AN OVERVIEW OF LANGUAGE PRESERVATION AT OHI:YO', THE SENECA

ALLEGANY TERRITORY

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This project seeks to discover and disseminate information pertaining to the language practices and values of a selected group of *Onödowáʼga:ʼ* (Seneca) at *Ohi:yoʼ*, or the Allegany Territory, in upstate New York. The goal is to find where the current practices and values are situated in the larger picture of Seneca preservation as well as the even broader frame of indigenous cultural preservation.

This study is important for its contribution to the understanding of the broader issues of language revitalization, particularly among indigenous languages. In terms of language endangerment in the United States, of the approximately 300 indigenous languages, only 175 are still spoken; 135 to 155 of those are moribund (Crawford, 1996; McCarty, 2008; Pease-Pretty On Top, n.d.). Only 20 of the 175 are still transmitted to children (Hornberger, 1998). Although the statistics are dire, there is still cause for hope as some languages, such as Hawaiian, are making a comeback from endangerment. As Hinton (2001a) explains, "This is also a time of unprecedented efforts on the part of minority peoples to keep their languages alive and to expand their usage" (p. 4).

Although estimates vary, Chafe (personal communication, 10 November, 2007) stated that "my guess is that there are less than 50 speakers altogether." Chafe went on to refer to an eight-stage "Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale" to measure language endangerment, developed by sociolinguist Joshua Fishman (1991). On this scale, a 1 represents the least endangered while 8 represents the most. Speaking of the Seneca

language, Chafe commented that he "would definitely put it at Stage 7." In Stage 7, most speakers are beyond childbearing age, and a language in that position is seriously endangered.

This study gives a voice to the Seneca at Ohi:yo' who work to maintain their culture and language, and it analyzes the practices and goals of this small group of traditional people, analyzing the ways they transmit the language and culture in homes and in community venues. Its aim is to give attention to their efforts and to inspire other people who strive for language revitalization in their communities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"If I do not love the world — if I do not love life — if I do not love people — I cannot enter into dialogue" (Freire, 1970, p. 90).

Paulo Freire, who devoted his life to education reform, the rural poor of Brazil and educators of the world, in this quote shares my own sentiments that have motivated me to engage in lengthy dialogues in order to complete this study. I have strong dedication to and sincere appreciation for the participants in this study, my dissertation committee, and my family and friends. They have guided me through this entire process, a process which has taken over a year to complete.

I would not even have a study without the gracious participants who responded to all my questions and who have helped me along the way, especially Dar and Sandy Dowdy, who opened their doors and their lives to me several years ago. They are at once dear friends and wise mentors, spiritual guides and role models. They introduced me to all the other people who participated in this project. Some of them have also become my friends, while others I have just met recently. All were unfailingly accommodating and cordial; they dropped everything in their busy lives to address my questions and my desire to learn, and to share a piece of their lives with me, and to all of them I am deeply thankful.

I am also most fortunate to have a fantastic dissertation committee behind me. Before entering into my doctoral studies, I had heard horrific tales of disastrous committees, but the scenarios depicted in those tales could not be further from the truth in my case. Dr Fontaine, my chair, provided reassurance, accurate direction, and speedy

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Many *Onödowá'ga:'*, or Seneca, people live in western New York State in several

territories. Some live at *Ohi:yo´*, or Allegany Territory, about an hour's car trip away

from my Erie, PA, home; a group is working toward language revitalization. I came to

know some of them as a friend and colleague some seven years ago, when a mutual

friend invited me to *Ganöhsesge:kha' Hë:nödeyë:sta'*[1], or the Faithkeepers School, a

place for the teaching and learning of Seneca culture and traditions. The people there

were warm and generous, and they were working hard toward preserving their

endangered language. Coming to this place, I was aware that, with the dominance of

English, the number of Seneca speakers had declined steadily for well over a century. I

had first thought that this group of people was alone in its efforts toward language

preservation in this community. I have come to learn that this first impression was not

entirely accurate, and that there are many other linguistic and cultural initiatives in this

society, forming a small yet complex web of networks.

When I first came to the Seneca community, these new friends welcomed me, and

I was happy to participate. I learned much about the beauty of the Seneca culture and

language, the history and natural resources of the area, about ways of teaching and

mentoring young people, and the complexities of maintaining an endangered language.

They showed me how to maintain hope and a healthy sense of humor even when

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[1]*Ganöhsesge:kha' Hë:nödeyë:sta'*, or the Faithkeepers' School, is a privately-run culture and language center in the Ohi:yo' territory. The words Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:stha, in the Seneca language, mean 'they learn Longhouse ways.'

conducting serious and sometimes daunting work. They invited me on many trips to cultural and historic places in the region. Yet in my capacity as a colleague, I seemed to be a jack of all trades, not an expert in any particular thing. I was an educator, but I have little knowledge of the Seneca language, so I helped teach classes like math and science that were aligned with state standards, yet included local cultural tradition. I was as much a student as a teacher. Even today, every time I visit my friends in New York, I learn something new.

Over the past few years, as I pursued my doctoral training, I have kept in mind the possibility that my studies might equip me to interact in a more in-depth and meaningful way. I do not consider myself a linguist, but have I developed an interest in sociolinguistic and sociopolitical aspects of language. *Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta* and other traditional activities of the small Seneca community have developed over this period as well, and I have become increasingly interested in documenting this story. Some members of this community are intensely engaged in and committed to preserving, or revitalizing, their culture. These goals are hard to define precisely, and it is even more difficult to decide what policies might best achieve the goals once they are defined, or to engage the broader community in support of these goals. I have come to realize that the Seneca saga is one of many now taking place worldwide; it is a tiny, yet unique piece of the great mosaic of language diversity and a story that has only partially been told. This realization represents the first step for me in my journey to conduct the present study.

People often ask me why I became interested in a language and culture that are not my own. My answer almost always includes this particular story: My father's family came from Italy. His first language was Italian, although he spoke English from his youth

onward. He married my mother, who is an English-speaking American. English was the language of the home, yet he maintained Italian with my grandmother and uncles. I never learned my father's heritage language. I did hear it at least once a week but never participated in it. I do not know the reason. I studied languages such as Latin and Spanish in school with relative success, so I certainly could have understood Italian. Yet I did not.

I told this story to my Seneca friend. I thought she would relate to a story about language and the ways in which my family's heritage language fell out of use. She listened, and then thought for a minute. She explained that although it is a sad thing not to understand my heritage language, at least I could travel to the homeland, a place where I could immerse myself in the sounds of the language, with millions of other speakers. Her heritage language is different. Her homeland has been almost obliterated, and, as a result, her heritage language has been gradually drowning in a sea of the dominance of English. Hers is a struggle to which I have to strain to relate, though the contrast she painted for me was stark and vivid.

This project is an attempt to try to relate to this struggle, to understand what it takes to keep a language and culture alive despite the odds, without the luxury of having a large speech community. My intent is to put these efforts at language revitalization in perspective, and to locate the Seneca story's place on the map of linguistic diversity. This study is also another way for them to tell their own story, for everyone to acknowledge it and to give it momentum at a time when such efforts are becoming fewer and are given little public attention. It is a way to honor the strength and tenacity of a small group of people who have so much to teach themselves and the rest of the world.

Seneca Language Loss

In the twenty-first century, many Seneca people struggle to preserve their heritage language. Although estimates vary, people who speak Seneca may be as few as 150 ("Seneca," 2007). Chafe (personal communication, 10 November, 2007) offered a more pessimistic estimate: "My guess is that there are less than 50 speakers altogether." Chafe went on to refer to an eight-stage "Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale" to measure language endangerment, developed by sociolinguist Joshua Fishman (1991). On this scale, a 1 represents the least endangered while 8 represents the most. Speaking of the Seneca language, Chafe commented that he "would definitely put it at Stage 7." In Stage 7, most speakers are beyond childbearing age, and a language in that position is seriously endangered.

Background of the Seneca

The Seneca are part of the *Hodínöhšö:ni:h* (also Haudenosaunee, Iroquois, or Six Nations) Confederacy, which also includes the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Tuscarora. The Iroquois' traditional territory spanned the eastern Great Lakes area; today they live in Canada, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, and western New York State. Their tradition states that they have inhabited the Northeast "since the beginning of human time" (*Basic Call*, p. 80). The Iroquois Confederacy is thought by many to be over 500 years old (Porter, 2002). This union of the Seneca and the other tribes that comprise the Iroquois may have begun as early as 1450 (Snow, 1996). The origin of the languages of these peoples is traced by some to 500-800 CE, and "the Seneca, at least, appear to have been deeply rooted in an ancient cultural pattern of the Northeast" (Foster, 1996, p. 106-07). Contact with Europeans may have begun as early as 1535 with the French (Morgan,

1851/1962), followed by the Dutch and the English. By the turn of the nineteenth century, many Seneca were speaking English in a process hastened by the establishment of the Thomas Indian School in New York near Buffalo in 1855 by the Society of Friends, also known as the Quakers, and Protestant missionaries (Fenton, 1956). Fenton estimated at the time of his research in the mid-twentieth century that English was taking over as a first language among the Seneca.

The focus of this project centers on one of the territories of the Seneca known as the Allegany Territory, or Allegany Reservation, in the Southern Tier of New York State bordering northcentral Pennsylvania. This territory includes 3,500 enrolled Senecas[2] living in and around the city of Salamanca, New York. The city is unique in its status as the only white-occupied city located completely within a territory/reservation, a fact that has caused some political unrest in the past (Jimerson, 2009). The Territory is in the foothills of the Allegany Mountains and straddles the *Ohi:yo:h* (Allegany) River. The indigenous population features a mixed demographic of traditionalists who follow the Handsome Lake, or Longhouse, religion and others who have assimilated Christian or secular ways. In terms of education, there are New York State public schools in the City of Salamanca as well as the Seneca Nation of Indians Education Department, which runs Head Start and after-school programs.

