

LAND OF THE THREE MIAMIS

A TRADITIONAL NARRATIVE OF THE IROQUOIS IN OHIO



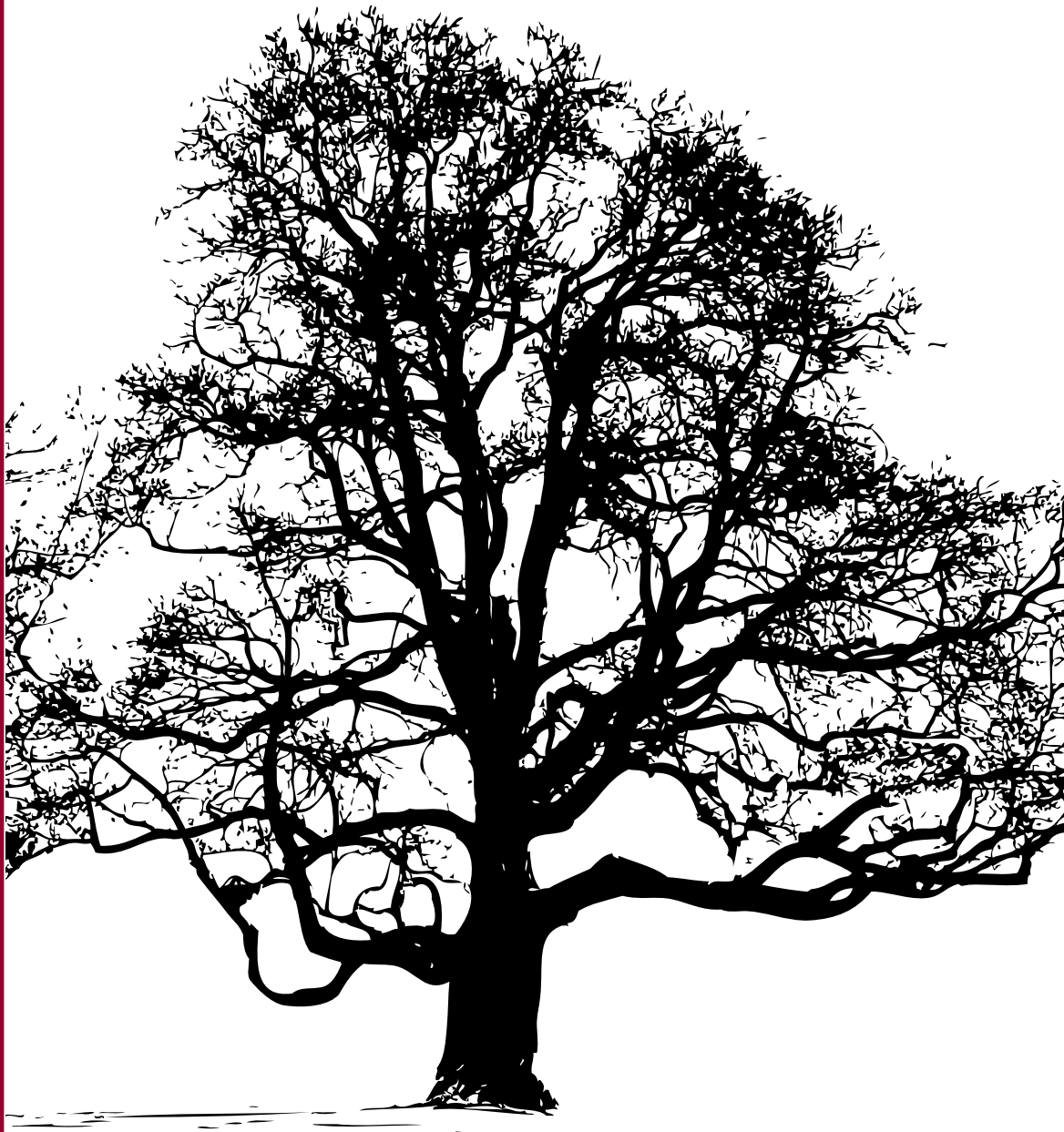
BY

BARBARA ALICE MANN

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Urban Affairs Center Press



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The University of Toledo, Urban Affairs Center Press

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Front cover: Etching of a sacred, four-directional tree, located at the corner of
Dorr Street and Richards Road, Toledo, Ohio

Design by Joan Bishop, The University of Toledo

Grandmother:

As you are a woman already in years, and much older than myself, you must have seen many things that I have not seen, and heard much that I have not heard.

Now I should like to hear the story of our people, who we are, where we came from, and what things you heard from your mother and grandmothers relative to old times.

— Traditional Story Request
from a Daughter
to a Grandmother

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FOREWORD

Land of the Three Miamis is different from Barbara Mann's long list of previous publications on Native American history and culture in that there are not pages of copious footnotes to back up her assertions and arguments. This time she has dropped the methodology of Euro-American scholarship and chosen to work in her own manner and that of her Seneca (Iroquois) ancestors. In this book, her purpose is not to prove facts or to give an interpretation of historical events but to pass along essential, traditional cultural narratives and knowledge to her granddaughter. Her readers are in the privileged and rare position of being allowed to listen.

I say "listen" because this is essentially a book of the spoken word. Even though it uses "bugs on bark" (the ironic Ohio Seneca term for writing), as a book must, it strives for orality in both its style and atmosphere. Native America has had ample cause to distrust writing. The Euro-Americans who overpowered and resettled the people of Turtle Island from the founding of St. Augustine, Florida, in 1565 onward used a series of written treaties and documents as well as the weapons of war to do so. The oral tradition, on the other hand, is highly trusted and borne with reverence by Native Americans, both for its own sake and as a counter to the supposed facts and laudatory narratives the conquering "Salt Beings" recorded, taught, and still maintain about the winning of the west and figures such as George Washington and Anthony Wayne.

It may disturb some readers of this narrative to learn that George Washington is a deeply despised figure in Iroquois lore who is referred to as "He Burns It." But it is a reality that Mann reveals in her narrative and non-Native Americans need to be aware of it. Nor is this a new attitude based on current notions of "political correctness." The original letter of protest over land seizure, sent to the newly created U.S. Congress in 1792 by the Seneca nation noted in the very first paragraph, directly addressing Washington, "You are the town destroyer."

Besides its basis in oral tradition and its important and revealing politico-cultural perspective, *Land of the Three Miamis* also brings a much needed correction to a gender imbalance that has existed through time and across the literature of Native American studies, whether by Euro- or Native male scholars. Native tradition is gendered in ways that the Euro-American tradition, both print and oral, is not. Originally, women kept women's traditions—a full half of the lore—whereas men kept men's tradition, the other half of the lore. It was only in hearing both, together, over a lifetime that members of the culture received the whole story of their people.

Unfortunately, the western chroniclers who collected Native traditions were almost exclusively men, and they listened only to other men. Consequently, only the men's version of Native tradition was preserved for the ethnographic record,

the equally salient, and equally interesting, women's tradition going unnoted and unstudied. Today, given the modern, ravaged versions of traditions that are in print, it is acceptable for those Native Americans, male or female, who know any tradition at all to repeat everything they know, whether it is male- or female-based. Dr. Mann does that in this volume, but she heavily focuses on the female tradition she knows best in an attempt to restore the proper Female-Male balance of Iroquois tradition.

In many ways, then, this is an important, even ground-breaking book. But to The University of Toledo Urban Affairs Center Press, it is equally important for its regional focus, which is central to our mission. Reading this book informs one about important etiological narratives of the Eastern Native Americans and about significant moments in American frontier history. But it also reveals rich local details—the fact that “Turkeyfoot Rock” is a fake, the fact that a sacred four-directional oak tree sits at a well-traveled Toledo intersection, [That tree is the basis of the etching on the front cover], and even the presence of a Native spirit in the Oliver House, the current home of the Maumee Bay Brewing Company.

