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The Ndakinna Education Center welcomes you to the Saratoga Native American Festival – celebrating the richness of our Northeastern Native communities since 2006. Known for its healing and history, Saratoga Springs is a perfect location for this wonderful annual gathering.

This Festival was designed around the idea that developing an understanding of the history, cultural traditions, and continued active presence of the Native American people of the Northeast is important.

The vendors, demonstrators, artists, dancers, and performers participating in this year’s Festival are here because of the commitment they show to the cultural traditions of the Nations to which they belong. Thank you for sharing in this celebration with us!

The Festival started in 2006 at the Saratoga Spa State Park (inspired by Warren Holliday, former Regional Director of the New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for the Saratoga/Capital District State Park Region). It is organized each year by the Ndakinna Education Center, a cultural arts non-profit organization located in Greenfield Center, New York.

We invite you to learn more about the Ndakinna Education Center. Our camps, programs, concerts, and workshops run throughout the year and are for children, young adults, college groups, and adults. Enjoy the Festival!

The Ndakinna Education Center
23 Middle Grove Road, Greenfield Center, New York 12833
www.ndakinnacenter.org | info@ndakinnacenter.org
(518) 583-9958
Festival Etiquette

The Saratoga Native American Festival is a gathering of Native and non-Native people in a relaxed, enjoyable and friendly environment. It provides an opportunity for Native people to express pride in who they are, socialize, network, reconnect with friends and meet new friends. Non-Native people get to learn about Native cultures and have the chance to experience various aspects of many Native groups. It is an excellent venue for the sharing of accurate information, asking and answering questions and displaying and selling Native-made art and crafts.

Here are some important things to keep in mind when in attendance at any Native festival, gathering, or PowWow.

Please be respectful of the singers, dancers, and storytellers. If you approach them with questions about their Nation, their traditions or their personal regalia, some may be shy, but others will be very willing to speak with you. Be sure to introduce yourself first.

It is always appropriate to ask permission before photographing anyone. The emcee will indicate when it is not permissible to photograph dancers in the Dance Arena. Individuals outside of the Dance Arena always appreciate being asked first. When photographing, remember to offer to send a copy to the person being photographed. If you are intending to use the photograph for commercial purposes, please get written permission.

The Dance Arena is for dancers only, unless the emcee invites others to participate. Listen and the emcee will indicate when it is permissible to join in on the dancing and who can participate. It is a wonderful idea to bring a blanket or folding chair.

The Dance Arbor is a restricted area in which only the dancers, singers, drummers, emcee and their helpers are permitted. Seats within the Dance Arbor are for the presenters. Please respect this area. Any chair, in or outside the Dance Arena, with a blanket or shawl on it indicates that it is reserved.

The Drum is the heartbeat of the Festival and represents the heartbeat of the people. There are many different kinds of drums, rattles, shakers, flutes and percussion instruments. Please do not touch a drum or any musical instrument without permission.

The clothing worn by Native people is referred to as “regalia” or “traditional outfits.” The term “costume” is not appropriate. Traditional outfits can be very expensive and are very often one of a kind. Many are made by the dancer or family or friends of the dancer. Some traditional outfits are family heirlooms and may be decorated with symbolic or personal embellishments. Please do not touch anyone’s clothing or regalia without permission.

Some feathers are sacred items. If you see a feather on the ground, please do not touch it. Rather, tell the nearest dancer, singer or emcee where it is. They will know what to do.

Please be aware that pointing at an object with your finger is considered impolite by many Native people. It may sound peculiar to members of other cultures, but it is considered more polite to Native people to point with the lips or with the nose.

Please do not let children play in the Dance Arena. The dancers may be moving backwards or very quickly and might not be able to avoid a collision.

It is not appropriate to record music at a festival without prior permission.

Drugs and alcohol are not permitted at the Saratoga Native American Festival.

Please stand during Honor Songs and Flag Songs. Men should remove their hats at that time (hats with eagle feathers do not have to be removed).

Enjoy! This event is meant to be fun as well as informative.

[Article by Kay Olan Ionataiewas]
DANCES & GATHERINGS

ARBOR

The Arbor is a shaded area reserved exclusively for the use of the drummers, singers, emcee, and their guests.

CEREMONIAL DANCING

Some types of Native dance are done for ceremonies for religious, healing, or cultural purposes. These ceremonial dances are not typically shown or shared with outsiders.

SOCIAL DANCING

Social Dances are done for fun, for socializing, and to express the joy of having been given the gift of life. Social dancing is usually made up of easy-to-learn steps, done by people of all ages in order to create a sense of friend-ship and community. At a Native festival or Pow Wow, the emcee will sometimes invite the general public to join the dancers in the circle.

Many tribes have circle dances where all the dancers link hands with each other. The Haudenosaunee also have stomp dances where dancers follow a lead singer with rattles keeping time. The Abenaki have a Friendship Dance with dancers facing in rows and a Snake Dance where dancers join hands in a wavy line. Another style of dance is the couple dance with pairs of people holding hands and following a lead couple around a circle. Couple dances often have a two-step rhythm and step, with dancers moving forwards, backwards, or twirling.

COMPETITIVE DANCING

During competitive dances, Native people show off their skills by performing in front of judges to win prize money. At modern festivals and Pow Wows, dancers from different Native tribes will register to compete in performing a particular style of dance. Each dance emphasizes a different degree of speed, showiness, precision, innovation, and/or restraint. Dancers are expected to display energy, agility, endurance, dignity, and pride.

Competitive dance regalia is typically made to match the style of dance being performed. Modern dancers may mix elements of clothing from different historical eras. Native people often use their winnings from competition dancing to pay for travel, regalia, or family expenses.

HONOR DANCING

Many Native gatherings begin or end with special Honor Dances done in a solemn and stately manner with very simple steps. Men who are outside the circle are expected to remove their hats during these dances to show respect. Honor Dances are done for the American and tribal flags, for war veterans, or to show respect to special elders.

POW WOW DANCING

A visitor to a Native festival or Pow Wow is likely to have the pleasure of seeing several types of Native dancing for fun, show, or honoring. Some dances are only for Native people, but the emcee will announce dances where newcomers can join in for a unique opportunity to celebrate Native culture through dance.
SMOKE DANCE COMPETITION

The Saratoga Native American Festival features a special Haudenosaunee form of dancing known as the Smoke Dance. Smoke dancers move their feet very quickly, brushing and tapping them against the ground as though putting out a fire. Their feet move in time to the drumming beat of a solo musician, while their arms are balanced out at their sides. Smoke Dance songs are typically sung to the accompaniment of a water drum, but some singers use a rawhide drum for a fuller sound. During the contest, several dancers will dance simultaneously, and judges will watch for distinctive style, speed, agility, and showiness.

One tradition says that the Smoke Dance originated as a special dance that young men would do, long ago, to move the smoke out of the long house. During the 1920s-30s, this style was revived as a faster social dance form with no ceremonial significance.

Another tradition says that the Smoke Dance originated as a War Dance done only by men. It gained popularity as a style of public performance during the mid-1900s, when singers started speeding up the tempo of the old War Dance songs just to see if the dancers could keep up.

Today, during Smoke Dance contests, both the new (fast) songs and old (slow) songs are sung. Men dance to both fast and slow songs, while female smoke dancers prefer the fast music. Male smoke dancers tend to dance with a forceful, arrogant, showy style. Female smoke dancers typically use a somewhat more graceful style. Every dancer develops their own unique approach to this exciting dance form. Smoke dancers rely on power, speed, and showmanship to honor the ancestors, impress the judges, awe the audience, and inspire the young ones to learn the dance.

BLANKET DANCE

Some performers or guests travel great distances to voluntarily participate in festivals and PowWows. It is common practice to hold a blanket dance so that the audience can have the opportunity to contribute money to help cover traveling expenses for those special visitors. At times, a blanket dance is held to raise funds to help a family or individual who is in need of financial support.

Kanatsiohareke Mohawk Community

Since 1993, a community where Mohawk people revitalize their culture, tradition, language and spirituality.

www.mohawkcommunity.com
Algonquian & Iroquoian Languages

Algonquian / Algonkian

The terms Algonquian and Algonkian refer to a broad group of Native peoples who share common cultural practices and a common root language (called Proto-Algonquian). These terms were adapted by Europeans from three different Wôbanaki (Abenaki) words: the Maliseet word elakomkwik, which roughly translates to mean "they are our relatives or allies;" the Montagnais word Algoumequin for "those who paint themselves red," or the Maliseet word elagankwin which means "they are dancing."

