

## **ABSTRACT**

BRUNO, L. DEAN. "Once a Home, Now a Memory:" Dispossession, Possession and Remembrance of the Landscape of the Former Seneca Army Depot. (Under the direction of Dr. Matthew Morse Booker).

Utilizing aspects of social, cultural, political, military and environmental history, this thesis details the cycles of possession and dispossession of the lands of Seneca County, New York. It explores both the changes in the people who claimed the land, and the changes in the natural landscape. Seneca County, a region forged in the fires of war, continues to be a region influenced by the relics and echoes of military and political conflict. Since the closing of the Seneca Army Depot at the end of the Cold War, the current residents of Seneca County have engaged in a fierce debate over the future of the former Depot lands. Whoever wrests ownership of this landscape will determine its future use and influence how its past will be celebrated and remembered.

“Once a Home, Now a Memory:” Dispossession, Possession and Remembrance of  
the Landscape of the Former Seneca Army Depot

by  
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## **DEDICATION**

To my parents, Louis and Donna Bruno, for encouraging me to lean into the wind and trod my own path, and to my loving wife, Liz, with whom I gratefully share the journey.

And to the people of Kendaia – past, present and future.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Dean Bruno was born in a small town in New York's Catskill Mountains and raised upstate along the eastern shores of Canandaigua Lake. He graduated from Cornell University with a degree in economics in 1986, and earned his MBA from Wake Forest University in 1992.

Dean will receive his Master of Arts in History from North Carolina State University in December, 2008.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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My thanks to my thesis committee members, Dr. Ken Vickery and Dr. Steven Vincent, for their guidance and comments, and especially to my committee chair, Dr. Matthew Booker, who encouraged me to wander the terrain of my own past.

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## Introduction

On a cool summer evening in 1941, residents of Seneca County, New York slowly gathered in the auditorium of the Romulus Central School. As the seats filled, friends and neighbors exchanged hushed greetings and anxious glances. For months, rumors had swirled throughout the area; rumors that, if true, threatened the livelihoods of many in the room. The federal government was coming. Instead of enjoying a school musical, pageant or talent contest put on by local children, the residents attended a command performance. On this evening, the stage belonged to strangers.

Across the seemingly vast barrier of the Atlantic Ocean, on the distant European continent, war raged. The ripples from a conflict that seemed so remote swept across the upstate landscape. In previous times of war, posters depicted Uncle Sam emphatically pointing and demanding “I Want You.” But in the summer of '41 Uncle Sam was not coming to recruit the people of Seneca County; instead the federal government wanted their land. At 7:00pm, L. P. Walker, of the Real Estate Division of the War Department, addressed the audience. He spoke of sacrifice - sacrifice that citizens of this country had made from colonial days in defense of freedom. We are faced with a problem, he said, and must continue to sacrifice. The nation was perched precariously on the brink of war, and it must plan ahead. Acting as the official representative of the War Department, he informed the people of Seneca County that the federal government was claiming nearly 12,000 acres of productive farmland – in many cases land that had been worked by families for several

generations. Land that was once used to grow corn, wheat, beans and pumpkins was now needed by the government for a munitions depot.<sup>1</sup>

By the end of World War II and the start of the Cold War, the Seneca Army Depot would become one of the nation's largest munitions facilities (Figure 1). The Depot contained both conventional and nuclear weapons and was also a storage site for some of the nuclear material and waste produced during the Manhattan Project. Citing documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, the Center for Defense Information (CDI) reported in 1982 that the facility was the main munitions depot for Lance missiles and atomic warheads for 8-inch artillery pieces. CDI concluded that the Seneca Army Depot was probably the largest storage site for nuclear weapons in the United States.<sup>2</sup> At its peak, during the 1980s, the Depot was the rural county's largest employer with a workforce of more than 1500 civilian and military personnel. The Depot also generated substantial economic benefit for the local housing market and area businesses.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Seneca County Picked as Site for Munitions Depot," Geneva Daily Times June 9, 1941; "Details of Purchase Explained at Romulus Meeting," Geneva Daily Times June 11, 1941.

<sup>2</sup> "Reports of Nuclear Cache Unsettle Upstate Village," New York Times Feb. 8, 1982, B2.

<sup>3</sup> "Communities Fear the Pain Base Closings Will Cause," New York Times March 1, 1995; "New Jobs Expected For Seneca County," New York Times May 14, 1999.



Figure 1: Map of Seneca County and the Seneca Army Depot, circa 2004.

The collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 signified the symbolic end of the Cold War, but the demise of Cold War facilities, like the Seneca Army Depot, has been more drawn out. As U.S. political leaders basked in the warm glow of perceived victory over the Soviet Union, they initiated plans to identify and allocate the “peace dividend” that would be achieved by reductions in military expenditures. Under the guidance of Congress, a special committee conducted an extensive review of military facilities with the aim to increase efficiency and realize cost savings. In 1995, as part of the Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) process, the Depot was placed on the decommission list, and over the next few years the once vibrant workforce reduced to a handful of caretakers.<sup>4</sup> By 2003, the military transferred ownership of nearly 10,000 acres of depot lands to the Seneca County Industrial Development Authority - a public benefit corporation created by the New York Legislature in 1973 to facilitate private sector commercial and industrial development. The military retained temporary control of approximately 1000 acres for hazardous waste remediation. Sections of the Depot are still listed on the Department of Environmental Protection’s Superfund list, and clean up is scheduled to continue for several years.<sup>5</sup>

The current owners of the landscape, the nine members of the county Industrial Development Authority governing board, are not directly elected by the voters, but are appointed by the Seneca County Board of Supervisors. As such, they are neither public

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<sup>4</sup> “Final Proposals on Military Closings,” New York Times June, 25 1995.

<sup>5</sup> “Getting the Lead out of the Depot,” Finger Lakes Times Nov. 26, 2007; EPA Superfund Final Record of Decision for Sites Requiring Institutional Controls in the Planned Industrial/Office Development or Warehousing Areas at the Seneca Army Depot Activity (SEDA), Sept. 28, 2004.

nor exactly private. Disagreements between the Industrial Development Authority board, members of the local community, and other interested local, state and national groups and agencies has created a contentious atmosphere as the various stakeholders vie for control of the seventeen square mile tract of land. While the phrase “highest and best use” is often referenced in the ongoing debates, this evaluation remains elusive and is highly subjective. The former Cold War military installation is now contested terrain in a struggle over competing visions for the use of the landscape.

Environmentalists see the large tract of mostly undeveloped land as an opportunity to preserve flora and fauna, while local politicians and members of the business community envision the depot as the site of new jobs and revenue. Of particular interest is the fate of a rare herd of an estimated 300 white-coated deer that thrive within the sheltered confines of the base <sup>6</sup> (Figure 2). While the white deer are part of nature, they are abundant because of human actions. The Development Authority asserts its legal possession of the Depot lands, but the deer are claimed by a greater community. The interrelationship between the white deer and local residents will have an influential role in determining how the lands will be used in the future.

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<sup>6</sup> “Nurtured at Army Depot, Rare Deer Herd Is Suggested As a Key to Tract’s Future,” New York Times March 21, 2004.



**Figure 2: White Deer at the Seneca Army Depot. Photograph by Lee Brun.**

Lost in the current struggle for possession of the Depot is a frank acknowledgement of to whom the land once belonged. Seneca County was once home to the Seneca and Cayuga people of the Iroquois Nation, and in recent decades the tribes have engaged in a protracted legal struggle with the state to reclaim what they consider to be their ancestral homelands. The dispossession of the Iroquois occurred during the Revolutionary War era when upstate New York was a largely unknown and unexplored landscape for European settlers. The region served as a permeable boundary for the western frontier; a borderland between civilization and wilderness. For the inhabitants of the early American colonies, the upstate territory represented an untapped landscape of promise and opportunity, but the land first had to be explored and conquered.

In the late summer and early fall of 1779, General George Washington ordered a detachment of the Continental Army to upstate New York to conduct a scorched earth campaign against the Iroquois. The offensive was designed to secure the western frontier from British and Iroquois raids and clear the way for colonial settlement. Upstate New

York was the gateway to the inland Empire. The outnumbered Seneca and Cayuga people were thrust from their homelands and their communities put to the torch. Washington's plan represented a competing vision of how these vast "open" lands should be used and settled. Today, historical markers dot the Seneca County landscape in commemoration of this campaign, but the dispossession of the Iroquois represents only one chapter in the region's history as contested terrain.

150 years after the dispossession of the Iroquois, just prior to America's official entry into WWII, the federal government forced 150 families from their farms and homesteads to make way for the Seneca Army Depot. Local residents often had only a few days to collect their belongings and relocate. In a scene eerily reminiscent of the military campaign of 1779, displaced families watched as their homes, churches and grange halls were commandeered or destroyed. For both the Iroquois people and the residents of Seneca County, lifetimes of human toil and bonds of community were erased from the landscape by powerful external parties who re-shaped the land to conform to their vision of the future.

D. W. Meinig, the noted historical geographer, wrote that "Life must be lived amidst that which has been made before. Every landscape is an accumulation. The past endures."<sup>7</sup> However, whoever controls the land not only determines how it will be used, but also influences how its past is remembered. As a former borderland, and the site of cultural and military clashes, Seneca County is a land of conflicted history, memories and meanings. The wars that shaped the area may be over, but the landscape of the former

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<sup>7</sup> D.W. Meinig, ed. The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 44.

Seneca Army Depot remains contested terrain. This thesis utilizes the Depot lands as a lens to recount the area's history of repeated dispossession, and considers how the past is remembered. It also explores the interrelationship between the people of Seneca County and the environment, and how the current struggle for control of the Depot will influence the use and memory of this landscape.

## Chapter One:

### The Sullivan Campaign and Dispossession of the Iroquois

The Iroquois Confederacy was formed, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, by the Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk, Seneca, and Cayuga tribes. The Confederacy expanded in the early 1700s when the nations granted refuge to the Tuscaroras, who fled North Carolina to avoid strife and conflict with white settlers who encroached upon their tribal lands.<sup>8</sup> The history of the Native American people, from the time of the early Republic to the modern era, is a story of dispossession, and that of the Iroquois, or the Six Nations, is no exception.

The Iroquois were the most powerful tribal organization during the Colonial era and held sway over most of what is now upstate New York. The name Iroquois itself is of uncertain, but likely European origin - possibly derived from the French. The people of the Six Nations identified individual tribes with a variety of names, but referred to themselves collectively as the Haudenosaunee –“the people of the longhouse.”<sup>9</sup> The Iroquois Confederacy was principally formed to end decades of internal warfare among competing Indian tribes, and eventually evolved to become a bulwark against European intrusion into their homelands. The Confederacy provided the tribes with a military,

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<sup>8</sup> Daniel K. Richter, The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The People of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1992), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

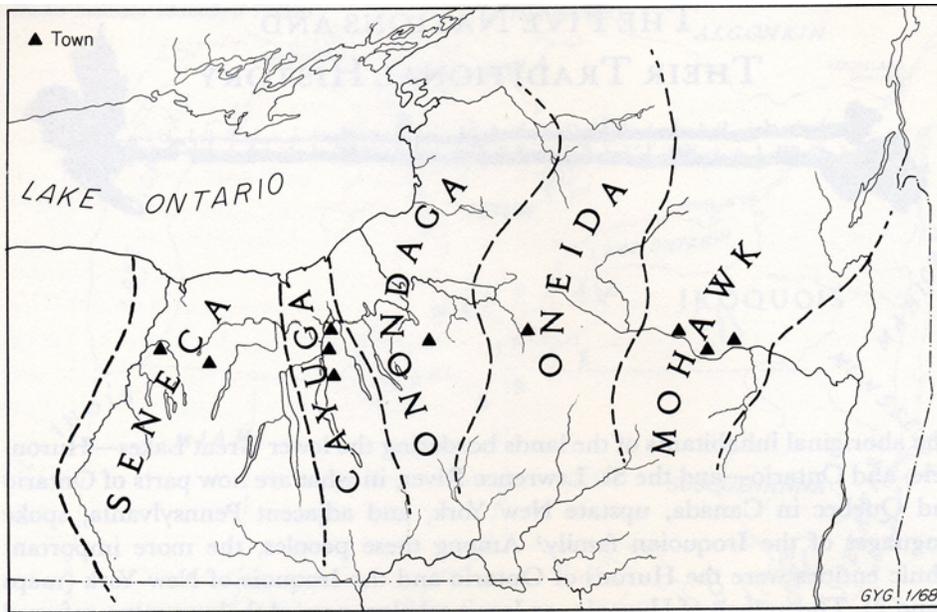
economic and diplomatic front, as the native people engaged and interacted with the European powers.<sup>10</sup>

Seneca County, New York was once the ancestral home of the Seneca and Cayuga people. As the “Keepers of the Western Door,” the Seneca secured the region west of Seneca Lake to the Genesee River and defended the Six Nations from attacks on the flank. To their east dwelled the Cayuga, who populated the shores of Cayuga Lake (Figure 3). Prior to the Revolutionary War, historians estimate the Iroquois totaled 8,000-15,000 individuals, with a majority divided between the Seneca and Cayuga tribes.<sup>11</sup>

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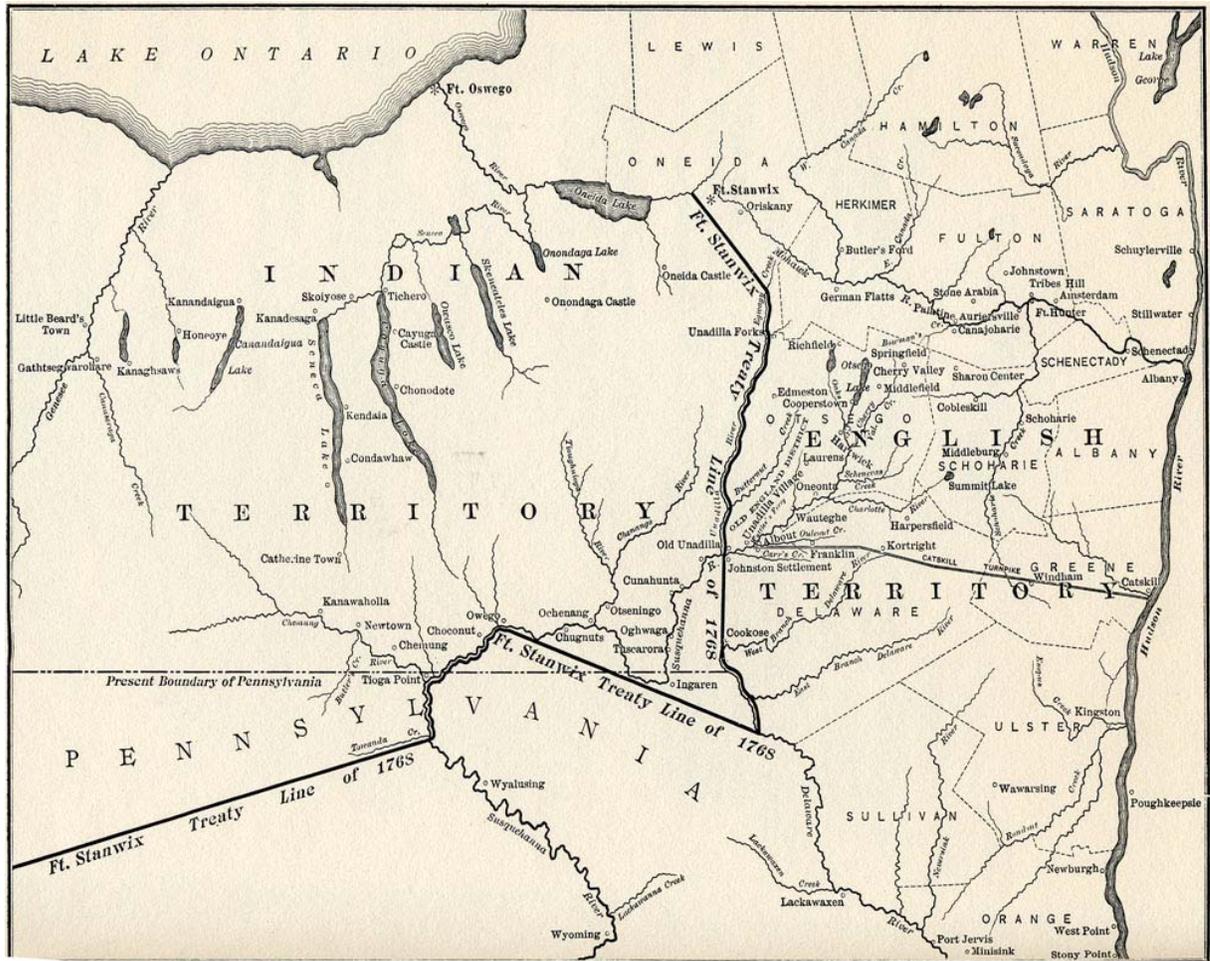
<sup>10</sup> For more on Iroquois-European relationships see Richard White, The Middle Ground: Indians, empires, and republics in the Great Lakes region, 1650-1815 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Daniel Richter, Facing East from Indian Country (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> For population estimates see: Anthony F.C. Wallace, The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, (New York: Random House, 1972), 196; Max M. Mintz, Seeds of Empire: The American Revolutionary Conquest of the Iroquois (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 1; Alan Taylor, The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 4. According to Taylor, historians have generally estimated Pre-Revolutionary War Iroquois population levels as being 4-5 times the number of Iroquois warriors referenced in historical records.



**Figure 3: The Iroquois Homelands. William N. Fenton, The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1998) 4.**

During the conflict between the British and French for colonial expansion into the region, the Confederacy attempted to steer a neutral course, although some individual tribes did take sides. After a series of British victories over the French, the Iroquois reluctantly supported the British in an effort to maintain control of their homelands. In 1768, the British and Iroquois negotiated the Treaty of Stanwix, which clearly defined the boundary between English settlers and the Confederacy (Figure 4).



**Figure 4: Map of Treaty of Stanwix (1768).** Francis W. Halsey, *The Old New York Frontier: Its Wars with Indians and Tories, Its Missionary Schools, Pioneers and Land Titles 1614-1800* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901).

As with most European treaties with the Indians, settlers ignored the prohibitions against western expansion, and the Iroquois grew leery of British intentions. With the onset of the Revolutionary War, the Iroquois again tried to stay neutral, but were eventually swayed to join the British cause after being showered with gifts and renewed promises to respect the ancestral lands of the Confederacy.

The British and their Iroquois allies staged a series of raids against various colonial settler outposts and encampments along the frontier of upstate New York. The Iroquois were defending their territory and culture from further intrusion by unwanted white settlers, while for the British the raids were designed to harass and harry the nascent Colonial political and military leadership. In the eyes of the early colonial settlers, the British and Iroquois raids were not only razing their new homesteads, but also their dreams for a better future. As each side in the conflict defended what they considered to be hearth and home, or their geo-political interests, the borderland was the scene of violent conflict and often brutal atrocities. The settlers' demands for protection and calls for retribution eventually led to a response by the leader of the Continental Army, General George Washington. With British forces firmly entrenched in the New York City area, Washington needed to address the exposed flank of the western frontier.

In the spring of 1779, General Washington initiated plans for an "Indian expedition" to strike at the heart of the Iroquois Confederacy. Earlier, in 1778, the Continental Congress allocated the sum of \$932,743 to support planned military campaigns against Indian tribes along the western frontier.<sup>12</sup> In a letter dated March 6, 1779, Washington offered command of the expedition to Major General Horatio Gates, with the caveat that if Gates chose to decline leadership of the expedition the command and packet of orders be passed to Major General John Sullivan.<sup>13</sup> Citing his advanced age,

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<sup>12</sup> Worthington C. Ford, ed. et al, Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, (Washington, D.C., 1904-37), 11:589.

