

OUR ABORIGINAL PREDECESSORS: ON THE ORIGIN AND RELATION OF THE VARIOUS INDIAN TRIBES OF NORTH AMERICA.

Where the Indians came from and how they happened to become dwellers in the land beyond Atlantis, on the shores of the Occident, has been a subject of investigation and speculation since Indian lore is rife. It has been almost universally thought that at some period of antiquity a migration or a series of migrations by way of Bering Strait took place, by which they were domiciled on the shores of the Pacific, and thence ranged over the continents. Extensive modern research claims the appearance of the aborigines of America to be shrouded in mystery and that such migration could not have taken place later than a time anterior to the records and traditions of the ancient Hindus or Egyptians, than whom the Indians are reputed to be still more ancient as is evidenced from excavations of their ruins, and in all that is peculiar to their individuality in life, language and religion. The fact that no mention is made of them in the earliest records of antiquity suggests their breaking away from the parent stock "before history had dipped her pen in ink or lifted her graver on stone." That they retain traditions of a deluge and that paleolithic implements have been discovered in the glacial drift in the Delaware river basin suggests their existence during the glacial era at the period of the glacial melting, so that their presence on this continent may be very ancient, indeed.

The Indians themselves speak of their forefathers as having sprung from the ground, "For we must tell you," says Canassatego, in a speech at the Indian conference at Lancaster, in 1744, "that long before a hundred years our ancestors came out of this very ground and their children have remained here ever since." (Minutes of conference, published by Benjamin Franklin). Probably the only theory that has not been advocated is that by the inscrutable providence of Jehovah, in the fulfillment of time, by the process of evolution and the progress of development, the aboriginal American may have been "the product of the soil."

When the first brave adventurers from beyond the sea visited these shores they found the copper-colored race in possession, and we know that they hunted the forests, sailed the rivers in their birch canoes, made wampum and held council fires, danced and made war, constructed mounds—for it is now generally conceded that the Indians were the mound-builders—and built cities, formulated religious rites and civil codes, savage though it all was, in happy oblivion of a race across the sea.

Fifty-eight great families, linguistically considered, with many hundred tribes, occupied the land north of Mexico, among whom were spoken as many different languages and dialects. "It is believed," says Mr. Powell (Seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, p. 26), "that the families of languages cannot have sprung from a common source. They are as

distinct from one another in their vocabularies and apparently in their origin as from the Aryan or the Scythian families." It is possible, he says further, that future investigation may result in the fusion of some, but at present existing data does not warrant such an assertion. And the (17) Seventeenth Annual Report of the same Bureau confirms Mr. Powell's assertion of the seventh, that the tendency, instead of being towards a single linguistic stock originally, is just the opposite, the linguistic families being originally apparently more diverse, with a tendency towards fusion as the various tribes commingle. There are others who affirm that their differences in customs, laws and beliefs are just as dissimilar, so that it is impossible to conceive of them as belonging to one original stock. When we think that, in the progress of development, manners, customs, habits and even organic life itself, change and are modified to meet the exigencies of necessity and environment, it is very difficult to make any positive assertion as to their origin or relation.

While thus unable to say where the Indians came from, it is equally impossible to state which of the great families may have arrived first, and it is interesting, biologically, to speculate on the forces distinctively at work in this Western Hemisphere, to develop characteristics of similarity noticeable among the families, for these did develop independent, apparently, of locality, notably an approximation in features, color and physical formation generally.

The Families Representative In Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania was the happy but hotly-contested hunting grounds of two of these great families, the Algonquin and the Iroquois, names given by the early French settlers. Algonquin, from an Algonkin word signifying "those on the other side of the river" (St. Lawrence), Iroquois from "a French adaptation of the Iroquois word 'hiro,' (used to conclude a speech), and 'kouè,' (an exclamation)," evidently due to the established custom of these Indians of concluding their speeches with an exclamation, signifying approval by the council. The "Yo-hah" concluded all the approved speeches at the various Indian conferences and treaties with the Six Nation Indians and the colonists. Other derivations of this name are recorded, but the one given is considered most probable.

