

they are identical with the Senecas. Doc. Hist. N. Y. Vol. 3. p. 29. As the Senecas are located by De Laets' map on the south side of Oneida Lake, Mr. Trumbull thinks that the name was bestowed by the Algonquins on the Oneidas, from the fact that *assene*, in Algonquin, signifies 'a stone,' and *ga* or *ke*, "place of," being an Algonquin translation of the Iroquois name of Oneida, into *Assinawke*, or "place of the Stone." He thinks that when the geographical divisions of the Iroquois became better known, the Senecas were assigned their true position further west, still retaining, in the nomenclature of the geographers, the name which belonged to the Oneidas. The opinion of so eminent an authority as Mr. Trumbull is certainly worthy of consideration. It would however be a more natural and satisfactory solution of the question, if their national name could be derived from the Senecas themselves. Without assuming to solve the mystery, the writer will content himself with giving some data which may possibly aid others in arriving at a reliable conclusion.

The French, in their pioneer explorations of Canada, derived their knowledge of the Senecas through the Franciscan and Jesuit Missionaries. Those holy Fathers first heard of them through the Hurons, among whom they established at a very early day the missions of their respective Orders. The Hurons called them *Sonontouerhouons*, that is, "people of *Sonnontouan*," the termination *rhonons* or *ronons* signifying "people."\*

Their name first occurs in the Jesuit Relation for 1635, and is there written by Brebenf, *Sonontoehonons*. Relation 1635, p. 33.

Le Mercier spells it *Sonontouanhrronon*. Relations 1637, p. 111.

Le Jeune mentions the *Sonontouehronons*. Relation 1640, p. 35.

They are subsequently called *Tsonontouans*. Relation 1670, page 69, and *Tshonontouans*. Le Clercq *Etablissement de la Foi* Vol. II. p. 187.

The Hurons and Senecas spoke a kindred language, and the word *Sonnontouan* is the same in both dialects. It signifies "great hill," and in the Seneca is compounded of *onondah*, hill, and *go waah*, great. The Senecas, in forming a compound word, usually drop all which follow the initial consonant of the last syllable of the noun, and the initial consonant of the adjective, and then suffix the latter to the former. Thus the compound of the above becomes *Onondowaah*, or great hill, written *Sonnontouan* by the Jesuits.† The letter S when prefixed conveys the idea of *possession*, and in some cases Ts, is substituted to represent a lisping sound of the S, which was formerly quite common among the Senecas, and is still occasionally heard.

To this word, *Onondowaah* or great hill, the suffix *gaah* was added, to denote the Seneca people. By dropping the neuter prefix O, the national title became *Nan-do-wah-gaah* or "The Great Hill people," as now used by the Senecas.

Sometimes the suffix *o-noh* is substituted for *gaah*, which would make *Nan-do-wa-o-noh*, having however the same meaning. Morgan's *League*, p. 51.

\* Relations 1635, p. 33 and 1634, p. 18. See Relation for 1670, p. 69., where it is written *Tsonnontouan*.

† Alluding to their residence on Boughton Hill where their principal village was located. See p. 10.