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Warriors of the Skyline : A Gendered Study of Mohawk Warrior Culture

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WARRIORS OF THE SKYLINE: A GENDERED STUDY OF MOHAWK WARRIOR CULTURE

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by

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ABSTRACT

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By Anthony Patrick Curtis

This analysis provides a better understanding of how members of the Mohawk tribe strived to maintain their cultural and gender identity within a white male-dominated high steel industry. This thesis examines traditional Mohawk warrior culture, meaning traditional Mohawk rites of passage and Mohawk male gender roles, through analyzing the role of Mohawk skywalkers in the late 19th and early 20th century. In tribal Mohawk society, the passage from adolescence to manhood was representative of a boy becoming a warrior. By exhibiting bravery, he earned the title of warrior and, consistent with his new tribal stature, increased his chances at marriage and acceptance as a leader. In the late 19th and early 20th century, Mohawk boys entered manhood by becoming skywalkers. Whether it was a boy's acceptance into a riveting gang, or a war party, a boy's passage to manhood was complete.

DEDICATION

In memory of
my second father,
friend,
and fellow historical/political enthusiast:

DONALD J. SHEMWELL, Sr.
1941-2005

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INTRODUCTION

"When they talk about the men that built this country, one of the men they mean is me," said Orvis Diabo, a retired Mohawk skywalker[1] of the Caughnawaga Reservation, located in upstate New York.[2] While few are aware of the role Mohawks played in high steel construction, their participation in the trade dates back to the late 19th century. Beginning in the mid-1880s, Mohawk involvement began with the building of bridges across the St. Lawrence River. Eventually Mohawk men were involved in the building of skyscrapers within major US cities, most notably New York City.

A more in-depth understanding in the involvement of these daredevils of Caughnawaga in the high steel construction trade is possible through the use of gender analysis and masculinity studies, and when placed within the historical context of North American Industrialization. This analysis provides a better understanding of how members of the Mohawk tribe strived to maintain their cultural and gender identity within a white male-dominated high steel industry. This thesis examines traditional Mohawk warrior culture, meaning traditional Mohawk rites of passage and Mohawk male gender roles, through analyzing the role of Mohawk skywalkers in the late 19th and early 20th century. In tribal Mohawk society, the passage from adolescence to manhood was

[1] When referring to skywalker, I mean those men who were involved in the high steel construction trade, participating in the building of bridges and skyscrapers during the late 19th and early 20th century, which I portend to be the modern day warrior. When referring to Mohawks, I am referring to those specifically located on the Caughnawaga Reservation. This reservation crosses from upstate New York in the United States crossing the St. Lawrence River into the southern reaches of Canada. The Mohawks were part of the Iroquois Confederacy (a.k.a. Six Indian Nations), a military and political coalition of tribes, which included the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscaroras.

[2] Edmund Wilson, *Apologies to the Iroquois/ With a study of the Mohawks in high steel by Joseph Mitchell* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1960), 28.

representative of a boy becoming a warrior. By exhibiting bravery, he earned the title of warrior and, consistent with his new tribal stature, increased his chances at marriage and acceptance as a leader.[3] In the late 19th and early 20th century, Mohawk boys entered manhood by becoming skywalkers. Whether it was a boy's acceptance into a riveting gang, or a war party, a boy's passage to manhood was complete.

While existing scholarship provides historians with a basic framework of Mohawk participation in the high steel industry, there have been few attempts to understand this role from a gender perspective, especially during America's industrial boom, and a select few focus on the broader role of Native Americans within an industrializing North America. This thesis breaks with traditional scholarship on Mohawks in high steel construction and focuses on the issues of gender and race, showing the influence of these factors on Mohawk men in the high steel construction trade.

Current scholarship begins in 1949, with Joseph Mitchell's first attempt to document Mohawk skywalkers.[4] Mitchell took a pioneering look into Mohawks in the high steel industry, including their early involvement in bridge building and their transition to the urban environment, and their participation in skyscraper construction. The next major study into Mohawk specialization as ironworkers was Morris Freilich's

[3] Daniel K. Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," *William and Mary Quarterly*, October 1983, 530.

[4] Edmund Wilson, *Apologies to the Iroquois/ With a study of the Mohawks in high steel by Joseph Mitchell* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1960).

work in the late 1950s, early 1960s.[5] Freilich takes a more in-depth look into the motivation for Mohawk participation in such a dangerous trade. More specifically, Freilich analyzes the social structure of Mohawk men in traditional society and of those involved in the high steel trade. He argues that when "parallel social structures" are present there is a persistence in "personality traits," in this instance signifying the masculine gender identities of the Mohawk skywalkers steeped in the Mohawk warrior tradition within urban society.[6]

The analysis of this profession continues with studies by Bruce Katzer, David Blanchard, and Richard Hill.[7] Katzer provides historians with a more focused look at the Mohawk ironworker trade, examining community relationships and residence issues. Katzer argues the Mohawks of the Caughnawaga Reservation have "pursued the most economically rewarding work they have been able to find; their choices have been conditioned by their previous occupational experiences" and have been based on changes in the "sociocultural system in which they are imbedded."[8] This change imposed upon the Mohawks by their contact with Euro-Americans.

Blanchard briefly compared traditional rites of passage of Mohawk warriors to that of their contemporary brethren, ironworkers. Blanchard argues the power of men and women "do not mix", and this traveling away from the tribe fulfilled a need to reside

[5] Morris Freilich, "Cultural persistence among the modern Iroquois," *Anthropos*, Vol. 53 (1958), 473-483.

[6] Ibid., 481-482.

[7] Bruce Katzer, "The Caughnawaga Mohawks: The Other Side of Ironwork," *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 15, no. 4 (1988): 39-55; David Blanchard, "High Steel! The Kahnawake Mohawk and the High Steel Construction Trade," *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 11, no. 2 (1983): 41-60; Richard Hill, *Skywalkers: A History of Ironworkers* (Brantford, Ontario: Woodland Indian Cultural Educational Centre, 1987).

[8]Katzer, 39.

outside the woman's domain, which directly tied them to the traditional tribal setting as caretakers of "the clearing."[9]

Hill provides the most comprehensive general history of Mohawk participation within the high steel industry since Joseph Mitchell's study. Hill argues that Mohawk men entered the ironworker profession because of a deep-rooted building tradition in Mohawk society, first displayed in the building of Longhouses, and in the modern setting through the building of bridges and skyscrapers.[10]

Analysis of the previously mentioned sources leads to three prospective conclusions. First, Mohawk involvement in high steel construction was rooted in the fundamental gender roles and identities of the traditional tribal setting. Second, they participated in this trade because it rewarded the Mohawk men economically, when the stability of reservation life was in economic turmoil, for example, with the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887. Finally, Mohawk participation was steeped in Mohawk tradition. Hill argues the importance of the Mohawk building tradition, while Freilich and Katzer argue as the presence of deeply imbedded "sociocultural" traditions within Mohawk society. This thesis takes these previously mentioned studies one step further, defining gender roles and gender identities within Mohawk society, while looking at the role of warrior culture within Mohawk tribal society, and showing the impact of this deep rooted tradition on the ever-evolving occupations of Mohawk men in the late 19th and early 20th century.

[9]Blanchard, 41.

[10] Hill, 19.

The concepts that differentiate this study from the previous authors' works are two-fold. First, this thesis applies gender analysis, including its subcategory of masculinity studies, to understand the definition of gender within Mohawk society, and applying this gender definition to Mohawk involvement in the high steel industry. The source material on gender analysis includes Joan Wallach Scott's article, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis."[11] Scott argues, "Historians need . . . to examine the ways in which gendered identities are substantively constructed and relate their findings to a range of activities, social organizations, and historically specific cultural representations."[12] Scott established gender as referring to the masculine and the feminine, as early women's historians usurped the word *gender* to mean the feminine. Scott argues that gender relates directly to the culture in which it is interpreted, and can change within that culture depending on "whether a person is elderly, disabled, a child or an infant, a woman or man, or a member of any other chosen social category."[13] Gender is then not only constructed around both the meaning of the masculine and the feminine, it is dependent upon the context (in this instance *context* meaning *culture*) in which gender is being interpreted.

[11] Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 28-50.

[12] Ibid., 44.

[13] Lisa Frink, Rita S. Shepard, and Gregory A. Reinhardt, eds., *Many Faces of Gender: Roles and Relationships through Time in Indigenous Northern Communities* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2002), 3.

The material concerning masculinity studies, a subcategory of gender studies, focuses on the works of E. Anthony Rotundo and Michael Kimmel.[14] Rotundo defines manhood as a social construction that continually evolves in response to cultural and societal influences. Kimmel, expanding Rotundo's argument, offers a more complex definition of manhood in his 1996 book *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*. "What it means to be a man in America depends heavily on one's class, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality, region of country."[15] One must look at the meaning of manhood within the context of traditional Mohawk society and apply this conception of manhood to modern Mohawk society. When applying Kimmel's argument to these two settings, the traditional meaning of Mohawk masculinity remains constant although the context of masculinity changes within an industrializing society, from the tribal setting to high steel construction.

This thesis takes gender analysis one-step farther, adding the issue of race. Many historians have engaged in this method of interpretation, using gender and race as mediums of analysis, including Jacqueline Jones, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Theda Perdue, and Darlene Clark Hine.[16] Jacqueline Jones focused on the experience of black

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[14] E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books a division of Harpers Collins Press, 1993); Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996).

[15] Kimmel, 5.

[16] Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black women, Work and the Family, from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books[A Division of Random House], 1985); Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Theda Perdue, ed., *Sifters: Native American Women's Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001);and Darlene Clark Hine, "Black Migration to the Urban Midwest: The Gender Dimension, 1915-1945," in Joe Trotter's, ed., *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991).

women from their forced servitude to the present affairs of black women. Jones states, "Black women actually inhabited a unique subculture, one not shared entirely by either black men or white women."[17] In other words, Jones analyzes historical events, using both gender and race as an analytical tool.

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese uses this same method, analyzing the relationship between black women and white women within the context of plantation culture in the South. Theda Perdue studies women in Cherokee society, while Darlene Clark Hine considers gender and race within the context of the African American "Great Migration" in the early part of the 20th century. All of these works focus on a specific group of individuals, focusing on gender and race as important determining factors, and how these factors effect their participation in a particular labor force. This thesis follows in that tradition, using gender and race to study Mohawk "warrior culture" within the context of high steel construction in the late 19th and early 20th century, focusing on how traditional Mohawk masculinity persisted within this new setting.

Secondly, this study analyzes Native American migration to the urban setting within the context of an industrializing North America. The secondary literature examining American industrialization, composed by Carroll Purcell and Ruth Schwartz Cowan, is significant in making this thesis unique from the previous studies.[18] These two general studies provide a foundation for developing an understanding of Mohawk participation within an industrializing nation, a topic ignored by historians. These studies

[17] Jones, 5.

[18] Carroll Pursell, *The Machine in America: A Social History of Technology* (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1999); Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *A Social History of American Technology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

define an industrializing country, looking at the innovations in transportation technology, which directly affected the jobs of Mohawks prior to bridge building and influenced these Mohawk men to join the high steel industry during the late 19th and early 20th century. This thesis will rely heavily upon the use of U.S. Census data from 1870-1940, looking at population and job data for the Native American population of a cross-section of U.S. cities (specifically New York City, NY; Buffalo, NY; Detroit, MI) representative of a Native American migration, in showing the role of Native Americans within an industrializing America.

The first chapter establishes a definition of gender within Mohawk society by juxtaposing traditional ideals of masculinity and femininity against one another. This is possible through the analysis of gender relations, gender roles, and gender identities within Mohawk society. This allows for the exploration and defining of warrior culture, establishing this as a masculine ideal.

The second chapter builds upon this definition of gender, focusing on Mohawk involvement in the high steel industry in the late 19th and early 20th century, using this as a microcosm of Native American involvement in an industrializing North America. This chapter also focuses on the ideal of occupational evolution[19] as experienced by Mohawk men and the idea of warrior culture within the modern setting.

[19] Occupational evolution means the continual change in Mohawk employment since Euro-American contact. The Mohawks transitioned from the tribal hunter, warrior setting to becoming involved in the French fur trade, to the timber trade, and finally to high steel construction, first as skywalkers in the bridge building industry and then proceeding to building skyscrapers. An ever-changing relationship between Mohawks and Euro-Americans, within a continuously changing Euro-American economic system, drove the Mohawks from one type of employment to the next.

The final chapter focuses on Native American migration during industrialization and their role within an industrializing nation. There are no major studies written dealing with the migration of Native Americans during industrialization. This chapter explores the broader Native American population in three urban areas, New York City (NY), Buffalo (NY), and Detroit (MI), to see if there was a significant Native American population growth during industrialization. This chapter analyzes this migration pattern, seeking to establish whether this was a permanent or temporary migration to urban areas, and how this fits within traditional warrior culture. This analysis provides a basis for future work on Native Americans and industrialization.