Both of these families claim to have migrated from the Far West. Algonquin traditions narrate that their ancestors at one time dwelt in the Far Western wilds of America. For some reasons not named they started Eastward and came, after many years, to the river Namoesi Sipu (Mississippi) "river of fish." Here they met the Iroquois, who had arrived before them, migratory also. They found a great warrior tribe, some of whom were of gigantic stature, in possession of the lands east of the Mississippi whose towns were numerous and large, planted on the shores of great rivers, and defended by fortifications and intrenchments, remains of which are still to be found. They were the Allegewi, from whose name the mountain, river and city Allegheny is derived.

The Lenni Lenape requested permission to stay and dwell in this vicinity, but were refused. The Allegewi, however, granted them the privilege of crossing their dominions to lands farther eastward, and the Algonquins again took up the march. But before many had succeeded in crossing the river, the Allegewi, becoming very much alarmed at their number, fell upon those that had arrived on the farther shore, killed the greater part and refused to allow the others to pass. The Algonquins, enraged at this treatment, thirsted for revenge, and, when the Iroquois approached with a proposition to form a league for the purpose of routing and destroying their enemies, with the view to dividing the land, the plan was eagerly adopted and preparations for war

were immediately begun. After years of hard fighting the united nations succeeded in overwhelming the Allegewi and driving them out of the country, never to return. Then, as had before been agreed upon, they divided the land, the Mengwe, or Iroquois, selecting the country to the north, around the Great Lakes, and the Lenape, or Algonquins, the lands to the south.

The Two Great Families As Rivals.

For many years they lived here very harmoniously, when the Lenape, who were hardy hunters, set out for the farther East. They crossed the Allegheny mountains, discovered the Susquehanna and Delaware rivers and settled principally along the shores and in the valley of the Delaware. Various colonies seemed to have gone off in tribes occupying Canada and New England and elsewhere. Most of these tribes figure prominently in the history of the colonies from the earliest settlements. A glance at the names of the principal tribes of the Algonquins will show clearly their settlements:

Miami	Algonquin	Ottawa
Micmac	Arapaho	Pamlico
Mohegan	Cheyenne	Pennacook
Montagnais	Conoy	Pequot
Montauk	Cree	Piankishaw
Munsee	Delaware	Pottawotomi
Nanticoke	Fox	Powhatan
Narraganset	Illinois	Sac
Nauset	Kickapoo	Shawnee
Nipmuc	Mohican	Siksika
Ojibwa	Massachuset	Wampanoag
Abuaki	Menominee	Wappinger

(See Seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, p. 48).

Lenape seems to be the original name of the Algonquins, afterwards used as applying to the Delawares only, who possibly are the parent stock of the Algonquins, for it is said of them that "forty tribes acknowledged them as grandfather. Mengwe and Iroquois are also seemingly synonymous, while the term Mengwe or Mingo later applied to the Conestogoes or Susquehannas more particularly.

The Iroquois followed in the wake of the Algonquins or were followed by them. Eventually they are in occupation of three districts: The Huron or Wyandot group to the north, in Canada; the Iroquois Confederacy, principally of New York and the Susquehanna and allied tribes of Pennsylvania with the Cherokees and Tuscaroras farther south. The Tuscaroras in 1713 joined the Confederacy, making the sixth nation of the Iroquois league.

In the course of time the two families, Iroquois and Algonquin, once friends and allies, became deadly enemies. At first the Algonquin tribes, being more numerous and masters of the greater area, were dominant and drove the Iroquois of this region out of the valley of the St. Lawrence, but the Iroquois, by their union, their valor and their greater civilization soon became superior, as did also the Susquehannas, or Iroquois of Pennsylvania, over the Delawares and the other Algit tribes of this State.

The Romans of the New World.

