

# Conference on Iroquois Research

Fostering and promoting research on the Haudenosaunee since 1945

**Oneida, New York  
Oneida Community Mansion House**



**170 Kenwood Avenue  
Oneida, NY 13421**

**<https://www.oneidacommunity.org/>**

**October 18-19, 2024  
79th Edition**

**IN PERSON and online via ZOOM**

**FINAL PROGRAM**

**Last revision: October 16, 2024**

PRE-CONFERENCE EVENTS

## Shako:wi Cultural Center

3:00 TO 4:30 PM

Admission: Free—Please identify that you are an attendee at the conference.



**Location:**

5 Territory Rd  
Oneida, NY 13421  
(315) 829-8801  
[https://  
www.oneidaindiannation.com/  
shakowiculturalcenter/](https://www.oneidaindiannation.com/shakowiculturalcenter/)

**NOTE:** Located a few minutes  
from the conference site.

FRIDAY EVENING

## Oneida Community Mansion House

**PARKING:** Spaces are available across the road from venue.

**ZOOM = Online Live**

**PANEL = Three or more presenters**

### Silent Auction

Join us in supporting Bringing Scholarships Back with our Silent Auction! We invite you to contribute by donating books, art, and other items to help raise funds for university scholars. Your donations will directly impact these promising individuals, enabling them to continue their academic journeys. Every auctioned item supports a future scholar.

**NOTE:** Cash and Venmo will be accepted.

**INFO:** Ellie McDowell-Loudan

**5:30 — 6:00 pm**

**Opening Thanksgiving Address**

**Welcome at the Woods Edge, Announcements & Tributes**

Francis Scardera

**6:00 — 6:30 pm**

**History of The Oneida Community Mansion House**

Thomas Guiler

Director of Museum Affairs, Oneida Community Mansion House

The Oneida Community Mansion House is a historic house and museum that was once the home of the Oneida Community, a religiously-based socialist Utopian group led by John Humphrey Noyes. The Mansion House has been continually occupied as a residence since its construction in 1862. In the 20th century the Mansion House became a National Historic Landmark. It is currently overseen by a non-profit organization chartered in 1987 by New York State Board of Regents.

**6:30—7:00 pm**

**History Lessons from The Best Land**

Susan Brewer

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Susan Brewer discusses *The Best Land: Four Hundred Years of Love and Betrayal on Oneida Territory*, an investigation of the parcel of land in central New York on which she grew up and the stories of the two families—her own European settler family and the Oneida/Mohawk family of Polly Denny—who called it home. Inspired by two questions, what happened here and why she didn't know anything about it, she found that in contrast to what she had learned in school, the Oneidas long had demanded justice regarding their land, while her family and Polly Denny's family had lived intertwined lives for centuries.

**7:00—8:00 pm [PANEL]**

**The Native North American Travelling College: Celebrating 50 Years**

Theresa A. Benedict (Mohawk Council of Akwesasne)

Anna Hoefnagels (Carleton University)

Joyce King (Native North American Travelling College)

The Native North American Travelling College (NNATC) is a community-based educational institution based in Akwesasne with a mandate to preserve, celebrate, revitalize and transmit Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) traditional knowledge and culture. The NNATC seeks to instill self-esteem and cultural continuity in community members while also fostering positive relationships within the local settler population. The NNATC's 50th anniversary celebration in July 2024 created a forum for community members to reflect on the Travelling College and its impacts throughout its existence and to consider its future directions. In this roundtable, we share highlights of the NNATC and discuss some current research projects.

**9:00-9:30 am**

**The Borrowing of Mohawk Men to Replace Oneida Warrior Losses After Champlain's 1615 attack on a fortified village near Oneida Lake.**

Brian Rice  
University of Manitoba

This paper will look at both written and oral traditions of Oneida warrior losses and the need to replenish not only men but also clans after Champlain's attack on the Oneidas. Although there's a lot of information on the subject, to surmise that the Oneidas were in dire straights between 1615 and 1620. I will also discuss the tradition of borrowing persons from other Rotinonshonni nations when needed including confederacy titles.

**9:30-10:00 am**

**The International Iroquois Beadwork Conference**

Dolores Elliott  
Iroquois Studies Association

The increasing interest by beadwork collectors and researchers in the 21st century and the increase in the number of Haudenosaunee artists who were creating beadwork inspired me to organize a conference where they could all meet and share their interest and love of Iroquois beadwork. So, since 2009, I've organized annual beadwork conferences which have been held in six museums and on five reservations and reserves in New York, Wisconsin, Ontario, and Quebec. They are modeled after the Conference on Iroquois Research with presentations, shared meals, and silent auctions. In addition, there are exhibitors, art competitions, and workshops. A good time is had by all.