The University of Toledo Urban Affairs Center Press is pleased to add this fascinating volume to our ongoing series on the regional history and culture of Northwest Ohio.

Thomas E. Barden, General Editor
The University of Toledo – Urban Affairs Center Press

INTRODUCTION

In Native American circles, it is traditional for the grandparents to tell the “rising generations,” their grandchildren, tales of the Old Times. When a child is ready to learn, she will come to a trusted Elder, respectfully requesting that Elder to tell her of times past. The “Grandmother” or “Grandfather” need not be the child’s blood-literal grandparents, in the way that westerners count descent, but the grandparent should be a member of the child’s clan or medicine circle. Because proper recitals of tradition are in the Grandparent-to-Grandchild format, I use it here, relaying the traditions of the Ohio Iroquois to my Granddaughter, one of whose lineage names is Grey-Eyes. Throughout, I address her as “Granddaughter” and use the second person in speaking to her.

The reader should also understand that Old Ones did not necessarily parse out Turtle Island (North America) in the same territorial way that later Europeans did, and, although the settlers did attach many traditional words to locales, they did not necessarily use the words in the same way as Natives when it came to identifying places. “Ohio” is a case in point.

“Ohio” is an Iroquoian term, meaning “Beautiful River.” It attached to what is now the Allegheny-Ohio-Mississippi river system. In the Native geography of the eastern woodlands (roughly, the continental U.S. east of the Mississippi River), this is all the same river, from Coudersport, Pennsylvania, where the Allegheny starts, to Pittsburgh, where it joins the Monongahela to form the modern Ohio, and on to the Mississippi Delta, where the Mississippi River runs into the Gulf of Mexico. The notion that the Mississippi River is independent of the Ohio and starts at Lake Itasca, Minnesota, is a European fancy, invented by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, so that he could add the title of “explorer” to his resume. Natives of the woodlands believe that it is an insult to the Beautiful River to suggest such paltry origins as Lake Itasca for the Grandmother River. In Native estimation, the upper Mississippi of today is, at best, just a feeder stream. It takes a river as big as the Allegheny to birth the Mississippi.

Because of these very different geographies, the word “Ohio” does not actually describe the modern State of Ohio in Native traditional lore. There, it is “The Land of the Three Miamis.” I have seen some less-than-generous references in antique settler lore claiming that the term, “Land of the Three Miamis,” was invented by Judge Asa Kenton Owen of Wisconsin in the nineteenth century. This is false and reflects the jingoism of the settlers, that is, the Euroamericans. In fact, the term, “Land of the Three Miamis” is entirely Native in concept and usage. It was recorded in settler chronicles as the Native term from 1670 on (two centuries before Judge Owen was born).

Natives traditionally describe places, and how to get there, in terms of three coinciding landmarks. Natives traveled far and wide before the Europeans ever stumbled across the Americas. Every nook and cranny of the continent was known, and distant sites were often visited as parts of vision quests. Oral directions prepared travelers to recognize when they had arrived in the right place. It is possible that two similar landmarks exist in one geographical location, but three identical features in one place are unlikely. Therefore, tradition always identifies three landmarks in one spot.

The three landmarks for modern-day Ohio included the three rivers lining Ohio's western gate: The Miami of the Lake, the Big Miami, and the Little Miami. The "Miami of the Lake" is now called the "Maumee River," due to a French mispronunciation of "Miami." The Big and Little Miamis are two rivers running into the Ohio River near Cincinnati. The traveling directions to Ohio were that it was just south of the Great Long-Tailed Cat (Lake Erie), north of the Beautiful River, and east of the Three Miamis. Obviously, these directions were not as exact as western border surveys, but anyone following them certainly knew where she was, once she arrived.

Finally, a few words on oral tradition: Eastern Woodlands Natives are widely reported in Western histories as having been "pre-literate." Although the Dutch mistook it for "money," seeding that error in Western stories, wampum was a form of character writing. Wampum are beads, deep violet-purple and white in color, made from quahog shell. Wampum writing knotted those beads into belts containing characters, white on black or black on white, depending on the message. These characters were very specific as to meaning, widely recognized, and used over the entire eastern woodlands. People who did not speak the same language could read the same characters, which made communications for the vast trade and alliance networks of the east easy to maintain.

It is quite incorrect, then, to hold that oral tradition existed because eastern Natives could neither read nor write. Oral tradition has to do with breath, which is a Sky thing. The breath is an important form of Sky medicine. Anything to do with expelled breath (such as forming words) is a sacred act of creation, which must be carefully managed. Misrepresentations distort reality, causing dysfunctions. Thus, forcing tradition to be breath-medicine was a way to emphasize (and ensure) truthfulness. Wampum writing has to do with water, which is an Earth thing. Wampum writing was used for mundane matters, such as keeping councilmanic minutes or lineage histories, while oral tradition exists for spiritual reasons.

Furthermore, men kept men's traditions, and women kept women's traditions. In pre-contact times, this gendered form of transmission was vigilantly maintained,

as disaster can result from ineptly mixing Earth (female) and Sky (male) medicine. However, with the disruptions that were forced on Native cultures due to invasion and genocide—yes, when 96% of indigenous people are dead because of the deeds of an invader, that is genocide—it is common today for anyone, male or female, who knows the traditions to pass them along. This puts a very heavy, extra burden on the “Keeper” (oral traditionalist), because she or he must be careful about the mixing of medicines. For instance, when I, a Grandmother, speak of the male Twins of Creation, I must take great care not to create a Flying Head by misspeaking. (Flying Heads are tornados, one raging result of poorly mixed Sky and Earth medicine.)

One last point about oral tradition is that it does not operate like Western scripture, in which many people claim there is but one “correct” version, so that any other version must be debased or wrong. Native tradition may contain three, four, five, or fifty distinct versions, and all are viewed as correct. This is because Natives are communal people, who think that no story is complete until every last viewpoint on it has been aired. As a result, speaking the Keepings of any Epoch of Time can take a week, or longer. (Iroquoian history is divided into “Epochs of Time,” with certain events properly belonging within certain Epochs.)

The only rule in telling the Keepings is that the key elements must never change—which requires the Speaker to know what the key elements are. For instance, depending upon the Keeper, the Peacemaker, Ayonwantha, or The Jigonsaseh may be given the most credit for spreading the Word of Peace in the Second Epoch of Time, but it does not matter which historical figure gets the credit, just so long as the Word of Peace, itself, is there and intact.

Because there can be so many, sometimes radically different, versions of the Keepings, it is traditional to alert listeners to which traditional threads any given Speaker is following. I follow Chief Tarhe, Grandmother Solomon, Chief Arthur Gibson, Chief Deunquat, and Grandmother “Mary” Grey-Eyes.

PART I.
THE FIRST EPOCH OF TIME



CHAPTER ONE

CREATION

Since you are curious about the Old Things, Granddaughter Grey-Eyes, I will tell you who we are, where we came from, and what I heard from my Mothers and Grandmother relative to Old Times.

We are the *Wakonnyh Howeh*, the sisterhood of the Iroquois. Along with our brothers, the *Ongwe Howeh*, we have walked Turtle Island—North America—since the beginning.

Sky Woman

That beginning was long ago, past all memory, in the mists of ancient time. Our ancestor, *Ataensic*, the Sky Woman, began our people.¹ She lived originally in *Karionwake*, or Sky World. *Karionwake* is a place that moves among the stars, going wherever our ancient cousins, the Sky People, wish it to go. The Sky People are wanderers, wayfaring to many places, looking to see and understand the dreams there.

