

Louis Hall — A Short History of the Montréal Mohawk

Louis Hall, 72, is a well-known painter and poet and a Kahnawake Mohawk. He converted from Catholicism to the traditional ways of the Longhouse while in his early forties. He has been instrumental in interpreting the Great Law of Peace so that his people can know more of their heritage.

"When (Jacques) Cartier came here in 1535 there was a large settlement of Mohawk at Hochelaga (Indian word meaning mossy place). Cartier himself wrote that there were 'at least 50 longhouses'.

"Cartier's first arrival was in October 1535. The Mohawk welcomed his companions and crew which in total were less than thirty-five. More than a thousand Mohawk men, women and children joined in the friendly greeting. Dancing in joy they brought large quantities of fish and bread which they showered down on the boats.

"The next day the natives took Cartier to visit their village. As he walked the path through the beautiful oak forest he remarked that the place was as beautiful as any forest in all Europe. Soon the forest gave way to fields full of the corn. The village was fortified with a tiered, wooden palisade some fifteen-feet high. Within the perimeter were some fifty sturdy houses and in the midst was an open square where Cartier was introduced to the Great Chief."

This was the day Montréal got its name. At Cartier's re-

quest the party was guided by the Mohawk in a climb up the mountain. That day the view that awaited Cartier was breathtaking. 'I could see for thirty leagues around,' he said. And he felt the site was worthy of the name 'Royal'. Thus, Mont Royal became the mountain's European name and later the name of the city that grew at its foot.



The day had been so exhausting for some of Cartier's men that the Mohawks' hospitality extended even to picking up the weary and carrying them back to their boats.

"Some seventy years later, (Samuel de) Champlain was out to satisfy the merchants' greed. To solidify France's hold on the fur trade he persuaded the Huron and the Algonquin to side with him against the Iroquois. The Five Nation tribes were consid-

ered the most intelligent, best organized, and their warriors the best fighters. But against firearms there was little doubt of the outcome. On Lake Champlain a battle was fought."

(American historian Frances Parkman later described the battle: It was agreed on both sides that the fight would be deferred till daytime; but meantime a commerce of abuse, sarcasm, menace and boasting gave unceasing exercise to the lungs — much says Champlain like besiegers and besieged in a beleaguered town.)

"Some of the Mohawk were chased down and killed, others were made prisoner. These prisoners were taken back to the fort at Ville Marie to be used as serfs in the European manner. They were put to work digging and moving stone to build the church and settlement around Place D'Armes. It was Indian labour that built the European settlement at Hochelaga. History has shown that Champlain's decision to make an enemy of the Iroquois proved very costly for the settlers of New France and the mother country.

"For most of the seventeenth century there was war between the Iroquois and the French. The Iroquois raided the French settlements and harassed the river traffic carrying furs to Québec. It was in 1666 that the Sulpicians were confirmed as the Seigneurs of Montréal Island by proclamation of the King of France. That year a huge force of French regulars supported by Canadians and Indian mercenaries invaded Iroquois territory around Lake Champlain and Lake George. The Mohawk scouts alerted the people to the invasion and the villages were empty when the enemy under de Courcelle arrived. The army numbered some thirteen hundred and they burned and pillaged the villages destroying all stocks of food. This 'defeat' so devastated the Indians it brought an uneasy peace to the St. Lawrence Valley for twenty years. Then in the 1680s, as the Iroquois regained some strength, more sorties against the Iroquois were made by La Barre, Denonville, and Frontenac.

"Donnerville thought by capturing and imprisoning the chiefs he would stop Iroquois resistance. He didn't realize the Iroquois always had at least one apprentice understudying for a chief's role ever ready to take his place. In 1687 he gathered a force of some three thousand to teach the Iroquois a lesson. In fact he planned to destroy all Iroquois villages. His militia captain, de Callière, entrapped some friendly Seneca after inviting them to a feast. These were ordered to France to work in the

galleys of Louis XIV. Donnerville's force continued into Iroquois territory burning and destroying homes, crops and livestock. The Iroquois thirsted for revenge.

"During this period the Mohawk in Kahnawake remained in semi-serfdom under the thumb of soldiers and the whim of the church. In 1689 the Grand Council of the Iroquois got together in Onondaga and sent a message to the Kahnawake Mohawk. It said that they were putting a force of Indians together to liberate them from serfdom. The Mohawk had been kept under guard by the soldiers and brainwashed by the priests for so long that they did not want to be liberated to 'paganism' again. So, when the Iroquois arrived in Kahnawake the French had taken the Mohawk into the Fort Ville Marie across the St. Lawrence.

"In frustration some fifteen hundred Iroquois warriors crossed Lake St. Louis and fell on Lachine, a fur trading settlement of about 1100. They killed 200, took 900 captive and burned the village. They took the prisoners to the gates of Fort Ville Marie to exchange for the Mohawk serfs. But those commanding the fort refused to bargain. The Iroquois told them they would burn at the stake the Lachine villagers one by one in front of their eyes if they did not release the Mohawk. But serfs were money-in-the-bank so they refused again. The Iroquois proceeded to make good their promise. Over the two month

period that they stayed in the Montréal area, they raided the seigneuries down the St. Lawrence as far as Trois Rivières and wiped out almost half the population of New France.

"When they returned to their lands in upper New York State they took many young children prisoners with them to be brought up with the Iroquois. These infants were to be taught the Indian ways and thus learn how to live properly. The idea was to return them to the white man after they had grown to maturity. By so doing the Iroquois felt they could educate the newcomers towards a better lifestyle. But it didn't work. The French settlers and their church wanted no part of the Great Law of Peace and the ways of the Longhouse. They rejected their own children who were then taken back by the Iroquois and lived out their lives with them.

"In 1697 Frontenac decided to invade the Iroquois Nation with another great force. But this time the Indians had burned most of their villages before them. He did lay waste some Indian villages and killed and tortured the Iroquois that were left. They (the French) took 280 prisoners and were on their way back to Québec with the infirm Frontenac when the Iroquois ambushed them, freed their people, and put the soldiers to flight.

