

# “It’s not personal, it’s strictly business” Historical Accounts and Archaeological Evidence Concerning an Early-Seventeenth Century Partnership

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Résumé de l'article

*La documentation historique est combinée aux preuves archéologiques pour examiner l'activité commerciale de deux individus entreprenants, Iroquet et Brulé, qui étaient périphériques à la grande histoire de la Nouvelle-France au début du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Cet article examine leur modus operandi en relation avec les pratiques d'échange intertribales indigènes établies.*

# “It’s not personal, it’s strictly business”

## Historical Accounts and Archaeological Evidence Concerning an Early-Seventeenth Century Partnership

by William Fox

### *Introduction*

Colonialism, in its varied expressions across our nation, has been the topic of countless research projects and publications. Over the last several decades, the result has been a more balanced view of historical events impacting Indigenous communities during a time extending back some five hundred years. Perspectives are beginning to change, particularly regarding Indigenous history<sup>1</sup> and material culture curation and presentation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bruce G. Trigger, *The Children of Aataensic: A History of the Huron People to 1660* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1987); Neal Ferris, *The Archaeology of Native-Lived Colonialism: Challenging History in the Great Lakes* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010); Paulette F. Steeves, *The Indigenous Paleolithic of the Western Hemisphere* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Michelle A. Hamilton, *Collections and*

### *Abstract*

*Historical documentation is combined with archaeological evidence to examine the trade activity of two enterprising individuals, Iroquet and Brulé, who were peripheral to the grande histoire of New France during the early-seventeenth century. This article considers their modus operandi as it relates to established Indigenous intertribal exchange practices.*

*Résumé: La documentation historique est combinée aux preuves archéologiques pour examiner l’activité commerciale de deux individus entrepreneurs, Iroquet et Brulé, qui étaient périphériques à la grande histoire de la Nouvelle-France au début du XVIIe siècle. Cet article examine leur modus operandi en relation avec les pratiques d’échange intertribales indigènes établies.*

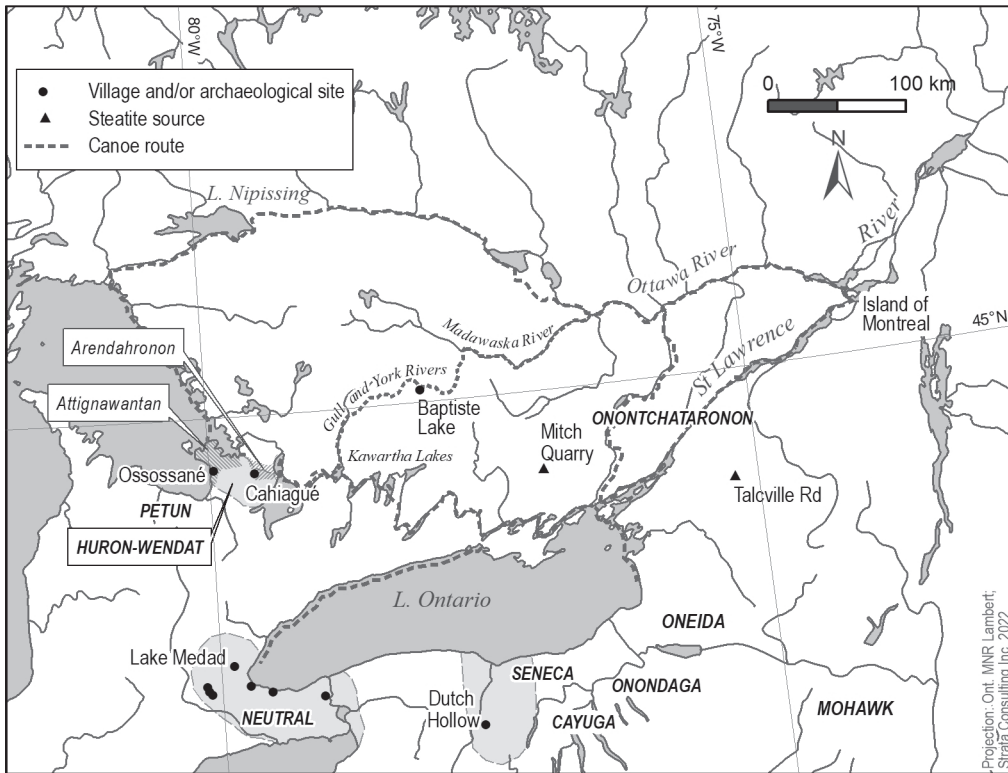


Figure 1: Iroquoian and Anishinaabe Archaeological Sites Producing Steatite Vasiform Pipes and Identified Geological Sources of Steatite Used in Pipe Production. Map produced by Andrew Stewart.

Across centuries, big men representing European colonial powers have dominated Canadian history. Occasionally, Indigenous actors have been recognized by name if they supported or thwarted European political ambitions. This has been the case in the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence region of the Northeast through the seventeenth-century journals of Champlain, reports of various religious orders, and subsequent British colonial administrators. Indigenous characters

have rarely been more than “bit players” in the stories.

This paper attempts to reconstruct a “back story” through records rarely involving more than casual asides and fortuitous observations which enhance the main colonial narrative. It then considers archaeological evidence to present a robust understanding and elaborate on the limited written record. The constructed narrative concerns an early seventeenth-century business partnership between a

politically powerful Indigenous figure named Iroquet and his young European protégé, Etienne Brulé.

