

# “True to my own noble race” Six Nations Women Teachers at Grand River in the early Twentieth Century

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Article abstract

While classrooms for Indigenous children across Canada were often taught by non-Indigenous men and women, at the Six Nations of Grand River, numerous Haudenosaunee women worked as teachers in the day schools and the residential school on the reserve. While very different from each other, Emily General, Julia Jamieson and Susan Hardie shared a passion for educating the young of their community, especially about Haudenosaunee culture and history, along with the provincial curriculum. They were community leaders, role models and activists with diverse goals, but they all served their community through teaching, and had a positive impact on the children they taught.

# “True to my own noble race”



## Six Nations Women Teachers at Grand River in the early Twentieth Century

by Alison Norman

*Figure 1. Emily General on left, with Chauncey Garlow and Dora Jamieson, in Hampstead England, 1930. Courtesy of the Emily C. General School, Grand River.*

I was bad one time. I went with a delegation of chiefs to England. I left my school and put a girl in my place.”<sup>1</sup> So said Emily General, the Six Nations teacher and activist, upon the occasion of the naming of a new school in her name on the reserve in 1991. In the summer of 1930, as a twenty-seven-year-old Mohawk woman, she led a delegation of petitioners to London, England, to ask for the Crown’s help in dealing with the Canadian government concerning control over their funds.<sup>2</sup> The trip caused a great stir both at home and in England, where Indigenous

people “in buckskins and feathers” continued to draw audiences.<sup>3</sup> She met with a committee of six members from the British House of Commons, but was denied a visit with the Crown, and even with the Secretary of State for the Dominions. In August, after three months in England, she boarded the S.S. Aquitania in Southampton to return home to Grand River. Before she left the reserve, she had hired her own replacement to finish her school year. Despite her planning, or possibly because of it, the Six Nations School Board decided to suspend her from teaching for

<sup>1</sup> Vicki White, “School named for Six Nations teacher Emily General,” *The Expositor*, August 24 1991. Emily General File, Woodland Cultural Centre.

<sup>2</sup> “Red Indian Chiefs in the Commons,” *The Times*, 3 July 1930. The petitioners included her brother Sylvanus General.

<sup>3</sup> “Canadian Indians in Costume Appear in British “Commons,”” *The Citizen*, 24 June 1930; “Red Indian Chiefs in the Commons”; “Canadian Indians in Tribal Costume visit in Commons,” *Toronto Globe*, 24 June 1930.

## *Abstract*

*While classrooms for Indigenous children across Canada were often taught by non-Indigenous men and women, at the Six Nations of Grand River, numerous Haudenosaunee women worked as teachers in the day schools and the residential school on the reserve. While very different from each other, Emily General, Julia Jamieson and Susan Hardie shared a passion for educating the young of their community, especially about Haudenosaunee culture and history, along with the provincial curriculum. They were community leaders, role models and activists with diverse goals, but they all served their community through teaching, and had a positive impact on the children they taught.*

**Résumé:** *Tandis que dans la plupart des écoles pour Autochtones au Canada l'enseignement était fait par des non-Indigènes, à la réserve des Six-Nations sur la rivière Grand de nombreuses femmes haudenosaunee ont travaillé comme institutrices dans les écoles. Quoique très différentes les unes des autres, Emily General, Julia Jamieson, et Susan Hardie partageaient une passion pour l'éducation des jeunes de leur communauté. Toutes trois ont combiné l'enseignement de la culture et de l'histoire haudenosaunee avec le curriculum provincial. Guides pour leur communauté, modèles pour les jeunes, et activistes avec des buts divers, toutes ont servi la communauté par leur enseignement et ont eu une influence positive sur leurs élèves.*

three years.

That same year, Julia Jamieson, a forty-one-year-old pious Baptist Cayuga woman, part of a large teaching family, taught at the No. 1 School on the Grand River Reserve.<sup>4</sup> Of the eleven day schools on the reserve, women held teaching positions at nine of them, including Julia's sisters Nora and Mary. And at the Mohawk Institute, the local residential school just off the reserve, a sixty-three-year-old Mohawk woman, Susan Hardie,

had recently celebrated forty-two years of continuous service in the school. She was honoured at a picnic with an address by her former pupils and a presentation by the Six Nations Council.<sup>5</sup>

While very different from each other, Emily General, Julia Jamieson and Susan Hardie shared a passion for educating the young of their community, especially about Haudenosaunee culture and history, which they did along with teaching the provincial curriculum.<sup>6</sup> They also shared

<sup>4</sup> Dominion of Canada Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the year ended 31 March 1930, Ottawa, 79.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>6</sup> Terminology surrounding the Six Nations can be complicated to those unfamiliar with the community. The Six Nations are an Iroquoian-speaking community made up of six nations – the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Tuscarora, Oneida and Mohawk. These nations united in a Confederacy prior to contact with Europeans (although the Tuscarora joined the original five nations in the early eighteenth century). After their removal from New York State to the Haldimand Tract in 1784, the mixed community became known as the Six Nations of Grand River, and the term “Six Nations” is often used by the community to

aspirations to improve their community in various and divergent ways. These three women negotiated multiple identities as Six Nations women, as Christians, as teachers in a Western school system, and as ‘good women.’ They took part in a process of cultural negotiation, exerting flexibility, creativity, and a willingness to look for opportunities to do the work they desired to do in and for their community. While Susan Hardie was willing to teach in a residential school all of her life, Emily General resigned in 1948, rather than make an oath to the Crown. Each of the three women discussed in this article found various ways of partaking in the colonial project, while resisting the assimilative efforts of the Department of Indian Affairs.

While Six Nations women were first hired at Grand River schools in the mid-nineteenth century, we know less about their goals and their work than we do about women teachers in the early twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> The numbers of women teachers increased proportionally so that by the 1920s, they dominated the profession on the reserve. The Haudenosaunee tradition of women’s involvement in children’s education combined with a comparatively long tradition of Western education for children in mission schools in New York state, the establishment of numerous day schools on the reserve

throughout the nineteenth century, and the unique Six Nations School Board all resulted in women working as teachers in high numbers and, as a result, had a strong impact on multiple generations of Six Nations students. They were community leaders, role models and activists with different goals, but the result was a comparatively well-educated Indigenous community with a high number of graduates who went on to high school and to post-secondary education. It was, and still is a community with a strong sense of their culture, history and tradition. How did Six Nations women teachers negotiate the task of educating Six Nations children for assimilation into non-Indigenous culture while preserving and encouraging Six Nations culture and identity? This paper will examine the history of education in this Indigenous community, and look at three teachers who exemplified the complicated and contradictory work of an Indigenous teacher working in Western schools.

## The History of Education at Grand River

The Six Nations of Grand River is a large reserve of about 46,000 acres situated southeast of the city of Brantford in south-western Ontario. The reserve itself was first established with the

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describe itself, both in the past and today. While “Iroquois” is the term used in the past by non-Indigenous people as well as early anthropologists and historians, the term “Haudenosaunee” is more commonly used today, and it means “the People of the Longhouse.”

<sup>7</sup> Virtually no research has been done on Indigenous teachers in the nineteenth century. See Alison Norman. “Mohawk Women Teachers in Nineteenth-Century Ontario.” Presented at The Changing Face of Missionary Education (Workshop) 9-10 July 2014, WWU Münster, Germany.

awarding of the Haldimand Tract to the Six Nations under the leadership of Joseph Brant in 1784 for their loyalty to the British during the American Revolution. The reserve was consolidated in 1847, and after that date, numerous schools and churches were built, so that by 1900 there were twelve day schools, along with the nearby Mohawk Institute, the local residential school on the edge of the reserve. There was no high school on the reserve, so students who passed the entrance examination generally attended either Brantford Collegiate or the high school in nearby Caledonia. While the historiography of Indigenous education has much to say about residential schools in Canada, we know comparatively little about the day schools, largely because a lack of centralized records for these schools.<sup>8</sup> The records of the Six Nations School Board, digitized and housed at Library and Archives Canada, provide a useful glimpse into the management of these schools, a wealth of information that we generally do not have for day schools on other reserves across the province and country. This article complicates the history of residential schooling as it explores the life of one woman who attended the Mohawk Institute as

a student before becoming employed as a teacher. We know very little about the Indigenous people who worked as staff in residential schools, and Susan Hardie's story allows us a glimpse into the life of a woman who negotiated multiple identities.

Prior to the introduction of Western systems of education, Haudenosaunee children learned in unstructured and non-coercive ways, through participation, and from examples in the environment in which they lived.<sup>9</sup> For instance, young girls would work with their mother and aunts cleaning and preparing quills to sew onto moccasins, and children of both sexes would learn about plant life while gathering herbs with women of the community. Once children were a bit older, men would spend some time teaching boys to make tools and weapons, but women were central to the education of Haudenosaunee children: "the mother-child relationship in tandem with all the women of the Longhouse, shared in the task of developing in the child, an appreciation for the home and family, language, values and beliefs."<sup>10</sup> Ideas of cooperation, competence, co-existence, and individuality were the basis of education, and learning took place

<sup>8</sup>On residential schools, the two most important books remain J. R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), and John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1896* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999). Some work on Indigenous teachers in reserve day schools includes Eileen Antone, "The Educational history of the Onyote'a:ka Nation of the Thames," *Ontario History* 85 (December 1993), 309-320; Martha Walls, "[t]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed": Colonialism, Resistance, and Female Mi'kmaw Teachers in New Brunswick Day Schools, 1900-1923," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 22:1 (2011), 35-68.