**10:00-10:30 am**

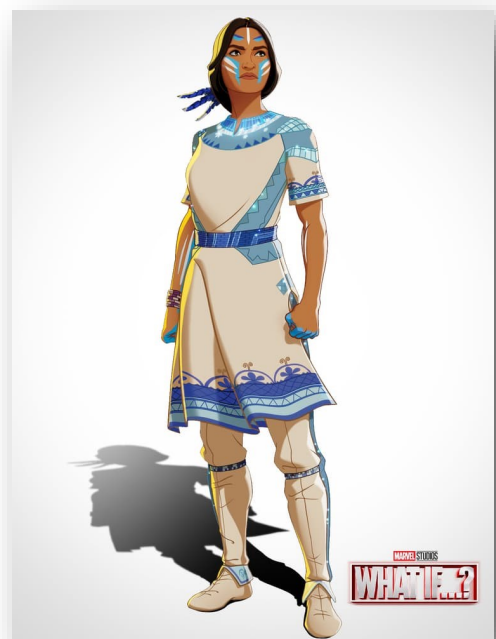
**Marvel Studios' Haudenosaunee Heroine—"Kahhori"**

Doug George

In December, 2023 Marvel Studios hosted a premiere of the "Kahhori" episode as part of its "What If..." series. The show was innovative in that it was done with the complete cooperation of Mohawk consultants. It is a unique show in that the dialogue is almost entirely in Mohawk with the storyline, dress, adornments, physical appearance and coloring done at the request of the consultants. The presentation will summarize how the show was realized from initial concept to completion and distribution around the world. The lecture will include stills from the show highlighting instances of adornment consistent with Mohawk culture. The show itself has now been viewed by millions of people and is the most effective treatment of Mohawks in media history.

**Feature Film**

**10:30-11:30 am**



## **BREAK—SILENT AUCTION**

**11:30-12:00**

**Shako:wi Cultural Center**

**12:00-2:00 pm**

**LUNCH BREAK —SILENT AUCTION—BOOK ROOM—ARTISTS AND EXHIBITORS**

**Lunch is INCLUDED for ALL participants.  
CREEKSIDE INN (5 minutes away)**

## **SATURDAY AFTERNOON**

**2:00-3:00 pm**

**Seneca Rock Art—Part 1. Historical References and Inferences**

Francis Scardera, Independent Researcher

**Seneca Rock Art—Part 2. D-Stretch Imagery**

David Moyer, Lead Archaeologist, Birchwood Archaeological Services, Inc.

The interaction between authentic rock art and its modern "touristic" interpretations creates a compelling narrative of cultural engagement and iconographic distortion. Central to this discussion is the "Seneca Lake Rock Art Site," located on a deteriorating cliff face along Seneca Lake's eastern shore. This site features a series of red pictographs that sharply contrast with the more tourist-centric "Pictured Rocks Site." Though historically significant, the Pictured Rocks Site is often mistakenly identified as authentic or pre-contact, causing confusion and detracting from the genuine pre-contact rock art in the area. This paper argues that while "touristic" rock art attracts visitors and captivates modern audiences, it also obscures Indigenous iconography. The original works, integrated into the same landscape, represent the true essence of our shared history and serve as a stark reminder of the need to protect these rare glimpses into the past.

**3:00-3:30 pm**

**The Haudenosaunee Water-Level Route: Geography and the Formation of a Segmented Polity**

David Babson

Independent Researcher

I am a transportation archaeologist. Approaching Iroquois Research from this perspective, I am led toward consideration of the terrain that the Five, then Six, Nations lived in and used, and the routes they created across this terrain as they built their confederation. Using trails, waterways and portages, the Five Nations were able to extend and maintain their political, social and cultural system along the Mohawk Valley, among the Finger Lakes and along the shore of Lake Ontario. They became a confederacy of linked nations through their use of a region later recognized by Anglo-Americans as the "water-level route," the lowest crossing of the Appalachian Mountains between the St. Lawrence River and northern Georgia. In this paper, I will argue that this circumstance helped the Haudenosaunee to develop their confederacy as a decentralized political form. From this, the Five, then Six, Nations present a contrast to and critique of hierarchical models of social complexity and state-formation processes, including the "ethnic periods" model first advanced by Lewis Henry Morgan.