A great, yellow dogtooth tree, *Onodja*, glowing at its very top, runs the entire height of *Kariowake*, holding together its Earth and Sky. The Old Ones said that the odor of its bark was pleasant, like gently smoldering *knickenick*, or tobacco. *Onodja* gives all the necessities of life to the Sky People. Whenever they need something, they simply go to the tree and think hard about it, and out it grows from the bark for the people to gather up.

As a little girl, Sky Woman roamed the forests of *Karionwake*, sadder than she should have been, for her mother had never identified her father, despite the urgings of her own mother. Every day, the little Sky Woman searched the forests, seeking out her father. All she knew was that he and her mother had courted once, her mother combing out his hair every morning—that is, she straightened out his thoughts, interpreting the meaning of his dreams. To this day, Little Fat-faced Granddaughter Grey-Eyes, we know that our hair represents our thoughts, and must be kept neatly arranged, lest our minds be in chaos.

Although the mother of Sky Woman conceived by her gentle lover, she decided not to acknowledge him, which was her right, but it caused sorrow in many places. Knowing that he would never be part of his little daughter's life, the mild father was so distraught that he died of grief. His was the first death to have occurred in *Karionwake*, for the Sky People live to ages that are unimaginable to us. The people buried him high in the branches of *Onodja*, his sacred wampum wrapped about his arms and neck.

His little daughter climbed all the trees of Sky World in search of him, finally scaling *Onodja*, higher than she had ever gone before. There, in the top branches,

she found his corpse, but his Sky Spirit, yet in grief, had not gone into the tree, as do the spirits of dead Young Men, to stand as Sky Guardians of the people. (It is traditional to capitalize office titles, of either spirit or physicality.) Instead, it lingered about his corpse, so that young Sky Woman was able, after much meditation high in the branches of *Onodja*, to speak with him.

Day after day, she visited *Onodja*, until one night, she climbed down, carrying her father's death wampum. Removing grave goods is deeply frowned upon, so the people questioned her closely, but she replied, "My father gave it to me." Now, the people knew that he was acknowledged as her father, relieving the stress on his Sky spirit, and plugging the hole of sorrow in his little daughter's heart.

As Sky Woman grew into young womanhood, so grew her Sky abilities, until they were the talk of Sky World. Now, Granddaughter, all Sky People can do things that we, their cousins, find inscrutable. For instance, they can communicate simply by moving thoughts from their minds into the minds of others. They can also move objects about, just by thinking about them. They are best at seeing the dreams of new places, but Sky Woman was better at all of these things than any of the rest.

One day, the Sky spirit of her father pressed Sky Woman to marry the Ancient One, the Earth Grasper, himself. This was a strange bit of advice, since The Ancient was a spiteful man, cruel, even. He was jealous of Sky Woman's great dream-reading abilities and did not treat her well. When she first came to him, he threw a steaming pot of sagamite, or corn soup, on her bare flesh, and then bid his dogs to lick it off, pulling off burned skin along with the stew. Sky Woman bore it stoically, but she was disappointed in her father. She asked him why he had urged her into such an untoward match, but he did not explain himself.

Turtle Island

One day, *Karionwake* floated over an insignificant little Water World. Not much was there besides water and water animals, in other words, so much Earth medicine that the Sky People could not read its dreams easily. They felt very frustrated by this. To make matters worse—or, perhaps the overload of Earth medicine was the matter in the first place—*Onodja* began to droop and die. Some people, including The Ancient, blamed Sky Woman for the great tree's disorder. She had spent too much time there, in communication with the dead.

In an attempt to heal *Onodja*, the Sky People uprooted it, leaving a big, empty hole where its roots once ran down to the bottom of Sky World. The tree might have been in disrepair, but suddenly, the dreams of the Water World were clear. The Sky People all came to the edge of the hole under *Onodja*, eager to look down on that Water World's dreams.

Granddaughter, the Water World was looking up at *Karionwake*, at the same time. The Elder Spirits of Earth—for the Water World was Earth—had long been hoping to make dry land and life to inhabit it, but they had lacked the Sky

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component necessary to do this. When the Sky People came by, then, the Earth Spirits were determined to seize the opportunity. A delegation was sent to Sky World, consisting of all the Elder Earth Spirits. Together, Sky and Earth held a council to discuss the creation of land life on Earth, with the Earth Grasper presiding as Fire Keeper. The Earth Spirits were very urgent on the matter, although the Sky Spirits were fairly neutral, not caring one way or the other.

Consensus does not require everyone to be enthusiastic about a project, so this was good enough for a consensus on the creation of land life on Earth. The Elder Spirits of Earth hastily departed, before the Sky Spirits could change their minds. As they descended, the Meteor Man, that Fire Dragon of Discord, zoomed down with them. This council set the accident of Earth Life in motion.

The counselors of The Ancient sought to curry favor with him by speaking badly of Sky Woman, fanning his envy into paranoid proportions with tale upon tale of invented misbehavior on her part. They easily convinced him that he needed to get rid of her so that, once more, he could resume his stature as the strongest dream-reader of *Karionwake*. Toward this end, The Ancient plotted until he knew just how to do that.

One day, he lured Sky Woman to the edge of the hole at the base of the nearly lifeless *Onodja*. "Look there!" he said, pointing to the dreams of Earth. As she leaned forward into the vision, he took his two fingers, pressed them against the nape of her neck, and pushed her over the edge of *Karionwake*.

Tumbling down, down, Sky Woman grabbed at the dangling roots of *Onodja* in her terror. She thought, I will need food below, and visualized the Three Sisters, the Elder Sister Corn, and her two Little Sisters, Beans and Squash. Because she grasped the roots of *Onodja*, and not the trunk, she was given seeds instead of the full plants. She held them desperately in her right hand. In her left, as she was falling past even the last, trailing roots of *Onodja*, she laid hold of tobacco seeds, so that she could at least make Sky prayers down there on Earth.

Now she was in free fall through the blue atmosphere of Water World, gathering speed as she plummeted down, down, and down, the horror of her situation unconcealed in her eyes.

Just then, Eagle, the Spirit who flies high and sees far, cruised by. He was startled to see a Sky Person rocketing down, and when he saw the panic in her eyes, he called out to the Great Birds, Heron and Loon, gliding below him: "Look there! A Sky Woman is falling!"

Heron and Loon had been searching the waves lapping beneath them, but at Eagle's cry, they angled up to see a very strange creature, arms and legs spread wide, flightless and falling at dramatic speed. Quickly, they flew close together, the feathers of their wings interlocking as they swooped under Sky Woman, breaking her fall with the downy bed of their wings. Startled, but grateful for the sudden end to her descent, Sky Woman looked about, surprised to see that she was still airborne.

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Heron and Loon carried the strange creature aloft for a while but knew this must be a temporary solution.

“This one is heavy!” Heron called to Eagle.

“We’ve done it now,” grouched Loon. “Where are we going to put her?”

Eagle spotted Great-grandmother Turtle, the Great Snapping Turtle, floating below in the waters. He called down, “There is a woman fallen from the Sky who needs a place to land.”

Great-grandmother Turtle never did anything quickly, so she chewed on that information for a while before saying, “We must hold a council of the Water Animals to see what is to be done.” With that, Turtle sent a moccasin (messenger) around to all the Animals, calling them forth.

Muskrat came, as did Otter, Beaver, Bass, and many others. With Loon and Heron urging them to hurry, they deliberated on the startling advent of Sky Woman. It was clear fairly soon that they could not allow her to drown, for her death might injure the dreams of Earth.

“Someone has to feed her, you know,” cautioned Beaver, turning down his mouth.

“I can do that,” offered Bass, as the others laughed at him. “You’ve got no sense!” they teased.

“If we’re going to keep her,” mused Turtle, “we’ll have to make her some dry land, because she can neither swim nor fly.”

The council ruminated on this idea for a while before Turtle added, “We will have to go to the bottom of the ocean to fetch dirt. I will carry that dirt on my shell, but someone else must dive for it.”