"That was the last attempt to invade Iroquois territory, 1697. And that is what we mean when we say we are an unconquered nation."

The Mohawk and the Land at Oka.

At one time the Six Nations occupied a vast territory stretching from Vermont to Ohio and Québec to Tennessee with hundreds of towns and villages throughout their country.

Indians do not have the same concept of ownership of the land that white people do. Land is given for need not greed, say the Mohawk. If one Mohawk needs to build a house for his family he is given whatever land he needs.

This is the Mohawk version of the events leading up to the crisis at Oka:

When the white man came to settle he asked if he could use our land to build a cabin for shelter and grow food for sustenance. We saw that he had need and we said yes. We could not conceive that he would neither give it back nor acknowledge us as owners. But that is what he did. He just kept it for himself. He reported back to the old world that there was land for the taking and plenty for everyone. He was encouraged in this practice by his



church. It declared itself owners of huge tracts of our land. Their spokesmen said that the King of France, who we had never even met, had given it to them. When the church needed money it sold the land it never owned to parishioners or newcomers to the area who built homes and businesses and eventually golf courses.

That is how it happened in Oka. The whole village was built on Indian land. They used and

enjoyed our forest land, too. We welcomed them. Then they wanted to add an extra nine holes to their private golf course by cutting down the sacred pine forest we planted. It is one of the oldest hand-planted pine forests in North America and our ancient burial grounds are within

it. This was too much to swallow and we refused to let our dead be disturbed or to let them use the land for that selfish purpose.

In 1718 a few Mohawk, some Huron and a branch of the Algonquin from the settlement at Sault au-Recollet, were moved to Oka. Sixty-one years earlier, in 1657, the Sulpicians had been made temporary managers of the island of Montréal with a mandate to protect it from the Indians. In 1666 this was confirmed

by the King of France. For years the Sulpicians had tried to get grants of land in New France. But they were in competition with the Jesuits who were more powerful in the French Court. Unable to win the grants, they instead asked for lands for an Indian Mission. The King of France agreed to provide a nine-square mile tract of land for the mission. It would later be doubled in size. But the grant came with many restrictions, the main one being that the Sulpicians would only hold the land in

trusteeship for the Indians. In 1720 the church insisted that about 200 Mohawk religious dissidents from Kahnawake be removed from their village and sent to live at Oka on the shore of the Lake of Two Mountains. It was the principle of divide and conquer.

The Iroquois were frequent invaders of the settlement and it was the Oka Indians who bore the brunt of the attacks on the community. They became its

defenders. But as time went by, more and more Iroquois converted to Christianity and many of them gathered at the settlement. The former enemy had now become the settlement's chief strength.

By this time, the Sulpicians in Montréal had become so wealthy that they surpassed the Jesuits. Among their prized pieces of territory was the land bordering the Lake of Two Mountains on part of which dwelt the Oka Indians. But according to the terms of the original grant, the Indians had a claim on the land that would expire only should they leave it or die out. The Indians loved their home and could not be induced to leave. The Sulpicians hoped to change

their minds. Privilege after privilege was taken away from the Indians. Grants they were entitled to were stopped. Tithes for the church were collected with greater vigor at a time when income was stopped. Through the government, the church offered to settle the Indians elsewhere. They were even stopped from cutting wood to repair their homes. They grew poorer and poorer.

Eventually, a Protestant Mission came to the area. And in 1869, the Methodists took up the Indians' cause against Rome. But the Catholic church was powerful in Québec, and in the 1930s the Sulpicians began to sell off land they were supposed to be holding in trusteeship for the

Indians. Some land exchanged hands several times although the original sale was not valid, at least as far as the Mohawk were concerned.

And so the fight over who holds title to the land at Kanesatake continues today for the 1600 Mohawk living there.

The preceding is a compilation of interviews with several Mohawk including Danny Karistanoron and Louis Hall of Kahnawake, Johnny Cree of Kanasatake and reference to documents including Rev. Amand Parent's book on the Oka Indians, published in 1887.

July 12, (con't)

Ciaccia had arrived at Oka at 6:00 p.m. He met with members of the Warrior Society. They talked for nearly two-and-a-half hours. Mohawk tradition demands that peace talks and important negotiations take place only in the light of day. When the sun set, the talks were adjourned.

Ciaccia crossed back to the police side of the barricade and was taken by car to Montréal.

That left the Mohawk and the police alone to play their night time games of intimidation. Both sides sent men into the woods. They would creep along, sometimes in silence, sometimes making noise to let the other side know that the enemy was out there. The police shone powerful spotlights on the Mohawk.

Mirrors were brought out by the Mohawk and used to reflect the light back at the police.

For the Warriors, there would be no more than a few minutes sleep snatched here and there. The dancing lights, the shouts from the police side, the occasional war cry from the Mohawk and the steady sound of the insects and night birds continued through to the dawn.



Negotiation: Ciaccia with Mohawk negotiator Gabriel

Debbie Etienne – The Day of the Battle

“Some of us women returned to the trees a few days before the army moved in. Dark sap was running down the big pines where the bullet holes went in. It looked like the trees were crying. Those trees saved us though, just like Johnny Cree (spiritual spokesman) prayed for. We cried too because they were wounded.”

“The actual attack started during the tobacco burning. We were up early, just about the whole village was there. At sunrise we were thanking the Great Creator for the sun and a new day. That’s when the first shots and tear gas came in. The women went out to talk to them (the SQ). They wanted to talk to our leader. We told them the truth – that we had no leader – it was the people together that spoke. The officer couldn’t grasp this and kept insisting he talk to our leader. We went back and asked Johnny Cree to talk to them. He is our faith keeper and hates the use of guns and any kind of violence.

“He told John they had orders to open fire if we all didn’t leave the area so they could take down the barrier. Johnny said he would talk to us and when he came back he told us he thought it was more than just arrests they wanted. But we told him to tell them we were staying.

“Johnny went back and told them and asked that at least they

give us time to finish our prayers so we would be prepared to meet our Creator. The SQ leader said we had five minutes then they were coming in. Johnny explained it would take longer than that. Then I think he gave us 45 minutes.