## **BREAK—SILENT AUCTION FINALE – ARTISTS AND EXHIBITORS**

**3:30-4:00 pm**

### **The Complex Obscurity and Obscure Complexity of the Native People in the Castorland Journal (1793-1797)**

Will Meyer

Mercyhurst University

Maps of Northern New York's Black River system were rare before 1800. The region was often charted as "unpassable and uninhabited." While historian Franklin Hough (1883[1860]) described rare (and negative) encounters with Native "stragglers" along the Black River, first-hand accounts by French settlers tell a different story. The Castorland Journal (1793–1797), contains more than 80 references to Indians, documenting several sustained encounters in the Black River valley. These references challenge abandonment narratives, requiring us to rethink received wisdom about "settlement" and "habitation." Further, they hint at the complex motives, interactions, and identities of Northern New York's Native peoples.

**4:00-4:30 pm**

### **Not Disappeared; Meeting the St. Lawrence "Iroquoians"**

Laurie Rush

Cultural Resources, Ft. Drum

New York archaeology inherited a long held belief that the Haudenosaunee people of Jefferson County disappeared in the late 16th century. As a result, many of our colleagues never looked for them. As an anthropologist new to the region, I immediately began to collect stories of Haudenosaunee people in our region from fishing guides, community members and other sources of oral histories. Over the past decades, evidence and clues to the presence and resilience of the Haudenosaunee people of the Eastern Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River region continue to emerge, helping us to understand their more recent history since contact with Europeans.

**4:30-5:00**

### **The Oneida: The Archaeological Record**



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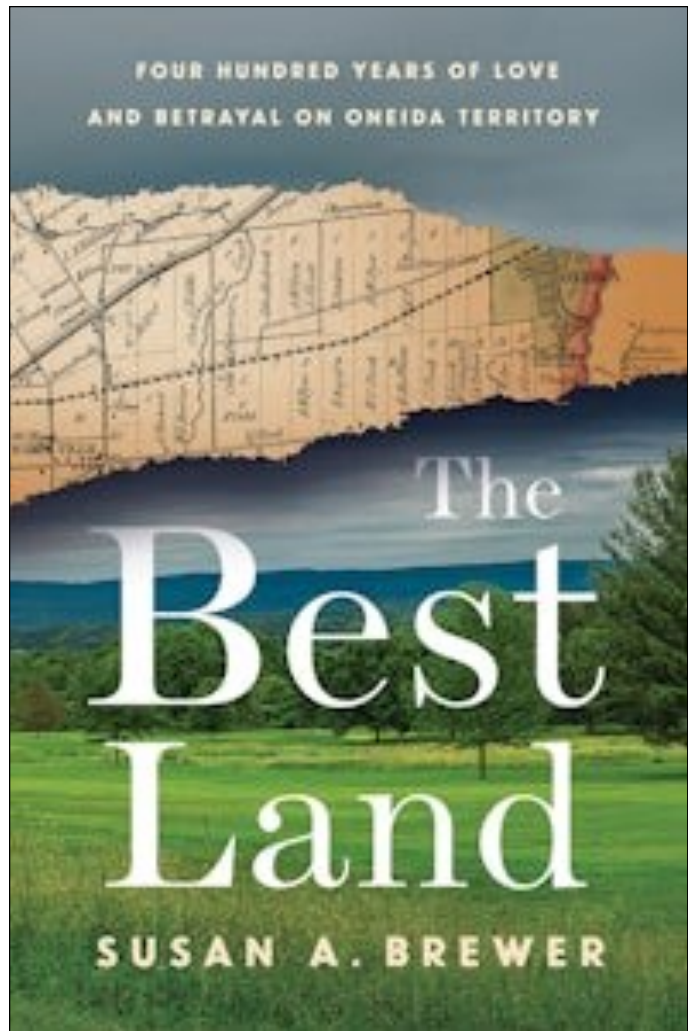
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## The Best Land by Susan A. Brewer |

In Susan A. Brewer's fascinating *The Best Land*, she recounts the story of the parcel of central New York land on which she grew up. Brewer and her family had worked and lived on this land for generations when the Oneida Indians claimed that it rightfully belonged to them. Why, she wondered, did she not know what had happened to this place her grandfather called the best land. Here, she tells its story, tracing over the past four hundred years the two families?her own European settler family and the Oneida/Mohawk family of Polly Denny?who called the best land home.

