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978-0-521-44030-1 - A Population History of the Huron-Petun, A.D. 500-1650

Gary Warrick

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## A Population History of the Huron-Petun, A.D. 500–1650

*A Population History of the Huron-Petun, A.D. 500–1650* reconstructs the population history of the Wendat-Tionontaté (Huron-Petun) people using archaeological, paleodemographic, historical, and epidemiological research. This book argues that the Wendat-Tionontaté occupied southern Ontario for thousands of years and that maize agriculture was gradually adopted by groups who were not experiencing population pressure, but who were simply interested in supplementing their hunting, gathering, and fishing diet with a reliable food that could also be stored to avert winter famine deaths. The book demonstrates that gradual population growth followed the adoption of maize agriculture, but that rapid population growth did not occur until the fourteenth century, encouraged by the colonization of new lands. The book also documents and explains why epidemic diseases of European origin did not occur among the Wendat-Tionontaté and other Native peoples of eastern North America until the 1630s.

Gary Warrick holds a B.A. in anthropology from McMaster University, an M.A. in archaeology from Simon Fraser University, and a Ph.D in anthropology from McGill University. From 1989 to 1999 he worked for the Ministry of Transportation for the province of Ontario and was a lecturer at the University of Toronto at Mississauga from 1997 to 1999. Currently, Warrick is associate professor at the Brantford Campus of Wilfrid Laurier University. He has been published in various journals, including *Ontario Archaeology*, *Canadian Journal of Archaeology*, *Current Anthropology*, *World Archaeology*, and *Journal of World Prehistory*. He was also featured in *The Ethics of Archaeology* (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

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GARY WARRICK

*Wilfrid Laurier University, Ontario*



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*To Carolyn and Caitlin*

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## Preface

Research for this book began in 1984 and was originally designed to explore the effects of depopulation among the seventeenth-century Tionontaté of southern Ontario, Canada. Two historical village sites threatened by subdivision development were selected for archaeological investigation, and plans for lengthy excavations were drawn up. However, on learning that both sites were to be saved from imminent destruction and, in fact, stood a good chance of long-term preservation by heritage designation, I decided to abandon my research design. A week later, I scheduled a meeting with my supervisor, Professor Bruce Trigger. Instead of trying to convince me to continue with the Tionontaté research, he actually welcomed my decision to abandon it. He then asked how I felt about expanding the original research proposal. After a long afternoon of discussion, he convinced me to write a history of the Wendat-Tionontaté (Huron-Petun) population from A.D. 500 to A.D. 1650. A feasibility study demonstrated to Professor Trigger and me that existing archaeological data, supplemented by additional fieldwork, were adequate to bring such a study to a successful conclusion.

Fieldwork in Simcoe County in 1985 and 1986 was generously supported by two consecutive Ontario Heritage Foundation Research Grants and by a McGill University Graduate Faculty Research Grant. Full-time academic research was made possible by a Max Bell Fellowship in Canadian Studies (1984–1985) and three years of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship (1985–1988).

Compilation of Wendat-Tionontaté village site data would have been extremely difficult without the kind assistance of Kathy Gray (former Data Co-Ordinator, Archaeology Unit, Ontario Ministry of Culture), who permitted open access to Ontario's archaeological site database contained in paper and computer files, maps, and unpublished reports. A number of archaeological colleagues were most generous with advice, critical discussion, and unpublished data: Jeff Bursey, Peter Carruthers, Bill Finlayson, Bill Fox, Charles Garrad, Jamie Hunter, Ian Kenyon, Dean Knight, Paul Lennox, Rob

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MacDonald, Jim Molnar, Roberta O'Brien, Bob Pearce, Dana Poulton, Peter Ramsden, Dean Snow, Peter Timmins, and Ron Williamson.

I want to thank my doctoral supervisory committee, Professor Michael Bisson, Professor Fumiko Ikawa-Smith, and the late Professor Bruce Trigger, for their guidance, patience, and genuine interest in my academic pursuits and for their constructive criticism and editorial assistance with rough drafts of the dissertation. I am especially indebted to Bruce Trigger, whom I consider my mentor and my academic father. I consider myself privileged to have had the opportunity to study with such a gifted scholar. His wisdom, intellectual stimulation, and unflinching support will always be remembered. It was Bruce Trigger's gentle prodding and constant encouragement that gave me the confidence to seek publication and the motivation to complete the final manuscript, which was improved immeasurably from his editorial comments. I cannot express in words my gratitude to Bruce Trigger for all that he has done for me and for this book.

More than 15 years have elapsed since the completion of the Ph.D. dissertation. This book is a revised version of that dissertation and has benefited considerably not only from new archaeological data, but also and most importantly from my friendships and discussions with descendants of the Wendat and Haudenosaunee (Six Nations Iroquois). In particular, I want to acknowledge the contribution of Georges Sioui, Michel Gros-Louis, and the late Norman Jacobs. In the 1990s, Georges Sioui shared his knowledge about Wendat history and population. Georges convinced me in our talks and by his writing that Wendat archaeology must be respectful of and relevant to the living Wendat. In 2001 and 2002, Michel Gros-Louis kindly invited me to participate in the annual gathering of Wendat at the site of the Ossossané burial ground. The experience of talking, feasting, and dancing with the Wendat within earshot of the ancestors buried in the Ossossané ossuary had a profound impact on me. I also want to acknowledge the late Norman Jacobs of the Haudenosaunee, Grand River, for sharing his insights about Six Nations history and the responsibility that archaeologists have to make their research available to the Native communities whose ancestors they study. I am thankful to these men and to other members of these communities for gently reminding me that their ancestors left a legacy far more important and lasting than potsherds and longhouse plans.

The publication of this book would not have occurred without the support of several people. First, I want to thank Neal Salisbury, Fred Hoxie, and an anonymous reviewer, who provided not only favorable reviews of the original Ph.D. dissertation, but who also made clear recommendations on how to transform the original from a rather clinical academic tome into a readable book. Also, I am indebted to Frank Smith, the series editor for Cambridge University Press, for his unremitting kindness, support, patience, and understanding in the face of lengthy delays in submitting the final manuscript.

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Production of the final manuscript was made possible by a generous Book Preparation Grant from Wilfrid Laurier University, which covered the costs of computer-generated maps and other graphics and final corrections and edits to the manuscript, completed by Phil Woodley and Candie Thomas, respectively.

Finally, every writer is sustained spiritually and emotionally by a core of special people. I want to thank my children – Zach, Courtney, Jill, and Kevin – for their unwavering love for an absent-minded father who seemed to be constantly preoccupied with “the book.” My final thanks go to Candie, whose love is a continual source of joy, strength, and inspiration.