“It’s a long way down to the bottom,” Otter observed, looking daunted. The council was silent as the waves lapped around it.

Muskrat swam forward. She always felt that she was up to more than she really was, so now she ventured, “I’ll go,” and dived. She went far down, much farther down than she had ever attempted before. Just as her chest was about to burst, she hit bottom, bit off a large chunk of dirt, and, joy filling the space so recently occupied by anxiety, raced for the surface. Unfortunately, the extra weight of the dirt slowed her ascent, so that she ran out of air before she broke through the waves.

The other animals floated about the carapace of Turtle waiting with increasing uneasiness for Muskrat to appear. Finally, her lifeless body bobbed to the surface, dirt still smeared across her mouth as she drifted out to sea. Silence grew profound as the council watched as she was swallowed up by the distance.

Now less eager in their earth-forming resolution, the animals looked askance when the next call for a volunteer came around. Finally, Otter swam forward. “I’ll go,” he said evenly, diving with all his might in one, superlative rush to the bottom of the sea. Rubbing dirt on his nose, he surged upwards, but, halfway to the top,

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he became disoriented, unsure of which way was up and which, down. In his confusion, he swam the wrong way, sidelong and down, until his air gave out and he, too, drowned.

Misapprehension gripped the council as two valued members were no more. It was a long time before anyone else volunteered. That anyone was Beaver, who was well known for his earth-forming antics. Beaver had always had a very high opinion of himself, so he boasted, "I am very good at creating land, and also good at swimming. A strong fellow like myself won't fail!" With that, Beaver dived, wrestling his bulk down, where his fat layer kept him from quite touching the bottom. In deep frustration, knowing that his air was running out, Beaver flapped his tail, inadvertently loosening dirt, which settled back down on his tail. Eager and vain, Beaver scurried to the top, his fat helping him float up. He broke the surface with glittering eyes, anticipating the glory of his success as he flapped his tailful of dirt onto the back of Turtle.

"It's about time!" cried Heron and Loon, whose wings were aching. Gently, they set Sky Woman down on the back of Turtle. Their goal achieved, the animals now dissolved their council and departed.

Sky Woman sat alone, dazed and disconsolate on the unseeded dirt of her new home. Looking about the small, rounded plain of Turtle's back, her courage failed her. She sobbed, bitterly regretting it all: the father she had been denied in life, her troubled marriage to The Ancient, her ejection from *Karionwake*, and now this—a barren place, devoid of growing things, consisting of nothing but Earth and Sky with only herself to mediate the two. Her tears fell thick and hot, but, once they were spent, she realized that her situation was still the same, so she stood on her two feet. Shading her eyes with her fists, she scanned the vacant landscape and the more vacant horizon.

Walking east, the direction of prayer, her face to the morning sun, she saw that the land on Turtle's back expanded with each step, hurrying out before her, until it was a continent. Now, Sky Woman began to understand why her father had encouraged her hard marriage, to steel her in preparation for her hard life as First Woman of Earth. Pressing her seeds into the dirt, she encouraged life, speaking kind words to the Spirits of the Three Sisters and watering the land with her urine. Soon, rivers and lakes formed from her waters. The Three Sisters intertwined to grow along the ground, with Sister Corn straining for the sky, and Brother Tobacco filling the valleys. She built her longhouse, harvested her crops, and sat down for the winter, growing heavy with child, for she had been pregnant when jealousy pushed her from Sky World.

The Lynx

Granddaughter, early that spring, Sky Woman gave birth to her lovely daughter, that little Fat-faced, Long-Tailed Lynx, whom some call "Hanging Flowers." A Sky

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Child, The Lynx grew quickly, aiding her mother in all their little tasks, singing life in her chirping child's voice. Sky Woman was as happy as she had ever been, there on Turtle Island with her beloved daughter, beneath the shade of the Great White Pine, the Tree of Peace, which grew dead center of Turtle's back, in the Land of the Three Miamis.

As The Lynx grew older, she took over some of her mother's duties, such as exploring the Back of Turtle, noticing all the plants and animals, and giving them their names. Each morning, she strode out upon one of the Four Shining Paths leading out from the Tree, along the plane of the Direction of the Sky (east-west) or along that of the Split Sky (north-south). Each night, she came home to describe to her mother what she had seen that day. In this way and together, Sky Woman and The Lynx learned the dreams of Earth.

One day, The Lynx encountered animals she could not understand at all. She told Sky Woman that she could not discern their meanings or their names. "Look at how they move," Sky Woman advised. That night, The Lynx dreamed that some ran swiftly, others moved with difficulty, and yet others scurried. When she told Sky Woman her dream, her mother advised, "You will know their names from their movements."

That morning, walking upon her four-root road (that is, each root ran to one of the four cardinal directions), The Lynx came upon a strange, black lake that swallowed up the slow of limb. Seating herself on a rise overlooking the quicksand lake, she watched carefully as each creature moved along its surface. Their tracks were clearly etched in the black lake for some time before fading. No two sets of tracks were the same. "Here is how I will know their names," cried The Lynx.

She hurried home that night to tell her mother of her discoveries. "Ah," replied Sky Woman, "that one moving slowly and with difficulty is a Standing Person, a tree. The one that skipped and raced on the light bones of his four feet was Deer. The one that hopped lightly was Spider, and the one rising and sinking was Beaver. The Two-Footed was Bird." The Lynx continued in this way the next day and the next five years until she had seen, and Sky Woman had named, all the animals of Turtle Island. The Lynx knew their dreams now, and kept all their names.

Now, things changed, Granddaughter.

When she was about sixteen, The Lynx became restless with her predictable life, a need welling up in her that she did not understand herself. Sky Woman shuddered to watch this development, since she knew that what The Lynx wanted was a mate, but there were no suitable mates on Earth for her Fat-faced Lynx.

Day after day, The Lynx went to her special place, a large vine draped from a tall tree, there to swing lazily and dream of she knew-not-what. Growing more anxious, Sky Woman spoke to her daughter about her longings, and elicited her promise not to marry anyone—or anything—without first consulting her.

The Elder Spirits of Earth had by now noticed the lovely Sky Child. Sensing her

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dreams, they sought a way to fulfill them. In particular, North Wind fell in love with the beautiful Sky Child and decided to become her mate. Knowing that the union of Sky and Earth was delicate, he thought long and hard about which form might best please The Lynx.

First, he came to her as a magnificent brown squirrel, his eyes aglitter and his plump tail twitching. “Oh, beautiful Sky Daughter,” he breathed, “come be my mate.” The Lynx recalled her promise to her mother, however, and avoided his breath. North Wind retreated to rethink his strategy. Next, he came to The Lynx in the luxurious fur of a gorgeous red fox, his dreams shimmering in his crafty eyes, but again The Lynx remembered her mother and politely declined the offer of Fox.

A bit nonplussed, North Wind thought for some time about his next form, knowing that it had to be irresistible to The Lynx. For this reason, he came to her now in the breath-taking flesh of a young human man, wonderfully proportioned and tanned to perfection. The Lynx was transfixed as she saw him step out from behind a tree, his vermilion body paint gracefully applied to emphasize his physique, his bark robe thrown jauntily over his shoulder, his black hair sleek with mousse made from bear oil. She exhaled in astonishment as North Wind came to her, taking her hand and gazing into her eyes.

“Oh, beautiful Sky Daughter,” he breathed seductively, “come be my mate,” and The Lynx forgot all about her mother.

She stayed with him a day and a night before he slipped back into thin air. The whole time, his breath, normally so cold, was hot upon her, and she conceived.