Algonquian is the largest linguistic family on the continent. The list of Algonkian peoples includes all of the original Native nations of New England (Eastern Abenaki, Western Abenaki, Mohegan, Montauk, Narragansett, Nipmuc, Pequot, Schaghticoke, Wampanoag, etc.). A group of Canadian tribal bands known as Algonquins, living north of the St. Lawrence in the Ottawa region, are part of the Algonkian group, as are the Anishinabe of the Great Lakes region, the Mohicans of New York State, and many other tribes.

Iroquoian

The term Iroquoian refers to the common culture and root language (called Proto-Iroquoian) shared by the original members of the Five Nations Confederacy (the people known today as the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca). Iroquoian is one of the two major linguistic groups found in the northeast. Iroquoian (including Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca) is one. Algonkian (including Abenaki, Mohican, Mahigan and Wampanoag) is the other.

The two linguistic groups are very different from one another. The word Iroquois seems to have come from Europeans adaptations of two different words: the Mohawk word ierokwa, "they who smoke," and the Montagnais word irmokwedac, meaning "terrible men." The Iroquois people properly call themselves Haudenosaunee, meaning "People of the Longhouse."

All of the Iroquoian languages have basic similarities and are related, much as the romantic languages (Spanish, Italian, French) are different from one another, but are structurally similar. The retention and revitalization of Indigenous languages is important to Native people because it is said that with the loss of one’s language, there is also the loss of 50% of one’s culture, ethnic identity and spiritual connection.
THE GREAT LAW OF PEACE

The Great Law is the Constitution of the Haudenosaunee. It was brought to the Haudenosaunee by the Peacemaker more than a thousand years ago. It is based on Peace, Power and Righteousness. It is documented that Benjamin Franklin and other framers of the U.S. Constitution met with Haudenosaunee leaders to learn about the Great Law, and so it is no surprise that there are many similarities between The Great Law of the Haudenosaunee and the U.S. Constitution.

THE OPENING ADDRESS

Ohen:ton Karihkwatehkwen means “The Words That Come Before All Else.” It is sometimes referred to as The Thanksgiving Address or The Opening Address. The Haudenosaunee say these words to begin and end each day as well as each meeting, ceremony or social occasion. The Ohen:ton Karihkwatehkwen is an expression of acknowledgment, greeting, love and appreciation to every part of the Natural World. It is a way in which the Haudenosaunee remind themselves that the humans are only one strand in the web of life and that we are all connected to each other and to the rest of Creation.

WAMPUM

Cylindrically-shaped purple or white beads made from the quahog shell. These special beads can be used for embellishment on clothing, sending messages, and for ceremonial purposes. Wampum beads can be woven into designs as seen in wampum belts. Wampum belts are “read” by individuals who are trained to memorize the speeches that are connected with each belt. Those speeches recount historical events and treaties. The Haudenosaunee are very well known for the detailed history recorded in their belts along with the oral tradition of passing accurate information from one generation to the next.

PAN-INDIAN

Each nation has its own stories, language, history, songs, traditional foods, traditional clothing, traditional shelters, etc. However, these days, it is so easy to visit with one another and share new trends in all of the above and so it is only natural that some aspects are shared and blended. When that happens, it is called Pan-Indian. It is a blending and sharing of traditions from many people and regions.

TRADITIONAL CLOTHING

KASTOWEH

The Kastoweh is the traditional hat worn by Haudenosaunee men. The framework is made of three black ash wooden splints which are covered with leather and decorated with feathers and sometimes silverwork and/or beads. The arrangement and number of feathers on top of each Kastoweh tells to which nation the wearer belongs. A Royaner (Chief) has deer antlers attached to the sides of his Kastoweh.
Regalia

Regalia is the special clothing worn by Native people on special occasions such as Festivals, Ceremonies and/or Pow Wows. Regalia can also be referred to as traditional outfits, but not as costumes. Regalia can be the traditional outfit worn by a particular nation at a particular point in time or it might be a blending of styles from many eras and/or nations. Native people love to share ideas, including new fashion trends.

Please do not touch any part of a person’s regalia without permission. Dancers will be happy to explain the significance of what they are wearing.

Traditional Instruments

Flute

The Native flute is a wind instrument that is used by many nations. Very often, it is played by a young man who is courting a young lady. It is said, that long ago, some flutes were used in healing rituals. No matter what, it is a beautiful instrument that makes haunting sounds.

Rattles

Rattles are used to help the singers and dancers maintain a rhythm and beat. Traditionally, Native rattles have been made from rolled birch bark, folded elm bark, hollowed-out gourds, sewn rawhide, woven ash splints, etc., filled with corn or pebbles. During the 1700s, many Native people started making rattles out of cowhorn filled with pebbles or lead shot for a different sound.
WATER DRUM

The Water Drum is used by the Haudenosaunee when doing many social dances. It is made of basswood and is carved out from the inside. A leather or cloth covered ring holds a piece of leather in place on top of the drum. There is a hole in the side of the drum where water is poured inside. A carved wooden peg is then placed in the hole so the water doesn’t leak out. The drum is inverted until the leather top becomes wet and tight. A carved wooden beater is used to play the drum.

The basswood reminds us of our connection to the plants. The leather reminds us of our connection to the animals. The water reminds us that water is life. The top of the drum and the ring is shaped like a circle which symbolizes many things including the life cycle, the water cycle, the celestial bodies, our eyes and countless important things in the Natural World. The beat of the drum reminds us of the first sound we ever heard... the beating of our mother’s heart.

NATIVE ORAL TRADITIONS

ORAL TRADITIONS

Among Native American Indian peoples, words are more than just sounds spoken into the air. All human vocalizations, spoken or sung, have potential power and influence that transcends the nature of the sounds themselves. Every Native nation was gifted, in their time and place of origin, with a distinct indigenous language. Words spoken in that language are heard more clearly by the ancestors and the creatures living in that place. Traditionally, Native languages, songs, stories, and place names were known to many members of a community. Certain individuals took responsibility for preserving and sharing these oral traditions as an important body of knowledge. Oral traditions did not degrade with the telling – they remained intact over many generations due to the care with which the keepers preserved them.

Perry Ground, Seneca storyteller
(Photo: Eric Jenks, Awasos Entertainment)
STORYTELLING

Native American stories are told for many different purposes: creation stories, lesson stories, historical anecdotes, healing stories, etc. Some stories are only told in certain seasons of the year, so as to not to distract the animals, birds, and other beings from their seasonal activities.

When you hear a Native story being performed in a public space, remember that these stories are being shared by individuals, families, societies, or elders who have been trusted with the responsibility for respecting the stories. When Native stories are borrowed, stolen, or misrepresented, they might cause harm or imbalance to the community they came from. So, enjoy the stories being shared, but please don’t take a Native story or retell it without permission.

SINGING

Many Native American Indian songs are sung in vocables, sounds that have no direct translation into human speech. Others are sung in Native languages. Some say that the vocables come from a very old language that only the animal world and the ancestors still understand. There are traditional songs for healing, ceremonies, dancing, hunting, lullabies, canoeing and many other activities. Traditionally, each of these songs has qualities that enhance those activities. Songs, like stories, are often considered to be the property of particular individuals, families, tribal nations, or groups.

[Section by Kay Olan Ionataiewas and Marge Bruchac]

About the Mohicans

Because of James Fenimore Cooper's famous novel, The Last of the Mohicans, everyone has heard of the Mohican Indians. Although these people were supposedly made extinct in the French and Indian Wars, in actuality they continue to exist to this day, centered on a reservation in east-central Wisconsin. Another substantial group lives at the Moraviantown Reserve in southwest Ontario.

Welcome to the ancient Mohican homeland, where Native American occupation in what is now New York State goes back approximately 12,500 years. Ancestral Mohican people probably lived in their aboriginal homeland for 700 years or more, although no one knows for sure. At least, from AD 700 +/- to AD 900 maize agriculture and village settlement became increasingly common in Mohican country, traditionally defined as the upper Hudson River drainage from the southern shores of Lake Champlain to the Catskill Mountains -- including the Mohawk River from its eastern terminus to west of Schenectady, NY -- and the upper Housatonic River in the Berkshire Mountains. Mohican territory also includes the corners of southwestern Vermont and northwestern Connecticut.
The river now called Hudson’s was to the Mohican people the Mohicanituk, the "Great Everflowing Waters," referring to the tidal motion of the river which was actually an extension of the Atlantic Ocean. Prior to European incursion, the Mohican people lived a timeless life of seasonal rounds, moving from one part of their territory to another according to the availability of natural resources.

Recorded history began for the Mohican on September 15th, 1609, with the voyage of Henry Hudson up the River subsequently named for him. Their southern neighbors and kin, the Munsee Delaware of the lower River were noted by Giovanni de Verrazano as early as 1524. Ship’s officer Robert Juet said when the Half Moon arrived in Mohican territory that, "There wee found very loving people..." The Mohican traded with the Dutch and in turn were given alcohol to make them drunk.

