

MOLLY BRANT (KONWATSIJAYENNI “SOMEONE LENDs HER A FLOWER”)

Molly Brant was born in 1736 along the Mohawk River in present-day central New York. In an age when women, much less Native American women, rarely had a voice in public discourse, Molly Brant became a well-regarded Mohawk leader, helping to promote peaceful relations between the Iroquois nation and the British government during the Revolutionary War era. A dedicated Anglican, she came to be known by the Church as “Witness to the Faith Among the Mohawks.”

Raised in the Ohio Territory, Molly Brant returned to her native village, where she quickly established herself as a leader among the Mohawk Nation. She sought to draw fellow Mohawks into the Anglican faith without dismissing their native culture and spirituality. Her work garnered the attention of Sir William Johnson, a widower and the superintendent of Northern Indian Affairs. She became his common-law wife, and together, they had nine children. As Johnson’s wife, Brant served as an influential and authoritative voice of the Iroquois people in dealing with the British and an essential factor in Johnson’s reception as superintendent among Native Americans. The respect and esteem the British held for Brant was not only unique during that era but it was also key to preserving peaceful relations between the two nations and cultures.

During the American Revolution, Brant remained loyal to Great Britain, providing lodging and food to British soldiers and uniting four of the six Iroquois nations as Loyalists. Two years into the war, she and her family were forced to flee to Onondaga, where she remained until the war’s end in order to avoid imprisonment by the Patriots. Despite her forced relocation, Brant continued to work for harmony among the Iroquois people and their European

neighbors. Her deft leadership led one commander of the British military to declare that Molly was “far superior to that of all their chiefs put together.”

Upon the surrender of the British in Yorktown, Virginia, in 1783, Molly moved with her family to Cataraqui in Canada’s province of Ontario, where she served as a founding member of both the town of Kingstown and its first Anglican church. She remained near Kingstown until her death in 1796.

MARIA KANE

COLLECT

Maker and lover of all creation, you endued Molly Brant with the gifts of justice and loyalty, and made her a wise and prudent clan mother in the household of the Mohawk nation: Draw us also toward the goal of our faith, that we may at last attain the full dignity of our nature in our true native land, where with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

BRENDAN THE NAVIGATOR

Saint Brendan of Kerry, the Navigator, lived and ministered in Ireland in the sixth century. A disciple of Saint Finian, Brendan is one of the twelve apostles of Ireland. Brendan was born in 484 and lived a long life full of adventure. He earned his title of “Navigator” traversing the British Isles, founding monasteries in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Brittany. After a sixty-five-year ministry, he died at age ninety-four, still praising Jesus and bragging about never stopping to ask for directions.

Saint Brendan is best known for his fabulous sea quest in which he sought the Land of Promise. When he was eighty years old, Brendan’s wanderlust led him to seek the legendary land across the Atlantic Ocean. The story of his journey is found in several ancient works, including the Irish *Life of St. Brendan*, Latin *Fragments of the Life of St. Brendan*, and *The Voyage of St. Brendan*. The works share many literary connections to other Irish sea voyage tales.

The tales are fantastic, with visions of hell, spectacular sea creatures, and encounters with odd island inhabitants (perhaps the oddest being a meeting with Judas Iscariot, condemned to a rock in the middle of the Atlantic). Brendan’s journeys and the description of the mythical Island of Promise (also called Saint Brendan’s Isle) were known by and an inspiration to Christopher Columbus on his voyage across the ocean some nine hundred years later.

Some argue that Brendan actually did successfully traverse the Atlantic Ocean. The geographical descriptions found in the *Voyage* match features of Iceland, Newfoundland, and Florida. If Brendan did not make the trip himself, it appears that someone in the sixth century had intimate knowledge of the land, flora, and fauna

of these areas. Whatever the historicity of his adventures, Saint Brendan lived a long life in service to God, committed to building communities of faith.

DAVID CREECH

COLLECT

O God, you have brought us near to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just people made perfect: Grant us during our earthly pilgrimage to abide in their fellowship, and in our heavenly country to become partakers of their joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.