<sup>13</sup> Jared Sparks, ed. The Writings of George Washington; correspondence, addresses, messages, and other papers, official and private, selected and published from the original manuscripts; with a life of the author.

Gates demurred, and General Sullivan stepped to the forefront (Figure 5). In the letter, Washington stated the purpose of the expedition was “to carry the war into the heart of the country of the Six Nations, to cut off their settlements, destroy next year’s crops, and do them every other mischief, which time and circumstance would permit.”<sup>14</sup> In later correspondence with Sullivan, General Washington’s marching orders were stark, clear and unequivocal. On May 31, 1779, Washington wrote:

The expedition you are appointed to command is to be directed against the hostile tribes of the Six Nations of Indians, with their associates and adherents. The immediate objects are the total destruction and devastation of their settlements, and the capture of as many prisoners of every age and sex as possible.

Washington continued, that Sullivan should direct his Continental forces to “lay waste all the settlements around, with instructions to do it in the most effectual manner, that the country may not be merely overrun, but destroyed.”<sup>15</sup> Presumably, Washington desired prisoners to use as hostages to thwart any plan by the Iroquois to return to their lands. A simple military defeat of the Iroquois was not sufficient; Washington directed Sullivan to wage a scorched earth campaign against the land. What territory Sullivan’s men could not hold would be despoiled. In the battle to secure the western frontier, both the Iroquois people and the land they shaped and that sheltered them were defined as the enemy.

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notes and illustrations (Boston: American Stationers’ Company, John B. Russell; Odiorne, and Metcalf, 1834) Vol. 6. 187-189.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 188.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 264-265.



**Figure 5: Major General John Sullivan. Painting from Library of Congress.**

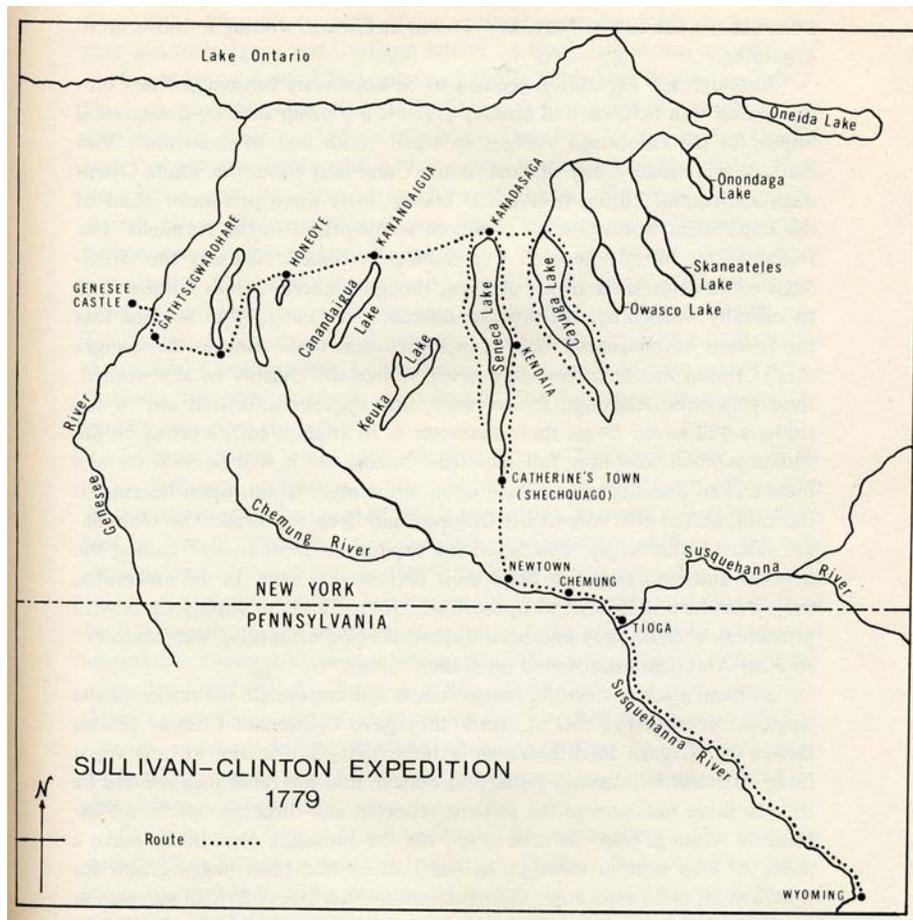
In The Iroquois and the American Revolution, historian Barbara Graymont described the Sullivan campaign as one of the most carefully planned operations of the entire Revolutionary War. “General Washington, fully aware of the significance of the Indian-Tory devastations of the frontier, wanted to remove the menace once and for all.”<sup>16</sup> Political and economic considerations also influenced the military response to the chaos in the borderlands. Colonial agricultural production was curtailed, food was in short supply, and settlers along the frontier wavered in their support for the Revolutionary War.

Despite Washington’s call for haste, Sullivan spent the summer of 1779 engaged in a series of logistics disputes with military quartermasters. It was not until August 26, 1779

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<sup>16</sup> Barbara Graymont, The Iroquois in the American Revolution (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1972), 193.

that Sullivan moved his army of more than 4500 Continental troops north from his staging point in Wyoming, Pennsylvania (Figure 6). For the Continental forces, this delay would turn out to be propitious. In *A Well-Executed Failure*, historian Joseph Fischer noted that “Sullivan’s small army entered the Iroquois homelands when the summer crops were ripe and ready for harvest.”<sup>17</sup> The Iroquois food stores that had been depleted over the long winter months were being replenished from the fields and orchards just as Sullivan and his men descended upon the Indian villages.



**Figure 6: Sullivan Campaign Trail. Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1972) 195.**

<sup>17</sup> Joseph Fischer, *A Well-Executed Failure* (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1997), 103.

On August 29, the Continental army crossed the Pennsylvania border into New York, and engaged the forces of Major Butler, the leader of the British Rangers, and a band of Iroquois allies at the Battle of Newtown. Butler was heavily outnumbered, with only an estimated 300 rangers, and a like number of Iroquois warriors.<sup>18</sup> More importantly, Sullivan had the tactical advantage of artillery. During the fight, Continental cannon fire created havoc in the British and Iroquois lines, causing them to break and retreat. Despite the intensity of the fight, casualties were light for both sides. At the end of the conflict, Sullivan's forces claimed the field of battle.

The next morning, Continental troops conducted a reconnaissance of the area and were amazed to discover a cornucopia of fruits and vegetables lying ripe in the village fields. What the men could not eat or carry was put to the torch. During the Sullivan campaign a number of officers and soldiers maintained journals and recorded details of the remarkable land they encountered, while leaving ashes in their wake. In his August 30, 1779 entry, Lieutenant Erkuries Beatty wrote:

Our Brigade Destroyed about 150 Acres of the best corn that Ever I saw (some of the Stalks grew 16 feet high) besides great Quantities of Beans, Potatoes, Pumpkins, Cucumbers, Squashes & Watermellons, and the Enemy looking at us from the hills but did not fire on us.<sup>19</sup>

Lieutenant John L. Hardenbergh noted in his journal: "Remained on the ground of yesterday. The greatest part of the army were employed in destroying corn which grew in

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<sup>18</sup> Ernest Cruikshank, The Story of Butler's Rangers and the Settlement of Niagara (Cranbury: The Scholar's Bookshelf, 2006), 70. First published in 1893.

<sup>19</sup> Frederick Cook, ed. Journals of the Military Expedition of Major General John Sullivan against the Six Nations of the Indians in 1779, with records of Centennial Celebrations (Auburn: Knapp, Peck & Thomson, 1887), 27.

great abundance.”<sup>20</sup> In describing the unusual aftermath of the battle, Barbara Graymont declared “It is the business of a soldier to know how to kill, but the business of this campaign would prove a strange task indeed for men at arms – a warfare against vegetables.”<sup>21</sup>

The outnumbered Iroquois, dispirited by the Continental cannons, their losses at Newtown and the devastation of their food supply, retreated deeper into their homelands. As Sullivan continued his march north into the heart of Seneca and Cayuga territory, the scorched earth campaign created a wave of refugees that rippled across the Six Nations creating stress on the communities and larders of sheltering villages. This first entanglement with Sullivan was a bitter lesson for the Iroquois and over the remaining course of the campaign they only engaged his forces in brief skirmishes.

During the month of September, Sullivan’s troops proceeded north along the eastern shores of Seneca Lake and carried out their efficient pillage of the landscape. On September 1st, Major John Burrowes recorded that Sullivan’s forces entered the Seneca village of Catherine’s Town, named in honor of a French woman who had married a local chief. Burrowes wrote “The land exceeds any I ever saw. There is a number of peach, apple & plum trees at this place.”<sup>22</sup> The fields were stripped to replenish the army’s food supply, the trees cut down and the village was torched.

On September 5<sup>th</sup>, the army marched to the Seneca village of Kendaia, or “Apple Town.” At this point in the expedition, Sullivan’s troops were roaming the exact

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 128.

<sup>21</sup> Graymont, The Iroquois in the American Revolution 213.

<sup>22</sup> Cook, Journals of the Military Expedition of Major General John Sullivan 45.

landscape of the future Seneca Army Depot. Lieutenant-Colonel Adam Hurley recorded that the village was “was situated on a rising ground, in the midst of an extensive apple and peach orchard, within a half a mile of the lake.”<sup>23</sup> The village itself was empty; the Seneca inhabitants fled in advance of the army. In his journal entry, Ensign Daniel Gookin described “a number of 200 old apple trees and peach trees plenty.”<sup>24</sup> Major Burrowes wrote “This town is about three hundred yards from the lake, the best houses I have seen and about 15 of them, with an orchard of 70 trees, to appearance had been planted fifty years.”<sup>25</sup> However, Kendaia’s bounty did not deter the soldiers from their task. The journal entry by Sergeant William Rogers concisely depicted the smoldering wake of the Sullivan Campaign: “came to Kendaia, Destroyed it.”<sup>26</sup>

The writings of Burrowes, Hurley, Gookin and other members of the Sullivan campaign provide an invaluable glimpse of the landscape. These were not wild trees growing haphazardly on the village outskirts, but were carefully planted and maintained Indian orchards. The fruit orchards existed because the Seneca and Cayuga were skilled agrarians who had developed detailed knowledge of soil conditions, sun exposure and other factors needed in the cultivation of sensitive fruit trees in the cold climate of upstate New York. Today, apple orchards are found in abundance in upstate, particularly along the southern shore of Lake Ontario, but peach trees are especially susceptible to cold weather and can thrive only in specific micro-climates in New York, like those found in a

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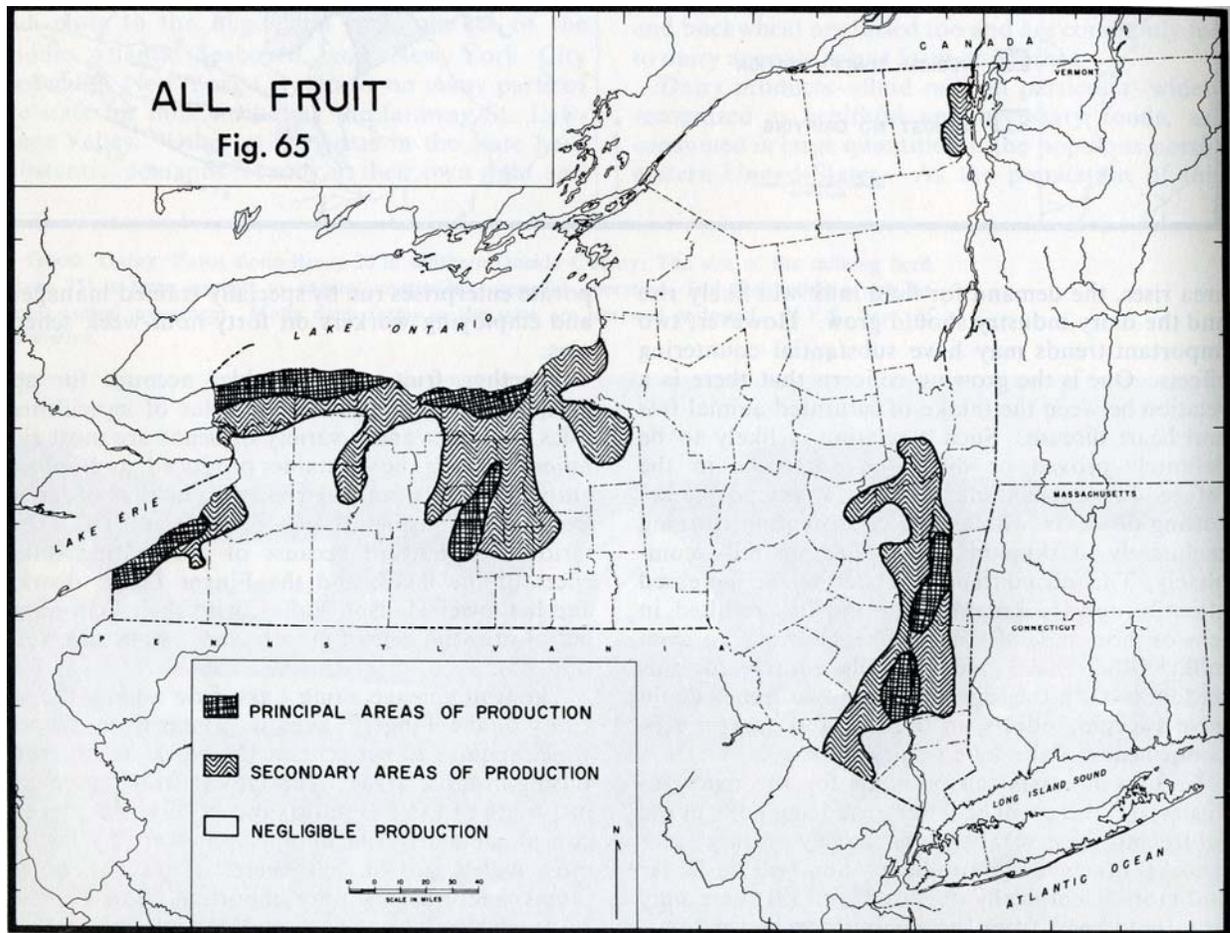
<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 159.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 106.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 206.

limited number of folds and valleys along the shores of Seneca and Cayuga Lake<sup>27</sup> (Figure 7).



**Figure 7: Areas of Fruit Production in New York. John H. Thompson, ed. Geography of New York State (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1966) 206.**

The journal descriptions of extensive acres of crops and orchards are clear evidence that the Seneca lands encountered by Sullivan’s men were not wild, untamed and

<sup>27</sup> Ian Merwin, “Growing Stone Fruits in New York,” Fruit and Vegetable Science Department, Cornell University, <http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/factsheets/ecogardening/growstone.html>, accessed on Nov. 27, 2007, and “Cornell Guide to Growing Fruit at Home,” Cornell University Cooperative Extension, <http://ecommons.library.cornell.edu/retrieve/63/Cornell+Guide+to+Growing+Fruit>, accessed on Nov. 27, 2007.

uncultivated. The Iroquois actively inhabited the landscape, and shaped it to meet their needs. “The expedition,” historian Barbara Graymont argued, “disclosed to the whites, who had always termed the redmen ‘savages,’ that these Indians were living in a state of civilization equal to, and often better than, that of the frontier whites.”<sup>28</sup> But not everyone in the Sullivan expedition considered the Seneca and Cayuga people in such a positive light.

After the soldiers burned the fields and crops near Kendaia, Major Jeremiah Fogg, a 1768 graduate of Harvard College, wrote:

Whether the god of nature ever designed that so noble a part of creation should remain uncultivated, in consequence of an unprincipled and brutal part of it, is one of those arcana, yet hidden from human intelligence. However, had I any influence in the councils of America, I should not think it an affront to the Devine will, to lay some effectual plan, either to civilize, or totally extirpate the race.<sup>29</sup>

Fogg perceived the landscape as both a soldier and as a potential colonist with an eye for future development and growth. This was a land of plenty; this was a land for industrious white men to settle and make flourish. To Fogg, the Iroquois were but remnants of the past, obstacles that should be removed to make way for a better future. Shortly after departing Kendaia, in a journal entry dated September 7, 1779, Fogg described his vision for the Seneca lands: “The land between the Seneca and Cayuga lakes appears good, level and well timbered; affording a sufficiency for twenty elegant townships, which in process of time will doubtless add to the importance of America.”<sup>30</sup> His assessment of the

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<sup>28</sup> Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* 220.

<sup>29</sup> Cook, *Journals of the Military Expedition of Major General John Sullivan* 98.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

landscape was insightful, and would later be of great interest to the political and business leadership of New York.

Over the course of September, detachments from Sullivan's command ranged deeper into the Iroquois homelands as they canvassed the territory between the Genesee River, the Finger Lakes and other regions of upstate New York. Members of the expedition continued to record details of the astounding bounty of the land, and the subsequent trail of despair they left behind. On September 28<sup>th</sup>, units of the Continental army traversed the eastern shore of Cayuga Lake. Major Fogg recorded that the men "destroyed one hundred houses, five hundred fruit trees, and an immense quantity of corn. The land was good and much like that between the lakes."<sup>31</sup> On the surface, Fogg's observations appear incongruous - the troops were razing a land that held much promise, but they reveal the underlying tension of the Sullivan campaign: the Indian expedition was both a punitive measure and a journey of exploration and conquest.<sup>32</sup> In one hand, the soldiers wielded a torch; while in the other, the surveyor's notebook. The lands of the Seneca people fired the imaginations of men who were eager to expand inward from the coastal areas in pursuit of opportunity and empire. This particular vision of the landscape held little room or sympathy for the people of the Six Nations.

On October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1779, General Washington issued terse orders for Sullivan to return his troops to West Point, New York - the Indian expedition was over. Due to Sullivan's foot-dragging prior to embarking from Wyoming, Pennsylvania, and his subsequent lack of

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 100-101.

<sup>32</sup> For more on the exploration and conquest of North America see, Stanley H. Palmer and Dennis Reinhartz, eds., Essays on the History of North American Discovery and Exploration (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1988).

formal reports to General Washington over the course of his operations, he received a lukewarm reception from his commander.<sup>33</sup> In Sullivan's detailed after-action report to the Continental Congress, he sought to win praise for his campaign and bolster his reputation. Sullivan boasted, "The number of towns destroyed by this army amounted to 40 besides scattered houses. The quantity of corn destroyed, at a moderate computation, must amount to 160,000 bushels, with a vast quantity of vegetables of every kind."<sup>34</sup>

While Sullivan carried out Washington's scorched earth policy to the letter, and suffered a minimal number of casualties during the campaign, he had not achieved a defining military victory. The Iroquois were severely wounded, but not defeated.

Like other asymmetrical military engagements, the outnumbered British and Iroquois forces melted into the sheltering landscape, only to re-form once Sullivan's troops passed. Washington accepted Sullivan's letter of resignation from service, in which the General cited personal health concerns as a motivating factor. Sullivan's military career was over, but not the struggle for control of the Seneca and Cayuga Lands. As Major Fogg noted in the final entry of his journal, "The nests are destroyed, but the birds are still on the wing."<sup>35</sup>

The shaping of public remembrance for the Sullivan Campaign began as soon as the soldiers returned from the expedition. It was portrayed by colonial leaders as both just punishment and as the conquest of bountiful lands. On October 17, 1779, Israel Evans, a chaplain assigned to a Pennsylvania detachment of troops on the campaign, delivered a

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<sup>33</sup> Max M. Mintz, Seeds of Empire: The American Revolutionary Conquest of the Iroquois (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 154.

