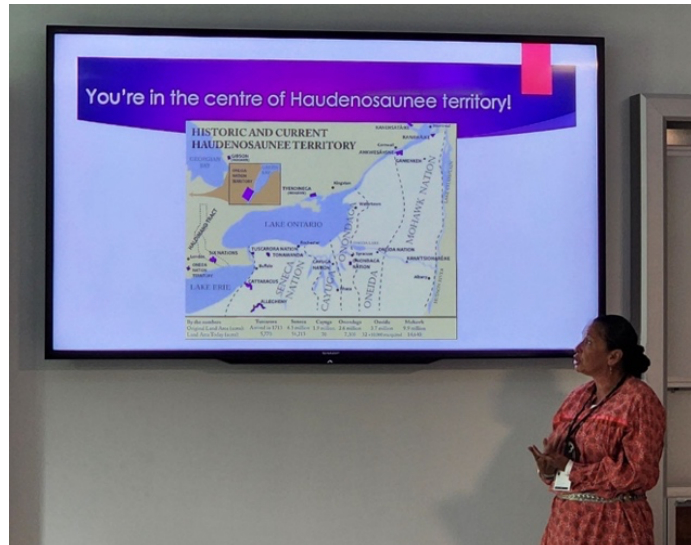


My cross-border land acknowledgement

When I donned a Dutch costume as a child, I knew nothing about my own settler colonial history. Recently my Haudenosaunee collaborators in the Earth to Tables Legacies Project encouraged me to learn about my Dutch ancestors, so intertwined with their history in upstate New York where my mother was raised on land that 500 years ago was Mohawk territory.



I was visiting the family farm near Albany on the U.S. election day. As we mourned the results in the following days, we made a pilgrimage to nearby Van Vechten cemetery, the burial grounds of my grandmothers' ancestors, then visited three area museums that told the stories of the unfolding bumpy relationship between the Dutch and the Haudenosaunee.



The Dutch were known as a tolerant seafaring people, initially mainly interested in trade, settling on the coast establishing New Amsterdam (now New York City). Thanks to Henry Hudson, they eventually moved north and inland to where the Mohawk River meets the Hudson, a perfect spot for the beaver trade.



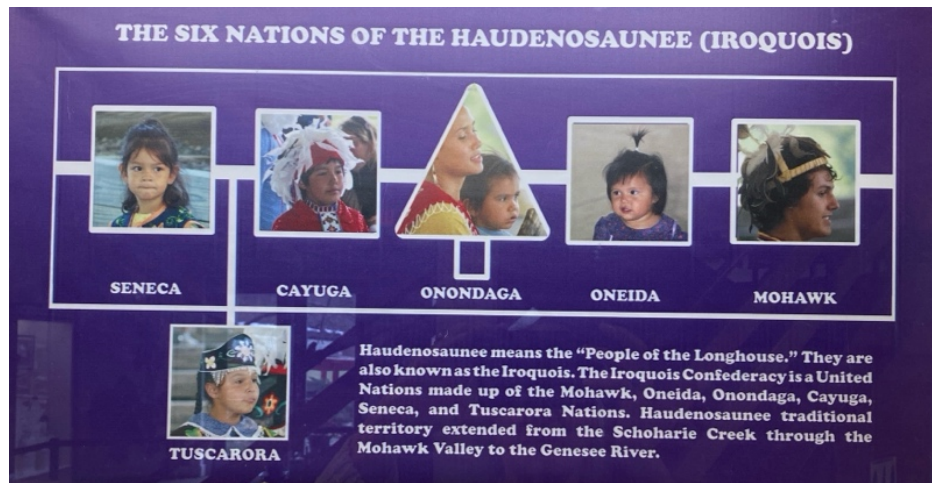
In 1613, the first two row wampum or *Teioháte Kaswenta* treaty was negotiated there when the Mohawks proposed to the Dutch an agreement of peace and friendship, two parallel paths - the ships and the canoes, respecting each other's cultures, and agreeing not to interfere. Chandra Maracle of Six Nations reminds us that the same two row wampum is being reclaimed today as a model for respectful nation to nation relations.

The more liberal and tolerant approach of the Dutch didn't last long, however. They soon became as aggressive as the French and English in the beaver trade, land grabbing and brutal warfare, adopting gunpowder, scalping and adding West Indian rum to their genocidal weapons.



In the present day, the Haudenosaunee confederacy, divided by the U.S./Canada border, is part of a broader Indigenous resurgence. We visited the Iroquois White Corn Project and the Onondaga Farm around Syracuse, where seeds are being repatriated from all over the country, recovering traditional foods.

Haudenosaunee is a Cayuga word meaning “extending the longhouse,” which includes six nations across upstate New York and into Ontario and Quebec.



The Iroquois Museum near Albany is shaped like a longhouse, and includes work by artists from this side of the border: like the tree of peace on the turtle’s back by renown sculptor Stan Hill, and his son Rick Hill’s humorous concoction of a ceremonial headdress with a hard hat for his Mohawk ironworker father, as well as images from dancer Santee Smith’s multimedia piece on The Mush Hole, the Mohawk Residential School at Six Nations.



George Washington, the first president of the United States, understood the power of Haudenosaunee's food security by storing corn for seven years, so ordered the burning of immense grain stores. Since then, the Mohawk word for "U.S. President" literally means "town destroyer."



Is this moniker still true for Indigenous communities in the U.S.?



What do the U.S. election results mean for the struggles of indigenous communities and their allies against pipelines, environmental racism, climate catastrophes and for land back, for free and informed consent, for resurgence of regenerative agriculture?

New York climate activists of the Food and Water Watch Hudson Valley group are fighting the expansion of the Iroquois Pipeline which would increase the fossil fuel infrastructure across two environmental justice communities, sending fracked gas to NYC.

How do we in SCAN! see the impact of the Trump presidency on Canadian climate justice struggles? Both in the coming years and for the next seven generations?

The climate crisis reminds us that our destinies are connected, despite the geopolitical borders. Perhaps our climate advocacy and solidarity with Indigenous peoples needs to cross those borders now more than ever.

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