



# Saint Kateri Tekakwitha

## NATIONAL SHRINE & HISTORIC SITE

### CAUGHNAWAGA NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

#### *Part of the Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Shrine*

The name Caughnawaga derives from the Mohawk word “kahnawa:ke,” meaning “place of the rapids,” referring to the rapids of the Mohawk River. The Turtle Clan of the Mohawk lived in this “castle” of Caughnawaga until 1693, with sources debating its construction date as either 1666 or 1679. The village moved to the site of this archaeological dig after the original settlement was destroyed by a French raid. The term “castle” was used historically to denote that this was one of the few Mohawk villages surrounded by a protective wall. The double wooden stockade that protected the village was 15 to 18 feet high and helped defend the inhabitants from intruders. The small gray posts at the site mark the stockade walls. The main gate of the village was in the west wall; there were no openings in the north and east walls.

Caughnawaga consisted of 12 longhouses, occupied by a total of about 300 people. The outer walls of the longhouses are outlined by small reddish posts. According to Dean R. Snow, expert on Iroquois archeology, each longhouse was divided into three or four residential sections, with each section containing two nuclear families: one on each side of the central aisle. The small yellow posts mark the places where supports for the benches and beds ran along the interior walls of each longhouse existed. The white concrete pillars at the site are surveyor markers. The small white metal posts form an archeological grid over the whole site area for record keeping. Many of the artifacts from the dig can be found at the Museum on the central grounds of the Shrine, accessible on Route 5 or via the Shrine’s Caughnawaga Village (Blue) Trail [see map on reverse].

French Jesuits established a mission in this area that operated from approximately 1668 to 1679. Kateri Tekakwitha was one of the converts, and she was baptized in the spring a short distance from Caughnawaga. She left the area with the Jesuit priests and other Native converts in 1677, moving to a Jesuit mission on the St. Lawrence River in Québec. The group finally settled just south of Montréal at a site they called Caughnawaga after their original village in New York; it is now known as Kahnawake. Kateri was canonized in 2012 and is currently the only Native American recognized as a saint by the Catholic Church. More information on her life can be found on the Shrine’s main grounds.

The property that encompasses this village came into the hands of the Conventual Franciscan Friars in 1935 as a result of their interest in Kateri Tekakwitha and now operates under the auspices of Our Lady of the Angels Province. Archeological investigations of this site were started in 1943. This consisted of surface searching only. The Van Epps-Hartley Chapter of the N.Y.S. Archeological Association dug a trench 60 feet long and 5 feet wide in 1948. Beginning in 1950 the village was thoroughly excavated by Fr. Thomas Grassmann with the help of the N.Y.S. Archeological Association. Work was completed in 1956, and the site was accepted into the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. It is the only completely excavated Iroquois/Haudenosaunee village in the world.

Would you like to contribute to maintaining this important site? You can donate here: <https://tinyurl.com/5c4wbx38> or by scanning the QR code. We are a 501(c)3 non-profit and rely solely on donations and grants (EIN 43-2037018). We receive no state or federal funding.



*Illustrations by Linda Benton of Syracuse, New York, who identifies as a person of mixed heritage.*