<sup>34</sup> Cook, Journals of the Military Expedition of Major General John Sullivan 303.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 101.

speech to a crowd of officers and men. Evans provided thanks “to our divine Benefactor and powerful Guardian, who has girded us with the strength unto the battle, and made us superior to all unavoidable toils, hardships, and dangers of a wilderness unknown and unexplored, unless by the wild beasts and the savages.”<sup>36</sup> Besides being a campaign of retribution and exploration, Evans characterized the expedition as a righteous crusade against the godless, untamed and uncivilized. But the Reverend envisioned something even grander as a result of the Sullivan Campaign. Looking into the future, Evans stated:

Methinks I see the rich lands from the Teaoga [Tioga] River to the banks of the Seneca and Cayuga lakes, and from thence to the most fruitful of lands on the Chenesses [Genesee River] to the great lakes Ontario, Erie, and Huron, and from these to Mihigan [Michigan] and Superior. Methinks I see all these lands inhabited by the independent Citizens of America. I congratulate posterity on this addition of immense wealth and extensive territory to the United States.<sup>37</sup>

Reverend Evans’ impassioned speech evoked images of conquest and Manifest Destiny that would not become part of western expansionist vocabulary until the 1840s with the Jacksonian Democrats. Not only does Evans serve to reperiodize Manifest Destiny, but he also relocates its geographical focus. Future generations of grateful citizens, Reverend Evans continued, “shall enumerate the many towns you destroyed, and the necessity of destroying unknown quantities of corn and fruits of the land, and of laying the country waste for an extent of two hundred miles.”<sup>38</sup> An entire landscape put to the torch and consumed in the name of progress and destiny.

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<sup>36</sup> Reverend Israel Evans, “A Discourse at Easton, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October, 1779, to the Officers and Soldiers of the Western Army, After their Return from an Expedition against the Five Nations of Hostile Indians,” (Philadelphia: Thomas Bradford, at the Coffee-House, 1779), 17.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

Despite the Reverend's assurances of a job well-done, the borderlands of upstate New York remained fiercely contested terrain until the Treaty of Paris between the colonies and Britain in 1783. The dispossession of the Iroquois that the Americans could not accomplish through musket and sword was eventually achieved with the 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua and the 1797 Treaty of Big Tree.

Public memory of the Revolutionary War was influenced by the patriotic fervor of a newly independent nation, and the war characterized as a defense of liberty and justice. The period's central figure, General George Washington, celebrated as a military hero, founding father and first president of our nation. However, to the Iroquois, George Washington was not a man to be revered, but feared. In 1790, the great Seneca war-chief Cornplanter traveled to Philadelphia to deliver a speech to George Washington:

When your army entered the country of the Six Nations, we called you town destroyer; and to this day when that name is heard, our women look behind them and turn pale, and our children cling close to the necks of their mothers.

Cornplanter concluded, "Our counselors and warriors are men, and cannot be afraid; but their hearts are grieved with the fears of our women and children, and desire that it may be buried so deep as to be heard no more."<sup>39</sup> Our nation remembers Washington as a symbol of honesty and virtue, but to the Iroquois he is an icon of dispossession.

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<sup>39</sup> The Speech of Cornplanter, Half-Town, and the Great-Tree, Chiefs and Councillors of the Seneca Nation, to the Great Councillor of the Thirteen Fires. American State Papers: Indian Affairs (Washington, D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1832) Vol. 1. 140. There is some disagreement among historians whether Cornplanter specifically referred to Washington as "town destroyer" as a result of the Sullivan Campaign, or for Washington's conduct during the French and Indian War. See William N. Fenton, The Great Law and the Longhouse (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1998) 117. Fenton notes that, after Washington, the Iroquois referred to all future presidents as "town destroyer."

The land treaties between the Iroquois and the fledgling American government were only the beginning of the dispossession of the Iroquois. In The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, historian Anthony F. C. Wallace claimed that by 1794, as a consequence of invasion, hunger, cold and disease, no more than 4,000 Iroquois remained in the area of upstate New York and Canada.<sup>40</sup> As their ancestral homelands and populations diminished, the imprint of the Iroquois on the landscape also began to fade in public memory. The battles for the territory of the Six Nations were not just to wrest control of the land but, more importantly, to determine whose vision of the past would shape the landscape's future. From the perspective of the Euro-Americans, the Sullivan Campaign created both a territorial and cultural vacuum; the Iroquois were not only dispossessed of their lands, but of their history. In the decades that followed, a wave of new settlers would inhabit and transform the lands of the Seneca and Cayuga people, and they would remember the past on their own terms.

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<sup>40</sup> Anthony F. C. Wallace, The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca (New York: Vintage Books, 1972) 195-196.

## Chapter Two

### Possession and Remembrance of the Landscape

During the Revolutionary War, New York offered land bounties as an incentive for military service. On March 20, 1781, the New York Legislature voted to raise “two regiments for the defence of this state on bounties of unappropriated lands.”<sup>41</sup> Over the course of the conflict, additional military units were raised with promises of substantial rewards of land. In order to fulfill its anticipated obligations, on July 25, 1782, the New York Legislature designated nearly two million acres of prime Iroquois lands as the New Military Tract.<sup>42</sup> The area was vast and encompassed much of central upstate from the southern shores of Lake Ontario to Seneca and Cayuga Lake. At the time of the designation of the tract, three years after the scourge of the Sullivan Campaign, New York did not control the region. The upstate lands were sparsely inhabited by Iroquois survivors, and a modest number of settlers who warily ventured into the borderlands of the western frontier. The New York legislature was being rather optimistic when it set aside the tract in anticipation of one day wresting control of the region and distributing the land to military veterans.

Why was this particular tract of land chosen for the land bounty? The laudatory first-hand accounts of the region by soldiers in the Sullivan Campaign were influential in the decision, but other pragmatic and strategic factors likely played a key role. The

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<sup>41</sup> New York State Laws of Session, Session 1, Chapter 5, March 20, 1781.

<sup>42</sup> New York State Laws of Session, Session 6, Chapter 11, July 25, 1782.

conquest of the Six Nations was partially accomplished by musket and treaty, but dominion of the Iroquois lands could only be completed by secure settlement. Having military veterans in the vanguard to fill the void left by the Iroquois would solidify the western expansion of the state. This region also contained favorable topographic features and numerous waterways, which facilitated transportation and communication with the more populated areas of New York City and the eastern seaboard.<sup>43</sup> The state legislature optimistically staked its claim on these lands in anticipation of a favorable outcome in the War.

The Colonists achieved a favorable outcome of the Revolutionary War with the Treaty of Paris in 1783, and the New York Legislature turned its gaze westward. However, the surveying and allotment of land bounties was delayed while the United States negotiated a lengthy series of peace treaties with the Iroquois, which also extinguished tribal claims to the region. The negotiations with the Iroquois were further complicated by a territory dispute between New York and Massachusetts over the western frontier lands, which was not resolved until the Treaty of Hartford of 1786.

Finally, on February 28, 1789, the New York Legislature passed a bill authorizing the Commissioners of the Land Office “to direct the surveyor-general to lay out as many townships in the said tract of land so set apart as aforesaid, as will contain land sufficient

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<sup>43</sup> For more information on these geographical features see Richard Huot Schien, “A Historical Geography of Central New York: Patterns and Processes of Colonization on the Military Tract, 1782-1820,” PhD Dissertation (Geography) Syracuse University, 1989, 56-60.

to satisfy the claims of all such persons who are or shall be entitled to grants of lands.”<sup>44</sup>

The Legislature also ordered:

townships shall respectively contain sixty thousand acres of land, and be laid out as nearly in squares as local circumstances will permit, and be numbered from number one progressively, to the last inclusive; and the commissioners of the land-office shall likewise designate every township by such name as they shall deem proper.<sup>45</sup>

By the conclusion of the survey mission, 28 townships were carved from the former Iroquois lands. Each township was subdivided into 100 lots, with each lot containing 600 acres.

The broad authority granted to the Land Office to name the townships and organize the region in an extensive grid pattern played an influential role in how settlers perceived the landscape (Figure 8-9). Many of the townships were named after Roman republicans, great thinkers and hallowed places; historians have long debated the individual(s) responsible for the designations. Simeon Dewitt, Surveyor General, and Robert Harpur, Secretary of the Land Board, have both been suggested as likely candidates, but the question remains unresolved. The ordering of the landscape with these historical names celebrated the ancient western roots of the European settlers, and provided a sense of familiar civilization to the perceived wilderness of the western frontier. The classical nomenclature used to identify the 28 military townships was also an attempt to imbue the landscape with the ancient republican values of duty, honor, sacrifice, service to

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<sup>44</sup> New York State Laws of Session, Session 12, Chapter 44, February 28, 1789.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

community, and self-sufficiency – components of a moral code many thought would be needed in the conquest of the land.<sup>46</sup>

**TOWNSHIPS**  
IN THE  
**MILITARY TRACT.**

◆

<i>NUMBER.</i>	<i>NAME.</i>
<b>Township No. 1</b>	<b>Lysander,</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Hannibal,</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Cato,</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Brutus,</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Camillus,</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Cicero,</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Manlius,</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Aurelius,</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Marcellus,</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Pompey,</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Romulus,</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Scipio,</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Sempronius,</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Tully,</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Fabius,</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Ovid,</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Milton,</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Locke,</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>Homer,</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Solon,</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Hector,</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>Ulysses,</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>Dryden,</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>Virgil,</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Cincinnatus,</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>Junius,</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>Galen,</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>Sterling.</b>

**Figure 8: The 28 Townships of the New Military Tract. The Balloting Book, and Other Documents Relating to Military Bounty Lands, in the State of New York (Albany: Packard & VanBenthuyzen, 1825). Reprinted by W.E. Morrison & Co., 1983.**

<sup>46</sup> For more on upstate New York place names see William R. Farrell, Classical Place Names in New York State (Jamesville, NY: Pine Grove Press, 2002).



J. B. Jackson, the noted scholar of American landscapes, contended that the post-Revolutionary War era of westward expansion was greatly influenced by the collective desire to impose order on unfamiliar surroundings. In this process, the grid pattern served both a physical and spiritual role in the conversion and civilizing of the landscape. Jackson wrote “It is after the American Revolution that the vision of the new rational, mathematical order began to inspire the designed environment.” The most obvious examples were found in the east, “above all in the so-called Military Townships of upper New York State.”<sup>47</sup> The grid pattern not only transformed the physical landscape, but also influenced the social, cultural, and political landscapes of upstate New York.

On July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1790, the Land Office reviewed the initial survey maps provided by Simeon Dewitt, the Surveyor General. After certifying individual claims, the office initiated the allotment process as outlined by the New York Legislature. Each veteran received their land bounty in shares of 600 acres (one lot), and total individual shares were determined by respective military ranks during the Revolutionary War. Non-commissioned officers received one lot of 600 acres, while officers received multiple lots of 600 acres. The actual allotment process was conducted by way of ballot. After a series of modifications, the New York Legislature stipulated that claimants would draw slips from two ballot boxes to determine the township and lot number for their land bounty. Townships would be numbered one through twenty eight, and lots would be numbered one through one hundred. Each draw represented one lot of 600 acres; high ranking officers

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<sup>47</sup> J. B. Jackson, “The Order of the Landscape” D.W. Meinig, ed. The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) 155-158.

would draw multiple times. An entry from The Balloting Book shows the acreage due to a partial list of non-commissioned personnel and officers who served in the New York First Regiment:

**CONNOLLY'S ORIGINAL RETURN,**  
**FILED BY LIEUT. CONNOLLY, IN THE SECRETARY'S OFFICE,**  
**THE 5TH DAY OF MAY, 1785.**  
**ROBT. HARPUR, D. Secretary.**

**RETURN**

*Of the Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and Privates, belonging to the State of New-York, in the service of the United States, which were enlisted for three years and during the war, and served to the end thereof; which entitles them to the several bounties of lands prefixed to their several names.*

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**FIELD AND STAFF—FIRST REGIMENT.**

<i>Names and Rank.</i>	<i>Acre.</i>	<i>Names and Rank.</i>	<i>Acre.</i>
Goose Van Schaick, colonel, - - -	3600	Caleb Sweet, surgeon, - - -	1800
Cornelius Van Dyck, Lt. Col. - - -	3000	John Elliot, surgeon's mate, - - -	1200
John Graham, major, - - -	2400	Francis Jackson, Q. M. Serg. - - -	600
Jacob H. Wendell, Lt. & Adj. - - -	1200	John Smith, Serg. major, - - -	600
Henry Van Vost, Lt. & Q. M. - - -	1200	William Loudon, D. major, - - -	600
Jeremiah Van Rensselaer, Lt. & P. - - -	1200	William Dougherty, F. major, - - -	600

**FIRST COMPANY—FIRST REGIMENT.**

<i>Names and Rank.</i>	<i>Acre.</i>	<i>Names and Rank.</i>	<i>Acre.</i>
Aron Aorson, captain, - - -	1800	William Petterson, - - - - -	600
Abraham Hardenbaragh, Lieut. - - -	1200	Alexander Forbush, - - - - -	600
Joseph Morrell, Lieut. - - -	1200	John Hudson, - - - - -	600
Robert Willkison, sergeant, - - -	600	Francis Lampier, - - - - -	600
Thomas Jones, - - - - -	600	Frederick Moon, - - - - -	600
Cornelius Mixwell, - - - - -	600	Alexander Munroo, - - - - -	600
John Way, - - - - -	600	Alexander M'Coy, - - - - -	600
Levi Sterling, - - - - -	600	John M'Intosh, - - - - -	600
Benjamin Waring, corporal, - - -	600	Leonard Olundorf, - - - - -	600
Thomas Mott, - - - - -	600	William Risdell, - - - - -	600
Duncan Smith, drummer, - - -	600	Jasper Stage, - - - - -	600
John Backer, private, - - -	600	Hussy Stratton, - - - - -	600
Henry Barans, - - - - -	600	John Uthest, - - - - -	600
Simon Brumly, - - - - -	600	Jacob Weeks, - - - - -	600
Robert Chase, - - - - -	600	Samuel Wright, - - - - -	600
John Cooper, - - - - -	600	Jacob Willson or Wishover, private, - - -	600
Peter De Valtz, - - - - -	600	Willit Carman, - - - - -	600

Figure 10: New York First Regiment Officers and Bounty. The Balloting Book, and Other Documents, Relating to Military Bounty Lands, in the State of New-York. (Albany: Packard & VanBenthuyssen, 1825) 80. Reprinted by W.E. Morrison & Co., 1983.

The balloting process began eleven long years after the Sullivan Campaign, and seven years after the end of the Revolutionary War. During this intervening period, a significant number of veterans sold their anticipated shares for paltry sums, settled far from upstate New York with no intentions of relocating, or died leaving their shares to be claimed by heirs or designees. According to an official list of land delivery outlined in The Balloting Book, of the more than 2000 eligible military veterans, fewer than 200 of the original claimants actually received and settled the land received from the military bounty.<sup>48</sup> Most of the lots were eventually sold to speculators and middlemen, who then advertised the land to potential buyers throughout the area of the eastern seaboard.

With few exceptions, the men who dispossessed the Iroquois were, in fact, not the ones that came to possess the land. This was particularly true for the military townships that eventually became part of Seneca County. According to a document prepared by Walter Gable, Seneca County Historian, “only three or possibly four of the soldiers settled on the lot they received, in Seneca County.”<sup>49</sup> One of these soldiers was Jacob Hicks, who settled on Lot 10 in the Township of Romulus. Romulus contains some of the same territory described in the journals of soldiers on the Sullivan Campaign, including the picturesque Iroquois village of Kendaia (Appletown). And it is these same lands that the federal government would claim 150 years later to make way for the Seneca Army Depot.

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<sup>48</sup> The Balloting Book, and Other Documents, Relating to Military Bounty Lands, in the State of New-York. (Albany: Packard & VanBenthuyzen, 1825) 150-184. Reprinted by W.E. Morrison & Co., 1983.

<sup>49</sup> “The Military Tract” (Archival document compiled by Walter Gable, Seneca County Historian) 7.

The names of all the individuals who received lots within the New Military Tract are recorded in a detailed list in The Balloting Book. The roll for the Township of Romulus, including Lot 10 received by Jacob Hicks, is provided below (Figure 11):

MILITARY TOWNSHIPS AND LOTS IN NUMERICAL ORDER.		125
ROMULUS, NO. 11.		
<i>In Township No. 11 were balloted as follows:—</i>	Lots	<i>In Township No. 11,</i>
To Ebenezer Hutchinson, S. mate, . . . . .	1	To James Gregg, captain, . . . . . 51
George Robeson, . . . . .	2	John Jacob, . . . . . 52
Peter Dumas, . . . . .	3	Thomas Owens, . . . . . 53
<i>Reserved to the State,</i> . . . . .	4	James Livingston, colonel, . . . . . 54
To Samuel Potter, . . . . .	5	<i>Reserved for Gospel, Schools, &amp;c.</i> . . . . 55
<i>Reserved for Gospel, Schools, &amp;c.</i> . . . .	6	To John P. Boyea, . . . . . 56
To Thomas Lee, . . . . .	7	John Stake, cornet, . . . . . 57
Thomas Gready, . . . . .	8	Henry Van Deburgh, captain, . . . . . 58
Abraham Van Amburgh, . . . . .	9	<i>Reserved for Gospel, Schools, &amp;c.</i> . . . . 59
Jacob Hicks, . . . . .	10	To James Parker, . . . . . 60
Ezra Weed, . . . . .	11	Christopher Queen, . . . . . 61
Robert Hunter, lieutenant, . . . . .	12	Ephraim Blanchard, . . . . . 62
Jeremiah Bennet, . . . . .	13	Alexander M'Dougall, maj. gen. 63
James Clinton, brig. general, . . . . .	14	Benjamin Goodale, . . . . . 64
John Degrote, . . . . .	15	Richard Moore, . . . . . 65
Alexander M'Dougall, maj. gen. 16		Eleazer Yeamans, . . . . . 66
John Weaver, . . . . .	17	Joshua Davis, . . . . . 67
Minnah Hyatt, . . . . .	18	Arthur Hurley, . . . . . 68
Jacob Heyer, . . . . .	19	Joseph Jones, . . . . . 69
James Barret, . . . . .	20	John Green, . . . . . 70
Jacob Bakchorn, . . . . .	21	Peter Green, . . . . . 71
Robert Wilkinson, . . . . .	22	James Goodall, . . . . . 72
Thomas Russell, . . . . .	23	Timothy Green, . . . . . 73
Isaac Sampson, . . . . .	24	Jeremiah Smith, . . . . . 74
James Clinton, brig. general, . . . . .	25	Jonathan Lawrence Jun. lieutenant. . . . . 75
Jacob Wandall, . . . . .	26	Peter Tappan, lieutenant, . . . . . 76
Peter Ferris, . . . . .	27	Abiel Petty, . . . . . 77
Jacob Roase, . . . . .	28	George Stock, . . . . . 78
Fred. Weissenfels, lt. col. com. . . . .	29	Cornelius Van Dyck, lieutenant. col. . . . . 79
John Frymier, . . . . .	30	Thomas Bryan, . . . . . 80
Robert Williams, . . . . .	31	Daniel Dawson, . . . . . 81
Isaac Morrill, . . . . .	32	Alexander Munro, . . . . . 82
William Wuins, . . . . .	33	Richard Platt, major brigade, . . . . . 83
James Thompson, . . . . .	34	Samuel Dodge, ensign, . . . . . 84
Daniel Riggs, . . . . .	35	Charles M'Kenny, . . . . . 85
Samuel Davies or Davis, . . . . .	36	Abraham Hodge, . . . . . 86
William Drake, . . . . .	37	John Stagg Jun. lieutenant, . . . . . 87
<i>Reserved for Gospel, Schools, &amp;c.</i> . . . .	38	Thomas Brooks, . . . . . 88
To Nchemiah Carpenter, . . . . .	39	John Williams, . . . . . 89
Jonathan Kinner, . . . . .	40	Charles F. Weissenfels, lieutenant. . . . . 90
Elias Van Bunschoten, captain, . . . . .	41	John Cosgrove, . . . . . 91
Henry Myers, . . . . .	42	Benjamin Walker, lieutenant. colonel, 92
Edmund Kelly, . . . . .	43	Isaiah Burch, . . . . . 93
William Jackson, . . . . .	44	Robert Provoost, . . . . . 94
<i>Reserved for Gospel, &amp;c.</i> . . . .	45	Michael Decker, . . . . . 95
To Cornelius Van Dyck, lieutenant. col. . . . .	46	James Grace, . . . . . 96
Abner Prior, surgeon's mate, . . . . .	47	John Goodcourage, . . . . . 97
John Armstrong, . . . . .	48	Levi Burling, . . . . . 98
Mordecai Hale, surgeon's mate, . . . . .	49	Florence Marony, . . . . . 99
<i>Reserved for Gospel, Schools, &amp;c.</i> . . . .	50	Thompson Beacan, . . . . . 100