By far the most interesting of all the Indian families were the Iroquois, particularly the Confederacy, sometimes called the "Romans of the New World." The Confederacy included, originally, five nations: Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagoes, Cayugas and Senecas, to which the Tuscaroras were

afterwards added. It was organized near the close of the Sixteenth century. The historical record accredits the organization to Thannawage, an aged Mohawk chief. The legendary account gives Tarenjawagen—presumably the same name—as a divinity who visited the earth as Hiawatha. His words, addressed to the assembled nations on a hill-slope overlooking Lake Onondago, reveal the purpose of the Confederation.

“We have met, members of many nations, many of you having come a great distance from your homes, to provide for our common safety. To oppose by tribes or single-handed, our foes from the north would result in our destruction. We must unite as a common band of brothers and then we shall be safe. You, Mohawks, sitting under the shadow of great trees, whose roots sink deep into the earth, and whose branches spread over the vast country, shall be the first nation, because you are warlike and mighty. You, Oneidas, a people who lean your bodies against the everlasting stone that cannot be moved, shall be the second nation, because you give good counsel. You, Onondagas, who have your habitation by the side of the great mountain, and are overshadowed by its crags, shall be the third nation, because you are greatly gifted in speech and powerful in war. You, Cayugas, whose dwelling-place is the dark forest and whose home is everywhere, shall be the fourth nation, because of your superior cunning in hunting. And you, Senecas, a people who live in the open country and possess much wisdom, shall be the fifth nation because you understand the art of making cabins, and of raising corn and beans. You five great and mighty nations must combine and have one common interest and then no foe shall be able to subdue us. If we unite, the Great Spirit will smile upon us. Brothers, these are the words of Hiawatha. Let them sink into your hearts.”

It was a wonderfully complete organization, evidencing a certain nobility of character, an astonishing degree of diplomacy, and an amount of civilization far in advance of the usual savage state. It was a simple democracy, communistic in form. To obviate the tendency to idleness and indifference naturally incident to communism, great stress was laid on achievement. He was most important who was most useful to his fellowman. A variety of tribal offices, nearly two thousand in number, from the president of the league to the subordinate officers of the individual tribes and clans were inaugurated, and selection and promotion, practically made by the people, were the result of careful investigation and “constant discussion of the virtues and the abilities of all the male members of the clans from boyhood to old age.” It was an excellent though savage embodiment of the principle now in vogue as civil service reform.

The laws of the league, civil and religious, were such as to preclude the possibility of conflicts and dissensions among themselves, which, before the organization of the league, prevailed to some extent. And while most historians tell us they waged war and engaged in furious combat, overran and conquered all the land between the Atlantic and the Mississippi, from Canada to the Carolinas, they were at peace with themselves and one body politic. Their numbers were so comparatively few, considering the territory they overran, their spirit and dash so resistless, considering the odds, often so unequal, that someone has made the interesting assertion that, had the discovery of America been postponed one hundred years, it would have found the Iroquois, or “New World Romans,” the masters of North America, from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Conclusions of ethnologists would seem somewhat to disprove this statement, for they claim that the Indians were not nomadic nor distinctly warlike until after the appearance of the white man, and though the Iroquois

fully deserved the title bestowed on them, their nomadic and distinctly war-like qualities did not antedate the latter part of the Sixteenth century.

Tribes That Inhabited Pennsylvania.

The Iroquois Confederacy, by conquest, owned Pennsylvania, but they did not occupy it or give it much consideration until after Penn had established his colony. The Delawares and Shawnees were the principal parties to the treaties with the proprietaries for half a century before the Iroquois put in a claim. The Shawnees held most of the Indian deeds and treaty belts for a long time, showing the important place they held in the estimation of the Indians. The Minisinks occupied the territory north of the Delaware, above the Lehigh hills. These, with the Ganaway or Conoys, were the principal Algonquin tribes of Pennsylvania familiar to the council fires of Easton, Philadelphia and Lancaster.

