zation, following the great natural channels, and all would ultimately meet at the foot of Lake Erie.

For the time being the French had the best opportunity and the Dutch the next, while the English were apparently third in the race.

CHAPTER III.

FROM 1620 TO 1655.

The French Traders — Dutch Progress — The Jesuits — De la Roche Daillon — The Company of a Hundred Partners — Capture and Restoration of New France — Chaumonot and Breboeuf — Hunting Buffalo — Destruction of the Kahquahs and Eries — Seneca Tradition — French Account — Norman Hatchets — Stoned-up Springs.

DURING the first twenty years little occurred directly affecting the history of Erie county, though events were constantly happening which aided in shaping its destinies. We learn from casual remarks of Catholic writers that the French traders traversed all this region in their search for furs, and even urged their light bateaux still farther up the lakes.

In 1623 permanent Duch emigration, as distinguished from mere fur-trading expeditions, first began upon the Hudson. The colony was named New Netherlands, and the first governor was sent thither by the Batavian Republic.

In 1625 a few Jesuits arrived on the banks of the St. Lawrence, the advance guard of a host of representatives of that remarkable order, which was in time to crowd out almost all other Catholic missionaries from Canada and the whole lake region, and substantially monopolize the ground themselves.

In 1626 Father De la Roche Daillon, a Recollect missionary, visited the Neuter Nation, and passed the winter preaching the gospel among them.

In 1627 Cardinal Richelieu organized the company of New France, otherwise known as the Company of a Hundred Partners. The three chief objects of this association were to extend the fur trade, to convert the Indians to Christianity, and to discover a new route to China by way of the great lakes of North America. The company actually succeeded in extending the fur trade, but not in going to China by way of Lake Erie, and not to any great extent in converting the Indians.

By the terms of their charter they were to transport six thousand emigrants to Canada and to furnish them with an ample supply of both

priests and artisans. Champlain was made governor. His first two years' experience was bitter in the extreme. The British men-of-war captured his supplies by sea, the Iroquois warriors tomahawked his hunters by land, and in 1629 an English fleet sailed up the St. Lawrence and captured Quebec. Soon afterward however, peace was concluded, New France was restored to King Louis and Champlain resumed his gubernatorial powers.

In 1628, Charles I., of England, granted a charter for the government of the province of Massachusetts Bay. It included the territory between latitude 40° 2′ and 44° 15′ north, extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, making a colony a hundred and fifty-four miles wide and four thousand miles long. The county of Erie was included within its limits, as was the rest of Western New York.

The Jesuit missionaries, fired with unbounded zeal and unsurpassed valor, traversed the wilderness, holding up the cross before the bewildered pagans. They naturally had much better success with the Hurons than with the Iroquois, whom Champlain had wantonly and foolishly attacked in order to please the Hurons and who afterwards remained the almost unvarying enemies of the French.

The Jesuits soon had flourishing stations as far west as Lake Huron. One of these was Ste. Marie, near the eastern extremity of that lake, and it was from Ste. Marie that Fathers Bréboeuf and Chaumonot set forth in November 1840, to visit the Neuter Nation. They returned the next spring, having visited eighteen Kahquah villages, but having met with very little encouragement among them. They reported the Neuter Indians to be stronger and finer-looking than other savages with whom they were acquainted.

In 1641, Father L'Allemant wrote to the Jesuit provincial in France, describing the expedition of Bréboeuf and Chaumonot, and one of his expressions goes far to settle the question whether the buffalo ever inhabited this part of the country. He says of the Neuter Nation, repeating the information just obtained from the two missionaries: "They are much employed in hunting deer, *buffalo*, wild-cats, wolves, beaver and other animals." There is no mention of the missionaries crossing the Niagara, and perhaps they did not, but the presence of buffalo in the Canadian peninsula increases the likelihood of their sometimes visiting the banks of Buffalo creek.

Down to this time the Kahquahs had succeeded in maintaining their neutrality between the fierce beligerents on either side, though the Jesuit missionaries reported them as being more friendly to the Iroquois than to the Hurons. What cause of quarrel, if any, arose between the peaceful possessors of Erie county and their whilom friends, the powerful confederates to the eastward, is entirely unknown, but sometime during the next fifteen years the Iroquois fell upon both the Kahquahs and the Eries and exterminated them as a nation, from the face of the earth.

The precise years in which these events occurred are uncertain, nor is it known whether the Kahquahs or the Eries first felt the deadly anger of the Five Nations. French accounts favor the view that the Neuter Nation were first destroyed, while according to Seneca tradition the Kahquahs still dwelt here when the Iroquois annihilated the Eries. That tradition runs somewhat as follows:—

The Eries had been jealous of the Iroquois from the time the latter formed their confederacy. About the time under consideration the Eries challenged their rivals to a grand game of ball, a hundred men on a side, for a heavy stake of furs and wampum. For two successive years the challenge was declined, but when it was again repeated it was accepted by the confederates, and their chosen hundred met their opponents near the site of the city of Buffalo.

They defeated the Eries in ball playing, and then the latter proposed a foot-race between ten of the fleetest young men on each side. Again the Iroquois were victorious. Then the Kahquahs, who resided near Eighteen-Mile creek, invited the contestants to their home. While there the chief of the Eries proposed a wrestling match between ten champions on each side, the victor in each match to have the privilege of knocking out his adversary's brains with his tomahawk. This challenge, too, was accepted, though, as the veracious Iroquois historians assert, with no intention of claiming the forfeit if successful.