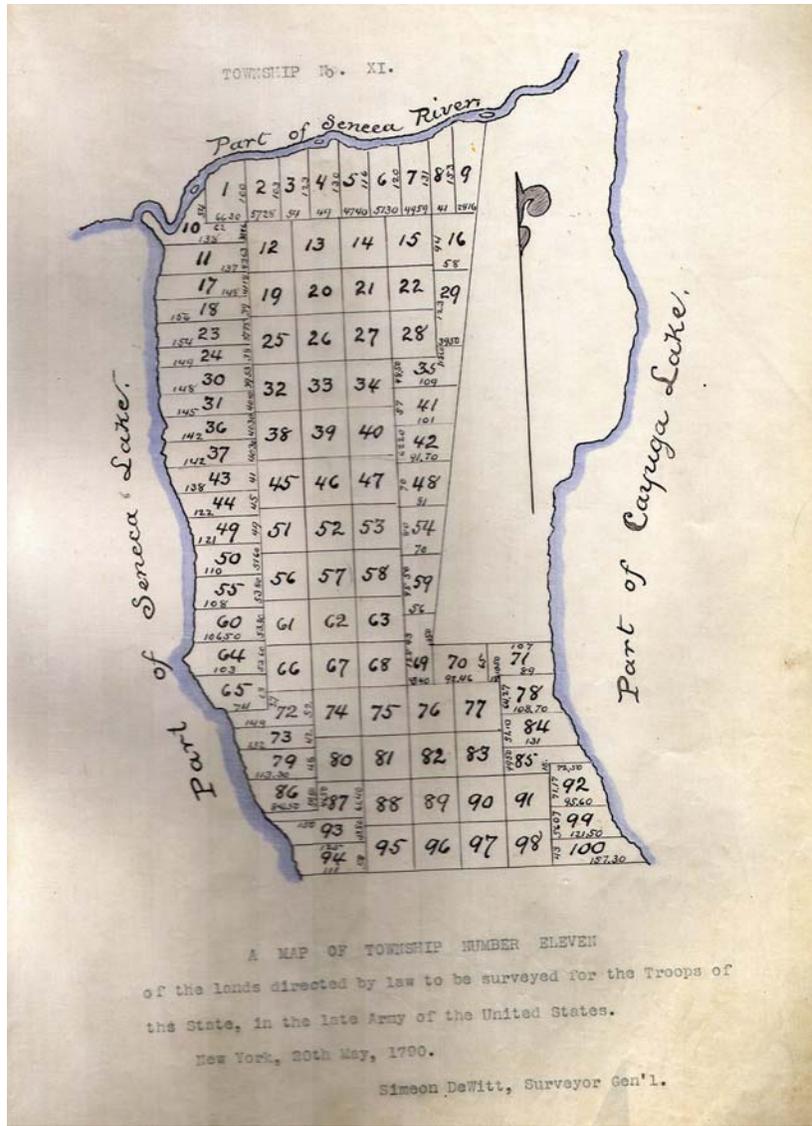
Figure 11: Township of Romulus Ballot List. The Balloting Book, and Other Documents, Relating to Military Bounty Lands, in the State of New-York. (Albany: Packard & VanBenthuyssen, 1825) 125. Reprinted by W.E. Morrison & Co., 1983.

Besides providing productive lands for new settlement, the New York Legislature also reserved six lots in each township to support churches and schools. This type of community development is further evidence of the State's desire to tame the frontier in a civilized and ordered manner.<sup>50</sup>

The boundary of Romulus and the distinct grid pattern of the township are clearly visible in this 1901 copy of the original township survey map (Figure 12).

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<sup>50</sup> For more on the early American frontier and borderlands see Patrick Griffin, *American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007); Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).



**Figure 12: Township of Romulus Map (Township #11). Original 1790 map by Simeon Dewitt, Surveyor General - Trace copy by Charles D. Becker. Seneca County Maps.**

By comparing the list of names recorded in The Balloting Book (Figure 11) with the Township of Romulus survey map (Figure 12), we can see the exact location of the lots drawn by the original ballot holders. Lot 10 for Jacob Hicks is located in the northwest quadrant of the township bordering the lake and river.

This particular map has an interesting provenance, and is an example of the importance of maintaining public records in order to preserve a community's history. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Seneca County's set of survey maps for the military townships and other localities were deteriorating. In 1901, Charles D. Becker hand traced a number of the maps. It is unclear if Becker was a member of the local community or a regional artisan who provided this service. Becker had the map tracings bound and, apparently, offered to sell the volume to Seneca County. Becker's map book does not have a formal title or copyright page, but inside the cover is a petition signed by members of the local community requesting that the Seneca County Board of Supervisors purchase the "Map Book" to preserve the information contained in the original documents (Figure 13). Walter Gable, Seneca County Historian, believes that this volume is likely the only one of its kind. Charles Becker's map book is currently stored in the Office of the County Clerk for Seneca County.

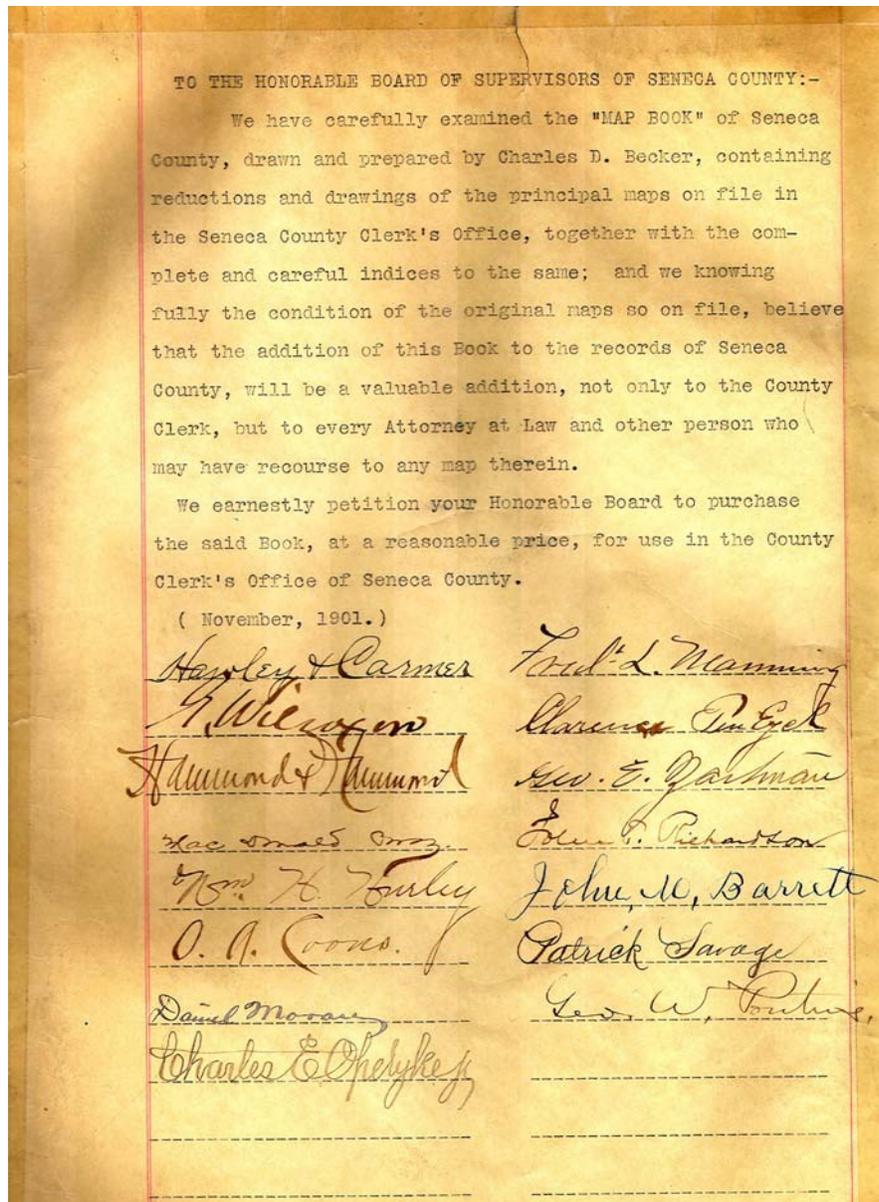


Figure 13: Petition for Charles D. Becker's Seneca County Maps.

The series of maps provided in this thesis serve two purposes: they depict the features and changing boundaries of upstate New York and also provide visual evidence of dispossession. From the maps drawn by an unsure hand during the pre-Revolutionary War era, to the detailed surveys of the New Military Tract, the lands of upstate changed from

terra incognita to terra firma. Empty spaces on the frontier maps, that once represented ominous areas of wilderness, were gradually filled in by European mapmakers who imposed their own vision and order on the landscape – a vision that ignored the current and past occupation by the people of the Six Nations.

Geographer Jo Margaret Mano has written on dispossession through mapping in her essay, “Unmapping of the Iroquois.” As primary source material, maps provide a valuable, but subjective view of the landscape. Mano noted that “maps are products of their cultural, social and particularly their political context. As such, they cannot be read as neutral testimony for illustrating history.”<sup>51</sup> Mapmakers, like historians, rely upon and choose a variety of sources in their efforts to create a visual or written narrative of a place at a particular moment in time. Both mapmaking and the writing of history are the consequences of choices.

While the colonial era maps depict the contest over the physical landscape of the upstate region, these historical documents also provide evidence of the underlying cultural struggle. These maps, Mano explained, also represent “the conflict between two different visions of the land, illustrating the Euro-American belief that it is a possession or commodity rather than a shared resource.”<sup>52</sup> Further, as was evident by the military bounty acts passed by the New York Legislature, much of the land claimed in early colonial maps was clearly inhabited by the Iroquois. The issue of who actually “possessed” the upstate landscape was largely irrelevant to the legislators. As teams of

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<sup>51</sup> Jo Margaret Mano, “Unmapping the Iroquois,” in The Oneida Indian Journey, ed. Laurence Hauptman and Gordon McLester III (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1999) 171.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

surveyors and explorers combed the western frontier, the unknown became defined, and dominion over the lands was expressed through maps.

The story of the dispossession of the Iroquois is usually framed in narrow terms of Euro-Americans forcing Native Americans from their ancestral lands, but an analysis of The Balloting Book reveals a more complicated story. In particular, the ballot list for the Township of Junius, north of Romulus, indicates that a small number of Native Americans, who supported the cause of the Colonists, also received military bounties (Figure 14). While the list does not indicate the tribal affiliations of these soldiers, it is likely that some were from the Oneida, the lone Iroquois tribe that allied with the Americans during the Revolutionary War.<sup>53</sup>

The presence of these names raises some intriguing questions. Who were these Native Americans and where did they come from? Did they settle in the Township of Junius or did they sell their shares to others? If they did settle their lots, what was their experience as members of the local community? A number of these individuals are identified by Christian first names. Did all of the Native Americans who served the Colonial cause receive bounty lands or just those who converted?<sup>54</sup> Based upon the evidence available in The Balloting Book, we can at least make one determination: Native Americans, who were losing ancestral lands to their own Colonial allies, were part of the

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<sup>53</sup> For more on the role of the Oneida tribe during the Revolutionary War see Joseph Glatthaar, and James Kirby Martin, Forgotten Allies: The Oneida Indians and the American Revolution (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006).

<sup>54</sup> Other townships listed in The Balloting Book also have Native Americans listed on the ballot rolls, but the majority of lots were located in Junius. The settlement of the Township of Junius is outside the scope of this thesis; no Native Americans are listed on the Town of Romulus ballot rolls, but these issues do merit further investigation.

wave of dispossession that swept the Seneca and Cayuga people from the western frontier of upstate New York.

140      MILITARY TOWNSHIPS AND LOTS IN NUMERICAL ORDER.

**JUNIUS, NO. 26.**

<i>In Township No. 26 were balloted as follows :</i>	Lots.	<i>In Township No. 26.</i>	Lots.
To James Brewster, lieutenant, . . . . .	1	To Samuel Gerrit, . . . . .	51
Jeremiah Buckhorn, . . . . .	2	Lieut. John Bailey, . . . . .	52
Cornelius Kahektotow, <sup>Lieutenant,</sup> <sub>Indian,</sub> . . . . .	3	Francis Williams, . . . . .	53
Hanjost Tewahongarahken, <sup>Lieut.</sup> <sub>Indian,</sub> . . . . .	4	Jellis D. Van Voorst, . . . . .	54
William Popham, aid-de-camp, . . . . .	5	Lewis Atayataghronghta, <sup>Lt. Colonel,</sup> <sub>Indian,</sub> . . . . .	55
Edmund Burke, . . . . .	6	Capt. David Van Ness, . . . . .	56
<i>Reserved for Gospel, &amp;c.</i> . . . . .	7	Capt. David Van Ness, . . . . .	57
To Henry Levines, . . . . .	8	William Popham, aid-de-camp, . . . . .	58
<i>Reserved for Gospel, &amp;c.</i> . . . . .	9	John White, . . . . .	59
To Hoseah M'Farland, . . . . .	10	John Olaawightow, capt. Indian, . . . . .	60
Lewis Atayataghronghta, <sup>Lt. Colonel,</sup> <sub>Indian,</sub> . . . . .	11	James Brewster, lieutenant, . . . . .	61
Garret Marselus, . . . . .	12	Abraham De Freest, . . . . .	62
Moses Beddel, . . . . .	13	Aaron Knapp, . . . . .	63
John Cackley, . . . . .	14	John Welts, . . . . .	64
William Witham, . . . . .	15	Nicholas Kaghnatshon, <sup>Lieutenant,</sup> <sub>Indian,</sub> . . . . .	65
Hanjost Tewahongarahken, <sup>Lieut.</sup> <sub>Indian,</sub> . . . . .	16	Walter Switz, lieutenant, . . . . .	66
Lieut. John Bailey, . . . . .	17	<i>Reserved for Gospel, &amp;c.</i> . . . . .	67
James Wakaranthraw, capt. Ind. . . . .	18	To John Erwin, . . . . .	68
Caleb Brewster, lieutenant, . . . . .	19	Levi Watson, . . . . .	69
Joseph Whiteman, . . . . .	20	Joseph Godwin, . . . . .	70
Simon Frazer, . . . . .	21	Caleb Brewster, lieutenant, . . . . .	71
James Wakaranthraw, capt. Ind. . . . .	22	Lewis Atayataghronghta, <sup>Lt. Colonel,</sup> <sub>Indian,</sub> . . . . .	72
Thomas Obrian, . . . . .	23	Peter Winn, . . . . .	73
John Olaawightow, capt. Indian, . . . . .	24	William Popham, aid-de-camp, . . . . .	74
<i>Reserved for Gospel, &amp;c.</i> . . . . .	25	John Wilcox, . . . . .	75
To John Walker, . . . . .	26	Nicholas Kaghnatshon, lieut. Ind. . . . .	76
Capt. Robert Wright, . . . . .	27	John Otaawightow, capt. Ind. . . . .	77
John Berwick, . . . . .	28	<i>Reserved for Gospel, &amp;c.</i> . . . . .	78
Samuel Frazer, . . . . .	29	do. do. . . . .	79
Hanyere Tewahangarahken, <sup>Capt.</sup> <sub>Indian,</sub> . . . . .	30	To Justus Walker, . . . . .	80
William Popham, aid-de-camp, . . . . .	31	Hanyere Tewahangarahkan, <sup>Capt.</sup> <sub>Indian,</sub> . . . . .	81
Stephen White, . . . . .	32	Capt. Robert Wright, . . . . .	82
John Sagoharase, lieut. Indian, . . . . .	33	Peter Tumand, . . . . .	83
Lewis Atayataghronghta, <sup>Lt. Colonel,</sup> <sub>Indian,</sub> . . . . .	34	George Smith, lieutenant, . . . . .	84
Richard Livingston, lieut. col. . . . .	35	Richard Livingston, lieut. col. . . . .	85
do. do. . . . .	36	Capt. Anthony Whelp, . . . . .	86
Gilchrist, John, . . . . .	37	Duncan Campbell, . . . . .	87
Edward Tobin, . . . . .	38	Jonathan Halleck, . . . . .	88
Henry Watterman, . . . . .	39	Robert Welding, . . . . .	89
Angus M'Lean, . . . . .	40	Walter Switz, lieutenant, . . . . .	90
Daniel Davis, . . . . .	41	Capt. Robert Wright, . . . . .	91
Cornelius Kahektotow, lieut. Ind. . . . .	42	Jesse Wood, . . . . .	92
James Letteis, . . . . .	43	John Sagoharase, lieut. Indian, . . . . .	93
Decker, John, . . . . .	44	Jeremiah Devoe, . . . . .	94
Richard Livingston, lieut. col. . . . .	45	David Condon, . . . . .	95
Capt. David Van Ness, . . . . .	46	John Wiltsie, . . . . .	96
Jonathan Lawrence Jun. lieut. . . . .	47	Capt. Michael Dunning, . . . . .	97
Justus Miller, . . . . .	48	Lewis Atayataghronghta, <sup>Lt. Colonel,</sup> <sub>Indian,</sub> . . . . .	98
Henry Sampson, . . . . .	49	George Smith, lieutenant, . . . . .	99
William Hotchkiss, . . . . .	50	Patterson, James, . . . . .	100

**Figure 14: Native American Bounty Recipients in the Township of Junius. The Balloting Book, and Other Documents, Relating to Military Bounty Lands, in the State of New-York. (Albany: Packard & VanBenthuyssen, 1825) 140. Reprinted by W.E. Morrison & Co., 1983.**

In the years following the mission to survey the New Military Tract and the balloting of bounty lands, Major Fogg's vision of a wilderness tamed and improved by the introduction of "twenty elegant townships" became reality. Thousands of settlers flooded into the "newly found" lands in the western frontier of upstate New York. The townships were christened with classical appellations, but white settlers also absorbed numerous Iroquois names into their vernacular to define important landmarks. While in this sense the upstate landscape was an accumulation of the past, the actual history of the Iroquois people was mostly cast aside and ignored by the new possessors of the land. For these European settlers, their version of history began when they arrived to claim and improve the wilderness of the frontier. Many of these "frontiersmen" would plod the same trails, plant the same fields, and tend the same trees as the Iroquois had before them. What the settlers encountered were not pristine lands, but a disturbed environment that had been transformed by the Iroquois to meet their needs.

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the dispossession of the Iroquois people was complete after they relinquished claim to the vast majority of their ancestral lands for a trivial amount of coin and promises. The few Iroquois who remained in the region were corralled onto reservations, and lived out of sight and mind of the new possessors of the landscape. As settlers in the region cleared forests for farm land and constructed new markets and communities, over the following century, a twinge of romanticism for Native Americans worked its way into the American consciousness. In the minds of some, the image of the Indians as barbarians was replaced with that of the noble savage. During the

summer of 1879, these two competing images came to a head during the series of centennial celebrations held in honor of the Sullivan Campaign.