“All this time the women were making breakfast – sausages and scrambled eggs and peanut butter and jam sand-



The battle site

wiches. There was a lot of kids around and we just sort of did it to keep the kids happy and our minds occupied. When Johnny came back he almost pleaded with us to leave because he felt blood would be shed. Again we said ‘No!’ and asked Johnny to offer up a prayer. He prayed like this: ‘Great Creator protect your

women and children and your people. Shelter the children, cover their eyes and ears to protect their hearts and minds. Whatever bad they send at us turn it back on them.’ It was a lot longer than that but that was the basic idea.

“Then Turtle (Ellen Gabriel) started to burn sweetgrass. We went to the SQ lines and put the ash on them. They were scared.

We put a line on the ground and asked that no enemy would cross it. Denise asked them ‘Why do you want to kill me? Why do you want to kill my children?’ That trooper slowly lowered his gun until his leader signalled him to reload and keep his weapon up. The girls spread out in a line.

“They yelled, ‘Time is up. Are you going to leave?’ We

said, ‘You know what our answer is. We cannot leave.’ Then the concussion grenades and tear gas started. Soon after the bullets. The women started to run back.

“Our men were back in the bush behind the lacrosse rink. None of them had fired up to then because no order had been

given. Around then there was a war cry given up to bring the Great Creator’s attention to what was happening to us. When our men saw they (the SQ) were firing with women and children up front, the command to fire was given and they opened fire

too. The youngest of the children was two and he was on a tricycle on the road. His little feet were peddling like heck. Bullets were kicking up dirt next to him. One of the men went out and grabbed him and pulled him behind a big pine. A woman was

terrified and she fell. A warrior ran out and covered her with his body so he would take the bullets. The exchange lasted maybe five minutes but it seemed forever. Then I heard someone say, ‘Look. They are running.’ and the firing stopped.”

“technicality” involved and that was the failure of the Québec government to withdraw the bulk of the 1,000-man police force surrounding the Kanesatake band.

As far as anyone could see, not a single police officer had been withdrawn.

On both sides of the barricades, there was a hardening of positions.

Mohawk spokesman Ellen Gabriel said that a partial withdrawal of the police would no longer be enough to end the blockade of the Mercier Bridge. All the police would have to go, she said, before the bridge could be re-opened.

The previous day, the police had allowed shipments of food and medicine to cross into the Mohawk land. Now, the police sealed off the reserve to even those vital goods.

You’re violating our basic human rights, said the Mohawk.

Put down your weapons and all your rights will be respected, replied the authorities.

Tuesday, July 17, 1990

Chief Joe Norton of Kahnawake sent out an urgent appeal to Indian chiefs across Canada. Come to Kahnawake, he said, for an emergency meeting on the crisis. He said the Mohawk needed the support of all native people in order to convince Ottawa to get involved in the negotiations.

“I hope this will kick the federal government in the pants and get them moving,” said Norton.

The federal minister for Indian Affairs, Tom Siddon, said that was not going to happen. He said federal intervention would only complicate the negotiations. The crisis is a provincial affair, he said, and Ottawa will stay on the sidelines.

But the Canadian armed forces said they expected to become involved. Forces’ officials said they



Chief Oritz — The Christian Burial Ground

“Nothing more characterizes the Mohawk than their care for their dead.”

“A short distance in back of Oka village lies the little Christian burying-ground of the remanent of Indians living on the Lake of Two Mountains. It was chosen with heed, and around the graves are evidences that fences had been erected to prevent the animals of the field

paltry six feet in which his body rests when dead.

“The dark spot at the left of the picture shows the grave from which the body of the old Chief Oritz was taken and carried away after it had been placed there by the hands of his friends. He had defended his country in time of

his grandchildren and great grandchildren were one by one hunted to jail for the crime of cutting what they considered to be their own wood.

“His was a sad end for an active life, a fitting emblem of the destruction of the race, once so powerful, of whom nothing will



The desecration of Chief Oritz' grave

from rudely trampling above those buried there. But these have been sawed and torn down by the enemies of the Indians and their religion, and it has been found impossible to protect the graves in any way. The spirit which prevented the Indian from fencing in his home and garden when living prevents his friends and family from claiming the

need (War of 1812); and received special attention and honour at the hands of his King. During a full century of life he had experienced much change. In his youth he had been a warrior, courted by friends and dreaded by his enemies. He had searched for the lost Sir John Franklin expedition by way of the Mackenzie. Yet, during his latter days

soon remain but the remembrance of the beautiful names they have given to our lakes, mountains, counties and streams.”

From the book: The life of Rev. Amand Parent, and Eight Years among the Oka Indians. It was published in 1887.

Johnny Cree — The Indian Community at Oka

Johnny Cree is 45, and father of four children. He lives in the house in Oka in which he was born and can trace some of his ancestors at Oka back seven generations. He is a spiritual faith keeper for the Longhouse and as such is against the carrying of arms. Neither does he favour any form of organized gambling on Indian land. He explained also that the way of the Longhouse is against the use of any substances such as drugs and liquor that alter the physical and mental state of the human body.

Questioned about the Pines, Johnny Cree said:

"The area of the Pines is our ceremonial place and sacred burial ground. We call it Onen'to: kon. It was our ancestors who had planted the trees all around. When I was young my parents and grandmother and grandfather took me there. It was there we played softball and lacrosse. It is our sacred place.

"Lacrosse is a ceremonial game. It tells us how to find a cure for illnesses and decides arguments. The way we play it, there could be a hundred on each side. I laugh when they say it is Canada's national game. It never was a white man's game. Canada has taken a lot of native things and ruined them.

When Indians play lacrosse it is a rough game, a man's game. White men have turned it into a game for babies. They can't take the hits, they can't take the checks, they can't take the slashes. That game was not

meant for Canadians. They should stick to hockey."

Do government incentives help?

"We don't like charity. We want to help ourselves. There is 85 percent unemployment among the Indians here. Programs are needed to build businesses for long-term employment that can offer medical benefits and old age pensions. Most of the government incentive

with the government setup right now the band council members take all the decent jobs for themselves."