Sky Woman was quite worried when she finally found The Lynx lying dreamily below her vine, her eyes looking so far off that she did not readily see her mother. Immediately, Sky Woman felt the new life in her daughter’s womb, and, from that moment, she cherished an inveterate hatred for North Wind. Thereafter, he had to sneak about to see The Lynx.

Sky Woman’s anger masked her fear. She did not know what to expect from this union of Sky and Earth but suspected that it might be an explosive mixture. Watching with bated breath as her daughter’s belly expanded, she hovered about The Lynx until the girl would creep off, just to have a moment to herself. The oldest stories say that The Lynx was heavy with the weight of quadruplets, the two girls of the Split Sky (North and South) and the two boys of the Direction of the Sky (East and West).

Granddaughter, over four hundred years of contact, the Christian missionaries tinkered with our sacred stories, slimming the sacred quadruplets down to just the male twins of East and West. What I am telling you here is just the boys’ story, that has become conventional among our people today. Another day, I will tell you about the girls, The Sweet Woman of the South and her younger sister, The Blue Woman of the North, for, although neglected, their medicine is still strong and important.

The Sacred Twins of East and West

Being a Sky Person, Sky Woman could hear the children thinking in their mother's womb about how they were to emerge from it. The Elder Boy of the East wanted to use the vaginal canal, but the younger, hastier Boy of the West did not want to take the long route. Instead, he wanted to pop out of The Lynx's armpit, as he thought it would shorten his journey.

Despite the heavy vigilance of Sky Woman, The Lynx was overtaken by her labor pains while she was alone in the birthing hut. Eventually hearing her daughter's piercing cries, Sky Woman ran as quickly as she could, but, by the time she arrived panting at the hut, her beautiful Lynx lay dead on her side, the squirming infants encircled in her arm.

Time stopped. Sky Woman stared down upon her child until her grief welled up to unwitting her. Seeing how her daughter had suffered alone, Sky Woman crumpled to the ground, beating it with her fists and screaming over and over in her agony, "Which of you too-many children killed my daughter?" Frightened, each accused the other. Overwhelmed by her anguish, Sky Woman picked up the Twin of the East and flung him into the underbrush, crying comfortless over her daughter's corpse.

It was many hours before she came to herself, but the sound of the wailing Twin of the West finally brought her around. Looking out the door of the hut to see the grasses moving where his brother lay, Sky Woman struggled to her reluctant feet and went to him. He was so small and helpless, that the sight of him tugged at her. For The Lynx's sake, she picked him up and brought back him into the hut, where she tried to think what she could feed her grandsons; how she could bury her daughter; how she could continue to live. In that moment, her heart shriveled, and she became embittered, transforming from Sky Woman into Grandmother, the Hard-luck Woman.

At last, she buried her beautiful Lynx, watering the grave with tears. The Earth embraced The Lynx, winding its beautiful elements about her, nourishing her so that she could shoot up all the crops of Earth. The Three Sisters sprouted from her fingers, and potatoes—that special creation of The Lynx—from her toes. Eventually, The Lynx sank down, down into the Earth. The first burial, she changed the ground from ordinary dirt into the remains of our ancestors. The Lynx lives now as Our Mother, the Earth.

Granddaughter, the new Grandmother had little patience with The Twins, the elder of whom she named Sapling, for his Sky ways, and the younger of whom she called Flint, because he was more Earth-like. Growing up without a mother, in the shadow of a caustic Grandmother for whose attention they had to compete, the boys acted out against one another, constantly doing, undoing, and redoing each other's work.

Since their elder women before them had completed much of the creation begun by the Earth animals, there was little creating left to be done. If the animals

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had created dry land, and the women had filled it with growing crops sown in level fields, the boys had but to finish the forests. The Twins needed each other for balance and harmony, since each was tempted to go too far in his own way, if left unchecked. In his Sky way, Sapling tended to be too smooth, removing every difficulty, whereas, in his Earth way, Flint tended to be too wrinkled, emplacing unnecessary difficulties.

Consequently, when Sapling created the great rivers, he made them complete with two currents, one running in each direction, to make it easy for the people to paddle their canoes either way. Flint disagreed with this arrangement, though, and walked behind his brother, removing one of the currents in each river, because, he said, if the people did not have to struggle at least half of the time, they would not appreciate creation. By the opposite token, Flint loved high mountain ranges, whose tops scraped the sky, making it impossible for the people to cross over them. To repair this extravagance, Sapling walked behind, stopping every now and then to push down a mountain pass with his hand.

When Sapling made lakes, they were always placid and reflective, but, knowing that too much reflection pressed visions too hard on passersby, Flint threw rocks and boulders into the waters, to make them skip and jump, breaking up the visions into manageable chunks. Sapling made pleasant meadows abloom with wildflowers, but Flint walked behind tossing in the less handsome but more useful medicinal herbs. Sapling made graceful animals, such as Elk, but Flint created screaming animals, such as Panther.

Granddaughter, the boys longed to know their father, North Wind, but were too wise to bring this up around Grandmother. Instead, Sapling walked far north one summer to visit North Wind and to bring back his wisdom to his brother. As a parting gift, North Wind gave Sapling a bag full of wiggling things, but told him he must not look inside until he arrived home. Once home, Sapling opened the bag to find it full of game fish, whose scales he polished smoothed, to a high sheen. Not wanting them to wiggle, he gave them very few bones, saying that it would be easier for the people to eat them that way, but Flint noticed that it was hard for the fish to swim straight forward, so he followed behind Sapling, adding numerous bones. The many bones allowed the fish to flit and skim quite ably through the water. The fish were then happy, even if the people were not.

One day, Flint decided to “fix” all his brother’s animals. Now, Flint, who is still alive and still himself, does not always have the best judgment, and his temper is quick, so that his best intentions sometimes go astray. In this instance, he knew that Sapling would not approve of what he intended, so he quietly drove all his brother’s animals into a cave, rolling a boulder in front of its entrance, so that none of them could escape until he was finished. He started his improvements with Rabbit.

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“Tell me what you would like,” he ordered Rabbit. Normally skittish, Rabbit knew of Flint’s temper, so he intended to humor him.

“I’d like long legs, like Elk, so I can run fast,” said Rabbit.

While this conversation was going on, Owl was pestering them both. “I want long feathers!” he shouted to Flint.

“Be quiet!” Flint replied. “Can’t you see I’m concentrating?”

Owl was too excited to wait his turn, however, so he kept shouting, “I want long feathers, and a big beak, and, oh, a good singing voice, too!”

Flint was becoming more and more annoyed. Just then, he was holding Rabbit by the ears. Distracted, he turned to Owl shouting, “Shut up!” Flint was so agitated that he was bouncing Rabbit up and down by his ears, pulling them out long.

“Oh, oh! I want flippers, too, so I can swim!” Owl shouted.

Flint was just then trying to give Rabbit his long legs. He’d finished the hind legs, but Owl had him so discombobulated that he threw Rabbit down on his head to shout at Owl, “I’ve had it with you!”

Flint’s anger frightened Rabbit so badly that he hopped off only half-finished to the corner on his oversized hind legs. Flint seized Owl by the throat. “This is what I’m going to do,” he shouted at Owl, “I’m going to make your eyes wide open all the time so you can see when you’re bothering someone. Then, I’m going to make your ears stand straight up so you can hear people talking to you! I’m also going to make you sit up in a tree, where you can’t annoy anyone, and the only song you can sing is, ‘Who? Who?!’”

While this mayhem was afoot, Sapling was walking through the forest, surprised to find none of his animals in it. When he saw some of their tracks leading off to Flint’s cave, he smelled a muskrat, knowing that his brother was never done tinkering, often fixing things that were not broken. Following the tracks to the cave, Sapling rolled aside the boulder, just as Flint was finishing his changes to Owl. All the frightened animals stampeded free, with poor Owl and Rabbit fastened to their new forms.