<sup>9</sup> Keith Jamieson, *History of Six Nations Education* (Brantford: The Woodland Indian Cultural Education Centre, 1987), 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*



during everyday life: it was not separated from the experience of day-to-day activities. With the establishment and growth of the missionary school system on the reserve throughout the late nineteenth century, children were increasingly educated in classrooms rather than homes, but importantly, women continued to be intimately involved in their education. Despite the fact that they now learned a colonial curriculum, it surely mattered that they were taught by a familiar woman from within their own community, rather than an Anglo-Canadian man or woman, as were many of the teachers in the early decades of the nineteenth century. In part, the hiring of so many women from within the community was the work of the Six Nations School Board (SNSB), the first Indigenous school board in Ontario. The board functioned between 1878 and 1933, and consisted of local missionaries, several chiefs, and a representative from the Department of Indian Affairs.<sup>11</sup> All of the day schools on the reserve were under the control of the board, with the exception of the Thomas School, which remained under the control of the Chiefs in Council.<sup>12</sup>

The day schools themselves were generally comparable to schools built for non-Indigenous children in neighbouring Brant country as members of the Six Nations School Board worked to make

sure that their schools were just as good, if not better than off-reserve schools. They built schools “to provide [children] the opportunity of education as acquired by their white neighbours.”<sup>13</sup> The board also wanted their teachers to be able to use the Ontario Curriculum of Studies to their students, and not the separate curriculum designed for “Indian Schools.” Six Nations teacher Julia Jamieson explained:

they had to overcome that tendency of some of the Indian agents in those early years, 1884-1900, to feel only basic knowledge such as ordinary farm work and house work should be a subject taught to the youth of the Six Nations and, as a result, the teaching of academic subjects was limited because it was their belief that Indians were unable to absorb more knowledge in subjects presented in the Ontario Curriculum of Studies.<sup>14</sup>

After several years of lobbying, in 1908 the Ontario Programme of Studies was adopted, and it is clear that the board believed that the Ontario education system would fulfil the needs of school children at Grand River. With much of the education system in the hands of the community itself via the Six Nations School Board and the teachers at the day schools, it is understandable that there was much support for it. Local control over schooling was likely more important to the community than the fact that the Depart-

<sup>11</sup> The missionaries were moved from the board in 1921, after a motion from the Six Nations Council that was approved by the Department of Indian Affairs. Moses, Henhawk, and King, *History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve*, 12.

<sup>12</sup> Jamieson, *History of Six Nations Education*, 18-21.

<sup>13</sup> Julia L. Jamieson, *Echoes of the Past: A history of Education from the time of the Six Nations Settlement on the Banks of the Grand River in 1784 to 1924*. (Brantford), 15.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

ment of Indian Affairs was involved. The community's confidence in the system, as evidenced by involvement in the school board and enrolment rates may well have been due to the fact that so many of the teachers in the schools were Six Nations people, and women in particular.

Prior to 1924, the training of teachers was inconsistent, varied and not standardized. Many of the teachers had been top students in reserve schools, had gone on to attend high school, and a few began teaching right away. This was the case with Edith Anderson Monture.<sup>15</sup> After high school, some teachers took training courses at the Mohawk Institute or the Brantford Model School, and then some attended normal school in Toronto or Hamilton. Several teachers were also the children of teachers. With the introduction of the new Council in 1924, an elected council rather than the traditional hereditary one, a demand for higher educational standards on the reserve was brought in and the new elected council put pressure on the school board to encourage their teachers to become formally qualified by the province if they did not already hold such qualifications. As a result, the few unqualified teachers enrolled in normal schools were quickly certified along with all of the teachers in the community.<sup>16</sup>

## Women's Careers and Labour Patterns

Despite the fact that Grand River teachers throughout the early twentieth century were predominantly Indigenous women, many of the labour patterns were similar to non-Indigenous women teaching in non-Indigenous schools in Ontario. For instance, the dominance of women teaching at Grand River was common and comparable to the "feminization of teaching" in Ontario and the rest of Canada. Coined by Alison Prentice, the term denotes "the gradual increase in the numbers and proportions of women teaching in most state school systems, along with their low status and pay within those systems."<sup>17</sup> In comparison to the rest of the non-Indigenous province, the prevalence of women teaching was somewhat delayed at Six Nations. Male Six Nations teachers tended to outnumber women until the Great War; at that time, female teachers became the majority. After the war, Six Nations women dominated the profession significantly, often making up three-quarters or more of the teachers, which echoed the gender-split in schools across the country, where four out of every five teachers was a woman in 1921.<sup>18</sup> However, in comparison to other Indigenous

<sup>15</sup> Alison Norman, "In Defense of the Empire': The Six Nations of the Grand River and the Great War" in *Sisterhood of Suffering and Service: Canadian and Newfoundland Women and the First World War*, edited by Sarah Glassford and Amy Shaw (University of British Columbia Press, 2012), 34-35.

<sup>16</sup> Jamieson, *Echoes of the Past*.

<sup>17</sup> Alison Prentice and Marjorie R. Theobald, "The Historiography of Women Teachers: A Retrospect," in *Women Who Taught: Perspectives on the History of Women and Teaching*, ed. Alison Prentice and Marjorie R. Theobald (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 5.

<sup>18</sup> Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Naomi Black, Paula Bourne and Magda Fahrni. *Canadian Women: A History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Toronto: Nelson, 2011), 298.

communities in Ontario and across the country, it seems that Six Nations women were among the first to become teachers in their own community, and in large numbers. In terms of non-Indigenous schools in Ontario, the major reason school boards had for hiring women teachers was financial: “Women teachers saved their employers money, for they could be paid as little as half the male teacher’s wage.”<sup>19</sup> At Six Nations, until the 1930s, women were almost always paid less than men, probably because no women ever sat on the Six Nations School Board.<sup>20</sup> In 1895, Mark Benson, Department of Indian Affairs clerk of schools, commented on the salaries of teachers at Six Nations:

the salaries paid are not sufficient to induce the right kind of persons to look for such employment, and most of these who seek such situations are generally unfitted for the work, either lacking in energy or qualifications. This does not, however, apply to the female teachers who are as a rule contented to receive even the small salaries offered by the Department.<sup>21</sup>

This might have been the case in 1895, but female teachers frequently asked for raises throughout the early twentieth century and were often granted them. For instance, in 1919 Julia Jamieson, Nora Jamieson, Mary Jamieson, and Minnie Martin, along with the African Canadian teacher Ethel Alexander all requested raises and the school board had to ask for an increase in funding from the Six Nations Council.<sup>22</sup> The board received the grant, and the women received their raises.<sup>23</sup> In reserve day schools in 1921, men were paid, on average, \$950 annually, while women earned \$850.<sup>24</sup> In comparison, male teachers in Brant County were earning \$1,020, and females \$754 in 1920.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, while men earned more at non-Six Nations schools, women’s salaries on the reserve were actually higher than those of women teachers in non-Indigenous schools. By the mid 1930s, male and female teachers were earning the same salaries at the Six Nations day schools.<sup>26</sup> Compared to non-Indigenous

<sup>19</sup> Prentice and Theobald, *The Historiography of Women Teachers*, 5.

<sup>20</sup> The board was abolished in 1933 by the Department of Indian Affairs, despite protests and requests for school supervisors. Olive Moses, Doris Henhawk, and Lloyd King. *History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve* (Brantford: Woodland Cultural Centre, 1987), 16.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Abate Wori Abate. *Iroquois Control of Iroquois Education: A Case Study of the Iroquois of the Grand River Valley in Ontario, Canada* (1984), 142.

<sup>22</sup> For more on Ethel Alexander and her family, see Alison Norman, *Race, Gender and Colonialism: Public Life among the Six Nations of Grand River, 1899-1939* (University of Toronto, 2010), 82-92, and also Claudine Bonner. Bonner, C. (2014). “A Daughter of Promise – Diary of a Female African-Canadian Teacher in Rondeau, 1907” in de B’beri, B., Reid-Maroney, N., & Wright, H., eds., *The Promised Land Project: History and Historiography of the Black Experience in Chatham-Kent’s Settlements and Beyond*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 90-105.

<sup>23</sup> Minutes of the Meeting, 10 December 1919. RG-10, Volume 2011, File 7825-4A, Library Archives Canada, Ottawa.

<sup>24</sup> Moses, Henhawk, and King, *History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve*, 12.

<sup>25</sup> Table C: The Public School, Teachers, Salaries, Certificates, Experience, etc. Ontario Department of Education, “Annual Report,” (Toronto, 1920), 150-51.

<sup>26</sup> Government of Canada, “Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the year ended



teachers in Canadian public schools, Six Nations women were better off. In Brant County, the average male wage was \$961 and the average female wage was \$710.<sup>27</sup> While discrimination caused financial inequalities in the early twentieth century, Six Nations women's persistence in asking for raises and their increasing dominance in the profession resulted in equal wages over time. Perhaps the important and valued roles that Six Nations women had historically played in their communities led to a self-confidence and self-worth that demanded equal pay.

Both Six Nations women teachers and their non-Indigenous colleagues resigned from their positions when they married. For instance, Mabel Styres taught at No. 3 School for several years before resigning in 1908 prior to her marriage to Hilton Hill, chief clerk of the Indian Office at Brantford and later an elected councillor.<sup>28</sup> In the minutes of the meeting, the Six Nations School Board noted that "Miss Mabel Styres, an Indian teacher, for a number of years has sent in her res-

ignation, which is very much regretted by the board as she was a good teacher in every way. Her resignation was accepted by the board."<sup>29</sup> She did not return to teaching, but enjoyed an active career in voluntary work as founding member of the Ohsweken Women's Institute, clerk and organist for the Ohsweken Baptist Church, and secretary of the Six Nations Agricultural Fair Board.<sup>30</sup> In what became a pattern with Six Nations women teachers, Mabel's daughter Mary K. Hill also became a teacher, training at the Hamilton Normal School, and teaching for several decades.<sup>31</sup> As with the non-Indigenous, teaching often ran in the family.