Further Dutch trading with the Mohican began the next year and continued thereafter. The primary trade item was locally-trapped beaver pelts. At first the Mohican controlled the beaver trade but by 1624 the Mohawk Indians had won primacy. Thereafter the Mohawk and other Iroquois tribes gradually became more powerful while the Mohican declined. When the Dutch colony of New Netherlands was conquered by the English in 1664, the Mohicans pledged their alliance to the English, in hopes of gaining protection against any further conflicts. The Mohawk began selling some of the Mohican lands to English settlers as part of the Schenectady, Hoosic, Canistigione, Niskayuna, and Saratoga Patents. There is some testimony that the Mohican people lost 90% of their people to epidemic disease in the decades after the Europeans arrived. Nevertheless they continued to contribute manpower to the Dutch and later to the English colonial economy and politics. They were particularly known as diplomats, the preferred mediator between the Mohawk and Munsee Delaware and later as emissaries between the Americans and Tecumseh’s forces in the War of 1812. They also served as soldier-warriors, scouts, translators, guides, runners (messengers), food providers, and makers of household goods.

In 1736, as a strategy for survival, the Mohicans elected to Europeanize and Christianize. To that end, some relocated to Wnhaktukuk in western Massachusetts and arranged for the founding of Stockbridge as an Indian "praying" town. Its location in the Berkshire Mountains assured that they would serve as a buffer against the northern enemies of the English (who were primarily Connecticut River Valley Indians, St. Francis Abenakis, Kahanawake.

Bark covered wigwam – a common Algonquian shelter

(Wigwam means “house” or “dwelling”)
Mohawks, and Canadian French) during the French and Indian Wars. Thereafter they became known as Stockbridge Indians. They served with and were admired by Major Robert Rogers of Rogers' Rangers, known as the father of modern guerrilla warfare.

During the American Revolution, the Stockbridge Mohican were the only tribe to fight wholly on the American side. They formed a militia company under the leadership of the Ninham and Konkapot families, and lost a third to a half of their warriors. When they returned to Stockbridge after the war, they discovered that all their land had been appropriated by the non-Indian residents of the town. Most of the Christianized Mohican decided to sell their lands and move west.

Thus began their "diaspora"--forced migration--first to central New York, then to other states in the Midwest, ultimately to end up in 1856 on their present reservation near Green Bay, WI. Later they were joined by a band of Munsee Delaware to become the modern Stockbridge-Munsee band of Mohicans.

Some Mohican had joined the Moravian missions at Shekomeko (in Dutchess County, NY) and at Kaunaumeek (Rensselaer County near the Columbia County line). Another major group of Mohican joined their Munsee Delaware kin in the Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania as "Moravian Indians." After moving to Ohio, 90 of them --noncombatants all-- unresistingly, one by one, had their heads crushed in by an American mob who accused them of serving the British in the Revolution. The remainder of this community later moved to Ontario, Canada, where today they are known as Moraviantown Indians.

No members of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican people live in the town of Stockbridge, Massachusetts today, and only one tribal member presently lives in New York state. Written resources on the Mohicans are so few, that they can be compared to a clay pot that’s been broken into a thousand pieces and scattered about the landscape. Mohican people are currently working to find as many of those pieces as they can with the goal of putting that pot back together again.

[Article by Steve Comer]

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**ABOUT THE HAUDENOSAUNEE (IROQUOIS)**

**HAUDENOSAUNEE**

*Haudenosaunee* is the real name for the Iroquois Confederacy (flag on right). Five Nations, Six Nations, Iroquois Confederacy, League of the Iroquois and Haudenosaunee are all names for the same thing. The name Haudenosaunee means “People of the Longhouse” or “Builders of the Longhouse.” The Haudenosaunee is a United Nations or a peace league consisting of the Mohawk Nation, Oneida Nation, Onondaga Nation, Cayuga Nation and the Seneca Nation. The Tuscarora became the sixth nation in the 1720’s.

According to the oral tradition of the Haudenosaunee, more than 1,000 years ago, the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca Nations were living in disharmony. It was a terrible period of social dysfunction, confusion, suspicion and warfare.
Then, a man from the Huron Nation came with a message of peace and unity. He is referred to as the Peacemaker. He succeeded, with the help of a great orator named Aionhwatha, in convincing the above mentioned five nations to form a Peace League, a United Nations, called the Haudenosaunee.

That league still exists to this very day. Some call it the Five Nations. Some call it the Six Nations, because the Tuscarora fled from oppression in North Carolina in the early 1700’s and found sanctuary with the other five nations. Some call it the Iroquois Confederacy. The real name for this league is the Haudenosaunee, which means “People of the Longhouse” or “Builders of the Longhouse.”

Longhouses were the traditional, long, bark-covered dwellings of those people. Today, the term Longhouse is also used to describe a particular building where traditional ceremonies, socials and meetings are held.

The Haudenosaunee who follow the traditional spiritual teachings of their ancestors are referred to as Longhouse People.

The Peacemaker and Aionhwatha traveled together for many years (no one knows for sure how many) trying to convince the people that a great peace would work. When all of the five nations finally decided to join together, the Peacemaker pulled up a White Pine Tree by its roots.

The people were asked to throw their weapons of war into the pit. An underground stream took the weapons away so the future generations would never see them again, (thus, the expression “bury the hatchet”). The tree was put back into the ground and is referred to as The Great Tree of Peace. It is said to have four White Roots of Peace that extend to the ends of Turtle Island (North America).
Those roots symbolize an invitation to other nations to join in the great peace by putting down their weapons and sitting down to discuss problems reasonably. The powerful, keen-sighted eagle was placed atop the tree to warn the people of any impending dangers to that peace. You will see this symbol on the clothing and in the artwork of many Haudenosaunee. The whole story of how the Great Peace came about takes many days to tell and there are many other symbols attached to the story.

The Haudenosaunee constitution is called The Great Law of Peace. It is documented that Benjamin Franklin and other framers of the U.S. Constitution met on many occasions with the Haudenosaunee to learn about the intricacies of the Great Law of Peace. Neighbors influence neighbors and so it is not surprising that both constitutions have much in common.

During the Boston Tea Party, some of the colonists dressed up as Mohawks in order to make the statement that they desired the kind of democracy, freedom and representation that the Haudenosaunee enjoyed. In 1987, Senator Daniel Inouye introduced a Senate resolution which acknowledged the contributions made to the U.S. Constitution by the Haudenosaunee and The Great Law of Peace.

Today, some Haudenosaunee live on reservations, some off reservations and many live all over the world. Some know their history, culture, traditions, spirituality and languages. Some do not. There is a major movement among the Haudenosaunee to insure that their beautiful and valuable history will be remembered by the future generations.

For example, Kanatsiohareke is a Mohawk community located on State Highway #5, just seven miles west of Fonda, NY on the shores of the Mohawk River. Kanatsiohareke was reestablished in 1993 on ancestral land in order to fulfill the prophesy that a group of traditional-minded Mohawks would return to the place where their umbilical cord was attached to Mother Earth. Kanatsiohareke holds conferences, workshops and language classes where Native and non-Native people can go and learn accurate information, make friends and share with one another.

Another example is The Akwesasne Freedom School which is located on a Mohawk reservation near Massena, NY. The students, who attend that school, learn their 3R’s as well as their history, culture and traditions. They learn to be proud of their ancestors and of themselves all in their own language. The school has a very successful Mohawk Language Immersion program. The Akwesasne Freedom School, Kanatsiohareke and many other Haudenosaunee communities are working hard to revitalize traditional languages because it is said that once a people lose their language, then they also lose at least 50% of their cultural ties, spiritual links and a sense of identity and worth.

[Article by Kay Olan Ionataiewas]
The Nations of the Haudenosaunee

Mohawk

*Kaniehke:ha* is the real name for the Mohawk. It is their name in their own language. Some say it means “People of the Flint,” but more recently some are saying that “People of the Crystal” might be more accurate. (Crystal probably refers to the high quality quartz crystals found in their traditional territory. Some call those crystals, “Herkimer Diamonds.”) The Kaniehke:ha are also referred to as “The Keepers of the Eastern Door,” since they were located furthest to the east of all the Haudenosaunee Nations.

Oneida

*Oneniota:ha* is the real name of the Oneida. It means “People of the Upright Stone.” The Oneida are one of the nations that make up the Haudenosaunee. The Oneida and the Cayuga are also called the “Younger Brothers.” Oneida traditional territory is to the west of the Mohawk Nation.

Onondaga

*Onontake:ha* is the real name of the Onondaga. It means “People of the Hills.” They are also called “The Firekeepers.” The Onondaga are one of the nations that make up the Haudenosaunee. They are located near Syracuse, west of Oneida traditional territory.