This thesis shows the development of Mohawk society, especially the concept of warrior culture, within an industrializing society. In addition, it shows that warrior culture did evolve within a modern industrialized context and that Native Americans played an important role in the industrialization of North America. However, Theda Perdue's warning must be heeded not to over generalize across Native American tribal boundaries, as not all Native American tribes adhered to the same cultural and social constructs. However, following European contact the role of warrior becomes an absolute across tribal frontiers, as all Native Americans attempted to fend off westward expansion by Europeans and the destruction of their societies and cultures.

This study has two unique characteristics. First, this work distinguishes itself from previous studies by using gender, along with race, as a medium to study Native Americans and industrialization in the United States, this through the use of Mohawk warrior culture. Secondly, this work fills a gap in Native American literature. Daniel

Richter defines warrior culture within the early colonial period, while other historians have shown the existence of warrior culture throughout much of the nation's history of conflict. Carl Benn during the War of 1812, Thomas Britten in World War I, Kenneth Townsend in World War II, and Tom Holm in the Vietnam War.[20] This work fills this gap in history, showing how Mohawk warrior culture survived within the high steel industry in the late 19th and early 20th century.

[20] Carl Benn, *The Iroquois in the War of 1812* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Thomas A. Britten, *American Indians in World War I: At War and At Home* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1999); Kenneth William Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2000); and Tom Holm, *Strong Hearts, Wounded Souls: Native American Veterans of the Vietnam War* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1996.

CHAPTER 1

"Defining the Gender Dichotomy: A Study of Masculinity and Femininity Within Mohawk Society"

Denotations of masculinity within Mohawk society have maintained a certain amount of fluidity throughout the tribe's history. Male and female gender roles within Mohawk society have designated women as gatherers and men as hunters and warriors. With the encroachment of Europeans, the Mohawk have continuously avoided societal and definitional assimilation. Masculinity, as defined using traditional Mohawk male gender roles, especially through the interpretation of traditional Mohawk warrior culture, aids in the establishment of a foundation in the understanding of occupational evolution for Mohawk men since the invasion of Europeans.

Utilizing the analytical basis of Scott's, Rotundo's, and Kimmel's arguments, a definition of masculinity within Mohawk society is clear. After defining traditional Mohawk masculinity, the focus of this examination comes to light. This study argues that the definition of masculinity within Mohawk society has remained the same, but the contexts in which Mohawk masculinity exists have continuously evolved.

Joan Wallach Scott in "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" outlines gender's usefulness in deconstructing the historical record. Scott stated, that "to pursue meaning, we need to deal with the individual subject as well as social organization and to articulate the nature of their interrelationship, for both are crucial to understanding

how gender works, how change occurs."[1] When using Scott's application of gender to Mohawk society, the importance of masculinity as a "useful category of historical analysis" is understood, as the term gender does not solely mean the feminine. In studying traditional concepts of Mohawk masculinity within the context of their latter involvement in the bridge and skyscraper building industries, this study reinforces the application of gender as an analytical category.

Michael Kimmel and E. Anthony Rotundo provide a strong foundation for establishing a working definition of masculinity. Like the frontier, defined in terms of place, time, and condition, the definition of masculinity is dependent upon these key factors. Masculinity is based upon place (defined by society and culture), time (the period in question), and condition (the circumstance of the present culture and society). Michael Kimmel states this succinctly: "Manhood means different things at different times to different people."[2] What remains the same in defining gender, and forming the basis of this study, is the meaning of masculinity within Mohawk society. The definition remains the same, but the context in which it exists is ever changing. The authors of the *Many Faces of Gender* qualify the definition of gender in a cross-cultural perspective, stating, "Gender should examine the limitless ways humans in different cultures choose to create, re-create, and change their personal identities and their interactions within (and

[1] Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 42.

[2] Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 5.

between) their societies and environments in meaningful ways."[3] This perspective enhances the definition of gender and its application to Mohawk society. It also shows how the application of traditional Mohawk gender roles transcends the encroachment of European society on the North American continent. This definition of gender evolves to fit the ever-evolving world outside the traditional indigenous tribal setting. The definition of gender remains timeless in Mohawk society; however, traditional gender roles are continuously reapplied within the modern setting.

Kimmel and Rotundo agree with the basis of Scott's interpretation of gender, that masculinity is a social and cultural construction. Rotundo, like other scholars, argued, that each society is responsible for constructing its own cultural definition of men and women.[4] If culture and society influence the definition of masculinity, it then becomes fluid in nature and becomes applicable in new social and cultural circumstances. Rotundo states, "Manhood is not a social edict determined on high and enforced by law. As a human invention, manhood is learned, used, reinforced, and reshaped by individuals in the course of life."[5] This definition offered by Rotundo, although he focused on the "dominant version" of manhood (that of white middle-class men), also defined masculinity in Mohawk society, as the definition of masculinity in Mohawk society has remained the same, but the modern context in which it exists continues to evolve.

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[3] Lisa Frink, Rita S. Shepard, and Gregory A. Reinhardt, eds., *Many Faces of Gender: Roles and Relationships through Time in Indigenous Northern Communities* (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2002), 3.

[4] E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books a division of Harpers Collins Press, 1993), 1.

[5] Ibid., 7.

A comparison of male versus female gender roles, for purposes of this study focusing on the division of labor in Mohawk society, helps in defining the attributes of Mohawk masculinity.[6] Theda Perdue, in her book *Sifters: Native American Women's Lives*, gives a poignant example of how gender is forced upon males and females beginning at birth. Although this example is from Cherokee society, the meaning of the example crosses tribal gender boundaries. Perdue quoted an anonymous nineteenth century Cherokee person who, upon attending the birth of a child, inquired, "Is it a bow or a sifter?" Perdue explains the quote: The bow, a weapon of war and an implement used on the hunt, symbolized masculinity; the sifter, a necessity in making bread, symbolized femininity within society.[7] These strictly defined groupings of the masculine and the feminine continue to play a prominent role in almost all indigenous societies. These gender groupings, both masculine and feminine, do not work against one another in the attempt to achieve power over the other group. They are complementary groupings, ultimately working together to achieve balance within society. Perdue, referring to the works of anthropologists, states, "Feminist anthropologists have referred to 'arenas of power' and 'complementary' roles in describing the relationship between Native women and men; each gender had its own responsibilities, and Native societies recognized that the contributions of each were essential to survival."[8] Through a study of

[6] Within Mohawk society, a key aspect in the defining of gender roles is the division of labor. The division of labor allows us to explore the feminine and masculine identities within Mohawk society, and leads us to ultimately defining the focus of this thesis: warrior culture (the defining factor of Mohawk masculinity).

[7] Theda Perdue, ed., *Sifters: Native American Women's Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3.

[8] Ibid., 4.

masculine-feminine relationships within a contextualized setting, especially those related to the political and economic spheres, an understanding of how the masculine-feminine gender relationship works within Mohawk society is achieved.

Studies by Elisabeth Tooker and Nancy Bonvillain focus directly on the roles of women in Iroquois society. These two scholars, however, come to different conclusions. Tooker argues that women do not wield the power in Iroquois society, as she tries to dispel the common misinterpretations offered by other scholars of the Iroquoian matriarchal society; in reality it is a matrilineal society. Alluding to the fact that men hold the power in Mohawk society, Bonvillain argued the exact opposite, stating that women do indeed hold significant economic, social, and political power within Iroquoian society. However, in defining the power of women in Iroquoian society, both of these authors define male gender roles.[9]

Comparing the political and economic roles of men and women in Iroquoian society can help solidify a definition of gender. First, looking at the political roles within Iroquoian society helps in seeing the development of "reciprocal obligations between the sexes."[10] This meaning that gender roles within the society were interdependent, as Iroquoian society was about achieving balance, not power over one another.

Within the political system, men controlled the affairs of the council. Women may have tried to persuade the men, but they did not control the ultimate decision-

[9] Elisabeth Tooker, "Women in Iroquois Society" in *Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquoian Studies*, ed. Michael K. Foster, Jack Campisi, and Marianne Mithun (New York: State University of New York Press, 1984); Nancy Bonvillain, "Iroquoian Women" in *Studies on Iroquoian Culture* ed. Nancy Bonvillain, Occasional Publications in Northeastern Anthropology, No. 6 (Rindge, NH: Franklin Pierce College Department of Anthropology, 1980).

[10] Tooker, 120.

making within the council.[11] Nancy Bonvillain argued, "Women and their opinions were influential in matters of policy and in decisions for action." She continues, "Political interests were represented by lineage and clan chiefs who were chosen from specific matrilineages. They were men who were selected by the leading matrons of the matrilineage. . .Women chose the successors to chiefs."[12] The leading woman made the ultimate recommendation, arrived at through consideration of a public consensus. Women also held considerable power in their ability to depose any unruly chief. Once again, this was based on the opinion of the feminine community at large.[13] Perdue supported this argument arguing that in Iroquois society, the title of mother insured certain rights to political power. The women then, through their clan mothers, chose the tribe's chiefs, while also holding the power to oust them.[14] Bonvillain's argument is more convincing as she provided concrete examples of how women hold significant power within the political spectrum of Iroquoian society, acting as the great equalizer to male-dominated councils. Another political relationship that existed between the masculine and feminine in Mohawk society, besides the deposing power of the feminine, was the power women indirectly brought to the chiefs' council meetings.

The indirect power women asserted in tribal meetings, which also relates to the economic power of the feminine, was *food*. While the male chiefs concentrated on governing the villages, women contributed "the most important currencies of chiefly

[11] Ibid., 113.

[12] Bonvillain, 53.

[13] Ibid., 54.

[14] Perdue, *Sifters*, 3-4.

leadership – food."[15] While food remained the domain of the feminine in Mohawk society, especially within the context of the political and economic realm, women possessed especially great power during menstruation and pregnancy. In politics, as in economics, James Carson argues, "Iroquois men and women enjoyed particular rights and prerogatives, but for the whole to function, the two halves had to be in agreement."[16] The concept of complementary roles plays the dominant part in Mohawk society, striving to achieve a common balance in order to survive. This agreement between the two genders plays an important role during the Quebec Bridge disaster in 1907, a turning point for the Mohawks in the high steel industry.

The second most important role considered in understanding the relationship between men and women in Iroquoian society are roles ascribed to each gender within the economic realm. Men and women controlled complementary sectors of the Iroquoian economy. Carson argued that, "Women's power rested on their importance as farmers and as mothers. . . Men moved in the forests that lay beyond the fields and villages, and they supplemented the bounty of the women's gardens with meat procured by the hunt."[17] Within a hunter-gatherer society, such as Iroquoian society, women gathered wild fruits and plants, while harvesting their own crops within "the clearing."[18] Perdue argued, "Throughout native North America, women acted as sifters, giving life and sustaining

[15] James Taylor Carson, "Molly Brant: From Clan Mother to Loyalist Chief" in *Sifters: Native American Women's Lives*, ed. Theda Perdue (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 48.

[16] Ibid., 49.

[17] Ibid., 48-49.

[18] "The clearing" is defined as the land on which the tribe maintains shelters and cultivates their crops.

life," an absolute she contends crosses all tribal boundaries.[19] Men were in charge of hunting, fishing, and trading. Within the area of farming, men cleared the forest in order to build the village and farm the land. Perdue summarizes this gender relationship within Mohawk society, arguing: Women participated in rituals and songs that helped corn grow, while men participated in ceremonies that brought success in war and on the hunt. Gender, determined the kind of life, from work to prayer, that a member of the Mohawk tribe lived.[20] Gender, in other words, is a dominant, if not *the* dominant, defining factor of Mohawk society. These aspects of the tribe's economic and domestic lives point towards the achievement of balance within this realm, each gender contributing a significant, yet equal, amount to the society.

Tooker argued that women had substantial economic power within Iroquoian society because of two reasons. She stated, "Iroquois women by their labor contributed the major portion of subsistence" to society and "they owned much property, including that used in production."[21] Property, in all actuality, belonged to no particular individual; rather the "animals, plants, water and the like were put on this earth for 'our use', that is, for the use of human beings." Tooker continued, "Property rights, then, were probably of little importance in Iroquoian society, and, in fact, there was relatively little in the economic organization to 'control'." In other words, property was not "owned" by any individual, it was "owned by those who used it."[22] By this definition of ownership,

[19] Perdue, *Sifters*, 3.

[20] Ibid., 4.

[21] Tooker, 114.

[22] Ibid., 116-117.

women controlled the village and the clearing surrounding it, because they were the ones who planted and harvested the crops, and scavenged for wild fruits and plants within close proximity to the village. Men, on the other hand, controlled the land they hunted upon, made war on, traded on, and cleared to prepare the land for fields and villages.[23] This creates a problem, as the two "separate" domains intersect and cross each other's boundaries, so ownership is made impossible, and use becomes the defining factor in determining individual property rights. Tooker suggested that economic gender roles within Iroquoian society were about achieving equal participation within society, not issues of achieving power. Bonvillain argued the opposite, arguing that men ultimately gave their "products of the hunt" and goods from their trading to their wives, giving women power over the economic realm in Iroquoian society.