The Territory was besieged and divided by US government incursions on several occasions. In 1964, hundreds of Senecas were removed by the Army Corps of Engineers from their homesteads and villages along the Allegany River, about ten miles away from Salamanca, to make way for the construction of the Kinzua Dam, causing irreversible

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[2] Enrollment, for Seneca people, is granted to descendants whose maternal side is Seneca. While several other indigenous nations use the same system as the Seneca, some nations require a percentage of blood quantum, a complicated system devised by the government's bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

damage to the morale of community members (Bilharz, 1998). The dam flooded 9,000 acres of land (Graymont, 1988), or about a third of the Seneca land base at Allegany. Much of this land included sacred and culturally significant buildings, such as the Longhouse, a type of religious center, as well as gravesites and other significant cultural artifacts such as medicinal plants unique to the riparian, or riverside, zones in that area. The people who were removed were relocated to two separate areas; one about nine miles away in Jimersontown, near the City of Salamanca, and one closer to the damsite, in Cold Spring, where the current Longhouse is located. The Seneca Nation Education, Recreation, and Health administration buildings were constructed at Jimersontown, partly with funds received as reparations for the removal.

Later, in the 1970s, New York State began expansion on a highway (US Route 17 and later Interstate 86) that bisected the community. Route 17 had to be relocated as a result of the Kinzua Dam project; since the project's completion in 1965, the New York State Department of Transportation desired to expand the highway. Construction and expansion of highways in the territory has been ongoing for decades. Both government actions — dam and highway construction — violated the Canandaigua Treaty of 1794, which guaranteed the land base as it was at that time to the Senecas "in perpetuity" (Jemison, 2000). Rather than pull the Ohi:yo´ community together, the treaty violations, especially the dam construction, splintered the community. The relocations divided family land claims; large family landholdings were reduced to one-acre plots. Prime farmlands were lost, ending most of the traditional subsistence farming in the area. Spiritual medicinal plants were inundated, nearly wiping out the traditional practice of medicinal healing. Severe psychological trauma affected the entire community. In the

wake of the political unrest caused by these government actions, the traditions and the language of the community have been severely threatened, resulting in the adoption of different models of revitalization over the past few decades. This project will trace these changes that have taken place, in order to give as full a picture and analysis as possible of the present situation as viewed by the community.

<p style="text-align:center">Research Questions</p>

This project seeks to discover and disseminate information pertaining to the language practices and values of a selected group in Seneca community. The goal is to find where the current practices and values are situated in the larger picture of Seneca preservation and ultimately in the even broader frame of general indigenous preservation. More specifically, the research questions guiding the present inquiry are the following:

1. What attitudes are held by selected members of the Seneca community regarding their traditional language and culture? How do they feel about learning the language or engaging in cultural activities such as dance and musical performance? Are they more inclined to favor certain activities over others? If so, which ones, and what reasons do the people in the community give for their preferences?

2. What practices are being carried out by members of the community who are committed to revitalizing the language? What is the community's response to these? Are some initiatives seen in a more positive light than others in the broader community? If so, which initiatives are these, and why are they favored, given the testimony of people in the community?

3. How do initiatives within the community relate to educational and civic policies in the broader mainstream Anglo society? What is the people's sense of the future of the culture and language?

To seek answers to these questions, I adopt a qualitative, ethnographic approach, involving observations, interviews, a survey, and gathering and analysis of artifacts. Specific hypotheses about Seneca language preservation are not formulated in advance, but emerge from data collection and analysis, at least in part due to the frequently and rapidly changing environment of language preservation at Ohi:yo´.

Significance of the Study

As noted earlier, this study is important both for its goal of giving voice to the Seneca community and its contribution to the understanding of the broader issues of language endangerment, preservation and revitalization, particularly among indigenous languages. In terms of language endangerment in the United States and Alaska, of the approximately 300 indigenous languages, only 175 are still spoken; 135 to 155 of those are moribund (Crawford, 1996; McCarty, 2008; Pease-Pretty On Top, n.d.). Only 20 are still transmitted to children (Hornberger, 1998). McCarty (2008) indicates that in 2000, 72 percent of indigenous children under 5 years of age spoke only English at home. Although the statistics are dire, there is still cause for hope as some languages, such as Hawaiian, are making a comeback from endangerment. As Hinton (2001a) explains, "This is also a time of unprecedented efforts on the part of minority peoples to keep their languages alive and to expand their usage" (p. 4).

Definition of Terminology

Indigenous/Indian

The words *indigenous* and *Indian* are used interchangeably in this project. *Indian* has fallen out of practice in the past but is also being reclaimed in some circles; the Seneca territories at Allegany and Cattaraugus are governed by the Seneca Nation of Indians, for instance. *Indigenous* will be used whenever possible; official names and direct quotations that use the word Indian will also be used. *Native American* will only be used if the term is directly cited; it has fallen out of favor with some indigenous people. Some who live in nations such as Canada or Mexico have noted the irrelevance of the word *American*. Many consider themselves members of sovereign indigenous nations rather than the citizens of these non-indigenous countries.

Indigenous Languages

Hinton (2001a) describes indigenous languages as "those that can trace a long existence in the locale in which they are used today." These languages may become threatened or even extinct when the indigenous group "is a minority in a country governed by speakers of a different language" (p. 3). Repression of the languages causes this shift from the indigenous language to the dominant language to take place, a shift that some groups are starting to reverse in an attempt to revitalize the language, engaging in a process that Fishman (1991) terms *Reversing Language Shift*, or RLS.

Maintenance, Preservation, Revitalization

The words *maintenance*, *preservation*, and *revitalization* are all used in relation to indigenous language survival. Sometimes they are used interchangeably in the literature; at other times, there is a slight nuanced difference in the meaning. *Maintenance* and

preservation are sometimes used to indicate keeping the conditions of language use the same, as can be said of languages that are not imminently threatened with extinction. Revitalization can sometimes mean more vigorous approaches in situations of impending endangerment, as Hinton explains. "At its most extreme, 'language revitalization' refers to the development of programs that result in re-establishing a language which has ceased being the language of the speech community and bringing it back into full use in all walks of life" (2001a, p. 5). No matter how active a language is, on one hand, or how threatened, on the other, "some level of revitalization is still possible" (p. 6). *Revitalization* will be used whenever possible in the case of the Seneca.

<div align="center">*Language Planning*</div>

At times, the terms *language planning* and *language policy* are used to describe language revitalization efforts. "Language planning and language policy can refer both to plans and policies external to a local group, such as national language policies, and to plans and policies internal to the group, such as community or even family language policies. … Language policy has often been a tool for the oppression of minority languages, but it can also serve as a tool for their survival and public enhancement" (Hinton, 2001b, p. 39).

<div align="center">*Community*</div>

The word *community* will be used throughout this project to describe revitalization initiatives in general, and the Seneca setting in particular. According to Fettes (1999), community "consists, in essence, of such connections between expressed thought and lived experience: a dynamic cyclical relationship between the stories people tell about themselves and the ways they relate to one another and to their environment"

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(p. 32). This membership in a community depends on the people's choice to claim membership and to tell the stories that other members tell.

Community-Based Education

Community-based education is the most common successful model of language revitalization in the current literature. Corson (1999) describes community-based education as

> a form of social action within a community framework that extends beyond schools as institutions. … [It] begins with people and their immediate reality. Above all, it allows them to become meaningfully involved in shaping their own futures through the school and other agencies in their community. (p. 10)

Note on Seneca Words

Whenever appropriate, the Seneca words for items that are culturally specific accompanies English forms; the English translation will be provided. The Seneca word appears in italics, and the gloss in single quotation marks. In addition, a glossary is provided in the Appendix. The vowels spelled ë and ö are nasalized, somewhat as the vowels in the French words *bien* and *bon*. The apostrophe indicates a glottal stop, as in the middle of the English *uh uh*. The colon shows that the vowel preceding it is lengthened.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

In this chapter, I trace the main trends in the literature on the following topics: general themes related to global and indigenous North American language endangerment; past and present trends toward revitalization of endangered languages; specifics of selected ongoing preservation programs; the history of the Seneca people and language; the effect of history, in general, and schooling, in particular, on Seneca language endangerment; and current preservation efforts in the Seneca community at Ohi:yoʼ.

Language Endangerment

In recent decades, awareness has increased on a global level regarding linguistic diversity and the loss of languages and, with this loss of languages, the loss of rich cultural traditions. Some scholars such as Mühlhäusler (2000) have linked the loss of languages and cultures with the loss of biodiversity, arguing that it is a dangerous trend. Until recently, the general public has been largely unaware of the crisis, but awareness of language endangerment has been increasing.

The threat to the survival of many of the world's languages is growing rapidly. The UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages maintains that, of the world's more than six thousand languages, at least half are losing speakers, and that as many as 90% of the world's languages "may be replaced by dominant languages by the end of the 21st century" (UNESCO, 2003, p. 2). Crawford (1996) explains that as languages die, critical scientific knowledge and intellectual diversity go with them. Also, there is great human cost to those who are affected by the loss; many feel that people ought to take an interest in the social justice issues related to endangerment and revitalization. Because of the imminent danger of rapid language loss, UNESCO issued

an urgent declaration in 2003: "There is an imperative need for language documentation, new policy initiatives, and new materials to enhance the vitality of these languages" (p. 1).

In some communities facing language loss there is relatively strong language use, while in others the language may not have been spoken for centuries. UNESCO (2003) explains that "[a] language is in danger when its speakers cease to use it, use it in an increasingly reduced number of communicative domains, and cease to pass it on from one generation to the next. That is, there are no new speakers, adults or children" (p. 2). Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (1991) shows eight gradations of language loss. Stage 1 is the stage of least endangerment — the language may be used in mass media, or it may have official status. Stage 8 occurs when the language is most endangered, i.e., a language spoken only by a few elderly.

May (1999b) asserts that fewer dominant languages have been relentlessly targeted and attacked through oppressive regimes. "If there has been a point of greatest resistance to the recognition of separate minority rights and entitlements, it has probably been in the arena of language and education" (p. 48). May cites Fishman (1991) as speculating that this oppression may be due in part to Western resistance to valuing linguistic differences. Yet these differences are beginning to finally be valued in the wider society in accordance with developments in general educational policy and practice. These complicated scenarios are why language revitalization and education efforts must be "historically situated," as McCarty and Watahomigie (1999) argue. The individual histories of the communities where language loss has taken place can help shed light on the entire scope of language endangerment and revitalization.