In the first bout the Iroquois wrestler threw his antagonist, but declined to play the part of executioner. The chief of the Eries, infuriated by his champion's defeat, himself struck the unfortunate wrestler dead, as he lay supine where the victor had flung him. Another and another of the Eries was in the same way conquered by the Iroquois, and in the same way dispatched by his wrathful chief. By this time the Eries were in a state of terrific excitement, and the leader of the confederates, fearing an outbreak, ordered his followers to take up their march toward home, which they did with no further collision.

But the jealousy and hatred of the Eries was still more inflamed by defeat, and they soon laid a plan to surprise, and if possible destroy, the Iroquois. A Seneca woman, who had married among the Eries but was then a widow, fled to her own people and gave notice of the attack. Runners were at once sent out, and all the Iroquois were assembled and led forth to meet the invaders.

The two bodies met near Honeoye Lake, half-way between Canandaigua and the Genesee. After a terrible conflict the Eries were totally defeated, the flying remnants pursued to their homes by the victorious confederates, and the whole nation almost completely destroyed. It was five months before the Iroquois warriors returned from the deadly pursuit.

Afterwards a powerful party of the descendants of the Eries came from the far west to attack the Iroquois, but were utterly defeated and

slain to a man, near the site of Buffalo, their bodies burned, and the ashes buried in a mound, lately visible, near the old Indian church on the Buffalo Creek reservation.

Such is the tradition. It is a very nice story—for the Iroquois. According to their account their opponents were the aggressors throughout, the young men of the Five Nations were invariably victorious in the athletic games, and nothing but self-preservation induced them to destroy their enemies.

Nothing, of course, can be learned from such a story regarding the merits of the war. It does, however, tend to show that the two great battles between the combatants were fought near the territory of the Senecas, and that some at least of the Kahquahs were still living at the mouth of Eighteen-Mile creek at the time of the destruction of the Eries, but it is not very reliable even on these points.

On the other hand, scattered French accounts go to show that the Kahquahs were destroyed first; that they joined the Iroquois in warfare against the Hurons, but were unable to avert their own fate; that collisions occurred between them and their allies of the Five Nations in 1647 and that open war broke out in 1650, resulting in the speedy destruction of the Kahquahs. Also that the Iroquois then swooped down upon the Eries and exterminated them about the year 1653. Some accounts make the destruction of the Neuter Nation as early as 1642.

Amid these conflicting statements it is only certain that between 1640 and 1655 the fierce confederates of Central New York "put out the fires" of the Kahquahs and the Eries. It is said that a few of the former tribe were absorbed into the community of their conquerors, and it is quite likely that some of both nations escaped to the westward, and, wandering there, inspired the tribes of that region with their own fear and hatred of the terrible Iroquois.

It is highly probable that the numerous iron hatchets which have been picked up in various parts of the county belonged to the unfortunate Kahquahs. They are undoubtedly of French manufacture, and similar instruments are used in Normandy to this day. Hundreds of them have been found in the valley of Cazenove creek and on the adjacent hills, a mile or two south of East Aurora village. Many more have been found in Hamburg, Boston and other parts of the county.

They are all made on substantially the same pattern, the blade being three or four inches wide on the edge, running back and narrowing slightly for about six inches, when the eye is formed by beating the bit out thin, rolling it over and welding it. Each is marked with the same device, namely, three small circles something less than an inch in diameter, each divided into compartments like a wheel with four spokes.

The Kahquahs were the only Indians who resided in Erie county while the French controlled the trade of this region, as the Senecas did

not make their residence here until after Sullivan destroyed their towns on the Genesee during the American Revolution. These hatchets would be convenient articles to trade for furs, and were doubtless used for that purpose. It is extremely improbable that any Indians would have thrown away such valuable instruments in the numbers which have since been found, except from compulsion, and the disaster which befell the Kahquahs at the hands of the Iroquois readily accounts for the abandonment of these weapons.

Some copper instruments have also been found, doubtless of similar origin.

CHAPTER IV.

THE IROQUOIS.

Their System of Clans — Its Importance — Its Probable Origin — The Grand Council — Sachems and War-chiefs — Method of Descent — Choice of Sachems — Religion — Natural Attributes — Family Relations.

FROM the destruction of the unfortunate Kahquahs down to the last great sale of land by the Iroquois to the Holland Land Company, those confederates were the actual possessors of the territory of Erie county, and a few years before making that sale the largest nation of the confederacy made their principal residence within the county. Within its borders, too, are still to be seen the largest united body of their descendants.

For all these two hundred and thirty years the Iroquois have been closely identified with the history of Erie county, and the beginning of this community of record forms a proper point at which to introduce an account of the interior structure of that remarkable confederacy, at which we have before taken but an outside glance.

It should be said here that the name "Iroquois" was never applied by the confederates to themselves. It was first used by the French, and its meaning is veiled in obscurity.* The men of the Five Nations (afterwards the Six Nations) called themselves "Hedonosaunee," which means literally, "They form a cabin;" describing in this expressive manner the close union existing among them. The Indian name just quoted is more liberally and more commonly rendered "The People of the Long House;"

*The writer has seen an old map which showed a tribe of Indians called "Couis," living near the site of Kingston, in the province of Ontario, while another ancient map designated the territory then occupied by the Iroquois as belonging to the "Hiro Couis." This is very plainly the derivation of "Iroquois," but what is the meaning of "Hiro" or "Couis," the writer saith not.