Bonvillain also argued that men's participation within the daily domestic sphere decreased with the arrival of Europeans. Bonvillain stated, "Although the prestige of a good hunter, trader, and warrior probably increased at this time period, men's share in daily economic and domestic life decreased as they spent more and more time away from the villages."[24] Women then became even more powerful within the Iroquoian economy. The economic sphere was not the only area in which a woman's influence changed. Women's roles in the political sphere were drastically altered. Englishmen often refused to negotiate with Native women, as it conflicted with their idea of the native "savage." Carson writing on Molly Brant, a powerful woman within Iroquoian society during the

[23] Ibid., 119.

[24] Bonvillain, 50.

initial European contact, stated that, "Englishmen regarded the power exercised by women as proof of Native 'savagery.' They believed that women's submission to men's will characterized 'civilization,' and they denied that women's productive and reproductive roles entitled them to a public voice."[25]

Women traditionally exerted their power through the matrilineal clan system present in Mohawk society. The head of the longhouses were the clan mothers, who were "usually older women so honored for their wisdom and industry, [and] who sought to foster the family's influence and power."[26] Women also exerted this "clan mother" power when a clan member died. The clan mother assembled a group of male warriors to avenge the loss of the clan member, and they retained the authority to block a declaration of war, fearing the repercussions it may have on their fellow tribesmen.[27] The clan mothers also arranged marriages in order to increase the power and influence of her individual clan. Carson argued, "Men controlled redistribution, went to war, and negotiated with foreigners. They could do none of these things, however, without women and the essential kin ties women provided."[28] The men's lives were especially tied to their clans, in particularly their clan mothers, as all distribution of the balance of power in Mohawk society was derived from the clan mother. The existence of the masculine and the feminine within Mohawk society was about achieving a balance given to the individual genders by the clan mothers and the chiefs of the society. Carson makes a

[25]Carson, "Molly Brant: From Clan Mother to Loyalist Chief," 53.

[26] Ibid., 49.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 50.

summative statement about men in Mohawk society, stating, "Men obtained their physical and social existence as well as their sustenance from women, and so they valued women's views."[29] This belief and respect of the opposite gender, with the ultimate objective within Mohawk society of achieving balance, allowed for the survival of the society as a whole.

Within the political and economic spheres of traditional Iroquoian society, women and men achieved balance. Following European contact this balance was interrupted, forcing a shift in the roles of Iroquoian men and women. The more powerful a particular role became for a particular gender in Mohawk society, was followed with the lessening of another of the gender's role. For example, women now played a more important part in the economic arena (their role in negotiating decreased), while men came to play a more important role in negotiating with the white man, and with their role of warrior (their role in the daily economic realm decreased), one of four "building blocks of the mature masculine," which include King, Warrior, Magician, and Lover.[30]

Man's role as warrior defined masculinity within Mohawk society. The prominence of the role simultaneously shifts with European contact. The constant struggle on this frontier, between Native American and European cultures, gained momentum as Europeans expanded westward, constantly confronting the many Native American tribes. This confrontation between the two cultures, made man's role as warrior the defining characteristic of masculinity in Native American society, in this

[29] Ibid., 52-3.

[30] Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette, *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine* (San Francisco: Harper-San Francisco, 1990) xi.

instance within Mohawk society. Benjamin Franklin recognized this gender delineation in Native American tribal society in the interim years following the French and Indian War (1754-1763) and prior to Pontiac's Rebellion (1763-1766). Franklin stated, in reference to the relationship between the Indian tribes and European settlers, "…the plan of preventing war among them, and bringing them to live by agriculture, they resent as an attempt to make women of them, as they phrase it, it being the business of women only to cultivate the ground. Their men are all warriors."[31] Franklin is acknowledging the fact of two distinct gender identities in Indian tribal society, in which women were the keepers of the clearing and men were the warriors. Mohawk men in pre-European contact America, post-European contact America, and in an industrialized America exhibited all of these traits, whether they were warriors or ironworkers.

Warrior culture embodied many different attributes for a Mohawk male. The characteristics of a warrior include aggressiveness, alertness, ability to adapt to the situation, training (both body and mind), and living with the constant threat of death in their lives.[32] Being a warrior also signified honor, courage, and bravery, gained through traditional rites of passage.

Mohawk rites of passage, define a boy's transition from adolescence into manhood. Shannon E. French, in her book entitled *The Code of the Warrior*, defined these rites of passage among the Plains Indians, stating, "Young men on the cusp of manhood would infiltrate deep inside an enemy village to steal some prized or sacred

[31] H.W. Brands, *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Anchor Books [A Division of Random House, Inc., 2000), 349.

[32] Moore and Gillette., 79-80.

objects, thus proving their ingenuity, courage, and potential as hunters/warriors."[33] This also defines warrior culture within Mohawk society. A boy becoming a warrior characterized the passage of boy to manhood. By exhibiting bravery he earned the title of warrior and consistent with his new tribal stature, increased his chances at marriage and acceptance as a leader.[34]

Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette, both professors of psychology, state "that this primarily masculine energy form (there are feminine warrior myths and traditions too) persists because the Warrior is a basic building block of masculine psychology, almost certainly rooted in our genes."[35] Moore and Gillette argue that the lacking of this ritual process in Western Europe and the United States led to a crisis in masculinity in these areas of the world. They continue with this argument, supporting the idea of a distinct ritual process in Native American tribal societies, stating, "There are carefully

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[33] Shannon B. French, *The Code of the Warrior: Exploring Warrior Values Past and Present* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 143.

[34] Daniel K. Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," *William and Mary Quarterly*, October 1983, 530.

[35] Moore and Gillette, *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover*, 77; Although I have found no primary and secondary documentation of women warriors in Iroquoian (Mohawk) society, there are sources that point to the existence of women warriors in other North American Native societies. Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 86-108; and Laura Jane Moore, "Lozen: An Apache Woman Warrior" in *Sifters: Native American Women's Lives*, ed. Theda Perdue (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 92-107. Perdue's *Cherokee Women* focuses on women's roles in Cherokee society, focusing one chapter (entitled "War") on the role women traditionally assume when deciding to go to war in Cherokee society. Perdue, however, explores the existence of women warriors within Cherokee society, although it is a rarity. Laura Jane Moore, in her chapter entitled "Lozen: An Apache Woman Warrior" (in Perdue ed., *Sifters*), explores a warrior woman (Lozen) within Apache society. Moore looks at Lozen's involvement in warrior culture, which began when she accompanied her husband on raids and in war parties. This occurred during the U.S. government's forced removal of Native Americans towards reservation life. Men and women were both needed as warriors at that point to fend off the impending threat to Apache society. This is a more in-depth study of a woman's trek to become a warrior woman, a part of a warrior culture traditionally reserved for men and the masculine traits of Native North American society.

constructed rituals for helping the boys of the tribe make the transition into manhood."[36] These authors state that there has to be a ritual process in order to complete the transition from adolescence to manhood, if not then the immature masculine will dominate the masculine side of society, as will the immature feminine if their ritual process is not complete. The domination of the immature masculine within society include such characteristics as "abus[e] and violent acting behaviors towards men/women; passivity and weakness; inability to act effectively and creatively in one's own life;" and often "an oscillation between the two -- abuse/weakness, abuse/weakness."[37] The immature masculine/feminine comprise the basis for the existence of patriarchy/matriarchy in society. The lack of a ritual process within a society leads to the creation of an insecure maturity (both masculine and feminine), while Moore and Gillette argue the presence of a ritual process in society creates a rite of passage to achieve a "secure maturity" for both of the sexes, and therefore a more balanced society.[38] The existence of such a ritual process in tribal societies, and for purposes of this study within Mohawk society, provide for the existence of such a strong, stable masculine identity which survives in many different contexts, this connected to the primary definition of masculinity, that of warrior culture.

Moore and Gillette offer a succinct and thorough examination of the ritual process within the tribal setting, showing the path of the masculine in Native society, the transition from boyhood to manhood. In order for the boy to make the complete

[36] Ibid., xv-xvi.

[37] Ibid., xvi.

[38] Ibid., 5.

transformation from the immature boy to the "secure maturity" of manhood the ritual process must contain the presence of *death*, as "the boy Ego must 'die'" in order for the mature man Ego to emerge.[39] The ritual process also contains two key elements. First, it must take place in a sacred or hallowed place, whether it is a specially constructed hut or a sacred cave. Second, a ritual elder must perform the ritual, in this instance "a wise old man."[40] In he space the ritual takes place, all contact with the outside world must cease, especially the man's association with and the influence of women. During the process, the authors argue, "They [the boys] learn to submit to the pain of life, to the ritual elders, and to the masculine traditions and myths of the society. They are taught all of the secret wisdom of men. And they are released from the sacred place only when they have successfully completed the ordeal and been reborn as men."[41] When this process is completed and the boy has learned the wisdom of the ritual elders and met the goals of the ritual process, for example by participating in a certain number of war party raids, the boy's transition from boyhood to manhood is considered complete by the elders of the society. Moore and Gillette stated the warrior aura in brilliant summation, stating,

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[39] Ibid., 6.

[40] The female ritual process (the rite of passage from adolescent girl to mature woman) has a much more defined process than that of the male's ritual process. A girl's transition to womanhood occurs with the onset of menstruation, a sign of power in Mohawk society for women. To gain a deeper understanding of the female ritual process consult the following works Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Theda Perdue, ed., *Sifters: Native American Women's Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Nancy Bonvillain, "Iroquoian Women" in *Studies on Iroquoian Culture* ed. Nancy Bonvillain, Occasional Publications in Northeastern Anthropology, No. 6 (Rindge, NH: Franklin Pierce College Department of Anthropology, 1980); and Elisabeth Tooker, "Women in Iroquois Society" in *Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquoian Studies*, ed. Michael K. Foster, Jack Campisi, and Marianne Mithun (New York: State University of New York Press, 1984).

[41] Moore and Gillette, *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover*, 6-7.

> His control is, first of all, over his mind and his attitudes; if those are right, the body will follow. A man accessing the Warrior archetype has 'a positive mental attitude,'. . . This means that he has an unconquerable spirit, that he has great courage, that he is fearless, that he takes responsibility for his actions, and that he has self-discipline.[42]

This is the pre-contact, traditional interpretation of warrior culture within tribal society, more specifically that of Mohawk society. Following the arrival of Europeans, traditional concepts of warrior culture remained the same, but reappeared in a modern industrialized context.

A succinct definition of gender within Mohawk society is thus possible: the women of the tribe are the gatherers, the keepers of the longhouse, the controllers of "the clearing," and appointed the chiefs of the tribe, while the men are the hunters, the traders, and the warriors of the tribe. These basic delineations have remained the same in Mohawk society over time, overcoming the many attempts by Europeans to assimilate them into western, white, European society. Joan Wallach Scott's argument, that historians must study gender identities and how they are constructed, and relate these conclusions to, as Scott argues, "a range of activities, social organizations, and historically specific cultural representations."[43] This argument fits the main thesis of this study, as traditional gender roles in Mohawk society transcended the tribal setting, adapting to the modernization of North American European society, and were applied to a new setting when Mohawk men took to bridge building and ultimately to the skies of the high steel industry in the early 1900s. As the authors of *Many Faces of Gender*

[42] Ibid., 83.

[43] Scott, 44.

stated, “Gender should examine the limitless ways humans in different cultures chose to create, re-create, and change their personal identities and their interactions within (and between) their societies and environments in meaningful ways.”[44] The meaning of gender remains timeless in Mohawk society, although the context in which it is applied is continuously re-created. In this instance, the re-creation takes place over the rivers and city streets of an industrializing North America.

[44] Frink, 3.

Chapter 2

"Mohawk Skywalkers: The Survival of Traditional Warrior Culture in the Modern Industrial Setting"

The Steel-Worker

Wherever new bridges are flinging
Their spider-web skin to the skies;
Where the steel ships are made for the business of trade;
Where the skyscrapers gauntly arise;
Where the cranes lift the twenty-ton girders
And red rivets hiss thorough the air---
From Chile to Nome and from China to Rome,
The steel-worker's sure to be there.

"Hey, you!"
(So the foreman said)
"Watch the way you're doin' there;
Use your bloomin' head!
Lower, here! Now let 'er go!
Ram the rivets through!"
(That's the way they do the job,
Do it proper, too.)

This week you find him on Broadway
Some forty floors upward or so,
Where the men seem to crawl on just nothing at all
When you watch from the sidewalk below.
Next week he'll be starting for Egypt,
This viewer of cities and men,
With his money all spent he is fully content
So long as he's moving again.