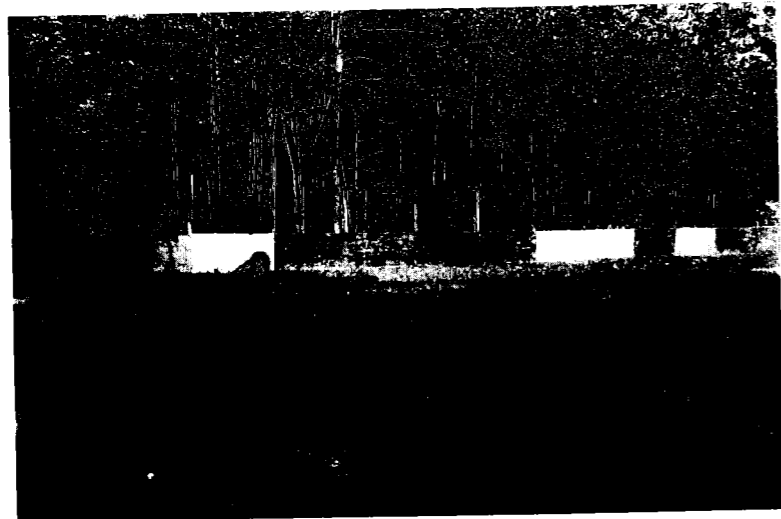
What about a bingo hall?

"A bingo hall is not a business. There is no future in it. No education or special skills are needed to push cards or soft drinks. It pays kids minimum wages on a few nights a week and if it is run by outside interests, nothing comes back. That's

why we fought it here. And it can be a bad influence on the community, too. Even if we did own it outright there would have to be restrictions on the type of gaming. No slots, craps, blackjack or roulette. If you are going to play bingo play bingo. Gam-

bling itself changes and corrupts. It changes a calm community into a community that is possessed.

"I'm talking about real businesses like starting a lumber yard or a bowling alley, where a



Lacrosse box at the Pines

programs last six months and there is altogether too much red tape attached. They tell us what we can do, where we can do it, and who we can sell to. All the bullshit kills the incentive and then the business fails. Anyway

firm can employ so many people and offer reasonable wages and good fringe benefits. We have some plans for long-term jobs but first we have to get our land back. For example we would like to set up an Indian village in the (Paul Sauve) provincial park which is on our land. We would invite tourists to come and see the history of our people and show them what we believe in."

On drugs and alcohol, Johnny Cree has firm beliefs:

"People of the Longhouse do not believe in the use of alcohol or drugs in any way, shape or form. They do not belong in any society. Drugs bring violence,

murder, robbery. Alcohol will make people do things that they would not do in their right mind. But this is not just a native problem. Actually it has cut down a lot among our young people because there is pride. Our young are finding out who they are. There is no more shame. Even if our people in the TC get killed it won't stop the fight. The war will go on. Our people have nothing to be ashamed of. Those men in the TC center have done nothing wrong but defend the rights of the Iroquois nation and the lives of their women and children.

"The town of Oka and Québec and Canada are responsible for the violent act. They are the ones who have a lot of questions to ask themselves. I am completely against the use of arms but it has been very hard to stand by and watch the injustice and racism we experience every day. Can you see why we laugh when they tell us this is a democratic society? Politicians may know how to pronounce the word but they don't know how to live it. They should send Mr. Mulroney back to kindergarten to find out."

land which Ottawa wanted to buy in order to hand over to the Mohawk. It wasn't a question of price. The town said it would not sell the land until the Mohawk barricades came down. Ottawa had offered to pay \$3.84 million for the 67 acres over which the crisis began. Oka would make a healthy profit in the deal. But the town said it wouldn't make any deals until the Mohawk laid down their arms.

In Paris, the International Federation of Human Rights began assembling a team of 24 observers to monitor the crisis at Oka and Kahnawake. Federation president Jean-Claude Fouque, who made an eight-day tour of the two Mohawk settlements, said he had found evidence of more than 50 human rights violations. In about half the cases, non-natives were the victims. Mohawk were the victims in the other cases.

And in Geneva, Kahnawake negotiator Kenneth Deer told the United Nations Human Rights Commission's committee on aboriginal people that the Mohawk crisis could easily turn into a "bloodbath."



Federal Indian Affairs minister Tom Siddon

Wednesday, August 1, 1990

The federal junior minister for Indian Affairs described the decision by Oka town council not to sell the disputed land to Ottawa as "regrettable but understandable."

"The federal offer to buy the land still stands," said Shirley Martin. "We trust that the Oka town council will soon be in a position to complete the transaction."

Ellen Gabriel – The Fine Art of Negotiating

Ellen Gabriel was born in Montréal in 1959. A Mohawk, she was raised at the Oka settlement where several generations of her family had grown up. Ellen is of the Turtle Clan and a member of the traditional Longhouse. A graduate of Concordia University with a degree in Fine Arts, Ellen was about to start teaching an adult education program in Oka when the crisis broke out. She had to put her plans on hold. Early in the negotiations, she was chosen by the women of the Longhouse to be a spokesman for the Kanesatake Mohawk.

During the crisis, Ellen became known for her soft-spoken but steadfast defense of Mohawk land claims. Afterward, she said that despite her bitter experiences and frustrating attempts to negotiate with the white authorities, she had no bad feelings towards Canadians in general. She said she believes they hold no ill will for the Mohawk.

“It is their leaders that I blame. I can’t believe their ignorance.”

And although the issues of Mohawk land claims and sovereignty were never settled, Ellen said she believed much good had come from the 78-day standoff.

“The people have renewed pride in themselves and I am very glad to see that. It proved that no matter what they did, they could not break our spirit”.

In late October 1990, Ellen was one of a delegation of natives who travelled to Strasbourg, France to tell their story to the European Parliament.

“They treated us very well and were very sympathetic. They plan to send a non-partisan delegation to Oka to see things for themselves.”