Situated on the passageway to the west, the ancestral land of the Oneidas was coveted by European colonizers and the founders of the Empire State. The Brewer and Denny families took part in imperial wars, the American Revolution, broken treaties, the building of the Erie Canal, Native removal, the rise and decline of family farms, bitter land claims controversies, and the revival of the Oneida Indian Nation. As Brewer makes clear in *The Best Land*, through centuries of violence, bravery, greed, generosity, racism, and love, the lives of the Brewer and Denny families were profoundly intertwined. The story of this homeland, she discovers, unsettles the history she thought she knew.

With clear determination to tell history as it was, without sugarcoating or ignoring the



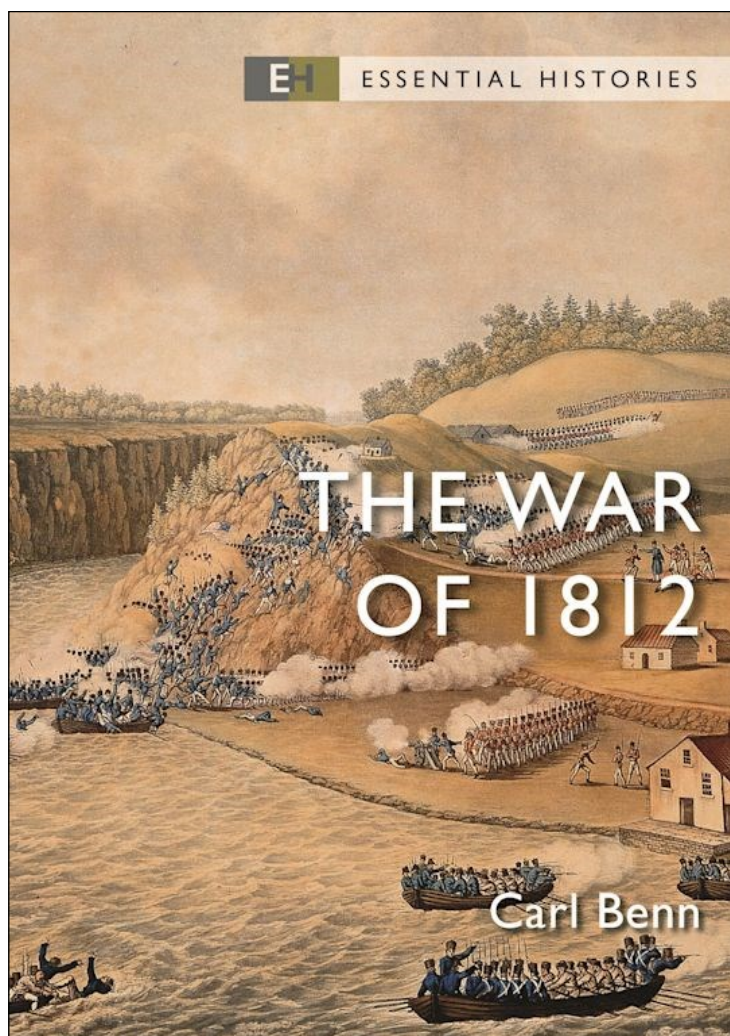
pain and suffering of both families, Brewer navigates the interconnected stories with grace, humility, and a deep love for the land. *The Best Land* is a beautiful homage to the people, the place, and the environment itself.

— Cornell University Press

“Susan A. Brewer leverages her unique vantage point as a historian and member of a settler family of long standing in central New York to craft a compelling narrative about the entangled history of Natives and settlers in the region. *The Best Land* is a welcome addition to the history of New York State and the history of Northeast Indigenous peoples.”