His passport's the card of his union
Wherever he happens to land,
His home is the spot where a job's to be got,
For the skill of his head and his hand;
No task is too distant to tackle,
No task too outlandish or dim;
He carelessly goes like the wind as she blows,
And the world has no terrors for him.
--Berton Braly, in Songs of the Work-a-Day World.[1]

The historiography of Mohawk involvement in the ironworking industry dates back to Joseph Mitchell's 1949 work entitled "A Study of the Mohawks in High Steel," which is included in Edmund Wilson's work *Apologies to the Iroquois*. Mitchell's work

[1] As quoted in *The Bridgemen's Magazine*.

is the pioneering study on this subject matter, as he shows in some detail the transitional period for Mohawk men, from the traditional tribal setting to that of the urban environment. Mitchell's work focused on the skills and agility of these men and how these characteristics transcended the tribal setting and were applied to the modern trades of Mohawks.[2]

The next work is Morris Freilich's participatory survey of the Mohawks entitled "Cultural Persistence among the Modern Iroquois," published in 1958. Freilich analyzes the social organization of Mohawk ironworkers, comparing these modern realities to the traditional social setting of Mohawk society. Freilich is the first scholar to specifically look at traditional Mohawk warrior men and compare this with the later ironworker trade. However, Freilich does not focus on specific gender connotations in Mohawk society and the issue of rites of passage.[3]

Following in chronological order is Jack Frisch's 1975 study entitled "The Iroquois Indians and the 1855 Franklin Search Expedition in the Artic." Frisch looked at why the Iroquois Indians were specifically involved in the expedition, looking at some of the key characteristics representative of Mohawk involvement in the high steel trade. Frisch takes Freilich's idea a step further, briefly connecting the "interim steps" between traditional Mohawk work and modern ironworking. He looks at the warrior and man's need to be away from his wife on the warpath and while hunting, and parallels that to

[2] Edmund Wilson, *Apologies to the Iroquois/ With a study of the Mohawks in high steel by Joseph Mitchell* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1960).

[3] Morris Freilich, "Cultural Perspective among the Modern Iroquois," *Anthropos,* Vol. 53, 473-483.

Mohawk men in the ironworking profession. Mohawk men needed to go away to build bridges and buildings to satisfy this gender tradition within Mohawk society.[4]

The next study is David Blanchard's article "High Steel! The Kahnawake Mohawk and the High Construction Trade," published in 1983. Blanchard briefly touched upon the ideal of ironwork as a form of the traditional rite of passage for Mohawk boys. Blanchard is the first to mention this connection of rite of passage to the Mohawk's ironworking trade. However, Blanchard does not explain in detailed fashion traditional gender roles in Mohawk society, and the effects these traditional definitions had on the Mohawks involved in the ironworking trade.[5]

The most in-depth work on Mohawk ironworkers is Richard Hill's booklet entitled *Skywalkers: A History of Indian Ironworkers*, published in 1987.[6] Hill compiled the most complete history to date of Mohawk Ironworkers. However, Hill concentrated on a different concept than the prior authors. Hill viewed Mohawk participation in the high steel industry as continuing the long held traditions of Mohawk men's involvement in the building trade. His argument is rooted in early Woodland cultures, which were known for their building of longhouses. Hill's argument is simple: the Mohawk tradition of construction made it easy for them to adopt their new trade of ironworking. According

[4] Jack A. Frisch, "The Iroquois Indians and the 1855 Franklin Search Expedition in the Artic," *Indian Historian*, Vol. 8, no.1 (1975): 27-30.

[5] David Blanchard, "High Steel! The Kahnawake Mohawk and the High Steel Construction Trade," *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 11, no. 2 (1983): 41-60.

[6] Richard Hill, Skywalkers: *A History of Ironworkers* (Brantford, Ontario: Woodland Indian Cultural Educational Centre, 1987).

to Hill's argument, bridges and skyscrapers became the longhouses of the past for these Mohawk men of construction.[7]

The final work that needs to be addressed is Bruce Katzer's work entitled "The Caughnawaga Mohawks: The Other Side of Iron Work," published in 1988. Katzer focuses on economic reasons for Mohawk participation in the high steel industry: "At any given time, the Caughnawagas have pursued the most economically rewarding work they have been able to find; their choices have been conditioned by their prior occupational experiences, but their actions have been mainly responses to changes in the state of the sociocultural system they are embedded."[8] Katzer recognized the influence of past Mohawk crafts, but based his argument on pure economic factors.[9]

All of these authors draw different conclusions about the involvement of Mohawks in the high steel industry. These conclusions range from economic to tradition. However, this thesis differentiates itself by defining gender in Mohawk society, then using this definition to explore modern Mohawk involvement in the high steel profession. With the creation of a more concrete definition of gender (as defined in the first chapter) and by using this as a basis for analyzing Mohawk involvement in the ironworking trade, a stronger foundation for the author's arguments of economic reasoning and building tradition is achieved.

Since the European invasion of North America in 1492, the cultures and traditions of Native Americans continually evolved through the constant encroachment of Euro-

[7] Ibid.

[8] Bruce Katzer, "The Caughnawaga Mohawks: The Other Side of Ironwork," *Journal of Ethnic Studies,* Vol. 15, no. 4 (1988): 39.

[9] Ibid.

American[10] values and mores. Though the French and English failed to completely transform Native societies along European lines, Mohawk culture was significantly altered.

Around 1700, Caughnawaga Natives migrated to Montreal and took part in the French Fur trade, as canoe men. For half a century, youths around the age of seventeen became involved in the French fur trade, until its decline in Lower Canada between 1830 and 1850. This forced the men of Caughnawaga to find alternate lines of work, ranging from joining the circus to becoming involved in the timber industry; these examples are the beginning of what would become an era of occupational evolution for Mohawk men.

Mohawk men engaged in many different jobs during the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century; this ultimately resulted from North America's commercial and industrial revolution. From their involvement in the French fur trade and timber industry, to their involvement in the high steel industry, the commercial development of North America affected the Mohawks, while the Mohawks continuously affected the development of North America. They were forced to continuously adapt to modernizing society, while restructuring their culture, traditions, and gender roles around their new employment. The Caughnawaga men were recognized in the timbering trade for their skill "in running immense rafts of oak and pine over Lachine Rapids."[11] This involved actually running on moving log rafts, a prodigious feat of balance, which became a distinguishing characteristic for Mohawk men involved in the high steel construction trade.

[10] The term Euro-American meaning the pre-revolutionary white, Anglo-Saxon in North America.

[11] Wilson, 13.

The men of Caughnawaga remained in these various jobs until an opportunity arose in 1886, with the building of the Canadian Pacific Railroad Bridge across the St. Lawrence River by the Dominion Bridge Company. Since the bridge encroached upon the lands of Caughnawaga, the Dominion Bridge Company promised to employ men of the Mohawk tribe to move materials for the company. An official of the Dominion Bridge Company spoke of its Mohawk employees:

> They were dissatisfied with this arrangement and would come out on the bridge itself every chance they got. It was quite impossible to keep them off. As the work progressed, it became apparent to all concerned that these Indians were very odd in that they did not have a fear of heights. If not watched they would climb up into the spans and walk around up there as cool and collected as the toughest of our riveters, most of whom at that period were old sailingship men especially picked for their experience in working aloft. These Indians were as agile as goats.[12]

They would walk around the narrow beams high above the river, seemingly unconcerned about the height, concentrating on the task at hand. While climbing on the bridge during their breaks, they would beg the foremen to teach them the art of riveting. The men of Caughnawaga, acting somewhat immune to the loud noises of riveting, learned the new trade quickly and wanted to become a part of the highest paid workforce in the bridge building community. Giving the Indians a riveting gun proved to be one of the most advantageous moves made by the bridge building community, because these men were "natural born bridgemen."[13]

Thus, the Mohawk found their new occupation by chance, injecting traditional warrior culture values and skills into this new context. Bruce Katzer, in his article "The

[12] Ibid., 14.

[13] Ibid., 15.

Caughnawaga Mohawks: The Other Side of Ironwork," argued that instead of this new occupation being tied to traditional warrior culture, it is more likely that the "Caughnawagas have pursued the most economically rewarding work."[14] The economic factor played a key role for these men, but as David Blanchard argued, "ironwork has helped the Mohawk nation to maintain its culture and traditions during the three hundred years of contact with the Euro-American society."[15] Katzer argued more for Mohawk involvement in the North American economy, while Blanchard argued that Mohawk tradition was the defining factor for Mohawk involvement in the high steel industry. The secondary source material related to Mohawk ironworkers reiterates these two motivating factors, that of tradition and economics.

The Mohawks soon moved to their first job as a professionally trained rivet gang, at the Soo Bridge, which connected the twin cities of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario and Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Each Mohawk riveter bringing along an apprentice from the reservation to train on this new job. Former riveter and patriarch of this band of men, Old Mr. Jacobs, stated, "The Indian boys turned the Soo Bridge into a college for themselves." This practice is much the same as the traditional rites of passage in Mohawk society, where a warrior brought an adolescent boy out on the hunting path, or as part of a raiding party. Thus, the system of traditional warrior culture is comparable to the apprenticeship training by Mohawk men in bridge building. Traditional masculine Mohawk gender roles were displayed by these bridgemen, who continuously adapted these traditional masculine gender roles to the modern industrialized setting. What once

[14] Katzer, 39.

[15] Blanchard, 59.

was preparing a young boy for the warpath became preparation for a riveting gang. Gender to Mohawks is timeless, the setting in which they display these gender traditions is under continual change. By 1907, there were over seventy skilled bridgemen in the Caughnawaga band, and more trained everyday.[16]

By August of 1907, the "Bridgewalkers" had moved on to another bridge building project, once again spanning the St. Lawrence River. The Quebec Bridge included the longest span of suspension bridge, some 1,800 feet in length. However, on August 29, 1907, disaster struck. The steel started to twist and it was only a matter of time before the bridge collapsed. Edmund Cooper, the chief engineer of the Quebec Bridge project, aged and in ill health during the project, "desired to build this bridge as his final work."[17] When he had learned of the bending and twisting of the steel structure, he sent a telegram instructing all work to cease, until further evaluations were made of the structure. The message Cooper sent was delayed or lost, due to a telegraph strike. When the whistle blew at 5:30 p.m. to stop work for the day, a "grinding sound" was heard. The workers began yelling, "the bridge is falling", and it collapsed with the sound of "snapping girders and cables booming like a crash of artillery."[18] Ninety-two men were on the bridge as the structure failed. Seventy-five men died in the accident, including persons aboard the steamer *Glenmont* which had not cleared the expanse when it collapsed. Among these seventy-five men were thirty-five Caughnawaga tribesmen. In keeping with the times, a

[16] Wilson, 18.

[17] Henry Petroski, *Engineers of Dreams* (New York: Vintage Book, 1995), 109.

[18] Ibid., 104.

New York Times article describing the collapse of the Quebec Bridge enumerated the whites, while the Mohawks remained anonymous.[19]

In contrast to the *Times* report, *The Bridgemen's Magazine*[20] listed the individual names of all the men killed in "The Disaster," twice, first by the magazine editor's, then by D.B. Haley, a white individual involved in the disaster. Haley lists these ironworkers by name, but also divides them into different categories, which include, Card Men – White (17 men), Card Men – Indian (33 men, all from Caughnawaga), List of Apprentices (17 men, including 4 from Caughnawaga), and List of Men Killed without Cards (19 men, no men from Caughnawaga).[21] The men of Caughnawaga clearly were not only involved in ironworking on the Quebec Bridge, they were also Union members and were involved in training other Caughnawaga individuals as apprentices, helping these individuals complete their quest from boyhood to manhood, consistent with the traits of traditional Mohawk warrior culture.

Known as "The Disaster" to members of the Caughnawaga band, many members of the building community believed such a tragic happening would scare away the men of the Mohawk tribe from the high steel trade. D.B. Haley, author of the previously mentioned letter to the editor, stated, "It has struck Caughnawaga. . .with particularly

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[19] "Bridge Falls Drowning 80," *New York Times*, 30 August 1907, 1.

[20] The official journal of the International Association of Bridge, Structural, and Ornamental Iron Workers, AFL, aka the International Ironworkers union.