Another Mohawk named Gabriel who lived in Oka a hundred years ago was also a spokesman for his people. His



story is told by missionary Amand Parent in his autobiography:

Parent describes Gabriel as “industrious, one of the better class of Indian”. In 1873, writes the missionary, Gabriel refused to return to the Roman Catholic Church. He and many other Mohawk had converted to Methodism in part because they

believed the Sulpicians were cheating them. Late one night, in the presence of his family, a bailiff took Gabriel from his one-room home to jail. There, he was visited by a priest and offered his freedom if he would go back to the church of Rome. It would be an example to other Indians. But the Mohawk was adamant. He said he would rather die.

Eventually he was freed. Soon after his release, he began to rebuild his one room home in preparation for winter. For this he needed lumber. On the pretext that he had cut wood without the church’s permission, he was again jailed. In fact, he had paid the priest a sum of money in advance to cut the trees he needed. While in jail, he contracted pneumonia. By the time he was released, it was winter and he had to walk from Ste. Scolastique through the snow to Oka. His poor house was little shelter from the cold and he died at home eight days later. But to the end he had been a thorn in the side of the Sulpicians.

Chief Joe Norton — for Peace and Dignity

The challenge for Kahnawake Grand Chief Joe Norton was to prevent any blood from being spilled on the reserve while at the same time not giving ground in the fight for Mohawk autonomy.



It was a fine line he walked throughout the crisis. To succeed, Norton had to be radical enough to convince the Warriors that he would not sell them out and moderate enough to win the confidence of the white negotiators.

From the time the barriers went up on July 11th to their dismantling on August 29th, not a shot was fired at Kahnawake. Norton had succeeded.

But the challenge of maintaining peace and dignity re-

mained even after the blockades had been removed. Police and army raids, the trashing of Mohawk homes by police searching for weapons, and the decisions by the Sûreté du Québec to resume patrols of the highways passing through Kahnawake infuriated the people of the reserve. For Norton, there would be no end to his efforts to keep the situation from exploding.

Army Strength

The Canadian Forces sent the 5th Mechanized Brigade to Kanesatake and Kahnawake at the request of Québec Premier Robert Bourassa. The brigade was under the command of Brigadier-General J.A. Roy.

One of the regiments employed was Canada's oldest, The Royal Canadian Regiment (The RCR's) which was formed in 1883. The first of the many battle honours it won in five wars was awarded for The Battle of Cut Knife Creek and the capture of Louis Riel in Saskatchewan in 1885.

Also called up for duty was the Royal 22nd Regiment (Vandoos), Canada's most famous French-speaking infantry regiment. The Vandoos have a distinguished battle record through both World Wars and the Korea conflict. Here is an inventory of manpower and weaponry.

UNITS EMPLOYED

Infantry:	2nd Battalion of The Royal Canadian Regiment (The RCR's)	Military Police:	5th Military Police Platoon
	2nd and 3rd Battalions of the Royal 22nd Regiment (the Vandoos)	Service Corps:	5th Canadian Service Battalion
		Medical Corps:	5th Field Ambulance unit.
Artillery:	5th Lt. Artillery Regiment	Air Force:	Fighter Squadron, Cold Lake 430 Tactical Helicopter Squadron
Armoured:	12th Armoured Regiment	Navy:	CSV 'Acadian' (navigation and reconnaissance)
Engineers:	5th Field Combat Engineers		

Total Strength: 3,300 officers and men



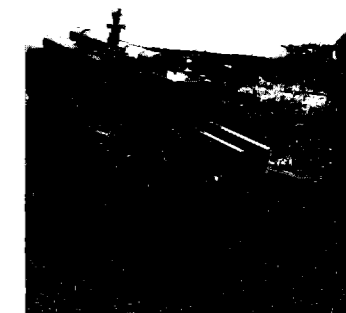
Weapons and equipment



Soldier with C8



M113. APC



105 mm

Small arms :
Infantry soldiers are armed with C7s and C8s. The C7 is a semi-automatic rifle modified from the US M16 for cold weather combat. Its 30-round magazine fires .556 NATO compatible ammunition. The C8 is a Belgian-made light (.556) calibre fully automatic machine gun with a 200-round magazine.

Armoured personnel carriers (APCs):
Grizzlys, Cougars, Lynx, Dozers and M113s. These amphibious troop carriers can be tracked or wheeled and are armed with

.50 calibre armour-piercing machine guns, grenade launchers (Grizzlys) and/or 76 mil cannons capable of firing high explosive or smoke shells (Cougars). Lynx are armoured reconnaissance vehicles and tracked M113s can be fitted with bulldozer blades for barricade removal.

Artillery :
105mm self-propelled field artillery pieces.

Tanks :
Three high-tech Leopard tanks, made in Germany.

Helicopters :
Squadron of 20 Huey (troop carrying), and Kiowa (reconnaissance) helicopters.

Fighter Planes :
2 CF5s (Freedom Fighters). Mostly used for training in Canadian Air Force.

Ships:
CSV. 'Acadian'. 50 ft. naval reserve observation craft used in navigation training.



Cougar APC



Grizzly APC



Kiowa



Leopard tank

Mavis Etienne — Spiritual Freedom

Mavis Etienne, a Mohawk Indian, is an outreach counsellor at the Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Center at Kanesatake. It was the center, or TC, taken over by the Warriors for their final standoff with the army.

“The Center’s proper Indian name is Onen’to:kon. It means ‘under the pines’. We have been open for four years and have had very good results. Natives from all over Québec are eligible for treatment here. We started cleaning up immediately after the army left and the centre was operational again within two weeks.

“My father was born in Oka, his name was Morris Cree. He was a Methodist and belonged to the old Methodist church started in Oka in 1870. In 1922 he joined the Pentecostal church. My great-grandfather was a Cree from Manitoba and he came to

Oka and married a Mohawk girl in the late 1800s.

“Under the law of the Iroquois Confederacy, religious thought is free. I remain faithful to traditional Mohawk ways as taught through The Great Law



of Peace. I am also a born-again Christian and find no conflict with the Christian Bible and the

Longhouse concept of the Great Creator. It is how we mediate with God that is a little different. I choose to do it through Christ.”