The main events for the Sullivan centennial were held in Elmira, New York (near the Newtown Battlefield), and local festivities occurred throughout the upstate region, including Seneca County. Crowds were entertained by visiting dignitaries, brass bands and fireworks displays. More than 50,000 citizens attended the celebrations and the centennial drew national attention. While the proceedings were intended to commemorate Sullivan's "victory" over the Iroquois, they were also an opportunity to proclaim man's dominion over the former wilderness of the frontier and to celebrate the growing prosperity of America.

Prominent attendees included Governor Lucius Robinson of the state of New York, Governor Henry Hoyt of Pennsylvania, and Governor Natt Head of New Hampshire. The centennial celebrations were so popular that the New York Assembly directed Frederick Cook, the New York Secretary of State, to collect and publish in a volume of primary sources and memoirs by soldiers who participated in the Sullivan Campaign. The volume also contains details of the records and proceedings of the centennial celebrations.<sup>55</sup>

The celebration served as a potent form of public memory to valorize the events of 1779. In a summary recounting the unveiling of a marble tablet at the Newton Battlefield, on August 29, 1879, the author observed:

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<sup>55</sup> Frederick Cook, ed. Journals of the Military Expedition of Major General John Sullivan against the Six Nations of the Indians in 1779, with records of Centennial Celebrations (Auburn: Knapp, Peck & Thomson, 1887). A signed first edition of this book is part of the NCSU library collection at D. H. Hill. The copy is in poor condition, but still has the original maps tucked inside the front cover. On a preface page is inscribed, "I take great pleasure in presenting you, my name sake, a copy of this valuable work. I feel when you reach mature age you will appreciate it highly." The inscription is signed by none other than Frederick Cook.

It is permitted to a few only, to be actors in great events shaping the destinies of a people; but one of the strong incentives to heroic action in behalf of the welfare of a nation in time of peril, is the consciousness that such action will not be unrecognized or forgotten by subsequent generations, which will be charged with the obligation and duty of perpetuating knowledge of the noble patriots of their country and deeds.<sup>56</sup>

Organizers and attendees chose to remember the Sullivan Campaign as a heroic struggle against the violent predations of the Iroquois, and not as Graymont later described as a “war against vegetables.” What these events perpetuated was the mythology of Sullivan and his soldiers.

The highlight of the centennial celebration was a keynote address to be delivered by a distinguished speaker. The event organizers searched far and wide for an individual to serve in this capacity. They needed someone who was no stranger to war. They needed someone who also participated in and was a vocal proponent of our nation’s indomitable campaign to dispossess Native Americans. There was only one individual who fit the bill: General William Tecumseh Sherman, Commanding General of the US Army, former Union hero and architect of the infamous March to the Sea, and leading strategist and proponent of the Indian Wars of the West. During his address to the adoring Elmira crowd, Sherman vociferously defended Sullivan (and his own conduct during the Civil War):

I know it is a very common practice, to accuse General Sullivan of having destroyed peach trees and cornfields, and all that nonsense. He had to do it, and he did do it. Why does the Almighty strike down the tree with lightning? Why does He bring the thunder storm? To purify the air, so that the summer time may come, and the harvest and the fruits. And so with war. When all things ought to be peaceful, war comes and purifies the

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 393-394.

atmosphere. So it was with our Civil War; that purified the atmosphere; we are better for it; you are better for it; we are all better for it.

“Whenever men raise up their hands,” Sherman concluded, “to oppose this great advancing tide of civilization, they must be swept aside, peaceably if possible, forcibly if we must.”<sup>57</sup>

In Sherman’s view, the Iroquois and the rebels of the Confederate Army shared and deserved their similar fates. To Sherman, the Sullivan Campaign was not just a conflict for land, but a war against barbarians. The victors continued on the inevitable march of progress and prosperity, and also earned the right to frame history. To the Iroquois, the war was, indeed, hell. In the record of the keynote speech, the editor noted that Sherman’s address was frequently interrupted with rounds of “Applause.”

In the Seneca County village of Waterloo (named in honor of Wellington’s defeat of Napoleon), the opening commemoration events were just as celebratory, but they concluded with an undercurrent of regret. During his address of welcome to an estimated crowd of 10,000 to 20,000 people, John Reamer, the President of the village of Waterloo, declared:

We have met to celebrate an event, which happened one hundred years ago. It was an event, which opened to the feet of the white man, the dark and dangerous pathways of the forest. The result has been to displace the wilderness, and place in its stead, the beautiful surroundings that we see today.<sup>58</sup>

Reamer’s speech, like Sherman’s, celebrated prosperity and civilization. In Reamer’s description of local history, the wilderness and the Iroquois were forces of chaos overcome by the settlers in order to mould the landscape into an environment that fit their vision of

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<sup>57</sup> Cook, “General Sherman’s Address,” 439-440.

<sup>58</sup> Cook, “John Reamer’s Address of Welcome,” 498-499.

the future. While acknowledging that blood had been spilled, and portions of the rich land razed during the conflict, Reamer was unapologetic: the history of Seneca County was a story of progress.

In a poem read by Rev. Dwight Williams, entitled “Sullivan Centennial,” history was revised to portray the Indians, not as victims, but as the violent instigators. In the fourth stanza of his poem, Williams declared:

A hundred golden-hued Septembers  
Have blessed the weary hands of toil,  
Since in the heat of smoking embers  
A victor trod his path of spoil;  
Not for love of war he went  
With sword and torch, and armament,  
But wild, the Iroquois had lighted  
A thousand fires of hate and scorn<sup>59</sup>

In this remembrance of the Sullivan Campaign, the Seneca and Cayuga brought the destruction of their civilization and lands upon themselves. While it is a fact that the Iroquois and British forces raided colonial settlements, there was no recognition by Reverend Williams that these lands were the ancestral home of the Iroquois. Similar to Reverend Evans’ 1779 speech of divine conquest, and its themes of manifest destiny, Williams believed that the early settlers had a “right” to possess the land. He was adamant in his defense of the changes in the people and landscape of Seneca County.

In contrast to the patriotic rhetoric of President Reamer’s opening remarks and the poem by Reverend Williams, the Waterloo celebrations concluded on a more contemplative note. The Waterloo Library and Historical Society dedicated a stone marker

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<sup>59</sup> Cook, “Seneca County (Waterloo), The Centennial Celebration of General Sullivan’s Campaign Against the Iroquois, in 1779,” 507.

to the Sullivan Campaign, which remarkably captured the contested terrain of the landscape (Figures 15-17). On the north side of the stone, a bronze plaque recognized the date of Sullivan's destruction of the Seneca village of Skoi-Yase (rapid water). Waterloo was founded on Skoi-Yase's charred remains. On the south side of the memorial, a simple inscription carved into the stone of the monument read:

Skoi-Yase,  
He-o-weh-gno-gek

The Indian dialect translates as:

rapid water,  
Once a home, now a memory<sup>60</sup>



**Figure 15: Sullivan Monument, Lafayette Park, Waterloo, NY. Photographs by Bruno family.**

The members of the Historical Society recognized that in the process of creating a new home for white settlers in the former frontier of upstate New York, the Iroquois were

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 521-522.

dispossessed of their lands, community and history. But the extensive records of the centennial events do not contain a single reference of any member of the Six Nations being invited to bear witness. The dedication organizers safely offered regrets and nostalgic sentiments in stone, but not in person. Even though, in 1879, a small number of these Native Americans continued to eke out an existence on the fringes of Seneca County, they were treated as a vanished race – “now a memory.”

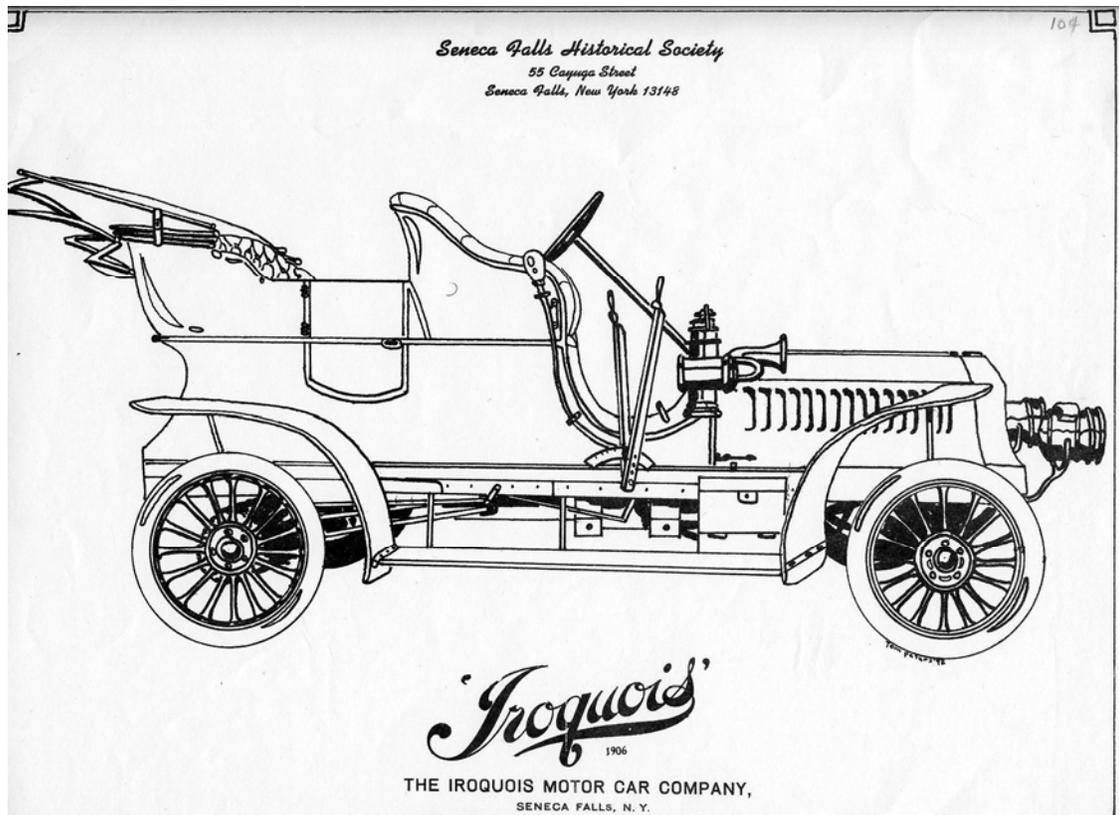


**Figure 16: Sullivan Monument – North Side.**



**Figure 17: Sullivan Monument – South Side. Skoi-Yase, He-o-weh-gno-gek.**

By the early 1900s, not only had the history of the Seneca and Cayuga people been forgotten by many in the local community, but the Iroquois name was appropriated by a local company in order to market the latest in automobile technology (Figure 18). What images or qualities did the Iroquois name conjure in the consumer’s mind? Was the marketing campaign an overt attempt to tame and own the past, or simply a ploy to use an “exotic” name to sell a product?



**Figure 18: The Iroquois Car Company. Seneca Falls Historical Society.**

In 1929, New York and Pennsylvania celebrated the sesquicentennial of the Sullivan Campaign. Pageants and parades were held in the upstate area, and many smaller observances occurred in local communities. As in 1879, the state of New York published a volume detailing the history of the expedition that also included pictures, a bibliography on the Sullivan Campaign and previously unpublished soldier journals. In the introduction to the book, State Historian A.C. Flick noted that New York had voted \$70,000 for the celebration.<sup>61</sup> Along with the official observances, the federal government issued a special postage stamp honoring Major-General John Sullivan. Given that Sullivan was forced to

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<sup>61</sup> A.C. Flick, ed., The Sullivan-Clinton Campaign in 1779: Chronology and Selected Documents (Albany: The State University of New York, 1929) 16.

retire after the campaign, this is another example of how public memory often ignores historical fact. A portion of the state proceeds were used to purchase 35 stone tablets that were placed along the routes of march for the expedition.<sup>62</sup> Many of these still remain, including one near the town of Willard in Seneca County. Someone anonymously expressed his or her views on the campaign by marking this bronze plaque with a “bloody” hand print (Figure 19).



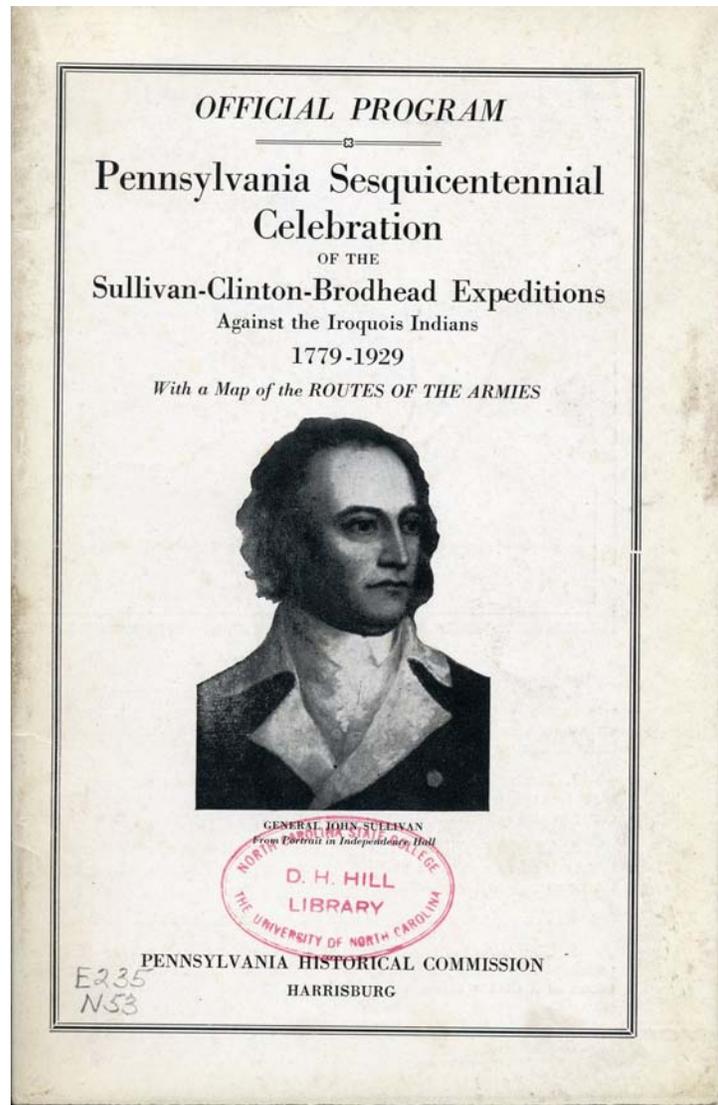
**Figure 19: Sullivan Campaign Marker, near Willard, NY. Photo by author.**

The NCSU library does not have a copy of the 1929 sesquicentennial volume, but tucked inside the back cover of Cook’s 1879 centennial book is an official program for the 1929 Pennsylvania Sesquicentennial Celebration (Figure 20). Whoever owned the book

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 32.

after Frederick Cook must have had an interest in the history of the Sullivan Campaign, and collected these two examples of public memory and history.<sup>63</sup>



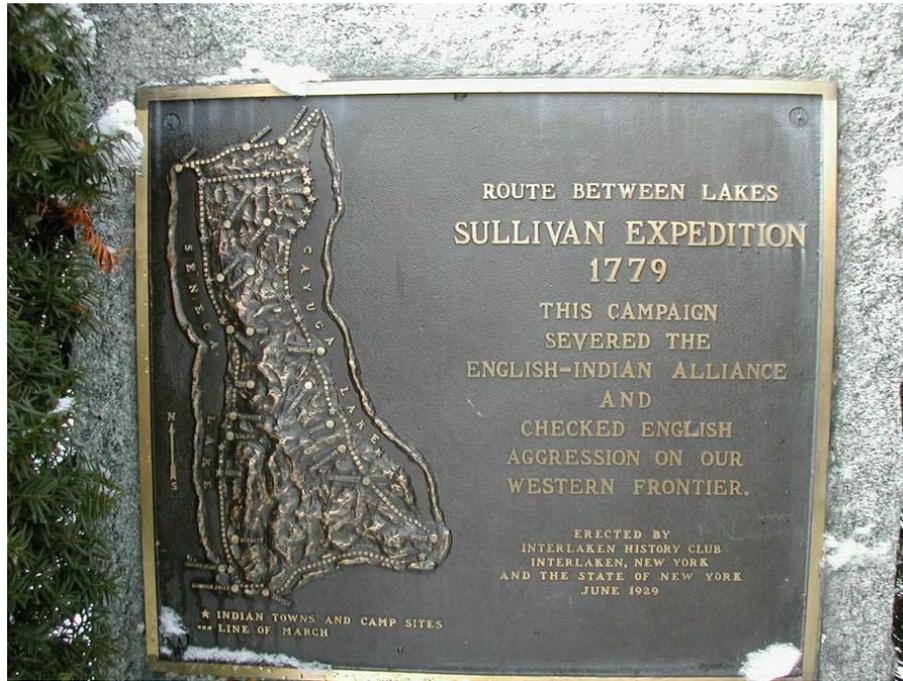
**Figure 20: Official Program from the Pennsylvania Celebrations.**

The book celebrating the sesquicentennial of 1929 was edited by A.C. Flick, New York State Historian and chairman of the celebration committee. Flick also actively

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<sup>63</sup> Unfortunately, the NCSU library does not have any records detailing how the 1879 Sullivan Centennial book by Frederick Cook or this 1929 program came to be part its holdings.

participated in local observances, and attended the dedication of a Sullivan Campaign monument in the town of Interlaken in Seneca County on September 19, 1929 (Figure 21). Besides Flick, twenty-two state and local officials participated in the ceremony, including Congressman John Taber.<sup>64</sup>



**Figure 21: Sullivan Campaign Marker in Interlaken, NY. Photo by author.**

The wording used on both the Willard and Interlaken markers share common themes, which influence public memory of the campaign. Both characterize the expedition as a punitive action against British and Indian aggression, with the colonists being the victims. Further, the markers each stake New York's claim to the western frontier, without acknowledging the ancestral homelands of the Iroquois. At the time of the conflict, the

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<sup>64</sup> Maurice L. Patterson, ed. Between the Lakes: The Settlement and Growth of South Seneca County, Town of Colvert, the Village of Interlaken (Interlaken: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1976) 16.

expanse of the Iroquois lands were still defined by the 1768 Treaty of Stanwix, which identified Pennsylvania as the southern border for the Iroquois, and Fort Stanwix, near the modern day city of Rome, New York, as the eastern line (Figure 4). The description on the Willard marker also celebrates the Sullivan Campaign's role in "extending westward the dominion of the United States." By glorifying the punitive and manifest destiny aspects of the expedition, neither state marker acknowledges the dispossession of the Iroquois and is evidence of silence in local history and public memory.

The 1929 observances were the last state-wide celebration of the Sullivan Campaign, and remembrance of the expedition coalesced into a mixture of history and folklore. For many local residents, the Sullivan Campaign became an obscure conflict from long ago that had little influence on current times. But Seneca County's story of conflict and dispossession was far from over. The sense of loss and pain experienced by the Seneca and Cayuga people in the 18<sup>th</sup> century would resurface nearly 200 hundred years later. Seneca County, a land created by war, would again be transformed by military conflict. Except, this time, the tables were turned as the descendants of white settlers dealt with the dispossession of their lands by a large and powerful external party.

## Chapter Three:

### The Dispossession of 1941 and the Seneca Army Depot

In the summer of 1941, after months of rumors and speculation, the U.S. War Department announced a \$10 million project to construct the Seneca Army Depot on a 12,000 acre tract of grass and farm land within the townships of Romulus and Varick.<sup>65</sup> Plans for the extensive munitions storage facility included: warehouses, a testing range, a small airport, disposal containment areas and more than 500 hundred concrete bunkers. To make way for the Depot, the federal government forced more than 150 families from their homes and farms. Much of this landscape had been worked by the same families for generations, including the local community of Kendaia (Appletown), which Euro-American settlers had claimed for their own following the ravages of the Sullivan Campaign and dispossession of the Iroquois. However, while the Iroquois lost their lands to the predations of an invading civilization, the Kendaia farmers of 1941 were removed from the landscape by an army of fellow citizens.