Like their non-Indigenous counterparts, Six Nations teachers were concerned with professional development, and to that end they both attended local (non-Indigenous) teacher's conventions, and organized their own teacher's association. Beginning in 1909, teachers at Grand River schools attended the meetings of the Public School Teachers' Convention in Brantford every year.<sup>32</sup> These

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March 31, 1934," (Ottawa, 1934). "Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31, 1935," (Ottawa, 1935). "Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31, 1936," (Ottawa, 1936). Teachers such as Emily General and Daniel T. Green were making \$1000/year in 1936.

<sup>27</sup> Table 13: The Public Schools, Teachers' Salaries 1934. Ontario Department of Education, "Annual Report," (Toronto, 1935), 137. See also R.D. Gidney, "The Salaries of English-Canadian Teachers, 1900-1940: A Reappraisal" in *15th Biennial Conference of the Canadian History of Education Association* (Sudbury, Ontario, 2008).

<sup>28</sup> Moses, Henhawk, and King, *History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve*: 7.

<sup>29</sup> Minutes of the Meeting, 21 September 1908. RG-10, Vol. 2010, File 7825-3, LAC.

<sup>30</sup> "Ohsweken Baptist" File 5, Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, Canadian Museum of History [CMH]. Also, interview with Hilton M. Hill and Mabel Styres Hill, File 15, Box 471, Sally Weaver Collection, CMH "Hilton M. Hill and Mabel Styres 50th anniversary," *The Expositor*, 27 January 1960.

<sup>31</sup> "Johnson, Mary K. nee Hill," *The Expositor*, 6 October 2004.

<sup>32</sup> Harry Smaller, "A Room of One's Own": The Early Years of the Toronto Women Teachers' As-

gatherings are an example of the cross-cultural communication that occurred between Grand River and Brant County of which we have limited knowledge. Julia Jamieson noted that “it was indeed a pleasure to listen to the Educator’s addresses presenting the teachers with new ideas to put into practice in the Six Nations Schools.”<sup>33</sup> Teachers from the Mohawk Institute also attended; on those days no classes were held. Instead, staff and students did general housekeeping of the building when the teachers were away.<sup>34</sup> In 1937, the Six Nations Teachers’ Organization was founded “to help the teachers and to exchange teaching ideas.”<sup>35</sup> The specifics of the founding are unclear, but contact with teachers from Brantford and Brant County inspired the Six Nations teachers to found their own organization.<sup>36</sup> In its second year of operation, Emily General served as president, and she continued to be involved in the organization for years. The Teacher’s Organization also created a traveling library for use by teachers, one member chosen

to be responsible. The books were bought with funds donated by the Ohsweken and Sour Springs Women’s Institutes and from the teacher’s funds; they were able to borrow and return them at meetings.<sup>37</sup> Professional development was important to these women, and attendance at local conventions and the organization of a teacher’s organization provided these women (and men) with opportunities to expand their knowledge, improve their teaching skills, and converse and learn from other teachers in Brant County.

Lastly, Six Nations women were willing to leave the reserve community for higher education, including high school and normal school training, which allowed them to become teachers within the community. Their interest in teaching is an outgrowth of the traditional role that Haudenosaunee women played in education, and in the community. This willingness to move or travel for training and work was common for the Six Nations. It was, and still is, not a closed community, in which residents stay

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sociation “ in *Gender and Education in Ontario: A Historical Reader*, ed. Ruby Heap and Alison Prentice (Toronto: Canadian Scholar’s Press Inc., 1991), 103-124.

<sup>33</sup> Jamieson, *Echoes of the Past*, 20.

<sup>34</sup> For example, in October 1922, teachers from the Mohawk Institute attended the meetings, and the students and staff did housecleaning, and replaced the window screens with storm sashes. Rogers Quarterly Report, 31 December 1922. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, LAC.

<sup>35</sup> Moses, Henhawk, and King, *History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve*, 62.

<sup>36</sup> As with the Brant County Historical Society, interested parties often communicated with non-Indigenous organizations in the community during the inter-war period. Asa Hill, Secretary of the Six Nations Council in 1922, made overtures to the Ontario Historical Society. See Cecilia Morgan, “History and the Six Nations, 1890s-1960s: Commemoration and Colonial Knowledge” (paper presented at the Canadian Historical Association’s 86th Annual Conference, University of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, May 28-30 2007), 11-13.

<sup>37</sup> Moses, Henhawk, and King, *History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve*: 66. For more about the Women’s Institutes, see “Chapter 5: “We decided that something must be done:’ Social Reform, Voluntary Associations and Community Work on the Reserve” in Norman “*Race, Gender and Colonialism.*”

within the confines of the reserve. Men and women frequently traveled to work at jobs in Brantford, Hamilton, Buffalo or even Toronto.<sup>38</sup> Women also commonly left their homes, often with their children, to go berry-picking during the summer months. They boarded at homes in Brantford, Caledonia and Hagersville, or at the Mohawk Institute in order to attend high school, as well as in Toronto and Hamilton for normal school, as part of a traditional pattern of leaving Grand River for work. The vast majority of the Six Nations teachers during this period attended either Toronto Normal School or Hamilton Normal School, which opened in 1908. For instance, Mary Anderson Longboat attended No. 10 School on the reserve as a child, went to high school in Caledonia, and then went to Hamilton Normal School. She returned to teach at No. 2 before stopping to have children in the mid 1930s. She also went back to Hamilton for additional courses in primary teaching methods.<sup>39</sup> Several women graduates of the Mohawk Institute went to teach at residential schools or day schools on reserves in Ontario, including Muncey, Oneida, and Tyendinaga, which was generally uncommon for Indigenous people. And those graduates also included a small number of peo-

ple who were from other communities in Ontario, and who went to the Mohawk Institute for training, before going on to teach elsewhere. For instance, Amelia Checkcock taught at Muncey Town, Stone Ridge, and Parry Sound. Phoebe Waddilove went to teach at the Oneida school. Josephine Good, who received the Nelles medal for general proficiency in high school, taught at Parry Sound for four years, then the Bay of Quinte. Catherine Maracle taught at No. 2 School at Six Nations, before teaching at St. Regis and then the Bay of Quinte.<sup>40</sup> Six Nations women's willingness to leave their community for training enabled them to become teachers within their own community, and beyond.

### Teachers as Role Models

Not only were teachers important leaders and cultural communicators, they were also often seen by government and church officials as examples of good womanhood on the reserve. Government and education officials remarked on educated, "proper" women, and hoped that they would be influential, even after they stopped teaching to raise families. The particular meanings of "good womanhood," of course, are unclear. This was a label applied by officials,

<sup>38</sup> See Carl Benn, "Chapter 4: Mohawks as Workers," in *Mohawks on the Nile: Natives among the Canadian Voyageurs in Egypt, 1884-85* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2009). Robin Jarvis Brownlie also suggests that Mohawk women from Tyendinaga had considerable mobility "related largely to the availability of work for themselves, and in some cases, their husbands." Brownlie, "Living the same as the white people," 67.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Mary Anderson Longboat and Carl Longboat. File 16, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMH.

<sup>40</sup> Russell T. Ferrier, "History of the Mohawk Institute, Successful Graduates," RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 2, LAC.

and while the community likely would have agreed with the descriptions of some of these teachers as proper women and good role models, it is impossible to know what the women themselves would have thought of such a label, or if it was even part of their own self-identity. “Good womanhood” generally meant that the teacher in question was sexually pure or monogamous, morally upright, attended church, kept a neat home, and/or spent time volunteering in the community. According to Lynne Marks, respectability was cultivated in rural Ontario through church attendance and community involvement. She notes that “race was also key,” and “while white Canadians considered churchgoing African Canadians and Indigenous Canadians more respectable than their non-churchgoing counterparts, the racism of Canadian society meant that even a complete adherence to dominant religious practices could never make African Canadians and Native Canadians fully respectable.”<sup>41</sup> So it is suggestive that non-Indigenous government and education officials were willing to describe certain Six Nations women as “civilized” enough to be examples of “good womanhood;” they likely believed

their assimilation project was successful, despite the fact that these women clearly remained Haudenosaunee in their identity and beliefs. In 1930, Russell Ferrier, Superintendent of Education, collected information on those he deemed to be “Successful Graduates” of the Mohawk Institute as part of the centennial of the school in 1930. He noted that Catherine Maracle, a graduate and teacher on the reserve, “keeps a good home and educated her children.”<sup>42</sup> Another example was Sarah Cecilia Russell (later Mrs. William Smith Jr.), who worked as a teacher on the reserve for eleven years. As a child she attended No. 7 school on the reserve, and then the Mohawk Institute for five years until grade 8, before going to high school in Brantford.<sup>43</sup> Russell earned the Nelles medal from the Six Nations School Board for general proficiency.<sup>44</sup> She began teaching in 1888 at the No. 7 school and then at the No. 3 school where she met her husband, William, a Dehorner and later an elected councillor.<sup>45</sup> Aside from teaching, Sarah was involved in volunteer work in the community; she was also the vice president of the Six Nations Women’s Patriotic League for Kanyengeh Church during the First World War and

<sup>41</sup> Lynne Sorrel Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 13.

<sup>42</sup> Russell T. Ferrier, “History of the Mohawk Institute, Successful Graduates,” RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 2, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1926-1936, LAC.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Florence Hill, about her parents William Smith Jr. and Sarah Cecilia Russell, File 17, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMH

<sup>44</sup> Russell T. Ferrier, “History of the Mohawk Institute, Successful Graduates,” RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 2, LAC.

<sup>45</sup> Jamieson, *History of Six Nations Education*, 13; Moses, Henhawk, and King, *History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve*, 3.