[21] D.B. Haley, Letter to the editor in *The Bridgemen's Magazine*, vol. 7, No. 10 (October 1907): 630-632. It is important to note that 33 Caughnawaga men were listed as "Card Men" in the Ironworker's union publication in 1907. This points to a very important question, why were the men of Caughnawaga, being Native American men, allowed into an AFL affiliated union during this period, while African-American men were not seen as equals to white workers, and were not accepted into AFL affiliated unions because of the prejudice policies? This question needs to be the focus of another paper.

heavy force, leaving 25 widows there alone, and a great number of small children, and removing from their midst a great many of the finest specimens of strength and manhood they had on the whole reserve."[22] The Quebec Bridge disaster, however, only strengthened the ties and pride of the Caughnawaga men to their highly dangerous, masculine work.[23] There were many other occupations the men of Caughnawaga could have reverted to, such as male teachers or employees of band affiliated organizations such as the cultural center, but these jobs were not considered "real work," because "real work must be 'hard' in a physical sense."[24] That "real work" has two elements, one being that it is "not of the line of what is perceived as the 'ordinary' work that North American men find themselves engaged in." Secondly, "For the Mohawk man, work must be dangerous, or pose some challenge to the skills of climbing, balance, and steadiness." These factors have characterized the work of Caughnawaga men since the formation of the settlement in 1667: "Today at Kahnawake real work is ironwork."[25] Craig Heron, in his book entitled *Working in Steel*, speaks of masculinity within the steel mill setting, stating, "That ever-present danger could breed fear in some steelworkers, but, for many, it posed that challenge to prove their manhood."[26] The same is true of Mohawks within the bridge building industry, and their involvement in the building of skyscrapers.

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[22] Ibid., 631.

[23] Wilson, *Apologies to the Iroquois*, 18.

[24] Blanchard, "High Steel!," 52-53.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Craig Heron, *Working in Steel: The Early Years in Canada, 1883-1935* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1988), 50.

The movement of Mohawks from the building of bridges to that of building skyscrapers happened when there was a shortage of jobs for the "Bridgewalkers" in Canada during the 1910s. This decision was also influenced by the women of the Caughnawaga community following the Quebec bridge disaster in 1907. The women did not want to chance the loss of another generation of Caughnawaga men in such a disaster. This power, exerted by women, is paralleled by their involvement in traditional Mohawk society when the society was considering the question of war. Responding to the women's pressure, the men of Caughnawaga fanned out across North America and began to work on all types of structures, including office buildings, hotels, and hospitals. It was said among men in the building industry, "any structure of size in Canada, there was an Indian on it."[27] Soon Canada became too small for these daredevils of Caughnawaga, and they started to migrate south to major cities in the United States, including Buffalo, Detroit, and New York City.[28] John Diabo, a Caughnawaga bridgeman, received a job in New York City on the Hell's Gate Bridge in 1915-16, where his co-workers knew him as "Indian Joe." Soon three more Indian workers joined him in New York City, where they formed and worked as a gang. They had only worked together for a few weeks when Indian Joe took a fatal step off a scaffold and drowned in the river below. The people of Caughnawaga tried to explain Indian Joe's death, stating, "It must have been one of those cases, he got in the way of himself."[29] The Caughnawaga men working alongside Indian

[27] Wilson, 19.

[28] Buffalo, Detroit, and New York City will be the focus of the 3rd chapter of this thesis, looking at census data and questions whether or not there was a wave of Native American migration to major U.S. cities during North American industrialization during the late 19th and early 20th century.

[29] Wilson, 20.

Joe recovered his body and returned to the reservation. No other Caughnawaga men worked in the high steel industry of New York City until the 1920s.[30]

In 1926, three or four Caughnawaga riveting gangs came to New York City during a building boom, and worked on such projects as the Fred F. French Building, the Graybar Building, One Fifth Avenue, and, in 1928, the George Washington Bridge. In the 1930s, seven additional gangs came to New York City and began work on the Rockefeller Center.[31]

Alfred E. Smith, President of Empire State Inc. and former governor of New York, in 1930, proposed the building of the Empire State Building, on the site of the original Waldorf Astoria Hotel in downtown New York City. Smith found himself in the middle of a "twenty-five year breach between the International Association, Structural and Ornamental Iron workers and some of the New York steel erecting companies."[32] Smith only wanted union steelworkers to work in the building of the Empire State Building and tried to mediate an end to "the twenty-five year controversy."[33] Smith disengaged himself with the talks to end the dispute, and William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), engaged himself as mediator in the dispute. Alfred Smith then concentrated his efforts in building the tallest skyscraper in the world.

Smith had no problem with the men of Caughnawaga, because upon their arrival in New York City they enrolled in the Brooklyn local of the high steel union, the

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[30]Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] "Smith Acts to End 25-Year Labor Row," *New York Times*, 3 April 1930, 31.

[33] Ibid.

International Association of Bridge, Structural, and Ornamental Iron Workers, AFL. The men found cheap furnished housing and cheap hotels in the North Gowanus neighborhood, a few blocks away from the union hall. By 1949, there were eighty-three Caughnawaga men in the Brooklyn local and forty-two in the Manhattan local.[34] Only one-third of these men worked steadily in New York City; most roamed coast-to-coast seeking jobs with overtime, which was not offered to them in New York City. Some Caughnawaga gangs worked in half a dozen cities around the country in one year, occasionally returning home to see their families in Brooklyn and the reservation in Caughnawaga. Some of the foremen who worked with the Caughnawaga men believed overtime was an excuse to roam, seeing Caughnawaga men whom were offered overtime leave their job, and pursue their passion of high steel work in another city. George C. Lane, manager of Bethlehem Steel in New York, said of the Caughnawaga ironworkers, "movement of Caughnawaga gangs was impossible to foresee, much like the movement of a flock of sparrows."[35] This roaming is also representative of traditional Mohawk warrior/hunter culture, as warriors/hunters left the villages for extended periods to fulfill their masculine duties.

The Empire State Building's "basketlike steel framework was built by daredevil steel workers casually placing rivets and swinging girders higher than man had ever reached before." The men of Caughnawaga were these daredevils. After completion of the Empire State Building, the men of Caughnawaga moved on to help build many more

[34] Wilson, 21.

[35] Ibid.

important structures across the United States, including the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937.[36]

As of today twenty percent of ironworkers in the building industry of New York are still Mohawk Indians, following in the footsteps of their fathers and grandfathers.[37] The structures standing across the United States and Canada today, "testify to the remarkable accomplishments of the Caughnawaga high-steel men who functioned in small, deft units, where each man knew and fully trusted his comrades and where the safety of all...depended on each individual."[38] The men of Caughnawaga not only helped build America, they maintained their cultural identity while building a working and fraternal relationship with white workers. Rather than simply submitting to attempted assimilation[39] of the Indians into white mainstream American culture, they continuously

[36] Andrew K. Eken, "The Ultimate Skyscrapers?," *Scientific American*, May 1931, 318.

[37] *World's Tallest Buildings: Fear of Heights*, Documentary, 2000, The Learning Channel (TLC).

[38] "Mohawk Sky Walkers: Walking on Air," N.d., http://collections.ic.gc.ca/heirloom_series/volume4/64-65.htm (12 September 2000).

[39] Throughout history, there have been many attempts by white, Anglo-Saxon Americans to assimilate the Native American population into what they deemed the cultural mainstream. A few examples of these attempts to assimilate the Native American populous centered on the issues of religion and land. There has been an attempt to turn Indians into good Christians, especially with French Catholic missionaries (the Jesuits) and the Canadian Iroquois in pre-revolutionary North America. This is in part important, due to the French trying to gain allies in the Iroquois nation, as part of their confrontational relationship with the British, who were also developing alliances with many Indian peoples. Also, since the landing of Europeans in America in 1492, there has been a movement to push the Indian population on the eastern coast of North American west towards the Appalachian Mountains, then towards the Midwestern plains beyond the Mississippi River. Finally this removal of Indians from their traditional lands, with the Indian Removal policies of U.S. President Andrew Jackson in the 1830s, to the creation of reservation life in the Oklahoma Territory. The creation of Indian reservations, helped the U.S. Government create a cultural buffer zone, to help maintain European cultural values, unimpeded by Indian culture and traditions. This separation of European culture and Indian culture was beneficial to white America until Indians were ready to enter the American economic job market and traditional white society, as productive "white" American workers. This is what the men of Caughnawaga transcended by maintaining Mohawk culture and tradition within the industrial setting, when becoming ironworkers in major U.S. cities.

reinvented traditional masculine Mohawk gender roles to fit into a modern industrial context.

Mohawk involvement in the bridge and skyscraper building industries may have happened due to their geographical location and for reasons of economic stability, but the men of Caughnawaga who became involved in this occupation reapplied traditional Mohawk warrior culture to fit the occupational evolution Mohawks experienced in the modern era, most recently within the ironworker trade. Mohawks referred to as "daredevils", as being "as agile as goats", and as working in "small, deft units" are a few of the parallels, which tie modern day Mohawk ironworkers to traditional conceptions of masculinity in Mohawk society, this definition rooted in traditional Mohawk warrior culture.

The influx of Mohawk men to major U.S. cities in the early part of the 20th century, seeking jobs in ironwork, raises the question of whether or not there was a substantial migration of Native Americans to city centers during this period. Taking into account the experiences of the men of Caughnawaga in New York City between the 1910s and the 1940s, and the role of traditional Mohawk warrior culture, the following chapter focuses on three cities: New York City, NY; Buffalo, NY; and Detroit, MI. This as a sampling of the Native American population in these areas between 1870 and 1940, seeking to understand whether there was a permanent or temporary migration of Native Americans to major U.S. cities during industrialization in North America following the American Civil War and prior to the Second World War.

Chapter 3

"A Brief Study in Native American Migration during North American Industrialization, 1870-1940"

This final chapter includes original, somewhat speculative, analysis of US census data, focusing on Native American migration during industrialization in North America following the American Civil War, and uses Mohawks ironworkers as an example of Native American roles within an industrializing nation. U.S. Census data from 1870-1940 can help us understand Native American involvement in the urban setting, as the presence of Mohawk ironworkers suggests Native American involvement. The movement of Mohawk men to the city environment suggests that there was a migration of Native Americans to the city setting between 1870 and 1940. This also suggests that Mohawk men were comfortable enough with the structure of their gender roles in the industrial setting and that these cultural values adapted thoroughly to the urban environment. The Mohawk then voted with their feet, integrating themselves into the everyday city life of North America. The main questions that this chapter helps to answer are: Within what context did this migration occur? Was there a permanent or temporary Native American migration to the urban setting? How does this pattern of permanent or temporary migration fit into the traditional framework of warrior culture? These answers help form a more complete picture of Native American migration during North American industrialization.

As is outlined in the previous chapter, Mohawk men became increasingly involved in the ironworking trade in the 1880s. They entered this profession building

bridges, and then transitioned into the building of skyscrapers. This increase in Native American migration to the urban setting produces an overall net growth until the post-WWII era when there is a boom in Native American migration to US cities. This growth was not only a Native American trend, it was true of the larger US population. As Carroll Pursell states, "By 1920 the census showed that slightly more than half the nation's population lived in urban areas."[1] With the majority of Americans now permanently residing in cities, many different ethnic groups were migrating to the urbanized setting to fill jobs created by industrialization in the United States. This affected the Native American population in a different way than prior migrations; the first were *forced* migrations (in the form of removal by the federal government) while this migration was voluntary.

The migration of Native Americans paralleled the migration of African-American men and women who were migrating from the South, to the Western, Midwestern, and Northern regions of the United States. This African-American movement, known as "the Great Migration", occurred between 1915 and 1960. A total of "about five million rural southern African-Americans migrated to the northern industrialized cities" in this period.[2] As of 1900, around nine out of every ten African Americans still lived in the South.[3] In the two following decades the African-American migration totals significantly increased.

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[1] Carroll Pursell, *The Machine in America: A Social History of Technology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 131.

[2] Alferdteen Harrison, ed., *Black Exodus: The Great Migration from the American South* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1991), vi.

[3] Ibid., xiii.

In 1910, 450,000 African-Americans migrated northward, while this total increased dramatically to 750,000 in 1920, the height of the Great Migration.[4]

However, historians still debate the reasoning for the mass migration of African-Americans from the South. In *Black Exodus: The Great Migration from the American South*, the authors identify a few different forces: (1) "the use of the myth of white racial superiority to justify and enforce segregation through overt hostility and lynchings"; (2) "the idling of African-American labor in the South because of increasing white job competition as industrialization and agricultural mechanization came to the South"; (3) "the work opportunities in the war industries in the north"; and (4) "the relocation of large numbers of African-Americans from areas where they had lost hope of bettering their conditions."[5] The multitude of reasons offered by these authors all relate to the attempt by southern whites to oppress the southern African-American population. The Native Americans migrating during industrialization had their own set of reasons to migrate from their rural tribal lands to the industrialized, urban setting. However, both Native American and African Americans strove to attain employment in the urbanized setting and they strove to maintain their individual cultures within the white dominated culture of northern cities.

This chapter focuses on the cities of Buffalo (NY), New York City (NY), and Detroit (MI), due to evidence that Mohawk men worked in these three cities in the

[4]Stewart E. Tolnay and E.M. Beck, "Rethinking the Role of Racial Violence in the Great Migration," in *Black Exodus: The Great Migration from the American South*, ed. by Alferdteen Harrison (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1991), 20.

[5] Harrison, viii.

Table 3.1 – Total City Population and Total Indian City Population in Buffalo, NY; New York City, NY; and Detroit, MI, 1870-1940, by actual population figures and percentage of population increase/decrease.