Beyond the loss of land was the loss of individual and community identity as cultural landmarks and significant repositories of memory were destroyed, or hidden beyond the base's impenetrable twenty-four mile perimeter fence. The military claimed homes, farms, churches, grange halls and even local cemeteries – all components of a once vibrant community. Similar to the development of military facilities in the American

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<sup>65</sup> “Seneca County Picked as Site for Munitions Depot,” Geneva Daily Times June 9, 1941; “Details of Purchase Explained at Romulus Meeting,” Geneva Daily Times June 11, 1941.

West, the federal government seized Seneca County land in the name of national defense and sacrifice. The construction and operation of the Depot provided jobs, spurred the local economy, and helped in the development of county infrastructure, but these gains in national and economic security were obtained at a cost.

Prior to naming Seneca County as the base site, the War Department evaluated more than sixty possible locations throughout the nation.<sup>66</sup> Dispossession threatened many families and communities. After extensive due diligence, three recommended locations were forwarded to a special committee of the Army for final consideration - Seneca County was declared the “winner” for a number of key reasons. Two major rail lines bordered the seventeen square mile tract, which enhanced transportation and logistical operations. The lightly populated county provided a remote location, far from any major metropolitan centers, but within range to supply coastal defenses. Seneca County also had an interesting geological feature that captured the attention of the Army. Just a few inches beneath the top soil, a layer of shale covered much of the region. The military valued the shale’s ability to absorb the shock from detonations, which reduced the chances of catastrophic mishap in case a munitions bunker exploded.<sup>67</sup> Compared to other locations on the list, land was cheap in Seneca County - allowing the federal government to reduce project cost. With war looming, the Seneca Army Depot was just one of many new military facilities on the planning docket.

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<sup>66</sup> Geneva Daily Times June 11, 1941.

<sup>67</sup> “Romulus Hears Approval Given Federal Project For Big Munitions Plant,” Geneva Daily Times April 29, 1941; “Colonel Paul B. Parker Addresses Business Men on Munitions Project,” Geneva Daily Times July 1, 1941

But beyond these pragmatic reasons, one was paramount. The people who inhabited the landscape were defined by the federal government as being true patriots. A subtle undercurrent in the assessment of Seneca County's patriotism was that local residents might not like having to leave their lands, but were both unlikely and unable to raise any significant protests. Compared to the potent forces of the federal government, local residents had little agency to act out or voice their displeasure. Not surprisingly, during the dispossession of the Kendaia famers, not a single organized protest, demonstration or picket line was reported by the media. Given the government's campaign for sacrifice and patriotism, anyone who vociferously opposed the dispossession risked having their loyalties questioned. More importantly, the federal government held all the leverage in the "bargaining" process. Local landowners either accepted the compensation offers of agents of the War Department, or had their lands condemned and taken. The federal government came to Seneca County because it could. Payment demanded compliance.

The government's publicity machine was well oiled. On the evening of June 10, 1941, when the base was formally announced to residents crowded into the Romulus school auditorium, L.P. Walker, of the Real Estate Division of the War Department, spoke at length about the need for sacrifice and the willingness of the people of Seneca County to do their part to secure the defenses of a most grateful nation.<sup>68</sup> The following day, editors from the local newspaper promoted the area's spirit of sacrifice and patriotism with a

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<sup>68</sup> Geneva Daily Times June 11, 1941.

cartoon featuring an Uncle Sam figure leading the nation up the daunting but necessary path to victory in war. (Figure 22):



Figure 22: “The Road Ahead.” Geneva Daily Times June 11, 1941.

During an interview later that summer in the Geneva Daily Times, Colonel M. E. McFadden, the Zone Constructing Quartermaster for New York, New Jersey and Delaware, emphasized that in determining the location of the depot an “important point that we considered was the type of person living in this region, for with such an important

depot in their midst it is vital that the Army's neighbors are 100 per cent Americans."<sup>69</sup>

This comment went beyond the typical themes of patriotism and sacrifice. It implied that instead of the Depot being considered a burden, the people of Seneca County should be honored that the War Department considered them worthy of having their land taken in support of such a vital facility.

Beside the assets of the landscape, and the assessment of the area's patriotic values, politics may have played an influential role in locating the Depot in Seneca County. The facility may have been an offering from the White House to gain the support of a powerful local politician. The residents of Seneca County were represented by Congressman John Taber, a Republican from the nearby city of Auburn (Figure 23). First elected to Congress in 1923, Taber held his seat until his retirement in 1962. During this forty year period, local politicians offered little challenge to his status as the incumbent. In the early years of his political career, Taber served as a low ranking member of the House Appropriations Committee, but in 1932 the Roosevelt landslide swept senior Republican members out of office, leaving him as the ranking minority member.<sup>70</sup> Taber twice served as the Appropriations Committee chairman - first during the 80<sup>th</sup> congress in 1947-49, and again for the 83<sup>rd</sup> Congress in 1953-54.

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<sup>69</sup> "Praises Citizens of Finger Lakes for Co-operation," Geneva Daily Times July 31, 1941.

<sup>70</sup> Cary Smith Henderson, "Congressman John Taber of Auburn: Politics and Federal Appropriations, 1923-1962," PhD Dissertation (History) Duke University, 1964, iii. Henderson lived in Auburn, NY during the early 1960s and taught at the community college. When Taber retired in 1962, he granted Henderson access to his congressional papers housed at Cornell University. After Taber's death in 1965, his papers were opened to all researchers. However, Henderson's dissertation is the only historical treatise on Taber and his service on the Appropriations Committee. No books have been published on Congressman Taber.

During the Roosevelt presidency, Taber was a staunch opponent of New Deal programs and was often critical of the president's budget requests to expand the United States military and engage in Lend-Lease programs with overseas allies. He was adamantly opposed to the growth of presidential executive power, the expansion of federal programs and America's involvement in global affairs. Taber's friends referred to him as the "Watchdog of the Treasury," but political adversaries had a more colorful list of nicknames, including: "Meat-Axe John," "Cash and Carry," "Fiscal Vigilante," and sarcastically, "Generous John."<sup>71</sup> His zealous commitment to trim the Federal budget was known inside the Beltway as "Taberizing," and his senior ranking on the House Appropriations Committee made him one of the most influential and powerful men in Washington.

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<sup>71</sup> "Ex-Rep. John Taber Dies at 85; 'Fiscal Vigilante' Led Committee," New York Times November 23, 1965.



**Figure 23: John Taber. Library of Congress, New York World-Telegram & Sun Collection, 1946.**

In January of 1941, President Roosevelt presented Congress with a budget request of more than \$17 billion dollars, of which nearly \$11 billion was marked for defense, including substantial funding for the Lend-Lease program.<sup>72</sup> Taber, like many of his Republican colleagues, opposed the president's request and decried Roosevelt's thinly veiled efforts to bring America into the war. But during the spring of 1941, when the War Department was evaluating sites for a new munitions depot, Congressman Taber changed his position. Instead of vociferously opposing the Lend-Lease appropriations bill, Taber, to the amazement of his political allies, threw his support behind Roosevelt's request.

Time Magazine wrote that Republican Congressmen burst out of a party caucus as if they

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<sup>72</sup> For more on the Lend-Lease Act see Edward Stettinius, Lend-Lease, Weapon for Victory (New York: Macmillan, 1944); Walter Kimball, The Most Unsordid Act; Lend -Lease, 1939-1941 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969).

had seen a ghost, and blurted to reporters: “My god! John Taber’s in there making a speech for Roosevelt.”<sup>73</sup> A few months later, the War Department named Seneca County as the location for the new depot. Was this a coincidence?

In conducting his detailed analysis of Taber’s career on the Appropriations Committee, historian Cary Smith Henderson had access to the congressman’s personal papers, but Henderson makes no connection between Taber’s political turnabout and the location of the depot. In fact, Henderson does not mention the Seneca Army Depot at all. The \$10 million project was, at the time, the largest federal initiative in the history of Seneca County. Why the silence in the record?

Perhaps whatever deal Taber struck with the Roosevelt administration was “off the books.” However, Henderson lived in Auburn for three years while working on his dissertation, and certainly would have been aware of the Depot and its importance to the area. It seems unlikely that Henderson would not have inquired into Taber’s role with the base. One possible answer is that Congressman Taber quietly facilitated the location of the base and the federal government’s arrival to Seneca County, but chose to keep his level of agency in the decision making process hidden from both public and political scrutiny. As a publicly elected official, he certainly did not wish to have his name associated with the dispossession of more than 150 families from his home district. The Depot was a boost to the county, but it was borne on the backs of the local Kendaia landowners. Given that Congressman Taber served in Congress for another twenty years after the dispossession,

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<sup>73</sup> “Change of Mind,” Time Magazine March 31, 1941.

whatever his involvement was with the Seneca Army Depot had little impact in the voting booth.

In the summer of 1941, Americans were divided over Roosevelt's preparations for war.<sup>74</sup> Despite the federal government's appeal for sacrifice and patriotism, the dispossession in Seneca County was opposed by some members of the greater upstate community. While the local county newspaper, the Geneva Daily Times, touted the government line, dailies from Syracuse and Buffalo were more critical of the military's intrusion into local lands.

Just days after the War Department's June 11 announcement, a front page article in the Syracuse Post-Standard lamented the predation of the federal government and the irrevocable transformation of the Seneca County people and landscape:

The federal government, about July 1, will begin preparing the fruitful flatlands between Seneca and Cayuga lakes to receive a new crop – the sterile seeds of war.

Where for more than 150 years these tilled acres have yielded an abundance of nodding timothy, purpled grapes and blushing clover for man and his silent servants, by fall will be buried the food of battle – bullets, bombs, shells.<sup>75</sup>

More troubling to the reporter than the loss of the bountiful land was the destruction of an entire community that had developed over generations:

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<sup>74</sup> For more on the debate over war preparations see James Schneider, Should America Go to War?: The Debate over Foreign Policy in Chicago, 1939-1941 (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1989); Justus Doenecke, Storm on the Horizon: The Challenge to American Intervention, 1939-1941 (Lanham: Rowan and Littlefield, 2000); Charles Beard, President Roosevelt and the coming of the war, 1941 : a study in appearances and realities (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1948); Manfred Jonas, Isolationism in America, 1935-1941 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966).

<sup>75</sup> "Federal Munitions Depot Will Occupy 18 Square Miles South of Seneca Falls," The Post-Standard June 15, 1941 1.

They call this thing an ammunition depot, a giant who will pounce on 18 square miles of the historic townships of Romulus and Varick, in the heart of Seneca county, strip them of their prosperous farms, historic churches and grange halls, and sow them with powder and shot.<sup>76</sup>

The early settlers had defeated the Indians and tamed the wilderness, but a new enemy stalked the land - a “giant” that could not be dissuaded or reasoned with – the federal government. “There is something deeper,” the article continued, “that hurts more than the ordeal of moving. That is the severing of bonds that have tied these farmers to their land for scores of years.”<sup>77</sup> The bonds of community shared by neighbors, friends and family were also severed in the taking.

As agents of the War Department urged residents to quickly prepare their deeds and land titles for immediate review, the community took a moment to remember how the territory had been won. An article in the July 17 Geneva Daily Times noted that land which a grateful nation had granted to the soldiers of Sullivan’s Campaign of 1779 was reverting back to the nation again as the government prepared for war. “Grants of land to Sullivan’s soldiers are still being held by the same families in some instances, and in others, ‘newcomers’ point to 150 years and more of continuous residence of their families on the same soil.”<sup>78</sup> County clerks assisting residents with title searches often had to reconstruct records of property ownership starting with the results of the Military Tract balloting process in the 1790s.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> “Many Families Have Been Rooted in Area For Over 150 Years,” Geneva Daily Times July 17, 1941

<sup>79</sup> “County Offices Busy As Clerks Aid in Search of Records for Land Transfer,” Geneva Daily Times July 11, 1941.

For federal officials, with war raging in Europe and tensions between the United States, Germany and Japan reaching a critical point, time was of the essence in the construction of the Depot. The day after the project's announcement, the Real Estate Division of the War Department initiated paperwork for those targeted for eviction. Between June 12 and July 26, the bureaucrats signed and executed options on 11,000 acres, with August 1 as the deadline for the complete removal of all people, possessions and belongings.<sup>80</sup> A July 18 editorial in the Waterloo Observer stated that the Depot project "is beginning to change lives, the thoughts, and the plans of hundreds of people in this vicinity. Such speed of operation has not been witnessed here before." "The question of whether or not it is what 'we want' is unimportant."<sup>81</sup> The base was coming, and the only issue that remained for those families affected was the speed with which they could abandon their homes and farms.

On July 22, 1941, the first of the farm families began the exodus from their lands, and a government contractor hired thirty security guards to protect the area. Besides discouraging looters, the guards ensured that residents left according to the military timetable.<sup>82</sup> A timetable that was initially measured in months soon narrowed to weeks – and eventually days. Mr. and Mrs. John B. Lisk received only three day's notice to leave the farm they had worked for 35 years. Their home was more than 100 years old. The Lisks were disappointed, but resigned to the move. Mrs. Lisk stated, "I'd rather give my farm to the government now to make America strong than to see another woman give her

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<sup>80</sup> "Building the Seneca Army Depot," (Archival document compiled by Walter Gable, Seneca County Historian) 1.

<sup>81</sup> Waterloo Observer July 18, 1941.

<sup>82</sup> "Exodus of Farm Families From Kendaia Area Begins," Geneva Daily Times July 22, 1941.

son's life to the defense of the country when we didn't prepare."<sup>83</sup> While the Lisks were described as "all-American," others were less accepting of the government's actions and still remember the events in vivid detail.

As a young boy, Bob Sorenson watched as the military removed his grandmother from her land. Decades after the traumatic events he recalled:

My grandmother had to leave her home, she wasn't too happy about it. There were cases where adult children had to come in and talk their parents out of their homes and off their land. Then the Army came in. They ran a steel cable through each house, fastened a steel train rail to one end of it, and hooked the other end to a bulldozer. They ripped the steel rail sideways through the house, which leveled it. Then they burned it. They wouldn't burn a standing house.

Sorenson concluded, "There were a lot of unhappy people around here."<sup>84</sup>

Similar stories were shared by four surviving members of the Kendaia community who graciously granted my request for an interview. Phyllis Button was eight years old when the government came to Seneca County. Both her parents and grandparents lost farmland that had been in the family since the late 1800s. Her father built their home in 1932 with his own skill and labor. After the Depot announcement, the house was sold at auction for \$75 and moved to Romulus. Her grandparent's home was a stately manor, and an individual from Ithaca wanted to purchase the ornate columns and the interior staircase. The Army denied the sale stating the home would be used as an office building. Days later, the ground rumbled as bulldozers approached the property. Mrs. Button said, "My family watched in shock as my grandparent's home was completely destroyed."<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> "3-Day Notice to Quit Farm Fails to Dampen Patriotism," Post-Standard July 26, 1941.

<sup>84</sup> "Debating the Future of the Depot's Deer," Ithaca Times May 2, 2007.

<sup>85</sup> Phyllis Button, interview by the author, Rushville, NY, March 4, 2008.

Kenneth Dean recounted that his father had just agreed to a sharecropping arrangement with a local farmer, and the Dean family was moving to their tenant farm when the base was announced. He was 11 years old at the time. The Dean family planned to raise corn, hay, wheat and beans on a 100 acre parcel of land. The Army allowed the Deans to gather their belongings. When they arrived at the farm, they found that government workers had shattered the front door and searched the house. Bulldozers were crisscrossing the fields, tearing up crops and outbuildings. Workers had even driven over and destroyed the family's horse-drawn hay rake. Days later, the house was flattened and the debris set on fire. Smoke drifted throughout the area. "There was no talk of patriotism or sacrifice," Mr. Dean stated, "just disbelief and disappointment. When the rumor first started to spread that the government might come in, few people thought it would ever happen."<sup>86</sup>

Aletha Hicks was a young woman when the Army came for her family's land. "We had a small farm of 60 acres," Mrs. Hicks recalled, "and my dad was wiring the barn for electricity in order to put in a dairy herd." The Hicks family had lived on the property since 1915, and her parents had planned to remain on their modest farm for the rest of their lives. Did her family believe that leaving their land was a necessary sacrifice or part of their patriotic duty? "There was no sense of patriotism; moving was just something we were forced to do by the government," said Mrs. Hicks. With the closure of the base, I asked Mrs. Hicks if she had been back to see her family's land - she had not returned. "A

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<sup>86</sup> Kenneth Dean, interview by the author, Seneca Falls, NY, March 4, 2008.

friend was going to take me, but she passed away. I still think of that place as home.”

Mrs. Hicks is 95 years old.<sup>87</sup>

Ed Montford was recently married and working the family farm in the summer of 1941. The land had been in his family’s name since 1909. Mr. Montford described the farm as “120 acres of good tile-drained land, with nice buildings.” The story being told in the local newsprint was far different than what he and his wife experienced. “Government agents had no compassion,” Mr. Montford stated, “and told me to accept the cut-rate offer of \$7300 or they would simply condemn the land and take it. The farm was worth at least \$15,000, but we ended up selling for \$7500.”<sup>88</sup>

Like other families caught up in the wave of dispossession, Mr. Montford received conflicting messages from the government regarding the eviction date. The first letter he received granted him three weeks to gather his belongings and conclude affairs on the farm. But just days later, he found another letter in his mailbox – this time the government told him he had only three days to leave (Figure 24).

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<sup>87</sup> Aletha Hicks, interview by the author, Waterloo, NY, March 4, 2008.

<sup>88</sup> Ed Montford, interview by the author, Geneva, NY, March 4, 2008.

WAR DEPARTMENT  
CONSTRUCTION DIVISION—QUARTERMASTER CORPS  
OFFICE OF THE ZONE CONSTRUCTING QUARTERMASTER, ZONE II  
120 WALL STREET  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

IN REPLY  
REFER TO:

Waterloo, N. Y.  
July 22, 1941

Charles E. Montford, plot #81  
Varick  
New York

Dear Sir:

Conditions have arisen which make it necessary for construction work to commence within the next few days on the property recently optioned by you to, and accepted by, the United States of America.

Notice is hereby given that possession of your property will be required within three (3) days.

SENECA ORDNANCE DEPOT  
*L. P. Walker*  
*H. J. Ames, Sec'y*  
L. P. Walker  
Project Manager  
Real Estate Acquisition Div.

Receipt of the above notice is hereby acknowledged.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

Figure 24: Letter to Ed Montford from the War Department.

The letter was signed by L.P. Walker of the War Department, the same individual who first announced the base to the residents in the Romulus School auditorium on June 11, 1941.

The Montfords could not move all of their possessions within the 72 hour window, and when they tried to return to their farm for another load, a member of the military police blocked their path. “I gunned the engine,” Mr. Montford recalled, “and threatened to run him over - he finally stepped to the side.” When the Montfords arrived home they found that their antiques, cherished by the family for generations, had been stolen. “Between the work of the looters and the men on the bulldozers, it was chaos,” he said.

After the Depot was decommissioned, Mr. Montford toured the base and was able to visit his family’s land. A lifetime had passed since the events of 1941, but the memories remained vivid. “A lot had changed in sixty some odd years. A small grove of trees covered the ground where our house used to be, and some munitions igloos sat atop the site of the old barn. But in my mind’s eye, I still see home.” Mr. Montford is 93 years old.<sup>89</sup>

The individuals I interviewed often expressed anger and disappointment with how agents of the government and contract workers conducted themselves during the eviction process. The words “heartless,” “cold” and “uncaring” were frequently mentioned. However, in an August 30, 1941 article published in the Geneva Daily Times, depot laborers were extolled for their ingenuity, efficiency and ability to transform the rural landscape. Many of these workers learned their craft constructing the Tri-Borough Bridge, Rockefeller Center and New York City’s extensive subway and tunnel system. They came to Seneca County to apply their skills and energies in the name of national defense. The story lauded the workers as:

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

Men, mentally alert and physically strong, experienced in making nature subservient to men's needs; superintendents and foremen who understand land and water, rock and sand, frost and fire, who have learned by hard knocks how to bend them to their will. They think in terms of cubic yards, tons, cofferdams, caissons, shoring, bulkheads, concrete piles, drainage, and power, the power of machines and the greater power of man's intelligence.