Overview of Indigenous Language Endangerment

Common Issues: Causes and Views of Language Endangerment

Indigenous language preservation and revitalization can be viewed as one large entity with an intricacy of unique and specific elements. Preservation efforts take place worldwide, but the focus of the present project's literature review is mostly in the area of the United States. Although hundreds if not thousands of different languages and communities are conducting revitalization efforts, the conditions that lead to the loss of languages and the need to revitalize them often feature very similar stories of colonization and oppression. The people who maintain their languages and cultures in the face of such opposition are often nothing less than heroic. In consideration of the differences and similarities across cases in the challenge that is language revitalization, communities often look to other populations facing similar challenges as they try to find the best of existing models and adapt them to meet their specific, local needs.

As Hinton (2001a) describes, each revitalization situation is unique, so models that are highly successful in one area may not thrive in other areas. There are different histories, demographics, values and funding sources that cause these differences, but shared aspects of their histories should not be overlooked. Speaking of indigenous peoples in North America, McCarty & Watahomigie (1999) emphasize this point: "The uniqueness of individual tribal and community situations notwithstanding, all indigenous peoples in the USA share a history as the targets of federal policies aimed at eradicating their languages and lifeways" (p. 80). Also, situations where populations struggle to achieve Reversing Language Shift (RLS) tend to share a cluster of features: the threat of dominant languages; similar causes of endangerment; similar political issues that gave

rise to endangerment; and a current population that recognizes the importance of linguistic diversity and linguistic rights movements in the present.

The causes that lead to loss of indigenous languages have been researched and discussed extensively in the literature (cf. Crawford, 1996; Fishman, 1996; Hornberger, 1998; Krauss, 1992; Mufwene, 2004). These discussions all tend to have an underlying theme with a distinctly political flavor. Crawford (1996) calls this loss "linguistic genocide." McCarty (2008) characterizes the situation of a population whose language is endangered using terms like "containment," "dislocation," "enslavement," and "imperialism," linking them with government initiatives to wipe out the indigenous languages and cultures. Many, like McCarty, feel that the dispossession of the indigenous people's lands was no coincidence, as impoverishment and disorganization served to hasten the destruction of the ways of life and cultural traditions of those people. May (1999a) explains that "language death seldom occurs in communities of wealth and privilege, but rather to the dispossessed and disempowered. Indigenous peoples are one of the most dispossessed and disempowered of all contemporary groups so it is little wonder, then, that much of their linguistic and cultural heritage has already been extinguished, or is currently facing extinction" (p. 1).

Much of this oppression was carried out through the use of state schooling, as May points out: "[E]ducation — as a key institution of the (colonising) nation-state — has played a central part historically in the subjugation of indigenous languages and cultures [which] were specifically proscribed, demeaned and diminished by the state via its education system — a system, moreover, that came to be controlled largely, if not exclusively, by non-indigenous educators" (p. 1). Worse, this control was strengthened

through the institution of boarding schools for indigenous children in the US in the nineteenth century; Hinton argues that these were beginning to be considered a necessity at the time of the closing of the frontier due to a lack of places to exile indigenous people. In order to fill these schools with indigenous to assimilate, draconian measures were used: "[C]hildren were removed, often forcibly, from their families for schooling, with the express goal of teaching children European ways and making sure that English became their main language of communication" (Hinton, 2001b, p. 41).

Leap (1981) indicates that people of diverse backgrounds were purposefully mixed on reservations to create conflict and "neutralize" their distinct traditions, which McCarty (2008) contends was part of a plan to take their lands. The results vary by context. Leap (1981) emphasizes the complexity of any given situation, as he enumerates the factors that may contribute to the maintenance of any particular indigenous language:

> [G]eographical isolation, level of speaker's English fluency, family association with 'traditional' vs [sic] 'Western' activities, family size, the number of Indian language speakers within the home, the number of speakers among the adult segment of the tribal community, the fact of student school experience, or even the presence of an Indian language arts program within the school may all have a hand in structuring the profile of Indian language fluency or the growth or decline in level of fluency within any single Indian tribe. (p. 219)

It is worth considering that language decline and endangerment have not always been the result of conscious efforts on the part of oppressors. Hinton (2001a) clarifies this point: "In the 20th century, language death has been speeded up [sic] by seemingly benign developments such as television, early-childhood education, and other practices brought

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to indigenous peoples from the dominant society that increase their level of contact with that society and decrease the domains in which the indigenous language can be used" (p. 4).

The causes of language endangerment often overlap in different communities, and their effect is also actualized in different ways depending on the details of local history.

Attitudes Toward Language Endangerment

Some scholars have come to the conclusion that, although situations of genocide and endangerment have occurred, the loss represents a natural process in the evolution of languages and there is nothing people should or could do about it. Others are sounding the alarm that endangerment is not natural, nor is it inevitable. Darrell Kipp (2009), a Blackfeet educator and director of the Piegan Institute, a language and cultural revitalization group in Montana, explains: "One of the most powerful rationales for language revitalization is understanding the dangers facing Indian children disconnected, or disenfranchised, from their tribal heritage" (Kipp, 2009, p. 3). When the language is lost, cultures, philosophies, medical and environmental knowledge, oral traditions, arts and more are also lost. These are epistemologies and ontologies that are vital parts of the whole of human knowledge. Recognition of the importance of language maintenance did not happen instantly, however. Kipp summarizes the situation eloquently, noting indigenous peoples' gradual acceptance of revitalization:

In the past 20 years, I have witnessed enormous expansion of awareness to the importance of revitalizing tribal languages. The days of being ridiculed for expressing an interest in learning and teaching the language thankfully are over when reluctance and, in some instances, overt hostility, shadowed our fragile

beginnings. The history of tribal language oppression is well documented, but what is not given enough credence is the effectiveness of the eradication processes used. In our tribe, the negative conditioning was so successfully ingrained that the taboo against speaking our language remained fresh in the minds of even second and third generation non-speakers. (p. 6)

Efforts at Language Revitalization

Hinton (2001a) states, "Despite the fact that the general public should feel they have an investment in the survival of indigenous languages and cultures, what is really important is self-determination: the rights of indigenous peoples to determine their own futures, whether or not they see language survival as an important part of that future" (p. 5). Kipp (2000) asserts that the imperialism and injustice that have prevented this self-determination are not just part of history; they continue today. Kipp (2009) looks forward to the future when he says that "we must document our past, but not be incapacitated by it" (p. 6).

The Reversing Language Shift, or RLS, movement has been actualized in different realms during the last few decades, from political to social. In the 1970s, some nations began establishing 'contract schools' with the government, building on relatively recent ideas about dealing with governmental institutions in their own ways. These contract schools allowed some indigenous autonomy through the establishment of local school boards. The bilingual education movement of this era, including the Bilingual Education Act, Title VII, helped many tribes to offer schooling in the indigenous languages (Hinton, 2001b). Also, at the same time, there occurred some backlash from *Lau v. Nichols*, a 1974 case in which the San Francisco school system was charged with

violating the civil rights of several Chinese-speaking students by failing to educate them through appropriate supplemental language instruction; this was a landmark case that paved the way for the expansion of bilingual education in the US. Before *Lau v. Nichols*, bilingual education programs, including indigenous schools, met with political and economic resistance; some scholars, including Hinton, charge that underfunding and lack of political support still endure in some locations, three decades after the landmark ruling that mandated such programming.

In the fields of education and language, much has been accomplished; yet there have been paradigm shifts in the organization and delivery of indigenous educational practices. For one thing, movements to preserve languages and cultures on a broad scale are relatively young: "[V]ery few language revitalization programs are old enough to serve as models for RLS" (Hinton, 2001a, p. 4). Still, tracing their histories and trajectories can serve as a vehicle for learning about what has been done so far, what can be done in the present, and what may be done in the future.

Language revitalization and education efforts of the past and the present include school-based initiatives and programs outside of but connected to schools, such as after-school or summer programs. They also include programs for adults, efforts aimed at language documentation and materials creation, and programs based in the home. These programs may be delivered through informal classes, through one of the models for bilingual education, or through immersion. Maintaining or revitalizing an indigenous language is challenging even for people who work hard to keep it alive, for several reasons. Often, the endangered indigenous language is surrounded by a dominant language, and the endangered language receives little support and use outside of the

home. Sometimes the parents of learners are not fluent in the endangered language (Hinton, 2001a). This is the point where school initiatives may offer assistance, but how these initiatives have been realized has evolved over the last decades.

Past Efforts

Past educators adhered to several language teaching and revitalization practices that are now considered ineffective. Much has been learned about second language education during the last decades as well. Early revitalization assumed that traditional, Western, school-based programs could be effective for indigenous language revitalization. Hinton (2002) explains that people once thought that language could only be taught in traditional Western contexts. She states that it was common to believe that it was necessary to have "a classroom, books, and a professionally trained teacher to learn a second language" effectively (p. 1). All people had to do was to reform the Western school models and adopt culturally-sensitive topics by inserting them in language classes. Many communities have found this approach ineffective given their histories, their current contexts, or both. Kipp (2000) explains that "You don't reform, you abandon bad systems." (p. 23). Kipp abandoned bad systems when he started his own Blackfeet immersion programs without the benefit of funds, classrooms, or even teachers (Kipp, 2009). These programs use their own models for indigenous education that contrast with Western models.