### Captain Iroquet

We first hear of Iroquet during a meeting on the St. Lawrence with Champlain in June 1609, where Iroquet is identified as an Algonquin chief.<sup>3</sup> However, his name is not Algonquian, nor is it Huron-Wendat because of the “r” in his name; John Steckley has suggested that this name could be of the St. Lawrence Iroquois dialect.<sup>4</sup> Iroquet was eventually identified as an Onontchataronon, making Steckley’s proposal consistent with Lalemant’s 1646 observation: “the Onontchataronons or the Iroquet nation... whose ancestors formerly inhabited the Island of Montreal.”<sup>5</sup> The 1609 Onontchataronon war party of 200-300 men led by Iroquet was reported to be camped downriver from present-day Trois-Rivieres with the Wendat and their chief, Ochasteguin. Subsequently, they invited Champlain and his men to join them in an attack on the Mohawk.<sup>6</sup> Following a successful attack,<sup>7</sup> Iroquet and Ochasteguin travelled west from

the Richelieu River at Chambly towards Montreal, and Champlain continued north with the Montagnais contingent to Quebec.<sup>8</sup> A year later, Iroquet arrived with the Wendat and eighty men,<sup>9</sup> a day late for another victory over the Mohawk near the mouth of the Richelieu River. At this meeting, Champlain arranged with Iroquet to have a young Frenchman, probably Etienne Brulé, winter with his people and to take a young Huron-Wendat, Savignon, to France.<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that Champlain negotiated with Iroquet, not a Wendat representative, concerning this diplomatic exchange intended to establish ties between the Huron/Wendat and the French. Furthermore, Savignon was a member of the Arendahronon or Rock tribe of the Huron-Wendat confederacy,<sup>11</sup> a relatively late arrival to Wendake from the Kawarthas to the southeast. The final occupation in the latter region was the heavily palisaded five-hectare “Trent-Foster” Glass Bead Period 1 (c.1580-1600) village south of Balsam Lake,<sup>12</sup> according well with Champlain’s report of the tribe’s 1590 arrival in Wendake. This village has produced a wide array of

<sup>3</sup> Samuel de Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain, 6 volumes and a portfolio of maps* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1922-1936), 2, 68.

<sup>4</sup> John Steckley (pers. comm. 30 October 2018).

<sup>5</sup> *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents 1896-1901* (hereafter JR), ed. Reuben G. Thwaites, 73 volumes, (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Company, Publishers), 29, 145-47.

<sup>6</sup> The Champlain Society (1925), 2, 70.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 98-100.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 104-105.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 137-38.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 138-42.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 142.

<sup>12</sup> William Fox, “The Foster Site Glass Beads,” *Arch Notes, Newsletter of the Ontario Archaeological Society* 22:4 (2022), 11.

St. Lawrence Iroquois artifacts, probably representing the arrival of some of the last St. Lawrence Iroquois refugees from their homeland in the upper St. Lawrence valley of Ontario and perhaps the historically documented village of Hochelaga.<sup>13</sup>

After this exchange, the Algonquins and Huron-Wendat left for Lachine with Brulé. The following year, 1611, Iroquet arrived at Lachine with Brulé, the latter dressed like a Native and fluent in their language, with some Wendat chiefs and 200 men, along with Savignon's brother.<sup>14</sup> They presented Champlain with a gift of one-hundred beaver skins,<sup>15</sup> and then Iroquet visited a day later with Savignon's brother to set up a separate and confidential meeting with Champlain.<sup>16</sup> As Champlain approved trader Bouvier's desire for one of his youths to winter with the Wendat and Algonquins, Iroquet departed with the second French lad.<sup>17</sup>

The next reference to Iroquet, who by this time is referred to as a Captain by Champlain,<sup>18</sup> is during the Fall 1615 expedition against the Oneida when he cut the finger from a captured Iroquois

woman before they attacked the village.<sup>19</sup> Undoubtedly, he was a senior leader, if not *the* leader of this Indigenous war party. That December, Champlain records that Captain Iroquet "came to spend the winter with his Algonquin companions" at Cahiagué<sup>20</sup> with his son, whom a bear had severely mauled.<sup>21</sup> In February of 1616, reports show Iroquet angered the Wendat Bear tribe by releasing and adopting an Iroquois captive who had been gifted for torture. Iroquet witnessed the death of the Iroquois at the hands of an assassin sent by the Bear tribe. He retaliated by killing the assassin. The Bear tribe then attacked the Algonquins at Cahiagué, wounding Iroquet with two arrow shots.<sup>22</sup> The affair was only settled with death compensation to the powerful Bear tribe.

While the Huron-Wendat considered all five nations of the Iroquois as enemies, unlike their associates to the south who remained "neutral" in this war, the hostility of Iroquet's people and their Algonquin associates to the north and east was primarily against the eastern

<sup>13</sup> Ramsey Cook (Ed.) *The Voyages of Jacques Cartier* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 59–66.

<sup>14</sup> The Champlain Society (1925), 2, 186–88.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 205–206.

<sup>18</sup> *The Works of Samuel de Champlain* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1922–1936), vol. 3 (1929), 101. [Hereafter: *Works*].

<sup>19</sup> *Works*, vol. 4 (1932), 253.

<sup>20</sup> Probably in the south village of the Warmnster site. W. Fox and C. Garrad, "Hurons in an Algonquian Land." In "Papers in Honour of Martha Latta. Ed. M. Kapches and P. Reed." *Ontario Archaeology* 77/78:129, (2004), Stuart Manning et al. "Radiocarbon re-dating of contact-era Iroquoian history in northeastern North America". *Science Advances Research Article* (2018), 4, eaav0280.

<sup>21</sup> *Works*, vol. 4 (1932), 277–78.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 284–85.