The article continued, "It is all for the defense of a nation whose way of life has brought blessings to its citizens; a way of life held as dear as life itself."<sup>90</sup> In this valorization of the men and machines that altered the landscape, the displaced families are never mentioned. Unlike previous articles in the local newspapers, this particular story ran with the simple byline of "contributed," and was likely written and placed by a public affairs officer from the federal government. To those outside of the local community what transpired in Seneca County may have appeared as another step on the path of progress, but to many of the families that bore the brunt of the Depot, it was a military facility built upon a foundation of loss and destruction.

The extent of the 1941 dispossession is clearly evident in two maps, originally prepared by the Office of the Constructing Quartermaster for the War Department, that provide a stark before and after representation of the landscape. The first map shows the preliminary footprint of the base on the townships of Romulus and Varick, including the community of Kendaia (Figure 25). Interestingly, the War Department maps use the same grid numbers as the original Military Tract survey maps produced in the 1790s, and later traced by Charles Becker in 1901. By comparing Becker's Romulus tracing (Figure 12) and grid numbers with this first map, we can see the significance of the proposed base on

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<sup>90</sup> "The Sudden Development Of Seneca County to a War Defense Project," Geneva Daily Times August 30, 1941.

the region. The 1941 Quartermaster maps also provide the names of the landowners that were targeted for displacement. The second government map depicts the completed Seneca Army Depot, which includes a 24 mile long perimeter fence, buildings, warehouses, and row after row of munitions bunkers (Figure 26).

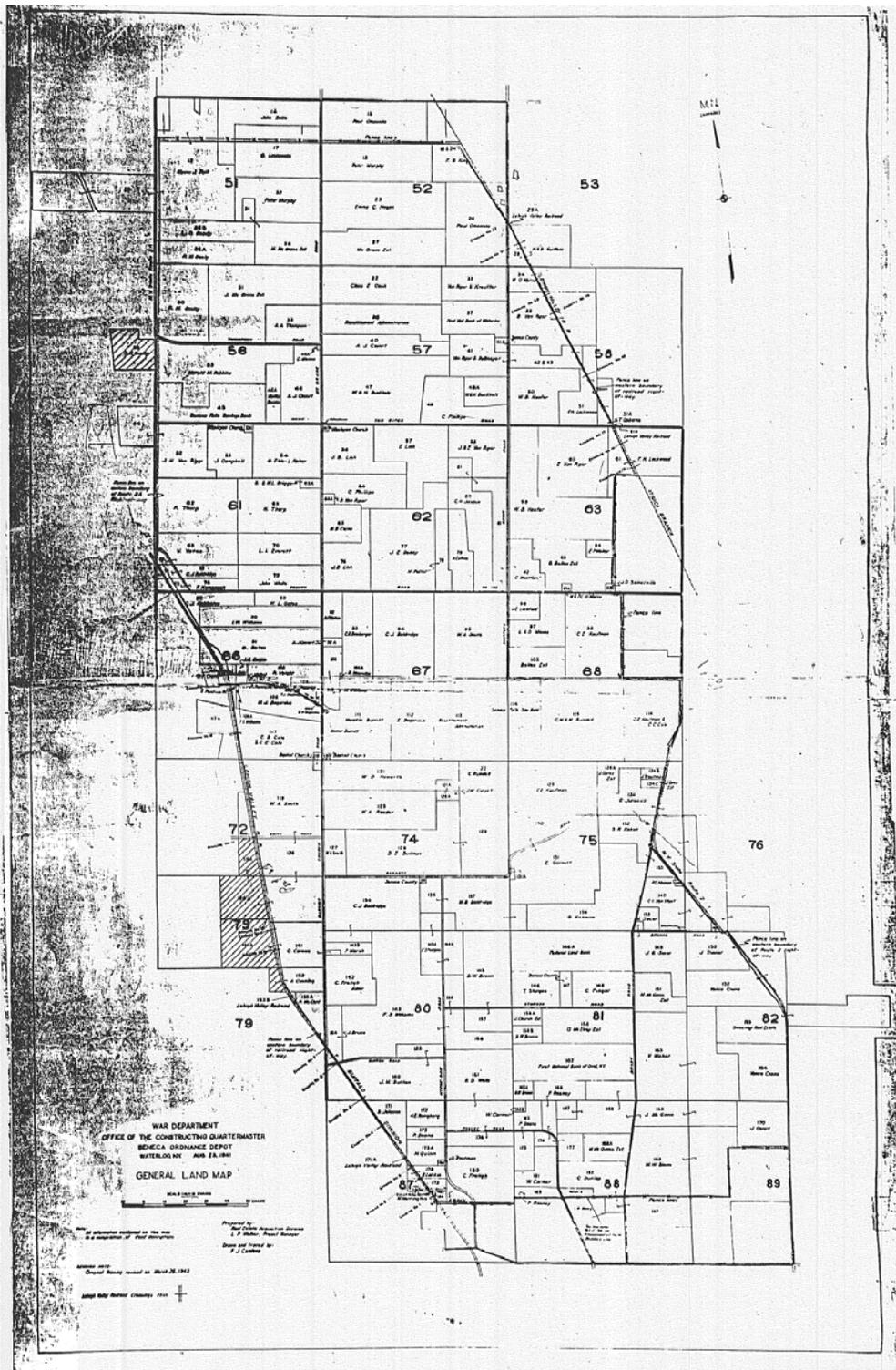


Figure 25: Map of Townships of Romulus and Varick prior to the Seneca Army Depot.

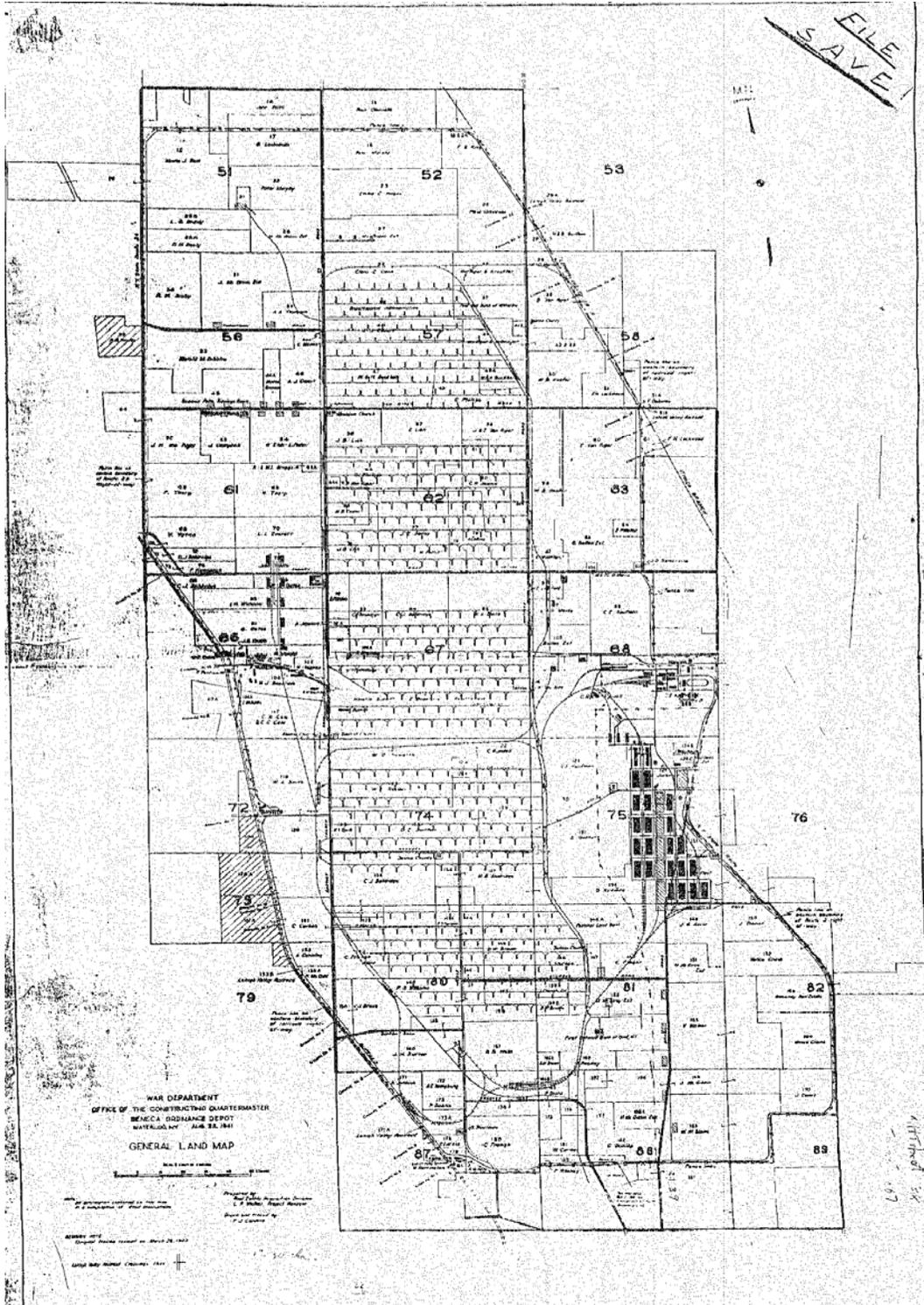


Figure 26: Map of Townships of Romulus and Varick after the Seneca Army Depot.

As government workers used heavy machinery to level homes and other community structures, residents questioned the military's actions. The Buffalo Evening News reported that the War Department had announced buildings were being torn down and burned to prevent enemy aircraft from using the structures to locate the depot. To some people in Seneca County this made little sense. The location of the base was a well known "secret" to the people of upstate New York, and the military had even appointed public information officers to handle the multitude of requests for articles and photographs. Besides, some asked, wouldn't the barren landscape of the vast tract make it easier to detect from the air?<sup>91</sup> The military offered no satisfactory answers to these questions and continued erasing the community of Kendaia from the landscape. The local residents may have been overwhelmed by the power of the federal government, but they did not quietly concede defeat. Speaking for many of her neighbors, Mrs. George Kirkmire angrily declared, "They have treated us rotten. They have treated us like a lot of Okies."<sup>92</sup>

After spending several days touring the area, a reporter from the Buffalo newspaper claimed "you feel the age of this region, settled by Revolutionary soldiers when you visit the Kendaia cemetery and see such inscriptions on the tombstones: Born 1776 – Died 1812."<sup>93</sup> As families fled before the advancing bulldozers, the community became an eerie ghost town. "House after house is vacant and nothing stirs in the barnyards. Bleak, curtainless windows look out at you."<sup>94</sup> The sense of loss was clearly evident during the

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<sup>91</sup> "Seneca County Families Leave Home to Clear Way for Bomb Depot," Buffalo Evening News August 20, 1941.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

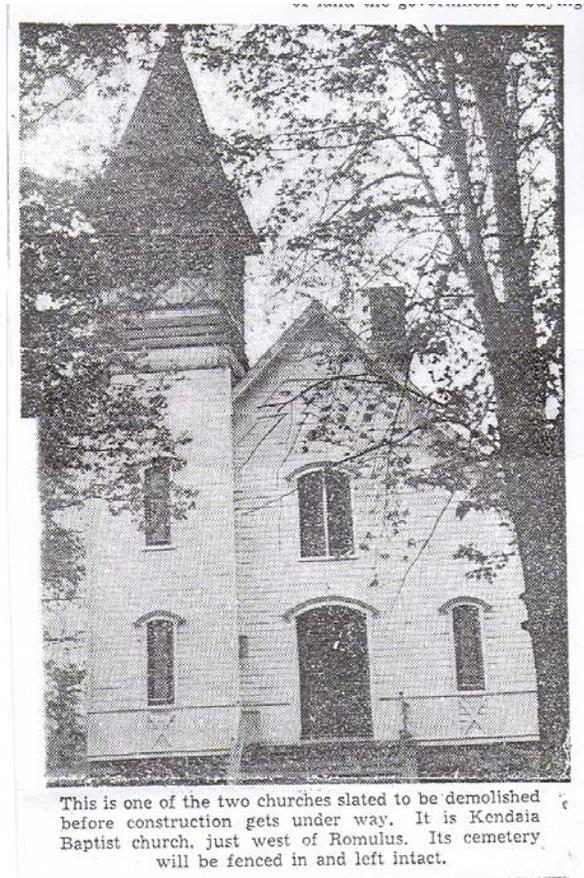
reporter's interview with Charles Dunlap, an 83 year old farmer. Besides the taking of his family's home, Mr. Dunlap was despondent over the loss of trees that held special memories and meaning to him. "I planted that Norway spruce in the lawn when it was a little bit of a thing. The black walnut came up from some nuts dumped on the ground when my girl here was young. It's such things as that get you attached to a place."<sup>95</sup>

Of all the buildings destroyed by the federal government, perhaps the most important to the local residents were the churches, particularly the Kendaia Baptist Church (Figure 27). Established in 1795, the Baptist Church was constructed during the ministry of Reverend John Caton, veteran of the Revolutionary War and friend to General LaFayette.<sup>96</sup> The church was a center of community life for nearly 150 years. For generations, young men and women were married in the gracious chapel, and family and friends laid to rest in the well-maintained cemetery.

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Agnes McGrane, Varick: A History of Varick, Seneca County, New York (Waterloo: K-Mar Press, 1975) 88.



**Figure 27: Kendaia Baptist Church. Courtesy of Walter Gable, Seneca County Historian.**

An overflow crowd of more than one hundred residents attended the final church service, led by Reverend B.A. Wagner on September 7, 1941. The Geneva Daily Times stated, “Outside, in closely parked rows, Model T Fords sat comfortably beside handsome new automobiles. Inside, elderly couples mingled with the youth of the church, the ties of grief binding them together. Handkerchiefs were often in view as memories went back over the past.”<sup>97</sup> While the final services were a time of sadness, the parishioners made a special effort to remember the pioneering spirit of their ancestors, and also acknowledge

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<sup>97</sup> “Concluding Service at Romulus Baptist Church, Soon to Be Demolished,” Geneva Daily Times September 8, 1941.

the sacrifice that family, friends and neighbors were making in the name of national defense. A poem entitled “Patriots of ’41,” especially written for the occasion by local resident Paul Baldrige, was read during the service. The final two stanzas celebrated how the people of Seneca County had endured much while taming the perceived wilderness and transforming it into their vision of a land of plenty:

I give you men of forty-one  
An un compelling kind,  
A proud unyielding race of folk  
With purpose set and mind;  
A pioneering, forward breed  
Inured to loss or gain,  
Too proud to turn from charted course,  
From snow or sun or rain

I give you men of sky and sod,  
Of furrows straight and long,  
Of bulging barns and fatted kine,  
Of thankfulness and song;  
I give you folk of sacrifice  
In name of freedom done  
Whose trek afar an epic makes  
In nineteen forty-one.<sup>98</sup>

The final service allowed the community to commiserate and provided an opportunity for healing, but this special gathering was also an example of agency, albeit limited, on behalf of the local residents. The federal government may have forced these families off their lands, but the people of Kendaia made a determined effort to remember and celebrate their community and history on their own terms.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

In attendance for this final service was the family of Kenneth Dean, the tenant farmers who had planned to make a new life in Kendaia until the base was announced. Included in the Dean family records are remarkable photographs taken from that day:



**Figure 28: Model T Ford and other cars parked outside the Kendaia Church.**



**Figure 29: Residents enter the Kendaia Church as Seneca Depot Police look on.**



**Figure 30: Reverend Wagner preparing for the final service.**

The Dean family records also included several group photos of the men and women from the Kendaia community that attended the service. Kenneth Dean is the young boy in the first row, far right (with hands clasped around his black pant legs). He was 11 years old.



**Figure 31: Kendaia Baptist Church final service.**

Days after the final service, the church was dismantled by government workers and the grounds cleared to make way for the depot. The adjoining Kendaia Cemetery was also claimed by the War Department, but over the years, the military allowed local residents to maintain the cemetery under the watchful gaze of escorts. For only one day of the year, the Sunday of Memorial day weekend, the military opened the Kendaia Cemetery to the public. During the holiday weekend of 2004, sixty-three years after the final service

depicted above, Mr. Dean returned to the former grounds of the Kendaia Baptist Church and Cemetery and took these photographs:



**Figure 32: Mr. Kenneth Dean pointing to where the Kendaia Baptist Church once stood.**



**Figure 23: Kendaia Baptist Church cemetery.**

One of the most compelling stories from the summer of 1941 was the account of what the Geneva Daily Times called “the house that talked.” In mid-September, government workers were busy demolishing an old farmhouse and, as they tore apart the front columns, found a slip of writing paper – considerably yellowed, but still legible. It was a letter dated August 13, 1863, written by Jennie Folwell, one of the young daughters of a former landowner.<sup>99</sup> The letter in the column was meant as a time capsule of sorts. Jennie wrote, “We are putting in some things for the good of future generations, or for strangers, whichever may tear down the old house. I wish to testify that Thomas Folwell lives here and a pleasanter handsomer family is not to be found easily.”<sup>100</sup> Jennie went on to playfully describe the members of her family, including two brothers who were serving in the Union Army. The note concluded:

We are all in the bloom of health and have very happy times together. Were it not for this ‘civil war’ we would all be home together in the ‘old house at home.’ I am wondering who will find this paper. Whoever does must send it to me. Jennie Folwell is my name and will very likely be in all time to come. I am a very good looking girl indeed! I am considered decidedly so. Father is anxious something should be out in the pillar, so here goes.<sup>101</sup>

Despite her fears of never getting married, Jennie later wed Professor Thomas Lounsbury, head of the Yale Scientific School of English. After the Civil War, her brother, Will, went on to become the President of the University of Minnesota.<sup>102</sup> Eighty years after she placed the letter in the column, Jennie’s hopeful missive to the future was answered by bulldozers.

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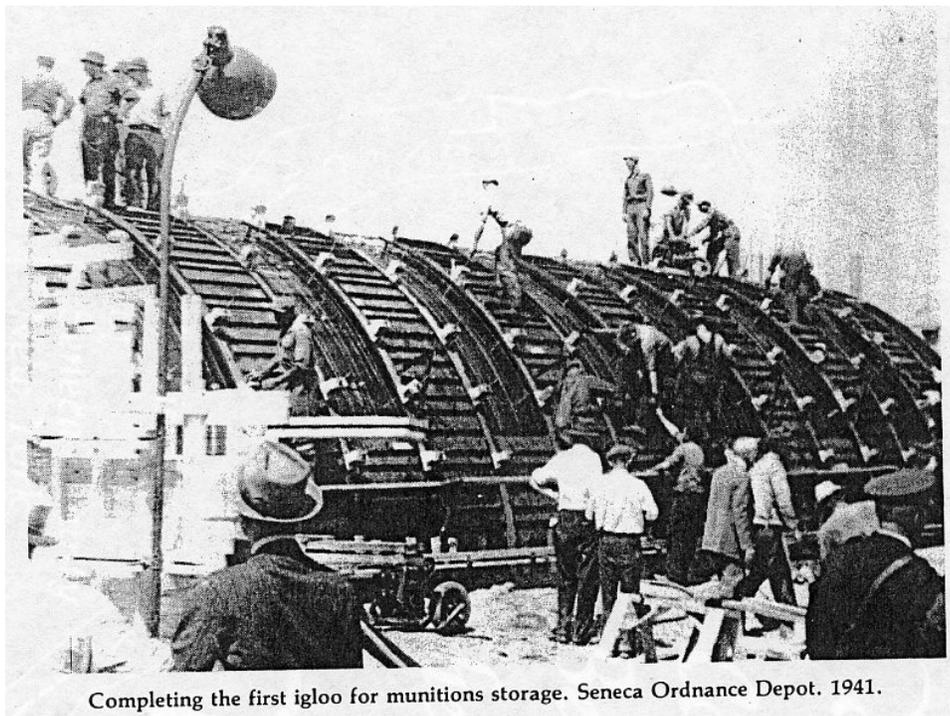
<sup>99</sup> “Letter Inside of Pillar of Old Seneca Co. Home Tells of Affairs in 1863,” Geneva Daily Times September 19, 1941.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

The concrete for the first munitions bunker at the Seneca Army Depot was poured on August 21, 1941 (Figure 34). By the Thanksgiving holiday, the base was 80% complete and the construction quartermaster claimed that two national and world records were set in the process of building the main facilities and 500 concrete bunkers.<sup>103</sup> Less than two weeks later, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, and the United States entered the war. However, for the residents of Kendaia, the first shots of the conflict did not land in the Pacific Ocean, but in the fertile fields of Seneca County.