Figure 2: Mohawk Institute Officers, ca. 1917. Mrs. D.K. Smith, Miss L. Bell (M.A. Jr. Teacher), Miss Gilpin (Sewing Teacher), Miss S. Hardie, far right. (Sr. Teacher) Courtesy of the Woodland Cultural Centre Museum.<sup>51</sup>

the founder of the Sour Springs Women's Institute in 1921.<sup>46</sup> Sarah was also the representative on the Mother's Allowance Board in the 1920s, visiting families and widows on the reserve.<sup>47</sup> When she died in 1929, Ferrier noted that she was "influential for good on the reserve," as she had "brought up and educated a large family who are all doing well."<sup>48</sup> The Department of Indian Affairs was proud of their graduates: "Many Indian girls who have left the Mohawk Institute have been noted as successful homemakers and splendid mothers. Special mention should be made of Sarah Russell."<sup>49</sup> These

women were seen as examples of good womanhood on the reserve, and especially so because they were teachers.<sup>50</sup> Both the DIA and the school board were pleased with their efforts among the community. It's likely that they were also valued among members of their own community as role models and examples of Christian womanhood, as many young women followed in their footsteps. While many teachers were seen as role models in the community, three in particular stand out for their contributions to Haudenosaunee society at Grand River. A detailed examination of three well-respected teachers from Six Nations in the early decades of the twentieth century suggests that there was no one model of successful teacher; instead there were various ways that Six Nations women could have long and successful careers with differing tra-

<sup>46</sup> Mabel Hill and Sally M. Weaver, "History of the Ohsweken Women's Institute," in Sally Weaver Collection (Accession 89/55, Box 471, File 14, CMH, 1965); Florence Smith Hill, "Patriotic Work of the Six Nations in World Wars I and II," in *75th Anniversary of the Six Nations Agricultural Society* (1943).

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Florence Hill, about her parents William Smith Jr. and Sarah Cecilia Russell, File 17, Box 471, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMH.

<sup>48</sup> Russell T. Ferrier, "History of the Mohawk Institute, Successful Graduates," RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 2, LAC.

<sup>49</sup> Government of Canada, "Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the year ended 31 March 1930," 21-22.

<sup>50</sup> Another example is Sarah Davis, "who taught for 27 years, was a great reader and a well informed woman. Her influence and example have done much for the community." *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> While the photo is undated, all four teachers are listed in a "Maintenance and Management Report" for 1917. RG-10, Vol. 2771, File 154,845, Part 1A, LAC.



jectories and goals.

### Susan Hardie<sup>52</sup> (1867-1961)

Susan Hardie's story is a fascinating one, as a mixed-race woman who spent her youth as a student in the local residential school before beginning an unusually long career as a teacher of Indigenous children. She is one of the most well-known teachers from the community during this period, although she may have been more celebrated by the church and Department of Indian Affairs than the community itself. She taught at the Mohawk Institute for fifty years, and encouraged hundreds of students to further their education. She arrived at the residential school in 1879 as a twelve-year-old, ready to begin her studies as a student. Very little is known about her life prior to her arrival at the school, and her family history is unclear. Her mother was a Mohawk woman, Mary Johnson Davis, a descendant of George Jacob Johnson, or Tekahiwake, which made Susan a second cousin of well-known Mohawk poet Pauline Johnson. Her father is unknown—as a child she was known as Ida Susannah Johnson, but when she started school, she entered as Susan Hardie.<sup>53</sup> A recently published biographical sketch notes that “her father gave her his name

and provided for her,”<sup>54</sup> and some in the community said that her father was Judge Alexander Hardy, although he was likely too young to be her father – he was born only eight years prior to Susan. Two more likely candidates are Henry A. Hardy, who practiced law in Brantford and was prosecuting attorney and clerk of the peace for Norfolk County in 1868, and who would have been fifty at the time, or Arthur Sturgis Hardy, a thirty-one year old from nearby Mount Pleasant in Brant County who, at the time of Susan's birth, had a law practice in Brantford. He went on to become attorney general and premier of the province from 1896 to 1899.<sup>55</sup> Regardless of her parentage, Susan Hardie excelled at the Mohawk Institute and, after passing the high school entrance examination, she was awarded one of the first scholarships provided by the Department of Indian Affairs – \$25 per year – for graduates of the Mohawk Institute to attend high school in Brantford, while remaining in residence at the Mohawk Institute.<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately, Hardie failed to gain a second class teaching certificate, which was necessary in order to teach, and instead earned only the third class certificate. The principal of the Institute at the time, the Reverend Robert Ashton, took up her case with the De-

<sup>52</sup> Susan's name is spelled both Hardie and Hardy in different sources, but her death certificate and gravestone use the “ie” spelling.

<sup>53</sup> 1871 Census. Census Place: *Tuscarora, Brant South, Ontario*; Roll: C-9915; Page: 64; Family No: 247. *Census of Canada, 1871*. Statistics Canada Fonds. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, RG31-C-1, LAC.

<sup>54</sup> The University Women's Club of Brantford. “Emily General: Six Nations Teacher, Activist.” In *Significant Lives: Profiles of Brant County Women* (Brantford, 1997).

<sup>55</sup> David G. Burley, “Arthur Sturgis Hardy,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.

<sup>56</sup> Dominion of Canada Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the year ended 31 March 1930, p. 17.

partment of Education and argued that English was her second language, that her “application and perseverance have been most commendable,” and that he wanted to appoint her as a junior teacher so that “she may become a teacher to her people.”<sup>57</sup> The minister of education relented, took the “special circumstances” into consideration, and awarded Hardie a second class teaching certificate in October 1885.<sup>58</sup> She completed her training at the Brantford Model School the following year and then attended Toronto Normal School. As the DIA proudly noted, “She made such good use of her opportunity, that in 1887 she was appointed teacher of the junior room.”<sup>59</sup> It was the beginning of a teaching career at the Mohawk Institute that lasted for fifty years, until she retired at age seventy in 1936.<sup>60</sup>

When she started teaching at the Institute, Susan Hardie was the only Indigenous teacher there; others joined her later.<sup>61</sup> And in fact, it was the policy of the Department of Indian Affairs *not* to hire Indigenous teachers in the early

twentieth century. In 1911, during a discussion to turn the nearby Mount Elgin school into an Indigenous residential teacher-training facility, the assistant deputy and secretary of the department vaguely explained that “the experience... with Indian teachers has not been very happy.”<sup>62</sup> Despite the general refusal to hire Indigenous teachers in residential schools, several Haudenosaunee scholars were educated and later taught in the Mohawk Institute. Hardie was generally considered a successful teacher and role model by the school and community. In a 1921 letter, school inspector, Standing, wrote that

she is an excellent disciplinarian, not severe, but firm in her control, and I believe, secures the affection as well as the respect of her pupils. In teaching, she has been uniformly successful, as is shown by the success of her pupils at the [high school] Entrance Examination.<sup>63</sup>

Hardie took great pride in the fact that all of the students that she had trained for the high school entrance exam passed and went on to attend high

<sup>57</sup> Ashton to Secretary, Education Department, 4 September 1885. RG-10, Vol. 2007, File 7825-1B, LAC.

<sup>58</sup> Education Department to Ashton, 8 October 1885. RG-10, Vol. 2007, File 7825-1B, LAC.

<sup>59</sup> Dominion of Canada Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the year ended 31 March 1930, p. 17.

<sup>60</sup> Thelma Finlay, “Institute Teacher is 90,” *The Expositor*, Wednesday 9 October 1957; The University Women’s Club of Brantford, “Susan Hardy: Dedicated Teacher.”

<sup>61</sup> She wasn’t the first, as Isaac Bearfoot had taught at the school for years in the 1880s before leaving to attend Huron College and to then become an Anglican Minister. See Alison Norman, “‘An excellent young Indian’: Isaac Bearfoot and the Education of the Six Nations of Grand River,” presented at *The House that Isaac Built: The Architecture of Cultures and Identities in Canada*, Huron University College, London, Ontario, 13-15 May 2013.

<sup>62</sup> Assistant Deputy and Secretary to Rev. T. Shore 20 June 1911. RG-10, Vol. 6205, File 468-1 (1-3), MR C7937.

<sup>63</sup> Standing to Whom it may concern, 12 May 1921. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, LAC. T.

school.<sup>64</sup> Many went on to careers as teachers. Norman Lickers, the first lawyer from Six Nations of Grand River, and the first Indigenous lawyer in Ontario, credited Susan Hardie with supporting him in furthering his education at the University of Western Ontario in the 1930s.<sup>65</sup> However, Hardie was not universally appreciated. In interviews done with people who attended the school, several mentioned that they were there when she taught, but few were positive in their comments about her. One former student, Martha Hill, noted that “I never took a licking from Miss Hardy,” and yet, she relays a story in which, after the student had been disobedient, Hardie “gave me a shove and I tripped on the radiator and I fell, and I laid there. By the scruff of the neck she shoved me in the seat.”<sup>66</sup> Another student, Edward S. Groat, recalled an incident in which Hardie belittled his achievements:

Every year Miss hardy’s chapter of the I.O.D.E. used to come to the school and present something to the most deserving student. And in 1936, her last year there, which was my year in the entrance class, we were all there sitting there expectantly wondering who was going to get the prize – we all thought it would be S – she was a smart girl. It came down to the presentation and I got

the prize – I’ve got it at home yet - it was a book – of English-type boys’ stories – things that happened in England. But I treasured that book. Nothing was said then, but the following week Miss Hardy told me that she was disappointed that I got the book – she didn’t think I deserved it. She thought S should have got the book. My marks were higher than hers were apparently

His wife Marjorie said in the interview “That’s where the put-down was – you were made to feel that you were not worthy. And that’s what a lot of them [former students]... were put down so that they just felt that they were unworthy – didn’t make anything of their lives – they just felt like nothing.”<sup>67</sup> So while Hardie was successful in training students to pass their entrance examinations and encouraged numerous students to further their education, she was also participated in an education process that was violent at times and belittled the students.