Cayuga

*Kaiokwenha:ha* is the real name of the Cayuga. It means “People of the Great Swamp.” The Cayuga are one of the nations that make up the Haudenosaunee. The Cayuga and the Oneida are also called “The Younger Brothers.” Cayuga traditional territory is to the west of the Onondaga.

Seneca

*Onontowa:ha* is the real name of the Seneca. It means “People of the Great Hill.” The Seneca are one of the nations that make up the Haudenosaunee. The Seneca and the Mohawk are called “The Elder Brothers.” The Seneca are also referred to as “The Keepers of the Western Door.” Their traditional territory is west of the Cayuga.

Tuscarora

*Ska Ruh Reh* is the real name of the Tuscarora. It means “Shirt-wearing People.” The Tuscarora are one of the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee, but they do not have a vote at Grand Council. The Tuscarora traveled from North Carolina in the early 1700’s to escape European repression.

Visit this site where thousands of Seneca lived 300 years ago, tour a full-size replica of a Seneca Bark Longhouse, walk miles of self-guided trails, and learn about the destruction of Ganondagan, Town of Peace, in 1687.

www.ganondagan.org
The Abenakis seem to be one of the lesser-known names among Native American nations - many Americans claim to have never heard of them. Yet the Abenakis and other Algonquian peoples such as the Wampanoags and Nipmucs were among the very first Native peoples met by English colonists we called the Bostoniak, (meaning "Boston people"), the Abenaki term for Americans.

The name Abenaki derives from Wôbanakiak, meaning "Dawn Land People," which is how we were known to other Algonquian speakers living to the west of us. We called ourselves Alnobak, meaning "ordinary people." Historically, there was no one single Abenaki nation, but many clusters of extended families and smaller tribal communities named for the regions where they lived. The so-called "Western Abenaki" homelands include northeastern New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, northern Massachusetts and southeastern Canada. Our name for this region is Ndakinna ("our land").

Abenaki communities still exist today throughout Ndakinna, and Abenaki families can be found throughout the United States. It is hard to give an exact figure of how many Abenakis there are today - a reasonable estimate is around 10,000 - a lot of people to go relatively unnoticed.

There are a number of reasons for the long "invisibility" of the people now known as the Abenakis. Our cousins in Maine, the Eastern Abenakis known as Maliseet, Mik'maq, Penobscot and Passamaquoddy, have been constantly noticed by and engaged in various ways with white Americans since the earliest English colonization of New England.

However, the western Abenaki nations, which included the Sokokis, Cowasucks, Penacooks, and Missisquois, were farther inland. Moreover, we became allies with the French in the early 1600s. During the long struggle between the French and English to control the continent, the Abenakis often found themselves fighting on the side of the French. To some New Englanders, they became known as "the bloody St. Francis Indians," due to their many raids on New England towns - on settlements built on land that had been taken by force, or cheated away by deeds, from the Abenaki and our allies.

Those long decades of warfare led many Western Abenakis to withdraw from central New England northward into present-day Vermont and New Hampshire, or even further north to the French mission villages of Norridgewock and St. Francis (also known as Odanak). The Abenaki villages situated at the swampy lands and intervales around Missisquoi (now Swanton) and Winooski (now Burlington) in northwestern Vermont also became important places of refuge. English settlers imagined that the Abenakis disappeared after their French allies finally surrendered to the English in 1763, ending the French and Indian Wars.

But the Alnobak did not leave. Many Abenakis continued to live in traditional ways, in their traditional home territories, but they began to dress like their white neighbors, and used
English as their primary language. They learned not to attract attention, but they were still Indians. The Sacandaga River Valley, west of Saratoga Springs, was another place of refuge for Abenakis until the Indian villages there were flooded out by the Sacandaga Reservoir in 1930.

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, Abenakis in Quebec, New York and New England hunted and fished and trapped, grew their gardens of corn and beans and squash, made baskets of birch-bark and ash and made other handicrafts that they often sold to tourists. Sometimes they would also perform Abenaki dances and dress in something like a traditional fashion.

Saratoga Springs is one of the places where Abenaki artisans came to sell their baskets, leatherwork, beadwork and other crafts. Saratogians thought that the 19th century Indian encampment in Congress Park consisted of "Canadian Indians," but it actually included Mohicans, Mohawks, Oneidas, as well as Abenakis, most of whom lived in New York State, and many of whom lived within walking distance of Saratoga Springs. Saratoga, known to the Abenaki as Salatogi, had long been a very important place because of the High Rock Spring, and many Abenakis came here to drink nebizonbik, "the medicine waters."

Today, the Abenakis continue to exist. American bands include the St. Francis Sokoki Band or Missisquoi Abenaki Nation, several branches of the Cowasuk Band, the Abenaki Nation of New Hampshire, and a number of small family bands across New England. In Vermont, the Abenakis have made significant gains toward state and federal recognition. There is now an Abenaki Tribal Museum in Swanton, and each year, a major celebration called Abenaki Heritage Days, takes place in Swanton right in the town square. State legislation to recognize the Vermont Abenakis and form a Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs was signed by the Governor in 2006.

There are two Canadian Abenaki reserves: Odanak (the former St. Francis) and Wolinak. These reserves are also part of the Wabanaki Confederacy, an older alliance with the Eastern Abenaki that is being re-awakened. There are now extensive family ties among Abenakis and other Native peoples across New England. Some Odanak Abenakis have spent several generations moving back and forth, over the past century, between Canada and the Albany-Troy region.

There are still concentrations of Abenaki families living in New York State. Abenakis can also be found living in Indian Lake, Lake George, and the Corinth-Hadley region. To this day, a number of families in Saratoga County, particularly Greenfield Center, Saratoga Springs, and Schuylerville have Abenaki ancestry. In Greenfield Center, the Ndakinna Education Center uses the old Abenaki name for "Our Land" to indicate that the skills and knowledge we pass on to new generations of people, of whatever heritage, owe much to the wisdom of our Abenaki ancestors who walked this land before us.

[Article by Joseph Bruchac and Marge Bruchac]
We are the Nulhegan Abenaki Tribe; the Memphreimagog Band; the Northern Cowasuk Indians. We have lived here, in the St. Francis, Nulhegan, Memphreimagog, Passumpsic, and Upper Connecticut Basins of Vermont, northern New Hampshire, western Maine, and the Eastern Townships of Quebec, from time beyond memory. This is our homeland (N’dakinna - our land) to help preserve and be good stewards so future generations may continue to live and thrive.

Nulhegan is one of the largest Western Abenaki Tribes (in both citizens and territory) living in Vermont and the United States. We are governed by a Tribal Council made up of family bands whose mission is the protection and governance of the Abenaki citizens and resources within our territory. We are guided by an Elders council who ensures that our customs, language, and traditions are in the forefront of what we do. Our Chief, Don Stevens, was elected in 2010. He is the representative of our people in all tribal affairs and operates at the direction of both councils. He is the guiding force in moving our people forward in governmental relations with both indigenous and non-indigenous governments.

Nulhegan appointed a War Chief, Bernie Mortz, to oversee the security and well-being of any internal or external threats to our community or territories. Our history is being preserved by our newly appointed Tribal Historian, Brian Chenevert.

Nulhegan started to become a political force in the early 21st Century. We helped in securing “Minority Status” for the Abenaki people by the Vermont Legislature in 2006 which established the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs. Nulhegan is proud to say that the majority of Chairmanship’s have been Nulhegan Citizens. We also have citizens serving on the New Hampshire Commission on Native American Affairs to help guide Nulhegan interests in that section of our territory.

Here are some major accomplishments of the Nulhegan Abenaki Tribe in recent history:

- In 2011, Nulhegan and the Elnu were the first Western Abenaki Tribes to obtain legal recognition in the State of Vermont followed by the Koasek and Missisquoi Tribes in 2012.

- In 2012, Nulhegan secured the first Tribal lands in 200 years for their citizens in Barton, VT. This land provides a home base for the people to gather, worship, and grow crops.

- In 2015, Nulhegan hosted the Wabanaki Confederacy and 7 Nations of Canada Gatherings in Shelburne, VT.

- In 2016, Nulhegan sued the Department of Interior and United States Fish and Wildlife Service and won a settlement agreement to possess and apply for Eagle feathers from the National Eagle Repository for all of the recognized Abenaki Tribes in Vermont.