The Lenni Lenape, or Delawares, claimed that the Iroquois obtained their conquest over them by treachery. Their story runs that the two nations, being at war, fought long and desperately; both sides won and lost equally; neither side was willing to give up, but the Iroquois, becoming tired of fighting, induced the Delawares to "make women of themselves" under false pretenses. It was a custom among the Indians, if war proved too prolonged, or very destructive to life, for the women to make overtures of peace. Their injunctions were always considered with great respect and reverence. This office of peacemaker the Delawares claimed the Iroquois urged them to assume, bringing to bear plausible tales and specious flattery, in which the dignity and honor of the peace-maker were emphasized, while nothing derogatory to courage or valor accrued. These conditions, the Delawares said, they accepted; but after the ceremony at Albany, in 1617, where the metamorphosis took place in the presence of the Dutch settlers, the Iroquois assumed over them all the rights of conquerors, treating them and speaking of them as having been made women, arrogating to themselves the rights of protection and command.

This version is altogether discredited by historians. It would be impossible, according to their verdict, for a nation like the Delawares to be tricked into any such arrangement. The Iroquois were skillful enough to force the Delawares to their terms of surrender. Later, during the French and Indian War, the Delawares, by their valor, forced the Iroquois to recognize them as men and warriors.

A Renowned Tribe of Local Interest.

A tribe of Indians in whom the Iroquois found a match were the Susquehannas. They are considered to have been a branch of the Huron-Iroquois family and inhabited one of the three districts occupied by Iroquois stock, though they never joined the Confederacy. There is considerable confusion to the historian attending the placing of this tribe. They were probably the ancient Mingoos, and may have included representatives of other tribes, at one time or another absorbed in them. They were called Andastes by the French, under which name Schoolcraft gives an interesting historical sketch. They were called Susquehannas in Maryland and Virginia, and Minquas by the Dutch and Swedes. After their conquest by the Iroquois the remnant were called Conestogoes by Penn, from the township which was their special reservation, enforced on them by their conquerors. This township in 1729 became the present Lancaster county.

The name Conestogo seems to have applied to this tribe of Indians long before Penn applied it to them. Evidently the stream and township originally may have taken their name from them. They seem to have some features in common with the Allegewi. They were of gigantic size, (Captain John Smith, in 1608, when on an exploring expedition at the mouth of the Susquehanna, met representatives of this tribe whom he described as of gigantic stature and of magnificent proportions); they were also a warrior tribe, having fortifications and intrenchments for defense; (this we will find later was not a general characteristic of the Indians), and they were renowned in the days of their glory for their valor and undaunted bravery "who, when fighting, never fled, but stood like a wall as long as there was one remaining."

Their palisaded town was on a steep mountain, difficult of access. They had guns and small cannon for defense and were practically impregnable in their mountain fastness. Isolated as they were, they kept the various surrounding Algonquin tribes in complete subjection, so that they did not dare to go to war against them. At the close of the Sixteenth century they were at war with the Mohawks, who suffered almost complete annihilation at their hands. In May, 1663, they were engaged with the Senecas, and with the odds sixteen to one, a little band of one hundred of them (the main body having been absent on an expedition to Maryland), defended themselves in their fort, then sallied out in vigorous onslaught, routed the enemy and put them to flight. Later they engaged with the Iroquois, en league, in as furiously contested warfare as history ever chronicled or human passion and the glory of arms ever contrived. Their encounters were, indeed, desperate, and though their forces were much reduced by smallpox, they were frequently victorious against overwhelming odds.

They were finally defeated and conquered. In 1675 the Iroquois, urged and aided by Maryland and Virginia troops under Major Trueman and Colonel Washington (grandfather of General Washington), who perpetrated, at this time, an act of treachery that later was responsible for Bacon's rebellion, reduced the Susquehannas to complete subjection and forced them to return to their original lands along the Susquehanna.

Scarcely twelve years before the Susquehannas had stood an impregnable frontier to the attempted invasion of the Senecas, who threatened extermination to the Maryland colonists. It is not to be wondered at that, when the opportunity presented itself, these Indians sought revenge. For more than three-fourths of a century the Conestogoes lived on their lands along the Susquehanna, held treaties with Penn and the proprietaries, with whom they were always favorites, and lived on very friendly terms; but they deteriorated rapidly and finally became a mere band of predatory beggars.

