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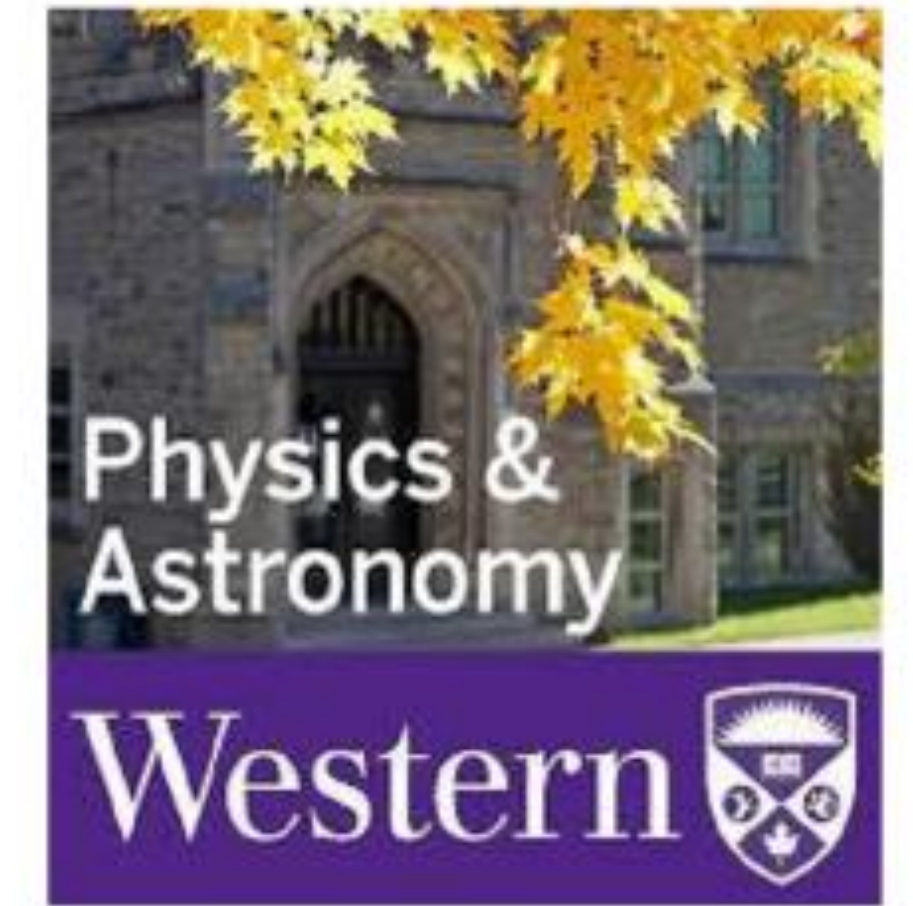
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Indigenous Astronomy As Told By The Haudenosaunee

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Supervisor: Professor Robert Cockcroft



Introduction:

Colonization has greatly reduced the extent to which Indigenous astronomy is presently known and shared. Much sky lore has become lost or fragmented, and the connections between stories, night sky observations, and their relevance is not as obvious as it once was. A detrimental spiral has ensued with many Western-trained scientists being reluctant to share sky lore out of fear of being misunderstood, disrespected and dismissed.¹

Methods:

I began my research by receiving a letter of support from the Clanmothers of the Oneida Nation of the Thames. They agreed that this research was important to gather and that passing it along to future generations was of the upmost importance.

Data was collected by meeting with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and conducting in person interviews. Interviews were held across the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