Not only have teaching locations and contexts evolved over time in some areas, but also the pedagogy has become de-Anglicized. Early efforts often adopted Anglo-style teaching methods, introducing written expression in Latin-based alphabets as a mode of language learning. Many educators and language scholars believed that

"[w]riting a language is what keeps it alive," a misconception detailed by DeJong (1998) in his recommendation of immersion-based teaching in US indigenous schools that emphasizes speaking (p. 2). Educators and community activists have moved to a shared understanding that they should focus on the teaching of speaking skills, since the languages have traditionally been transmitted orally, and speaking serves important functions, including the ceremonial, in indigenous communities. Also, schools can validate that "[y]our language is your curriculum" (Kipp, 2000, p. 26). Now schools working on language revitalization are developing curricula through local, community-based models. Corson (1999) describes Freire's pedagogical theory, based on dialogic teaching, in relation to indigenous community-based education. "A dialogic teaching approach gives the learners more control over their own curriculum. It allows them to become the teachers of their own experience and culture, who choose and direct the themes that provide their own courses of study" (p. 10-11).

Anglo-based models of the past also required enormous and complicated funding projects, often through US governmental programs, since the received view was that "[y]ou need money to do language teaching and learning" (Hinton, 2002, p. 4). Now people have started to give up this notion, and they have started grassroots community schools and programs with little or no funding; these are often very small initiatives. This is how Kipp's Piegan Institute and other language immersion schools began.

These departures from Anglo educational theory and the establishment of indigenous pedagogy have become possible through the realization of the importance of local control. McCarty & Watahomigie, (1999) state this explicitly: "In the last 30 years, [earlier] policies and practices have been replaced by ones intended to encourage

indigenous control over education and the meaningful incorporation of indigenous languages and cultural knowledge into school curricula" (p. 81). One of those types of practices is avoidance of the competition often seen in Western-based schooling. Kipp (2009) states that the students at the Blackfeet immersion schools "do not compete against each other for ranking, instead they are encouraged to improve on previous accomplishments. Our school has no royalty, students of the week, teachers pets or punitive designations of failure" (p. 5). The school does not issue grades or report cards; instead quarterly progress reports are provided to help gauge the progress and planning for individual students. Kipp also explains that indigenous programs should value and honor the speakers who work toward revitalizing the language, offering competitive pay regardless of the speakers' other qualifications. He contends that "[i]t is a shame when the most important members of a tribal language staff, the fluent speakers, are relegated to accepting low status job titles and pay because of rigid certification or accreditation regulations" (p. 5). These divergences from established mainstream practice are the beginnings of a decidedly indigenous way to teach language and culture.

Present Efforts and Common Models

Since the language revitalization movement has started to come into its own, remarkable progress has been made among many indigenous groups. Lessons have been learned from past efforts. May (1999a) stresses the importance of local control:

Given this history [of indigenous movements], it is also perhaps unsurprising that education has now come to be seen as a key arena in which indigenous peoples can *reclaim* and *revalue* their languages and cultures and, in so doing, improve the educational success of indigenous students. A key concern here has been to

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regain a measure of direct *control* of the educational process, something largely

denied indigenous peoples by colonisation. This is where the significance of

community-based education comes into play. (p. 1, italics in original)

This localized self-determination has been seen as key to the success of

revitalization programs and language survival. Without it, little progress usually occurs.

Efforts to establish local control of education often co-occur with demonstrations of tribal

sovereignty. "Particularly in the last 20 years or so, indigenous peoples, and the political

movements associated with them, have mounted a sustained assault on the established

nation-state system by arguing for greater self-determination or autonomy within that

system" (May, 1999b, p. 42); much of this autonomy is being asserted in the realm of

language and education. According to Hinton (2001a), successful programs "have a

number of key characteristics, among them *persistence*, *sustainability*, and *honesty with*

oneself" (p. 16, italics in original).

To provide perspective on the present revitalization models, different types of

programs conducted in various communities are described below. These examples

represent only some of the communities that are effectively revitalizing indigenous

languages. Current efforts are persistent across nations yet unique and contextualized;

descriptions of programs in nine separate areas in the US and Pacific Islands are

presented in overview form in the following sections.

Specifics of Ongoing Programs

Potawatomi

The Potawatomi Nation, a group of affiliated indigenous tribes, operates a variety

of programs in its nine nations located in Michigan, Wisconsin, Kansas, Oklahoma, and

Ontario. The seven Potawatomi bands in the United States have about 47,000 people, each group varying in size, with bands as large as 25,000 and as small as 300. Although many participate in cultural activities such as the Potawatomi Gathering of Nations, language loss is still critical; there may be as few as 52 fluent speakers of Potawatomi altogether (Wetzel, 2006). Their language is known as *Neshnabemwen*. Due to the complicated nature of the different local conditions, Neshnabemwen revitalization efforts vary. Those bands that are located in Wisconsin have had federal and tribal assistance since 1973 through the Wisconsin Native American Program, housed at the University of Wisconsin. Goals include study of the language, teaching it to adults, and assisting the tribes in teaching the language. The Citizen Nation, one of the Potawatomi bands, has a small program run through the Tribal Heritage Department which offers programs for youth and adults, and a plan to make lessons available to everyone through the use of online seminars. The Forest County Community in Wisconsin uses a master-apprentice approach, through Head Start, and after school, adult, and summer immersion camps. In other areas, situations vary from a Potawatomi Language Scholars College, with locations in Wilson, Michigan, and Lawrence, Kansas, which offer youth opportunities to learn from preschool to high school, to small areas with no formal programs due to limited budgets.

<div align="center">

Wampanoag

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The second group of people whose revitalization efforts are noted by RLS scholars is the *Wôpanâak*, or Wampanoag. This group in New England consists of Narragansett, Mohegan-Pequot, and Western Abenaki (McCarty, 2008). They once had 69 tribal groups in their nation; their area covered the locales of 194 current-day towns

(Ash, fermino & Hale, 2001). Their situation was dire a century ago. Still today, there is nobody who speaks the Wôpanâak language as a first language; the few who use the language have learned it from texts or from recitations taught through elders. Now, the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project works with Massachusetts Institute of Technology and some instrumental Wôpanâak people. Fortunately, those working with the language can depend upon a rich historical record, including grammatical descriptions, but many of these use old orthographies and many separate documents must be searched and combined before establishing a full program. Work has progressed toward materials production, and classes did begin in 1998. In these classes, the structure of the language is taught (Ash, fermino & Hale, 2001).

California Languages

The California area is another region that is thriving with revitalization efforts despite grave endangerment statistics. In California, 50 separate languages are spoken by elders as first languages, but only four of those have more than 100 speakers (Hinton, 2001a; McCarty, 2008). In small speech communities, due to the scarcity of speakers, the language that does remain is inevitably changed. The Bilingual Education Act (BEA) funded 21 Native California programs in the 1980s, and the Native California Network provided funds starting in 1992 when BEA funding ended. Under this network, the California Master-Apprentice Language Learning Programme began, which pairs masters with apprentices who receive a stipend and training in conjunction with immersion camp and school learning. In 2001, there were 55 teams representing 15 languages.

Navajo

The *Diné*, or Navajo, Nation has met much success in its revitalization efforts. The Nation has 298,000 people across three Southwestern states, with about 150,000 speakers (McCarty, 2008). It has the largest land base in the US as well as the largest number of speakers of an indigenous language in the US and Mexico (Hale, 2001). Diné education has a long and complicated history, from boarding school initiatives in the first half of the twentieth century, to a public school system, and eventually to indigenous schooling. Many indigenous education programs in this area received federal bilingual education funds to build schools and curricula. Two communities, Rock Point and Rough Rock, have been key players in Diné revitalization (Corson, 1999). Programming at Rough Rock was funded by the federal Office of Economic Opportunity. In fact, "Rough Rock was the first school in the USA to have a locally-elected, all-Indian governing board, and the first to teach in and through the Native language and culture" (McCarty & Watahomigie, 1999, p. 82). But initially, it lacked community control, stalling its success (Fettes, 1999). Rock Point, in contrast, started with "long, slow building of local control" (p. 24) and found success more quickly than did Rough Rock, in part because Rough Rock had begun formalization earlier, in 1966, when such education initiatives were in their infancy. Rock Point initially met skepticism from BIA officials but received Title VII Bilingual funds in 1971. Fluency among children, however, was diminishing throughout the 1970s through 1990s. For this reason, immersion programming in colleges, schools and Head Start programs have begun to develop more fully (Hale, 2001; Platero, 2001). Their ability to adapt is why these schools "became a national symbol for Indian self-determination. … Today, over 80 indigenous communities have followed

Rough Rock's lead" (p. 83). Also, colleges and universities are now offering courses in the languages.

<div align="center">*Cherokee*</div>

Another area that has met success with RLS is in the Carolinas with the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokee Nation has a population of 115,000, with an estimated 10 percent fluent speakers. Originally from the Carolinas, many now live in Oklahoma. Like other Nations, they have a varied history of language revitalization programs. In 2001, they established an early childhood immersion program called the *Tsalagi Ageyui*, or "Our Beloved Cherokee," with the assistance of the Cultural Resource Center and the University of Kansas. Since its inception, the program has served approximately 50 children (Peter, 2007).

<div align="center">*Languages in the Dakotas*</div>

In the Dakotas, groups of indigenous peoples are helping to provide models of RLS for others in the area. The Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota teach Arikara, a Caddoan language, and Hidatsa and Mandan, both Siouan languages. They have begun a mentoring project through the Fort Berthold Community College's Tribal Mentor Program. The apprentices are enrolled in the college, majoring in the tribal language and aiming for language teaching certification through a tribal process. These apprentices learn to teach the youth with the goal of implementing immersion programs in indigenous schools (Pease-Pretty On Top, n.d).

<div align="center">*Pawnee*</div>

The final area in the continental US that I will mention here in terms of RLS is in Oklahoma. The Pawnee Nation in Oklahoma has established language programs with the

assistance of Administration for Native Americans (ANA) Language grants. They opened

Hukasa Child Learning Center and Pawnee Nation College in 2005. The intent has been

to establish language nests (described below) and teacher training programs. In addition,

Oklahoma State University provides assistance ("Pari Pakuru," 2007).