City	Date	Total Pop.	(%+/-)	Indian Pop.[6]	(%+/-)
Buffalo, NY	1870	117,714	--	0	--
	1880	155,134	31.79%	4	--
	1890	255,664	64.80%	2	-50.00%
	1900	352,387	37.83%	6	200.00%
	1910	423,715	20.24%	54	800.00%
	1920	506,775	19.60%	97	79.63%
	1930	573,076	13.08%	435	348.45%
	1940	575,901	0.49%	487	11.95%
New York, NY[7]	1870	942,292	--	9	--
	1880	1,206,299	28.02%	46	411.11%
	1890	1,515,301	25.62%	52	13.04%
	1900	3,437,202	126.83%	31	-40.38%
	1910	4,766,883	38.68%	343	1006.45%
	1920	5,620,048	17.90%	149	-56.56%
	1930	6,930,446	23.32%	391	162.42%
	1940	7,454,995	7.57%	1,064	172.12%
Detroit, MI	1870	79,577	--	4	--
	1880	116,340	46.20%	34	750.00%
	1890	205,876	76.96%	11	-67.65%
	1900	285,704	38.77%	14	27.27%
	1910	465,766	63.02%	41	192.86%
	1920	993,678	113.34%	155	278.05%
	1930	1,568,662	57.86%	350	125.81%
	1940	1,623,452	3.49%	434	24.00%

Source: *Ninth Census of the United States (1870),* vol. 1 (population), 380-391; *Tenth Census of the United States (1880),* vol. 1, pt. 1 (population), 420, 422; *Eleventh Census of the United States (1890),* vol. 1 (population), 370, 464, 470-471; *Twelfth Census of the United States (1900),* vol. 1, pt. 1 (population), 430, 623, 630-631; *Thirteenth Census of the United States (1910),* vol. 1, pt.1 (population), 91, 93; *Fourteenth Census of the United States (1920),* vol. 1 & 2 (population), 47, 77-78; *Fifteenth Census of the United States (1930),* vol. 1 & 3, pt. 1 & 2 (population), 25-26, 297, 1152; *Sixteenth Census of the United States (1940),* vol. 2, pt. 3 & 5 (population), 150, 157, 171, 179, 892.

[6] It must be noted that the cumulative Total Indian Population data collected by the U.S. Census bureau may contain statistical anomalies. The data contains no delineations by tribal affiliation, but prior studies indicate a large portion of Mohawk men migrating to the city setting during this period. It can be assumed that a large portion of the Total Indian Population in these cities have connections to the Mohawk tribe.

[7] In 1898, New York City (the only one included in the 1890 census) incorporated five boroughs into its total population, thus drastically increasing the total population data in the years between the 1890 and 1900 U.S. Census. These were Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island.

Chart 3.1 -- Total Population of Buffalo, NY; New York, NY; and Detroit, MI, 1870-1940

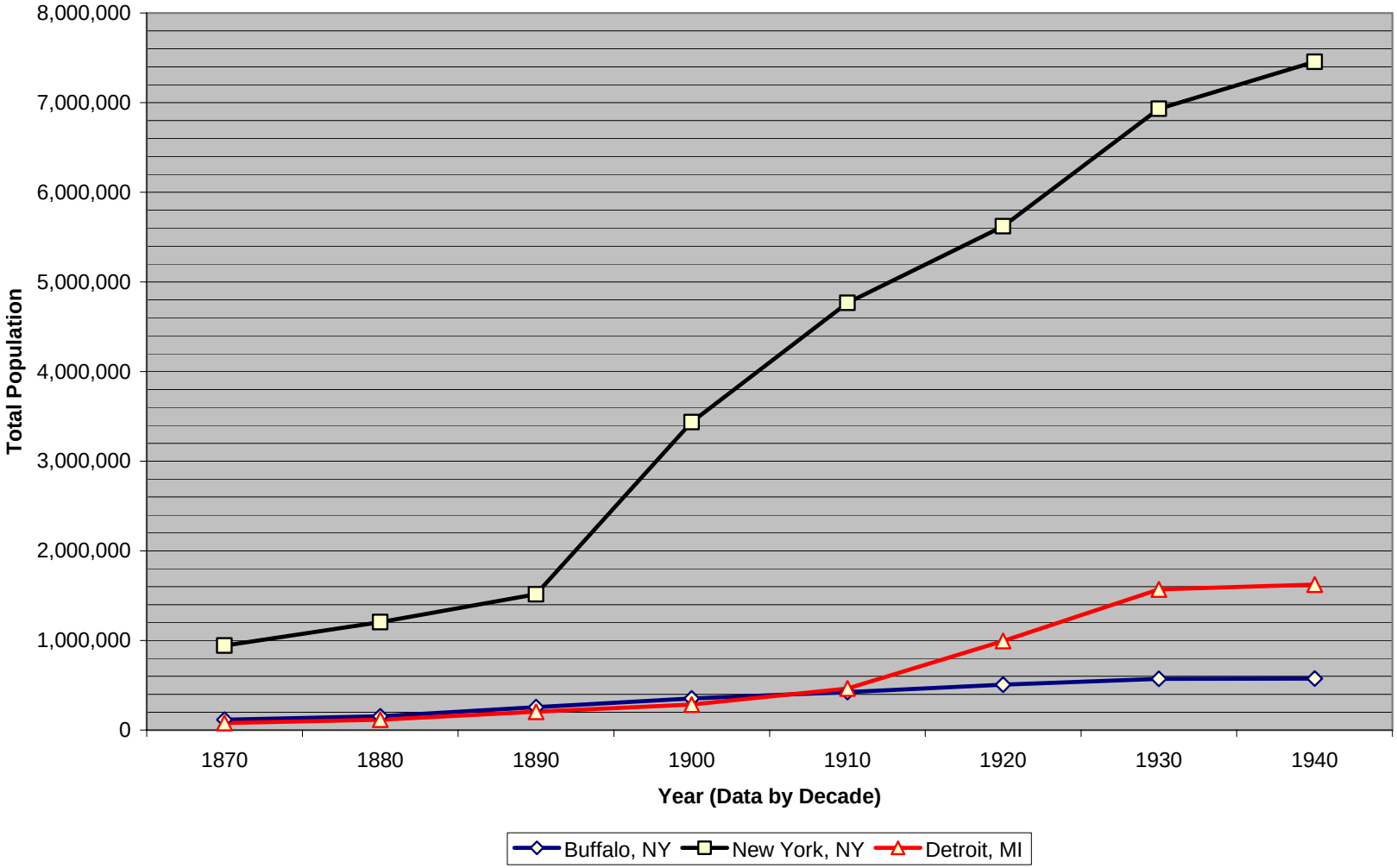


Chart 3.2 -- Total Indian Population of Buffalo, NY; New York, NY; and Detroit, MI, 1870-1940

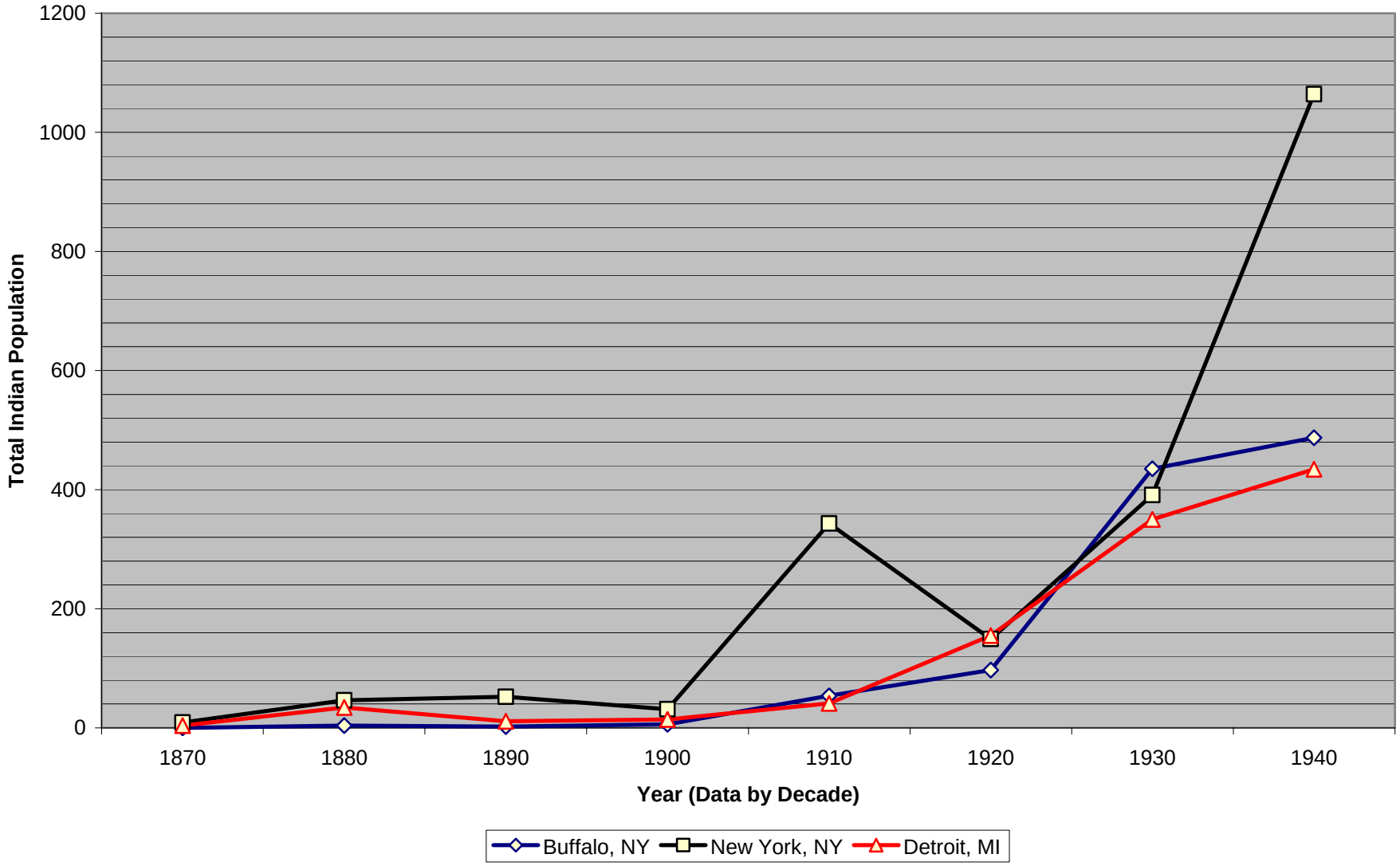


Chart 3.3 -- Total Indian Population, Percentage Increase/Decrease for Buffalo, NY; New York, NY; and Detroit, MI, 1870-1940