Nor was the school administration always enthusiastic about her work. In December 1921, Principal Alice Boyce wrote a letter to the secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs to hire new, young teachers, asking the department to provide a pension so that fifty-five-year-old Hardie could retire. Boyce explained

W. Standing was the Brant County school Inspector from 1907-1932. Moses, Henhawk, and King, *History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve*, 15.

<sup>64</sup> Finlay, “Institute Teacher is 90.”

<sup>65</sup> Joy Hendry, *Reclaiming Culture: Indigenous People and Self-Representation* (Toronto: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2005), 108.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Martha Hill, student at the Mohawk Institute from 1912-1918. Elizabeth Graham, *The Mush Hole: Life at two Indian Residential Schools* (Waterloo, Ontario: Heffle Publishing, 1997), 355-56.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Edward S. (a.k.a. Russell) Groat and Marjorie J. Goat (nee Smith), students at the Mohawk Institute 1930-1939. Graham, *The Mush Hole*, 367.

that she would prefer “a younger, brighter teacher.” She added that “Miss Hardie is a capable teacher – but she has spent her life here since twelve years of age – and her horizon is very limited – and she knows practically nothing of the ways of the world. I think a pension plan would solve our difficulty.”<sup>68</sup> Boyce’s request was denied, however, and Hardie taught for another fifteen years before retiring.<sup>69</sup>

Hardie was a bit of an anomaly in that the Department of Indian Affairs refused to entertain the idea of making a policy to hire Indigenous teachers in residential schools, and across the country their numbers were generally low.<sup>70</sup> As noted above, a decent number of Indigenous men and women were trained at the Mohawk Institute, and many went on to become day school teachers, but a very few became residential school teachers. The philosophy of assimilation behind the schools excluded Indigenous people from working as teachers or principals, but allowed them to work as labourers or kitchen staff.<sup>71</sup> Of course, having attended the school herself, and then teaching there for decades, Hardie was a strong supporter of the Mohawk Institute. In an interview on her

ninetieth birthday, Hardie thought that it was “very strange people don’t appreciate that the Institute, the New England Company, and other educational institutions, have produced a race of clear-headed and straight-thinking people.”<sup>72</sup> As with many staff members of residential schools, she believed in the educational work she was doing, and supported its mission, even if it was assimilative. How much of her own Mohawk culture she retained after attending the school herself as a student is unknown. Interestingly, in the 1921 census, under “language other than English or French, spoken as Mother tongue,” the enumerator had first written “Mohawk” but scratched that out.<sup>73</sup> As her “race or tribe” was noted as “Indian,” and she was listed among eight other Anglo-Canadian or British staff at the school, we might wonder who told him that she was Mohawk or that she spoke Mohawk, before perhaps Hardie corrected him. We will never know, but Hardie’s own experience with the assimilative educational experience, and her apparent disconnect from her Indigenous family, surely coloured her opinions of the work the school was doing.

Hardie’s Anglican faith also played

<sup>68</sup> Boyce to Secretary DIA, 17 December 1921. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, LAC.

<sup>69</sup> She was finally given a pension, but payments were often late or did not come at all. See various letters in RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 3, LAC.

<sup>70</sup> Milloy, 176-77.

<sup>71</sup> We know very little about Indigenous men and women employed by the residential schools after they graduated from the school, except that some young men and women found employment in the kitchen or on the farm. Of course, the students themselves also worked as unpaid staff in the kitchens, laundry, carpentry shop and in the fields. See Miller, “‘Such Employment He Can Get at Home’: Work and Play” in *Shingwauk’s Vision*, 251-88.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> 1921 Census of Canada. RG 31; Folder Number: 50; Census Place: Brantford East (Township), Brant, Ontario; Page Number: 4.



Figure 3. Susan Hardie, Window Number Seven, the Mohawk Chapel. Courtesy of the Brantford Expositor/Sun Media.

to care for the poor on the reserve.<sup>74</sup> Hardie was a member of the Teachers Federation of Ontario, and was awarded a life membership in the Ontario Educational Association.<sup>75</sup> Hardie never married nor had children, and had few family connections on the reserve towards the end of her life. After retiring, she first lived with Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Rogers in Brantford, the previous principal of the school, and then, until Hardie's death in 1961, with the daughter of another principal, Gwen Snell, in Oshawa.<sup>76</sup>

Susan Hardie has been commemorated in quite an elaborate way; she is the only Indigenous woman to be honoured by a stained glass window in the historic Mohawk Chapel.<sup>77</sup> The window features a young Hardie in front of the old Mohawk Institute, reading a book with several Indigenous children gathered around her. The inscription below the window is a quotation from John Brant in 1824 about the early days of the Mohawk Institute, and it reads "The children are particularly taught religious and moral duties – it is an agreeable sight to observe the rising generation employed in acquiring knowledge, and in a spirit of true worship, attending divine service on the Sabbath."<sup>78</sup> Hardie

a part in her work as a teacher, and like many others, Hardie was involved in the church, and several voluntary organizations, where she worked towards bettering her community in a variety of ways. In addition, she worked with the Remembrance Chapter of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire to reinforce historical connections with Britain, and

<sup>74</sup> Hardie used her connections with the I.O.D.E. to have the organization donate prizes for competitions to the school. Rogers Quarterly Report, 30 June 1925. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, LAC.

<sup>75</sup> The University Women's Club of Brantford. "Susan Hardy: Dedicated Teacher." In *Significant Lives: Profiles of Brant County Women*, (Brantford, 1997), 54.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-54.

<sup>77</sup> The window was unveiled in 1960, the year before Hardie's death.

<sup>78</sup> Canon W. J. Zimmerman, *Story of the Windows, Her Majesty's Chapel of the Mohawks* (Brantford, 1965), 9-11.



clearly had an impact on several generations of Indigenous children whom she taught and encouraged in their studies. She was the longest serving teacher at the Mohawk Institute, and likely the most influential one. But she also took part in the church and state project to assimilate children from her own community into Christianity and Western culture. Her own familial background, her mixed-race heritage, and her long teaching career suggest that there were a variety of teachers who were valued by both the Six Nations community and those in charge of education at the Mohawk Institute and the day schools on the reserve.

### Julia Jamieson (1889-1975)

Like Susan Hardie, Julia Jamieson had a very long and influential teaching career. She taught in multiple day schools on the reserve, and her influence spread not only within those classrooms, but also within the Baptist community on the reserve, as she was a church and community historian. And importantly, she also worked to preserve and teach the Mohawk language and to promote and preserve Haudenosaunee history and culture. Julia was the daughter of Cayuga teacher and Six Nations School Board member Augustus Jamieson and Mohawk Emmeline Echo-Hill. Emmeline was the daughter of chief Jacob

Hill, and Augustus was descended from Mary Jamison, the well-known “White Woman of Genesee,” an Irish woman captured by the Shawnee in the French and Indian War, before being traded to the Seneca. Mary chose to remain with the Seneca, married and had children. By the early twentieth century, she had many descendants at Grand River.<sup>79</sup> The Jamiesons were a family of teachers; five of the eight children taught school.<sup>80</sup> Julia attended a day school on the reserve, and then went to high school in Caledonia, graduating in 1908. She began teaching almost immediately, and without any formal teacher training. Like Susan Hardie, she had some difficulty getting started teaching. In 1908, the non-Indigenous reserve doctor, Dr. C.U. Holmes, challenged Julia’s hiring, as she did not yet have any provincial qualifications. However, according to Martin Benson,

she has passed the Entrance examination to the Normal School and is most likely the best teacher they could obtain for the salary available... Miss Jamieson has only been in the school less than a month and it would only be fair to give her a try... The qualified teacher is not always the most successful in Indian schools.<sup>81</sup>

Jamieson was supported by the members of the Six Nations School Board and her hiring stood. A decade later, in Oc-

<sup>79</sup> “Jamieson, Julia Laurine,” *The Expositor*, February 1975. See James E. Seaver and June Namias, *A narrative of the life of Mrs. Mary Jamison*, 1st ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992); June Namias, *White captives: gender and ethnicity on the American frontier* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

<sup>80</sup> Mary Helen Jamieson, Elmer Ernest Jamieson, Nora Elsie Jamieson, and Andrew Northe Augustus Jamieson all worked as teachers. Her brother Thomas James Jamieson, was a doctor in Detroit.

<sup>81</sup> Martin Benson to the Deputy Superintendent General, 16 September 1908. RG-10, Vol. 2010, File



Figure 4: The Jamieson family ca. 1901. At back, from left to right, Elmer, Julia, Nora, Emily. Seated from left to right, Augustus Jamieson, Andrew, Thomas, Emmeline, Mary. The Wilma Jamieson Collection. Courtesy of the Woodland Cultural Centre Museum.

tober 1918, the school board voted to increase her salary not because she applied for an increase but because “she has taught a great many years and is highly recommended by the Inspector although she has no professional qualifications.”<sup>82</sup> After teaching at day schools for almost fifteen years, she attended the Toronto Normal School in 1923, and earned her certificate. Jamieson taught at half of the schools on the reserve, including No. 1, 2, 4, 8, 10, and the Thomas school.<sup>83</sup> She

was also interested in professional development, and in 1937 became a founding member of the Six Nations Teacher’s Organization.<sup>84</sup>

Jamieson was heavily involved in the work of the Ohsweken Baptist Church, and when the church founded a branch of the Baptist Young People’s Union in 1914, it was Jamieson who was elected president. She also held the positions of clerk and treasurer of the church at the time, and later sat on the music commit-

7825-3, LAC.

<sup>82</sup> By that time she was teaching at No. 8 School, and her salary rose from \$500 a year to \$550. Minutes of the Meeting, 25 September 1918. RG-10, Vol. 2010, File 7825-4, LAC.

<sup>83</sup> Six Nations School Board records, Annual Reports of the Department of Indian Affairs.

<sup>84</sup> Moses, Henhawk, and King, *History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve*: 65.



