

### Coming Full Circle: The Seneca Nation of Indians, 1848-1934

Frank Rzeczkowski  
Xavier University, rzeczkowskif@xavier.edu

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## Review

**Rzeczkowski, Frank**

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**Hauptman, Laurence M.** *Coming Full Circle: The Seneca Nation of Indians, 1848-1934*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2019. \$34.95 ISBN 9780806162690

The title of Laurence Hauptman's *Coming Full Circle: The Seneca Nation of Indians, 1848-1934* has a double meaning; not only does it chronicle the development and maturity of a new form of government among the Seneca of the Allegany and Cattaragus reservations during that era, it also fills the final temporal gap in Hauptman's nearly 50 years of study and scholarship on the Iroquois (and more specifically the Seneca Nation of Iroquois) since American independence.

Hauptman's focus here – as in his other works – is on Iroquois responses to crises generated by outside interests seeking control of tribal lands and resources. By the early 1840s the Seneca – along with other Iroquois communities – faced the near-total loss of their remaining lands in New York state. He argues that the 'revolution' of 1848 in which Seneca affiliated with the Allegany and Cattaragus reservations replaced an existing council of chiefs with an elected government was not engineered by outsiders but the product of Iroquois men and women seeking more effective ways to blunt the drive for Seneca dispossession and removal.

Though the revolution did not end Seneca political infighting, Hauptman argues that Seneca leaders generally set aside factional differences in confronting threats posed by the arrival of railroads in New York's southern tier, the boom generated by the oil development, and recurring efforts by the state of New York to tax and exercise jurisdiction over Seneca lands. Ironically, Congressional efforts to allot Seneca lands in late 1800s and early 1900s stalled, not just as a result of Seneca opposition, but also due to the difficulties of resolving the Ogden Land Company's preemptive claim on Seneca territory. Hauptman proves to be an apt guide in shepherding readers through the legal morasses and complexities of legislation, land claims, and treaties that render Iroquois history so complex. Given the Iroquois' experiences in dealing with

outsiders, it is little wonder that Seneca Nation voters resoundingly rejected the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 that provides an end point for Hauptman's work.

Beyond politics, Hauptman devotes several chapters to Seneca society during the mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century, documenting the influence and impact of Anglo-American culture and the persistence of Iroquois values in areas ranging from religion to athletics, and the education of Seneca children in both local institutions and boarding schools – with particular attention to Senecas' experiences at Hampton Institute. Better known as a center of education for African-American children after the Civil War, Hauptman claims that Hampton significantly influenced Seneca educational, political, religious, and social life – to the extent that Cattaragus Senecas chartered a Hampton alumni association chapter. Seventy-nine Seneca Nation children eventually attended Hampton, including future Seneca Nation President Ray Jimerson and tribal councilor Leroy Snow. Hauptman suggests that Seneca children were better equipped to deal with Hampton's educational regime than children from other Indian communities, given the Iroquois' hundreds of years of contact with non-Indian society, and their prior experience with Anglo-American educational institutions.

Hauptman's discussion of Seneca participation in the Civil War, in contrast, is cursory at best; an understandable decision given his previous publication *The Iroquois in the Civil War*. Those unfamiliar with the social and political structure of the Seneca Nation may be disappointed by the near-total absence of Ely S. Parker, arguably the most-famous Iroquois of his era. However, Parker - Ulysses S. Grant's aide-de-camp and first Native American commissioner of Indian affairs - belonged to the Tonawanda Seneca, a separate federally-recognized Seneca community. The parallel absence of any in-depth discussion of the Seneca Nation's relationship to the rest of the Iroquois Confederacy is one of the few disappointments in an otherwise-exemplary work.

*Frank Rzeczkowski is a professor of history at Xavier University, and author of Uniting the Tribes: The Rise and Fall of Pan-Indian Community on the Crow Reservation.*