Iroquois. They were particularly hostile towards the Mohawk, with whom the St. Lawrence Iroquois had been warring since the sixteenth century due to the strategic location of Hochelaga in the European trade.

Tensions between the Attignawantan and Algonquins and, probably their allies, the Arendarhonon,<sup>23</sup> led to an urgent message being sent to Champlain, requesting that he terminate his February trip to the Petun and Cheveux relevés at Blue Mountain and return to mediate.<sup>24</sup> During his return Champlain's planned meeting with the Nipissings, who wintered in Wendake near the future site of the Jesuit headquarters at Ste. Marie was on hold due to events to the east at Cahigué. Champlain had hoped to travel north with the Nipissing that summer. However, Iroquet visited these fellow Algonquins and gifted them with wampum to encourage the postponement of Champlain's planned trip north.<sup>25</sup> This likely would have taken him at least as far north as Lake Abitibi and the James Bay watershed—the Nipissing's summer trading range.<sup>26</sup>

It is a decade later before we have another French report of Iroquet's activity. As summarized below, Iroquet continued

to obstruct the French development of a more accurate understanding of regional geography and from establishing direct contacts with Anishinaabe and Iroquoian groups which could threaten the Onontcharonon middleman status in the trade for European goods. During the winter of 1626, Recollect Father Joseph de La Roche Daillon, at the suggestion of Father Joseph le Caron, travelled south from Wendake to visit the Neutral Nation, who were situated around the western end of Lake Ontario and throughout the Niagara Peninsula (Figure 1). They were a coalition of Iroquoian-speaking tribes from across southwestern Ontario, each with its own traditional history. Together, they were known to the French as the Neutral because they sided neither with the Wendat nor their enemies the Five Nations Iroquois. To their Wendat kinsmen, they were known as Attioudarons or "they who understand the language."<sup>27</sup> In 1639, Jesuit Paul Le Jeune referred to this nation as "a main gateway for the Southern tribes,"<sup>28</sup> reflecting their connections with tribes as far south as Alabama and particularly with the Shawnee tribes of the Ohio valley.<sup>29</sup>

Being the first priest to visit their villages, the Neutral were curious and

<sup>23</sup> The Rock tribe or Arendahronon Wendat allies living in the north village at Cahigué.

<sup>24</sup> *Works*, vol. 4 (1932), 286.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

<sup>26</sup> Francois Guindon, "Iroquoian Pottery at Lake Abitibi: A Case Study of the Relationship Between Hurons and Algonkians on the Canadian Shield," *Canadian Journal of Archaeology*, 33 (2009), 65–91.

<sup>27</sup> *JR*, vol. 17, 164 and vol., 20, 50.

<sup>28</sup> *JR* vol. 16, 253.

<sup>29</sup> William Fox, "The North-South Copper Axis," *Journal of Southeastern Archaeology* 23:1 (summer 2004), 85–97.



friendly. That is until the Wendat learned of Daillon's attempt to establish a direct trade between the Neutral and French. They were not amused and spread "fake news" concerning Daillon being an "Atatanite"—one who utters spells or a witch in modern parlance.<sup>30</sup> The Neutral response to this news was sufficiently violent to encourage a group of Frenchmen to extract the good Father in the spring of 1627, "lest matters should go to the extreme."<sup>31</sup> It may be no coincidence that Daillon had just previously asked Iroquet about a direct route to the French at Lachine, which he had been told by the Neutral involved a ten-day journey to the trading place. The Neutral referred to Iroquet's route via the north shore of Lake Ontario and the upper St. Lawrence, which would have subverted the circuitous route via Lake Nipissing that the Algonquins had convinced the French to use to access Wendake. The much shorter Madawaska-York-Gull River route to Balsam Lake from the Ottawa River was well known to the Algonquins and even roughly indicated on Champlain's 1632 map,<sup>32</sup> produced from a charcoal on birchbark map provided to him by the leader of the Cheveux relevés (Odawa) "welcoming party" at the mouth of the

French River in 1615. Regarding a more direct route to the French traders via the upper St. Lawrence River, to quote Daillon, Iroquet "would never give us any indication by which to find out the mouth of the river." Daillon further noted that among Neutral communities, Iroquet was "a savage well known in those parts, who had come there with twenty of his people to hunt beaver and had killed quite 500 of them."<sup>33</sup>

### Etienne Brulé

Etienne Brulé was likely the youth entrusted by Champlain to overwinter with Iroquet in 1610, but he could also have been Bouvier's youth, who wintered with Iroquet in 1611. Nevertheless, the young Frenchman began his truchement career with Iroquet, wintering in Wendake, probably at the Warminster site, identified as Champlain's Cahigué (see Figure 1).

Subsequently, he travelled widely in the Northeast, reputedly as far northwest as Lake Superior and Gaston Falls—Sault Ste. Marie in 1621<sup>34</sup>—and south to the Chesapeake Bay area on the Atlantic coast in 1615/16.<sup>35</sup> We know that he at least travelled as far northwest as Manitoulin Island because he was robbed of his

<sup>30</sup> H. Langdon (Translator), "Letter from Father de la Roche Daillon to a friend," KEWA Newsletter of the London Chapter, Ontario Archaeological Society 81-9 (1981), 2-7, 4.

<sup>31</sup> JR 21, 203.

<sup>32</sup> W. Fox "Champlain and the Cheveux relevés." *Strata Newsletter of the Peterborough Chapter, Ontario Archaeological Society* 11-3 (2021), 21-24.

<sup>33</sup> Langdon, "Letter from Father de la Roche Daillon to a friend," 4.