<p align="center">*Hawai'i and New Zealand*</p>

Outside of the continental US, two of the most famous and successful programs of

all RLS efforts are found in the Pacific Islands in Hawai'i and New Zealand. In New

Zealand, Māori is the indigenous Polynesian language, spoken by people who settled the

islands over a thousand years ago. Contact with Europeans began in 1642 when there

were an estimated 100,000 Māori on the islands (King, 2001). Missionaries followed in

the 1800s. Teaching took place in mission schools as it did in many indigenous

communities, reaching its zenith around 1830. At this stage, the teaching and learning

took place in the Māori language, as missionaries felt this would support easier

conversion to Christianity. The language was written extensively during the era of

colonization, yet Māori writing began an immediate decline between 1840 and 1867.

English entered the picture with the arrival of British settlers who established a colonial

government around 1840. By1858, there were as few as 58,000 Māori, owing in part to

disease and warfare. English took hold strongly in 1867 with the establishment of the

Native Schools Act, which mandated English as the language of instruction. Citing

Benton (1991), King (2001) explains that "[t]he gradual shift from Māori to English as

the language of the home was linked in various communities to the two world wars, the

1930s depression, urban drift in the 1960s, and the introduction of television" (p. 120).

As of the mid-1970s, a fifth or fewer of the population spoke Māori fluently, and the language was still in decline as recently as the 1990s (Hale, 2001).

This alarming situation is what gave rise in the 1980s to the *Te Kōhanga Reo*, or the 'language nest,' as an immersion model that has served as inspiration for other nations ("Te Kohanga," 2003; Pease-Pretty On Top, n.d.). The Māori language nest, established in 1982, is designed for preschool-aged children and their parents who do not or cannot take part in other early childhood programs. Nests provide daycare services using the heritage language. Today there are 704 nests in New Zealand enrolling 13,000 children. These schools receive support from and are licensed by the New Zealand Ministry of Education through a charitable trust. Language nests often take place in the home, with elders and young adults transmitting the language and cultural practices to young children while caring for the children's daily needs. The language used is informal, conversational, and imbedded with cultural values, for instance, in the teaching of traditional children's stories that teach religious values or cultural beliefs. The language nest model is important to the present project since a Seneca family has recently begun to adopt the Māori model. In addition to these model Māori nest schools, there are K-13 schools, institutions of higher education, and adult education programs that teach the Māori language and culture in New Zealand.

Like the Māori education programs, the Hawaiian language immersion models are highly regarded and serve as models for other nations; Hawaiians began aggressive immersion programs by adopting the Māori language nest model. Native Hawaiians migrated to the island chain in the eighth century and first had contact with Europeans in 1778 when there were about 800,000 Hawaiians (Warner, 2001). Missionaries arrived in

the 1820s, complicating the situation with proselytism. As has transpired in many other indigenous locales, missionaries developed orthographies of the indigenous language and taught the native population literacy through Christian texts translated into Hawaiian. However, English was mandated in government schools in 1854, and, with mission support, it became the language of literacy. Disease and other problems soon led to a 94% loss of the population, so that by 1878, only 47,500 remained. This era was also a time when government documents began to be issued in English as well as Hawaiian.

After 1900, no schools offered instruction in Hawaiian (Warner, 2001). Hawaiian revitalization has grown from only a few hundred speakers in the 1950s to as many as 15,000 speakers today, due in part to a "Hawaiian renaissance" that stemmed from civil rights reforms (McCarty, 2008, p. 215). After the 1893 US takeover of the Kingdom of Hawai'i, the Hawaiian language was banned in public schools, a policy that lasted for 90 years (McCarty & Watahomigie, 1999); but by 1978, Hawaiian once again became the state's co-official language (McCarty & Watahomigie, 1999).

The language education system has now diversified: from its origins in grassroots parental support of Hawaiian language in the home and in family-run schools, it has now grown into an expanded network serving preschool, K-12, college, and teacher-education programs. The *'Aha Pūnana Leo*, the preschool language nest, co-founded by William Wilson, was inspired by the Māori model ("'Aha Pūnana Leo," 2006; Pease-Pretty On Top, n.d.). In these Hawaiian nests, parents, as well as children, learn the language; they also participate in administering their own local schools. Building on the success of the preschools, primary schools and then high schools were developed, with Hawaiian as the medium of education. Funding of these programs has a complex history, but programs

have been supported by the Native Hawaiian Education Act, public, federal charter, state, foundational, and university funds (McCarty & Watahomigie, 1999).

These are just some of the communities and their efforts to revitalize Native languages. There is not space enough here to analyze and describe all of the programs and initiatives throughout the country, let alone the successes found across the globe. The models are highly variable, and, in most cases, they have evolved in many conceptualizations since their inception. There are several other successful initiatives underway in Pueblo, Karuk, Mono, Paiute, Hopi, Tohono O'odham, and Arapaho communities, as well as many others in Alaska, Canada, Mexico, and other North American locales — far too many to survey in this chapter. Perhaps owing to their similar, albeit unique, histories of oppression and disenfranchisement, most success stories are products of grass-roots involvement. May (1999a) illustrates that "[w]hile still in many cases small-scale, and while still facing considerable odds, community-based educational initiatives are beginning to have a positive effect on the specific educational futures of indigenous students and, more broadly, the retention of indigenous language [sic] and cultures" (p. 1, italics in original).

Kipp (2009) summarizes language revitalization well: "Our languages can serve us to the end of time, because they were with us in the beginning of time" (p. 7). Such is the sentiment of the Seneca who are working toward revitalization in their community. In the next section, I present something of the history and current situation of this group, which is the target group for the present study.

Brief History of the Seneca[3]

Origin

The exact origin of the Iroquois, of whom the Seneca are a part, is not easy to determine, and an estimation of the culture's beginning is dependent upon which source is consulted. Also confounding the Iroquois origin is how to determine the place of their original homeland, the divisions of political units and languages, and the migrations during prehistory. Iroquoianists, the conventional term for scholars who study the Iroquois, have long debated whether the Iroquois of prehistory migrated to the area near the central-eastern Great Lakes, or whether they originated *in situ*. Many favor the *in situ* hypothesis. The Iroquois differ from other ancient groups around them, such as the Algonkian-speaking peoples, in that they seem to have always been matrilineal, centralized horticulturists, offering an anomaly that scholars would try to solve for many years (Foster, Campisi, & Mithun, 1984). Another consideration when understanding the reason for so many divergent theorizations about the Iroquois origin is the stage of development that the archaeologists operated under, in that they were products of their own time and traditions; some scholars favored an etic rather than an emic approach.

Snow (1984) argues for "an arrival of Iroquoians in New York after the end of the Late Archaic[4] (1700 B.C.)" (p. 248), which was speculated as "the end product of a cultural development that began in the Laurentian Archaic some 6000 years ago" (J. Wright, 1984, p. 284). James Wright (1984) considers Iroquois cultural development as evolving possibly from a "generalized Archaic base" (p. 291). Morgan (1851/1962) theorizes that they later lived as one unified group around present-day Montreal, where

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[3] Please refer to the Selected Chronology, after the Appendices, for a condensed timeline of Seneca history.
[4] The Archaic period in North America is thought to have spanned the years of 8000 to 1000 BCE, although exact dates are often debated.

they fought with the Adirondacks, or "Bark Eaters" (Tehanetorens, 2000). These skirmishes caused their migration to the mouth of the Oswego River, and then, "[a]t a subsequent day they divided into bands," or the five tribes (p. 6), to be enumerated in the next paragraph. This migration may have happened a thousand years ago (Snow, 1984). But it should be noted that "[a]rchaeology has a long way to go in its efforts to elucidate the factors that gave rise to the Laurentian Archaic" (Snow, 1984, p. 292). Their own tradition, as presented, for example, by the authors of *Basic Call to Consciousness*, a treatise on the history and plight of the Iroquois presented in 1977 to the Non-Governmental Organizations of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, is rich in historical and spiritual content. The delegates at Geneva explained that "our people originate in the northeastern woodlands of North America. There are no stories within that tradition concerning migration across frozen lands to the area we occupy. We have been and continue to be inhabitants of these lands" (*Basic Call*, 1978, p. 1). According to this indigenous tradition, this was an "organized and continuous" occupation (p. 80). In fact, their tradition warns of inauthentic and colonialist historical representations of their culture. *Basic Call* also noted that "[m]ost of what passes as 'Iroquois History' was an effort by English and French historians to discredit the Haudenosaunee [i.e. Hodínöhšö:ni:h] and to justify the destruction of the Confederacy[5] and the theft of Confederacy lands" (p. 17).

The Confederacy refers to and includes five groups: the *Ganyë':ge:onö´*, the Mohawks, or People of the Flint; the *Onëyotgé:onö'*, the Oniedas, People of the Standing Stone; the *Onöda'ge:onö'*, the Onondagas, or People of the Hills, the *Gayógew:onö'*, the Cayugas, People of the Great Pipe; and the *Onödowá'ga:'*, or Senecas, People of the

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[5] The Hodinöhŝyönih, or Iroquois Confederacy

Great Mountain (See Figure 1 below). As a whole, they are known as the

Hodínöhšö:ni:h, often spelled Haudenosaunee, or "People of the Longhouse." They were

called Iroquois[6] by the French and Five Nations by the British. After the

Dasgeowë'ge:onö', the Tuscarora, a distantly-related group seeking refuge from warfare

in the Carolinas, was added in 1722, they were called Six Nations by the British (Morgan

1851/1962). The Seneca were the most numerous group (Abler & Tooker, 1978).

