

## **Mohawk-Wyandot Ancestry of Catharine the Wife of Lt. John Young: Genealogical Evidence**

By

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It is known that Lt. John Young was married more than once. The objective of the present work is to provide evidence to determine the identities of his wives; and particularly the ethnic and specific ancestry of his first wife Catharine, the mother of all his children. The study focuses on genealogical sources of evidence, and attempts to lay out all the relevant data to permit the reader to come to their own conclusions (which may differ from those of the present author). Other research explores the genetic data that can shed light of the questions posed here. [Click here](#) to see this document.

Lt. John Young (1742-1812), who served in the Six Nations Indian Department during the American Revolutionary War, was married at least twice. His first wife Catharine's given name appears in the 1770 baptismal record of their son Daniel at Trinity Lutheran Church, Stone Arabia, NY. There is no indication of her surname or ethnic affiliation. Similarly there is only bare bones information in any other record from the Mohawk Valley, never recording the forename of Catharine, just "John Young's wife"; for example in relation to the arrest and detainment of Catharine and family in 1777 after John Young left to join the British forces on the Niagara frontier. This will be a continuing and vexing problem. The contemporary records in Ontario also typically do not name Catharine directly. An exception is the Census of Niagara of 1 December 1783 where Lt. John Young was listed with his four children, and wife Catharine Young (age 36 so born about 1747). On 15 October 1796 Young petitioned for land for himself, his four children, and "my wife, deceased, since the Peace" (25 December 1784) – no name given. Young stated that he was submitting the claim for his wife who came with him from the Colonies (as was required for a spousal Loyalist grant). It can be stated with confidence that Catharine died between December 1784 and October 1796.

Perhaps the purchase of a "long silk gown" for a very large price tag of 9 pounds by the widow Priscilla Nelles on 5 February 1793 is a strong hint as to the death date of Catharine. This is likely a wedding dress, and the "green gown" willed 22 April 1817 by Priscilla Young to her step-son Abraham Young's daughter Helen (Annals of the Forty, Vol. 6, pp. 70-71). In his will dated 15 April 1805 John Young mentioned his, "beloved wife Priscilla". Priscilla (Ramsay) Nelles was an Indian captive (since age 6) and widow of Captain Hendrick William Nelles, Young's fellow Indian Department officer, friend, and neighbor who died in 1791. Thus John Young had at least two wives, with no substantive evidence of any other wife.

As stated, the primary goal of this article is to clearly and as unequivocally as possible, identify the ancestry of Catharine, the mother of John Young's four children. Priscilla and any potential previous wife subsequent to Catharine can be ruled out as being mother

to any of Young's children. All four children named in the Census of Niagara, are also named in John Young's will (and none other).

Please note that many of the reference details to the above and later materials can be found in the biography of John Young by [clicking here](#). However some key references will be given later for those records and sources not specifically noted in the biography, or in the author's work pertaining to Six Nations records and sources (David K. Faux, "Understanding First Nations Genealogical Records: Sources and Case Studies", Ontario Genealogical Society: Toronto, 2002).

### **Evidence Relative to the General Racial – Ethnic Ancestry of Catharine -**

What follows is a selection of some of the genealogical records that stand as evidence that Catharine was of Six Nations Native American ancestry.

#### **A) Young Family – General Association with the Six Nations Before and During the Revolution:**

Reference to the above noted biography of John Young illustrates that the family resided on the Van Horne Patent (where the Canajoharie Mohawk Upper Village was situated) such that John would have grown up with Mohawk neighbours. Both he and his Uncle Frederick (who spoke Mohawk well enough to act as an interpreter for a land transaction), and doubtless his father Adam (who was an Indian trader), were fluent in one or more Indian languages.

When the Revolution began in 1777, John and his Uncle Frederick joined the British at Niagara. In the same year Frederick was commissioned as a lieutenant, and in 1778 his nephew John became an officer in the Six Nations Indian Department. One might assume that these appointments were to some degree based on a familiarity with Indian languages and customs. Certainly being married to a Six Nations woman could probably open the door to an appointment as a commissioned officer. There were, however, many Indian Department officers, such as Captains Henry William Nelles and his son Robert, who did not have kinship ties to Native Americans.

#### **B) Young Family – Specific Association with the Six Nations After the Revolution:**

##### **1) Land Records:**

##### **a) 1836 Survey Pertaining to the Estate of Abraham Young –**

After the death of their father Abraham Young (the eldest son of Lt. John Young and Catharine) in 1815, over a number of years his children sold off their respective shares to their uncle Joseph Young (below), or to Andrew Alexander Van Every. The matter involved extensive litigation, and is documented in the Indian Affairs Papers. One key document is the survey map of the Young Tract by Samuel Ryckman dated 13 December

1836. On the back of the map is a list of all of Abraham's children, and rough notations as to which children sold their interest to their uncle Joseph Young – framed by a line or bracket. Ryckman wrote the term “**Six Nations Indians**” to the right of the list of names (RG10, Vol.3, pp. 10-11).

b) 1838 Deed – Six Nations in Council to Joseph Young -

On 25 April 1838 the Six Nations Chiefs in Council granted land to Joseph Young (born 1782), of Young's Tract on the Grand River, the youngest son of Lt. John and Catharine. The original deed is among family records, and a copy is registered in the National Archives of Canada, Indian Affairs Papers, RG10 Series (Vol. 113, p.512). In the deed they specified that Joseph was to have a parcel of land adjoining one already in the *possession of the said Joseph Young one of our people*. The term "one of our people" clearly indicates that the chiefs recognized Joseph as a member of the Six Nations, born of a mother who was a member of one of the Six Nations. There are numerous other such references such that the meaning is absolutely clear. On 1 March 1809 the Chiefs in Council at Onondaga discussed, *A tract of land that was granted to John Dochstader, who also had a family of our nation, noting his family who were our people*, and specifically the *farm in the possession of his daughter of the Onondagas and Grand son of the Cayugas* (Johnston, 1964, p. 111). On 22 March 1817, the Mohawk Chiefs assigned lands to Abraham Kennedy Smith (whose mother was Mary Hill, a Mohawk). The Chiefs indicated that *this was our particular choice one of our own People & not have any more strangers occupy any more of our People's Farms* without the permission of the Chiefs in Council (RG10, Vol. 34, p.19745).

In order to receive special consideration it was key to being perceived by the Council as having the all important stamp of being “one of our people”. Hannah Dochstader, *an orphan daughter of a deceased Indian chief of the Six Nations Indians* petitioned for land 6 October 1838 (RG10, Vol. 155, p. 89861). In a related matter expressed in a letter dated 19 June 1845, Hannah (who resided directly opposite the Young Tract), was *informed by Mr. Wm. Cook and my son from an interview they had with the Chiefs of the 6 Nations Indians yesterday that I am still recognized by them as one of their people* (RG10, Vol. 814, p.612).

2) Oral Traditions of the Elders of the Six Nations:

Elliott Moses was a chief of the Delawares (his ancestry also included Lower Cayuga) who resided on the southern block of the Six Nations Reserve, and was perhaps the most knowledgeable individual on the Reserve in the 1960s concerning the history and traditions of Six Nations and Delawares. On 23 June 1967, while on a field trip with Dorothy Hutton a local historian of Haldimand County, he pointed to the house on the hill where Warner H. Nelles (see below), the son of Warner Nelles and Elizabeth Young (daughter of John and Catharine Young) was born. Hutton reported that Moses said that, *his grandfather or before knew that there was some or a bit of Indian blood in the Nelles' who lived on the other side of the River on the hill*. Probably Moses' grandfather or great grandfather knew, perhaps first hand, of the installation of Warner H. Nelles to the role of

sachem of the Six Nations (see later). Hutton read this quote from her files during a visit with the author on 4 September 1979. Hence even up to modern times the link between the Young – Nelles family and the Six Nations was still recognized by elders on the Reserve. This adds further evidence that Catharine was a Native American – since the Young connection is the only known Indian ancestry in the Warner Nelles line (Records of Mary Nelles, Caledonia, Ontario).

**Conclusion:** Catharine was a member of the Six Nations.

### **Evidence of the Specific Ancestry of Catharine -**

#### **1) Young Family Links to Mohawk Lands, Ft. Hunter, New York State - During the Revolution:**

Two uncles of Lt. John Young, although residing in the Canajoharie District prior to the beginning of the Revolution in 1776, are documented as having been residents of Mohawk property in the Mohawk Flats area of Ft. Hunter New York in 1780. This location was on the west side of Schoharie Creek, some thirty miles to the east of their permanent residences near what is today Ft. Plain and Canajoharie. Since some Mohawk families had not left for Canada at this time, clearly John Young's uncles had permission to occupy the homes of those Mohawks who had vacated their lands to join the British.

Andrew Young, brother of John's father Adam Young, and Theobald Schremling, brother of John Young's mother (who was married to Adam Young's sister – a double uncle to John Young), resided among the few remaining Mohawks prior to the raid of Sir John Johnson on 18 October 1780. The area known as the Mohawk Flats, between Schoharie Creek and Auriesville, was owned in whole or in part by the Hill family, prominent Mohawks. Aurie's Creek was named after Aurie Kanaghowende "of the Hill". His great granddaughter, Mary Hill Kateriunigh, was the wealthiest individual (male or female) at Ft. Hunter prior to the Revolution. Her claim for wartime losses included 112 acres of *rich flat land commonly called the Mohawk Flats* (National Archives, Colonial Office Vol. 42, Q Series, p.242). This claim was made at Lachine, Quebec 11 April 1784. Her brothers Aaron Hill Kanonraron and David Hill Karonghyontye each owned 100 acres of land, but submitted their claims at Niagara (Colonial Office Records, Q Series, Vol. 24, pt. 2). This family was by far the wealthiest at Ft. Hunter in terms of both land and material possessions. Numerous documents attest to their high degree of acculturation to Euro-American society.

During the above noted raid of Sir John Johnson and his Loyalist troops, after devastating the Caudahurity settlement to the south, they moved toward the Mohawk River and captured Peter Martin and Andrew Young (Simms, 1883, p.441), as well as the above Mary Hill Kateriunigh (Claus Papers, MG19, F1, Vo. 25, p.66). However, the troops failed to recognize Theobald Schremling as kin to the Young family, and he was killed outside his house, *the present residence of Richard Hudson* (Simms, 1845, p.423). According to an Atlas of the area dated 1853, R. Hudson was residing between Auriesville and the Schoharie Creek, closer to the latter, his house being near a hillside,

where three trails intersected. This home is one of very few located on the Mohawk Flats – there being considerably more houses in the uplands closer to Auriesville. Later maps, from the 1880s, show the property to be occupied by a B.R. Hudson.

It seems clear that the Hudson property on the Mohawk Flats (which had been occupied by Schremling in 1780), was originally (before 1777) owned by a prominent Mohawk family. It was on this property, in the care of Schremling, where the precious items from the Ft. Hunter Chapel were buried for safekeeping. These furnishings, *were put in a hogshead [barrel] by the Mohawks and buried on the side of the hill south of the Boyd Hudson place near Auriesville, N.Y.* (Reid, 1901, p.91). The silver items, a gift from Queen Anne in 1710, were recovered after the Revolution and brought to Canada. They were divided between the Mohawks of Tyendinaga near Deseronto, and the Chapel of the Mohawks on the Six Nations lands (now Brantford) on the Grand River.

Thus one can conclude that at the beginning of the Revolution there was a connection between the Mohawks, most likely the Hill family (who owned most of the Mohawk Flats) of Ft. Hunter, and the Young family of Canajoharie. A reasonable hypothesis that will be explored here is that Lt. John Young's wife from prior to the Revolution was a Mohawk who had family ties to the Ft. Hunter area, specifically the Mohawk Flats, and most likely to the Hill family.

## 2) Young Family Residence – After the Revolution

In January of 1784 John Young purchased the property that was to become the Young Tract (Seneca Township, Haldimand Count, Ontario) from the then owners, the Mississauga. He built a home on what later became the Haldimand Grant and Six Nations Reserve, and established a farm close to the Delaware and Lower Cayuga settlements. However he also had a second residence. In his 1788 claim for wartime losses, John Young explained to the examiners that in the spring of that year he was residing *70 miles back [from Niagara] at the Mohawk Village* (NA, A.O.13/16, p.462), and was unaware that he was expected to attend a hearing. It appears that perhaps because of family ties, Young maintained a second home within the community where most of the Mohawks resided.

## 3) The Patrick Campbell Diary –

On 14 February 1792, Patrick Campbell visited Young on the Grand River at his Seneca Township home. Campbell made the following recordings in his diary, published in 1793. This record is without a doubt the single most important document for the determination of Catharine Young's specific ancestry – assuming that the wife noted here is the same woman recorded in the 1783 Census of Niagara.