— **KARIM M. TIRO**, author of *The People of the Standing Stone*

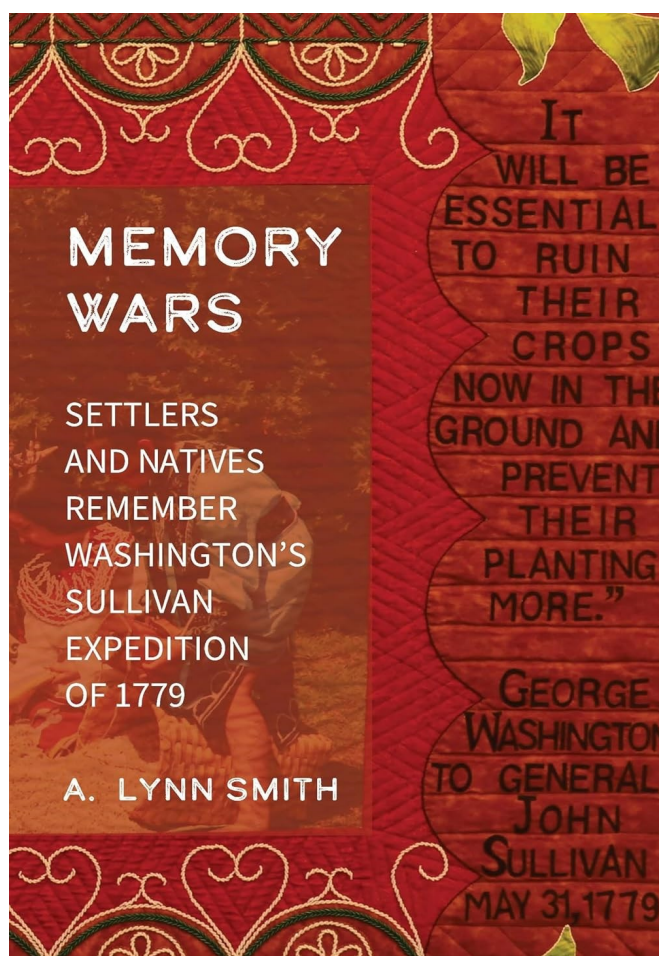




## **The War of 1812** **2nd Edition** **by Carl Benn**

The war of 1812–1815 was a bloody confrontation that tore through the American frontier, the British colonies of Upper and Lower Canada, and parts of the Atlantic coast and the Gulf of Mexico. The conflict saw British, American, and First Nations forces clash, and in the process, shape the future of North American history. Carl Benn explains what led to America's decision to take up arms against Great Britain and assesses the three terrible years of fighting that followed on land and sea, where battles such as Lake Erie and Lake Champlain launched American naval traditions.

This new edition has been updated throughout to draw on the research and advances in scholarship in the two decades since original publication in 2002. Benn examines how this has not only impacted basic assumptions of force size and battle dates in some cases, but has also drawn attention to subjects that had previously been overlooked. Fully illustrated in colour with specially commissioned maps and over 50 new images, this book provides an accessible overview of the War of 1812.



## Memory Wars: Settlers and Natives Remember Washington's Sullivan Expedition of 1779

by A. Lynn Smith

Memory Wars explores how commemorative sites and patriotic fanfare marking the mission of General John Sullivan into Iroquois territory during the Revolutionary War continue to shape historical understandings today. Sullivan's expedition was ordered by General George Washington at a tenuous moment of the Revolutionary War. It was a massive enterprise involving thousands of men who marched across northeastern Pennsylvania into what is now New York state, to eliminate any present or future threat from the British-allied Iroquois Confederacy.

Sullivan and his men carried out a scorched-earth campaign, obliterating more than forty Iroquois villages, including homes, fields, and crops. For Indigenous residents it was a catastrophic invasion. For many others the expedition yielded untold bounty: American victory over the British along with land and fortunes

beyond measure for settlers who soon moved onto the razed village sites.

The Sullivan Expedition has long been fixed on the landscape of Pennsylvania and New York by a cast of characters, including amateur historians, newly formed historical societies, and local chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Asking how it is that people continue to "celebrate Sullivan" in the present day, Memory Wars underscores the symbolic value of the past as well as the dilemmas posed to contemporary Americans by the national commemorative landscape.



# 2024 Organizing Committee

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## Cultural Liaison

## Program Coordinator

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## Scholarship Committee

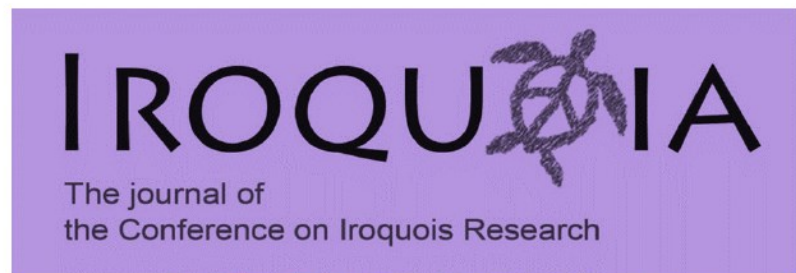
Ellie McDowell-Loudan

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2024 Conference on Iroquois Research -  
Attendee