<sup>34</sup> Consul W. Butterfield, *History of Brulé's Discoveries and Explorations 1610-1626* (Cleveland: The Helman-Taylor Company, 1898), 107.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 85-86.

glass trade beads there by the Odawa, according to a report by Le Jeune in 1638.<sup>36</sup> He may have travelled further west to the Sault Ste. Marie region in 1621, as Brulé showed Sagard a copper “ingot... on his return from a journey made in the district,”<sup>37</sup> and “they had red copper, of which I saw a small ingot towards the sweet sea, which the Truchement Bruslé brought to us, from a nation distant 80 leagues from the Hurons.”<sup>38</sup> Brulé must have travelled through the country of the Neutrals and Niagara Peninsula in the Fall of 1615 while circumventing the Iroquois on his way to the Susquehannock village of Carantouan;<sup>39</sup> his return likewise after the Seneca captured and released him.<sup>40</sup> It may be that Sagard’s report of Brulé’s torture and miraculous escape due to “the ‘Agnus Dei which he wore hung to his neck’<sup>41</sup> refers to this capture by the Iroquois. In 1616, Champlain recorded that Brulé “promised them (Seneca) to make them friends with the French and their enemies, and to make them swear friendship for one

another, and said that with this object he would return to them as soon as he could.”<sup>42</sup> Therefore, Brulé may have visited the Neutral (and Seneca) as early as 1625.<sup>43</sup>

Beyond Sagard’s references during his brief visit to Huronia (Wendake) to an “interpreter” assumed to be Brulé<sup>44</sup> during 1623/24, there is minimal mention of him in the New France official records after 1615. However, he incurs Champlain’s disdain following Sagard’s 1624 report that Brulé was “very vicious in character, and much addicted to women.”<sup>45</sup> Detailed research into French legal records has illuminated Brulé’s activities in France during the 1620s, either unknown or ignored by New France officials. For instance, he travelled to France twice, in 1622–23 and 1626–28,<sup>46</sup> and there, as a respected merchant, married Alizon Coiffier in 1626 or 1627.<sup>47</sup> He was also wealthy enough to loan money to various neighbours in Champigny-sur-Marne and persons of influence in the French court—and own

<sup>36</sup> *JR* 14, 99–103.

<sup>37</sup> Gabriel Sagard, *The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons*. (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1939), 242.

<sup>38</sup> Gabriel Sagard, *Le grand voyage du pays des Hurons*. (1632), chapter 9.

<sup>39</sup> *Works*, vol. 3 (1929), 213–14.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 221–24.

<sup>41</sup> Sagard, *The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons*, 162.

<sup>42</sup> *Works*, vol. 3 (1929), 224.

<sup>43</sup> Butterfield, *History of Brulé’s Discoveries and Explorations 1610–1626*, 111.

<sup>44</sup> *Works*, vol. 5 (1933), 97.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 132.

<sup>46</sup> Lucien Campeau, *Monumenta Novae Franciae II: Établissement à Québec (1616–1634)* (Montreal: Les presses de l’université Laval, 1979).

<sup>47</sup> Eric Brossard (Editor), “Étienne Bruslé Un Campinois en Nouvelle-France,” *Les dossiers No. 5, Société d’Histoire de Champigny-sur-Marne* (Val-de-Marne, 2002).



a second home in Paris.<sup>48</sup> He returned to Québec in 1628 and passed through the Kirke brothers' blockade, and following the fall of Québec in 1629, he entered the employ of the English.<sup>49</sup> Brulé's activities clearly display his commitment to the European fur trade and profit. Champlain, in some detail, describes his harangue against Brulé, whom he encountered at Tadoussac during Champlain's deportation to France, telling Brulé that he would "be pointed at with scorn on all sides."<sup>50</sup> Brulé reportedly replied that he would have to make up his mind "never to return to France."<sup>51</sup> Given his domestic and business situation in France at this time,<sup>52</sup> such a decision would seem unlikely. Shortly after his meeting with Champlain, Brulé is said to have returned to Wendake<sup>53</sup> with Amantacha, a young Huron/Wendat friend and protégé,<sup>54</sup> and was never again seen by the French.

### It's Strictly Business

Following Daillon's 1626 encounter with Iroquet in the Neutral Nation

country, we hear nothing more in the French records concerning him, only references by the Jesuits following their return to New France in 1633 to the "tribe called Iroquet, from the name of their Captain"<sup>55</sup> and to the Onontcharonons or "those of the Iroquet nation," including a "captain" in 1647 named Taouchkaron.<sup>56</sup> Other Jesuit references from the 1640s record the nation's present and former geographic location on the Island of Montreal,<sup>57</sup> as well as the successes and failures in conversion to Christianity<sup>58</sup> and ongoing battles with the Iroquois.<sup>59</sup> Their former location at Montreal, where they are said to have tended corn fields, which is consistent with Cartier's description of Hochelaga,<sup>60</sup> adds credence to Steckley's (infra) suggestion concerning the St. Lawrence Iroquoian heritage reflected in Iroquet's name. Father Vimont's 1644 description would appear to sum up the French attitude to the Iroquet nation as being "extremely insolent, arrogant, full of superstitions and very profligate."<sup>61</sup>

On the other hand, there was much

<sup>48</sup> Daniele Caloz, "Etienne Brule: A Wealthy Parisian Trader?" <<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/etienne-brule-a-wealthy-parisian-trader>> 16 March 2015.

<sup>49</sup> *Works*, vol. vol. 6 (1936), 63.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>52</sup> Brossard, "Étienne Bruslé Un Campinois en Nouvelle-France."