- 1) Here he stated, *we dined at the house of a half-pay officer, a Mr. Young, who had served last war as a lieutenant in the Indian department, married to a squaw, sister to one of the chiefs of the Mohawke nation who succeeded Captain David*

(H.H. Langton, *The Champlain Society*: Toronto: 1937, p. 180). He further added, *Here I for the first time played cards with a squaw.*

- 2) At another location in the diary Campbell speaks of Aaron Hill, *eldest son of the renowned chief, Captain David, whom everyone who knew him allowed to be the handsomest and most agreeable Indian they had every seen; he died about two years ago, and, what would be deemed hard by many, the son does not succeed to the honours and titles of the family, but they go in the female line to his aunt's son. Captain Brant did all he could to get the son, who seems worthy of his gallant and amiable father, to enjoy the titles, but it would not do; the ancient laws, customs, and manners of the nation could not be departed from* (Ibid, pp.166-7).
- 3) At a later point in the Diary, Campbell reflects on the advantages of mixing in various species. He said, *I do not remember to have seen an instance where a white man and an Indian woman did not produce handsome and well looking children: thousands of examples of this kind might be given. The famous and handsome Captain David, and the present Mr. Brant, afford striking instances of this kind, and of whom I have spoken already in another place* (Ibid, p.225).

There are three distinct parts here which offer different, and in each some very important, clues to the identity of Young's wife.

"Captain David" was David Hill Karonghyontye, Chief Astawenserontha who died in November 1790. He was succeeded by his maternal nephew Seth Hill Kanenkaregowa who became "Captain Seth", also known as Seth Hill Astawenserontha.

This finding, although not giving the forename of Young's wife provides very specific information about the family – kinship connections of the wife who was alive in 1792 (which was most probably Catharine). Thus Catharine was a sister to Captain Seth Hill; daughter of Mary Hill Kateriunigh, Clan Matron of the Bear Clan Astawenserontha family; and niece to Captain David Hill the brother of Mary Hill.

#### 4) Sundry Items Linking the Hill and Young Families:

John and Catharine Young named their youngest son Joseph Young, perhaps after Catharine's apparent youngest brother Joseph Hill Sr. born circa 1764. At Tyendinaga in 1813, a chief of the Mohawks was one "Young Hill" who appears to be a son of Joseph Hill Sr., son of Mary Hill Kateriunigh. His name appears repeatedly in sundry documents (NA, RG10, Indian Affairs Papers) with this spelling so it would appear that his forename was Young. This would suggest a link between the Hill and Young families circa **1790** (at which time presumably Young Hill was born).

Furthermore, in **1791** John Young (garege?) paid the merchant William Nelles to discharge the debt of "Aaron Hill Capt. David Son" – his wife's first cousin (Toronto Public Library, Baldwin Room, 5111 Nelles, William Accounts and Militia Papers, Account Book, William Nelles, 1792-1837).

On the Six Nations Band Lists for the distribution of interest payments beginning Spring **1873** among the Lower Mohawk was Number 361 Young Geo. (Rev.) Seth Clause accepted the money on Young's behalf as he did for Spring 1874. The Fall 1873 and 1874 payments were signed for by Hester Thomas (NA, RG10, Vol. 9565, C-7177). Hester was a kinswoman of Abraham Kennedy Smith (noted earlier and also in the documents relating to the Nelles obituary), and her testimony as to the Hill family ancestry is found in the Lyman Draper Papers (Wisconsin State Historical Society). Perhaps he turned 21 between the Fall of 1872 and Spring of 1873. If so, he would have been born about 1851. George Young then disappears from the records (before Spring 1875) – reason unknown, although death or emigration to the USA being perhaps most likely.

There are those with the surname Young, with Native status, residing on the Six Nations Reserve who may be related – but the specifics are unclear. For example, in the **1901** Census of Tuscarora Township, Division 3, residing on Concession 6, Lot 3 is an Elizabeth Young born September 1858, and mother of James Silversmith. The latter's "Racial or Tribal Origin" (via paternal lineage) is given as Cayuga, whereas that for his mother Elizabeth is Mohawk (T-6460). It is noteworthy that the last chief to hold the Astawenserontha Bear Clan title prior to the writing of Annemarie Shimony's well known work, *Conservatism among the Iroquois at the Six Nations Reserve* (1961) was Charles Silversmith (he died about 1956. Simon Bomberry had the title before him (p.105). This title (family) is that of the Hill and Young families as noted above – although at the moment it is not clear what if any relationship Charles Silversmith had to James Silversmith.

##### 5) Obituary of Warner Henry Nelles - 1896:

Col. Warner H. Nelles, was born 1799 on the Grand River Six Nations Indian Reserve, the son of Lt. John Young's daughter Elizabeth (Young) Nelles and husband Warner Nelles. Warner H. Nelles was the nephew of Joseph Young, who was mentioned as being "one of our people" in a deed from the Six Nations in 1838. Warner H. Nelles was also the first cousin of the author's ancestor Rachel (Young) Young.

The key segment from his obituary of 12 October 1896 reads:

*His popularity as a young man may be judged when, being only seventeen, he was made a chief of a tribe of Indians called the Beavers. Upon the death of the old chief, they saluted him as Tahanata, and the chain of wampum they threw over his head is still in the family. Up to the end of his death he was still recognized as chief, though the tribe is greatly scattered* (Haldimand County Museum, Dorothy Hutton Collection N-1-4).

Clearly Warner H. Nelles was eligible, if "standard rules" of Six Nation chiefly succession were followed here (as described in the above Campbell Diary entry), by descent from his maternal lineage, to inherit a title as a chief of the Six Nations, *There being no foundation for the common belief that white men are made chiefs of any kind*

*when Indians adopt such persons, or confer a name on those whom they wish to compliment* (Boyle, 1898, p. 176).

The importance of this document needs to be discussed in detail, clause by clause, to yield key information about the maternal ancestry of Catharine. The key point is that this sachemship was a title associated with the Astawenserontha Bear Clan Mohawks family. Nelles succeeded Francis Cotter Tahatonne, in 1817, the year Cotter and family permanently left for the Wyandot country near Detroit. Francis Cotter, whose father was a white man, stated that he was a chief of the Upper Mohawks formerly of Canajoharie, although his mother was listed among the Lower Mohawks formerly of Ft. Hunter.

After the Campbell Diary entry of 1792, the Nelles obituary is the second most important source for detailing the specific ancestry of Catharine Young. Both documents are examined in considerable depth later in the present study.

**Conclusion:** Catharine was likely an Upper Mohawk (formerly of Canajoharie) but whose ancestry via her mother was Lower Mohawk (formerly of Ft. Hunter). She may have followed her brother Seth in using the maternal surname Hill. Her family was of the Bear Clan, and held the Confederacy sachemship Astawenserontha. They were also connected to the Wyandot faction among the Upper Mohawks, with sachem inheritance rights to the chieftainship associated with the above Bear Clan League Sachem title.

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While the above conclusion is entirely consistent with the key sources of evidence, it is important to seek further confirmation. As well, it is good practice to establish any suitable alternate hypotheses and bring forth data that might call into question the primary conclusion.

**Primary Hypothesis: Catharine was the daughter of Mary Hill Kateriunigh -**

A reasonable conclusion at this point is that **if** John Young's wife in 1792 was the same wife as the woman in the 1783 Census of Niagara, **then** we have something of a "slam dunk". Perhaps many genealogists would not see a need to pursue the matter further. The evidence is very clear – she was a sister of Seth Hill. However because Campbell did not mention the forename of John Young's wife in his 1792 diary entry, a skeptic would ask, "was the wife mentioned here the Catharine who was enumerated at Niagara in 1783?"

One way to address this question would be to demonstrate that Seth, the undisputed inheritor of two of his uncle's "honours and titles", had a sister Catharine born about 1747 (approximate date of birth of Catharine from the 1783 Census of Niagara).

Seth's parents Johannes (Hans) "son of Seth" and Maria (Mary) "daughter of Aaron" were married 12 January 1747 at the Albany Reformed Dutch Church (see Sivertsen, 1996 for all references to church register details). Seth Hill was baptized 10 July 1748 at the Albany Reformed Dutch Church and a possible sister Margaret 18 May 1749 at the



Schenectady Reformed Dutch Church (however under ‘parent’s names’ only “Hans” was written). More definite was the birth of a son John, baptized 19 January 1752 at Ft. Hunter. A further check of all of the extant church records shows no Catharine born to a John and Mary (or variant names) until a Catharine, daughter of a Johannes and Mary was baptized 14 February 1758 at Ft. Hunter Anglican Church. Clearly she is too young to be the wife of Lt. John. A problem is that there were at least three couples with the names John and Mary (or variants) baptizing children at this time (including two John / Hans son of Seth and wife Mary) so it is difficult to be certain about the identity of children born to parents with these names – except those also noted in the Fonda Account Books.

It appears that until the death of Johannes (Hans, John) son of Seth circa 1768, that the family resided at Canajoharie, then moved back to Ft. Hunter before 1772 by which time Mary had remarried to Hendrick Sadoquiot and their names appear in the Fonda Account Books.

Jelles Fonda was a Mohawk Valley shopkeeper who served the Native community, particularly those of Ft. Hunter, prior to the American Revolution. He kept meticulous detailed records within the pages of his account books. In the early to mid 1770s Seth and John were recorded as Mary’s sons, and Sadoquiot’s step-sons (sometimes though noted as sons). There is a Margaret but in the two occasions when a relationship is noted, she is recorded as Sadoquiot’s “daughter”. These accounts also, for example, note uncles Aaron and David Vanderbarrak (Hill) and other Hill relatives such that detailed family histories can be assembled from these records alone (Jelles Fonda Accounts, Cornell University Library, Microfilm 903). However, no Catharine appears in these family accounts – but if Catharine was married and residing at Canajoharie she would not likely appear in these account books. All of the Mohawk names of the above Hills are found in other records (e.g., see the 1789 deed below; Faux 2002).

What is noteworthy is that there is no Catharine, born to John and Mary “at the right time”, in the extant baptismal records. However, as we will see, there is a likely baptismal entry for 1747, but the names were altered later by the minister. Also only a small percentage of the total baptismal records are available, in part because there was no Church of England minister present during the critical period between the latter part of 1746 and 1751. Some, but by no means all, of the Ft. Hunter Mohawks took their children to the Schoharie, Albany or Schenectady Reformed Dutch churches for baptism. Most Canajoharie Mohawks likely used the services of Rev. Jacob Ehle, but his records have not survived.

Thus the lack of a crystal clear baptismal record for Catharine circa 1747 is merely unfortunate, and reflects the same problem in relation to Mary Hill Kateriunigh prior to the arrival of Rev. Henry Barclay to Ft. Hunter in 1735 – no baptismal record.

The two most important documents that serve to illuminate the ancestry of Catharine are the **Campbell Diary of 1793** and the **Warner Henry Nelles Obituary of 1896.**

## **A. Campbell Diary of 1793 and Supporting Materials**

As noted above, the Campbell Diary is one of the two most pivotal sources in the search for the specific ancestry of Catharine. In addition to the earlier statement about Catharine's brother being a Mohawk Chief who succeeded Captain David, there are other statements in the Diary which offer clues as to who this brother was. Once this specific piece of information is properly researched we may have what is needed to address the goal of outlining Catharine's surname, Indian name, clan and family among the Mohawk Nation.

At another location in the diary Campbell noted that Aaron Hill, *eldest son of the renowned chief, Captain David, whom everyone who knew him allowed to be the handsomest and most agreeable Indian they had every seen; he died about two years ago, and, what would be deemed hard by many, the son does not succeed to the honours and titles of the family, but they go in the female line to his aunt's son. Captain Brant did all he could to get the son, who seems worthy of his gallant and amiable father, to enjoy the titles, but it would not do; the ancient laws, customs, and manners of the nation could not be departed from* (see Johnston, 1964, p.61, 65).

**Two questions emerge from the Campbell Diary entry above, and their answer may be the key to documenting the ancestry of Young's wife:**

- 1) **What "honours and titles" belonged to David Hill at the time of his death?**
- 2) **Which Mohawk chief or chiefs held David Hill's "honours and titles" in February 1792?**

### The Honours and Titles, and the Role, of David Hill -

The fact that the "honours and titles" of David Hill went to his sister's son suggests strongly that this sister was a Clan Matron, probably the eldest sister, and alive in November 1790 (the month and year David died).

In sundry sources (see Faux, 2002) it can be seen that David Hill's personal name was Karonghyontye, but that he also held the Bear Clan Confederacy sachemship of Astawenserontha – both Native names for Captain David Hill being included in a deed of sale to the Van Horne Patent in New York to Jelles Fonda, 6 July 1789. The other title that could be inherited was "Captain". Hence there were potentially two "honours and titles" for Hill's successor. It is unlikely that David Hill's "everyday" name would be included in this category.

### Some Known Family Relationships of David Hill -

The data detailing family relationships as seen in the Jelles Fonda Account Book records are confirmed in many other record sources. Among the most important of these is the Seth Newhouse Manuscript (see Faux, 2002) which lists the women's and warrior's

names associated with each of the 9 Mohawk families. Included are siblings Kanonraron (Aaron Hill), Oterouyanente (John Hill), Karonghyontye (David Hill); their sister Kateriunigh (Mary Hill); and the latter's son Kanenkaregowagh (Seth Hill). In addition Anequendahonji (Johannes Crine – Green) the maternal uncle of the first four, and Aronghyengtha (John Green Jr.) a first cousin, are all found in this same grouping of Bear Clan family names in the Seth Newhouse Manuscript, and all were from the Lower Mohawk (Ft. Hunter) Castle and in the early nineteenth Century the names all belonged to the Astawenserontha Bear Clan family (although apparently “loaned” to the Dehennahkarineh Family at some point). Other names, particularly those from the Upper Mohawk (Canajoharie) Castle, will soon come into view and will be placed in the context of the above family constellation.