“You know that it is cruel to pen up animals!” Sapling shouted. “Who said you could tinker with Rabbit and Owl, anyway?”

Flint was unremorseful. “They wanted a new look,” he shot back.

Thoroughly annoyed with Flint, Sapling began chasing him up and down the length of Turtle Island. “You can’t catch me!” Flint taunted, as he smashed into hills and slid in for a landing, pushing up the Allegheny Mountains.

Sapling was right behind him, shouting, “I can, too!” but he lost his balance several times, stumbling over the new Allegheny range. Once, he had to lean down on his right hand to stop a fall, pressing long lakes into New York, where each of his fingers came down. Another time, he fell on his side, depressing the Ohio valley.

CREATION

Always the swiftest, Flint raced ahead of his brother. To escape his pursuit, Flint made an ice bridge far up north and ran across it, throwing ice down on Sapling to slow his pursuit. Shaking off the frost, Sapling lunged ahead. Angry at Sapling's determined chase, Flint stamped his feet, caused the Moving White Stone Mountains to run down over Turtle Island. (White Stone is ice, and moving White Stone Mountains are glaciers.) They cruised far down, as far as the Land of the Three Miamis and stayed put for many lifetimes.

Eventually, Sapling caught Flint and threw a mountain on top of him, smooshing his face sideways. Flint was trapped there, under the Western Rim of Turtle's Shell, where he now runs back and forth, hunched over so he does not hit his head. (This is why one of his names is "Hunchbacked Runner of the Western Rim.") Sometimes, he can be heard shouting as he shakes the earth like a turtle rattle. Sometimes, he gets loose and walks the back of Turtle, stirring up wrinkled times. On the brighter side, however, he has made a pleasant home there, under the Western Rim, so Earth spirits have somewhere to go upon death. They now walk west, to Flint. His Land of the Ancestors is filled with all his favorite things: dancing, laughing, eating, gambling, and raucous sex. New arrivals are sure to find relatives, spouses, and friends there, waiting with herb tea and corn soup for them to enter their clan's longhouse.

Our Grandmother, The Moon

Granddaughter, Sapling was now alone on Turtle Island with Sky Woman, who had grown very old and frail. Realizing that her time was coming to an end, she called her remaining grandson to her side, asking him to fetch her medicine pouch from under her bear-rug bed.

"I am about to leave you," she told him, "but first, I want to make sure that my grandchildren are never scared in the dark or lost in time." With that, she reached into her medicine pouch and flung the moon into the night sky. Grandmother and Sapling looked at Moon for a long time as its face shifted about from full to halves, to quarters, to slivers. Once a month, Moon completely turned her face away, leaving the Sky dark, but she always came back, refreshed. As a compliment to the male directions of East and West, the female Moon traveled a North-South line in the Sky. Once a generation, she stopped dead in her tracks, and walked back in the opposite direction. Now, the people could always tell where they were in the dark of space and time.

Grandmother reached into her medicine bag once again. "I want the Sky Spirits of Turtle Island always to know the way home," she told him, as she tossed a million tiny points of light into the sky. Together, Grandmother and Sapling watched them twinkle. "See there," said Grandmother, pointing to a streak of stars, heavier than the rest. "That is the Milky Way Trail. Sky spirits may follow it home to the stars."

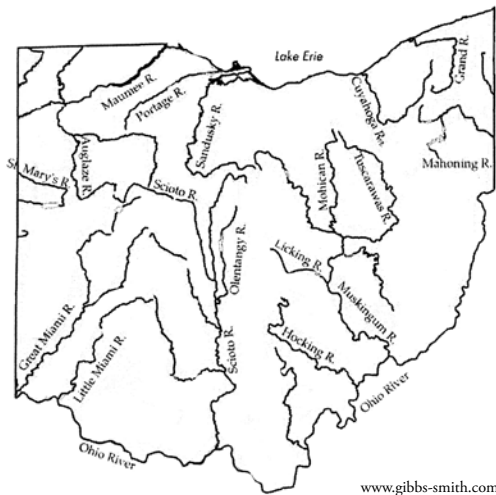
CHAPTER ONE

Now when we die, Granddaughter, our Earth Spirits journey to the Western Rim, while our Sky Spirits travel the Milky Way Trail, Our Spirit Path Home to the Placides.

Shortly after she had made the moon and the stars to shine, Grandmother folded her arms and died, leaving Sapling bereft and in mourning. He longed for the mother he never knew; regretted the brother trapped below the Western Rim; lamented the grandmother, whose love he never totally possessed. The Old Ones say that, in his grief he sat many hours beside his grandmother's corpse, his back against the wall of her longhouse, staring at his feet stretched straight out in front of him.

That Grandmother had never wanted to be on Earth, he knew full well. She had never ceased regretting her lost *Karionwake*. Sapling did not know where *Karionwake* was right then, but he did know where Moon was. Lifting up Grandmother, he took her into the Sky, all the way to the shining face of Moon. There, he buried her under a gentle dusting of moon dirt, the Three Sisters tucked into the right fold of her skirt, and Brother Tobacco, hidden under the the left. Sky Woman lives there now, as *Soika Gakwa*, Our Grandmother, The Moon, her plump face smiling down on her grandchildren, making light in the night, and keeping time in the sky.

Ohio Rivers



Major rivers of Ohio, including the Three Miamis. The Maumee River is in the upper left, or western, corner. The Greater (Big) Miami and Little Miami rivers are in the lower left/western corner of the map.

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Granddaughter, the time of the Moving White Stone Mountains came in the third (Twins') cycle of the Creation Epoch, when Flint stamped his feet in a temper tantrum, shaking loose the Big Cold of the North. This marked a bitter period for the people, with freezing temperatures and little food.

Some people will try to tell you that this is when the Iroquois came to Turtle Island, but do not believe them, Granddaughter. We were always here; we were created here. The people lived all across Turtle Island by the time White Stone gathered up into those dangerous Moving Mountains.

The Moving White Stone Mountains

The Moving White Stone Mountains seemed as if they would never retreat. Turtle Island was keenly cold, and the numbers of people dropped, for parents could not keep babies and children alive on their sparse rations. Not all of the exposed land was habitable; in fact, during the coldest years, very little of it was. There were certain areas that could sustain life, although meagerly. One of them was the Hocking Hills of southern Ohio, where many of the people weathered those terrible years. "Hocking Hills" comes from the Native name for the Hocking River, Hockhocking, which means "Bottle River," a reference to its shape.

The Moving White Stone Mountains were treacherous as well. They looked very solid, but people had to tread lightly when walking along their surfaces. Sometimes, an entire area would simply collapse in a sink hole, whisking unwary walkers down into crevasses, from which their kin were seldom able to extract them. Other times, the White Stone would just slither apart, the half behind moving rapidly forward, folding down into the front half, which seemed to stand still. At that point, the Old Ones said that, should people be trapped on the moving half, all they could do was to take a running leap onto the immobile half, hoping to clear the infold, and then run like crazy. If they did not move fast enough, they would be sucked backwards, dragged into the undertow, as the Moving White Stone Mountain slid forward.

The Big Shaggies were abroad then, too, Granddaughter, ferocious and huge animals, both smart and mean. They seemed to hate the people and would rampage through the campsites, knocking down shelters and trampling slow runners. These animals were so large that they could even uproot trees, butting them with their big heads and long, curving, spear-like teeth. Sometimes, they knocked trees over onto campsites. The only way to kill a Big Shaggy was to spear him many times in the heart or belly, but by the time anyone was in position to do that, he was actually underneath the behemoth—not a healthy place to be. The people were terrified of the Big Shaggies.

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To avoid the Big Shaggies, some people took to living on rafts on the waters. Other people huddled miserably where they could find caves with entrances too small for Big Shaggies to enter. (Bears were still a problem, though.) Sometimes, people made their own caves out of White Stone.

