



The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy (The Civilization of the American Indian Series)

William N. Fenton

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An in-depth survey of Iroquois culture and history

This masterful summary represents a major synthesis of the history and culture of the Six Nations from the mid-sixteenth century to the Canandaigua treaty of 1794. William N. Fenton, renowned as the dean of Iroquoian studies, draws on primary sources, in both French and English to create a readable narrative and an invaluable reference for all future scholars of Iroquois polity.

Central to Fenton's study is the tradition of the Great Law, still practiced today by the conservative Iroquois. It is sustained by celebrations of the condolence ceremony when participants mourn a dead chief and install his successor for life on good behavior. This ritual act, reaching back to the dawn of history, maintained the League of the Iroquois, the legendary form of government that gave way over time to the Iroquois Confederacy.

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