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to the central British Columbia coast every summer to fish and enjoy the spectacular scenery.

Christopher B. Wooley
North Slope Borough
Barrow, Alaska

The Huron: Great Lakes. By Nancy Bonvillain. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1989. 112 pages. \$17.95 Paper.

In an effort to promote "a greater comprehension of the issues and conflicts involving American Indians today," the *Indians of North America* series, of which this book is a part, seeks to have scholars portray for young adults the "significant place that American Indians have had in our society." In this volume, Nancy Bonvillain, who has written a grammar and dictionary of the Mohawk language and has explored the role of Christian missionaries in Iroquoian history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, describes the history and culture of the Wendat, or Huron, people who originated in southern Ontario. They are the best-described North American native people from the first half of the seventeenth century; their descendants continue to live in Quebec and Oklahoma.

The book begins with a general statement about Indian-white relations by the general editor, Frank W. Porter III. I presume that this essay is intended to serve as an introduction for all of the volumes in this series. Porter stresses conflict for control of power, land, and resources and the tenacious struggle of Native American groups to retain their freedom and identity as perennial issues in the relations between American Indians and Euro-Americans. He hopes that as all Americans acquire a deeper appreciation of the spiritual, cultural, and intellectual riches of Indians, the just resolution of these conflicts will become easier. I wish I felt equally confident that ideals will triumph over material interests.

I also find Porter's account of relations between North American Indians and the United States a curious beginning for a book about native people who originated in what is now Canada and many of whom continue to live there. The current treatment of native people in Canada is certainly no better than it is in the

United States, but the history of the government policies that have reduced Indian allies to outcasts in Canada is quite different from what happened south of the border and certainly deserves coverage in the introduction to a book on the Huron.

Bonvillain begins with the Wendat creation myth and a review of Wendat history prior to European contact, which stresses the rapid development of their culture following the introduction of cultigens, which is now dated about A.D. 500. This is followed by a brief sketch of the Wendat way of life when the tribe was first contacted by Europeans, a description of their role in the fur trade at the start of the seventeenth century, and an account of the later Jesuit missions and the dispersal of the Wendat by the Iroquois in 1649. A fifth chapter traces the history of the Wendat refugees who fled to Quebec from 1650 to modern times, while the following one chronicles the Wendat who amalgamated with the Petun and continue as the Wyandot of Oklahoma. A final chapter surveys the current state of these two groups as they rediscover aspects of their traditional culture and seek to regain more control over the political and economic levers that shape their lives.

A notable feature of this book is its excellent reproduction of a collection of engravings and photographs that illustrate Wendat life from prior to European contact to the present. Of particular interest are the illustrations reproduced from the Bressani map of 1657, which are far more accurate than the better-known engravings from the works of Champlain. There is a visually stunning eight-page color picture essay illustrating Huron and Wyandot decorated clothing and handicrafts from the late seventeenth century to 1912. Readers should note, however, that the "fortified house" on page 60 is in fact the French trading post at Quebec and that the "Huron" signature on page 78 is that of the celebrated Huron chief Kondiaronk (Le Rat).

Bonvillain's account of Wendat history and culture is clearly written and informative. Yet the brevity of these books does not provide an opportunity to introduce readers to some of the livelier controversies about the nature of Huron history and culture, and this can sometimes be misleading. Bonvillain also has had to summarize a vast body of material. As a result, a moderate amount of erroneous and misleading material appears in her text. I know of no evidence that the Huron traded significant amounts of corn to the Petun and Neutral or the skins of animals

they hunted to other tribes (pp. 25–27); that all Wendat farmland was “owned” by individual clans rather than by extended families (p. 27); that beaver skins were actively sought by European traders in the first half of the sixteenth century (p. 41); that any Huron converts lived on a regular basis at the Jesuit mission of Sainte Marie (p. 56); or that there was smallpox on Gahoendoe in 1649–50 (p. 61). Huron women planted their corn in hills, not holes (p. 22), and the Iroquois began to negotiate with the Huron at Quebec to have them join them in 1653, not three years later (p. 63).

More importantly, Bonvillain suggests that the French who described Huron society had to converse with the Indians through interpreters (p. 21). This was true for Champlain but certainly not for the Jesuit missionaries (cf. p. 51), some of whom acquired an excellent command of the Huron language. John Steckley’s study of the ethnosemantic content of the numerous manuscript dictionaries, grammars, and Huron compositions prepared by these missionaries is currently revolutionizing our understanding of Wendat culture. Unfortunately, no use has been made of his findings in this book.

Bonvillain’s account of Wendat culture also appears to be somewhat bowdlerized. I would not have thought that young adults needed to be spared any mention of the experimental aspects of Wendat courtship and marriage, of the sexual aspects of curing rituals, and of the religious aspects of prisoner sacrifice. The selective elimination of this material makes Wendat culture appear unduly conformable to rather old-fashioned Euro-American middle-class values.

The historical sections do not take account of important recent work. Christine Dodd has demonstrated from the archeological record that the size of Wendat longhouses began to decline in the late prehistoric period and that by the seventeenth century the average longhouse sheltered no more than six families; this account corresponds exactly with Jesuit census data from 1639. I thought that in *The Children of Aataentsic* (1976) I had convincingly disposed of Hunt’s thesis that in the 1640s the Iroquois were fighting to gain control of Huron trade routes. I maintained that instead they were seeking to plunder furs and European trade goods and to gain control of hunting territories. Since then still other Iroquoianists have proposed that the main stimulus for the Iroquois wars was their desire to replace population lost in the

epidemics that had begun among them in 1633. Bonvillain does not draw readers' attention to these important debates. She also errs seriously in suggesting that around 1750 "more Huron [at Quebec] gave up their traditional beliefs and converted to Catholicism" (p. 76). Adherence to Roman Catholicism had been a strict Jesuit requirement for all Wendat who settled at Quebec in 1650, and the early Huron settlers were celebrated for their Christian devotion. Their piety was reinforced by the increased economic dependence on the Jesuits that followed the loss of over 35 Huron men at the Battle of the Long Sault in 1660. Cultural changes in the eighteenth century bore little relation to changing religious views.

The bibliography, while brief, contains some works that few general readers are likely to consult. Under these circumstances, it is extraordinary that it does not contain Elisabeth Tooker's seminal study of seventeenth-century Huron culture, any of James Wright's books on Ontario Iroquoian prehistory, Conrad Heidenreich's important monograph on Huron geography and ecology, and a number of important historical studies. Robert Kelly is the author of *Cornplanters of the Eastern Woodlands*.

I would like to end by citing two further examples of the tenacity and resilience of Wendat culture. Although they have long had no corporate existence, the Wyandot who live in the Detroit area continue to hold a picnic on Grosse Isle each summer. Since Bonvillain's book was published, Georges Sioui, a member of an extraordinarily talented and creative Wendake (Lorette) family, has published *Pour une autohistoire amérindienne*. This book contains the most eloquent exposition I have ever read of the relevance of North American Indian values for the whole of humanity. Sioui and his fellow Wendat continue, as did their seventeenth- and eighteenth-century ancestors, to build bridges of understanding between disparate peoples.

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The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest: Lessons for Survival.
By Peter Douglas Elias. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988. 262 pages. \$34.95 (Canadian) Cloth.