In this time, the people got about in White Stone Canoes, that is, ice floes that were hollowed out with fire and shaped to float. It was even possible to paddle them, although they were clumsy to maneuver. The water was so cold and still that these canoes would float for a long time before wearing out their bottoms. We knew that the time of the Moving White Stone Mountains was ending when the White Stone Canoes melted too quickly to be safe any longer.

Finally, the White Stone Mountains began to recede, their edges leaking cold, clear-water streams that sometimes widened and ran furiously. The air became warmer, and the population started to increase, so that the people grew too many for the little bits of land they were on. Sapling came to the people in this time of their need, as a lineage chief named Tarachiawagon. He took on the brave venture of going forth into the landscape, where he found several new living areas.

It had been so long since anyone had ventured very far out, that no one quite knew any longer what lay beyond their Hills, but it was clear that the people needed to find out—soon. Tarachiawagon offered to go into the great beyond for a look-see. The people all saw him off in his White Stone Canoe as he sped down a new stream, the swirling waters quickly rushing him forward and out of sight. No one ever saw him again. Whether the rapid waters wore out the bottom of his White Stone Canoe prematurely or some other misadventure took him away, no one knew. His courage inspired the people, though. Others followed his trail out, and, although they did not find him, they did find new land, into which the people spread.

The Long Walk across the Grass Ocean

Now the seasons changed dramatically, Granddaughter. Mother Earth stretched and yawned out of her sleep, rolling to catch the rays of Brother Sun, now warmer than they had felt for some time. Since most people had moved south, near or above Turtle's Tail (Mexico) to avoid the extreme cold, the people then were living in a very warm place, where the trees had long and spearlike leaves that drooped down from the treetops. It was a good place to live, with a lot of food.

At that time, the Iroquois and the Cherokees were the same people, just living in different town clusters. The Old Ones said that at this time four thousand years ago, the Iroquois and Cherokee spoke the same language and lived in large metropolitan areas that were a three-days' walk apart. The weather was so pleasant, and the food so plentiful, that the population increased considerably, until the area grew overcrowded. At that point, the Cherokees stood up and walked east in

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search of more open spaces. The Iroquois did not see them again for another two thousand years, and then, we did not know one another.

A long time passed in this pleasant place before it began to dry up. The living became more difficult, especially since there were so many people to support. At that point, the people recalled the Cherokees and their walk east. They had not come back, which meant that they had probably found fertile, open land, so we stood up and walked east, too, the Young Men carrying the children and the elders. It was a long walk, Granddaughter, especially across the Grass Ocean.

The grasses of that Ocean grew so high and stretched on so long that the people feared that tall grass was all that existed in the east. Children born just as the people entered the Grass Ocean were toddlers by the time everyone had passed across it. To see where they were going, the Elders had the strong Young Men walk up front, carrying other Young Men on their shoulders. Those up top could see where to go, while those behind could always look up to see the Young Men on shoulders, piloting ahead.

The Lenape Alliance

Eventually, the people came to the the Ohio portion of what we call the Mississippi River. There, they encountered your Cousins, Granddaughter.

One night, as the women were making camp, the scouts looked north into the distance and saw many lines of smoke rising up into the sky. Obviously, a very large encampment existed a couple of miles up. Wary, the Elders sent scouts to spy on the other camp, to see who the people might be and whether friendship were possible. Some hoped that these were their Siblings, the Cherokees, but it turned out not to be so.

After watching the strangers for a time, the people realized that the strangers had been watching them, too. There were many Innocents in both camps, so that it was obvious that neither group was intent on war. Had they been, there would have been only Young Men and a few War Women among them. Reassured, but still tentative, both sides sent Messengers of Peace to make contact.

Communication was difficult, since neither spoke any language that resembled anything the others spoke. At first, the people relied on hand signals, exchanging a few basic terms. This was, however, a slow and clumsy way to talk, so both groups agreed to exchange some of their young people, who quickly learned each other's languages. Thereafter, communications improved, although the older generations were awkwardly and unnaturally dependent upon translators who were younger and less mature than themselves.

The people in the northern camps called themselves the Lenapes. They were on their way to a place they called Dawnland, on the middle edge of the Great Salt Lake (the Atlantic Ocean). Their scouts had been to the Chesapeake and Delaware

Bays and back again, assuring their Elders of the wonderfully pristine land abounding in all good things. The Iroquois had not scouted so far ahead, but were happy to learn of such good land in the east. For safety's sake, the Lenapes and Iroquois soon struck an alliance to aid and support each other in their simultaneous treks eastward.

Their alliance was put to the test as they entered the Land of the Three Miamis, Granddaughter. Their first order of business was just walking up the Beautiful River, however. Many weeks would pass before the people encountered the Three Miami Rivers, leading into that wonderful land. As always, scouts were sent ahead of the main groups, seeking out the best and safest routes forward, always mindful that Elders, pregnant mothers, and children cannot manage the same feats of travel as Young Men and Young Women.

The Tsalages

Ahead, Granddaughter, past the Three Miamis, the Lenape and Iroquois scouts encountered a majestic, impressive culture. They had already seen some mounds while traveling east, but nothing to rival the magnificent cones, plateaus, circles, squares, and effigy mounds that heavily dotted the landscape east of the Three Miamis. The proprietors of these mounds were the "Talligewi," as the Lenapes pronounced it. The actual word was Tsalage or Tsarage—Cherokee. The Land of the Three Miamis was what the Cherokees had found in their long-ago trek east, a land then inhabited by the Moon-Eyed People, that is, astronomers who kept close track of the night sky from their circle and effigy mounds.

Some Cherokees later said they had killed the Moon-Eyed People and taken their land, but most Cherokees kept the tradition of marrying the Moon-Eyed people and continuing their mound-building culture. To the existing circle and effigy mounds, they added the square, a motif from their western sojourn, with the motifs of the attached circles (of Sky) and squares (of Earth) being predominant when the Iroquois and Lenapes arrived.

The Land of the Three Miamis was rich and beautiful but already densely populated, so that it was obvious that the Iroquois and Lenapes had to continue on to Dawnland, hoping for space there. Towards this end, the allies sent Messengers of Peace to the Mound priesthood, which controlled the Cherokee culture, asking permission for safe passage through Tsalage land to reach the east. The decadent and dismissive priesthood at first sloughed off the newcomers, assuming them to have been a few stray travelers, numbering no more than the scouts sent as Messengers. In regal disdain, they conceded to the safe passage, with the stipulation that everyone hurry on by, not lingering in their lands. The Iroquois and Lenapes quickly agreed to this condition.

Believing themselves warranted to pass through the Land of the Three Miamis, the people began fording the Ohio River near what is now Cincinnati. To cross over, the women first made heavy, strong ropes of bark thread, wetted and twined

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together, with large knots on each end. One end of these cables was made fast on the near shore, around hefty tree trunks. Strong Young Men, good swimmers, each took one end of a cable and swam it to the opposite shore, anchoring it around another tree or a boulder. The swimmers then stayed on the far shore to manage the cable on that side while yet more strong Young Men began to help Elders, pregnant women, and younger children across, hand over hand, along the cables, slung against the river's current. It was a dangerous, but manageable, crossing.

This whole time, Guardians of the Tsalage watched from high hills along the river, becoming more and more concerned. The priests had assumed that the travelers were few in number, but here, arrayed before the Guardians, were thousands and thousands of people, all with their belongings, crossing into Tsalage land. Quickly, the Guardians dispatched moccasins to the priests, apprising them of the true situation. Believing themselves in danger, the priests sent their army to destroy all the Iroquois and Lenapes in the river.

