

Cornplanter
Chief of the Seneca and principal Chief of the
Six Nations from the period of the Revolutionary War
to the time of his death

Cornplanter was one of the great Indian orators in the late 1700's and early 1800's. The birth date of Cornplanter, or Ki-on-twog-ky, has not been definitely determined, but it was between 1732 and 1740. He was born at Connewaugus, on the Genesee River in New York. His mother was a full-blood Seneca, and his father is thought to have been an Irishman named O'Bail. Cornplanter has been referred to as John O'Bail. Cornplanter was a very powerful chief of the Seneca. In this important capacity, his long life was to become very significant indeed, for he influenced the course of American history for roughly half a century from well before the Revolutionary War until after the War of 1812.

He signed many treaties, including those made at Fort Stanwix in 1784, and others in 1789, 1797, and 1802. In 1790 he went to Philadelphia to lay complaints before George Washington. Cornplanter frequently attended councils in Philadelphia, traveling great distances for these sessions in order to protest treatment of the Seneca's and make peaceful attempts to secure better conditions; he died February 18, 1836, at more than ninety years of age. Some authorities set his age at one hundred years.