

TWO ROW TREATY

The Two Row wampum (Gä•sweñta') is the first recorded treaty between the Haudenosaunee and European settlers, created after a series of meetings in 1613 between the Mohawk and Dutch immigrants who were clearing areas on Mohawk land with the intention of building permanent villages and farms. The Two Row belt depicts two purple lines travelling parallel on a field of white beads. One of the purple rows was meant to represent the Haudenosaunee way of life, the other row the Dutch. Each of their ways of life would be shown in the purple rows running the length of a wampum belt. "In one row is a ship with our White Brothers' ways; in the other a canoe with our ways. Each will travel down the river of life side by side. Neither will attempt to steer the other's vessel."

The Haudenosaunee and the Dutch agreed on three principles to make this treaty last. The first was friendship; the Haudenosaunee and their white brothers will live in mutual respect. The second principle is peace; there will be peace between their two people. The final principle is forever; that this agreement will last forever.

The Two Row is considered a living treaty by the Haudenosaunee. In 2013, the Onondaga Nation and Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation (NOON) developed a statewide educational campaign to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the treaty. It was during this campaign that the City of Ithaca in collaboration with the Multicultural Resource Center passed a resolution in support of the Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign passed by the Common Council, signed by Ithaca Mayor Svante Myrick and 2nd Ward Representative Seph Murtagh. Brandon Lazore's mural design won a public contest offered by the City of Ithaca to reaffirm Ithaca's commitment to the ideals of the Two Row Treaty. Article VI of the U.S. Constitution affirms all treaties as the "supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding." As such, treaties between the governments of nations are active living agreements.