Dancing Seneca Youth Council

The Seneca Nation of Indians Education Program is a bi-cultural program with emphasis placed on both scholastic improvement and instruction in traditional Seneca arts and crafts. Scholastic improvement through tutoring is done in the Salamanca Central School District, the Gowanda School District and the Silver Creek Central School District for children at the Jr.-Sr. High School level. Seneca language and dancing classes are conducted at the Haley and Steamburg Community Buildings on the Allegany Reservation. On the Cattaraugus Reserve, classes are conducted at the Saylor Community Building. Also included in the Seneca Cultural aspects of the program are wood carving, traditional food preparation and costume making.

Mural, “snowsnake,” traditional Indian sport.

Wall mural executive wing, Haley Building

The Haley and Saylor Buildings both have wall murals which depict scenes of Seneca life. The Seneca are noted for their art work. Many have entered into commercial and free lance work.

The Official Seneca Nation Seal, designed by a member of the tribe, shows the three reservations and the eight animals that represent the clan of the traditional Senecas. The traditional Senecas follow the religious code of Handsome Lake, Seneca prophet of the late 1700’s.
The Seneca Nation of Indians is a member tribe of the Iroquois Confederacy. The Confederacy is made up of six Indian nations: Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk and Tuscarora.

The Seneca Nation is located in the Western part of New York State on land set aside by the Treaty of Canandaigua of 1794. The Senecas once owned all of Western New York and held land in the State of Pennsylvania.

The Seneca Nation is comprised of three tracts of land. The Cattaraugus Reservation of 20,168 acres is located near Gowanda, New York. It takes its name from nearby Cattaraugus Creek. The Allegany Reservation, located near Salamanca, New York, along the banks of the Allegany River. Due to flooding problems in the down river Pennsylvania area, land was taken in 1964 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the Kinzua Dam Project. This left the Allegany Reservation with approximately 20,469 acres which includes the City of Salamanca. The Oil Spring Reserve, located near Cuba, New York, is approximately one square mile in area and is not inhabited by any members of the tribe.

The current population is 5,175 members on the tribal roll. Of this number, 854 reside on the Allegany Reserve, 1,926 on the Cattaraugus Reserve and the remainder is scattered throughout the United States.

The elected Seneca Nation Executive Officers (President, Treasurer, Clerk) and Tribal Councilors (eight from each inhabited reservation) are involved in many tribe motivated programs to fulfill tribal needs. The President and Councilors are administering programs focused on health and economic development to benefit the members of the tribe. Among these are health clinics established on Allegany and Cattaraugus Reservations and economic development for both areas including recreational and industrial projects. Also being stressed is renewed instruction of the young people in the Seneca language and traditional crafts. The Nation is concerned that because of the influence of modern culture, many arts and crafts are being lost.