Thus it was that, without the slightest warning that bright spring morning, the Tsalage army opened fire, flinging spears from their atlatls at the people in the river. Caught unawares, the Young Men in the river could do little but look about them in horror, as Elders, pregnant women, and children were all slain, helpless along the cables, sliding beneath the waters soon running red with their blood. Fighting the cables, slick now with gore, the Young Men herded the people back, swimming as many as they could to the first shore, where their Brothers hastened to the river banks, pulling to safety whomever they could. All of the Innocents already across the river were killed, as were hundreds in the river, along with the Young Men attempting to defend them.

By that afternoon, Granddaughter, the Iroquois and Lenapes were wailing over the losses of so many, including important Elders, now dead on the opposite shore. Scouts were sent down the river, to pull out the bodies of missing kin. The weeping was incessant, as more children and grandmothers, pregnant wives, and sons were pulled forward for funerals.

Shock overtook the allied camps for several days, as their sad losses were tallied, bloated bodies were cremated, and grief took its grim toll. Next, shock turned to anger, especially in the Lenape camp, which had lost the most people. The Lenape Elders and Young Men began to talk of revenge for the despicable double-cross, but they soon realized that they, alone, were no match for the massive Tsalage army. They sent moccasins to the Iroquois, to inquire whether a joint assault could be launched. Deeply aggrieved themselves, the Iroquois women agreed to the war, and the Young Men began to brighten their spears.

The language barrier between the Lenapes and the Iroquois still existed, especially in the finer points of linguistics. Now that trauma had unhinged both sides, the language difficulty increased, but remained undetected until it was almost too late to repair. The Lenapes had suggested a simultaneous pincer attack,

but the Iroquois thought that the Lenapes had volunteered to lead the attack, with the Iroquois reinforcing the rear. When the Lenapes found themselves alone in the attack, they felt that the Iroquois had abandoned them. The Iroquois did attack, however, hitting the Tsalage very hard and unexpectedly from behind, putting them to flight. Afterwards, there was grumbling in the Lenape camp, but, the alliance ran smoothly again after the hurt feelings were soothed.

Granddaughter, this attack began a long and bloody war for possession of the Land of the Three Miamis. It lasted at least three hundred years, and perhaps as many as five hundred, depending upon how victory is defined. Starting around 100 of the Common Era (C.E.), it raged until the Tsalages were pushed out of Ohio. Most were chased south by 300 C.E., but factions held on furiously until about 500 C.E. The allies won the war because the Iroquois invented the bow and arrow, which was more accurate and more deadly than the atlatl of the Tsalages. Sharing the invention with the Lenapes, together, the Iroquois and Lenapes pushed the Tsalages south of the Ohio River.

At first, the Tsalages took up residence in Tennessee, where they continued to build mounds. This was, however, too close for comfort, for Guerrilla bands of the Tsalages, called the Stone Giants, continued a war of terror against the Iroquois and Lenapes.

The Stone Giants

Granddaughter, you got your height from your ancestors, for the Iroquois people, including the Cherokees, were and are very tall people. The Tsalage priesthood, the eighth clan of the Cherokees, included the tallest of the tall. These priests were the people with the most to lose in the long war, since it was they who held the highest positions and enjoyed the best lives in the Land of the Three Miamis. It was from the priests' ranks, then, that the increasingly inhuman Stone Coats were drawn.

Once they were cut off from the rest of the Tsalages, who migrated south to Tennessee after it became clear that they had lost the Land of the Three Miamis, the Stone Giants became downright bestial in their behavior, turning to ritual cannibalism, a major source of terror to the new inhabitants of Ohio, whom they harrassed in continual raids. These diehard Tsalages were called the Stone Coats or Stone Jackets because they adopted a kind of armor to thwart the new bow-and-arrow technology of the Iroquois and Lenapes.

One Stone Giant, named Ocasta, hid behind a tree one day, watching an Iroquoian man shoot at a deer with his bow and flint-tipped arrow. The deer fell swiftly, giving Ocasta a nasty start as he realized the deadliness of the new weapon. Quickly gathering as many flint chips as he could find, he knotted them together into a jacket of flint-mail body armor. He showed his fellow terrorists how to do the same. The Old Ones said that some of the Stone Giants also toughened their skin against flint arrows by rolling naked in flint chips.

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The Stone Coats were clearly fighting a losing battle, but they doggedly remained in the fray, soon attacking even fellow Cherokees who lived in Tennessee. These more ordinary Cherokees claimed not to know the Stone Coats, but the Stone Coats were using Tennessee as their staging grounds for launching raids into Ohio. (In fact, the Cherokees of Tennessee were as afraid of the Stone Giants as the Iroquois or Lenapes—too afraid to boot them out of town.) To root out their base of operations, the Iroquois sent to the Cherokees of Tennessee, warning them they were not yet far enough away from the Land of the Three Miamis. If they did not move farther south, the Iroquois and Lenapes promised to fall upon them and destroy them all. At that, the Cherokees stood up and moved south from Tennessee into North Carolina, sending word north to the Iroquois and Lenapes, asking whether this was not far enough away. It was.

After that, the Iroquois hunted down the remaining Stone Giants, who, no longer having a base of operations, fell more and more to stragglers. In particular, the Onondagas of the Iroquois had a high reputation for being able to track down the remaining fighters. In the end, tiny pockets of Stone Giants remained, but they were no longer a threat. Cut off from all succor, they became little more than outlaw bands, hiding in the hills and occasionally harassing outlying towns.

The war won, the Iroquois and Lenapes divided the Land of the Three Miamis between them. The Lenapes chose southeastern Ohio, especially the Muskingum River valley, while the Iroquois chose northern Ohio, all along the southern shore of the Long-Tailed Cat and across the Great Black Swamp. Swamps are alive with game and laced with fine waterways for canoe travel. All of Ohio easily became traversable. With its wonderful array of waterways, it became a crossroads of commerce between the east and west coasts of Turtle Island.

Both the Lenapes and the Iroquois continued the tradition of building mounds in their new homes. In the south, the Lenapes used built their mounds with stones, later plundered by the European settlers in search of building materials. After the settlers had dismantled all the magnificent stone mounds, they insisted that North American Natives never built in stone, despite their own records of the tonnage of stone they had “quarried” from the stone mounds! The Iroquois in the north built dirt and sand mounds, becoming the people whom archaeologists now refer to as the “Eries.” In fact, between 500 and 900 C.E., the so-called “Eries” included all of the Iroquoian nations, called “The Six Families.” The Six Families were the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas (who were the eastern Eries), and Tuscaroras.

The Six Families

A few centuries after final victory over the Tsalages, the bountiful Land of the Three Miamis became very crowded. The Lenapes stood up and walked the rest

CHAPTER TWO

of the way east to Dawnland, their original destination, where (according to their count sticks) they arrived in 1397. The good living in Ohio likewise led to crowding in the north among the Iroquois, so the Six Families of the Iroquois likewise began spreading out east, across western Pennsylvania, up into Ontario, and down into New York.

The Mohawks were led east by the Clan Mother, Gaihonariosk, who took them first into the Land of Ontario. Finding the growing season there too short, she led them south again, into modern-day New York state. All the other Families, hearing of the good living there, started spreading east, too. Now, the people stretched from the the Black Swamp in the west to Lake Champlain in the east.

The Tuscarora wandered the farthest off, and had the worst luck. In crossing the Allegheny portion of the Mississippi, their vine rope broke, stranding half on the eastern and half on the western shore. The larger group on the western shore continued down into North Carolina. The smaller group, isolated on the eastern shore, wandered desolately about, eventually losing their humanity to the point that they joined their old enemies, the Stone Giants, huddled in miserable pockets in the south. These people were lost to the Iroquois, as they became cannibals.

Not all of the Iroquois left Ohio. The western Senecas, known traditionally as the Eries, always remained in the Land of the Three Miamis, even as the First Epoch of Time drew to its close.