#### Succession of Confederacy Sachemship Titles –

Among the Six Nations typically inheritance of a Confederacy sachem (principal chief) name such as Astawenserontha (Bear Clan) follows very strict rules involving maternal line succession (e.g., Newhouse, 1885; Parker, 1916). Thus a chief is succeeded by his brother or nephew, or maternal cousin but never by his son. It always went to a member of the former chief's Clan and Owachira (maternal line), assuming that there was an eligible candidate. Seth Newhouse, in his List of Chiefs, penciled “L.M.” (Lower Mohawks) for Astawenserontha, but “U.M.” (Upper Mohawks) in relation to the other two Bear Clan Chieftaincies (see Fenton, 1950, p.41).

#### Record Sources 1790 – 1795: Two Major Problems –

- 1) Unfortunately the most potentially useful documentary source is unavailable for the “critical years”. In other words, there do not appear to be any deeds or related items containing lists of chiefs from the date of David Hill's death in November 1790, until the Spring of 1795. It will be necessary to tap other sources which may be less clearcut.
- 2) Many chiefs who received new chiefly titles appear to have generally used their given Mohawk name – as did David Hill although he was the holder of one of the 9 Mohawk sachem titles. At some point, however, and for reasons unknown, these chiefs began to use their prestige titles in signing formal documents. Hence not using a title would not necessarily mean that the individual did not possess it.

It should be noted that the **term brother could refer to a full brother or a half brother, and less likely a step-brother.**

**Related Hypothesis: The Brother of Catharine Young was the First Astawenserontha Recorded after 1790 -**

Various record sources in the RG10 collection indicate that Seth Hill Kanenkaregowa succeeded to the titles of his uncle David Hill – although the timing of just when is unclear. Seth, baptized 10 July 1748 at the Albany Reformed Dutch Church, was the son of John “Widemouth” Seth's son and Mary Hill Katehriunigh (David's sister). He inherited the military title "Captain", the title “Chief” and one of the three Bear Clan (Tribe) titles among the Mohawks, Astawenserontha (the name translates as, "He Enters Wearing Rattles"). There is no evidence that Seth ever inherited the name Karonghyontye.

However the name as “Seth Hill Astawenserontha” does not appear in the records relating to the Six Nations until 18 February 1805 (NA, MG19, Claus Papers, C-1480, pp.93-5), **14 years after the death of his uncle**. It was not until 9 November 1806 that he is recorded as Seth Hill Astawenserontha, and William Claus the Indian Superintendent wrote “Capt Seth” beside the entry (NA, RG10, Vol. 27, p.15670) thereby ensuring that we have identified the correct Seth Hill. This affords a crystal clear snapshot at this point in time, Seth is then the official successor of his Uncle, Captain David Hill. However, this gap after the death of David Hill leaves open the door for a prior successor. In the few records that are available, Seth is recorded with his given name – Seth Kanenkaregowagh, which is his Mohawk name back to at least 1776 when he inscribed it in scrimshaw work on a powder horn. [Click here](#) to see a sketch of the entire design.

With the realization that there could have been a successor to David Hill that preceded Seth Hill, an outline of the content of the following sequence of documents can be instructive. Note, it is typically difficult to determine whether a Six Nations chief has signed, made his mark, or had someone make a transcription that may ignore this data:

- 1) 2 March 1795 in a deed to Phillip Stedman, a signator is “Kanenkaregowagh” (Claus Papers, F8)
- 2) 20 May 1796, in a deed to Robert Kerr, with “Seth Kaneaharegowagh” signing (NA, RG10, Vol. 103, pp.77-8)
- 3) 25 August 1802, among those signing a receipt for lands in Stedmans Township is “Kanharekowah” (AO, RG1, A-I-7, Box 7)
- 4) 8 February 1804, “Seth Hill” signs his name immediately below that of Joseph Brant (Claus Papers)
- 5) 18 February 1805 we find “Aghstawenserontha” (his mark), (Ibid., pp.93-4)
- 6) 22 August 1805, “Seth Kaneakaregowa” (his mark) appears (AO, UCLP, Petition of William Kennedy Smith, S20/64)
- 7) 22 July 1806 the name “Seth aghStaweanserontha” is found among those attending a Council meeting (Newberry Library, Ayer Ms, John Norton Letterbook, Council at Ft. George)

It is interesting and perhaps important to note that John Young, and his son in law Warner Nelles, were generally among the three or so witnesses to these deeds and Council minutes.

What is difficult to explain is whether Seth held the title Astawenserontha prior to it appearing in print.

Importantly, there are a number of references pertaining to “Capt. Seth” as a messenger sent by Brant during the year 1797 (e.g., Russell Papers, Vol. 2, p.41, Joseph Brant to D.W. Smith, 15 December 1797). It can be inferred that he either inherited or was assigned the “Captain” title prior to this time. Again the question can be asked, did Seth inherit this title from his uncle David Hill before 1792?

Ultimately the question is, does Seth, the undisputed inheritor of two of his uncle’s titles (at least in or before 1805), have a sister Catharine born about 1747 (date of birth of Catharine from the 1783 Census of Niagara). The parents Johannes (Hans) “son of Seth” and Maria (Mary) “daughter of Aaron” were married 12 January 1747 at the Albany Reformed Dutch Church (see Sievertsen, 1996 for all references to church register details).

As noted previously, Seth and most of his kin are recorded in the account books dating to the early and mid 1770s of Jelles Fonda (a Mohawk Valley shop keeper who served the Native community, particularly those of Ft. Hunter, prior to the American Revolution). Here it is possible to reconstruct detailed genealogies, due to the meticulous record keeping. Seth had a (step?) sister Margaret and a brother John noted here in the mid 1770s, with a mother Mary, uncles Aaron and David Vanderbarrak (Hill) and step – father Sadoquot (Jelles Fonda Accounts, Cornell University Library, Microfilm 903). No Catharine appeared in these family accounts although Catharine’s residence proximal to the Upper Mohawk settlements could be one explanation for this apparent omission.

It will be important to try to find a suitable (e.g., born circa 1747 as per the Census of Niagara in 1783) Catharine in the Mohawk baptismal records, to show that indeed Johannes and Mary Hill were the parents of Catharine, who was in turn the person described in the 1792 diary. There was no baptismal entry circa 1747 for a Catherine, daughter of a John and Mary **except** a mysterious 1747 entry in the Schenectady registers.

### **An Anomaly in the Baptismal Records:**

To add an element of confusion (something we will see frequently in the available records), there is a baptismal entry that amounts to one huge anomaly. It pertains to a Catharine apparently born at the time expected for the Catharine in the 1783 Census entry. It is the interpretation that will be problematic.

So what is this “mystery entry” in the baptismal records of the Schenectady Reformed Dutch Church. The author suggests that the reader look at the entry for a Catharine,

baptized 3 June 1747 by [clicking here](#). By using the magnification feature, and by looking at the way the minister or clerk has written other entries on the same page, it is clear that the entry for Catharine with parents named,

**Nicus Brant**  
**Margaetic**

has been overwritten. A close inspection of the particulars of the entry suggest that it originally may have been,

**Hans**  
**Maria**

The above odd version of the name Margaret is the clearest indication of something amiss. There are two other Mohawks with the name Margaret recorded on this page and both are spelled “**Margariet**”. Also there is a clear and distinct dot over the “g” in the first version of Margaret. While there are some stray marks on this page, the one above the “g” is clearly a purposeful dot – probably the remains of the “i” in Maria.

In looking at Nicus versus Hans, there is no other “N” written this way with a “flourish” at the top left – yet there is a very precise example of this with “**H**illegond Veddir”. Also the letter has smudges consistent with alteration.

The author is “stumped” by this entry since it is difficult to know why the original version would have been amended to change the entry to create two completely different parental names. So the question is, does the entry pertain to a Catharine born to Nicus and Margaret or Hans and Maria? It should be noted that the author may be “over – interpreting” here and the matter is subject to the role of expectation. What is entirely clear though is that the sponsors were Brant and his second wife Christina.

There is no evidence that Mohawks “waited until marriage” to begin having children. Thus a Catharine could well have been born in 1746 or early 1747 and baptized in June, with the second child Seth coming closely on her heels within a year (not atypical) in 1748. So what do we do about this entry? As a rule in such instances, the final entry, even if amended, should be accepted as the most likely of the two alternatives – although clearly it would be “convenient” to the primary hypothesis to have a Catharine baptized to a Hans and Maria in 1747.

#### **A European Father: Possibly Sir William Johnson?:**

There is another persuasive interpretation worthy of consideration. If we accept that Catharine, daughter of Hans and Maria, was baptized 3 June 1747 at the Schenectady Reformed Dutch Church, then Mary Hill was pregnant when she was married 1 January 1747 at the Albany Reformed Dutch Church (or may have already given birth to Catharine). The timing puts the paternal side in question, and there is no independent

evidence of Catharine's father (Hans may have been a step-father). There are multiple sources of evidence pointing to Mary Hill as being the birth mother of Catharine. The genetics findings (see later) leave open the probability that the father of Catharine was a white man.

Considering the documented behaviour of Sir William Johnson among the Mohawk women at this time, he must be considered as a prime candidate in fathering a first-born child. One respected author (Wallace, 1945) estimated the number of illegitimate children of William Johnson at 100! Others have questioned this figure (Jennings, 2000). New York Governor George Clinton reported to Johnson the rumors circulating about the latter even in the House of Commons. Clinton stated, in a letter to Johnson dated 27 February 1756, *Indeed from things I have been asked about and very often repeated to me which is the Number Indian Concubines you had and as many Children they had fixed upon you as the late Emperor of Merocco Muli Ishmale which I think was 700* (JP, Vol. 9, p.386). In relation to this matter, when asked the number of his children, he was alleged to have *smiled and replied, 'That is a question that I cannot answer'* (Taylor, 2006). Sievertsen (1996) discusses this matter and details those children for which she was able to find evidence linking them to Johnson. The intermediary (enabler?) in all this was his good friend Brant Kanagaradunckwa, who appears to have supplied one or two of his daughters for Johnson's conquests or served as an adoptive parent for a few of these children (no doubt with suitable rewards for the children's upbringing). According to the most recent biography of Sir William Johnson, in relation to the Mohawk children of the latter, *since he did not want to be recognized as their legal father in the Colonial world, they were listed by the Reverend Barclay in his register of baptisms at Fort Hunter as the children of other Mohawk couples* (O'Toole, 2010, p.105). O'Toole noted that at least two of the Mohawk children of Sir William were recorded as the children of Brant Karadunckwa and his wife Christina. Sievertsen (1996) and O'Toole interpret the data in the baptismal registers as a change in the perceptions of Barclay over time. Eventually he realized that Christina, then over 50 and beyond child-bearing age, recorded the child Christian as the "adopted son of Brant". However, *Brant and Christina would have genuinely seen Johnson's Mohawk children as part of their family* (p.106). Catharine was born after Barclay left Fort Hunter in 1746 such that the Reformed Dutch Church at Schenedtady was the most appropriate venue for baptisms until another Anglican minister could be appointed to Fort Hunter. Hence the baptismal record noted above is perfectly in keeping with the pattern established under Barclay, except that now a son of Brant was appointed the adoptive father of Catharine, with Brant and Christina being the sponsors (with the entry changed to reflect the adoptive status).

As to Johnson's apparent selective bedding of the daughters of key Mohawk chiefs, *the liaisons and the children they produced created a kinship network that bound Johnson to Indian families, and their obligations and benefits. Johnson had to bestow particular favors and presents on his Indian kin, while they provided inside information and political support. Here, Johnson understood the multiple advantages of his native mistresses and children* (Taylor, 2006).

A reading of the references to Aaron Hill Oseragheté in the Johnson Papers shows a strong connection between Aaron and Sir William Johnson, despite the fact that Aaron was often a thorn in his side. This dynamic is certainly consistent with Johnson being a paramour to one of Aaron's daughters as was the case with the Brant family and one or two of Brant Kanagaradunckwa's daughters. These men were the first village chiefs of Ft. Hunter in the mid 1740s. Brant's home served as a "hospitality" station; and Aaron's home was the location of village council meetings (JP; DRCHNY). Hence fathering a grandchild (or grandchildren) of Brant and Aaron would be advantageous.

A question that can be asked is whether Sir William felt, for whatever reason, compelled to "do the right thing", at least in relation to children born of his liaisons. Undoubtedly, to avoid scandal, or any sort of negative impact, he would need to mitigate circumstances to ensure that his child and its mother were assured of some form of security. Again we run into a wall of silence from Johnson himself – despite the 13 volumes of his papers and records which have been published – it is as if his personal life was by chance, or likely purposely, kept close to his chest. Only the occasion bit of importation has emerged, and one might question whether this applied to all of his productive liaisons with "high bred" Indian or white mistresses.