It is possible that part of the Susquehannas were absorbed in the Six Nations, when settlement of Senecas, Cayugas, Oneidas and Tuscaroras were gradually formed along both sides of the Susquehanna, but in 1775 all that were left of that once haughty tribe were conveyed, by John Ross, by proprietary order, to the special reservation of five hundred acres in Manor township, where they lived until 1763, when, but twenty in number, they were barbarously murdered by the gang known as the Paxton boys.

Their glory was, indeed, departed long before their extermination, but as their historian says: "their name will be perpetuated by their noble river, which is a more enduring memorial than the perishable monuments erected by man." Even their fallen estate is perpetuated in the smaller stream, Conestoga, suggestive of their diminished glory, nature seemingly averse to forget these favorite children of her forests.

Indian Characteristics Before the Appearance of the White Man.

Ethnologists and archeologists tell us that the Indians, before the appearance of the white man, led rather a sedentary life, and developed agricultural pursuits toward which they were fast progressing from the hunter state, and, although they did not stay at any one place the whole year 'round, they had their homes and villages, to which they returned after their hunting excursions. While the Indians of the plains west of the Mississippi were more or less of a roving disposition, this is certainly not true of the Indians east of the Mississippi. A system of government like that in vogue among the Iroquois would not admit of extensive wandering, all of which had to be accomplished on foot, expert and hardy runners though they were. They had wars, and some of the tribes had distinct organizations for purposes of war, and though in general their wars were not exceedingly destructive to life, in some exceptional instances whole tribes were almost annihilated by prolonged and deadly combat. This was the case in the instance of the Allegewi. Such wars were the result of encroachments on each other's hunting grounds or fisheries, or were due to superstitious prejudices. In some instances they were instigated by revenge, but never for mere purposes of conquest. More often their differences were settled by treaty methods. Arbitration and reciprocity, in a rude way, were methods used by the Indians.

The introduction of the fire-arms and horses of the Europeans made the nomadic and distinctly warlike qualities of the Indians possible, and at the same time inculcated their predatory habits. When furs and skins acquired a commercial value the habits and habitats of the Indians changed completely. The Iroquois became the "Romans of the New World," but it was their special adaptability to the new conditions that gained for them the title.

The training of the red man through long ages fitted him pre-eminently for fighting. It must be remembered that in the savage state hunting and fishing are not considered recreation, but the ultimate of extreme labor. When the Indians left the female portion of the tribe at home in fixed habitations to the agricultural and domestic pursuits, it was the lighter tasks that were left them. And, if, on the march they carried the burdens, it was to let the men free to attack or defend. The Indians had the greatest reverence and respect for their women. It was through motherhood that the line of ancestry was traced. Their weapons of stone and wood and bone required great skill and exertion to render them often effective in hand-to-hand encounter. Moreover, to match the treacherous assault of the panther, to track the deer or the elk, to discover the haunts of the bear, and outwit the cunning of the beaver, to encounter the wolves and other wild beasts of the forest, made it a necessity to develop qualities of stealth, alertness, endurance, treachery and cunning, so that to dart hither and thither silently, under cover, and to hide successfully, to know where and when to attack and retreat, to follow a trail with almost as keen a scent as the bloodhound, became to the Indian an instinct. When the white man put into the hand of his red brother of the forest the deadly weapons of European warfare, his fighting qualifications were practically unlimited and it was almost an impossibility to defeat him, odds as to numbers being scarcely a consideration until the colonist himself had grown somewhat into the Indian methods, or could entice him from his forest haunts. Not that the savages were superior in warfare to the soldiers who, in many instances, were the flower of European armies, but they knew how to hide, to sneak and to skulk, to stealthily strike and run away.

In justice to the Indians, facts seem to warrant the assertion that these qualities, developed to cope with wild beasts of the forest, for the purpose of sustenance and defense, were brought into requisition against the white man in imitation of his own policy.

Authorities consulted and compared: Colonial Records of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Archives, Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Schoolcraft, "Archives of Original Knowledge," Egle's "History of Pennsylvania," Winsor's "Narrative and Critical History of America," and smaller encyclopedic articles.

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