- In 2018, Nulhegan secured license access to all State of Vermont managed lands and other lands in our territory from private and federally controlled entities. Nulhegan citizens Joseph and Jesse Bruchac, with the help of Eli Joubert, intensified Abenaki Language programs to help save the Western Abenaki Language from extinction. This successful endeavor has increased the number of Abenaki speakers worldwide. This initiative has expanded to help teach citizens of other native nations at the University of Southern Maine. Our language is now being heard in movies and TV mini-series thanks to the Bruchacs’ efforts.
In 2019, Nulhegan helped pass Indigenous People’s Day in the State of Vermont which included a permanent Abenaki Display at the Vermont State House. Nulhegan secured an apology from the University of Vermont for the Eugenics Sterilization program which devastated the Abenaki people. Nulhegan also secured a large cultural display at the Burlington International Airport so that our culture can be seen and appreciated. Nulhegan also helped pass H.3 Ethnic Studies bill by the Vermont Legislature that will recommend changes to school curriculum throughout the State of Vermont.

The Nulhegan people are survivors. Oral history tells of the wars and the hardships of survival our ancestors endured. Abenaki presence here has not always been wanted or even admitted. However, we are still here making a difference in the lives of future generations of Abenaki people. Memories and stories of eugenics and ethnic cleansing in the 19th and 20th centuries brought animosity and distrust that still manifests itself today; but we move forward in good faith for the sake of our children.

We are the Nulhegan Abenaki Tribe. We are from the place of the wooden traps that live in the pines who see the first light of day. We are a strong, resilient, and proud people.

[Article by Chief Don Stevens]

Saratoga’s Native Histories

The original Indigenous inhabitants of Saratoga Springs were Algonkian peoples known as the Mohican, speaking an Algonquian language. Their Native neighbors included the Munsee to the south, Western Abenaki to the northeast, and Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) to the west.

Algonkian peoples have lived in this area for over ten thousand years. Before European colonial settlers arrived, they maintained a mostly peaceful existence in balance with the land’s huge bounty of natural resources. Their clothing was made from tanned animal skins and furs. Their houses, known as wigwams, were made from tied-together saplings covered with bark or woven reed mats. Tools fashioned from wood, stone, and bone allowed them to create and acquire all that was needed to survive.

They adapted to changes over time, from hunting paleofauna at the end of the Ice Age, to embracing horticulture (corn, beans, and squash) during the last millennia. These people traveled widely, on foot and along waterways in canoes of hollowed logs or birchbark. Extensive trade networks throughout the northeast were established long before Europeans arrived.
In 1609, the Mohican encountered Henry Hudson during his journey up the Mohicannituk (Mohican river) that was later named for him. Like their downriver relatives the Munsee, the Mohican quickly established trade with the Dutch colonists of New Netherlands, who were eager to exchange iron tools, woolen and linen cloth, beads, copper pots, guns and other items for beaver, deer, bear, otter, and other animal hides from Native hunters and corn from Native farmers.

Around fifteen hundred years ago, a group of Iroquoian-speaking people, the Mohawk, migrated to the Saratoga region from the west. Part of the Haudenosaunee, the “People of the Longhouse,” their league of five nations also included the Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca. After years of internal conflict, around a thousand years ago the Iroquois nations had formed a very strong confederacy, called the “Great League of Peace.” Their Indigenous form of government—which ensured that all individuals and councils were represented—was one of the influences on Benjamin Franklin and other framers of the U.S. Constitution.

Both the Algonkian and the Haudenosaunee people considered the area surrounding Saratoga Springs sacred. Because of its mineral springs with healing waters, it was considered an area of peace to be shared by all. The Mohican controlled the area fur trade until the 1620s when the Mohawk gained supremacy.

Following the defeat of the Dutch by the English in 1664, some Mohican and Mohawk formed close relations with English settlers in New York. Mohawk leaders later sold Mohican lands to the growing number of English settlers. These land transactions included the Niskayuna, Schenectady, Kayaderosseras, and Saratoga Patents.

Several bands of Mohawk adopted Catholicism and moved north to French mission villages along the Saint Lawrence at Kahnawake and Kanesatake. They eventually formed a new inter-tribal alliance—called the “Seven Nations”—with the Huron-Wendat at Lorette, the Abenaki at Odanak and Wolinak, and the Mohawk at Akwesasne and Oswegatchie.

During the French and Indian wars of the 1670s to the 1760s, some Mohican people adopted English culture and settled into towns modeled after English villages. They were uneasy neighbors to Pocumtuck and Nonotuck refugees from the Connecticut River Valley who joined the village of Schaghticoke on the Hoosic River, southeast of Albany, established as a buffer between colonial settlers and Abenaki to the north.

Some Mohican relocated seventy miles southeast to join the Housatonic at the new village of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, in the

Sir William Johnson being carried to High Rock Spring in August 1767. Illustration from Harpers New Monthly Magazine, August 1876.
Berkshires. Stockbridge Mohican men served as scouts for Major Robert Rogers of Rogers’ Rangers, who is credited as the founder of modern guerrilla warfare.

During the mid-1700s, Sir William Johnson, the English Superintendent of Indian Affairs for New York State, is said to have been brought to Saratoga Springs by the Mohawk. Legend has it that bathing in the springs and drinking the mineral water gave him some relief from his war wounds.

Through Johnson’s diplomatic efforts, the Mohawk and Mohican people living in New York developed lasting ties with the English. In contrast, the Abenaki, Mohawk, and Huron people living along the Saint Lawrence allied with the French.

During the 1740s, the Native residents of Schaghticoke left, moving north to join the Abenaki at Missisquoi and Odanak. After the English defeat of the French in 1763, a political border was imposed that separated Native families in New York and Canada. Some Native people maintained old hunting territories, nonetheless, taking refuge in the forested lands not yet settled by English or French. In the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix, Sir William Johnson agreed to preserve Native control of lands west of Rome, New York, but he could not stop the expanse of colonial settlement.

With the start of the American Revolution in 1775, regional tribes were heavily involved as allies, although on different sides. The Stockbridge Mohican and some Western Abenaki allied with the colonial rebels; the Haudenosaunee nations in New York remained allied to the English loyalists.

During that war, after colonial rebels assaulted Haudenosaunee villages, British and Mohawk allies retaliated with the Cherry Valley raid of 1778. In response, in 1779 General George Washington sent forth the Sullivan Expedition—aimed at breaking the morale of British loyalists and their Iroquois allies—which resulted in the destruction of more than forty Iroquois villages and their crops. Many of the Mohawk people who moved north to seek protection from American colonists settled at Akwesasne, on the northernmost edge of New York State, straddling the US and Canadian border. This mass exodus opened up more lands for colonial expansion.

Following the defeat of the loyal American and British forces in 1783, things only got worse for our region’s Native populations. Despite having sided with the rebel American colonists, the Stockbridge Mohican found that most of their land had been appropriated, during their absence, by the town’s non-Native residents. Those still holding land were forced to sell, and most headed west to join a band of Munsee/Delaware near Green Bay, Wisconsin on the current Stockbridge-Munsee Reservation. Others relocated to Ontario, Canada to join Lenape people at the Delaware Nation at Moraviantown.

Many Native people living in the Saratoga region never left; they laid low for decades, or returned once wartime prejudices subsided. During the early 1800s, a steady increase of non-Native visitors to the mineral springs provided new opportunities for Native Americans in Saratoga. By the mid 1800s, Native artisans from Abenaki, Mohawk, and Oneida communities were regularly setting up camps to market their goods.

The first Saratoga Springs Indian camp was set up in the pine grove near North Broadway; it moved to South Broadway in 1850, and then moved in 1860 to Congress Park. From the tents and booths of those Indian camps, Native artisans sold ash splint baskets, moccasins, beaded items, and toys for children. They also made snowshoes and
miniature canoes, while their children demonstrated their skills with the bow and arrow for crowds of eager tourists. During the late Victorian era, Natives sold even more ornate baskets, fans, wall pockets, and beadwork.

Native craftspeople also traveled door to door peddling brooms and baskets and weaving chair seats. One of the most noted local Abenaki basket makers, Sam Hill, carried so many baskets as he walked along he could hardly be seen. Some say he was the origin of the popular phrase “Where the Sam Hill are you?” Others, such as the Fox Hill Indians of Greenfield and Porter Corners, used their wilderness skills to provide fresh game for the cooks in Saratoga’s grand hotels.

Two Akwesasne Mohawk men—George Speck and Pete Francis—became famous for guiding hunters and fisherman and cooking. Speck, also known as George Crum, is identified in some sources as Mohican or African American; like most Native people, he was listed in the local census as “colored.” Speck and his sister Katie Wicks (or Weeks), cooked for tourists at Moon’s Lake House on Saratoga Lake. George and Katie’s thinly sliced version of fried potatoes became known as “Saratoga Chips,” the first potato chips.