Mrs. Etienne was a member of the Mohawk negotiating team for almost two months. She was not present in the Pines on the morning of July 11th. But on August 26th, she was arrested by the SQ who claimed she had been there. She asked them for their evidence. She says they produced a photograph showing her with the Secretary-General of the International

Human Rights Federation, as he escorted him to the negotiating table – an event that took place weeks later.

Angus Jacobs — A Police Interrogation

Angus Jacobs, 47, is a stone mason and a Mohawk Indian from Kanesatake. He has lived there all his life. On Wednesday, the 26th of August, he was fed up with the absence of fresh food inside the Oka barricades. Since July 11th they had been manned on one side by Warriors and on the other by the Sûreté du Québec and then the Canadian army. With his girlfriend, he decided to drive north out of the village to buy food in Montréal. At the first road block he was stopped by soldiers and arrested by the Sûreté du Québec after showing identification. Six-and-a-half-hours later, he was permitted to make a phone call from a Montréal jail. This is his account of what happened during those six-and-a-half-hours.

“Around 11:30 in the morning we drove to the north barricade on St. Germain. We were going to buy food in Montréal. The army stopped us and SQ cops took our identification and when they came back they dragged me out of the car and shoved me into the back of a cruiser. They drove from the barricade and a cop grabbed me by the hair and pushed me to the floor.

“After driving around for fifteen minutes, they transferred me to a MUC police car and again they shoved my face into the floor so I couldn't see where I was going.

“We stopped at a building in the woods that I think was their headquarters. They showed me a photo of a masked man in the pine woods holding a gun. I think it was taken on July 11th. They said they knew it was me. I denied it. They called me a dirty Indian bastard. They put a shotgun in my ear and made me crawl on the floor and called me a dog and said that they were going to kill me like a dog if I

didn't make a confession. For the next two-and-a-half-hours they took turns beating me. They split up into teams of two or three. They took off their heavy



shoes and put on sneakers so the marks wouldn't show as bad. They punched and kicked every part of my head and body. Not hard enough so I would be punched out but just on the border all the time. One of them grabbed me by the balls and twisted and then I almost passed out. Twice they put a gun to the side of my head and said that they were going to blow my brains out. I told them to go ahead and get it over with if that was what they were going to do, and who the hell was stopping them, not me. The beating kept

up and I was hurting bad. By then my ears were running blood from being slapped over and over. I couldn't hear anything. My kidneys and stomach hurt real bad and my private parts were painful too. They kept saying I had to sign this confession they put in front of me. Finally I signed it just so they would stop. I didn't even look at what I signed. Then they took me downtown, and shoved me in a cell.

“Through it all I kept asking if I could phone my friend so she could get a lawyer for me. They just laughed and said no one could help me where they had me and there would be no fucking phone calls till I signed. They didn't let me make a call until I had been in custody for six-and-a-half-hours — by then it was about six o'clock. They never even read me my rights.”

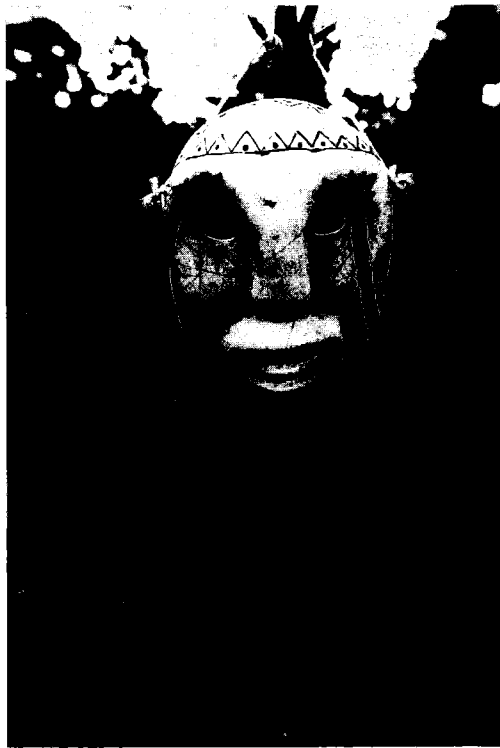
Angus Jacobs was charged with possession of a dangerous weapon and released on bail.

Louis Hall — Return to the Longhouse

“There has been a 300-year dark age for the Great Law of Peace. It was used freely in the writing of the constitution of the United States of America but there is little knowledge of it among non-natives. Even among the Iroquois nations the Great Law of Peace was almost lost because of suppression by the white man’s church and government. The chiefs who were teaching it had to go into hiding. The white man has always tried to eliminate the Longhouse law and replace it with his Indian Act.”

“It was a Jewish lawyer who made me understand the importance of our traditional ways. I met this man during the negotiations for compensation for the land taken from us to build the St. Lawrence Seaway. He was a good lawyer too. In some cases he got us three times more for the land than the government offered. One day he asked me: ‘What is the national religion of the Mohawk?’ I said ‘The Longhouse’. ‘How many in the Caughanawaga (Kahnawake) reserve practice it?’ I exaggerated and said ‘About half of the village.’ He said ‘Get the other half in. A national religion will help you. Indians all over North America should return to their traditional religion.’ Then he said: ‘Not all Jews are religious but they profess to a common religion. It is a force for unity and without it we could never have survived the persecution over the centuries.’

“This made sense to me because no race had been more persecuted than mine. So with a friend, Stanley Mayo, I started



to attend the Longhouse ceremonies. I think the next one was to be the ‘first fruits of the

season’ ceremony, the Strawberry Festival.

“There was a pretty simple ceremony, not too heavy on the religious side, and when they danced, it was more fun than being in church. So I learned to enjoy traditional dances like the Great Feather Dance and the Creator’s Dance. The next festival was at mid-summer for the the first vegetable to ripen, the bean. Then came the corn festival in late August followed by October’s harvest thanksgiving. The midwinter festival comes in January to celebrate the start of a new year. I attended them all that year.

