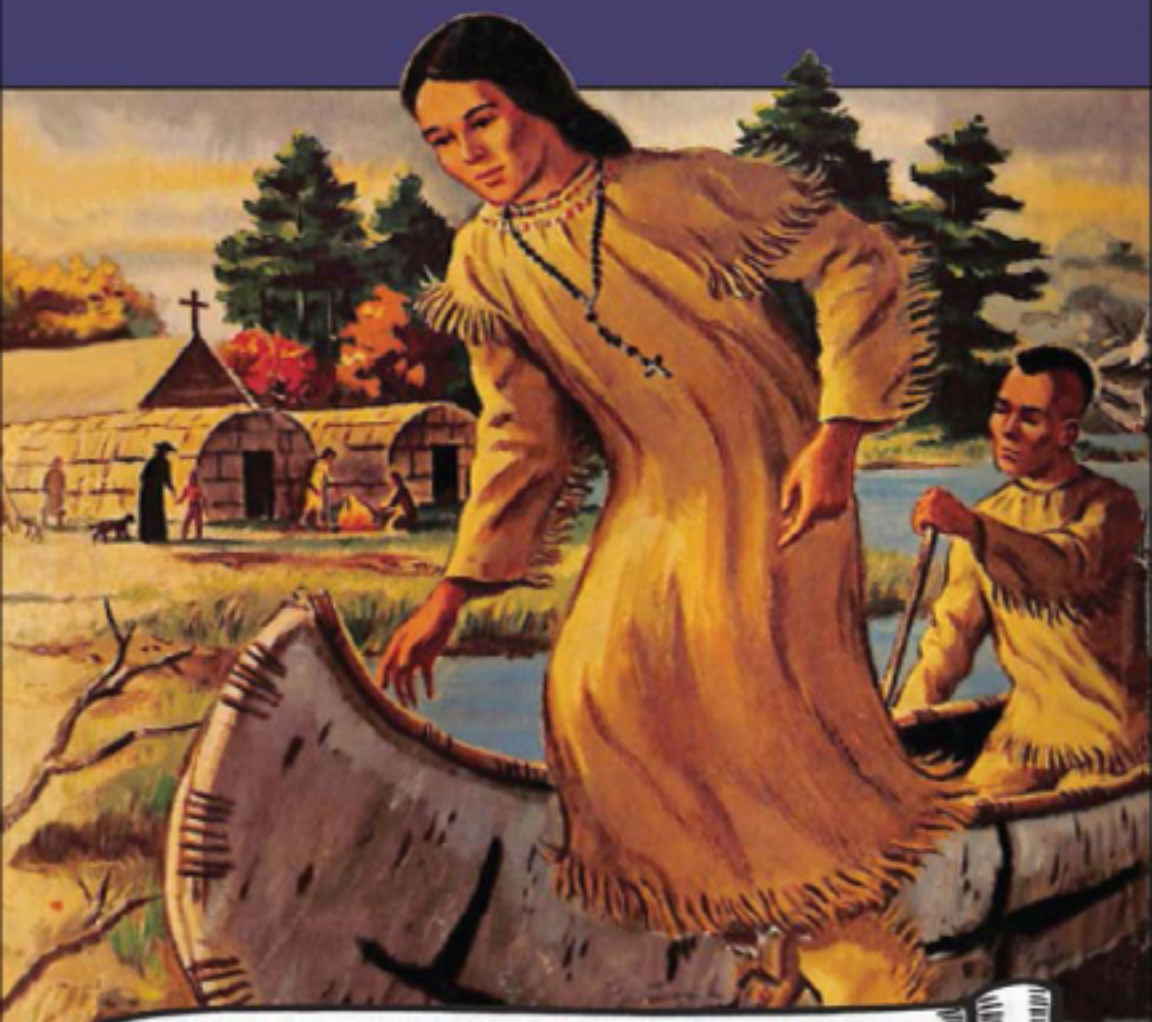


# Star of the Mohawk

Kateri Tekakwitha



*Portraits in Faith and Freedom*

Francis MacDonald

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*Kateri Tekakwitha*

by Francis MacDonald

Illustrated by Charles L. Dougherty



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# Portraits in Faith and Freedom

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*Star of the Mohawk: Kateri Tekakwitha*  
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## **Statement on Portraits in Faith and Freedom**

Bethlehem Books is bringing back this series of biographies originally made available in the 1950's and 60's by publishers who wished to introduce young people to a wide range of arresting and faithful Catholic lives. Slightly edited now for the modern reader, these biographies present key people and events from the past that help us reflect anew on the meaning of freedom. They depict how powerfully men and women of faith have formed and influenced the world in which they live.