By the end of the 1800s, the atmosphere for Native trading in Saratoga had changed for the worse. During this era of western Indian wars and forced relocations to boarding schools, hostile prejudices towards all Native Americans resulted in the closing of the Saratoga Indian camp. Local Native artisans found other ways to support their families, by selling their goods from home or working as loggers and guides. Native people in our region quietly carried on with their lives, while the camps faded away into memory.

During the early 1900s, although few Native people made themselves publicly visible in the Saratoga region, traditions and languages survived in small enclaves around the northeast. In recent decades, things have changed for the better, and Native American craftspeople, storytellers, dancers and cultural educators are becoming more visible and more in demand.

In 2006, hundreds of Haudenosaunee and Algonkian people came together to celebrate at the first Saratoga Native American Festival, held in the Spa State Park. Run by the not-for-profit Ndakinna Education Center (founded by the Bruchac family, members of the Nulhegan Abenaki tribe), the Festival sought to breathe new life into the area’s appreciation of its Native cultures. Since its inception, this festival has brought together thousands of Native dancers, craftspeople, storytellers, and traditional knowledge keepers from across the Northeast, including members of the Mohican, Mohawk, and Abenaki tribal nations.

After over a decade in the Spa State Park – and two years at the National Museum of Dance – the festival has moved to Congress Park in the heart of Saratoga Springs, site of the last of the Saratoga Indian Camps. It is hoped that, through such events as the Saratoga Native American Festival, a consistent Native presence will be visible in our area, as we welcome and educate our Native and non-Native neighbors about our histories and cultures for generations to come.

[Article by Jim Bruchac]
Although Saratoga County was originally the homeland of the Mohican Indians, several other groups of Native people moved here as a result of European settlements elsewhere.

After King Philip’s War in 1675-6, a large number of Native refugees from the Massachusetts tribes in the middle Connecticut River Valley temporarily relocated to New York State, at the invitation of Governor Edmund Andros. Native people from Agawam, Nonotuck, Pocumtuck, Sokoki and Woronoco moved to the refugee village forming at a place called Schaghticoke, meaning "where the waters meet," near the confluence of the Hoosic and Tomhannock Rivers east of Stillwater. (Despite the name, this village was not part of the Schaghticoke Tribe on the Housatonic River in northwestern Connecticut.) Some Connecticut River Valley refugees also settled among the Palmertown Mountains in northern Saratoga County, where they became known as the Palmertown Indians.

Between 1686-1734, the lands around Schaghticoke were sold off to English settlers by Mohican and Mohawk signatories on various deeds, and the refugees from the Connecticut River Valley were forced to move again. Some went north to join Abenaki villages at Missisquoi, Winooski, or Cowasuk. Some went into French territory to join the Abenakis at St. Francis/Odanak. Some scattered into the hilltowns of the Adirondacks, where their descendants mixed with Mohawk, Mohican, and Abenaki people, or with rural white families.
The "Brothertown Indians" (Christianized Native families from Mohegan, Pequot, Wampanoag, Montauk, and Narragansett), led by the Mohegan minister Samson Occum, also passed through Saratoga County on several occasions. From the 1730s through the 1780s, these families relocated from their homes in New England to Oneida territory in central New York state, then to Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and then back to Oneida. Most of the Brothertown Indians eventually moved west, but some individuals stayed in the Saratoga region.

By the 19th century, the Native families from different tribes who lived in Saratoga County were pretty well mingled and intermarried with each other. Indians who stayed in rural regions like the Sacandaga River Valley or the Palmerton Mountain Range continued their traditional lifeways of hunting, trapping, fishing, and seasonal traveling. Some were "Indian Doctors," dispensing herbal medicines; some worked as guides and lumberjacks; and some enjoyed the bustling tourist trade in places like Ballston Spa, Lake George, and Saratoga Springs.

The Fox Hill Indians around Greenfield, Porters Corners, Corinth, and Splinterville made a good living selling furs to traders, and wild game and woven ash-splint baskets to the grand hotels in Saratoga Springs. One of the most picturesque of these basketmakers was Sam Hill, who used to walk down the Greenfield-Corinth Road (Route 9N) so loaded up with baskets he could barely be seen.

Native families from several different tribal nations came to the Indian Encampment in Congress Park to sell their ash-splint baskets and other tourist goods. Oneida and Mohawk people came from central New York State, and Christianized Abenaki and Mohawk folks came from Canada. The Saratoga Springs Indian Camp was originally located in the Pine Grove near North Broadway; during the 1850s, it moved to South Broadway.

By the 1860s, it had moved to Congress Park, bounded by Circular, Spring, and Congress Streets, where it was also known as the "Gypsy Camp." ("Gypsy" was a common insult at the time for Native people who looked particularly dark-skinned.) One of the most famous Indians in Saratoga Springs around this time was George Speck (also called George Crum), known for his fine preparations of wild game dinners. George was St. Regis Mohawk (with perhaps some Mohican ancestry). George was married several times; his first wife was a Stockbridge Mohican woman who left him to move to Wisconsin. He learned to cook from Pete Francis (Mohawk) when both men worked as guides in the Adirondacks. George’s sister, Catherine (Aunt Katie) Wicks (or Weeks) cooked at Sans Souci in town before joining George out at Moon’s Lake House on Saratoga Lake. One day in 1853, Katie accidentally fried some potato slices extra thin, but they met with George’s approval. The "chips" became a taste sensation, and were packaged up for sale by Moon. (Some folks later imagined that George invented "Saratoga Chips" after a wealthy patron complained.) George left Moon’s in the 1860s to open his own restaurant on Storey Hill overlooking Saratoga Lake.

Many northeastern Indians served in the American Civil War; some served in white regiments; others in so-called "colored" regiments alongside Irish or African-American soldiers. At least three Abenaki Indian Civil War veterans resided in Saratoga County. Louis Bowman (Company E, 69th NY Infantry), who was badly wounded at Hatcher’s Run, settled on a farm in Porter’s Corners. Thomas Kesiah (Company K, 2nd Regiment New York Veteran Cavalry) was secretly accompanied during the war by his wife Margaret, who dressed in men’s clothes to make her way to the front. Abram Burlett
(Company L, 1st Vermont Cavalry) and his wife, Marie Louise Joseph, came to Saratoga Springs after the war to sell baskets. George Speck’s three sons also enlisted in the Civil War; William and George died at Bull Run, but Richard became a sergeant and went on to serve in the Indian Wars out west.

Native people who worked as guides, basketmakers, doctors, or even models and movie actors, made a pretty good living around Saratoga and the lower Adirondacks during the early 20th century. But rural Native communities continued to lose their lands to white settlement. In the 1920s, 12,000 acres and three Native towns – Barktown, Indian Stream, and Indian Hollow – were drowned forever when the Hudson River Regulating District dammed the Sacandaga River to prevent spring flooding downriver. These communities were located in the Sacandaga River Valley, just west of Saratoga County. "Sacandaga," in the Kanienkehaka Mohawk language, originally meant "drowned lands," referring to the large bowl-shaped depression that once held a huge glacial lake. The region is now flooded with rich vacation homes, in place of the Native towns that had been there for generations.

During the early 20th century, most Native American families living in Saratoga County kept fairly quiet about their ancestry, due to the widespread prejudice of the times. One survival strategy of this time was intermarriage. Some Native people in New York State mixed with the descendants of New York’s Dutch and English settlers; others mixed with African-Americans, French-Canadians, or the new European immigrants.

Many of the Native families who still live in Saratoga Springs today – whether they identify as Mohawk, Abenaki, or some other tribal nation – can trace their descent to some part of this complicated history of relocated Native peoples from elsewhere who came to call Saratoga County home.

[Thanks to Marge Bruchac for contributing this article]

**Names for Saratoga and the Springs**

For millenia, Native American peoples have been partaking of mineral waters at Saratoga Springs that are well-known for their healing properties. The springs all had different characters: some bubbled up in surface pools; others formed cones of dried mineral deposits; others burst forth in great spouting geysers. More than forty different springs held varying degrees of carbonic acid, dissolved salts (calcium bicarbonate, magnesium bicarbonate, sodium chloride or potassium chloride), and/or iron (ferrous bicarbonate), and small amounts of sulfur (hydrogen sulfide), silica, and trace elements. The list of the healing uses for these waters is long.