Figure 5: Director Julia Jamieson, at right. Diane Smith is playing Pauline Johnson. The 1961 Six Nations Reserve Forest Theatre Pageant. National Film Board of Canada. Still Photography Division [graphic material] — R1196-14-7-E, LAC.

tee.<sup>85</sup> The BYPU was part of a national effort to bring and keep the youth of the churches in the fold, and while no records of this group exist, a 1932 list of church council members shows Jamieson as still president.<sup>86</sup> Clearly she was dedicated to fostering the Baptist mission among the youth in her community. She also researched and wrote the centennial history of the Ohsweken Baptist Church when it celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1940.<sup>87</sup> After her retirement from teaching in the 1940s, she wrote a history of education on the Six Nations Reserve, titled *Echoes of the Past: A History of Education from the time of the Six Nations Settlement on the Banks of the Grand River in 1784 to 1924*. She also

wrote a history of the Six Nations Agricultural Society.<sup>88</sup>

As she aged, it seems that Jamieson became more interested in working to preserve and promote her culture. In an effort to preserve the Mohawk language, she made tape recordings in 1958 and compiled and published five booklets. These included a speech from a 1905 Tea Meeting, the Lord's Prayer, Psalm 23, lyrics to an Indian hymn, and other Bible verses.<sup>90</sup> And a few years later, she became involved in the Six Nations Reserve Forest Theatre, founded by her friend Emily General. In 1961, for instance, she was the script-writer and director of a pageant that told the life story of Pauline Johnson.<sup>91</sup>

Pauline Johnson held a particular fascination for Jamieson and her sisters Nora and Mary. That spring, March 1961, the three women traveled to Vancouver with a group from the community who were making a pilgrimage to celebrate a

<sup>85</sup> "Anglican Churches," File 4, Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMH

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Julia L. Jamieson, *The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Ohsweken Baptist Church* (Brantford: n.p., 1940). "Ohsweken Baptist" File 5, Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, Canadian Museum of Civilization.

<sup>88</sup> "Anglican Churches," File 4, Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMC.

<sup>90</sup> Jake Thomas and Julia L. Jamieson, *Grand River Territory Mohawk Language* (1958, 1995).

<sup>91</sup> Six Nations Reserve Forest Theatre, 1961. National Film Board of Canada, Still Photography Division, R1196-14-7-E, LAC.

centurysincePauline Johnson's birth.<sup>92</sup> Later that summer, they founded the "Jamieson House of Hobbies," which displayed "Iroquois crafts, paintings, photographs and mementos of Miss E. Pauline Johnson" in her own home. A card advertising the museum from 1961 noted that there was a daily showing from 2pm to 8pm, excluding Sundays,



Figure 6: Julia Jamieson showing a mask at her museum during the summer of 1961. National Film Board of Canada. Still Photography Division [graphic material] — R1196-14-7-E, LAC.

in June. They charged 50 cents admission for adults, and 25 for children.<sup>93</sup> The trip, the exhibit and the pageant all focused on the life of Pauline Johnson, and are an example of Julia Jamieson's efforts to celebrate and teach the history of the Six Nations community. As a historian, Jamieson participated in a tradition of producing and controlling the stories

being told about the Six Nations of Grand River, along with people like Pauline Jamieson, Ethel Brant Monture, and Elliott Moses.<sup>94</sup> She was justifiably proud of her community's distant and more recent past, a past that she was herself a part of, and felt it important to put the story to paper for future generations. While she participated in

educating children from her community in Western schools and within the Baptist Church, she also believed it was possible, and in fact necessary, for her community to preserve what aspects of their culture and language remained, and to teach the history of the Six Nations to children and the community at large. Jamieson's successful experience of cultural

<sup>92</sup> Photos from the Wilma Jamieson Collection, Woodland Cultural Centre Museum.

<sup>93</sup> Card from the Wilma Jamieson Collection, Woodland Cultural Centre Museum.

<sup>94</sup> Michelle Hamilton, "Borders Within: First Nations and Anthropology in Victorian Ontario," in *Lines Drawn Upon the Water: The First Nations Experience in the Great Lakes Borderlands*, ed. K.S. Hele. Kitchener (Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2008), 191-204; Cecilia Morgan, "Performing for 'Imperial Eyes': Bernice Loft and Ethel Brant Monture, Ontario, 1930s-1960s," in *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past* ed. Myra Rutherdale and Katharine Pickles (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005); 'History and the Six Nations: the Dynamics of Commemoration, Colonial Space, and Colonial Knowledge,' eds. James Opp and John Walsh, *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada* (University of British Columbia Press, 2010); Morgan, Cecilia. "Mr. Moses goes to England: Twentieth-Century Mobility and Networks at the Six Nations Reserve, Ontario," in *Indigenous Networks: Mobility, Connections, Exchange* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 167-83; Strong-Boag and Gerson, *Paddling her own canoe*; Carole Gerson and Veronica Strong-Boag, "Championing the Native: E. Pauline Johnson Rejects the Squaw," in *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past*, ed. Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005).



Figure 7: Julia and her sister Nora examining props to be used in the 1961 pageant. National Film Board of Canada. Still Photography Division [graphic material] — R1196-14-7-E, LAC.

negotiation between the Haudenosaunee and Anglo-Canadian Christian worlds suggests that multiple identities were both valued and useful at Grand River.

In response to the important work the Jamieson family had done for education in the community, a new school was built in 1976, and named after them.<sup>95</sup> In many ways, Julia's life was similar to numerous other Anglo-Canadian women who remained single, were involved in their churches, and taught for decades in small communities across the province, but Julia Jamieson was a proud Six Nations woman who combined her passion for teaching with her Christian faith, and her belief that her people's traditional language and history were worth preserving and being taught to the younger generations.

### Emily General (1908-1991)

Emily General was the most politically active woman of the three profiled here and a woman whose Haudenosaunee culture, language and principles guided the decisions she made in her life. Like Susan Hardie and Julia Jamieson, she was a single woman who had a long career teaching and promoting the education



of the young in her community, as well as a significant involvement in a Christian church on the reserve, but her cultural negotiation tended to put her more squarely in the Haudenosaunee camp. Emily was born Christine Emily General to a Cayuga father, Alexander General, and a Mohawk mother, Sophia Jones, in 1903. She was also known by the name *Gaw hen dena*, meaning “she is going along in the front or in the lead.”<sup>96</sup> While not much is known about her mother's family, her father's family was very politically active. Alexander (or Sandy) General was an assistant hereditary chief in the Upper Cayuga Longhouse, although the family was listed as Anglican in census records.<sup>97</sup> Alexander's brother was Levi General, or *Deskaheh*, the hereditary chief who traveled to Geneva and Lon-

<sup>95</sup> “Jamieson School Bears Name of Historic Family,” in George Beaver, *Mohawk Reporter: The Six Nations Columns of George Beaver* (Ohsweken, Ontario: Iroqrafts: Iroquois Reprints, 1997), 59-62.

<sup>96</sup> Translation from Jeremy Green, Mohawk Language/Culture Teacher, Oliver M. Smith School, Six Nations.

<sup>97</sup> “1924 Chiefs - Socio-Economic Data” File 20, Box 468, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMH.



don in the early 1920s to argue for Six Nations sovereignty.<sup>98</sup> Another brother, Samson, was also a hereditary chief, and a second brother, David, was a Dehorner and elected councillor after 1924.<sup>99</sup> David's sons (Emily's cousins) were also elected councillors. Many in the General family were successful farmers, and were also involved in the Six Nations Agricultural Society.<sup>100</sup> Emily's paternal grandmother, Lydia General, was a clan matron.<sup>101</sup> This history of leadership in her family line had an impact on Emily's beliefs and her actions in her adult life.

As a child, Emily attended a day school on the reserve, but when she was thirteen, the truant officer reported to the Six Nations School Board that Alexander General was not sending his children to school.<sup>102</sup> It seems that Emily was at least partly educated at home, or that her parents did not believe that the school was beneficial enough for their daughter. Perhaps they had concerns about the education being taught in the

day schools. However, when she attended high school in Caledonia in the early 1920s, she was driven by horse and buggy to the train which took her into Caledonia, where she boarded with an Indigenous family during the week.<sup>103</sup> While she might have skipped school as a child, clearly formal Western education was important to her family, as they made such an effort to support her high school education. Like many of Indigenous people, they likely saw that a Western education could be useful in the changing world around them. It certainly did not mean they were desirous of an assimilative experience for their child.

Early on in her life, Emily became an advocate for children in her community, even before becoming a teacher. On 6 April 1925, the Six Nations School Board truant officer, with the help of mounted RCMP officers, rounded up a group of twenty-one children from their classrooms in the day schools and took them to the Mohawk Institute for the

<sup>98</sup> Joëlle Rostkowski, "Deskahé's shadow: Indians on the international scene," *European Review of Native American Studies (Budapest)* 9:2 (1995); "The Redman's Appeal for Justice: Deskahé and the League of Nations," in *Indians and Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays*, ed. Christian Feest (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); Laurence M. Hauptman, "The Idealist and the Realist: Chief Deskahé, Attorney George Decker and the Six Nations' Struggle to Get to the World Court, 1921-1925," in *Seven generations of Iroquois leadership: the Six Nations since 1800* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2008); J.R. Miller, "Petitioning the Great White Mother: First Nations' Organizations and Lobbying in London" in *Canada and the End of Empire*, ed. Phillip Buckner (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004).

<sup>99</sup> David was also a founder of the Indian Defense League of America in the 1920s. "The Indian Defense League of America," in *The Encyclopedia of Native American Legal Tradition*, ed. Bruce Elliott Johansen (Greenwood Press, 1998).

<sup>100</sup> David was treasurer for many years in the 1920s as was Alexander, while Levi was second vice president in 1922 and honorary director in 1923. File 9 "S.N.A.S.", Box 470, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMH.

<sup>101</sup> "Chiefs" File 2, Box 468, Accession 89/55, Sally Weaver Collection, CMH.