One "technique" he used in relation to his pregnant concubines (Indian or white) was to ensure that they married to someone, who might be expected to take good care of his offspring, prior to the birth of the child. For example, Flexner reported that, in relation to Susannah Wormwood, *Sir William had tried to do the right thing by her several years ago. Before their son appeared, he had married her to one Dunbar* (pp.337-8). This appears to be precisely what he did in relation to Mary Hill, and "arranged" a marriage to John the son of Seth Widemouth in January 1747. Due to reasons unknown, the arrangement did not seem to work and Johnson appears to have tapped the Brant family on the shoulder and likely orchestrated an adoption by his most reliable of friends. Alas, in his will, while Johnson acknowledged (indirectly) two of his illegitimate Mohawk children (both boys – "young" Brant and "young" William), *To his friends, retainers, tenants (and the mass of his illegitimate children) he left almost no bequests* (Flexner, 1979, pp.344-5).

What also stands out is that according to the Claims for Losses as a result of the Revolution, two women stood out ahead of the male Mohawks in terms of wealth (e.g., land, jewelry). One was Mary Brant of Canajoharie, most recent paramour to Sir William Johnson; the other was Mary Hill of Ft. Hunter who may also have been one of Johnson's (earlier) paramours. It is difficult to imagine how Mary Hill could have accumulated so much in the way of material possessions without the contribution of the wealthiest man in the Mohawk Valley. At a later point in time (1780 – during the Revolution), Mary was allegedly the "confidante" (i.e., mistress) of the Rebel head of Indian Affairs, General Peter Schuyler who may have also contributed to her wealth (e.g., Watt, 2002). If this is true, Mary (something of a "cougar" in today's terms) had a "habit" of gravitating towards those in power to secure an advantage for her and her offspring.



Unfortunately there are few direct contemporary references to Johnson's children, particularly females. He clearly wished to keep this information known only to a few close friends. O'Toole (2010) notes the lack of direct references to Johnson's Mohawk children. He notes, however, an apparent exception where, *Other Mohawk relationships are hinted at in a letter from Johnson's friend Joseph Chew in 1749* (p.106). It is possible that Catharine is mentioned in this letter from Joseph Chew (trusted by Johnson to probate his will) to Johnson 1 January 1749. The former seems to be referring to "special" little children at each of the two Mohawk Castles. In his addendum Chew stated, *I hope the young Ladys at the Castle are well my Compliments to little Miss Michael at the Mohaws & madam Curl'd locks at Conejesharry as I can't well remembr the French officers name have left a Blank wch please to fill up* (JP, Vol. 1, p.205). The officer is undoubtedly Michael Montour who was residing at the Ft. Hunter "Mohawks" Castle at the time (Sievertsen, 1996). It is unclear when Montour married Esther (probably the daughter of Brant Kanagaradunckwa baptized 25 September 1730), but they had a child Seth baptized at Schenectady in 1747, hence the daughter was likely born about 1746. Since Catharine, it would appear, was also adopted by the Brant family (Bear Clan relatives via Crine Anequendahonji and wife Anna) she may have then been living at Canajoharie with the family of Nicholas Brant, the adoptive father. Hence Catharine may have been the "madam Curl'd locks at Conejesharry" mentioned by Chew in 1749.

It is perhaps noteworthy that 14 September 1765 (about the time John and Catharine were likely married), there is the following reference in the Accounts of John Butler charged to Sir William Johnson (JP, Vol. 13, p. 511):

To 1 gallon of Rum & a Cagg to Cattreen the Squa  
To 2 shillings Cash to Johannes of Conajohary

This amount of alcohol was typical of that expended at a wedding, and it is difficult to see this as anything other than a very unusual (unique) gift by Sir William to a Mohawk woman, who may have been a close relative such as a daughter. The Johannes noted here may have been her mother's husband, her step-father, the parents of her half brother Seth.

The fact that three of the four children of Lt. John Young and Catharine named one of their children William is perhaps a coincidence, but worthy of note.

**A third wife?:** It is now time to explore the possibility that there are candidates for the wife of John Young other than Catharine sister of Seth Hill. In all of the sources (extensive archival searches, family sources etc.) there is not a hint of any possible marriage other than the known two of Catharine and Priscilla. None the less, the matter bears close scrutiny since it could impact on the ethnicity and identity of Catharine. There is only one possible data source that suggests this possibility.

Going back to the information showing John Young's two uncles residing on what appears to be Hill property during the Revolution, the connection between the Young and

Hill family could relate to someone other than Mary Hill Kateriunigh – although it would be difficult to oust the latter from the candidate list.

There is a woman noted in a document created three years prior to the Campbell Diary that needs to be assessed. This record is one of the two July 1789 deeds of sale to the Lower Mohawk lands at Ft. Hunter and the Upper Mohawk lands on the Van Horne Patent at Canajoharie, both sites being situated along the Mohawk River in New York State. These deeds of sale were signed at Niagara by all or most of the principal men and women formerly of both the Upper and Lower Mohawk “Castles”. Most of those present signed their Native names to the Ft. Hunter deed, although in many cases someone else added in their baptismal and white surnames. Unfortunately most of those noted in the Canajoharie deed had their names recorded by a clerk (even Joseph Brant’s Native name was added by someone else who made a hash of his Mohawk name).

It is noteworthy that a signator to the Ft. Hunter Lower Mohawk deed of 9 July 1789 is:

**kayadontyi**  
**[p]eggy yanng**

[Click here](#) to see this signature in context and use the magnification feature to see this entry at the top left. The name appears to be Peggy (a diminutive for Margaret) – although the first letter is just a guess. The second name appears to be “yanng” which is surely just an eccentric way of writing “young”. She signs immediately before the children of Johannes Crine – toward the end of the document. There are two possibilities here:

1) Peggy married a man with the surname Young:

There were two men with the surname Young that would best fit time, place and circumstances; however there were numerous males with the surname Young residing in the Canajoharie and Ft. Hunter regions. The name of the wife of Lt. Frederick Young (circa 1733-1777) was Catharine Schumacher (widow of Melchior Bell) who he married in 1762. A daughter Dorothy was born in 1764 to the couple and at that point there is no further information about the family of Frederick other than he had a son who died in 1779 without issue. There was no record of his wife being apprehended in 1777 as was the case with the wife of John Young, even though the two men left together. It is likely that Frederick was a widower, or his wife had already left for Canada. Peggy could have been a second undocumented wife to either Frederick or John. If the latter then she would be the woman mentioned in the Campbell Diary. This does seem to be a long stretch in the “maybe department”. She might more likely be the widow of John’s uncle Frederick who died in 1777.

2) Peggy young may mean “young peggy”:

Peggy appears to have signed the deed with her own full name and in her own handwriting (not worrying about capitalization – as was the case with written Mohawk) –

although this is not certain. It could be argued that she meant to imply “young peggy”, as among the Mohawks formerly of Ft. Hunter there was, for example, a “Lydia” and an “Old Lydia” and a “young Brant” as seen in the 1789 deed. In other records from earlier years there was a Brant Senior, Old Brant; there is also Abraham Major and Abraham Minor. “Little” and “big” were also used to differentiate individuals with the same first name – “the Elder” and “the Younger” are also seen. However names such as say “Gideon young” and “Gideon old” being employed to identify two individuals with the same first name appear to be rare, recalled by the author in only one document where in 1795, “Young Brant” was written as “Brant Young” (Wisconsin State Historical Society, Lyman Draper Manuscripts, Series F, Vol. 15, p.215) so there is at least precedent. However if Peggy was writing her own name, it is difficult to know what she meant.

There were other women with the name Margaret apparently alive at the time. The most likely candidate is Margaret the widow of Captain Daniel (possible daughter of Margaret Crine and Aaron Hill) and so the sister of Mary Hill Kateriunigh. Five years earlier at Lachine in 1784 she submitted her claims for wartime losses, including 72 acres at Ft. Hunter. Unless she had died in the interval she would surely have signed the 1789 deed. In addition she was one of the few Mohawks who could write in English (Sivertsen, 1996). Hence it is reasonable to assert that Peggy was more likely Captain Daniel’s widow (born about 1728 so an unlikely match for Young).

Also found in the Seth Newhouse Manuscript noted earlier is Kayadontyi (the Native name used by “peggy” in the 1789 Ft. Hunter deed) – but the name is also claimed by one Turtle Clan and one Wolf Clan family. Reg Henry translated the name as, “Her Body Floats By”. Hence the conclusion here is that **the aunt of Catharine Young was Margaret Kayadontyi, the widow of Captain Daniel.**

What makes it highly unlikely that anyone named Margaret married John Young is in the fact that none of the three sons, or other kin, of Lt. John had a daughter named Margaret as might be expected based on the customs of the times. Since any wife between Catharine and Priscilla would have been the nurturing maternal figure to young children (as opposed to Priscilla who at the very earliest married Lt. John when the youngest was 13 years old), and likely found among the names of the step-children. Daughter Elizabeth had a daughter Priscilla, born 16 December 1796. The youngest child, Joseph, has only one daughter, and named Catharine. John’s brother Daniel had a daughter named Priscilla (born between 1789 and 1793). Clearly this act would only make sense if his brother was married to Priscilla at the time (estimated marriage date 1972-3).

Certainly no children were born to any wife other than Catharine. It might have been expected that if there was another marriage say 1787 that more children would have been born – but that is not the case. None were born to Priscilla and John either, but Priscilla did not bear her previous husband Capt. Henry William Nelles any children either (when she was younger), and so it seems that she may have had fertility problems (two husbands, each of whom had children, and she had none). Priscilla is the only step-mother of record.

**Conclusion** – It appears safe to conclude that Lt. John Young had only two wives, Catharine who died about late 1792 and Priscilla who John married about 1793.

**Genetic and Genealogical Findings:** What affords the Sir William Johnson hypothesis considerable weight is the **findings of the genetic testing of descendants of Catharine**. The author has located two families with an Iroquois ancestor who is five generations back from the participant who was tested. One family descend from Tarhe, a Wyandot chief; and the other from the Oneida / Oghquaga warrior Peter Davis (“Peter the Runner”). Descendants of these individuals who are 1/64 Native American, 5 generations from the participant (DNA testee) to the Native American ancestor, all have from two to six “Asian” segments on the Ancestry Painting feature of 23andMe. While those in the Young family who are 5 generations removed from Catharine do have undisputable evidence of Native American ancestry using other more sophisticated testing, only one of 8 tested has even a single “Asian” segment here. Based on the author’s knowledge and experience, the only logical conclusion is that Catharine had far less biological Native American ancestry than 100%. It is already established that the maternal Hill side of the family was extensively admixed with European. What appears to be the case in looking at the “big picture” is that positing an admixed paternal side would be insufficient to explain the paucity of “Asian” segments. Only an interpretation that asserts that Catharine must have had a European biological father would be consistent with the data. It would in fact resolve any inconsistencies between the paper trail genealogy and the genetic findings.

#### **Integration of Genetic and Genealogical Data** –

The data most clearly and convincingly supports the hypothesis that Catharine was the daughter of Mary Hill Kateriunigh and an undocumented white man.

Based on the weight of evidence accumulated by testing a number of descendants of Lt. John Young with three or more methods used to detect the presence of, percentage of, and specific location of, Native American ancestry there is little doubt that Catharine was Native American. [Click here](#) for the extensive study of the matter. However, the overall picture is one where if her parents were both of Native American heritage (although admixed on the mother’s side), we would expect to see more substantive evidence – for example a larger number and size of segments that are Native American in individuals such as Lawrence Young who is only 5 generations removed from Lt. John and Catharine. The genetic and genealogical evidence would dovetail considerably better if Catharine’s biological father was European. Based on the life and times, and on the respective histories of the Brant and Johnson families, this hypothesis could easily be reconciled with the data.

Granted that there was overwhelming evidence of admixture in the maternal line of Catharine, but the genealogical data needs to be reconciled with the genetic test findings. While the findings in some descendants of the Lt. John Young line of indisputable Native American heritage is convincing, the absolute percentages are not.

Essentially there are a series of “holes” in both the genealogical and the genetic records. What can, however, be said with a high degree of certainty is that Catharine was a descendant of the Hill family in the maternal line and her descendants were in the line of succession for the title of the Bear Clan / Tribe, Astawenserontha sachemship, and a linked title specific to the Wyandots among the Mohawks.

If perchance Catharine’s biological father was a White man, then the genetic findings would make “perfect” sense. Much of the genealogical data could also be explained if perchance a prominent Euro-American was father to Catharine, and that her mother was pregnant when she “married” Hans, son of Seth Sr.; and that the baptism reflected social not biological reality. Here a close relative (as will be described below) and strong Johnson supporter (the family had adopted other of Johnson’s children), Nicholas Brant accepted the role of adoptive father. This hypothesis would posit that Catharine was being accepted into her kin among the Brant family, who had a special relationship with one non-Native male, Sir William Johnson.

The second most important document essential to understanding the ancestry and social – cultural position of Catharine among the Mohawks, is the obituary of her grandson, Warner Henry Nelles.

### **Beaver Clan - Wyandot Connection**

#### **B. OBITUARY OF WARNER HENRY NELLES, 1896**

Col. Warner H. Nelles, was born 1799 on the Grand River Six Nations Indian Reserve, the son of Lt. John Young’s daughter Elizabeth (Young) Nelles and husband Warner Nelles. Warner H. Nelles was the nephew of Joseph Young, who was mentioned as being “one of our people” in a deed from the Six Nations in 1838. Warner H. Nelles was also the first cousin of the author's ancestor Rachel (Young) Young.