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[6] The origin of the word Iroquois, according to Bakker (1990) is derived from Basque and an unknown Algonquian language. It is a pidgin word, probably *hilokoa*, meaning 'the kill(er) people.' The Basques traded with Algonquians, developing a pidginized trading language. The spelling Iroquois is of French origin, learned through an intermediary Algonquian language, perhaps Micmac , Montagnais, Maliseet, or Saint Lawrence Iroquoian.
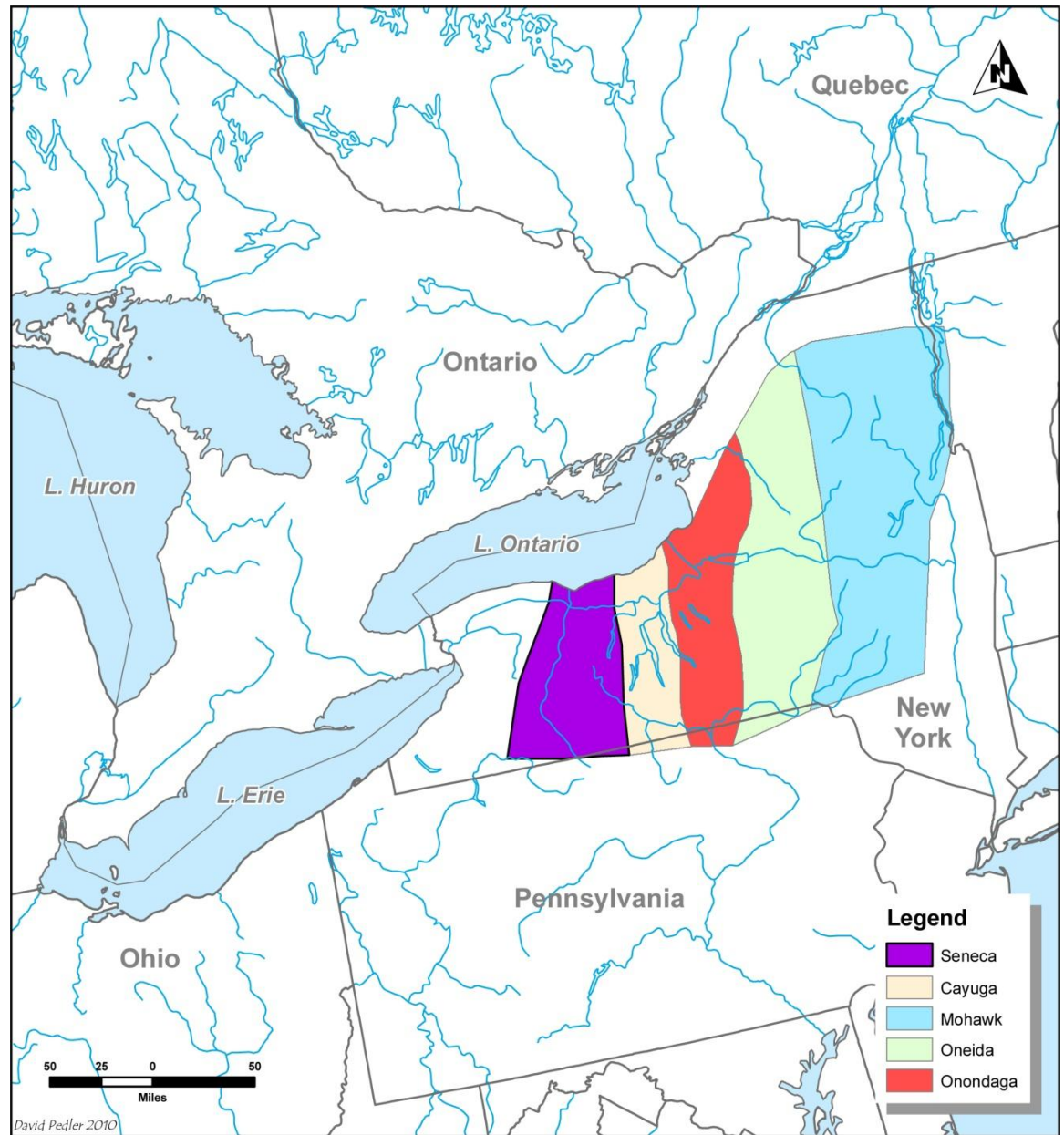
Figure 1: Map of Iroquois Territory, Pre-Contact (Courtesy of David Pedler). Source: Trigger, Bruce G., 1978. Key to Tribal Territories. In Northeast, edited by Bruce G. Trigger, p. ix. *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 15, William C. Sturtevant, general editor, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. and (2) Sturtevant, William C., 1967. *Early Indian Tribes, Culture Areas, and Linguistic Stocks*. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

The Iroquois lived in longhouses made of bark and with central fires, 50 to 130

feet long and 16 feet wide. A 120-foot house might hold 20 families (Morgan,

1851/1962). The longhouse is also used as a metaphor for the region that is the home of

the Iroquois people, with the Onödowá'ga:' positioned at the western door of the longhouse and the Ganyë':ge:onö ' at the eastern door. Fenton (1956) comments on the longhouse and illustrates its metaphor: "The old row longhouse, which sheltered a matrilineal family and had become enlarged in Iroquois imagery to cover New York State from Schenectady to Rochester, went out of style before 1800" (p. 574). Food and other necessities in the longhouse era were plentiful during times of peace. The Iroquois made practical items as well as artistic ones, some of which are still crafted today. These items include distinctive pottery, moccasins, clothing items and bags — some with intricate beadwork — war clubs, musical instruments, such as the turtle rattle and water drum, ropes, birch-bark canoes, baskets, snow shoes, corn mortars, corn-husk dolls, and more. They enjoyed and still enjoy games, such as the snow snake, hoop and javelin, lacrosse, archery, and the Gadzë'geka:', 'Great Dish' or peach stone game, among others. They subsisted primarily with fishing and farming, and so they often lived in valleys so they could be close to fishing sources and so they could take advantage of a long growing season for corn (Trigger, 1978). Senecas traditionally grouped between the Genesee River in the west and Canandaigua Lake to the east (Abler & Tooker, 1978). Through examination of Proto-Iroquoian language, they must have known of deer, turtles, beavers, otters, eagles, snipes, sugar maples, corn, birches, pines, slippery elms, husk mats, moccasins, cradleboards, rattles, and other animals, plants, and objects still common to their lifeways today (Mithun, 1984).

In the longhouses, families were grouped by matrilineal lines and by clans, with husbands going to live with the wife's extended family under one large longhouse. The family's children followed the mother's clans. Senecas have eight clans grouped in two

moieties, animal and bird, with four clans each. The animal clans are wolf, bear, beaver, and turtle, and the bird clans are snipe, heron, hawk, and deer[7]. Intermarriage within a moiety was not practiced (Morgan, 1851/1962). Some villages had more than a thousand people grouped together, with neighboring villages comprising "tribes" (Trigger, 1978). Women tended the fields while men handled hunting duties. Parker (1968) explains that "if a man loved his wife devotedly," he might on occasion help her clear the fields, but he avoided being seen doing this women's work (p. 22).

Life was not always peaceful among the Iroquois. At times, the groups "forgot the ways of the Creator" (Tehanetorens, 2000, p. 11) and fought each other. A result, according to tradition, is that a Huron named Deganawidah , referred to as the Peacemaker, and an Onondaga named Hiawatha, were sent by the Creator to reestablish peace among them and provide them with the *Gayaneshä'go:wa:h*, or Great Law of Peace. This law set forth this principle:

> The first principle that the Peacemaker set forth was … that some force or some thing [sic] must have created this world — the Giver of Life — [and this Giver of Life] had not intended that human beings would abuse one another. Human beings whose minds are healthy always desire peace, and humans have minds which enable them to achieve peaceful resolutions of their conflicts. (*Basic Call*, 1978, p. 10)

Deganawidah traveled from nation to nation to enlist support, establishing laws about the use of hunting lands, the taking of game, customs for holding meetings, bestowing titles

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[7] The deer clan was originally the killdeer clan. The killdeer became scarce, and it was thought to be bad luck to name a clan after a nearly extinct animal. Killdeer was changed to deer, a plentiful animal that seems to almost fly as it leaps, hence the inclusion of deer as a bird clan.

upon leaders, and exchanging of *otgóä'* , 'wampum.'[8] The people acknowledged the

message and united into a confederacy; Mohawks became Keepers of the Eastern Door,

the Senecas Keepers of the Western Door, and the Onondagas, being centrally located,

the Keepers of the Fire. The Onondaga territory is where councils are held. Legends tell

the tale of the formation of the league. The Peacemaker "argued not for the establishment

of law and order, but for the full establishment of peace" (*Basic Call*, 1978, p. 10).

The Iroquois Confederacy forged a union to fight off common enemies and

establish peace amongst themselves[9]. They had 50 sachems, or chiefs. They held councils

for various reasons, religious and civil, including mourning. Decisions were not the sole

province of a chief alone or even of the majority; "[u]nanimity was a fundamental law"

(Morgan, 1851/1962, p. 111). The laws created were remembered and recorded in

wampum strings woven of white and purple shells and sinew into a belt. Speaking of

these belts, Morgan (1851/1962) explains that "the idea, the string, or the belt can tell, by

means of an interpreter, the exact law or transaction of which it was made, at the time, the

sole evidence" (p. 121). *Basic Call* characterizes the government further: "The

government which is established under the Great Law provides, in effect, that the leaders

or 'chiefs' are the servants of the people. Everyone in the Six Nations … has direct

participation in the workings of the government … the key factor for the success and

longevity of the Haudenosaunee" (1978, p. 12-13). As Deskaheh, a Cayuga chief,

explained to the League of Nations in 1923, the wampum belts of the Confederacy are

important means of recording history:

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[8] A bead/product of the freshwater Quahog clam (Dowdy, 2008).
[9] Cf. Woodbury (1992) for more on information regarding the legend of the founding of the league.

[The Iroquois Confederacy] is a League which is still alive and intends, as best it can, to defend the rights of the Iroquois to live under their own laws in their own little countries now left to them, to worship their Great Spirit in their own way, and to enjoy the rights which are surely theirs as the white man's rights are his own. … If one hundred and sixty winters ago, our warriors had not helped the British at Quebec, Quebec would not have fallen to the British. The French would then have driven your English-speaking forefathers out of this land, bag and baggage. Then it would have been a French speaking people here today, not you. That part of your history cannot be blotted out by the stealing of our wampum belts in which that is recorded. (*Basic Call*, 1978, p. 31-32)

The traditional religion of the Iroquois is still active today. There is belief in a Creator, a creation story, and rituals that still hold a place in parts of Iroquois society. Although there are different variations, the essential Iroquois creation story involves a Skyworld where beings exist among the animals. There is usually a man and a woman in the story, and a tree growing in the center of the Skyworld. The tree is removed and the woman falls through the hole, plummeting toward a world of water below. Birds and marine animals work to help the woman, who is placed on a turtle's back where she lives and gives birth to twins (Kenyon, 1993).