<sup>53</sup> *Works*, vol. (1936) 6, 102.

<sup>54</sup> Trigger, *The Children of Aataensic: A History of the Huron People to 1660*, 398.

<sup>55</sup> *JR* 5, 219.

<sup>56</sup> *JR* 31, 279.

<sup>57</sup> *JR* 18, 229; *JR* 22, 215.

<sup>58</sup> *JR* 22, 271; *JR* 31, 279–283.

<sup>59</sup> *JR* 22, 269; *JR* 27, 279; *JR* 28, 225.

<sup>60</sup> Cook *The Voyages of Jacques Cartier*, 59–66.

<sup>61</sup> *JR* 25, 249.

news about Brulé and his death at the hands of the Wendat Attignawantan (Bear Tribe). In 1633, Le Jeune recorded the Wendat concern that his murder might result in French reprisals. However, many Wendat were reassured that, since Brulé was considered a traitor for joining the English, the French had no concern about his murder.<sup>62</sup> Additional details, such as the location of the murder and subsequent Indigenous political implications, were provided over the ensuing years and dutifully reported by the Jesuits.<sup>63</sup> Reports state that Brulé had been killed at his village of residence, Toanché, by a Wendat northern Bear tribe headman named Aenon,<sup>64</sup> who was “one of those who are supposed to have killed the wretched Brusle.”<sup>65</sup> Sagard reports of his murder that “it was his fault that he committed against them, and saw how one should not abuse the goodness of these peoples,”<sup>66</sup> further suggesting that it was a corporate or group act rather than a personal grudge. He may have been subject to a traditional public execution, including torture during which he may have acquitted himself

well, resulting in the ritual consumption of body parts<sup>67</sup>: “Bruslé has since been condemned to death, then eaten by the Hurons” in the Wendat village of Toanché.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, the Wendat desire to exhume his remains and include them among their dead in their national “Feast of the Dead” at Ossossané in 1636<sup>69</sup> indicates that they held Brulé in respect. The abandonment of Toanché shortly thereafter<sup>70</sup> speaks to the Wendat fear of French reprisals for this corporate act. It was not until the Jesuit visit to the Neutral nation in 1640 that Brébeuf learned that his murder was from a concern about his journeys to the Seneca and the potential for direct trade between them and the French.<sup>71</sup> Given this information and their apparent partnership, it seems likely that Iroquet’s final and personal disappearance from the French records also involved this contentious issue.

### Picking up the Pieces: the Archaeological Evidence

Recent AMS dating of the Glass Bead Period 2<sup>72</sup> (c.1600-1632) Warmin-

<sup>62</sup> JR 5, 239-241.

<sup>63</sup> JR 7, 223; JR 8, 83, 93, 103; JR 10, 37, 79, 237; JR 14, 17, 53.

<sup>64</sup> Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660*, 474.

<sup>65</sup> JR 12, 89.

<sup>66</sup> Sagard, *Le grand voyage du pays des Hurons*, chapter 28.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas S. Abler, “Iroquois Cannibalism: Fact Not Fiction,” *Ethnohistory*, 27:4 (1980), Special Iroquois Issue, 313–14; Thomas S. Abler and Michael.H. Logan, “The Florescence and Demise of Iroquoian Cannibalism: Human Sacrifice and Malinowski’s Hypothesis,” *Man in the Northeast*, 35 (1988), 8.

<sup>68</sup> Sagard *Le grand voyage du pays des Hurons*. 1632, chapter 28.

<sup>69</sup> JR 10, 305, 309.

<sup>70</sup> JR 8, 91-93.

<sup>71</sup> JR 21, 211.

<sup>72</sup> Ian T. Kenyon and Thomas Kenyon “Comments on 17th Century Glass Trade Beads from Ontario.” *Proceedings of the 1982 Glass Trade Bead Conference*. Rochester Museum & Science Center Research

ster villages<sup>73</sup> has been consistent with Heidenreich's identification of the site as Champlain's Cahiagué,<sup>74</sup> where Iroquet wintered (see Figure 1). Some had proposed the nearby Glass Bead Period 1 (c.1580–1600) Ball village to be Cahiagué,<sup>75</sup> but its material culture assemblage argues an earlier date. In fact, it may well be the village antecedent to Cahiagué.<sup>76</sup> The author has argued for a substantial Algonquin presence on the Ball site<sup>77</sup> and commented on the predominance of Onondaga chert Neutral arrow points in the lithic assemblage. Pavlish et al. have documented the unique diversity and volume of European copper goods on the late sixteenth-century Ball village,<sup>78</sup> and the village's abundance of a particular chemical group perfectly mirrored contemporary Neutral sites.<sup>79</sup>

Taken together, it appears that the Ball village population was extremely well-connected with European goods suppliers to the east and with Neutral communities to the south.

Another artifact class, stone pipes of distinctive material and form,<sup>80</sup> connect the Canadian Shield geological province of southeastern Ontario with early seventeenth-century Neutral and Seneca sites (Figure 1). Archaeological evidence clearly shows that the seventeenth-century Neutral received pipes from numerous distant sources, including limestone elbow-shaped effigy pipes from the Petun/Odawa,<sup>81</sup> elbow and disc-shaped forms of Ohio pipestone from the proto-Shawnee populations of the Ohio valley<sup>82</sup> and small catlinite "Plains style" pipes from the Iowa,<sup>83</sup> possibly via the Odawa.

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Records No. 16. (1983), 59-74; William R. Fitzgerald "Further Comments on the Neutral Glass Bead Sequence," *Arch Notes. Newsletter of the Ontario Archaeological Society* 83:1 (1983), 17–25.

