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While war between the English and Indigenous Peoples occurred often during the colonial era, the Lancaster Treaty of 1744 succeeded in preventing conflict between the Iroquois and the English. The Iroquois faced some of the same problems that other Native groups did but such problems did not result in conflict. The main grievance of the Iroquois was that white settlers were crossing beyond the Blue Ridge into the Shenandoah Valley and the treaty was to prevent them from moving east towards them. The English were however never prevented from advancing west of them (Merrell 5). This study identifies that the Lancaster treaty of 1744 provided the framework to which amicable solutions were developed and eventual prevention of conflict achieved.

## **Iroquois and English Conflict**

A year before the signing of the Lancaster treaty, the Iroquois caused a lot of skirmishes to settlers in the Shenandoah Valley. They also almost declared total war on the Virginia territory until its governor paid them a sum of 100 sterling pounds for any claims they had on the valley. This action was to be later followed by a sellout of all their stakes in the Shenandoah Valley for 200 pounds. However, this agreement was followed by numerous misunderstandings between the two parties because the Virginians understood that the Iroquois had relinquished all their claim for the land that was demarcated as Virginia territory in 1609 but the Iroquois understood the treaty as a relinquish of claim only to the land in the Shenandoah valley; which was to the west of the Ohio watershed (Merrell 7). This disagreement was partially resolved by subsequent agreements in 1752 through the treaty of Logs town which forced the Iroquois to recognize English rights to the

South East of Ohio. However, subsequent treaties saw the Iroquois relinquish all their claims of Ohio and Tennessee rivers.

## **Negative Consequences of Colonization for the Iroquois**

The interaction of the Iroquois with the Europeans had a profound impact on the economy of the indigenous people because the expansion of European settlements in Iroquois land destabilized the economic equilibrium that previously existed. By the onset of 1800, much of the Iroquois population had been pushed to reserved lands. This caused them to lose most of their land through the intrusion of European settlements into traditional highlands. There was also a negative impact of European trade with the natives because the Europeans took advantage of the virtue of gift-giving by showering the locals with many manufactured goods from Europe that created dependency on certain goods like rifles and metal axes which were not in any way beneficial to the Iroquois. The consequences to the imposition of the Europeans on the natives were discussed in treaties and deeds like those that settled grievances on land.

However, before such forms of agreements were made, the natives often engaged the foreigners in fights to claim control of their property and rights which the Europeans were slowly depriving them of. Such warfare can be compared to the mourning war where the locals engaged their opponents in wars and often conspired against their enemies with like minded partners. Nonetheless, negotiations solved the grievances the Iroquois had. The negotiations were majorly aimed at increasing the foothold of the Iroquois's diplomatic presence in most aspects of governance. Essentially, this incorporated the extension of the clan system and the Iroquois confederacy

into the governing elite. Trade rights and empowerment of the military were also negotiated between the Europeans and the locals, especially after the Europeans adapted to the local systems of governance and also after adopting a change of attitude with regard to superiority over the Iroquois. Land was also a primary factor that was negotiated in the talks and the Europeans had to settle on a financial understanding with the locals. The European colonialists joined the negotiations at Lancaster to add on the ongoing debate over land disputes.

Essentially, they aimed to achieve a more formidable presence over the Shenandoah Valley and also stamp their authority amid growing French influence in the surrounding territory. This therefore prompted them to side with the Iroquois to limit French control in the surrounding territories. In addition, the Colonialists also sought to entrench their culture over other existing cultures and more so, the French's.

## **Reflections of the Lancaster Negotiations on the Europeans and the Iroquois**

The Lancaster negotiations exposed underlying elements of both negotiators throughout the entire process. The Iroquois came out as very adamant people because of their resilience in fighting for their land rights. This especially exposes their belief on the fact that their traditional land was given to them by God and that it was to benefit the entire community and not a few individuals.

This fact was especially enforced after the land on the Shenandoah Valley was personalized and they could no longer enjoy the benefits which they

initially did. On the other hand, the negotiations exposed the Western ideals the Europeans held about land and community property with respect to finding amicable solutions. The Europeans believed in the capitalistic view of land ownership as opposed to the community ownership of land which the natives upheld. The negotiations also exposed an underlying belief of the European community that resources had a value attached to them and property could change ownership through payments; a principle that the Iroquois never held until later in the negotiations.

## **Conrad Weiser**

Conrad Weiner was a key mediator in the dispute between the Iroquois and the Pennsylvania colony. He played the roles of an interpreter and a diplomat between the two warring factions. Conrad commanded a lot of respect and trust from both parties, effectively enabling him to mediate between them. He was therefore able to negotiate the deal that saw the Iroquois sell their land, West to the Blue Mountain.

Among his key roles in the Lancaster negotiations was his interpretative role but thereafter, he was sent to streamline the differences that emerged after the negotiations. He was therefore able to make both parties understand the implications of the Lancaster negotiations (Merrell 14).

## **Compromises from the Lancaster Negotiations**

One of the major compromises the Iroquois made was to sell their rights over the Shenandoah Valley to the colonialists. In addition, the native community also recognized the rights of the English over their native land; at least to the South Eastern part of Ohio. On the other hand, the English settled their long

standing dispute by parting with 100 sterling pounds which it paid to the Iroquois for their land rights.

Additionally, the English also recognized Blue Ridge Mountains as the official demarcation between their territory and the Iroquois's which they wouldn't infringe on.

## **Conclusion**

The eminent conflict between the Iroquois and the English was repetitively solved from the Lancaster negotiations of 1744. The settlement of the land rights through financial means and the recognition of official boundaries also imposed a sense of calmness on the aggrieved parties. Matters were done overboard and the Iroquois were willing to sell their rights over traditional land. However, the greatest success came from the adaptation of the English form of land system into the Iroquois's, such that both parties operated through a streamlined system that encompassed the desired of both parties. The role of negotiators also helped streamline negotiations and the presence of a common enemy (French) also helped curb angry sentiments by the Iroquois. Nonetheless, the Lancaster negotiations provided the ground work to which all these conflict resolution mechanisms were developed and eventual aversion of conflict achieved.

## **Works Cited**

Merrell, James. *The Lancaster Treaty of 1744: With Related Documents*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008.