Shögwajë:no'kda'öh, 'Creator' in Seneca, is given thanks for all things. "To him they rendered constant thanks and homage for the changes in the seasons, the fruits of the earth, the preservation of their lives;" this ritual of thanks is still performed to this day (Morgan, 1851/1962, p. 155). This tradition is known as the *Ganö:nyök*, 'let it be used for expressing thanks,' roughly translated as the Thanksgiving Address. It is recited every

day and before important events and gatherings. An example of one of the things they are thankful for is *jöhehgöh*, the 'three sisters' or 'three sustainers' — corn, beans, and squash. They are provided by the Creator to help sustain their people, and are grown together symbiotically. In their own words, "all elements of the Natural World were created for the benefit of all living things. … Our institutions, practices, and technologies were developed with a careful eye to their potential for disturbing the delicate balance we lived in" (*Basic Call*, 1978, p. 2). The natural world figures prominently in the belief systems and events. "We are shown that our life exists with the tree life, that our well-being depends upon the well-being of the Vegetable Life [sic], that we are close relatives of the four-legged beings. In our ways, spiritual consciousness is the highest form of consciousness" (p. 71).

This reverence for the natural world is actualized in the major cyclical and seasonal festivals of maple, planting, strawberry, green corn, harvest, and new year (Fenton, 1956; Morgan, 1851/1962). People who helped to conduct these ceremonies and other religious doings were and still are known as *Honödi:ön,* 'officials,' and the word is used for 'Faithkeepers,' who are represented by both males and females. They make a pledge to the Creator acknowledging their responsibility to carry on the customs of their ancestors, including laws, traditions, and ceremonies (Dowdy, 2008). This tradition continues to the present day.

The traditional religion, also known as the Longhouse religion, saw revival during the hardest of times when European conquest and internal factionalism were causing considerable unrest. The religious renewal began with *Ganyodaiyoˊ*, 'Handsome Lake,' a Seneca who was born around 1735 and lived until 1815, according to Morgan

(1851/1962). His was "a vision of liberation and resistance. His words became the guiding force that saved our peoples from complete cultural destruction during a period which saw practically complete cultural destruction among Native people throughout northeastern North America" (*Basic Call*, 1978, p. 4). Handsome Lake was half-brother to Cornplanter, a Seneca leader. Handsome Lake fell to the temptations of liquor, but, during a near-death experience, he had a series of visions that caused him to reform his life. From these visions he received messages from the Creator to help pull his people out of despair. The messages from the Creator to Handsome Lake, and thus to the people, are collectively known as the *Gáíwi:yoh*, meaning 'the good words' and also known as the Code of Handsome Lake; its provisions are still observed today. Ganyodaiyo' taught his followers to return to the rituals honoring the Creator, to honor children and the elderly, and to stay away from alcohol and witchcraft, among other things. His message is delivered annually to this day, and those who follow it are known as the followers of Handsome Lake or adherents to the Longhouse religion. The followers who direct the traditional events and ceremonies are the Faithkeepers.[10],[11]

<p style="text-align:center">*Contact with Europeans*</p>

Colonial History

That these traditions are still followed today is no small miracle considering the long history of European invasions and oppression waged against the Iroquois. The French forayed into Iroquois territory in 1534 at the Baie de Gaspé (Trigger, 1978). Around 1535 the French made an alliance with the Adirondack Indians. Because of this alliance, the French battled against the Mohawks, in what Morgan (1851/1962) describes

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[10] Faithkeepers are assisted by speakers, who deliver ceremonial speeches and make announcements.
[11] Cf. Wallace (1970) for Seneca history before, during and after Handsome Lake.

as the first war between Europeans and the Iroquois. The Dutch began contact around the year 1609, and they established a trading post at Albany in 1615. Peaceful relations and free trade with the Dutch lasted until around 1664 when the Dutch surrendered to the British.

In 1634, Van den Bogaert saw iron hinges on Mohawk doors, a sign of early trade with Europeans since Indians did not use metals before contact (*Six Nations*, 1995). In 1694, Sadakanahtie, an Onondaga, gave a speech indicating that they desired peace with the English and accepted their Christian practices, working with them against the French and their Indian allies. In 1677, the Covenant Chain, represented in a wampum belt, was a symbolic measure indicating an agreement between Iroquois, Dutch and English traders. It was embodied in the *Gaswëhda'*, 'wampum belt' signifying the 'Two-Row Wampum.' The two rows signified the Indian and the European worlds walking alongside each other in harmony.

In the late seventeenth century, the Iroquois were a group of great strength (US Congress, 1915; Morgan, 1851/1962). Morgan illustrates, "At the era of their highest military supremacy, about the year 1600, the Iroquois, in their warlike expeditions, ranged unresisted from New England to the Mississippi, and from the St. Lawrence to Tennessee" (p. 39). He adds, "About the year 1700, the Iroquois reached their culminating point" (p. 15).

During their strongest era, the Iroquois lived in villages scattered across the present-day state of New York. Fenton (1956) explains:

Iroquois settlements were formerly much more concentrated than of late, and the League consisted of 12 or 13 villages, ranging between 300 and 600 persons per

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town: Mohawk (3), Oneida (1), Onondaga (2), Cayuga (3), and Seneca (4). Two

Seneca towns had upward of 100 houses of which many were extended bark

houses sheltering composite families. In the next century, settlements dispersed,

the bark houses gradually giving way to single family log houses, and by 1800,

save at Allegany, the bark Longhouse was a thing of the past. (p. 571)

The main Seneca villages in the seventeenth century were located in what is now Ontario

and Monroe counties; new villages later spread throughout western New York (Morgan,

1851/1962). Seneca people occupied these places from at least the sixteenth century until

the Revolution, yet their hunting grounds extended in the west to Ohio, Niagara frontier,

and southern Ontario (Abler & Tooker, 1978).

During this time of great power for the Iroquois, the French made enemies of

many of them, especially the Senecas. Denonville, the governor of Canada, raided Seneca

villages in the late seventeenth century. One of the places he destroyed in 1687 was

Gannagaro, now known as Ganondagan (Fenton, 1851/1962; Robinson, 1976).

According to Morgan, Denonville had 2,000 French and 600 Indian forces there; they

destroyed four villages and burned large cornfields. The relations between the French and

the Seneca fluctuated between war and peace several times during the seventeenth

century (Abler & Tooker, 1978). At the turn of the eighteenth century, peace was

established with the French and British, a peace that was to last about 50 years. The

Iroquois at this time were governed by many strong leaders who took on specific roles.

Red Jacket, Handsome Lake and Ely S. Parker were sachems, and Cornplanter and Brant

were warriors and chiefs (Fenton, 1956).

During the American Revolution, most Iroquois, especially most Senecas, sided with the British, in part owing to promises of the old Covenant Chain. Many Iroquois in the eastern part of the state sold their lands after the war in the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, although this move was opposed by Cornplanter and Red Jacket (O'Reilly, 1838). Alliance with the British was a critical development in the events of the period, and led to substantial losses of territory for the Seneca: "The years immediately after the American Revolution were the decisive period in the history of the Iroquois Indians. In the decade and a half following the conflict, the Iroquois lost over 95 percent of their lands [Figure 2 below] as a result of unprecedented white pressures on their vast and rich estate" (Hauptman, 1988, p. 4-5).
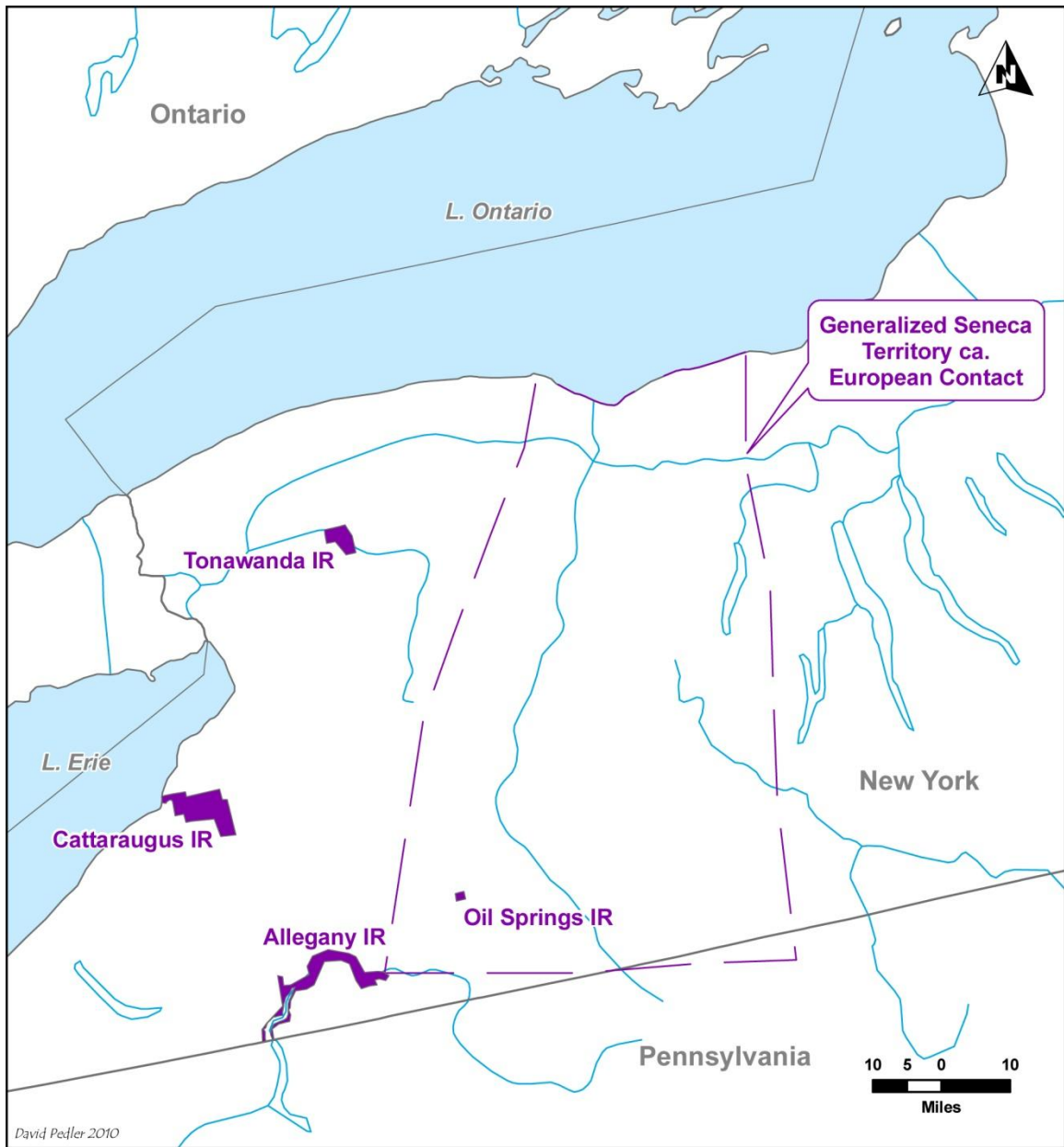
Figure 2: Map of Seneca Territory, Post-Revolution, shown in IR's, or Indian Reservations (Courtesy of David Pedler). The dotted lines represent the original Iroquois territories (see Figure 1). Source: National Atlas of the United States, 2006. Indian Lands of the United States. National Atlas of the United States, Reston, VA.