The key segment from his obituary of 12 October 1896 reads (with emphasis added):

***His popularity as a young man may be judged when, being only seventeen, he was made a chief of a tribe of Indians called the Beavers. Upon the death of the old chief, they saluted him as Tahanata, and the chain of wampum they threw over his head is still in the family. Up to the end of his death he was still recognized as chief, though the tribe is greatly scattered*** (Haldimand County Museum, Dorothy Hutton Collection N-1-4).

Clearly Warner H. Nelles was eligible, by descent from his mother and maternal grandmother, to inherit a title as a chief of the Six Nations, *There being no foundation for the common belief that white men are made chiefs of any kind when Indians adopt such persons, or confer a name on those whom they wish to compliment* (Boyle, 1898, p. 176).

**The name Tahanata and Age of Installation:** It was shown above that the Young – Nelles family were members of the Six Nations, and linked most particularly to the

Mohawk Nation. There are 50 hereditary sachem titles of the Six Nations. Nine names are specific to the Mohawks, and none of the latter titles is “Tahanata” or any similar name. However at the time of Nelles’ installation, there was a single exception.

A list of "Mohawks Principle Chiefs" was created by Chief George Martin for the Indian Department 22 February 1815 (i.e., about two years before Nelles was made chief) and included the names of the holders of the three hereditary sachemship titles for each of the Turtle, Wolf and Bear Tribes (Clans), and the associated War Chiefs for each sachem (Archives of Canada, MG19, F1, Claus Papers, Vol. 10, p. 153). Number 3 in the Bear Tribe is John Johnson Astawenserontha (Captain Seth Hill died in 1810). While it is not entirely clear who this John Johnson is, it could be the John, brother of Seth Hill (but using the first name of his father as a surname – very common among Mohawks and their neighbors the Dutch). This Johannes, born to John and Wari (Mary), was baptized 19 January 1751 at Ft. Hunter. The associated "War Chief" was John Green Aronghyenghtha (see 1788 Canajoharie petition). While this individual would appear to be the Johannes, son of Johannes Crine and Neeltie baptized 19 May 1755 at Ft. Hunter. The father Johannes Senior was a member of the Astawenserontha Bear Clan family. Hence Johannes Junior, in theory, could not become chief of his father’s Ohwachira (maternal clan). The matter is confusing, and best left alone since it is peripheral to the main focus of this story.

Oddly, here the Bear Tribe was shown as having four hereditary sachem titles with #3. Astawenserontha and #4. Tahatonne linked together via a bracket thus }. Since time out of mind there have been three Turtle Clan titles, three Wolf Clan titles, and three Bear Clan titles - and no more – except circa 1815. A hypothesized reason for this exception at this particular time will be given later. It is also noted (e.g., Hale, 1881; Tooker, 1978) that there were so – called “pine tree” chiefs elected from time to time due to merit, but the title died with the original holder. Each Principal Chief had an associated War Chief (as seen in the 1815 Martin document), also appointed by the Clan Mothers, but the title also died with the chief. There was also a class of sub – chiefs to assist the Principal Chief with his duties – also appointed by the Clan Mother. Tahatonne may have started as this category but was elevated (for reasons noted elsewhere) to almost equivalent to, in this case, Astawenserontha. So Tahatonne (and later Tahanata) first may have been essentially a “special advisor” to the more senior sachem who held the title of Astawenserontha. However it is unique to have a list with 10 Principal Chiefs (hereditary sachems) among the Mohawk, giving the Bear Clan / Tribe a numerical advantage (also in the number of War Chiefs with 5 in contrast to the 3 for the Turtle and Wolf Clans / Tribes). [Click here](#) to see the Martin document.

An examples of a possible earlier instance of the name Tahatonne is found on 5 April 1687 a Mohawk named Tahaiadons offered proposals at a conference in Albany – this may be the same sachem, so TA-HA-IA-DONS. With reference to Tahanata, on the above 1789 deed signed by the Canajoharie Mohawks there is a name, David Dehanonyantha. His identity is unknown. Phonetically this is similar to, and perhaps more precisely written, Tahanata (D and T being equivalent in Mohawk). It is exceedingly difficult even for those who are fluent in the language to determine whether

two Mohawk names are identical, due to spelling and dialectical differences and change in word meaning over time. One other example of a Six Nations name likely to be equivalent to Tahanata was “Tachanuntie or Tachanontia”, an Onondaga Chief attending the June 1744 Conference in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He was known as “the Black Prince” due to his African – Indian heritage, although others say it was due to his tatoos (Colden, 1747, p.110; Shannon, 2008).

There is also the strong possibility that names introgressed from other Iroquoian Nations (more on this subject later), especially after the wars of the mid 17<sup>th</sup> Century when Iroquoian speaking tribes such as the Huron, Wenro, Attiwandaronk, and Erie were effectively destroyed, and many of the survivors adopted into member nations of the Iroquois Confederacy.

Clearly Tahanata is a Six Nations name (Iroquoian language family) with some antiquity. For example on 12 July 1742 among the Tuscaroras at a conference in Philadelphia was Tahnatakqua. Reg Henry (see below) told the present author that frequently endings such as “ha” to personal names are dropped in everyday use. An example relating to the Mohawks is Brant Canagaradunckwa (various spellings). On 23 August 1752 Brant appended a note written in Mohawk to Conrad Weiser in a letter sent by Daniel Claus. He signed his name “Kanakaradon” in this document (Kelsay, 1986). He dropped the “ckwa” which is equivalent to the “kqua” in the name above. Among the Mohawks of the Bear Tribe from Canajoharie, accompanying Sir William Johnson to Montreal in 1760, was Johannes Tehanagrackhas. Here the “ckhas” could have been “optional” so if dropped yielding Tehanaghra. If the last “r” was meant to be a “t” this name would be identical to Tahanata - maybe.

In truth, there is no clear evidence that either name has appeared in the historical record among the Mohawk prior to their appearance as the names of Cotter and Nelles respectively.

If the chiefship was of ancient lineage, it may have been similar to the others including Astawenserontha. Most of the chiefly titles never appeared in any of the hundreds of documents to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. This has puzzled historians and led to questions about the antiquity of the chiefly names associated with the Confederacy (Shannon, 2008). Perhaps there was a “taboo” to using these names for what might be called “profane” purposes – such as signing land deeds although it is difficult to accept this rationale for Council minutes. The one exception was the head Turtle Clan chief, Tekarihokea. Most individuals used their name given upon reaching adulthood. For example, as noted earlier, David Hill used only Karonghyontye except in the 1789 Canajoharie Upper Mohawk deed where he appears for the Mohawks of the Lower Castle using both his above name and Astawenserontha – but this was very rare and it appears that someone else wrote in one or both names (it is not his signature). The 1789 Canajoharie deed includes 8 of the 9 sachem names (but these names seem to have been added by a white witness to the document). This practice appears to have changed prior to the War of 1812. By about 1805 Captain Seth Hill had dropped his old name of Kanenkaregowagh and was known only as Astawenserontha in all official documents.

As to the meaning of the name Tahanata, it is often very difficult to obtain a clear interpretation of the meaning of Mohawk names from many years ago since they are frequently shrouded in the mists of time. Much depends on which dialect of Mohawk is used (there being differences in pronunciation and spelling between say Grand River and Kanawaki); and the languages and dialects spoken by anyone today trying to interpret a particular spelling of a name. The present author was indeed fortunate that a Six Nations linguistic scholar, Philip Henhawk, happened to contact him about another matter. Philip (personal communication, 7 March 2011) found the name Tahanata to be very straightforward in terms of ease of translation into English. Philip's detailed analysis of the name can be found by [clicking here](#). Tahanata is a Mohawk name and means, **Towards his village**.

**Francis Cotter** held the title of Tahatonne in the George Martin document of 1815, and its connection to Tahanata must be specified. As we shall see, when Cotter resigned his office and moved to the west he appears to have taken his Mohawk name Tahatonne, "**He is coming to the end of it**" (Philip Henhawk, personal communication, 24 March 2011) with him. Unfortunately all documents which have been located and date to this interval were signed by Chief Cotter using only his non – Native name. Understanding the "Cotter connection" may be one of the keys to identifying Catharine's ancestry. Since there is often missing data or inadequate documentation, an assumption will be made here that by virtue of the Cotter – Nelles link, that their respective mothers were closely related. A working hypothesis is that Catharine and Cotter's mother Margaret were sisters. The evidence, admittedly all circumstantial, will be explored throughout the present work. Perhaps she was Margaret Konwariseh, who appears as (Kon) Watyesea (Kon) waGeri (Mohawk for Margaret) from the 1789 Canajoharie Deed (document folded at bracketed location). She is the next name after Katerin Kayakhon, and also has a Bear totem beside her name.

Francis Cotter's father was N. Cotter (likely Nicholas), a white man, married to Margaret, a Lower Mohawk (Claus Papers, MG19, F1, Vol. 21, pt.2, p.85 – no date but before 27 March 1819). Note that there is a great deal of fluidity in deciding who was Upper Mohawk (supposedly from Canajoharie) and Lower Mohawk (supposedly from Ft. Hunter). There are many instances in the various census records for annual annuity payments where it is noted that by petition a family had changed their affiliation from one band to the other.

Francis Cotter, according to the Six Nations Chiefs on 9 January 1814, was among a group of Mohawks who acted in an "Unbecoming manner" by refusing to fight the enemies of the King (during the latter stages of the War of 1812), and so they recommended that he not receive any of "His Majesty's bounty" – which meant annuity payments (Johnston, 1964). Cotter and 8 other Mohawk chiefs blamed this schism on the behavior of the Lower Mohawks formerly of Fort Hunter, where members of the Upper Mohawks formerly of Canajoharie "are treated like outcasts" (Indian Affairs, RG10 Series, Vol. 118, p. 169562, no date but before 27 November 1818 – Vol. 790, p. 7048). Francis Cotter was thus an Upper Mohawk chief apparently with ancestral ties to Canajoharie, although his mother also had ties to the Lower Mohawks – as seen above.



The conditions on the Reserve in 1816 and 1817 appear to have been lawless and chaotic, permeated with factionalism and name-calling. As of about 1816, Cotter appears to have been "shunned", both via the factionalism within the Mohawk community, and by his behavior during the War of 1812. The evidence shows that on 17 February 1816 Francis Cotter was still a "Principle Chief" when he signed a certificate – it being noted in a later addendum that he was among those still living 14 April 1835 (Archives of Ontario, Street Papers, MU2928).

One other reason why Francis Cotter was dissatisfied with his circumstances, was perhaps that he had expected to be raised up as either Astawenserontha, a title firmly in control of the Lower Mohawks. In order to placate Cotter and those who sided with him (the Upper Mohawks), it may be that the Chiefs decided to elevate Cotter's personal name to the chiefly rolls and place him alongside Astawenserontha (as seen on the 1815 George Martin list of Chiefs). If this is correct, then until circa 1814 Tahatonne was not a chiefly name, it was simply the name of an Upper Mohawk who was raised up as a chief in order to defuse a potentially serious political crisis. Hence it is likely that there is no "history to" the name prior to Cotter. If so, it seems to have been a futile gesture by the Chiefs since Cotter and family gave up everything a few years after his installation to move to the Detroit area and become Wyandot.

Abraham Kennedy Smith of Brantford petitioned in 1843 to have lands he purchased from Cotter confirmed. On 13 April 1817 Smith paid Margaret Cotter, mother of Chief Francis Cotter and Nicholas Cotter, Mohawks, for lands near Brantford owned by the family. The chiefs in council validated the sale on 12 May 1817, but none of the Cotters were then present (standard in land transactions of this nature), suggesting that they had moved away in April 1817 (Indian Affairs, RG10 Series, Vol. 120, 8 November 1843, p. 4834). An Indian Department document specifically stated that sometime before 27 November 1818, Francis Cotter had "gone to Detroit" (Indian Affairs, RG10 Series, Vol. 790, p. 7048). He settled among the Wyandots (Hurons) at Amherstberg, Anderdon Township, Ontario where his son Nicholas was baptized in 1822. Family records give the name of the wife of Francis Cotter as Catherine Brown, a Wyandot of the Turtle Clan. His first son Francis Jr. was said to have been born in 1813 in "Toronto" (which to the Oklahoma informant may have been a generic statement for "Canada"). However the 1843 Wyandot rolls of those moving to Kansas shows Francis Cotter Jr. to be under age 25, so likely born in Anderdon Township. The Cotters were also involved in one way or another with the Wyandot Upper Sandusky settlement (for example Francis was a member of a six man firing squad who executed a convicted murderer in that community); and perhaps the Honey Creek Mohawk settlement at Sandusky, which was established between about 1815 and 1817, associated with both the Senecas and Wyandots (Sturtevant, 1978). All of these were in the Detroit area.

It is clearly established that in 1836 all of the Cotter family were residents of Amherstburg when on 23 September 1836 "F. Cotter" signed a deed which alienated the north and south thirds of the Anderdon Reserve. On 26 September 1836 a group of seven "Warriors" of the Wyandot, not present during the first signing, which included Anthony

Cotter, Nicholas Cotter and Francis Cotter, signified their approval of the deal (these and similar documents are found on the Wyandotte-nation.org website).