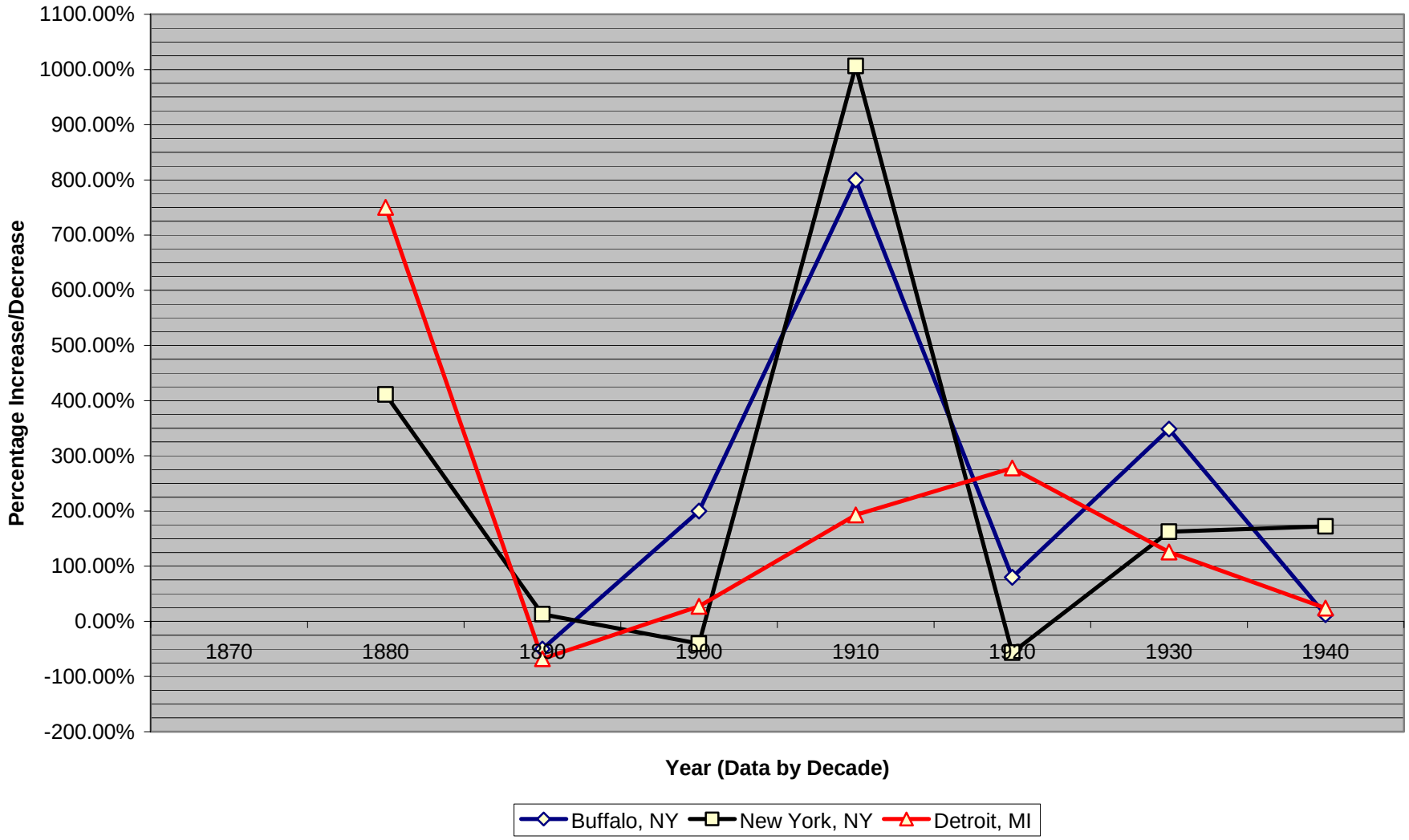


Chart 3.4 -- Buffalo, NY -- Percentage Increase/Decrease, 1870-1940

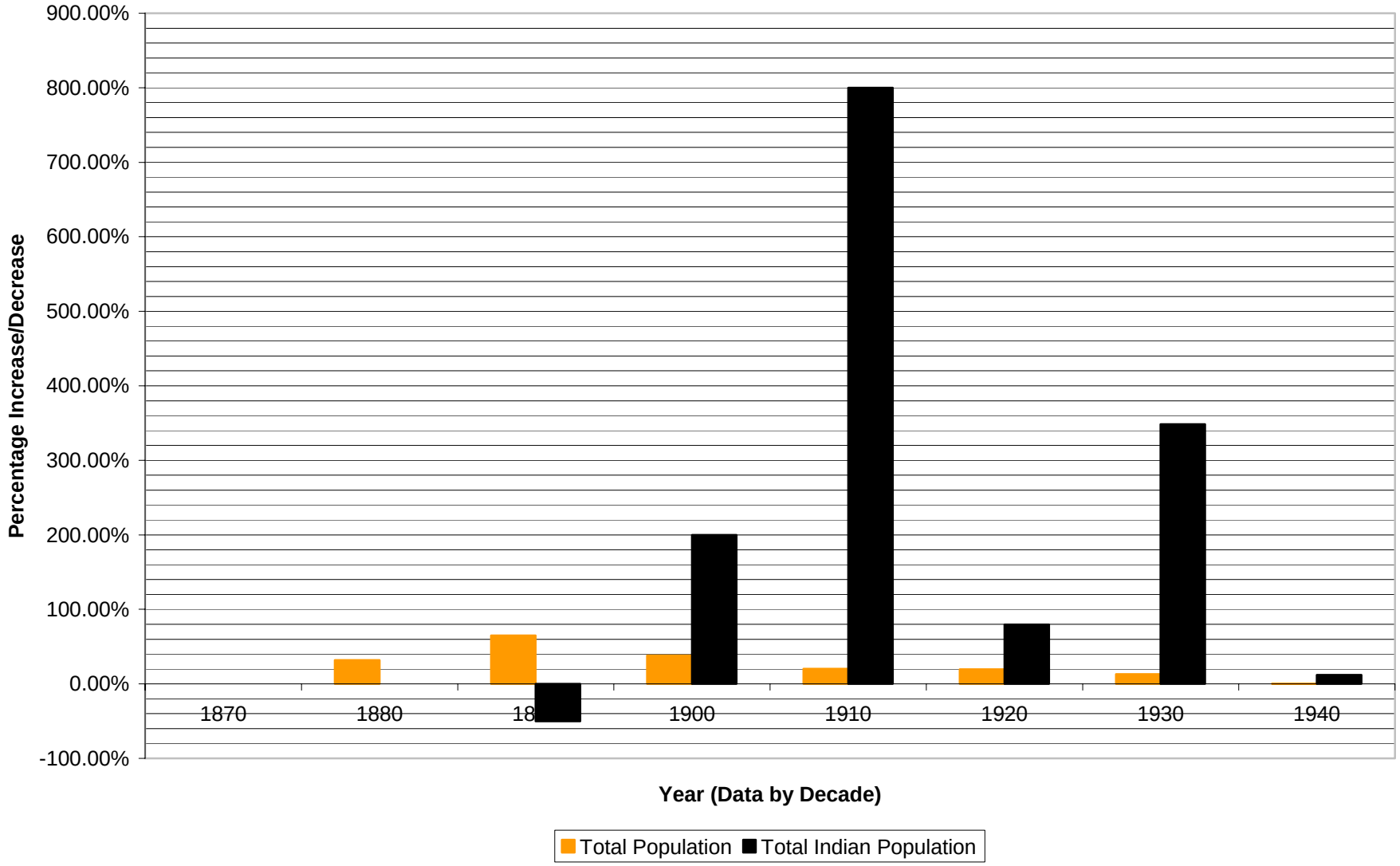


Chart 3.5 -- New York, NY -- Percentage Increase/Decrease, 1870-1940

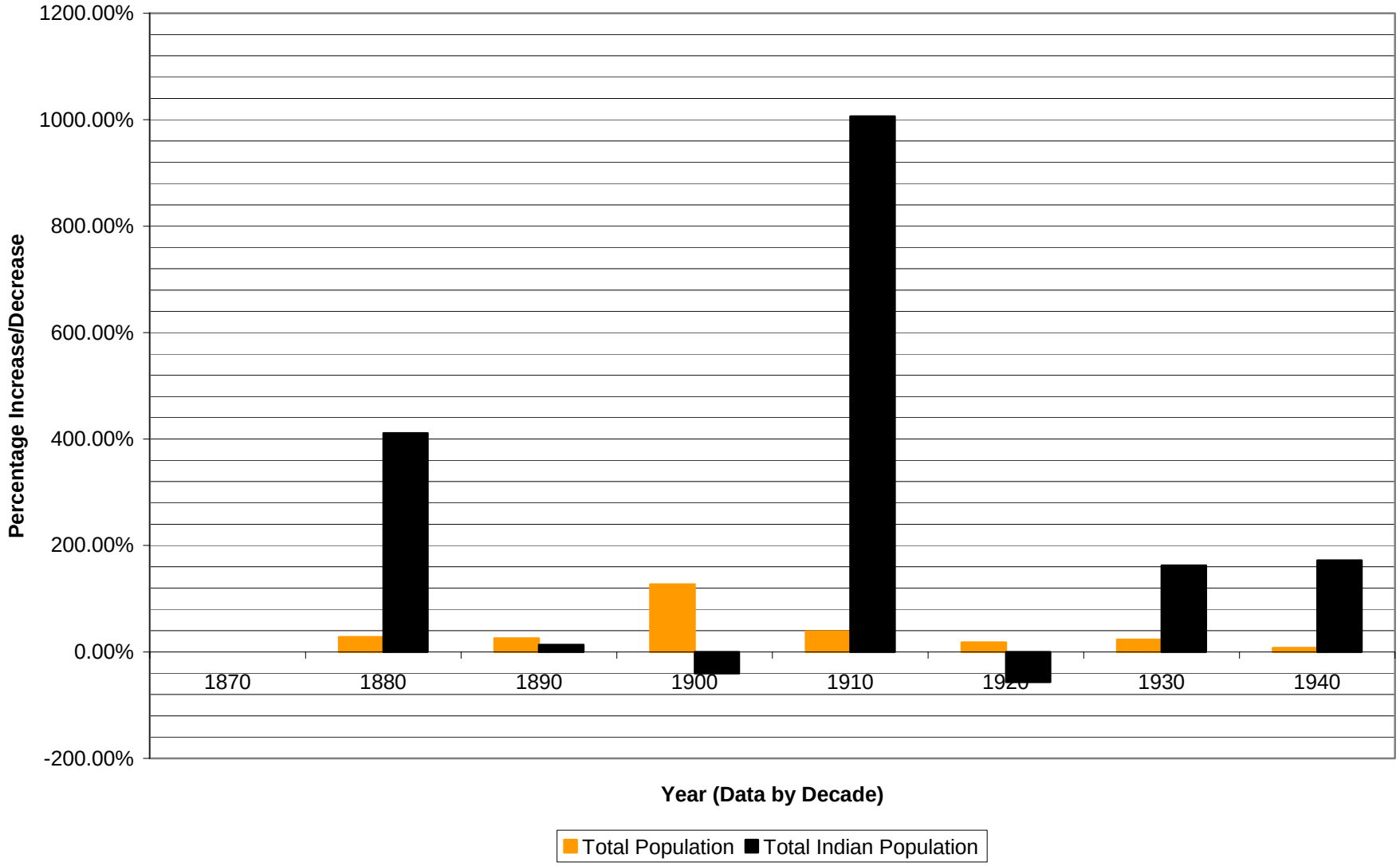
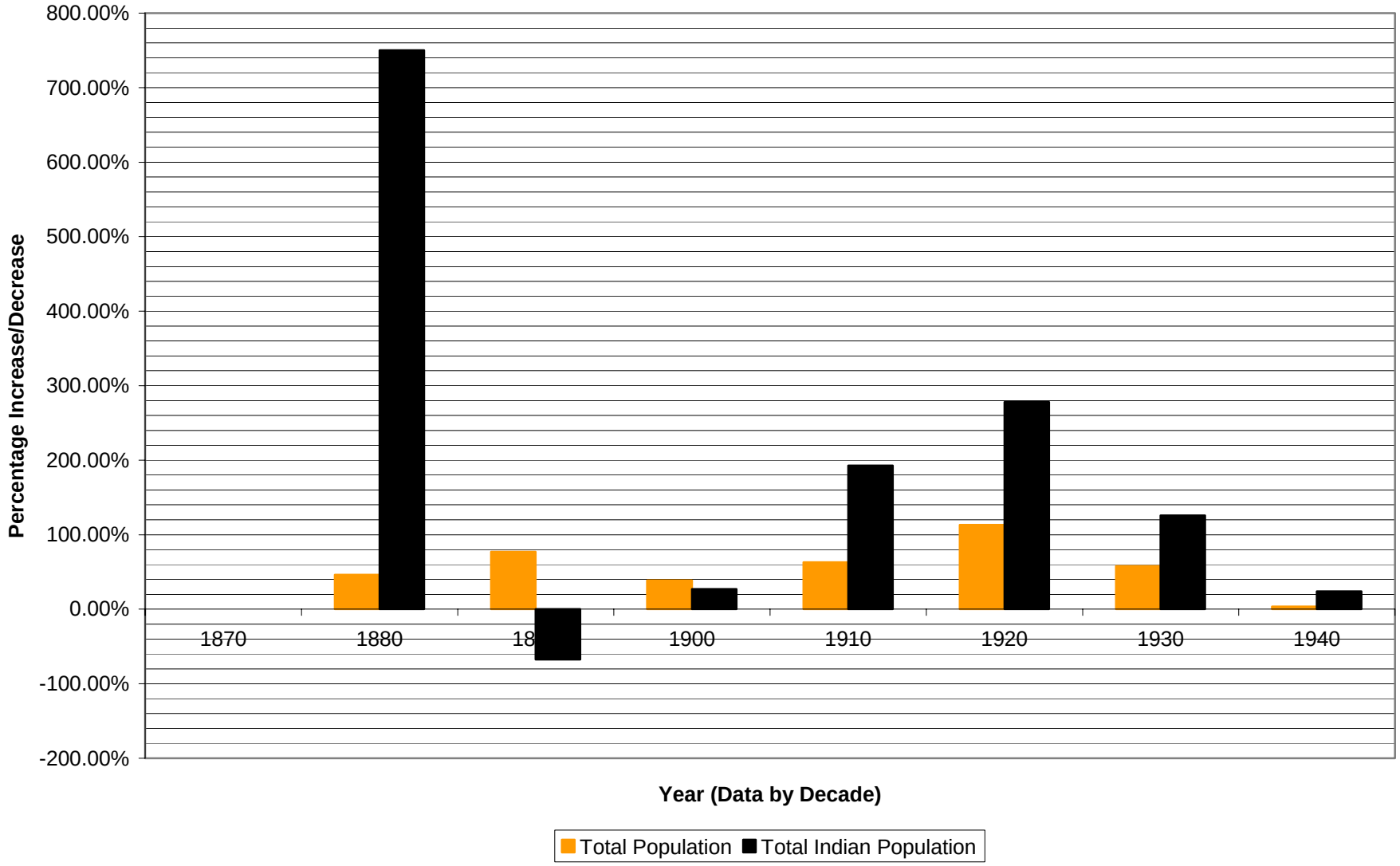


Chart 3.6 -- Detroit, MI -- Percentage Increase/Decrease, 1870-1940



ironworking trade.[8] This data table (Table 3.1), constructed from U.S. Census data from 1870-1940, portrays a comparison of total city population to total Indian population in the three cities and includes percentage change over time. This table shows substantial cumulative growth in the population of these three cities from 1870-1940, and substantial growth in the Native American populations of each city, although the Native American population remains a small fraction of the total population of each city.