<sup>73</sup> Manning et al. "Radiocarbon re-dating of contact-era Iroquoian history in northeastern North America"; J. Birch et al. "Refined Radiocarbon Chronologies for Northern Iroquoian Site Sequences: Implications for Coalescence, Conflict, and the Reception of European Goods," *American Antiquity* (2020), table 2.

<sup>74</sup> Conrad Heidenreich *Hurononia: A History and Geography of the Huron Indians, 1600-1650*. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1971); Fox and Garrad, "Hurons in an Algonquian Land," 129.

<sup>75</sup> William R. Fitzgerald, "Is The Warminster Site Champlain's Cahiagué?" *Ontario Archaeology* 45 (1986), 3-7.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>77</sup> Brandi L. MacDonald et al., "Iron oxide geochemistry in the Great Lakes Region (North America): Implications for ochre provenance studies," *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 19 (June 2018), 489.

<sup>78</sup> Larry A. Pavlish et al. "Tracing the Distribution of Late 16th and Early 17th Century European Copper Artefacts in Southern Québec and Ontario, Canada," *Archaeometry* 60:3 (2018), 517–34.

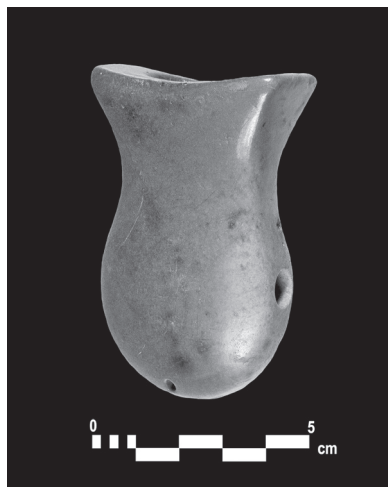
<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 4.

<sup>80</sup> William Fox and Jean-Luc Pilon, "Evidence for Sixteenth-Century Exchange: The Ottawa and Upper St. Lawrence Waterways," *Contact in the 16th Century, Networks among Fishers, Foragers and Farmers*. Ed. B. Loewen and C. Chapdelaine. *Mercury Series Archaeology Paper* 176 (2016), 204, fig. 8.5.

<sup>81</sup> Charles Garrad, *Petun To Wyandot The Ontario Petun from the Sixteenth Century*. Ed. J-L. Pilon and W. Fox. *Mercury Series Archaeology Paper* 174 (2014), 310, plate 6.11.

<sup>82</sup> Penelope Drooker, *The View from Madisonville Protohistoric Western Fort Ancient Interaction Patterns. Memoirs of the Museum of Anthropology University of Michigan* No. 31 (1997); Earnest A. Hooton *Indian Village Site and Cemetery Near Madisonville Ohio. Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1920), plate 19.

<sup>83</sup> Harlan I. Smith, *An Album of Prehistoric Canadian Art*. (Ottawa: Canada Department of Mines.



(Left) Figure 2: Steatite Vasiform Pipes: Baptiste Lake site (left), Lake Medad site (right). Photographs by William Fox, enhanced by John Howarth Photography.

(Above) Figure 3: The Ossossané Steatite Vasiform Pipe. (Royal Ontario Museum, Dept of New World Archaeology, enhanced by John Howarth Photography.

An additional pipe type recovered in abundance from seventeenth-century Neutral sites is a vasiform style, manufactured of a green steatite, weathering to a cream to beige to brown colour. George West,<sup>84</sup> in his definitive stone pipe compendium, identifies “vase-shaped pipes” as “quite common in the Great Lakes region, the New England States and the St. Lawrence Basin.” A review of his Plate 160 displays the “various forms” of this type, mostly manufactured of sandstone

and limestone, with only one specimen identified as steatite. Plate 121, figure 6 illustrates the only specimen resembling the Neutral vasiform pipes, but mistakenly identified as limestone, and is one of three pipes from the Lake Medad site presently housed in the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian.<sup>85</sup> Another two specimens from the early seventeenth-century Neutral Lake Medad village are part of the Hirschfelder collection held by the Canadian Museum of

*Victoria Memorial Museum Bulletin* No. 37 *Anthropological Series* No. 8 (1923), 166–67, Plate LXX, figs 1 and 2; Lloyd A. Wilford and John W. Brink, “The Hogback Site: A Proto-historic Oneota Burial Site.” *The Minnesota Archaeologist* 33:1&2 (1974), 36–37 and 74, plate 8b.

<sup>84</sup> George West *Tobacco, Pipes and Smoking Customs of the American Indians*. Milwaukee: *Bulletin of the Public Museum of the City of Milwaukee*. vol. 17, parts 1 and 2 (1934), 221.

<sup>85</sup> William Fox, “George Gustav Heye and His Looted Lake Medad Collection: An Allegory for All That Went Before in Ontario” *Ontario Archaeology* 100 (2020), 90–101.

History; Harlan Smith illustrated one in his volume entitled “An Album of Prehistoric Canadian Art.”<sup>86</sup> The southern Ontario distribution of these particular pipes is striking, with four specimens derived from the c.1620 Baptiste Lake site in the vicinity of the steatite source in Onontcharonon territory and fourteen from nine seventeenth-century Neutral sites (**Figure 2**). No similar pipes have been recorded from Petun sites, and only two specimens have been recorded from Wendat sites, including one from the 1636 Ossossané ossuary<sup>87</sup> (**Figure 3**), where the Wendat proposed to inter Brulé’s remains and may have interred those of Iroquet.