<sup>102</sup> Minutes of the Meeting, September 1916. RG-10, Vol. 2010, File 7825-4, LAC.

<sup>103</sup> The University Women's Club of Brantford, "Emily General: Six Nations Teacher, Activist," 112.

night.<sup>104</sup> According to General, the next day, “amid cries and screams,” they left for Chapleau Residential School, almost 900 kilometres to the north in central North-eastern Ontario.<sup>105</sup> Cecil Morgan, Superintendent of the Six Nations, described an unlikely story, that the children left happily eating apples and candies: “not one cried or expressed regret at leaving their former squalid surroundings.”<sup>106</sup> Emily General acted as an advocate for some of the families on the reserve who demanded the return of their children from the Department of Indian Affairs. She contacted Frederica Flemyng Gyll, an English woman who had a passion for Indigenous rights and who had been a supporter of Emily’s uncle, Levi General or Deskaheh. Through her correspondence with Emily, Gyll was well aware of the political situation and events on the reserve; she was already furious with the Canadian government and the Department of Indian Affairs for what she saw as the ousting of the hereditary council and the imposition of the new elected government the previous year. Her anger grew when she received letters from Emily drawing her attention to the removal of the students, and asking for her help. Gyll responded with numerous letters of pro-

test to DIA officials, the Governor General, the Dominions Office in London, and to the Aborigines Protection Society, in which she often enclosed copies of letters written by Emily General and Emily’s mother, Sophia Jones General. She demanded that the “kidnapped” children be returned home. Gyll wrote to General Lord Byng of Vimy, the Governor General of Canada, telling him “I must seriously ask Your Excellency to take immediate steps to restore those children to their parents and homes as soon as possible, for I am sure that it is quite within Your Excellency’s power to do so.”<sup>107</sup> As was customary with requests to British officials, however, the Governor General consistently forwarded her letters to the Department of Indian Affairs, and aside from a letter of acknowledgement, she rarely received a response from the Governor General. The Acting Assistant Deputy and Secretary of Indian Affairs, A.M. Mackenzie, replied to Gyll’s letters to the Department, suggesting that she “will be glad to know” that the removed children were considered orphaned and destitute, and that the institution they were taken to was “a Christian home where Indian children receive both academic and vocational training.”<sup>108</sup> Gyll responded that:

<sup>104</sup> Principal Sydney Rogers noted “April 6th: A party of children were outfitted for Chapleau. These children were boarded at the school and slept in a cottage nearby. Some were in a very filthy condition and although we took utmost precautions we had quite a lot of cleaning up to do after they left.” Rogers Quarterly Report, 30 June 1925. RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, LAC.

<sup>105</sup> Letter from Emily General to Rica Flemyng Gyll, 11 April 1924. British Foreign Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society Fonds. Reel A-1649.” LAC.

<sup>106</sup> Letter from Col. Cecil E. Morgan to G. H. Muirhead, Esq., 5 October 1925. *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Rica Flemyng Gyll to His Excellency General Lord Byng of Vimy, Governor General of His Majesty’s Dominion of Canada, 27 April 1925. *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> A. F. Mackenzie, Acting Assistant Deputy and Secretary, to Miss Rica Flemyng Gyll, 24 July 1925.

However admirable this Institution may be, I cannot but condemn very strongly the method by which these unfortunate children were suddenly taken from the Grand River Lands without any warning or time given to prepare for the change. I felt that it was nothing less than kidnapping, especially in view of the fact that the "truant officer" got so much money per head for every child he took!<sup>109</sup>

General used Gyll as an ally in her efforts to get the children returned, and allowed Gyll to use her letters as evidence of the wrongdoing being done on the reserve. Despite General's efforts and Gyll's numerous letters, the children remained at Chapleau. But perhaps General was encouraged to become a teacher after this disturbing episode, as she enrolled at the Hamilton Normal School several months later, in the fall of 1925.<sup>110</sup> While she clearly did not support the residential school system, she was keen to become a part of the local day school system as a teacher.

After graduating from the normal school in 1926, General was hired by the Six Nations School Board, and began teaching at No. 6 School before moving to No. 9 a few years later.<sup>111</sup> She was fluent in Mohawk and Cayuga, and used traditional stories and customs to "bring

to life for her students the heritage of their people."<sup>112</sup> She had a strong belief that it was necessary to instil pride in the children of Six Nations by teaching them about their own culture, a belief that only seemed to have grown throughout her career. In her early years as a teacher, she also became involved in the Six Nations Agricultural Society (SNAS), serving as a Lady Director in 1926.<sup>113</sup> The SNAS was the first Indigenous agricultural society in Canada, and though women were involved right from the beginning, their power was limited.<sup>114</sup> In Ontario at the time, agricultural societies were generally concerned with sharing agricultural knowledge for greater progress and development of the community. The Lady Directors were responsible for some of the planning of the annual fair, and were in charge of the competitions in the ladies' categories, such as cooking, baking, preserving and handiwork. But there were limits on what women had control over through this organization, and they could only serve as Lady Directors; they could not be elected as an officer, such as president, secretary or treasurer.<sup>115</sup> Despite these limits, women like Emily General took full advantage

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RG-10, Vol. 2287, File 57,169, Part 1X, LAC.

<sup>109</sup> Rica Flemingy Gyll to the Acting Assistant Deputy and Secretary, Indian Affairs, 31 December 1925, LAC.

<sup>110</sup> Hamilton Normal School, *The Eleventh Annual Year Book* (Published by the Students of the Hamilton Normal School, 1926).

<sup>111</sup> Moses, Henhawk, and King, *History of Education on the Six Nations Reserve*, 14.

<sup>112</sup> The University Women's Club of Brantford, "Emily General: Six Nations Teacher, Activist," 113.

<sup>113</sup> Julia L. Jamieson, "The History of the Six Nations Agricultural Society," in *Six Nations Indians, yesterday and to-day, 1867-1942*, ed. N.E. Jamieson (Brantford: 1942), 23.

<sup>114</sup> See Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society during the Nineteenth Century*, 289-94; Weaver, "The Iroquois, 1875-1945"; Jamieson, "The History of the Six Nations Agricultural Society".

<sup>115</sup> "Constitution of the Six Nations Agricultural Society (taken from the Minute Book owned by Mr.

of the limited opportunities that the Society presented. Her identity is further complicated when we consider that General also taught Sunday school for many years at St. Luke's Anglican Church.<sup>116</sup>

After teaching for several years, General was motivated to travel to England, like many Haudenosaunee people had before her, to petition the Crown for Six Nations sovereignty, and to ask for their help in dealing with the Canadian government, especially to gain control over their own funds.<sup>117</sup> Despite some suggestions that she was merely a member of the delegation, several sources tell us that she in fact led the group, and was issued the first Haudenosaunee passport by the hereditary chiefs to do so.<sup>118</sup> General and the delegation were met by a committee of six members, two from each party, that was appointed by the British House of Commons, including the Labour candi-

date A. Fenner Brockway. Brockway asked the Right Honourable J.H. Thomas, the Secretary of State for the Dominions, to meet with the "Red Indian Chiefs," but they were denied a visit, as the matters "lie within the exclusive competence of His Majesty's Government in Canada," and so he "cannot see his way to receive the deputation or to take any action in regard to these matters."<sup>119</sup> While the delegation caused some embarrassment to the Department of Indian Affairs and the federal government, the British politicians who met with the delegation, and the committee that was formed to look into the matter, did what British officials have always done, and referred the matter back to Canada, because an "attitude of non-interference with what is a purely Dominion matter has been maintained with regard to all other appeals by or on behalf of the Six Nations Indians."<sup>120</sup> General was

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A. Anderson)," Six Nations Agricultural Society File, WCC.

<sup>116</sup> "General, Emily C. - "Gaw hen dena."

<sup>117</sup> "Red Indian Chiefs in the Commons," *The Times*, 3 July 1930. The petitioners included her brother Sylvanus General.

<sup>118</sup> In fact, Brian Titley suggests that the delegation was led by Chauncey Garlow when numerous other sources and oral history suggest that Emily General herself was appointed by the Confederacy Chiefs to lead the delegation. See The University Women's Club of Brantford, "Emily General: Six Nations Teacher, Activist." Brian E. Titley, "The Six Nations' Status Case," in *A narrow vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986). "Special recognition for Ms. Emily General," *Tekawennake*. 25 May, 1989.

<sup>119</sup> A. Fenner Brockway to J.H. Thomas, 8 July 1930; H.N. Tait to John R. O. Johnson, Esq. 8 July 1930. RG-10, Vol. 2287, File 57,169, Part 6, Six Nations Agency – Correspondence, Reports, Memoranda, Publications & Photographs Dealing with the Political Status of the Six Nations, 1924-1936, LAC. Thomas further explained to Brockway that "I am sure that you and your colleagues will appreciate that it would be most inappropriate for me, by receiving a deputation, or otherwise, to give any appearance of intervening in what has always been regarded, both by the Canadian Government and ourselves, to be purely and solely a domestic concern of Canada, and thus to depart from an attitudes consistently maintained by successive Secretaries of State." J.H. Thomas to A. Fenner Brockway, 15 July 1930. RG-10, Vol. 2287, File 57,169, Part 6, LAC.

