

**THE HISTORY OF THE FIVE INDIAN
NATIONS OF CANADA: WHICH ARE
DEPENDENT ON THE PROVINCE OF NEW
YORK, AND ARE A BARRIER BETWEEN
THE ENGLISH AND THE FRENCH IN THAT
PART OF THE WORLD, VOL. I. PP.1-185**

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The history of the five Indian nations of Canada: which are dependent on the Province of New York, and are a barrier between the English and the French in that part of the world, Vol. I. pp.1-185 by Cadwallader Colden

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Commodore John Paul Jones

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Hon. CADWALLADER COLDEN

WITH MAP

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTION.

On the death of Lieutenant-Governor de Lancy, in 1760, Cadwallader Colden, as President of the Council, came to New York, took up his residence at the Province House in the fort, and administered the Government until his appointment as Lieutenant-Governor, which took place in August, 1761.

"Governor Colden," says Verplanck, "was a scholar of various and extensive attainments, and of very great and unremitting ardor and application in the acquisition of knowledge. When it is considered how large a portion of his life was spent in the labors or the routine of public office and that, however great might have been his original stock of learning, he had in this country no reading public to excite him by their applause, and few literary friends to assist or to stimulate his inquiries, his zeal and success in his scientific pursuits will appear deserving of the highest admiration. A great mass of manuscripts on mathematical, botani-

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cal, metaphysical, and theological learning, in addition to the works published during his life, affords ample proof of the extent and variety of his knowledge, and the strength, the acuteness and the versatility of his intellect."

Cadwallader Colden was the son of the Rev. Alexander Colden, minister of an obscure parish in Scotland, but was born on the 17th of February, 1688, in Ireland. Young Colden was destined by his father for the ministry and was sent to the University of Edinburgh, where he graduated in 1705. Not caring for his father's profession, he repaired to London and began the study of Medicine. Five years later he came to America and practised his profession in Pennsylvania for a considerable time. After a brief visit to England, he came to New York, where he formed the acquaintance of Governor Hunter, who offered him the position of Surveyor-General of the Colony. Thereafter emoluments and honors came upon him thick and fast. He was made a Master in Chancery, though why, it is hard to say. He was called to a seat in the Council, a body of gentlemen elected by the Crown,

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and forming the upper legislative house in the Colony. Governor Hunter stood his friend, and it was owing to his support that a grant of two thousand acres of land in what is now the town of Montgomery, Orange County, was bestowed upon him. He received another grant of one thousand acres which he called the Manor of Coldenham. He was now one of the great land-owners of the Colony.

Shea, in commenting upon his rapid advance in influence and wealth, states that Colden "was unremitting and zealous in his labor, adhering firmly to the royal Governors—while others fought only to mimic the Capital in show and parade, Colden went to work to study the climate, geography, native inhabitants, civic and political interests of the Colony."

Cadwallader Colden was regarded as the best-informed man in the new world on the affairs of the British-American Colonies. Shea states that "he is spoken of as better versed than any other in the geography of the country, and his writings show that he was an early and careful observer of the climate and its influence on health." That he

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was highly regarded by the Indians may be seen from the fact that he was adopted by the Mohawks of Canajoharie.

This brings us to "The History of the Five Indian Nations." Mr. Shea says it was written "to lay more completely before the public the importance of the Five Nations—or Iroquois—to the Colony of New York, as a barrier against the French and a means of controlling the West." There is no doubt that the book was written with a political motive, and it may have been necessary to teach the King and Council, Lords of Trade and other ruling powers, the real position, influence and power of the Iroquois Confederacy. But Colden was too well informed a man not to perceive that the day would come when every scrap of authentic information in regard to the Indians would be valuable. He had access to sources of information by reason of his official position not usually open to writers, of which he made remarkable use.

Colden wrote many political pamphlets, scientific studies, and other works besides his "History of the Five Indian Nations," none of which it will be necessary to allude to here. He was a very busy and industrious