## **Web Resources**

To access printable maps, a timeline, and other information, visit <https://www.bethlehembooks.com/star-mohawk-kateri-tekakwitha-844>

## About Usage of Outdated Terms

In republishing the books that form our *Portraits in Faith and Freedom* series, the editors considered whether it would be worthwhile to update the authors' usage of words like "Indian" and "Negro." The more current preference among many is "Native American" and "African American." The editors found, however, that changing the original terms often did not work well for the context of those times. The attitudes of respect and honesty that inspired these works—written in the 1950s and early 1960s—clearly conveyed the authors' positive meaning. In most cases, therefore, we have let the words stand.

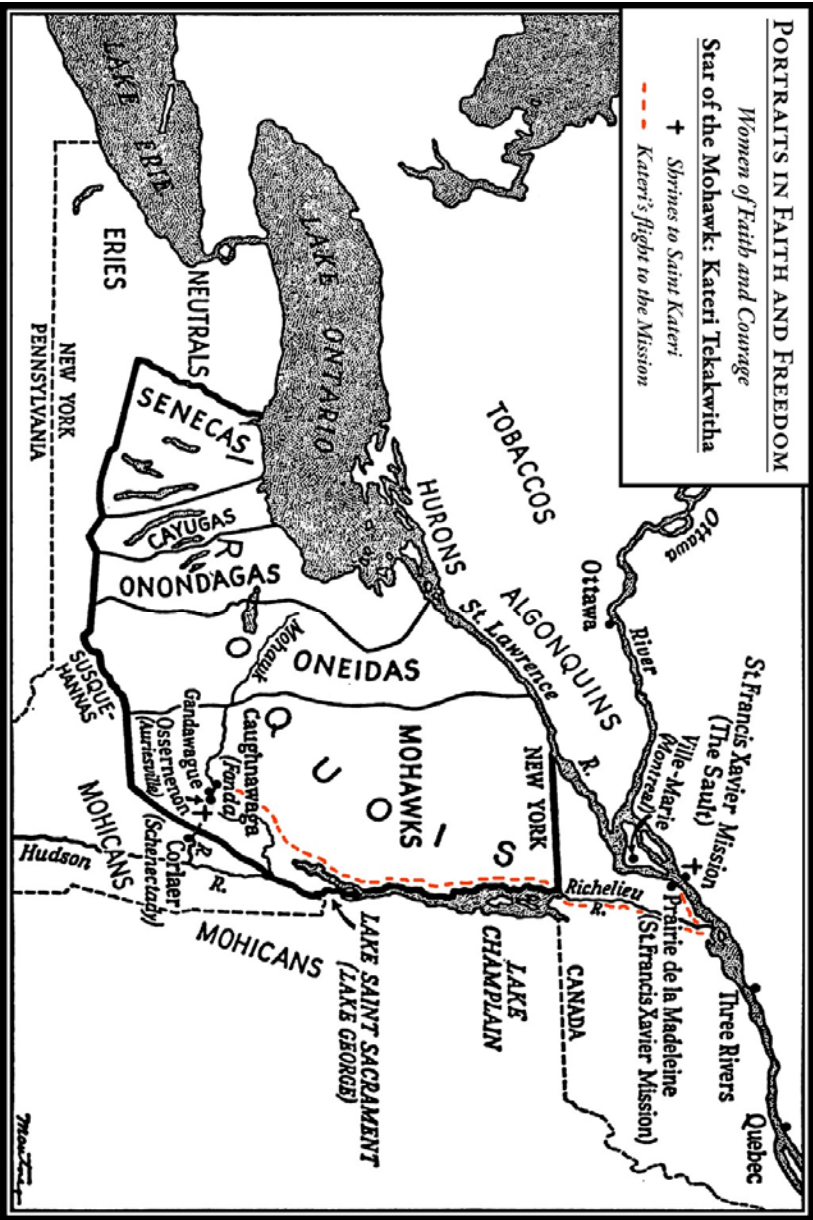
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# Map





## 1. A Captive Maiden

SIX MOHAWK SCOUTS crept silently along the river path toward a distant spiral of smoke. Kenhoronkwa, their chief, had sent them ahead of the main war party to discover whose camp they were approaching.

Just ahead of the scouts, an Algonquin sentry crouched behind a rock watching the path. Overhanging branches hid his face and the proud scalp lock bristling on the top of his head. His tomahawk and quiver lay by his right hand. His bow rested loosely in his left.

Suddenly he tensed. The snap of a breaking twig sounded sharp in the still air. A moment later the six Mohawks came into his view.

The Algonquin crouched lower, taking care not to stir even a blade of grass. "Aie! Mohawks. These devils have come to raid our lands! Perhaps I can kill them all before I warn the camp." He shifted his position slightly to reach for his arrows. The branches behind his back rustled softly.

