**Chapter Outline**

to accompany

*Indigenous Peoples within Canada: A Concise History*, Fifth Edition

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**Chapter 5: The Wendat Confederacy, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the European Colonizers**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the development of the Wendat and Haudenosaunee confederacies and to demonstrate the lasting influences of Europeans—particularly that of the French and English—on these confederacies. Montreal had been established as the centre of St Lawrence trade, and the Wendat and French entered an alliance that would have lasting impacts in the region. Prior to the arrival of the French, the Wendat had been allied with the Innu, Omamiwinini, and Mi’kmaq against the Haudenosaunee. By allying with and joining the economic network of the Wendat, the French became immediate enemies with the Haudenosaunee. In addition to a trading relationship, Champlain insisted that the relationship also include one of Christian conversion; the Wendat would be the most open to Christianity in this era. He asserted that without missionary involvement, there would be no trade. The Kichesipirini, an Omamiwinini nation, would impose a system of tolls for travelers in their territory along the Ottawa River to compensate for Wendat-French trade that bypassed them.

The influence of the missionaries went far beyond attempts at conversion and, in fact, resulted in the deaths of many Wendat; it is believed the missionaries spread European diseases such as smallpox among the Wendat. This indirect spreading of disease had long-term impacts in that it caused the Wendat to question their own spirituality and spiritual leaders as the Wendat had no explanation why diseases were decimating them but not affecting Jesuit missionaries among them.

Realizing the importance of access to European trade goods, the Haudenosaunee established trading relationships with both the Dutch and English and for a time played the two European nations against each other. In the 1640s, the Haudenosaunee—especially the Kanienkehaka and Onondowaga—began blockades of the St Lawrence, stopping the Wendat and French from moving furs. As the situation intensified, the Haudenosaunee moved from attacking trade convoys to attacking settlements. As a result of these intensified attacks and the devastation from disease, the Wendat dispersed from their territory and joined other nations that accepted them. In 34 short years, the Wendat Confederacy went from the most powerful confederacy in the region to a defeated nation. The inhabitants left its territory and attempted to survive among other nations.

The impact of the dispersal of the Wendat included a change in geographic concentration of the fur trade and a greater influence of the English. This shift in geography was to more northern and westerly areas, and this paved the way for the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) to rise to prominence. The HBC realized that an alliance with the Cree was essential to success of the trade, so they made efforts to cultivate a relationship. The French also saw opportunities in the fur trade in the West, so they made efforts to establish good relationships with the Cree and other groups in the West. As a result, the various Indigenous nations became very good at taking advantage of European interests in alliance and friendship.