A deeper analysis of the census data of these three cities, on an individual basis, shows this period as a foundation for later Native American migration. First, the total population of Buffalo, NY increased from 117,714 in 1870 to 575,901 in 1940, an almost five-fold increase. Buffalo's Native American population increased from zero in 1870 to 487 in 1940, a large percentage increase in population. Buffalo experienced a sizeable growth in the Native American population over a seventy-year period. Second, the total population of New York City, NY increased from 942,292 in 1870 to 7,454,995 in 1940, approximately eight times the population. New York City's Native American population increased from nine in 1870 to 1,064 in 1940, 118 times the original total Native American population. Finally, the total population of Detroit, MI increased from 79,577 in 1870 to 1,623,452 in 1940, almost twenty times the population. Detroit's Native American population increased from four in 1870 to 434 in 1940, an increase of approximately 109 times the 1870 population. The total percentage increase in Native Americans in each of these three cities from 1870-1940, far exceeds the total population

[8] This is based upon the participation of Native Americans in several building projects, as discussed in chapter 2.

growth rate, on a percentage basis, of each city. This shows there was a sizeable increase in the Native American population between 1870 and 1940, the precursor to Native American migration to the defense industry during the Second World War when the urban Native American population drastically increases.[9]

A compilation of data from Table 3.1 into chart form helps to put the two population growths into perspective. First Chart 3.1, which charts the total population increase of the three subject cities between 1870 and 1940, shows that each city experienced an increase in total population on a decade-by-decade basis. New York City experiencing the most drastic population growth, but all posted net gains on a decade-by-decade basis, and by total population between 1870 and 1940. Chart 3.2, which charts the total Indian population figure between 1870 and 1940, reveals that these three cities experienced sporadic increases and decreases in total Indian population growth on a decade-by-decade basis, but an overall net gain over the period. New York City experiences an abrupt decrease between 1910 and 1920, this tied to the death of "Indian Joe" on Hell's Gate Bridge. No Mohawks would work in the city until the mid-1920s, when Mohawk riveting gangs returned to New York City to participate in a building boom. However, all three cities experiencing dramatic growth in the 1930s and 1940s, this possibly due to job opportunities in defense industries while the United States was gearing up for World War II. Each city also experienced a cumulative net growth in total Indian population over the period in question.

[9] See Kenneth William Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).

Looking at the data broken down by the percentage increase and decrease on a decade by decade basis from 1870 to 1940, shows constant increases in each cities total population, yet sporadic increases and decreases in total Indian population of each city. Chart 3.3, which shows the percentage increase and decrease of the total Indian population, tells a much different story about this ethnicity in each city. Each city experiences periodic decreases in the total Indian population. Buffalo experiences a 50% decrease between 1880 and 1890. New York City experiences two such decreases, a 40.38% decrease between 1890 and 1900 and 56.56% between 1910 and 1920 (a possible effect of "Indian Joe's" death).[10] Detroit also experiences a decrease in total Indian population of 67.65% between 1890 and 1900. One possible explanation for these decreases in the Indian population could be the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, which provided for the allotment of former reservation lands to Indians and to expand the "protection of the laws of the United States and the Territories over the Indians."[11] This promise of land to the Indian population, could account for this dramatic decline of the Indian population in the cities in question.

The final three charts compare the percentage increase and decrease of the total population to the total Indian population of each city. Percentage data can be misleading to a certain extent; for example Chart 3.5 shows the total population percentage growth of New York City in 1910 as 38.68% (an increase from 3,437,202 to 4,766,883) and the total Indian population percentage growth was 1,006.45% (an increase from 31 to 343).

[10] See pages 37-38 for the death of "Indian Joe."

[11] *Dawes Severalty Act of 1887*, February 8, 1887 http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~hst203/documents/dawes.html (January 12, 2005).

The percentage increase data shows the total Indian population outperforming the total population of New York City, but when broken down to the actual population numbers the total population statistics increased by 1,329,681 individuals while the total Indian population increased by 312 individuals. The total Indian population percentage out performed the total population statistics by percentage comparison, but the total Indian population remains low.

The census data poses another problem with interpretation. The U.S. Census office has only tracked the "Indian" category of race since 1860.[12] Thus, there is no method to accurately track the Indian population in these U.S. city centers prior to North American industrialization. Even with this problem, the data reveal that the Native American population is a minuscule fraction of the total population in these individual cities, at all times less than one half of one percent, but makes drastic gains during this period. There are two possible explanations. First, there was a small, yet increasing, migration of Native Americans to US cities between the American Civil War and the Second World War. Second, the migration that was necessary for employment was only temporary and permanent relocation of Native American to U.S. cities directly related to industrialization remained small.

Historians who focus on the "urbanization" of Native Americans focus on WWII and post-WWII world. Kenneth Townsend states that by 1943, the defense industry employed approximately 40,000 Indians, the total Indian migration during WWII equaling one-third of the total Indian population. Townsend continues, "The higher cost

[12] *Thirteenth Census of the United States (1910)*, vol. 1 (population); 265.

of living in the cities often meant the migrant could not take his family with him."[13] This is also a possibility for Mohawk men from 1870 to 1940, although the role of Mohawk gender relations cannot be downplayed. Donald L. Fixico continued with the post-WWII argument, stating, "The wartime experience of Indians serving in various parts of the armed services and of almost fifty thousand Indian men and women working in the war industries convinced bureaucrats that the Native American populace was ready to leave the reservations."[14] To aid in this effort, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) instituted "The Relocation Program" in the 1950s through a new branch, the Branch of Placement and Relocation (formed in 1951). This was an effective program, relocating between 100,000 and 125,000 Indians between 1951 and 1973.[15] Historians who focus on the migration of Indians during the Second World War and in the era of the Relocation Program fail to study the migration of Native Americans during earlier periods of North American industrialization. The precursory Native American migration during industrialization helps in understanding the post-WWII migration of Native Americans in the 1940s and 1950s. The building blocks of Native American migration started in the post-Civil War years in North America, grew until the Second World War, when migration to urban areas exploded with Native American involvement in wartime industry. When government officials realized Native Americans could indeed become

[13] Kenneth William Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 180.

[14] Donald L. Fixico, *The Urban Indian Experience in America* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 9.

[15] Ibid., 25; 195.

productive employees within the urban economy, this underscored the BIA effort of post-WWII relocation.

Mohawk men follow the second choice, where small groups migrated temporarily in order to complete a specific ironworking job before returning to their tribe on the Caughnawaga reservation, most of the time on a weekly basis, to visit their families. As Mike Cherry, an ironworker, stated in the 1970s of his Indian fellow gang members, "most of [them] go home to Canada every weekend."[16] Cherry's observation also held true to Mohawk men in the early 20th century. This continuous travel from reservation life to the job site in the city and back to the reservation has its origins in traditional Mohawk warrior culture. Traditionally, men would leave the tribe for long periods to hunt or make war, then return to their tribe and family setting following the completion of their task. This tradition transcends time to the modern tasks of Mohawk ironworkers, where the men leave their tribe and families to journey to the location of their jobsite, the city, and return weekly to visit their families and return to the tribe after completing their ironworking job, until they get new work at another site. This is an example of how traditional Mohawk gender roles, where the application of warrior culture is present with Mohawk men in the ironworking trade.

The small, but ever increasing, Indian population in the cities of Buffalo, New York, and Detroit cannot be attributed to a lack of jobs in the ironworking profession or a lack in growth of ironworking jobs in individual areas over the years. The 1860 Census shows the state of New York containing a population of 55 Bridgebuilders and

[16] Mike Cherry, *On High Steel: The Education of an Ironworker* (New York: Quadrangle Press, 1974), xiv.

1,296 Ironworkers, while the state of Michigan contained 9 Bridgebuilders and 66 Ironworkers. Bridgebuilders and Ironworkers in New York and Michigan comprise a very small portion of the jobs for the individual states and cities.[17] One can see the presence of opportunity in this profession on a statewide level, most of these jobs taking place within the city setting as this is where the skyscraper and bridge building was taking place.

The census data shows an increase in Native American migration patterns to the urban setting, while also showing opportunity and growth in the occupation of ironworkers. This does not follow the magnitude of the Great Migration, that of African-Americans migrating northward to the urban environment in the early 20th century.[18] However, this study shows that there was an influx of Native Americans to major U.S. cities during industrialization. This migration gained strength during industrialization, serving as a precursor to Native American migration during the Second World War and in the post-war United States. This migration of Native Americans trended upwards in the 1930s (possibly due to building projects during the Great Depression) and peaked during the Second World War, with the migration of Native Americans to jobs in the defense industry.[19]

This chapter forms a basis for future studies in Native American participation in North American industrialization. This chapter also shows that there was drastic growth

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[17] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States, vol.?: Statistics, 1860, Occupation Statistics* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1867), 246; 333; 337; 659-659;666-667.

[18] Joe William Trotter, Jr., ed., *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 1-17.

[19] Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian.*

in the Native American population in these three sample cities from 1870-1940, but it also brings to light some new questions. What Native American groups participated in this migration during industrialization, in addition to Mohawk ironworkers? What other urban occupations employed Native Americans? What was the overall Native American contribution to industrialization? As with all studies, more research is needed to draw a more complete picture of Native American involvement in North American industrialization between 1870 and 1940.

CONCLUSION

This thesis addresses several important historical issues, including gender and race, within the context of industrialization. The primary focus of this study is traditional Mohawk gender roles, analyzing how these roles transcended the traditional tribal setting to a modern context within the industrialized urban environment between 1870 and 1940.

The definition of gender within Mohawk society contains multiple facets. First, it consists of two distinct groups, the feminine and the masculine, based upon the core principle of achieving balance within society, placing the importance upon the survival of society, not the individual. The feminine gender is best described as gatherer, keeper of the longhouse, and controller of the clearing, while the masculine gender is hunter, trader, and warrior (the key concept of determining masculinity within Mohawk society). Gender within Mohawk society is timeless, as traditional gender roles within their society are continuously reapplied to a modernizing society, avoiding total assimilation and reasserting cultural norms within a new societal setting. This is shown through the use of warrior culture in defining the Mohawk masculine, and taking the traditional meaning within Mohawk tribal society and reapplying this within a new context of the high steel profession.

Using Mohawk ironworkers as the medium, the survival of traditional masculine Mohawk gender roles is seen within the context of an industrializing North America. Mohawk involvement in the bridge and skyscraper building industries may have happened due to the Mohawks geographical location, for reasons of economic stability, and for affinity of building, but the men of Caughnawaga who became involved in this occupation reshaped traditional Mohawk warrior culture to fit the modern context.

Mohawks being referred to as "daredevils", as being "as agile as goats", and working in "small, deft units" are a few of the parallels which tie modern day Mohawk ironworkers to traditional conceptions of masculinity in Mohawk society, rooted in traditional Mohawk warrior culture.

The last chapter, being both speculative and pioneering, shows an influx of Native Americans to the urban setting during industrialization, in Buffalo, New York City, and Detroit. Such increases in the Native American population of these three cities is the precursor to the explosion of the urban Native American population during the Second World War and in post-war America. Native American migration during North American industrialization was a foundation for later Native American migrations. Further research is needed to understand more fully the role of Native Americans during industrialization in North America (See Chart 3.3 in Chapter 3).

Mohawk involvement in the high steel industry, when studied through the mediums of gender and race, show how traditional gender roles within Mohawk society were reapplied in the modern, industrialized setting to maintain Mohawk cultural identity, while avoiding complete assimilation into white, European or American culture. Mohawk ironworkers are best described by Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette:

> In North America, Native American men lived and died with the Warrior energy informing even the smallest of their acts, living their lives nobly and with courage and with the capacity to endure great pain and hardship, defending their people against an overwhelming foe (the invading white people), and leaping into battle with the cry, 'Today is a good day to die!'[1]

[1] Moore and Douglas Gillette, *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine* (San Francisco: Harper-San Francisco, 1990), 78.

The men of Caughnawaga were warriors, first within in the traditional Mohawk tribal setting on the frontier. With the encroachment of European culture and the forces of an industrializing nation, they invoked traditional Mohawk warrior culture within high steel construction and became modern day warriors . . . warriors of the skyline.

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