"Hold," signaled the foremost Mohawk. The six warriors melted into the underbrush and once again the trail was empty of any sign of life. But the Algonquin's eyes were keen. He could see two men among the trees to his left, while three others were stooped between the rocks to the right. The sixth was nowhere in sight and no moving branch betrayed his position. The sentry could delay no longer. He quietly drew an arrow from his quiver, fitted it to his bow, and took aim at the leader of the Mohawks crouching among the rocks. The silent arrow found its mark. With a stifled grunt the warrior slumped forward and lay still. No outcry revealed to the remaining scouts what had occurred. The Algonquin slipped another arrow over the string, and again the silent messenger found its target.

As he was about to release his third arrow, a flicker of movement caused him to look up, to see the sixth Mohawk leap at him

from the rock above. Quickly he changed his aim. The arrow caught this warrior in the chest and the body crashed loudly on top of the luckless Algonquin.

In a flash the other three Mohawks surrounded him, and three war-clubs struck him as one. He never felt the knife that lifted his scalp.

Leaving the body of the Algonquin sentry where it lay, the Mohawks slipped soundlessly back into the brush. Silence fell over the forest, but again it was broken by the rustle of branches. It was the main party of Mohawks approaching the Algonquin camp.

The three remaining Mohawk scouts gave their report to Kenhoronkwa who signaled his men, and the party split up into three groups. The chief waited until all were in their places and then gave his signal, the mournful cry of the hoot-owl.

Instantly pandemonium raged. Fifty shrieking Mohawks charged out of the underbrush and hurled themselves into the camp. Few of the startled Algonquins had a chance even to reach for their weapons.

In a short time the fighting was over. Mohawk braves killed all the wounded Algonquins who could not travel, and hacked off the scalp locks of their victims. The remaining captives were herded into a line and made to carry the loot taken from the camp.

Once more the Mohawks stepped onto the river path. This time bloody scalps hung from their belts as they triumphantly began their return trip. The leader raised his hand and the group halted.

“Kasewe, come here!” he shouted.

A stocky warrior ran forward to join his leader.

“You are sure there was only one sentry?” the chieftain asked.

“Yes, mighty Kenhoronkwa.”

“Then we should be safe from pursuit. However, we shall not camp till we reach the big river. Force the captives to march fast so that we will arrive there by sundown.”

Kasewe did as he was ordered, and at sundown the party had reached a clearing on a bluff overlooking the Hudson River about twenty miles north of what is now Troy, New York.

“Hold! We camp here!” shouted Kenhoronkwa. “Kasewe, station sentries.”

When this had been done, the party sat down to a meal of dried corn and pemmican. Then the Mohawks stretched out on the ground and lit their pipes.

“Ho, Kenhoronkwa!” called out a thickset warrior with four scalps dangling from his belt. “No Algonquin we have met yet is our match.”

“Do not get too boastful,” cautioned Kenhoronkwa. “It was not always so.”

The others nodded. In their own lifetime they could well remember that Algonquin, Huron, Susquehannah, Erie, Neutral, and Mohican braves had soundly defeated them and driven them from their land.

The threat of the Huron-Algonquin-Susquehannah alliance was so great that the Iroquois (the Five Nations—Mohawk, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, and Seneca) met in council to solve the problem together. The Hurons had monopolized the fur trade and their wealth was increasing. The lands of the Iroquois nations were empty of game, and they were becoming poorer.

In 1645, therefore, the Mohawks made a peace treaty with the French and their Indian allies, the Hurons and Algonquins, at Three Rivers near Montreal, the French capital. But the Hurons broke the treaty and in 1647 made another alliance with the Susquehannahs.

This decided the Iroquois. Their enemies must be eliminated. By 1649 the Hurons ceased to exist as a nation. By 1652 the Tobacco and the Erie nations were scattered. Now in 1656 and the next year, the Algonquins were the target for Iroquois attack. This raid by the Mohawks was but one of many carried out in these years against enemies of the Iroquois nations.

“What we should do,” grunted Kasewe, shifting to a more comfortable position on his log seat, “is wipe out the French as well as their allies.”

“We will do as the council says,” reprimanded Kenhoronkwa sharply. “The French must be our allies.”

“They do not want us,” another warrior pointed out.

“True,” admitted Kenhoronkwa, “but we need their trade. If we eliminate all their allies and thus cut off all other means of obtaining furs, they will come to us.”

The chief’s face darkened as he said these last words. He sprang to his feet and paced back and forth, brooding. The braves looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders. Conversation was finished. Anyway, it was time to rest. It would be good to get back to their camp at Ossernenon.