It may be instructive to look for a reason as to why the Cotter family were able to transfer their allegiance from the Mohawks to the Wyandot so quickly. One could infer that Francis Cotter, although at one time an Upper Mohawk chief, had an ancestral connection to the Wyandot, but his name Tahatonne presumably reverted to a non-chiefly name. It is possible that his mother, as was the case with many Mohawks in the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, spent her early years in the “Old Northwest”.

There is no evidence that Francis Cotter Sr. was ever a chief of the Wyandot. In effect he gave up a role as a principal chief of the Six Nations to become a “rank and file” member of the Wyandot. He and his family joined the majority of Wyandot, and migrated to Kansas in July 1843 with many of their fellow tribal members from Upper Sandusky, settling on the Wyandotte Purchase in Kansas where Cotter died 29 September 1852 (William Walker Jr. Diary).

As noted above, doubtless upon departure from the Grand River (or perhaps before) Cotter would have been "dehorned" (a form of impeachment), or he voluntarily turned in his wampum credentials - his chiefship removed and given to an available candidate from within the matrilineal family. Since his name was not among the 9 inherited league titles among the Mohawk, it appears that “resigning” from this role as a principal chief did not mean relinquishing his given name. Tahatonne never appears later among the list of chiefs (or warriors) on the Grand River. Most likely it was due to his removal to the Detroit area to join the Wyandots that resulted in Cotter’s loss of his Mohawk sachemship. He was clearly frustrated by the factionalism among the Mohawk, and opted for a refuge elsewhere. The obituary informants said that the reason for Nelles’ assuming the Tahanata title was due to the “death of the old chief”, clearly an error, but understandable since this was the reason for a new chief to be installed in the vast majority of instances. So in essence, Tahanta (Nelles) took on the (possibly largely ceremonial) role of Tahatonne from 1817 until his death in 1896 – being issued a name from within the same family lineage.

Exploring the apparent Mohawk – Wyandot link via the titles Tahatonne and Tahanata may be productive. It is of some interest that by 1750 the Wyandot had three clan groups, the Turtle, Deer and Wolf. The Deer included the Bear, Beaver, Deer, Porcupine and Snake clans. At this time there was a council of chiefs from each clan chosen by clan mothers as with the Six Nations. However an individual was elected from among this group as head chief, and by custom was from Bear clan, but later the Deer clan due to a lack of suitable candidates (Powell, 1880). If this tradition was still active in 1815, perhaps Francis Cotter of the Bear clan was elected to represent the Wyandot faction at Six Nations, as over the years (particularly the late 1650s), the Iroquois had taken Wyandot (Huron) captives and had “adopted” these as Mohawks.

Thus, in relation to the two matrilineally inherited Mohawk Bear Clan associated names which are linked with the Hill, Cotter, and Young – Nelles families:

Astawenserontha = “(He Enters) Wearing Rattles” (Mohawk League sachem name).  
Tahatonne = “He is Coming to the End of It”.  
Tahanata = “Towards His Village” (Mohawk name tied to the above but with an as yet unspecified connection to the Wyandot).

Warner Henry Nelles was born 2 May 1799 so if the Cotters left in April of 1817, and he was installed soon thereafter, Nelles would indeed have been age 17 precisely as the obituary reported. This fact adds external validation to the content of the Nelles obituary.

Hence in April 1817 either Margaret Cotter, and/or other Clan Matrons, or Elizabeth (Young) Nelles, selected a member of the Astawenserontha Bear Clan with “Beaver Tribe” connections (see below) to fill the vacancy. The candidate picked was the second born son of Elizabeth (Young) Nelles, Warner H. Nelles. There is little to suggest that the individual chosen to be a sachem had to be the eldest son. This was true in the case of Seth Hill, but his uncle David Hill was the youngest son.

**The Identity of the Beaver Tribe:** There are various census lists of the tribes along the Grand River from 1784 to the 1860s (e.g., Johnston, 1964). None include a specifically denoted “Beaver Tribe”. Perhaps the “Beaver Tribe” was an extended family group such those recorded 27 March 1819 (Claus Papers, MG19, F1, Vol. 21, pt.2, p.86) including “Peg Symington Canada” (Lower Mohawks) and the “St. Regis Family” (St. Regis or Akwesasne Mohawk Reserve also comprised of Abenaki and Onondaga). However it is noteworthy that in this document, contemporary with the installation of Nelles, there was no group denominated specifically as “the Beavers” or the “Beaver Tribe”. It is important to note that the terms tribe and clan were generally interchangeable. Typically in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and earlier “Tribe” meant what is today termed “Clan”. Today there are only three Mohawk clans / tribes (Turtle, Wolf and Bear). The question is whether there was ever a Beaver tribe / clan grouping among the Mohawks, specifically the Upper Mohawks. Clearly Cotter’s and thus Nelles’ maternal Tribe / Clan was Bear (Astawenserontha), Lower Mohawk according to Seth Newhouse as noted earlier, and the same family grouping as per the Patrick Campbell Diary (1792) also referred to previously, but they may have represented a group with a link in common to a “tribe” known as the “Beavers”.

Documents signed in the Mohawk Valley in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century show that in addition to the “big three” among the Mohawk, there were, several sub – tribes, as the Beaver, the Elk, the Serpent, the Porcupine, and the Fox, as shown by deeds of record, of which the most frequently met is that of the Beaver (Proceedings of the New York State Historical Society, 1906). In the previous century, a Dutch map of 1614 showed 8 Mohawk villages, and 100 years later there are only three (Snow et al., 1996). In 1634, at a time of great upheavals due to the epidemics, the original 8 had collapsed to 4 settlements. In 1634 Schanatisse had 32 longhouses. This village was situated on a “very high hill” west

of Canahoharie Creek. *It is supposed to have been the castle of the Beaver tribe – a sub – gens* (Ibid). The location fits with the Allen archaeological site, west of modern Canajoharie, and about 2 miles inland (see Snow et al., 1996). However, by the time of Greenhalgh’s visit in 1677, Shanatisse was not recorded. The researchers at the Three Rivers website noted that, *Shanatisse, the Castle of the **Beaver Tribe**, who apparently joined the **Bear Tribe** upon the destruction of their Castle.* During the attack by the French 16 February 1693 the three villages on the north side of the River, Caughnawaga, Canagora, and Tionontegen were burned. *A castle on the south side of the Mohawk, said to have been two miles inland, escaped. Presumably it was the village of the Beaver family, but we have nothing further concerning it* (Ibid). The Bear Tribe is associated with Canagora (Canajoharie), or the western (Upper) Castle. Here, if this is correct, the Bear and Beaver merged about 1666, but the Beavers retained some degree of autonomy in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, and the Nelles obituary would suggest, perhaps, into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Although Huron / Wyandot captives were being brought to the country of the Six Nations over an extended period, there was one event which had perhaps the most profound effect and may relate directly to the story here. In 1657 the Mohawks “convinced” an entire tribe of Hurons residing on L’Isle d’Orleans near Quebec City to come and live in Mohawk country. The Bear Tribe (Attignawantan) of the Huron / Wyandot, the once most powerful tribal unit, chose to become Mohawk – perhaps coming to dominate Schanatisse. The Rock Tribe opted to join countrymen among the Onondaga. The Cord Tribe remained with the French to take their chances among the French. As noted earlier, the Deer Tribe joined the Seneca in 1651. The Bear Tribe comprised initially a fourth village among the three already settled by Mohawks (and likely many Huron / Wyandot captives). Apparently these groups may include those who fit into the Young family saga. It was reported that in the 1660s that two thirds of the Caughnawaga Castle along the Mohawk River was comprised of Huron / Wyandot and Algonquin immigrants or captives (see Snow et al., 1996). The record clearly indicates continuing contacts between all Huron – Wyandot descendants. Some Huron / Wyandot, who had joined the Onondagas (Rock Tribe etc.), later lived among the Mohawk in Canada (e.g., Kanawaki; St. Regis - Akwesasne) and some later came to the Mohawk Valley communities, which were clearly a hodge podge, a complex mixture of ethnicities and clans.

Beauchamp, in discussing the aboriginal use of wood in New York, described an artifact, showing a Bear on a wampum belt *which he holds in his paws to avenge the death of some one and he is conferring about it with his brother, the Beaver*. He further noted that a, *Council of War between the tribe of the Bear and that of the Beaver, they are brothers* (Figure 78).

What is interesting and likely relevant here is that the Huron / Wyandot adopted the beaver as their national symbol. Sioui (1999) stated, *It is not unrealistic to say that in both their physical organization and social vision, the Wendats were naturally inclined to take the beaver as their model. This animal was their political emblem* (pp. 93-4). Since at least the days of the early French missions, the Wyandots considered the beaver to represent many concrete and abstract elements of Wyandot life, including the beaver lodge symbolically representing the Wyandot village (Sioui, 1999, p.94). Although they

self – identified as the Nation of the Beaver, it does not appear that many if any other nations used that term in reference to Wyandots.

It is the opinion of the present author that the beaver was, considering Sioui's information, the symbol of the Wyandot and their descendants among the Six Nations – at least among the Mohawk, probably because it was the numerically largest clan.

At the individual level, in the many hundreds of documents the present author has explored relating to the Mohawks, after about 1750 only Nicholas Brant Canadiorha (Captain Joseph Brant's step – brother) was clearly listed on a deed as "of the Beaver" (Halsey, 1901, p. 158; Lyman Draper Manuscripts). At that time it appears that all Mohawks were, at least at the official level, integrated into either the Turtle, Wolf or Bear Clans. Although Nicholas may have been born of a Beaver Clan ancestral link probably originally among the Wyandot descendants, he was firmly in the camp of the Mohawk Bear Clan (e.g., being on a list of Bear Clan members who accompanied Sir William Johnson to Montreal in 1760). Nicholas was born circa 1727, at a time when the Beaver Clan was still formally recognized, particularly at Canajoharie.

As noted above, in a document of 1760, "Nicolas Brant" was described as "of the Beaver". Two documents indicate that this connection was probably to the Huron / Wyandot. On 21 May 1765, John Campbell wrote to Sir William Johnson from Detroit stating that, *Two days ago Nicolas a Mohawk, a Wyandot of Sanduskey, and two Canada Indians came in to me in company with four Chiefs of the Hurons of this place* (JP, Vol. 11, p. 744). On 8 June 1766, the Mohawks showed Sir William Johnson, *the Belts they intended to send to the Huron Nation by one of their Chiefs going that way, namely, Nickus alias Kanadyora* (JP, Vol. 12, p. 122). Hence it would appear that Nicholas Brant was an ambassador to the Huron / Wyandot, doubtless spoke their language, and may have had some unspecified connection with the Huron / Wyandots of Sandusky Ohio, and Detroit (which includes Amherstburg, Anderdon, Ontario).

One interpretation here is that the Cotter – Nelles sachemship may have encompassed a group of Mohawk families all of whom were descendants of Nicholas Brant's family (or related Huron / Wyandots).

In exploring the Wyandot – Onondaga – Mohawk connection, the following observations may or may not be relevant. Among the Onondaga the head chief is Atotarho. Also sachems, but linked as "cousins" and holding a special relationship to Atotarho, are Enneserarenh and Dehatkahthos or Tchakatons of the Beaver Clan (Hale, 1881). The first "cousin" has a name that resembles the Mohawk Astawenserontha; and the second "cousin" is remotely similar to Tahatonne or Tahanata. This "cousin" relationship being somewhat similar to the relationship between the Mohawk titles being highlighted by the bracket used by George Martin to join them (in 1815).

Ultimately the "Beaver Tribe" likely represented a very powerful sub - group among the Mohawk Bear Clan, and may have attained considerable status in the new community – but not forgetting their roots, nor severing their connections to the homeland in Canada,

or their distant kin among the Wyandot. Since they were fully adopted Mohawks (and there being relatively few “true” Mohawks), the Huron Bear Tribe may have furnished the lineage for the Astawenserontha sachemship, as well as the closely associated Tahatonne / Tahanata sachemship which is outside the original Mohawk three from the days of the founding of the League (the Five Nations Confederacy) and may have Wyandot - Onondaga roots. Among the Huron / Wyandot, over the course of time, the Bear phratry (Bear and Deer clans) was linked to the Turtle phratry (Turtle and Beaver clans) via the division into moieties (halves). These terms roughly meaning “side” used by anthropologists to signal divisions or groupings between clans each of which had reciprocal duties (e.g., to condole members of the other “side”). Hence the Bear and Beaver clans were associated from early days (Sioui, 1999, p.115).