Unlike the ubiquitous ceramic smoking pipes characteristic of early seventeenth-century Iroquoian village sites, stone pipes appear to have functioned in a generally more corporate or interpersonal as opposed to personal manner, particularly those manufactured of exotic stone. A classic example is the disc pipe of catlinite manufactured in the Midwest and recovered from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Iroquoian sites in Ontario<sup>88</sup> and New York State, as well

as proto-Shawnee sites like Madisonville in the Ohio valley.<sup>89</sup> That these symbols of interaction did not always reflect goodwill is suggested by the shattered or “killed” specimen from the sixteenth-century Seneca Richmond Mills village.<sup>90</sup> A diplomatic and perhaps interpersonal function for such pipes has been proposed,<sup>91</sup> presaging the famous Midwest calumets of the eighteenth century, as suggested by Witthoft et al.<sup>92</sup>

The latter ceremony has been described in the western Great Lakes and Plains regions by a variety of French and Spanish traders and the Recollect priest Father Louis Hennepin.<sup>93</sup> The latter accompanied la Salle on his expedition to the Mississippi in 1679/80 and described calumet ceremonies among the Pottawatomis and Fox, as well as the calumet pipe itself. Father Joseph Francois Lafitau illustrated such a ceremony in the Midwest and observed that “the calumet is not only a symbol of peace and war, but is also that of trade”<sup>94</sup> (**Figure 4**). He continues, saying that the “tribes have traded... from time immemorial” and “the commodities exchanged are beads, wam-

<sup>86</sup> Smith, *An Album of Prehistoric Canadian Art*, plate 70, fig. 3.

<sup>87</sup> Kenneth E. Kidd, “The Excavation and Historical Identification of a Huron Ossuary,” *American Antiquity* 18:4 (1953), 365 and 369, fig. 125, b.

<sup>88</sup> William Fox, “Thaniba Wakondagi Among the Ontario Iroquois,” *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 26:2 (2002), 130–51.

<sup>89</sup> Drooker, *The View from Madisonville Protohistoric Western Fort Ancient Interaction Patterns*.

<sup>90</sup> John Witthoft et al., “Micmac Pipes, Vase-Shaped Pipes and Calumets,” *Pennsylvania Archaeologist* 23:3-4 (1953), 92.

<sup>91</sup> Fox, “Thaniba Wakondagi Among the Ontario Iroquois,” 146.

<sup>92</sup> Witthoft et al., “Micmac Pipes, Vase-Shaped Pipes and Calumets,” 94.

<sup>93</sup> Hennepin, *A Description of Louisiana*. Translated by J.G. Shea (1880), 112–13. (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc).

<sup>94</sup> William N. Fenton and Elizabeth L. Moore, *Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Previous Times*. By Father Joseph Francois Lafitau, vol. 2 (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1977), 183.





Figure 4: Father Lafitau's Image of a Calumet Ceremony. From "Customs of the American Indians Compared With the Customs of Primitive Times" (1724) Plate XV (1977), 184

pum, furs, robes, tobacco,... calumets, in a word all the commodities which they use in daily life."<sup>95</sup>

Blakeslee has provided a cogent argument for the pre-contact existence of this ceremony on the Great Plains during the early seventeenth century. More importantly, he has proposed that the spread of the ceremony into the Eastern Woodlands was primarily in the interests of "considerations of alliance and trade."<sup>96</sup> He describes the standard calumet stone pipe bowl as "plain with a high polish as its only decoration"<sup>97</sup> and points out that the calumet ceremonies "contain an adoption ritual, and... establish a fictive

kinship relationship between individuals of different clans, bands, or ethnic groups."<sup>98</sup> In Iroquoian society, such a ceremony could have tied Iroquet to a person of influence in a foreign community through establishing an "Athenrosera, or particular friendship,"<sup>99</sup> similar to the objective of the Seneca Eagle Dance documented by Fenton.<sup>100</sup>

It is perhaps significant that one of only two of these distinctive steatite vasiform pipes recorded in Wendake was recovered from the Ossossané ossuary, which Kidd<sup>101</sup> identified as the site of the Feast of the Dead reported by Brébeuf in 1636<sup>102</sup> (see Figure 3).

## The Corporate Reality

The importance of the French trade to the Wendat cannot be overstated. It was, at times, a matter of life and death,<sup>103</sup> as we can glean from the early

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, 184.

<sup>96</sup> Donald J. Blakeslee, "The Origin and Spread of the Calumet Ceremony." *American Antiquity* 46:4 (1981), 759–68.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, 763.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, 759.

<sup>99</sup> Fenton and Moore, *Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Previous Times*. By Father Joseph Francois Lafitau. vol. I (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1974), 361.

<sup>100</sup> William N. Fenton, *The Iroquois Eagle Dance, An Offshoot of the Calumet Dance*. (Syracuse University Press, 1991), 208–210.

<sup>101</sup> Kidd, "The Excavation and Historical Identification of a Huron Ossuary," 378.

<sup>102</sup> *JR* 10, 279–305.