**Figure 34: Constructing the first munitions bunker. Hilda Watrous, The County Between the Lakes (Waterloo: K-Mar Press, 1983).**

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<sup>103</sup> “Quarter Century - \$47 Million Depot Marking Anniversary,” The Geneva Times August 8, 1966.

Other than the dispossessed, few people within Seneca County publicly questioned what was happening during the expedited construction of the base or expressed concern over the type of munitions and weapons the military planned to store just a few miles from their homes. Influenced by the patriotic fervor of the times, most local residents viewed the Depot as a symbol of security, economic prosperity and American pride. If the violent Colonial era battles for the lands of upstate New York were, in part, a conflict between civilizations, the dispossession of rural families in 1941 represented a more subdued struggle within a society for control, not just of lands, but of a region's future.

Similar to WWII and Cold War era facilities located throughout the "vacant" lands of the American West, the rural New York landscape was a place to conceal things deemed undesirable by more politically influential urban areas.<sup>104</sup> The location of the Depot was also a demonstration to the residents of Seneca County of the federal government's extensive powers. While these rural/urban and local/federal tensions did not overtly surface in the community during the construction and operation of the Depot, it is an example of how local people and lands are shaped by powerful external parties and distant events.

Nearly two centuries of history separated the dispossession of the Iroquois with the removal of the rural families in 1941. For both peoples that once called Kendaia home there were similar stories of loss. But there are also marked differences in the dispossessions. Although many claimed they had not received fair market value from the

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<sup>104</sup> For more on the placement of military facilities see Rebecca Solnit, *Savage Dreams: A Journey into the Landscape Wars of the American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Bruce Hevly and John Findlay, eds., *The Atomic West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998).

government, the farm families did get a measure of compensation for their lands.

Accounts from local newspapers indicate that many of these families resettled in the county or other areas of the upstate region. Their forced removal was traumatic, but no blood was spilled. In addition, the farm families could obtain some measure of peace by choosing to remember the taking of their lands as a sacrifice for the nation – a patriotic duty. The Seneca and Cayuga people of the Six Nations were not as fortunate.

As a consequence of Sullivan's scorched earth campaign, the Iroquois population was decimated, and the survivors fled deeper into the western frontier in an attempt to establish a degree of stability and security in their lives. The resulting turmoil from the expedition of 1779 would eventually claim the heart of the Iroquois Nation, as Euro-Americans conquered the lands using the sword, musket, treaty and plow. The landscapes of Kendaia and the Seneca Army Depot are, indeed, the stories of two dispossessions, but they are magnitudes apart.

Although the Iroquois and the farmers once possessed the same landscape, they inhabited different histories. If, as D.W. Meinig claimed, the landscape is an accumulation of the past, then Iroquois history formed a sedimentary layer that often remained hidden or ignored. In a sense, for the white settlers that possessed the land after the Revolutionary War, the Iroquois were considered to be outside of history. Settler history began when they arrived to inhabit the Military Tract; whatever transpired before was of little importance. As the current residents of the landscape debate the future of the Depot lands, the stories of dispossession of the Kendaia community in 1941 also remain largely unspoken and unrecalled. Unlike the trail of historical markers that commemorate the

1779 Sullivan Campaign, there is not a single monument in Seneca County to remember the people and landscape of 1941.

Today, only a few members of the more than 150 farm families remain to remind us of what was lost. Individuals like Phyllis Button, Kenneth Dean, Aletha Hicks and Ed Montford accept that their Kendaia farms, homes and community will not return. Though dispossessed of their lands, they still possess the vivid memories of the people and landscape of Kendaia. In their own modest way, they are keeping history and the past alive. The present debate over the Depot lands provides those whose voices were muted in the past with an opportunity for a new forum, and they should be encouraged to speak and help us all remember.

## Epilogue:

### White Deer and the Contested Landscape of the Former Depot

In the decades following the 1941 dispossession, the Seneca Army Depot transformed the people, economy and communities of Seneca County, and also had a significant impact on nature and the environment. The construction of the Depot's 24-mile long perimeter fence had the unintentional consequence of isolating large numbers of white-tailed deer that once freely roamed the rural landscape. As the captive deer intermingled and bred, a recessive gene for coloring flourished within the artificial environment of the base. In the summer of 1956, the first white-coated fawn was sighted among the herd. By 1960, seven white deer were counted. These fawns were not albinos; only their coats were affected. The Depot's military commander was so enamored with these rare deer, that he prohibited the animals being culled as part of the base's deer management plan.<sup>105</sup> Over the years, this order remained in place. Today, the herd of an estimated 300 white-coated deer is the largest of its kind in the world.<sup>106</sup>

Besides serving as storage site for conventional munitions and weapons of mass destruction, the Depot also functioned as a Cold War zoo and nature preserve.<sup>107</sup> Animals that would ordinarily have been actively hunted and numbers reduced outside the confines

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<sup>105</sup> "Game Hunters Indebted to Seneca Army Depot," Geneva Times December 16, 1969.

<sup>106</sup> "Nurtured at Army Depot, Rare Deer Herd is Suggested as a Key to Tract's Future," New York Times March 21, 2004; "Green vs. Green," The Citizen March 19, 2007.

<sup>107</sup> For more on the relationship between nature and military facilities see Rebecca Solnit, Savage Dreams (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 1-204; Bruce Hevly and John M. Findlay, ed. The Atomic West (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998); Richard White, Organic Machine (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 81-88; William Cronon, ed. Uncommon Ground (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995), 27-28 and 58-66.

of the base, found refuge nestled among the labyrinth of bunkers that housed America's arsenal of democracy. In addition to the white deer, the Depot provided an enclosed, artificially maintained environment for a number of species including: thriving populations of turkey, grouse, pheasant, fox, coyote and beaver (Figure 35-37).



**Figure 35: White doe with fawns. Photo from Senecawhitedeer.org.**



**Figure 36: Wild turkeys at the Depot. Photo from Senecawhitedeer.org.**



**Figure 37: Seneca Army Depot bunkers and landscape. Photo from Senecawhitedeer.org.**

In the current conflict between the various stakeholders to determine how the former Depot lands will be used, the white-coated deer present a particular challenge. Some local residents and environmentalists advocate sections of the Depot be designated as a wildlife refuge, and the animals be allowed to pursue their own ends. However, in order to preserve the white-coated deer, the perimeter fence would need to be maintained and monitored to keep hunters out, and the deer in. While these deer are, of course, creatures of nature, their continued enclosure within the relative security of the former Depot lands is, in a sense, unnatural. The white deer herd was originally protected due to the aesthetic value humans placed upon these animals, and not for any unique or integral role these particular deer have in the local ecosystem.

To some, regardless of the degree of human artifice present in the herd, preserving the white deer equates to preserving wilderness, while others consider the animals in utilitarian terms as a source of revenue and jobs. Few concerned voices have been raised for other species within the enclosed lands – and certainly not for the brown-coated deer. The Depot herd is a prime example of the conflicts that result from nature being defined and valued by people in a variety of ways.<sup>108</sup>

Since the transfer of the Depot lands to the county Development Authority, portions of the base have become home to a state prison, police training center, county jail, and a residential home for children with emotional problems. In the fall of 2007, a private company leased 64 of the former munitions bunkers and announced plans to renovate them into state-of-the-art electronic data storage sites.<sup>109</sup> Once used to store valuable military materiel, these bunkers will now provide a measure of security for something perhaps even more prized – information. In addition to these new public and private uses, local military veterans and former Depot employees have actively lobbied to have part of the former base designated as a Cold War museum. To many local residents, the Seneca Army Depot is an important historical icon for the local community and a symbol of security and economic opportunity. As stakeholders debate the Depot’s future, they are also contesting how the landscape will be remembered. Will it be as a monument to local patriotism? A reminder of the painful sacrifices deemed necessary to wage the Cold War? Or as a working landscape that was transformed by cycles of habitation and enterprise?

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<sup>108</sup> For more on competing meanings and value of nature see Jennifer Price, Flight Maps: Adventures With Nature in Modern America (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

<sup>109</sup> “New Jobs Expected for Seneca County,” New York Times May 14, 1999; “High-tech use for ‘Q’,” Finger Lakes Times September 23, 2007.

While all of these facilities and uses can fit into the expanse of the former Army Depot, the most ambitious plan to transform the land comes from a competing project supported by a group of environmentalists, farmers and influential venture capitalists. Empire Green Biofuels, whose parent company is based out of Goshen, California, purchased 362 acres from the Industrial Development Authority to build an ethanol plant, with an option to buy another 4500 acres – all within the heart of the white-coated deer range.<sup>110</sup> The facility itself is sited for the smaller parcel, but the company wants to use the larger tract to grow willows, switch grass and other plant life as fuel sources for the “green” ethanol facility. Proponents of the ethanol plant seek to use the power of technology to transform and harness nature to serve human needs.<sup>111</sup> Critics of the ethanol plant argue that without a comprehensive environmental analysis, any changes in the lands of the former Depot may negatively impact the greater environment. While some argue over separate pieces of the landscape, a few are concerned about the greater whole.

In an effort to bridge the impasse between advocates of the deer and ethanol plant, the company has engaged academics from Syracuse and Cornell Universities to develop a joint facility and wildlife management plan that will allow both the plant and a reduced number of white-coated deer to live in “harmony.” However, to pro-deer advocacy groups, the inclusion of the ethanol plant in the heart of the white deer refuge will cause irrevocable harm to the herd. Some environmentalists are now fighting a pitched legal and

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<sup>110</sup> “The Plight of the White Deer,” Life in the Finger Lakes Fall 2007, 40-41; “Rare White Deer Versus Ethanol: Conservationists at Odds in Seneca,” New York Times March 13, 2007;

<sup>111</sup> Richard White makes a similar point about the use of technology and construction of dams on the Columbia River in The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995).

bureaucratic battle against other environmentalists, both claiming to know the best way to use the land.

On February 8, 2007, the Industrial Development Authority declared itself the lead agency in determining the necessity of a full environmental study for the ethanol project. The nine board members, appointed by the County Board of Supervisors, subsequently announced that a full environmental study was not required and construction of the plant could move forward as planned.<sup>112</sup> Local community groups like Seneca White Deer, Inc. and the Finger Lakes Future Alliance rallied in opposition to the Development Authority's vision for the landscape, and lawsuits were quickly filed to halt construction of the ethanol plant.

The Depot's future was further complicated in January of 2008 when the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation announced tentative plans to place 2100 acres of Depot wetlands under state protection, in order to preserve critical freshwater ecosystems.<sup>113</sup> The state's involvement bolstered the efforts of local residents who oppose the ethanol project. The fates of both the plant and the white deer herd remain in limbo as the Department of Environmental Conservation completes its assessment, and as the lawsuits work their way through the legal system. But the ethanol plant is just one of the competing visions for the contested terrain of the former Depot.

In December of 2007, L.M. Sessler Excavating & Wrecking, Inc. of Waterloo proposed leasing 2300 acres from the Development Authority to build a lodge for "fee hunting." The Sessler business plan promoted raising revenue by charging hunters for the

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<sup>112</sup> "Changes May Delay Ethanol Plant," Finger Lakes Times February 12, 2008.

<sup>113</sup> "DEC Proposes Depot Wetlands Protection," Finger Lakes Times January 11, 2008.

right to come on to the Depot lands to shoot game animals, including the white deer.<sup>114</sup>

The company also asked for tax breaks from the Development Authority in order to make the project more economically viable. Opponents were outraged and labeled the proposal as a thinly veiled “canned hunt,” where docile animals would be harvested for private profit. Local residents and groups, like the New York State Humane Association and The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, wrote numerous letters to local papers and elected officials to express their anger with the plan. The Industrial Development Authority board initially expressed some interest in the Sessler proposal, but declined to move forward due to the overwhelming negative press received. The project is tabled, but not dead.

A new citizens group called the Seneca Depot Conservation Alliance announced, in early 2008, that it was developing a comprehensive eco-tourism plan for the former Depot lands. The Alliance was formed against the continued threats from commercial and industrial development. Spokeswoman Mary Ann Kowalski stated “we feel the highest and best use of the remaining lands of the depot should be for protecting its rich natural resources, military history and open-space attributes.”<sup>115</sup> The Alliance’s plans include a conservation park, museum, campground, hotel, restaurant and shops – all of which would require development and transformation of the land. Organizations like Seneca White Deer, Inc., Humane Society of United States, Seneca County Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs, Wildlife Watch, New York State Conservation Council, and a group of former

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<sup>114</sup> “Wrong for pay-to-hunt plan to target captive white deer,” Rochester Democrat and Chronicle December 19, 2007.

<sup>115</sup> “Depot Alliance has Tourism Proposal in the Works,” Finger Lakes Times February 25, 2008.

military police that served on the Depot have all thrown their support behind this proposal. Advocates of the Sessler plan and the Alliance proposal claim to offer clearly divergent paths, but there are subtle similarities.

Supporters of the Sessler plan want to raise revenue by harvesting animals as a renewable resource, while members of the Alliance prefer to maintain the white deer as the featured attraction in a Cold War zoo that would provide economic return to the local community. Under each proposal the deer, and the land itself, are commodified and their value measured in financial terms. The eco-tourist supporters are adamant that their proposal will save the white deer, but their preservation will come at the cost of others. Since 1941, in order to keep the overall herd numbers within the carrying capacity of the Depot lands, thousands of brown-coated deer were culled. For example, in 1958 alone, more than 600 white-tailed deer were harvested from Depot lands.<sup>116</sup> Under either plan, deer will be removed from the land.

As the various Depot stakeholders continue to debate the relative merits of their respective proposals, a final claimant adds to the tug-of-war over the contested terrain of Seneca County. Since 1980, both the Seneca and Cayuga Indian tribes have asserted their legal claims to more than 100 square miles of ancestral lands in upstate New York.<sup>117</sup>

Upstate politicians and members of the business community have responded to the tribes'

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<sup>116</sup> "Game hunters indebted to Seneca Army Depot," Geneva Times December 16, 1969.

<sup>117</sup> "Cayugas Suing to Regain 100 Square Miles in State," New York Times Nov. 23, 1980. The original suit, filed in 1980, was fiercely contested in various courts for more than 25 years. Currently, the NY State Governor's office is actively working to reach a compromise agreement over lands. One proposal would allow the tribes to build casinos on property in the Catskills, if they drop their legal claims to the land in Seneca and Cayuga County. Ironically, one of the proposed Catskill sites is in Sullivan County – named in honor of Major General John Sullivan. At this time, the lands of the Seneca Army Depot are not part of the legal entanglement.

claim with a mixture of anger and suspicion. The focal point of this debate centers on the tribes' proposals to build casinos and stores, their possible competition with local businesses for revenues, and the resulting property tax loss if lands are removed from county rolls. On the surface, this is not a conflict over who would be the best steward of the land and environment, but, rather, to whom the financial benefits of the land should flow. Similar to the plight of the white deer, in the ongoing conflict over the ownership of the landscape, the land itself has been reduced to its barest essence as a commodity. For many of the current residents, its "highest and best use" is measured in purely capitalistic terms. However, for the people of the Six Nations who consider expanses of the upstate region as ancestral lands, there is a deeper claim for sovereignty and possession. To the Iroquois, the scorched earth strategy of Sullivan's Campaign has been replaced by a skirmish of words and legal documents.

Both the Seneca and Cayuga Indians, and the white settlers that followed, developed an interrelationship with the land and transformed the "wilderness" into something they viewed as more desirable. Today, the possessors of the landscape are struggling with the latest changes that will impact, once again, the people and the environment. The history of Kendaia is that of a land and people influenced by powerful entities; first, by the Sullivan expedition, and then, in 1941, by the federal government. This particular story of forced transformation is recurring in the landscape.

During well-attended meetings in April 2008, both the Waterloo Village Board and the Geneva Town Board passed resolutions demanding that the county Development Authority renounce itself as the lead agency for Depot projects and that a full

environmental impact study be ordered. The Development Authority board refused the requests of the publicly elected Town and Village officials. If the board continues on its present course, the future of the Kendaia landscape, and how it will be remembered, will not be directly determined by the people of Seneca County, but by a handful of powerful political appointees that hold sway over the land.

Seneca County is not the only local community dealing with issues of possession and use of former military facilities. Since the end of the Cold War, hundreds of bases across the national landscape have been shuttered. In Concord, California, a city located in the San Francisco Bay area, community leaders and residents have implemented a Reuse Plan for more than 5000 acres of the former Concord Naval Weapons Station that was mothballed in 1999, and declared surplus by the Navy in 2007.<sup>118</sup> Similar to the Seneca Depot, the Concord base includes extensive munitions bunkers, open terrain and an abundance of wildlife. One important distinction, however, is that the Concord Reuse Plan is a transparent process lead by publicly elected officials (Concord City Council) who have encouraged participation from all segments of the greater community. Proponents of commercial and industrial development have a voice, but do not set the agenda for the plan. The stated principle of the Reuse Plan is that any future use must be economically feasible, environmentally sensitive and sustainable. The debate in Concord over issues of possession, memory and future use will be intense, but the Reuse Plan provides the opportunity for a more inclusive and comprehensive communal decision.

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<sup>118</sup> For more background on the Concord Naval Weapons Station and the Reuse Plan see “Ear to the Ground: News from the Community and Natural World,” BayNature April-June 2008, Vol. 8, Issue 2, and also visit the project web site at [www.concordreuseproject.org](http://www.concordreuseproject.org).

The uncommon grounds of the former Seneca Army Depot are replete with stories of loss and gain – some remembered more than others. We often measure the past in a linear manner, but the history of Seneca County reveals a cyclical story of dispossession and transformation. For the Kendaia landscape, the past is prologue – but this past is often unrecognized, and its participants remain silent. None of the proposals submitted to the Development Authority have included any plans to remember the former inhabitants of the land. The Iroquois people and the farm families of Kendaia have become part of the sediment of the landscape; distant memories, hidden and mostly forgotten, and sometimes actively suppressed.

History moves us to remember, and to draw a connection with those who have gone before. The lands of Kendaia and the Seneca Army Depot serve as a locus of memory and meaning. As the current stakeholders struggle over the contested terrain of the Seneca Army Depot, care should be taken by those that now inhabit the landscape to connect with the collective past. Encouraging remembrance as part of the current Depot debates will foster engagement by local residents and ensure a more complete communal dialogue. Remembering will also allow those voices that were muted or ignored in the past to be heard. The inscription on the Sullivan Memorial, “once a home, now a memory,” calls on the people of Seneca County to remember both the real and the imagined historical landscape.

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