“I had been brought up a Catholic but I slowly came to realize that was not the way my ancestors worshipped the Creator, so I converted. Now in 1990, the Longhouse membership is growing steadily and I think more will come to it after this crazy summer (of 1990).”

Private Cloutier — Soldier

It was the stare seen around the world. And it made Private Patrick Cloutier a celebrity.

On September first, the Royal 22nd Regiment—the Vandoos—moved against the Mohawk barricades at Oka. With only a handful of Warriors left to face the army, the Mohawk withdrew without a fight. But as the soldiers moved forward, the Warriors confronted them at each point along the way.

When the army began setting up their razor wire fences near the site of the original barricade in the Pines, the Warrior known as Lasagna picked Pte. Cloutier as his target. The Mohawk walked up to the slightly-built, 20-year-old soldier. For a moment, Cloutier wavered, unsure what to do. When no orders came from his officer, Cloutier stuck out his chest and stared back at Lasagna. The two men were standing literally nose-to-nose.

Lasagna said, “Boo!”

Cloutier didn’t flinch.

The Warrior called the private a “motherfucker” and asked him if he was ready to die. Cloutier never blinked. Lasagna continued to try to stare him down. Cloutier steadfastly returned the stare.

Eventually, it was Lasagna who turned away.

But the confrontation had been recorded by the cameras. And the image of the baby-faced soldier staring impassively into the eyes of the

fearsome Warrior appeared in newspapers, magazines and TV newscasts around the globe.

It was an image of bravery and discipline that the military

to begin a special course that would prepare him for a rapid promotion to the rank of master corporal.

Some of his fellow soldiers, however, said Cloutier’s bravado was no big deal.

Much of Cloutier’s 20 months in the Canadian Forces had been spent as a member of the Red Guard. The guards are the sentries who stand expressionless outside the Citadel, one of Québec City’s most popular tourist sites. The sentries are constantly teased and provoked by tourists who want to pry some sort of facial reaction or movement from the stone-like soldiers.

The tourists tell jokes or pretend to toss things at the guards. Sometimes, girls will stand directly in front of a young guard and hike up their skirts or lift their blouses.

And that, said the other soldiers, is a lot tougher to deal with than Lasagna’s taunts.



hierarchy loved. Within days, Cloutier had been sent back to his military base in Québec City

Jennie Jack — An Education

Jennie Jack is 35, a Tlinkit Indian from British Columbia where she is a third year law student at University of British Columbia. She came to Kanesatake 10 days after the crisis erupted to support the Mohawk. She is the mother of two children.



On Sunday September 2nd, Jennie was acting as a press liason. It was she who announced to the more than one hundred media people assembled, that the Mohawk would permit a picked handful to join them in the treatment center:

“The army wants to cut you off from us, we want you to witness what they do to us because none of us will be around to tell the story,” she said.

At that time the army was slowly squeezing down the perimeters, systematically reducing the Warriors’ territory. It was felt by the Mohawk that there would be a fight to the finish and that the Warriors were ready to sacrifice their lives but

would give a good account of themselves in so doing.

“I knew what I was getting into when I came and we all knew it would come to this. The boys have already been tortured so that’s not much to look forward to. We would rather be shot by a bullet than that.”

Reflecting on her soon to be wasted education: “It blows me away to think I did four years of political science and three years of law school. The idea was to learn how to run a country and how civilized governments work. Then I come here to witness three levels of Canadian government in action. What a joke.”

Johnny Cree — Our Land

Johnny Cree is a faithkeeper of the Longhouse: "There are only a few of us. It's something that just comes upon us. The ceremonies and teachings are passed on by elders. It's a lifetime job." He tells a story to illustrate some of the Longhouse beliefs:

"When I was a little boy an elder asked me who is the Creator's father. I said I didn't know. Then he asked if I knew the story of creation. Again my answer was no. So he said he would tell it to me:

"There was a woman in the Sky World who became impregnated by the wind which had also uprooted a tree leaving a big hole. As the woman walked, she looked through the hole and saw the ocean, a land of water. She leaned over to take a better look, lost her balance and fell through. As she fell, she grasped out with both hands and in one hand she grabbed tobacco, the voice to our Creator, and in the other were strawberries, the heart of our Creator. As she fell, the birds spotted her and went underneath her to cushion her fall. As she floated down, a great turtle came out of the ocean but his shell was so hard the watching animals saw she would be hurt so they tried to go down to the bottom of the ocean to bring up mud to put on the back of the turtle to soften her fall. But none of them could do it except the muskrat who kept going down and back until he had covered the turtle with mud.

"That place became known as Turtle Island and it is North

America. Soon she gave birth to a daughter and it came to pass that her daughter too was made pregnant by the wind. She gave birth to twins. One was the Creator and when he grew he set about the business of making the oceans and the mountains and streams and putting the trees in place. He was very serious. But the other was a joker and he ran



around making frivolous things like rapids. He was a practical joker too and when he saw his brother lying on the lake sleeping from all his work he pushed him. His brother then fell over what we now know as Niagara Falls.

"And the elder asked me again: 'Now do you know who the Creator's Father was?' I replied, 'No.' He said, 'What are

the two things you cannot do without?' I thought a bit then said, 'Water and air.' 'Right. But which one is the Creator's Father?' I still didn't know. 'Then what is the first thing you need when born?' 'Air' I said. 'And what is the last thing you do before dying?' I said, 'Draw a last breath.' So I knew then that air was the Father of Creation.

"The story explains why Mother Earth is so important to us. She gives the land and the trees that breathe the oxygen that sustains all life on earth. Her breath is all over the world giving and sustaining life. Without Mother Earth and the trees, there would be no life.

"If you can understand the importance of what I have told you then you will begin to know what the Longhouse people are all about. We do not have a sense of ownership like the white man. We are the caretakers of the land for our children and future generations but we are responsible to Mother Earth to see that our children and their children will be able to walk the land and still see the green trees and grass and clear streams that give clean water and fresh air."