The “original” Native name for the region and the springs has been the subject of much speculation ever since Europeans arrived. In 1646, Jesuit Father Isaac Jogues identified the lands around Schuylerville as Ossarague (perhaps meaning “fishing-place”). An Indian deed (later called the Saratoga patent) transacted on July 26, 1683 for lands east of the Hudson River named the region as follows: “A tract of land called Sarachtogoe” (by the Dutch) “or by the Maquas (Mohawk) Ocheratongue or Ochsechrage, and by the Mahicanders (Mohican) Amissohaendiek.” It was bounded by two streams, the Hoosick, known to the Mohawk as Tioneendehowe (“hemlock-clad hills”) and the Batten Kill or Diononodahowe (“conical hills”).
The Mohican term Amissohaendiek roughly translates to mean “beaver-hunting territory” from amisk, the Algonkian word for beaver. The Mohawk term Ochseratongue is a variant of Oserake, apparently meaning “at the beaver dam.” These terms reflect the abundance of small streams and meadows that offered ideal beaver habitat. They also reflect the activities of the colonial era, when Mohawk and Mohican peoples were providing thousands of beaver furs for the lucrative European fur trade, and when Mohawk people started selling Mohican land.

Western Saratoga County was sold by the Mohawk in the October 6, 1704 and November 2, 1708 Kayaderosseras patent, as part of a broad tract of lands lying west of “Sarachtoga.” Kayaderosseras (a variant of Kaniatarossa) indicates “land where the lake mouths out” onto its flood plains. Kayaderoga (“at the lake”) is the Mohawk name for the land around Saratoga Lake. When Sir William Johnson was carried to High Rock Spring by his Mohawk allies on a litter in the late 1700s, he identified this place as “the spring at Kayaderosseras.”

Historians have long debated the linguistic origins of “Saratoga,” searching for some association with the mineral springs. One proposed the Mohawk Assarat “sparkling water.” Other Mohawk suggestions include O-sah-rah-ka (“sidehills”); Soragh-agqa (“salt springs”); or Saragh-agqa (“swift water”). A 19th century Kahnawake Mohawk man suggested Sar-a-ta-ke (“where the prints of heels may be seen”), pointing to impressions in some of the rocks around the springs. One historian suggested Ser-ach-to-que, said to mean “floating scum upon the water.”

Scientists trace the origins of these mineral waters to ancient earth movements, reading signs still visible on the landscape. When the lands around Saratoga were once ocean shoreline, deposits of marine life and shells were compressed and transformed, over time, to limestone layered in-between metamorphic crystalline rock, shale, sandstone, and dolomite. These layers were shifted by ancient volcanoes that cracked open faults, forming fissures in the limestone. The waters that filter and flow through the rock layers mix with subterranean waters, collecting minerals and trace elements from the limestone when natural flows force them towards the surface.

Native oral traditions attributed these ancient movements of land and water to the efforts of giant earthshapers (some of whom are better known to us today as “glaciers”). Indigenous locative words identify the particular places where the feet of these earthshapers stepped or slid heavily on the land, where giant hands molded mountains and tossed rocks, and where other cataclysmic earth-shiftings took place, carving out lakes and rivers and forcing underground waters to the surface. The Native names of many of these earthshapers have been forgotten, but the results of their actions can clearly be read on the land today.

One limestone reef from the Cambrian sea 500,000 years past, for example, is visible at the now-closed Petrified Sea Gardens in Greenfield. Fossilized stromatolite (lime-
secreting algae) that look like cross-sections of cabbages are identified in Native oral tradition as the remains of a rich garden planted by ancient ancestors. The Native story says that the sky spirits devastated the village and turned the crops to stone, as punishment for the peoples’ warlike ways. This story is an apt metaphor, since the reefs hold the remains of some of the earliest living organisms—a sort of garden—from the ancient ocean. The springs gain their medicinal properties from minerals leached from those ancient rocks. The springs have suffered in modern times, however, from the building of pipes, drains, and dams—ways of making war on natural waterways—that have caused many springs to stop flowing permanently.

Interestingly, none of the Indian deeds or patents makes any mention of ever selling the springs, which suggests that they may have been shared in trust by the many different Native peoples who used them. Every Native nation had its own name for such sacred places. The Abenaki called the springs Nebizonbik, meaning “medicine waters.” The land where the Saratoga Performing Arts Center is located today was once known to the Mohawk as Dandaraga (“vale of springs”), and its best spring was Auasa (“where the bear drinks”), a word of Algonkian origin. The mineral springs in what is now Saratoga, by whatever name they are called, are still a beloved place, regarded for the beauty of the landscape as well as for the healing properties of the waters.

[Article by Marge Bruchac]

NATIVE ARTISANS AND THE SARATOGA INDIAN CAMPS

For Native American and First Nations people, Saratoga Springs is an old familiar place. The oldest archaeological evidence dates back at least 9,000 years; Native people traveled the waterways, hunted the giant paleofauna, and witnessed the retreat of the glaciers. In the succeeding forests, fields, lakes, rivers, creeks, swamps, and marshes of the woodlands, resources were abundant across the seasons: spring and mineral waters, plants, animals, birds, insects, fish, trees, and other beings.

Native woodland artisans created objects that were both handsome and practical: flint-knapped arrowheads and knives, shell beads, feathered caps, carved bone and antler utensils, bent-wood bows, stone mortars and pestles, clay pottery, and more. They crafted clothing from brains-tanned hides sewn with sinew, made bedding and robes from warm furs, wove containers and mats from plant fibers, prepared medicines from plants, saps, and roots, constructed homes from bent saplings covered over with bark, and made canoes from dug-out logs or stitched birch bark.

Native trade networks spanned the length and breadth of the continent, bringing copper, chert, seeds, and other useful things from distant places. These old technologies and trade networks have persisted to the present day among modern Native artisans who make stone, bone, wood, bark, leather, fur, and woven goods for personal use, gifts, trade, and sale.

After thousands of years of trading with one another, local Mohican and Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) people met with newcomers when Dutch colonial settlers traveled up the Mahicannituk (“Mohican river,” now called the Hudson River), carrying trade goods from Europe. These Dutch, French, and English people were eager to purchase animal hides from Native hunters and corn from Native farmers. European traders offered glass beads,
steel knives, copper pots, woolen strouts, linen cloth, guns, and other European goods. Since wampum shell beads were in great demand for both diplomacy and adornment in the 1600s, the Dutch also attempted to mass-produce fine tubular shell beads to supply the Indian trade.

Native trade networks expanded to accommodate these new resources, and the regular flow of trade goods became a crucial part of Euro-American diplomacy with northeastern Native tribal communities. Good trade ensured good relationships. European goods were not necessarily better, but for savvy Native traders, they were easy to obtain, and used in distinctly Native ways. Native hunters still used traditional stalking techniques while carrying their new European guns and ammunition. Native artisans adapted new materials to familiar uses, using wool for leggings and petticoats, linen for shirts, thread instead of sinew, and glass beads alongside shell beads. Traditional symbols and decorations were reproduced in glass beadwork, paint, and silk ribbon on the hems of garments. Copper pots, as a source of precious metal in convenient sheet form, were cut up to create arrowheads and ornaments. Silver coins were hammered into silver brooches.

Trading, however, did not prevent war, especially as the population of colonial settlers increased. During the late 1600s and through the 1700s, the chaos of the French and Indian Wars and colonial crowding strained Indigenous resources and threatened survival, and Native communities were forced to shift locations. The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) fought to keep hold of Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Seneca, and Tuscarora territories in present-day New York state. During the early 1800s, some Haudenosaunee families relocated to reserves in Canada or missions on the Saint Lawrence. Mohican families from the Saratoga area moved westward to Oneida and then on to Wisconsin. Abenaki and Mohawk families moved into the mountains or northward to Quebec. Small Native enclaves persisted in rural locales in the Sacandaga River valley, the Adirondack mountains, Lake Champlain, and elsewhere across the northeast.

These Native families, bands, and nations maintained ties with other Native people across the northeast and continued subsistence hunting and harvesting wherever possible, as they had done for generations. They made regular trips to the springs, known to the Mohawk as Assarat ("sparkling water"), and to the Abenaki and Mohican as Nebizonbik ("medicine waters"). While following the old trails, they wove new trading relationships. By the mid-1800s, Native craftspeople could often be seen traveling door to door, peddling brooms and baskets that were essential to the upkeep of everyday white households. One local basket maker, Sam Hill (Abenaki), used to walk down the Greenfield-Corinth Road (Route 9N) so
loaded up with baskets he could barely be seen. Some Native people worked as “Indian Doctors,” dispensing herbal medicines; others did hunting, fishing, and guiding for white hunters and tourists. During the mid-1800s, several Native people – including Pete Francis (Akwesasne Mohawk), George Speck/Crum (Mohawk/German/African), and George’s sister Catherine Wicks – became famous for cooking wild game dinners at camps and hotels around Saratoga Lake. Harper’s Magazine reported that “no one – so they all agreed – could cook a fish as delicately and serve it as temptingly as Pete” (Stone 1876, 396).