There is also archaeological evidence of a link between families of Upper Mohawks, and a group who appeared to place a special emphasis (symbolic or otherwise). The site of the Upper Mohawk Castle in the early 1700s is shown as Tarajiorhees (Upper) Castle on contemporary maps, and was an early component of the Canajoharie Castle complex which extended to Nowadaga Creek. Its “lifespan” was from 1693 to 1755 (with probably a few families remaining here to the time of the American Revolution). There is an associated burial site here with some interesting, or even diagnostic, artifacts (grave goods). Googling “beaver amulets” results in zero hits. However at the Galligan Site #2 there are a minimum of two burials which include as grave goods beaver amulets. Grave 16F has a single (silver) 5 cm beaver amulet with a string of beads. Grave 16G (the proximity suggesting a family relationship) has seven catlinite beavers among a string of beads (Snow, 1995a, pp. 466-7). Clearly those buried in this area of the Cemetery had a “connection” with the beaver. In discussing the Hopewell “mound builders” (c. 200 BC to 400 AD) Fagan (2011) reported that, *We know, from the pendants, of at least nine clans, each with animal or totem associations* (p.214). Hence, these beaver pendants were likely the expression of a strong attachment to a specific clan, and provides cross validation of the Upper Mohawk “beaver connection” that extended to at least the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century – perhaps further.

There is, however, no evidence that the Hill family were Wyandot descendants – but by virtue of the number of Huron among the Mohawks in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, this has to be considered a distinct possibility. Their being of the Bear Clan makes it impossible to differentiate Mohawk Bear and Wyandot Bear – at some point they became one. One interesting observation, although somewhat late in time (1890s), which is that one of the Tuscarora Sachems was “Karinyentye” of the Beaver (Chadwick, 1897). This appears to be the same name as Karonghyontye in Mohawk (David Hill’s personal name from the Bear Clan).

To this point there are strong suggestions that the father of Catharine Young (first wife of Lt. John Young), may have been the adopted daughter of Nicholas Brant Canadiorha of Wyandot - Beaver ancestry, or a close relative; which would serve to account for the statement in the Nelles obituary.

It stands to reason that John Young would marry into an acculturated and prominent family (marriage was transacted as a way to economic or political advancement) of Canajoharie. None in that vicinity meets the criteria better than the Brant family of Canajoharie (Upper Mohawk Castle), and further afield the Hill family of Tiononderoge (Lower Mohawk Castle). In the 1789 deed of sale for Ft. Hunter, Captain Joseph Brant signed to represent the Canajoharie Mohawks and Captain David Hill (noted in the 1792 Campbell Diary) did the same for the Ft. Hunter Mohawks.

At the time of his marriage to Catharine circa 1765-7, John Young, later lieutenant of the Six Nation Indian Department, resided at Canajoharie on property owned by his father Adam on the Van Horne Tract among the Mohawk settlements between Ft. Hendrick opposite the mouth of East Canada Creek, and the most westerly cluster at Indian Castle. However it is important to note that proximity was one of the major determining factors in selecting a marriage partner. It was most typical to marry neighbors, generally close ones at that – certainly among the Palatine Germans of the Mohawk Valley (Jones, 1986). Young resided among the Canajoharie Mohawks at the Upper Castle. It was 36 miles to the Ft. Hunter Lower Castle. While finding a marriage partner who was residing in the latter location was certainly possible, it was somewhat improbable – although the previously noted pre-Revolution association between the Young family and the Ft. Hunter Mohawks, likely the Hill family, needs to be explained.

The above suggests that it was very likely that Catharine was also residing at Canajoharie in the 1760s. The Johnson Papers make note that by 1755 Nicholas Brant was in the process of building a house near Ft. Hendrick in Canajoharie (Upper Castle), perhaps to join his father who had moved there about 1753.

It was the acculturated Mohawks who tended to be scrupulous about ensuring that each child was baptized (whether the event would be recorded by the minister is another matter), and tended to accept or encourage their children's marriages to prominent White men – the Brants and Hills being the most sterling example of this tendency in the Mohawk Valley and in the early days along the Grand River. Unnamed daughters of Brant Canagaradunckwa had liaisons with Sir William Johnson and had an unknown number of children by him. However, one of whom, Lt. Brant Johnson, married a white woman. Joseph Brant's sister Molly Brant also married Sir William Johnson. Esther Hill married Epaph. Lord Phelps, and Mary Hill married William Kennedy Smith (see Faux, 2002).

There was a small handful of Mohawks named Catharine baptized between 1745 and 1749 (the target year range based on Catharine's age in the Census of Niagara of 1783, which indicates that she was born circa 1747). However there is generally a "problem" in an attempt to link any to the matter here under discussion. The only recorded Mohawk baptism of a Catharine in 1747 occurred 3 June at the Schenectady Reformed Dutch Church. This is the anomalous entry noted earlier where the only thing certain is that the father of Nicholas Brant, Brant (Canagaradunckwa) and step - mother Christina as sponsors. [Click here](#) to see the baptismal record.

Nicholas / Nicus / Nickus etc. was the step – brother of Captain Joseph Brant Thayendinagea. Joseph was the head Upper Mohawk chief during the Revolution, Captain in the Six Nations Indian Department, a friend and colleague of John Young, and approved the grant of land on the Reserve for Young in 1787. Their friendship is reflected, perhaps, in the fact that John Young named his youngest son Joseph (born 1782), Joseph Brant witnessed the sale of John's Loyalist land grant at the Head of the Lake to Richard Beasley in 1803, and John's being a witness to almost every deed signed at Councils at the Grand River (as well as the Council minutes) to the time of his death. It has also been proposed that Catharine named her youngest son after her youngest brother, Joseph Hill Sr. of Tyendi©aga.

In summary, Nickus (Nicholas etc. Canadiorha), and others tied to the Bear Clan and the Hill family, was of the "Beaver Tribe" (Mohawk, but originally Wyandot) which could be the connection noted in the Nelles obituary (via the large extended Beaver Tribe family members among the Upper Mohawks whose representative among the Principal Chiefs was Tahatonne then Tahanata of the Bear Clan). Even if Catharine had been adopted by Nicholas Brant, she and her descendants could expect to benefit from this linkage due to the nature of adoptive relationships among the Mohawk (see Sievertsen, 1996).

### **Oral History Evidence**

Almost a year after this manuscript was presented to the family members present at the Young Reunion in July 2009, Tom Nelson was going through some old correspondence to find information on some of his Hines ancestors (who have no known link with the Wyandots). He found a reference from 2002 that, while meaning nothing to him at the time, takes on some significance in light of the present study concerning the Wyandot connection. An elderly distant relative in Fulton, New York named Bill Hines recalled, *Also my father says his father or great grandfather was chief of the winedot tribe in canada.* He further said, without any prompting, that ultimately these "winedot", *moved to the west to where the Apaches or Cherokees lived.* The recollection does not have any tie to the Hines family, so Tom believes that, *This is an example of family history being passed between relations and then getting distorted as applying to one family line, when it was another. This would have been a reference to the Six Nations ancestry in the YOUNG family through Celestia having married Charles Harrison HINES who was a first cousin of Bill's father.* Further that, *This has to be in reference to Warner NELLES being made a Chief of the Beavers (which was of Wyandot origin) – (Tom Nelson, personal communication, 23 March 2010).* Informants on the Six Nations Reserve have told the author that there are still to this day families on the Six Nations Reserve who recognize their connection to the Wyandot.

**Tahatonne and Tahanata – Astawenserontha Bear Tribe / Clan:** If John Young married the above Catharine then, based on the status of her grandson Warner Henry Nelles, it is evident that Catharine's adopted father must have been of the Astawenserontha Bear Tribe / Clan lineage, as well as her biological mother.



In the Johnson Papers there is an entry written 14 August 1761 in Johnson's "Detroit Journal", stating that *Nickus the Mohawk, with his party encamped here last night. He told me he expected White Hame [White Hans, Johannes Crine], his uncle, would be up with us in a day or two* (JP, Vol. 13, p. 240). Johannes Crine (aka "White Hans") was baptized 28 January 1722 to Kryn (Crine) and Anna at the Albany Reformed Dutch Church. Nickus Brant Canadiorha's mother was Catharine (wife of Brant Canadaradunckwa). The above-mentioned Crine Anaquendahonji and Anna had a daughter Catharine who was baptized on 21 June 1712 at the Schenectady Reformed Dutch Church.

Captain Aaron Hill Kanonraron (brother of Captain David Hill) stated, in his own words, that White Hans was his uncle. Thus, in this case Aaron Jr.'s mother was the elder Margaret, daughter of Kryn Anequendahonji and Anna, and the sister of Johannes Crine (White Hans). Mary Hill Kateriunigh, daughter of Margaret Crine, was also the niece of White Hans (Sievertsen, 1996). It is therefore possible that Nicholas Brant was a biological uncle of the female he adopted (again Sievertsen provides examples of this form of adoption occurring among the Mohawk).

If Catharine was in attendance at Niagara when the principal men and women of both villages sold their interest to Jelles Fonda, as would be likely, she will probably be found among those from Canajoharie (her place of residence at the time of the Revolution). There is no Catharine with a name found among the Astawenserontha family on the Ft. Hunter deed. Among the Canajoharie Upper Mohawks there is a Katharin Kayakhon whose name is beside a symbol (totem) of the Bear Clan. [Click here](#) to view this item. All of the women's names were written by a clerk, so even if she did write, there will be no surname. This was true for other Mohawks such as the first female signator, Gonwatsijayenni Wari (Wolf totem). This is Mary Brant Johnson (see DCB, Konwatsiatsiaienni, online). The next individual was Hester Davis Sakagoha of the Wolf Clan on the same list but again no suranme. It turns out the Kayakhon is a name from the Astawenserontha Bear Clan family. Thus, while the evidence is not direct, it would appear reasonable to assert that **the wife of John Young, Catharine, was Catharine Kayakhon**. Based on the translation of the name by Philip Henhawk (personal communication, 7 March 2011), Kayakhon means, "She Breaks / Cuts All of Them". [Click here](#) for the specifics of the translation.

It is perhaps important to note that many genealogical studies do not probe to this depth when the evidence is acceptable as is. The present author has extended the reach more out of the desire to be 100% sure. However when working in what amounts to "ethnic genealogy", at the time under consideration, "certainty" in relation to the identity of a female ancestor is often unattainable.

If, as intimated above, John Young was related to both the Brants and the Hills via his wife, a reasonable question is whether there is evidence of a continuing affiliation with these families along the Grand River. The fact that Joseph Brant was a witness to the sale of John Young's Loyalist grant at the Head of the Lake has already been noted, as has John's attendance and signature as witness to almost every Six Nations document from

the first days of settlement until he death in 1812. Furthermore, the youngest son of Joseph Brant, John Brant, was elected to the House of Assembly in 1832, *with the support of settlers on the Six Nations' lands, especially Warner Nelles, an election official* (Herring, 1998, p.57). Furthermore on 17 September 1791 in the William Nelles Account Book there is an entry, *Aaron Hill Capt David Son to Wm Nelles*. This debt was discharged by John Young at an unspecified date (Toronto Public Library, Baldwin Room).

In summary:

The Beaver Tribe / Clan comes from the Wyandot “branch” of the Upper Mohawks, from the descendants of the Crine, Hill and Brant families of the Bear Tribe / Clan Astawenserontha family. Both the names Tahatonne and Tahanata reflect that link.

Mary was the head women of the Astawenserontha Bear Tribe / Clan, daughter of Aaron Hill Oseragheté and Margaret Crine (Green). Apparently Mary, likely the eldest sister, may have been entitled to choose the first Astawenserontha to fill the shoes of David Hill. Mary Hill (Lower Mohawk), was ultimately entitled to choose the Astawenserontha successor circa 1790 and her son Seth Hill got the nod. Subsequently an unknown descendant or descendants of Mary had the right to select a candidate to fill the associated Tahatonne then Tahanata Bear Tribe / Clan Upper Mohawk titles (Francis Cotter then Warner Henry Nelles). There may have been some political reasons for this split, relating to the perception of a segment of the Mohawk community led by elements of the Astawenserontha family members linked to the Wyandot, that they were the victims of discrimination as Upper Mohawks.

Since Mary's eldest daughter Catharine Young (wife of Lt. John Young) had died (circa 1793), Catharine's proposed sister or niece Margaret Cotter selected her son Francis to be installed with the sachemship, and likely used his personal name Tahatonne. When Cotter was “dehorned” in 1817, or simply left to join the Wyandot, it is possible that as a parting gesture Margaret Cotter chose her grand nephew Warner H. Nelles as her son's successor (there being no evidence that she lost her status as Clan Matron). Otherwise the right to choose the successor of the Tahatonne/Tahanata sachemship may have gone directly to Margaret's niece, Catharine's daughter Elizabeth (Young) Nelles. It is important to emphasize that there is no direct evidence showing the specific relationship between the Cotters and the Youngs. All that can be offered are reasonable assumptions.

**Beaver Tribe Scattered 1817 – 1896:** The above obituary of Warner H. Nelles stated that to the time of his death he was still recognized as chief, but that the Beaver Tribe “is greatly scattered”. It may be the large extended family of the Mohawk Beaver group, Upper Mohawks, descendants (biological or adopted) of the Crine and Wyandot faction, for whom a special sachemship was created. Many of this family / group had chosen to settle at Sandusky prior to the raising up of Cotter. When Nelles was installed, the diminishing number of remaining members of the Beaver Tribe moved to Amherstburg near Detroit in Ontario, as well as Upper Sandusky, and Honey Creek in Ohio. All of

these were Wyandot and Seneca – Mohawk settlements. Most eventually moved west to allotments in Kansas and Oklahoma.