<sup>120</sup> "Deputation of the six nations Indian confederacy from Canada," (The National Archives, London: DO 35 Dominions Office and Commonwealth Relations Office: Original Correspondence, 1930-31).

suspended for teaching for three years upon her return to Grand River, but the trip only heightened her efforts to work on behalf of her community.<sup>121</sup>

She was rehired to teach by the Six Nations School Board in 1933, and continued to teach throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s, when her political beliefs caused her to lose her job once again, but this time, permanently. The 1947 Civil Service Act required all civil servants to make an oath of allegiance to the Crown, and Emily refused to do so. As a result, on 16 June 1948, she was fired for refusing to take the required oath.<sup>122</sup> She had been hired by the Six Nations School Board, which fell under the authority of the Department of Indian Affairs, making her (and all of the teachers in the board) employees of the federal civil service. Her sister-in-law Germaine Myke remembered that “she came back crying, and said they didn’t need her anymore... When you swear allegiance that means you’re looking after the government’s affairs, not your people’s. She didn’t want to be gagged.”<sup>123</sup> General wrote a letter to the Department of Indian Affairs asking that they reconsider her situation:

The Six Nations are living on this Grand Riv-

er lands under special treaty as allies of the British Crown. So it is out of order to expect a Six Nations to subjugate himself in order to teach his own people, in his own land... I do not think that the Canadian government, the people of Canada, or the Crown, would respect me otherwise than be true to my own noble race who have done so much for the English on this continent.<sup>124</sup>

She received no reply. However, as a result of her removal from the school system, she found other ways to educate her people.

The following year, 1949, Emily founded the Six Nations Reserve Forest Pageant, which was her most lasting contribution to the community’s education, as the pageant still runs in the twenty-first century. In 1946, Emily’s sister Laura had been to Ticonderoga, New York, to see an historic pageant with Chief Clinton Rickard, the founder of the Indian Defense League (IDL), and several other chiefs from Grand River and the Tuscarora Reserve. Inspired by what she had heard, Emily approached the Confederacy chiefs for their support and took them to see the pageant in Ticonderoga herself in order to persuade them that something similar could be done at Grand River.<sup>125</sup> They were impressed with the play, and agreed to help her with the history of the

<sup>121</sup> The minutes of the Six Nations School Board are not explicit in discussing their suspension of General. But in the 226th meeting on 31 July, 1930, upon hiring her replacement (Garnette Atkins), they noted “Your work with junior pupils has been very good and you now have an opportunity for good work under rather more difficult circumstances as the teacher at No. 9 deserted [sic] her position in May and the temporary teacher who replaced her was not a good disciplinarian. You may, therefore, find things more difficult and the board relies upon you to pull this school together and will watch your success with interest,” 6-7. In multiple oral history interviews with Emily and her family, she explained that she was suspended from teaching for three years as a result of her trip. RG 10, Vol 2011, File 7825-4A, LAC.

<sup>122</sup> White, “School named for Six Nations teacher Emily General.”

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> Robert Edward Krieg, “Forest theatre: a study of the Six Nations’ pageant plays on the Grand



founding of the Confederacy as the subject of the first pageant. At the time, she was also a member of the IDL and she approached them for funding and help with the construction of the theatre itself.<sup>126</sup> Over several months, the grounds were cleared and the theatre built on her mother Sophie Jones General's land. She remembered:

I was a member of the Indian Defense League and there was a lot of history discussed there and I finally thought it would be a good thing to start something like this because they honoured the men of the past, the historians and the great orators and the men that had done very great work for the Six Nations.<sup>127</sup>

The first play was written by William Smith, also a member of the IDL, called "The League of Peace," and was presented in August 1949.<sup>128</sup> General wanted the pageant to present the history of the Six Nations from "an Indian point of view."<sup>129</sup> According to an interview done in the 1970s, General did

not approve of fanciful accounts of history, that is, history that has been dressed up like a Hollywood production so that it will ap-

pear more interesting. Rather, she prefers that the plays adhere to the facts because she believes that they are interesting enough in themselves.<sup>130</sup>

Her wishes are still being honoured as today's pageant is very similar to the 1949 version. Although the pageant ceased production in 2010, it re-opened with a 65th anniversary pageant in August 2013 about Emily herself, and titled *Paper Doll*, a nickname given to Emily when she worked as a delivery person for the *Hamilton Spectator* after losing her teaching job.<sup>131</sup> The 2014 pageant featured the story of long distance runner Tom Longboat. Emily's sister-in-law remembers that

In her time, when she tried to tell people of these things [Six Nations history], there were some who could understand her and some who couldn't. But today, it's just like they're speaking her words. She's changed the attitude of people, to be proud of who they are. Children and teaching was her life.<sup>132</sup>

Throughout the postwar period, General continued to be involved in education and activism for the benefit her community. While all three teach-

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River Reserve" (PhD, University of Western Ontario, 1978), 5-6.

<sup>126</sup> Sonya Sault, "Six Nations Annual Pageant," (Interviews with Emily General and Bill Smith, 1976). Woodland Cultural Centre.

<sup>127</sup> "Savage or chieftain? Six Nations reclaims its history," The CBC Digital Archives Website, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation., [http://archives.cbc.ca/society/religion\\_spirituality/clips/15942/](http://archives.cbc.ca/society/religion_spirituality/clips/15942/).

<sup>128</sup> Krieg, "Forest theatre," 6. Smith was also a member of the Six Nations Council, the Ohsweken Fair Board, the Plowmen, and other organizations. His wife Josephine Anthony Smith also worked on the Pageant Committee, as well as being a member of the Sour Springs Women's Institute and Sour Springs Women's Committee. "William Smith," *The Expositor*, 4 October 1994.

<sup>129</sup> "Forest theatre," 7.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> "A Salute to the Paper Doll" *The Hamilton Spectator*, 3 August 2013, <http://m.thespec.com/whatson-story/3922503-a-salute-to-the-paper-doll/>; Lauren Baron, "Six Nations play honours life of Emily C. General." BrantNews.com, 1 August 2013.

<sup>132</sup> White, "School named for Six Nations teacher Emily General." <http://www.brantnews.com/>

ers dealt with the process of cultural negotiation through their attendance at reserve schools, and then as teachers in Western schools on the reserve, General remained the most attached to Haudenosaunee traditions, especially when it came to politics. She was a strong supporter of the hereditary government that had been ousted in 1924, and she served as president of the Indian Defense League for a time.<sup>133</sup> In March 1959, when the Warriors and other Longhouse political activists attempted to retake the Council House



Figure 8. Emily General at the 1964 Six Nations Reserve Forest Theatre Pageant. Wilma Jamieson Collection, Woodland Cultural Centre Museum.

in what Andrea Catapano suggests is the second phase of the assertion of sovereignty and status of Six Nations, General was involved in attempting to “hold the fort.”<sup>134</sup> She was a spokeswoman for the Confederacy Council of the Six Nations of the Grand River throughout much of this period.<sup>135</sup> As well as these political

activities, General worked a large farm with her brother Sylvanus and his wife Josephine, raising ducks, pigs and corn, and also worked delivering newspapers.<sup>136</sup> Two years before her death, a new school was built on the reserve, and was named after her. Emily General is celebrated by her community as an educator and activist, a woman who fought for her people. As noted in the *Brantford Expositor*, “she installed in [her students] knowledge of native

culture and traditions, and pride in that heritage.”<sup>137</sup> Throughout her life, General clearly resisted the efforts of the colonial government to assimilate her people, and worked expressly to promote and preserve Haudenosaunee history and culture, as well as their political rights.

whatson-story/4111522-six-nations-play-honours-life-of-emily-c-general/.

<sup>133</sup> Little to no research has been done on the IDL, and what has been done tends to focus on the men, especially Clinton Rickard. See “The Indian Defense League of America.” Emily General’s obituary states that she was past president. “General, Emily C. - “Gaw hen dena.”

<sup>134</sup> Edmund Wilson, *Apologies to the Iroquois* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1960), 263. Lucille Catapano, “The Rising of the Ongwehònwe: Sovereignty, Identity, and Representation on the Six Nations Reserve” (Ph.D. thesis, Stony Brook University, 2007), 333.

<sup>135</sup> “General, Emily C. - “Gaw hen dena.”

<sup>136</sup> White, “School named for Six Nations teacher Emily General.”; Wilson, *Apologies to the Iroquois*: 256.

<sup>137</sup> “The lessons of Emily General,” *The Expositor*, 27 April 1991.

## Conclusion

The fact that Six Nations women were employed to teach in day schools and the residential school on the largest reserve in Canada in the early decades of the twentieth century suggests several possible conclusions. The community's control over education led to a greater pride in their history and better knowledge of their culture. Although much culture was lost during the process of Western education, in comparison to other Indigenous communities in Canada, much remained and was passed down by these teachers in various ways. Traditions and language have more recently been revived because they have not completely disappeared.

The Six Nations benefitted from having teachers from within their own community at day schools controlled by their own school board, even though they only made up half of the members. It is likely that parents were more willing to send their children to school when the Six Nations School Board had hired a Six Nations woman to teach the class, and especially if she promoted Haudenosaunee culture and history. By mid-century, here were no longer outsiders coming to teach their children, and the power of the board meant that the children were taught the curriculum the board chose. In some ways, the Mohawk Institute played an important role in the community by training teachers and other community leaders. These women, many of whom taught for decades, educated several generations of children,

and contributed to the relative success of the reserve community in the twentieth century. The teachers, school system, and community in general adopted parts of Western traditions and values that they found useful and necessary in order to deal with the Anglo-Canadian community around them, but more importantly, they also maintained and preserved their languages, culture and history.

Each of these three women, Susan Hardie, Julia Jamieson and Emily General, cared deeply about the rising generation of children. They believed children should be taught the Western curriculum so that they could succeed in a new and changing society, but also that they be taught about their own traditional culture, history, and language. These women negotiated their own complicated cultural identities. They were willing to teach Six Nations children in a federally-run residential school, to teach both the Mohawk language and also the Ontario provincial curriculum, and to teach Sunday school while also directing a pageant about the founding of the Confederacy. They worked to improve the education system, to better their community, and to stand up and fight for the rights of their people. Although these three women likely did not always agree with each other's goals, they shared an objective of instilling pride in their community through educating the young. Due to the complexities of the Haudenosaunee community at Grand River, it was possible for these three women, and many other women teachers, to achieve their goals.