Saratoga Springs and Ballston Spa became popular destination resorts for American and European tourists who came to stay at the grand hotels, drink the spring waters, and promenade around the towns and parks. With encouragement from local residents, “Indian Camps” were set up in town parks, and Native artisans – mostly Mohawk, Mohican, Oneida, and Abenaki – began regular jaunts to these locales every spring to publicly market their wares through the summer and fall.

During the early 1800s, the first Saratoga Springs Indian Camp oriented to the tourist trade was located in the Pine Grove near North Broadway and Van Dam. The site, situated above High Rock Spring (part of present-day Skidmore College and Woodlawn Park), had its own mineral spring, and an ancient stone samp mortar that had been carved out for communal use. Although this was an ancient site, local historians imagined that it was a new locale where “the Indians encamped, sold their bows, canes, and baskets, and shot at pennies to show their skill” (Stone 1876, 390). Native artisans made ash splint baskets and fans, beaded bags, leather moccasins, and children’s toys, including miniature canoes. Native children performed trick target shoots and invited tourists to join in. Pine Grove later became part of the Walworth family estate, and young Clarence recalled, as a child, having received a “beautiful bow of well-seasoned wood and a good supply of arrows” in exchange for gifting a shirt to one of his Native neighbors (Britten 1964).

Successful Indian Camps were set up elsewhere across the northeast, from the grand hotels of Rhode Island to the shores of Niagara Falls. Wealthy tourists were keen to purchase exotic Native crafts and souvenirs, and this work was crucial to survival during an era when it was difficult to find other employment. Lake George historian Todd De Garmo notes that “people of Abenaki and Iroquois descent actively participated in the upstate tourist trade,” and that the “Fox Hill Indians [from Greenfield and Porters Corners] made the trip into Saratoga Springs to sell provisions to the large hotels. They also marketed furs and wild medicinal plants, and sold homemade items to the tourists, including baskets, snowshoes, moccasins, gloves and mittens and small novelty birch bark canoes” (DeGarmo 1993, 4).
By the 1840s, another Native trading camp called the “Indian Encampment” was set up on Ballston Avenue one block away from South Broadway: “Here are to be found the general accompaniments of a gipsy life, also archery, rifle range. . .bazaar of curiosities, and the Circular Railway” (Lee 1883, 197). Visitors recalled that “the white tents glistening among the green hemlocks and pines, and the rustic lodges displaying the gaily decorated bow and quiver of arrows, the beaded moccasins and other bead work made a picture somewhat attractive” (Durkee 1928, 65). One visitor described the Native artisans as “picturesque,” “theatrical,” and “instructive to the inquiring mind,” but complained that the homes were “shanties, half tent, half hut” and mistakenly identified the Native people as a “gypsy band, part Canadian, part Indian” (Taintor 1881, 83). By the 1870s, there was another Indian Camp situated atop a small hill bounded by Congress, Circular, and Spring Streets (above the present-day Congress Park Carousel). It featured Native artisans as well as “archery, hobby-horse, whirligigs, bowling alley, shooting gallery, croquet lawn, photograph galleries,” etc. (Lee 1883, 197). One enterprising artisan, named “Big Indian Holmes,” advertised: “See the Big Indian Photographer and take with you a semblance of arts, wonders and mysteries as being exhibited at the Big Indian Photography Gallery, opposite Congress Spring” (Daily Sentinel 1873).

White tourists loved to visit these camps, but they had a hard time recognizing eastern Indians as “real” unless they dressed like the Western Plains Indians who starred in Buffalo Bill’s “Wild West Show” and other touring companies. But Native artists adapted, and some began dressing up in Western Plains-style fringe and feathers to create a more recognizable attraction. Annie Fuller/Falling Star, an Abenaki artisan from Lake Luzerne, also worked as an artist’s model. Styles of Native artwork evolved during the Victorian era, resulting in more ornate baskets, wall pockets, fans, and fancier beading to accommodate fanciful trends in American tastes; some beadworkers included place names (like “Saratoga”) in these designs (Byron 2014). Art historian Ruth Phillips interviewed Mohawk artists from Kahnawake who recalled “with pleasure and pride the great quantities of beaded souvenir objects that had to be prepared for a successful selling stint at Saratoga” (Phillips 1999, 65). Some artisans were so successful that they hired others to mass-produce items for sale. Many families worked a regular circuit of travel; Abenaki basket maker Andrew Joseph, who was born in the Saratoga Indian Camp, recalled that his family also sold ash-splint baskets at hotels up in the Adirondack Mountains (De Garmo 1993).
The popularity of the Saratoga Indian Camp began to fade during the early 1900s, and cheap American-manufactured goods began to take the place of Native crafts. The Indian Camp in Saratoga closed when the land was purchased by Richard Canfield and added to Congress Park (today, it is the site of the Italian Gardens). Native artisans adapted by finding other kinds of work to support their families, and other ways to preserve their culture. Mohawk and Abenaki families continued making art, selling it from their homes, or from places like Montreal, Niagara Falls, and the White Mountains. Native men also worked in the Adirondacks as loggers and guides. During the mid-1900s, very few Native artisans were visible in and around Saratoga Springs. But, as they always have, Native artisans adapted to the changes in resources and markets, finding inventive ways of adapting to modernity while preserving their culture.

In 2006, the first Native American Festival in Saratoga Springs offered an occasion to revive a new version of the old Saratoga Indian Camps by inviting dozens of Native artisans, hundreds of Native families, and thousands of tourists to come together at the Saratoga State Park. At all of the festivals in-between, Native families have returned to Saratoga Springs, to take the waters, wear traditional regalia, demonstrate traditional arts and crafts, and share traditional knowledge. In 2019, the Saratoga Indian Camp is finally returning to the center of town. In Congress Park, it has been revitalized as a large inter-tribal festival, where artisans, dancers, singers, and storytellers can come together to strengthen the threads of some very old Indigenous traditions.

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[Article by Marge Bruchac]
The Springs of Congress Park

Congress Spring

Congress Spring was discovered in 1792 by a Congressman from New Hampshire. It became the centerpiece of the park and village that grew up around it. Bottled and sold around the world, Congress Water was the most famous of the Saratoga mineral waters. Covered by a Greek Revival style pavilion, a reproduction of the first pavilion built there in 1826, Congress Spring flows year round. (Cathartic, thought to benefit dyspepsia, gout, and skin ailments)

Columbian Spring

Once known as ‘the headache spring’, the Columbian now dispenses municipal drinking water; the original mineral water vein has been lost. Topped by a reproduction 19th century Federal style pavilion, it looks much as it did during the mid 1800s. (“Iron Water.” Strengthened the stomach, increased red blood cell count.)

Deer Park Spring

Also known as ‘the Deer Spring’ and marked by a diminutive ornate green and white cast iron monument, this spring dispenses water from a vein of the Congress Spring. In the late 1800s a rustic style Adirondack lodge stood at the south end of the park to house tame deer. This spring is named for its proximity to this once popular attraction. (Similar to Congress Spring)

Hathorn Spring

On the northeast corner of Putnam and Spring Street is the Hathorn #1 Spring, a moderately mineralized, diuretic water. The elaborate pavilion, benches, and landscaping, are recent additions to Saratoga’s landscape. This beautiful site demonstrates the city’s continued interest in maintaining and updating her most valuable natural resource, the mineral springs. (Cathartic, diuretic, ‘grateful’ to the stomach)

Information about the springs comes from the Saratoga Springs Heritage Area Visitor Center located across from Congress Park on Broadway. Please visit this wonderful local resource for more information about Saratoga Springs.

http://www.saratogaspringsvisitorcenter.com
The Ndakinna Education Center is an affiliate of the Greenfield Review Literary Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and charitable organization located in Greenfield Center, New York. The Center offers people of all ages unique hands-on learning experiences, creative presentations, and exhibit spaces fostering an awareness of regional Native American understandings, Adirondack culture, wilderness skills and the natural world.

Our programs emphasize observation skills, interactive learning activities, critical thinking, cooperative problem solving and teambuilding for all ages. The Center is home to many educational exhibits, including Native tools, baskets, rattles, drums, shelters, clothing as well as a full-scale birch bark canoe and several wigwams.

Besides the exhibit space, the Center also contains a large presentation room, an animal tracking room with more than 1000 plaster casts of North American Mammal tracks, Cyber Tracker computer stations, and a gift shop. The gift shop offers visitors a rich collection of educational resources including books about Northeast Native American tribes (such as the Iroquois, Abenaki, Wampanoag, Pequot, and Mohican), animal tracking, wilderness crafts & skills, and Native storytelling.

We present our programs and series year-round at the Education Center and on the adjacent 80-acre Marion F. Bowman Bruchac Memorial Nature Preserve. The beautiful trails that wind through the woods are used for bird and tree walks, animal tracking, and for enjoyment by the participants of our youth and adult programs.

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