

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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# The Haudenosaunee Confederacy

Long before the US Constitution was drafted,  
Democracy had already been established  
In the land now known as North America.  
Iroquois was the name given by French settlers,  
But they already had a name.  
They called themselves the Haudenosaunee—made up of five Indigenous nations.  
This confederacy was formed by the  
Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca—  
And then was the Tuscarora joining later.  
They all came together to form something major.  
Some historians believe the confederacy  
Formed as early as 12th century BCE.  
Haudenosaunee means “people of the longhouse,”  
And this group was brought together under the Great Law of Peace,  
The constitution of the confederacy.  
According to legend, two Indigenous leaders, The Great Peacemaker and Hiawatha,  
Met at a time when tensions were high  
Between nations to form the confederacy.  
Each nation remained independent but had a say.  
And decisions the confederacy made  
Were made by the Great Council of 50 Sachems,  
Which was made up of chiefs from each nation.  
They made decisions about declaring war, signing treaties,  
And also organizing the confederacy.  
Though all of the chiefs were men,  
A lot of power was held by women.  
They selected chiefs, owned property,

Could divorce their husbands,  
And participated in political decisions;  
Men and women working together, same mission.  
When the founding fathers set out to unite  
The American colonies, they needed more real-life  
Examples of the type of government they wanted to establish.  
One was close by and already had it.  
The Haudenosaunee Confederacy served as a model for a centralized  
Government that united colonies, while allowing each  
To maintain a level of independence. See,  
Benjamin Franklin referenced this  
In his 1754 Albany Plan of Union  
And invited members of the Great Council to address  
The Continental Congress in 1776.  
This key concept in the US Constitution,  
Known as federalism, was influenced by the oldest democratic system  
In North America. The Haudenosaunee Confederacy  
Is a model of peace and cooperation that was not extended back  
To the Indigenous tribes who inspired that.

The Haudenosaunee Confederacy  
Was formed for democracy and peace.  
They focused on independence, treaties, and solutions.  
It also influenced the US Constitution.  
The Haudenosaunee...