Dale — Liberated Women

Dale is a clan mother or Oyaner of the Bear Clan. She was born and raised in Kahnawake. She talks here about women's rights among the Iroquois and The Great Law of Peace:

"The lineal descent of the Iroquois people runs in the female line. Women are considered as progenitors of the nation. They own the land and the soil. Clan mothers solely choose the clan chieftains from the eligible men in the clan. Clan mothers hold all titular rights. There are three for each Mohawk clan, totaling nine. Bear, Wolf and Turtle are the three Mohawk clans. (The other five Iroquois nations have additional clans including Beaver, Deer, Snipe, Heron and Hawk.) It is compulsory to marry outside your own clan. The women help and support the men. In times of strife like these (the 78-day stand-off), they cook and help the men who are on the lines in every way possible.

"The Great Law shows us how to act in the present situation. It is stated that an eagle shall sit on the top of the Tree of Great Peace. (See second law) This eagle is able to see a great distance and if he sees any danger he will at once warn the people who will defend their lands. The eagle is allegorical, meaning the people must be ever watchful. If an outside nation refuses to accept the peaceful way, the Great Law of Peace,

they bring war upon themselves. Then the Warriors shall chose a war chief. The current situation is a state of war except that the Warriors are defending their own land. (See thirty-seventh, seventy ninth and eighty first laws.)

"Warriors' are all the men of the community. They are linked with the Longhouse but warrior is not our word neither is it accurate. Our word is Rotiskarate: it means 'the car-



rier of peace'. They are always prepared to meet their Maker if that's what it takes to defend their people and lands.

"All our effort today is for the younger generations. Their health and happiness is of paramount importance to us. Our Great Law tells us we must think ahead seven generations in making decisions and agreements. We are very much aware of this in these present land negotiations.

"The Longhouse follows the Gayaneshakgowa, the Great Law

of Peace or Constitution of the Iroquois, and the Band Council does not. The Band Council has accepted the Indian Act. We have not. The Band Council is elected and funded through the federal government. The Longhouse follows the ancient laws of election of chiefs. Our Constitution is not recognized by the government. The Longhouse recognizes the Two Row Wampum treaty. It was an agreement with the

British in 1664. It says that we shall live together in the same land in peace and friendship each under our own law and paddling his own canoe, the other not to interfere or molest his neighbour.

"One aspect of the Iroquois Law that was not copied (in American constitution) were those that established women's rights. Now Americans are trying to pass an Equal Rights Amendment because they ignored the equality of women two-hundred years ago.

"So this attitude still exists in non-Indian peoples and their church and political leaders. The women of the Six Nations feel they were liberated centuries ago with the establishment of the Great Law of Peace."

Margaret Gabriel — Politics of Dispair

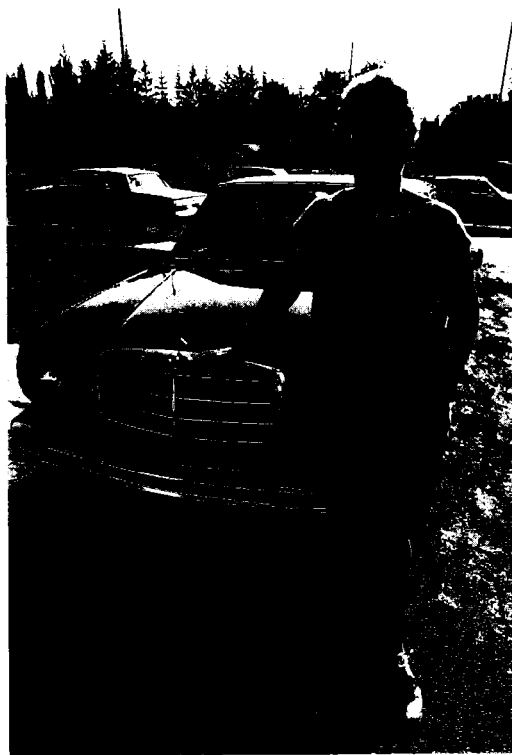
Married to a Mohawk for thirty years and mother of six (all raised in Oka) and aunt of Ellen, Mrs. Gabriel was born in Folkestone, England and has lived at Kanesatake since 1957. During the isolation of the community by the SQ and later the army, she became a volunteer worker in the emergency committee at the food bank. Her daughter Brenda was in the TC during the entire siege.

"This is a very poor community. Education could be an answer. There is still a high drop-out rate but a lot more are getting a university education now. That's what helps in the negotiations. I don't think the government people expected the young Mohawk to be so bright. And it also surprised them — the role women play.

"Bourassa and his government are stupid. They gave a grant to build the bingo hall and then sent in the SQ to close it down the first day. They smashed everything including the computers. It would have employed 700 people. Most people are against the casino idea because it would bring bad characters into the community, I agree. But bingo? So long as the money comes back into the community, I don't see much morally wrong with bingo. The Québec government raises millions through lotteries. And the Catholic church seems to like the idea. It could have given some employment for the young people and maybe finance some businesses that are needed here.

"This siege has brought the community together. The young

people have seen the governments and police in action against them now. If they are going to arrest everyone that was at the barricade that morning (July 11th) they are going to have to arrest the whole village including me. I think there will



be a movement away from the Band Council to the Longhouse traditions. (Grand Chief) George Martin has no support and most agree he is a puppet for the government and the village of Oka. It was lack of competent

negotiation that led to the impasse on the golf course land."

After the siege was over Margaret Gabriel said: "I feel drained and nothing good seems to be coming out so far. The government is using the internal strife to stall again. Tension is very high. The good thing is I have my daughter back. They fired Linda Simon, the director of the school, and replaced her with someone who just doesn't understand the Mohawk. The Band Council has disbanded the parent committee and there are no budgets for anything. The community wanted a drop-in center to help the healing process but Martin turned it down. They cancelled housing projects and the day care center. They even wanted to send food in the food bank back. They, the Band Council people, were in hotels and well paid. They took \$32,000 that was donated to the community for food and medicine and

put it in the Band Council's lawyers' trust account. But we need it. There is no employment here and no money earned during the summer. It's going to be a very rough winter for some."