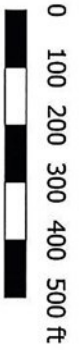
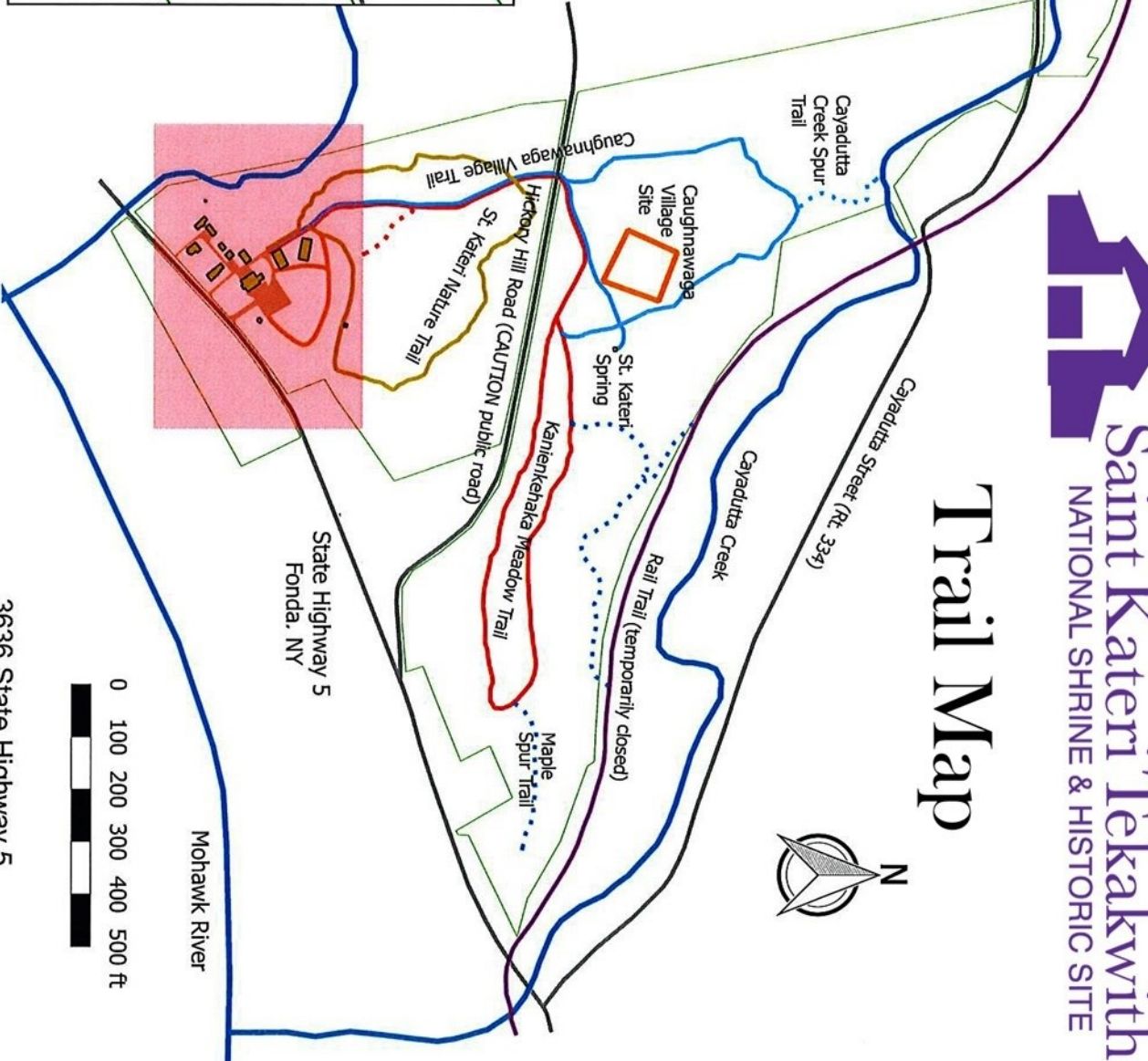
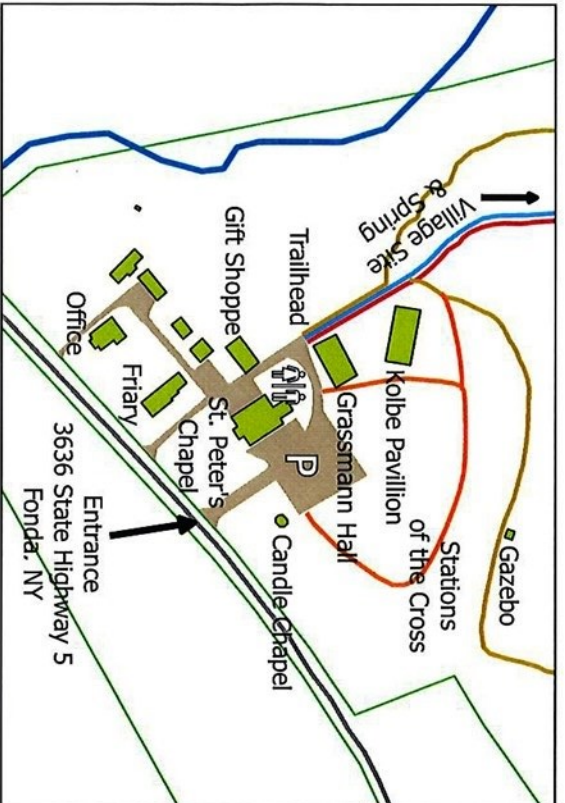


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# Trail Map



- Legend**
- St. Kateri Tekakwitha Nature Trail (Yellow)
  - Kanienkehaka Meadow Trail (Red)
  - Caughnawaga Village Trail (Blue)
  - Caughnawaga Village Site
  - ⋯ Maple Spur Trail
  - ⋯ Cayadutta Creek Spur Trail
  - Public Roads
  - Buildings
  - Shrine Roads & Parking
  - ⋯ Trail to Rail Trail (temporarily closed)
  - Rail Trail (off site, temporarily closed)



# Main Grounds

3636 State Highway 5  
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Fonda, NY 12068-0627  
Phone: 518-853-3646  
katerishrine.org