<sup>103</sup> Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic A History of the Huron People to 1660*, 474.



seventeenth-century historical record, it twice resulted in “smear campaigns” by the Wendat when official French visits were made to the Neutral tribes to the south. The word “official” is used to differentiate the visits of Recollect and Jesuit French corporate representatives from the regular trade visits of the unrecorded<sup>104</sup> or little recorded individuals such as Brulé, who left evidence of their presence through the “Metis” offspring interred in a Neutral cemetery dating to the 1630s.<sup>105</sup> Further, a European male was interred in Cemetery 1 of the Seneca Dutch Hollow village dated to c.1620-35<sup>106</sup> (see Figure 1). Additional evidence of European contact has been documented through advanced syphilis displayed by an adult female interred in Grave 5 of the 1620-30 Neutral Misener cemetery<sup>107</sup> and syphilitic pathology was noted for Individual 12, an adult female interred in Grave 45, dating to c.1620-30 in the Neutral Grimsby cemetery.<sup>108</sup>

Trigger<sup>109</sup> elaborates on the Indigenous importance of the French trade by

noting that the Arendahronon or Rock Tribe chief Ochasteguain, who by Wendat tradition was “master of that trade,” being the first to initiate it, passed that status and right to trade on to the principal headman of his tribe, Atironta. The Arendahronon tribe, junior Wendat confederacy members, then seemingly passed these rights on to the entire confederacy. They specifically gave them to the powerful and original ancestral Wendat tribe, the Attignawantan or Bear, in 1611,<sup>110</sup> which would explain Brulé’s move to the Bear village of Toanché by the 1620s.<sup>111</sup> Within the context of Wendat confederacy power politics, the participation of the Onontcharonon chief Iroquet in international trade with the Neutral, on the scale documented by Daillon, suggests that he felt free to continue to assert his original rights to the French trade as late as 1626, perhaps abetted by his protégé and “eyes and ears” among the Attignawantan.

Geochemical analysis suggests that the steatite acquired for manufacturing the distinctive vasiform pipes derives

<sup>104</sup> JR 21, 203.

<sup>105</sup> Mary Jackes, “The mid seventeenth century collapse of Iroquoian Ontario: examining the last burial place of the Neutral Nation,” *Vers une anthropologie des catastrophes. Actes des 9e journées d’anthropologie de Valbonne*. (Association pour la Promotion et la Diffusion des Connaissances Archéologiques: 2008), 352.

<sup>106</sup> Mary Jackes, *The Osteology of the Grimsby Site*. (Edmonton: University of Alberta Department of Anthropology, 1988), 29-36, 143; Martha Sempowski and Lorrain P. Saunders *Dutch Hollow and Factory Hollow. The Advent of Dutch Trade Among the Seneca. Part One. Charles F. Wray Series in Seneca Archaeology. Volume III*. Rochester Museum and Science Center Research Records No. 24. (2001), 32-36.

<sup>107</sup> Ian T. Kenyon, “A Preliminary Report on the Misener Cemetery Glass Beads,” *KEWA Newsletter of the London Chapter, Ontario Archaeological Society* 85-5 (1985), 19; M.W. Spence “Field Observation on the Misener Cemetery” (1984), 3-4. Manuscript on file at the Museum of Ontario Archaeology, London.

<sup>108</sup> Jackes, *The Osteology of the Grimsby Site*, 76, Table 61; Ian T. Kenyon and William Fox “The Grimsby Cemetery—A Second Look”. *KEWA Newsletter of the London Chapter, Ontario Archaeological Society* 82-9 (1982), 11, Table 2.

<sup>109</sup> Trigger, *The Children of Aataentsic. A History of the Huron People to 1660*, 288.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, 290.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, 292.

from the traditional territory of the Onontchateronon Algonquin nation. While four of these pipes were recovered from an Algonquin site, which may be Tonttharararon or Onontchateronon, and one from an allied Algonquin group further north on Lake Nipissing, over 80 percent of the pipes recovered from an Iroquoian context derive from Neutral mortuary sites dating between roughly 1620 and the 1640s. That is, they were likely interred with important personages who had passed away during this period.

How did Iroquet receive permission from the Neutral tribes of the early seventeenth century to remove so valuable a commodity as beaver from their territory? From what little we learn from the French literary sources, he was a respected war leader and senior member of the Onontchateronon/Arendahronon trade cartel with the French in the first decades of the seventeenth century. He may well have been the major purveyor of French goods to the Neutral tribes, along with his protégé, Etienne Brulé—the latter familiar with the Neutral and murdered by the Attignawantan Wendat due to his connections with the Seneca. The presence of two distinctive steatite vasiform pipes in a contemporary Dutch Hollow Seneca cemetery may signal a visit by Brulé or Iroquet attempting to establish trade links. What better way to secure such an arrangement than through fictive kinship in consideration of trade, providing a pipe with a plain, highly polished stone bowl consistent with docu-

mented calumet ceremony specimens? These distinctive Onontchateronon pipe bowls are proposed to constitute a part of pipes presented to partners, people of influence, to seal trade and resource access agreements between Iroquet's people and the Neutral and, possibly, the Seneca.

## Conclusion

The business of supplying European goods to interior tribes such as the Neutral passed east to west between Indigenous traders up the St. Lawrence and secondary waterways over the course of the sixteenth century. Osteological evidence from both Seneca and Neutral cemeteries of the early seventeenth century makes it clear that there was European contact during this period. There is even a European male buried in a c.1620 Seneca cemetery. Clearly, Brulé was unlikely to be the first European in the region, prompting Brébeuf's 1640 observation from the Neutral country that "Many of our Frenchmen who have been here have, in the past, made journeys in this country of the Neutral Nation for the sake of reaping profit and advantage from furs and other little wares that one might look for."<sup>112</sup> Both Iroquet and Brulé's active involvement in a lucrative trade with the Neutral and probably Seneca tribes during the 1620s is evident, as is the abrupt termination of these activities by the Wendat when an opportunity for political action was presented by the Kirke brothers' holding of Quebec at the end of the decade.

<sup>112</sup> *JR* 21, 203.