Others were to follow scattering throughout the succeeding years. Documented surnames of Mohawks residing in the Sandusky – Detroit area include Cotter, Brant, Battise, Garlow and Bumberry, names (with the exception of Cotter) still known also at Six Nations. The origin of the David Young among the Wyandot is unknown. In a list of Upper Mohawk property holders at the Grand River, 3 January 1843, there was a notation beside the name David Froman, “Sandusky” (RG10, Vol. 140, p.170338). David Froman was residing among the Wyandot at Wyandotte, Kansas on 14 June 1844 (Miller, 1881). So indeed, the word “scattered” would seem to apply.

The present author is well aware that the above linkage involves some speculation, but there simply does not seem to be any other way to explain all of the available data – no further documentation is expected since the author has exhausted most or all of the available sources.

**The Installation Procedure:** To close with reference to the last clause in the Nelles obituary, it is perhaps noteworthy that the obituary informants were entirely accurate in their reporting of the manner of installing a new chief among the Six Nations (further external validation). During what is termed the Condolence Ceremony, when the new chief is "raised up", the string or strings of wampum are used as a sacred emblem to "crown" the candidate chief, Warner H. Nelles, hence the Condoling Chiefs **threw over his head** the wampum. In looking at the images of David Hill (1776 – [click here](#)), he is wearing wampum (most white, some purple), in their hair, cascading down from the top. He has three strings, with the leather end being prominent in one string, and wears this wampum on the right side of his head, with two strings in front of the ear. The design is virtually identical to # 57 *String containing a chief's name* (p.349) also with three strings (Beauchamp, 1901). The new chief keeps the wampum strings as *their certificate of office* (Tehanetorens, 1983, p.5) – and in the early days this seems to have meant actually wearing the wampum, as a badge, where it could be most readily seen and identified. It appears that David wore the wampum strings on his head, at least during formal occasions – which would tangibly denote his chiefly status – representing the “horns of office”. The fact that the Chiefs placed the wampum over Nelles’ head during the installation ceremony fits well with the descriptions of his above maternal kin when presiding at official functions.

At this point it may be helpful to note the general uses of wampum in Native American societies. Wampum are shell beads made from the whelk, generally from sources along the Atlantic Coast. There are two colors, white (signifying something positive), and purple (which can have a more negative connotation such death in its use in mourning rituals). Wampum has been used as currency by Europeans, and had a set value. The Six Nations use it to make strings for use in communicating messages and in the Condolence Ritual (more on this later). Another use is to weave the wampum beads into long belts composed of figures such as a tree in order to symbolize something, and to be used a

mnemonic device to recall the specifics of a treaty or obligation of some kind. Basically wampum had a very high degree of symbolic as well as monetary value.

The fact that Nelles still had the wampum strings supports the idea that it was a sachemship for life, and that he was not “dehorned” by the Clan Matrons despite his apparent lack of participation, probably since it was not one of the ancient Bear Clan sachemships. This would explain why Tahanata (or the surname Nelles) does not appear among any documents signed by the chiefs in Council – Nelles left the Grand River in the 1820s; nor does it (or Tahatonne) occur among any of the Astawenserontha “Warriors Names” in the Seth Newhouse Manuscript. It appears to be in a class by itself, and was likely chosen from among Wyandot - related names associated with the Bear Tribe to be used for political reasons only at the time (circa 1814) when factionalism was tearing apart the fabric of Mohawk society at the Grand River. It did not seem to work as planned since, as noted above the first-known office holder, Francis Cotter, left the Six Nations of the Grand River to become a member of the Wyandot Nation; and many or most of the malcontents moved west over time to ultimately reside in the adjoining Seneca and Wyandot Reservations of the Quapaw Agency in Oklahoma. Furthermore the successor of the sachemship, Warner H. Nelles, was also unable to carry out his duties due to his residential situation.

An assessment of the above evidence, guided by the Law of Parsimony, allows the following interpretation as to the wives of Lt. John Young:

### **Conclusion** –

- 1) Catharine Hill Kayakhon (“She Breaks All of Them”), Mohawk of the Bear Clan Astawenserontha family (although with a link to the Wyandot Beaver Clan as seen in the Nelles obituary of 1896 and related documents), born about 1747 to Mary Hill Kateriunigh and a white father, possibly Sir William Johnson, married about 1765, and died about 1793, was the mother to all four of Young’s surviving children.
- 2) Priscilla (Ramsay) Nelles, a white captive among the Indians, born unknown, married about 1793, died about 1817. No issue.

Unfortunately additional documentary information that would offer further clarity is unlikely to surface (the author has been looking for 35 years). In the opinion of the present author, under the circumstances, it is best to maintain the status quo.

### **Admixture in the Lineage of Catharine Young -**

The genealogical (plus genetic evidence discussed elsewhere) taken as a whole strongly suggests that Catharine Hill was highly admixed. It is possible that she was more biologically European than Native American. On her paternal side she may have had a white father, and the most likely candidate would be Sir William Johnson. Her maternal great uncle was “White Hans” Crine (Green), a “whitish Indian”. Also her first cousin at the time of the War of 1812 was known as John “Blue Eyed” Green. If Joseph Chew’s

addendum referred to Johnson's daughters at Canajohary in 1749 as "madam Curl'd locks" is a direct description, this would again appear to reflect a mixed heritage. Recalling the Campbell Diary's description of the blended European and Indian heritage of David Hill, uncle to Catharine, [click here](#) to see a picture of the facial features of David Hill. In addition, a justice of the peace recorded that Catharine's youngest son Joseph had "grey eyes" and "brown hair" when he signed an oath of allegiance to the Crown in order to secure his land grant in Vaughan Township (Reaman, 1971, p.31).

This clearly indicates considerable European biological ancestry, although Mohawk maternal cultural heritage. This heritage may explain the low "Asian" scores on the 23andMe test. However, descendants of Catharine have percentages of "Native American" at more expected levels on the DNAPrint Test. While it can be argued that more weight should be given to the 23andMe test, the use of "Asian" (Han Chinese) as a proxy for Native American is troubling.

Perhaps a consideration of the blending of the genealogical and genetic sources would provide an appropriate exit strategy for the present study by examining phenotype. Over the years frequent comments have been made to the effect that many of the pictures of the earlier generations of this branch of the Young family strongly hint at some percentage of Native American. [Click here](#) to see some examples. This data is, however, highly subjective, and the phenotype (what is seen in the mirror) may not necessarily reflect the genotype (biological heritage). However, based on the sum total of available evidence, the author has concluded that the pictorial representations of facial features reflect the documented admixed Mohawk - Wyandot and European genetic ancestry of these Young and Nelles descendants.

## CONCLUSION:

Interpretation in Light of the Above Evidence - First it is important to note that the incompleteness of the record sources from the various communities of the Mohawk Valley and the Grand River Valley (e.g., baptismal and marriage registers), it has been necessary to rely on the material that retains a "fuzzy" quality and is at times open to more than one interpretation. Hence, as is true of much genealogical work, it is possible to derive a family tree which is likely correct – but it has to be admitted here that it may never be possible to put forward a completely definitive version of Catharine Young's ancestry.

The major aim of the present study was to explore the evidence relating to the ancestry of Catharine, the mother of all four children of Lt. John Young – Abraham Young, John Young Jr., Elizabeth (Young) Nelles, and Joseph Young. Based on the preponderance of evidence, and on a balance of probabilities, **the mother of Lt. John Young's children was Catharine "Brant-Hill-Johnson" Kayakhon (1747 – 1793), adopted daughter of Nicholas Brant Canadiorha and biological daughter of Mary Hill Kateriunigh (Mohawk Bear Tribe / Clan, Astawenserontha family), both of whom had ties to the Wyandot Beaver Tribe / Clan. Some evidence points to her biological father being Sir William Johnson.**

It is important to note that Captain Joseph Brant Thayendenagea took the surname Brant from the given name of his step – father Brant Canagaradunckwa. He was the step – brother of Nicholas Brant Canadiorha, and Catharine Young was Joseph Brant’s step – niece. Therefore while there is a family connection between the families of John Young and Joseph Brant, it is clearly not biological.

More Conservative Interpretation – If one were to be perfectly frank about the data, and put aside the natural tendency to want the fruits of one’s research to yield a detailed genealogy of distant ancestors, the following must be considered. There are “gaps” in the information stream that can be filled, but by sometimes something of a Procrustean fit.

Hence if we were to look at only what can be said with relative certainty a more “bare bones” interpretation in relation to Catharine Young emerges:

- a) The surname of Catharine, first wife of John Young, is unknown.
- b) Catharine was, at least in the maternal line, of Six Nations Indian ancestry.
- c) Catharine was of the Mohawk Bear Clan, Astawenserontha family, linked to the Hill and Green family formerly of Ft. Hunter. The evidence shows that a tie predates the Revolution and the death of Catharine.
- d) A Mohawk Bear Clan chiefly title, Tahanata, meaning **Towards his village**, is associated with the family. It came to the Young – Nelles family in 1817 when Warner H. Nelles was raised up in this name by the Six Nations in Council.
- e) There is a relationship in the maternal line with the former holder of the title, Chief Francis Cotter Tahatonne, meaning **He is coming to the end of it**, of the Upper (Canajoharie) Mohawks who in 1817 joined the Wyandot of Anderdon Township. His father was a white man, and his mother Margaret was listed in one document as a Lower (Ft. Hunter) Mohawk.

The genetic evidence is pointing strongly toward an even greater percentage of admixture than the above would suggest. In order to blend the two data sources with some degree of harmony, it will be necessary to propose that not only did Catharine have a European father, but the same would hold for her mother Mary who, being the eldest daughter of an unwed Clan Mother Margaret Green, may have simply been adopted by Aaron Hill Oseraghete when he married Mary’s mother. Scenarios such as these within the Mohawk community are quite common (see Sievertsen, 1998).

ADDENDUM re the Astawenserontha Green and Hill Family and Names Pertaining to the Present Study:

The following names follow different paths of “certainty”. Generally those who were from the Lower Mohawk Village at Ft. Hunter are the best documented and hence there is little to no doubt about the identifications. However when it comes to the generation which moves to the Upper Mohawk Village at Canajoharie, the level of confidence in the identifications goes down correspondingly.

- a) Descendants of Margaret Crine (Green) Konwatyennih, daughter of Anna, daughter of Eva Jawaandasse –

**Lower Mohawk / Upper Mohawk**

- 1) Mary Hill Kateriunigh whose son Seth Hill Kanenkaregowagh became Astawenserontha before 1800, and who was half brother to Catharine Kayakhon below – residing Tyendinaga
- 2) Margaret Hill Kayadontyi the widow of Captain Daniel Oghnawera – residing Tyendinaga
- 3) Aaron Hill Kanonraron – residing Grand River
- 4) John Hill Oteroughyanente – died during Revolution
- 5) David Hill Karonghyontye (Astawenserontha) – residing Grand River

- b) Descendants of Mary (Hill) Kateriunigh –

**Upper Mohawk / Lower Mohawk**

- 1) Catharine (Brant-Hill-Johnson) Young Kayakhon whose grandson Warner H. Nelles became Tahanata (1817-1896), succeeding his cousin Francis Cotter Tahatonne – residing Grand River
- 2) Seth Hill Kanenkaregowagh who inherited the titles “Captain” and the Bear Clan sachemship Astawenserontha from his maternal uncle Captain David Hill – residing Grand River
- 3) Margaret (Brant) Cotter Konwathseh whose son Francis Cotter became Tahatonne was a sachem (circa 1812 to 1817) – residing Grand River
- 4) Other half siblings, all appear to have settled at Tyendinaga, Bay of Quinte, notably John Hill and Joseph Hill Sr.

ADDENDUM re Name Karonghyontye:

It is of interest that the name Karonghyontye or “Flying Sky” appears to have been a high status name among other Six Nations and other First Nations groups. Here are some examples harvested from the Internet:

- 1) Mohawk of Kanawaki. One Louis Karoniontie “Flying Sky” (born circa 1820) was a prominent man among the “Iroquois” in Quebec (Gerin, 1899/00).
- 2) Oneida of Oneida Castle, New York. In the Joseph O. Powless diary he notes that on 16 July 1831, “Flying Sky, an important man” died.
- 3) Tuscarora of New York. Chadwick (1897) listed Karinyentya as a Beaver Clan Tuscarora title that was not found on the Six Nations Reserve. Karinyentya is clearly the Tuscarora version of “Flying Sky”.

- 4) Ojibways of Cass Lake. Among this non – Iroquoian Sky) and whose photo was taken in 1863.

ADDENDUM re Name Tahanata and Tahatonne:

The title represented by the name Tahanata (which came to the fore when Francis Cotter Tahatonne left for Wyandot territory) remained in the Young – Nelles family until 1896 at which point it appears to have become extinct. One reason is that Nelles left the Grand River soon after assuming the title (although his father Warner Sr. was a frequent attendee at Six Nations Councils); another is that there would seem to have been few families in the Grand River area to comprise a cohesive unit for the Beaver “tribe”; and a further matter was that there was no one remaining in the female line of the Nelles or closely related families to assume the role of Clan Mother. So the name and title were effectively lost to the Six Nations virtually from the moment Nelles was raised up as Tahanata.

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