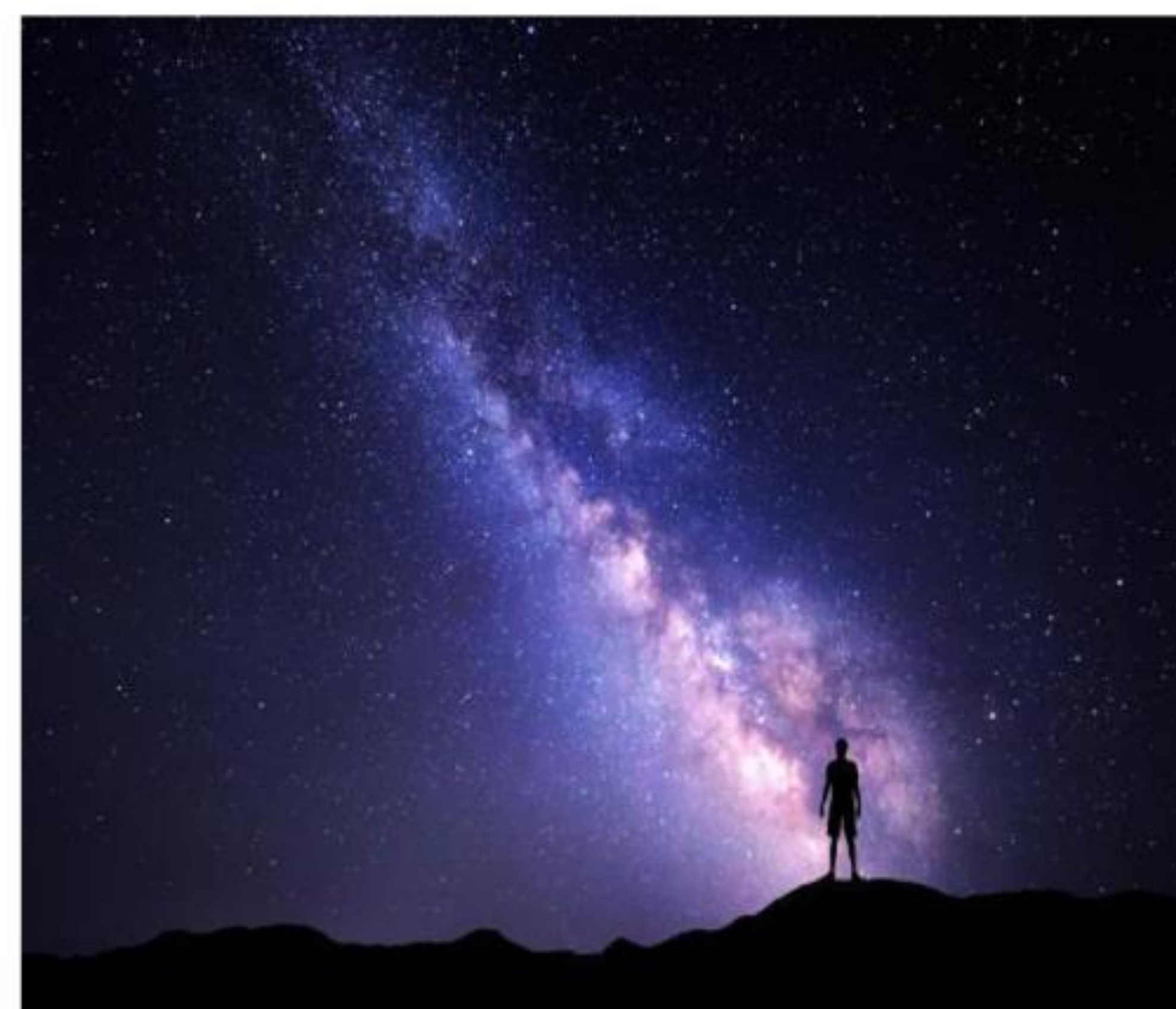
Results:

Upon conducting interviews with Knowledge Keepers I had learned a lot more about how we as Haudenosaunee are descendants from the stars. I had originally thought that I would hear how certain constellations came to be but that was not the only thing I learned.

We as Haudenosaunee connect to the stars in many ways, spiritually, ceremonial, agriculturally, birth and death, navigational, sleep and the list goes on.

Conclusions:

I plan on furthering my research by building on existing collaborative efforts to collect and disseminate Indigenous astronomical stories. Rob and I planned to use the research to develop an Indigenous astronomy course at Western University and as of recent were successful in that endeavor. Western will be offering an Indigenous astronomy course this upcoming term, the 1st of it's kind in Canada. We also plan to have community outreach presentations by securing a portable planetarium.



Partnerships:

In April I attended an Indigenous Education Youth Leadership Event. Rob and I presented a Haudenosaunee star lore story to the youth. There were presenters there from NASA. Since meeting that day we have kept in contact. Daniella Scalice the Education and Communications Lead of the NASA Astrobiology Program, American Indian/Alaska Native Working Group, and NASA Science Mission Directorate, has asked that I join her working group. I look forward to sharing my research within this capacity.



Acknowledgements:

I would like to begin by giving thanks to the Clanmothers of the Oneida Nation of the Thames. Without their guidance and support I would not have been able to begin this important journey of discovery. Thank you to the Knowledge Keepers that I was able to interview and for trusting me with your stories. A very special thanks to my home community, Oneida Nation of the Thames for all of your support and encouragement. It has meant the world to me that I have your support. I would also like to thank Robert Cockcroft for giving me the opportunities to meet other astronomers. Near and far. You are an important ally.



References:

Robert Cockcroft 1