



The Treaty of Canandaigua by Robert Griffing., 6'x9' oil painting, Courtesy of Paramount Press.

This painting depicts the Canandaigua Treaty signing on November 11, 1794, when over 1,200 Haudenosaunee people and leaders and Colonel Timothy Pickering solidified negotiations that affirmed peace and friendship between the Haudenosaunee and the U.S. The artist asked contemporary Haudenosaunee descendants to pose so that he could be more accurate in his depiction of Haudenosaunee history and culture.

The Canandaigua Treaty - The promises and exchanges made during treaty negotiations led to the release of Indian lands to the United States. Treaty agreements also recognized that the U.S. and each Indian Nation was a sovereign government. Negotiations for this treaty (which was actually signed on November 11th, 1794) began in early September that year and returned Seneca homelands that were previously lost in the Treaty of Fort Stanwix. Colonel Timothy Pickering (appointed by George Washington to represent the U.S.) wanted the United States to secure peace with the Haudenosaunee because they were a very powerful and numerous Confederacy of Nations, who could side the U.S. or choose not to.

Clan Mothers - Haudenosaunee clan mothers have a responsibility to help make all the major decisions affecting their clan. They also nominate male leaders of the clan. Leaders are chosen based on their devotion to Haudenosaunee people, including future generations.

Wampum Belts - Wampum belts are visual messages to record important events. The treaty or law that went with each belt was memorized by certain trained individuals. Twice a year at a special council, a Wampum Keeper would hold each wampum belt, recite its meaning to those gathered and the belt would be passed among the entire gathering so that its design and meaning would always be remembered. With every important treaty, wampum belts were exchanged. Wampum belts are considered sacred, so no Haudenosaunee person would break their word when belts were exchanged at treaty signings. Notice the belt next to Timothy Pickering. That belt is called the George Washington Belt and Pickering had that belt made to secure peace with the Haudenosaunee. In the painting, he has not presented it yet to the Haudenosaunee leaders. On the belt, there are 13 large figures of men that represent the 13 states, their hands joined in friendship with the two center figures who are standing at each side of a house. The two center men represent the Mohawks and the Senecas, two of Nations within the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. This belt commemorates the Treaty of Canandaigua and peace between the U.S. and Haudenosaunee. See the belt here:

<http://navajotimes.com/news/2014/0914/091814treaties.php#.VGE1fbEo6JA>

Historical Acknowledgement – Even after 220 years the U.S. government sends the Haudenosaunee a bolt of cloth to fulfill one of the 1794 treaty obligations. In recent years, the government proposed sending money instead. The Haudenosaunee replied, “The cloth is more significant than money, because so long as you keep sending this to us, there’s a chance you’ll maybe remember all of the other articles of that treaty.”

Commemoration - Each fall, people gather in front of the courthouse in Canandaigua, New York, to hear the treaty read aloud and see one of the original copies. The community has a Treaty Day parade and leaders read and interpret wampum belts to remind everyone of the treaty’s significance.

For more: <http://www.brightonpittsfordpost.com/article/20141109/NEWS/141109691/1994/NEWS/?Start=1>