A factor that affected the loss of land at this time involved raids by Generals

Clinton and Sullivan and Colonel Broadhead in 1779. Sullivan brought four thousand

troops into the Genesee Valley and destroyed major Seneca towns as well as their grain

stores (Morgan, 1851/1962). These raids had a devastating effect, as Fenton (1956) illustrates: "For a time the Senecas virtually abandoned farming, as if dispirited by the scorched earth campaign of General Sullivan" (p. 573). Due to Sullivan's raids, some of the Iroquois in the upstate New York area who had sided with the British had moved westwards toward their forts along the Niagara and near Buffalo Creek, while some were "removed" to the western areas such as Wisconsin (Fenton, 1956). For those in the Buffalo Creek area, the winter of 1779-80 was "one of the worst recorded" for the Iroquois in terms of loss of life (Abler & Tooker, 1978, p. 508). Since Sullivan was an agent of Washington, the Iroquois referred to Washington as *Hanödaga:nyas*, which is sometimes interpreted to mean 'Town Destroyer.'[12]

The American patriots had amassed debt after the war, and they intended to offset that dept by accumulating Iroquois lands. In 1783 after the Treaty of Paris between England and the United States, all land belonging to indigenous groups was transferred to the new nation due to its preemptive rights (*Six Nations*, 1995); "no provision was made for the Indians" (Abler & Tooker, 1978). After the Revolution, though, much of the land in the area that is now New York State was in dispute among the invaders, with Massachusetts and the Duke of York among the claimants to some overlapping lands. The Continental Congress settled this problem in 1786; New York retained the right to govern its area, while Massachusetts had the right of preemption, or title, to the land (US Congress, 1915).

On May 11, 1791, the State of Massachusetts sold the land in western New York between the Genesee and Niagara Rivers to Robert Morris at three cents per acre (*Six*

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[12] Hanödaga:nyas is also interpreted as 'president;' all presidents, including Seneca presidents, are called Hanödaga:nyas (Dowdy, 2008).

Nations, 1995). Then in 1792, Morris conveyed most of it to capitalists from Amsterdam who later became the Holland Land Company. These transfers happened despite Cornplanter's insistence that the Iroquois were never under British jurisdiction (*Six Nations*, 1995). Also, by the Treaty of Canandaigua of 1794, the land belonged to the Senecas (Abler & Tooker, 1978). Thus, the Treaty of Big Tree was made by the US government to deprive the Iroquois of their lands once and for all, though Cornplanter, Red Jacket and others who were present were against any transfer of their lands. Nevertheless, the treaty created "reserves" for the Indians in the area in 1797. Ten tracts totaling 310 square miles were reserved, four in the western part of New York and six small tracts along the Genesee River (Abler & Tooker, 1978). This was the beginning of the Iroquois reservations including Allegany Territory, Cattaraugus Territory, and Tonawanda Territory.

The Seneca also retained a small tract of land in Pennsylvania at this time. In 1796, Cornplanter was granted a reserve of approximately three square miles along the Allegheny River in Pennsylvania, just south of the New York border. Pennsylvania granted this land in appreciation of Cornplanter's efforts at keeping the Iroquois out of the "confederacy of western Indians" in 1790 (Abler & Tooker, 1978, p. 509). The Cornplanter Grant was the only property owned by indigenous people in Pennsylvania. The Seneca would retain this grant for almost 170 years.

Pressure from settlers to sell Seneca lands in New York State did not slow during the nineteenth century. One village on the Genesee River was sold in 1803 (Abler & Tooker, 1978). In 1810, the Holland Land Company sold the right to purchase Seneca lands, including Allegany, to the Ogden Land Company. Then in 1826, the Senecas sold

their remaining tracts along the Genesee (Abler & Tooker, 1978). Morgan explains, "To embitter their sense of desolation as a nation, the 'preemptive right' to these last remnants of their ancient possessions is now held by a company of land speculators, the Ogden Land Company, who, to wrest away these few acres, have pursued and hunted them … with a degree of wickedness hardly to be paralleled in the history of human avarice" (1851/1962, p. 32-33).

Factionalism among the Iroquois and even within the Senecas also deepened the sense of despair and loss. According to Fenton (1956), major issues dividing the Senecas included the land sales, to be sure, but other contentious issues included the adoption of white laws versus chieftainship and Christianity versus the Handsome Lake religion. The Iroquois had also developed dependence on certain items such as wool, gunpowder, and domesticated animals, among other things. By 1848, the Senecas at Allegany and Cattaraugus territories had indeed abandoned the governance by chiefs and instead opted for elective governance with laws and a constitution under the name of the Seneca Nation of Indians. Alternatively, the Tonawanda Band, excluded from the Seneca Nation of Indians, retained the system of chiefs.

Fenton (1956) further illustrates the plight of the Senecas. "The generation between the Treaty at Big Tree and the onset of trouble at Buffalo Creek (1797-1836) saw the beginnings of Reservation culture and commenced to speak English" (p. 573). The trouble at Buffalo Creek, some 114, 869 acres, was that it was sold for $1.75 per acre, "not so much by virtue of the treaties, as by skillful management" (Morgan, 1851/1962, p. 34 footnote). This treaty was another case of bribery and deception. Even though the Senecas refused to sign, another treaty was negotiated.

Iroquois literature in *Basic Call to Consciousness* states that from the years "1784 to 1838 most of the Haudenosaunee territory was taken under fraudulent treaty or treaties obtained through coercion. Many of our people fled to lands promised them by the British Crown, lands which are now within the area shown on European maps as Canada" (*Basic Call*, 1978, p. 4). That these treaties were seen as fraudulent added further insult to the Senecas, who considered and still consider themselves a sovereign nation. "To many of the Iroquois, their federal treaties with the United States government put them above the legislative actions of any one state. They trace the source of their sovereignty to the period 1784-1794 and define their world as far different and distinct from other Indian nations" (Hauptman, 1988, p. 19). This uniqueness is based on the history of negotiations between Iroquois councils and colonial governments of France, Holland, and England, and the Fort Stanwix (1784), Jay (1794) and Canandaigua (1794) treaties.

Since the Iroquois and Seneca had a special set of prior negotiations and treaties, the Iroquois were exempted from the General Allotment Act, also known as the Dawes Act, of February 8, 1887, which removed indigenous people from their lands and allotted each a 160-acre homestead located within a reservation, dividing reservation lands into parcels that were privately-owned, a shift from the communal-living style prevalent on reservations before the act took effect. The act was established to break up the lands of the indigenous, make them tax-paying citizens, and destroy their sovereignty (*Six Nations*, 1995).

This was also a time of dispute over jurisdiction of Indian reservations in the state which came to be known as the "Indian problem" (US Congress, 1915, p. 14). State and federal governments often battled for power. Both wanted to "curtail the power and

authority of tribal organizations" and send representatives to "enforce obedience" to the law (p. 21). Following these jurisdictional confrontations, these forces undertook a series of incursions into Seneca lands that was to last well over a hundred years.

In 1842, the Buffalo Creek reservation, located at the site of the present-day City of Buffalo, was subsumed in a series of coercive land-grabbing deals (Lankes, 1964). Land speculators, such as Grieg from the Ogden Land Company, threatened the Senecas that their land would be taken from them if they did not sell it voluntarily. According to Lankes (1964), Ogden officials claimed that they would ask the US President for help in attaining Buffalo Creek lands. Some 33,637 acres at Buffalo Creek were sold. Lankes (1964) reported that 430 Senecas voted for the sale while 2,606 voted against it. Asher Wright, a presbyterian missionary, counted 2,777 Senecas against the sale and 145 in favor of it, information he collected when they had to make the move with him to Cattaraugus (Fenton, 1956). Chiefs, Lankes alleges, were bribed with $21,600 to influence the sale among their people. After the sale, many of those who did not move to Cattaraugus moved to Allegany. Also in 1842, the Allegany Senecas signed a treaty that allowed railroads to cross their territory (Merrill, 1953). In 1846, there were talks of forcing 135 to 200 Senecas out of New York State. Some 62 Senecas were "removed" in June, 1846, to Kansas. Many became sick, some tried to return to New York, and some died en route back home. At the time of Asher Wright's news report on this tragic turn of events, 46 had died (Wright, 1846). As of 1915, the Allegany Territory was roughly 40 miles by 2 miles, or 30,469 acres, along both sides of the Allegany River in Cattaraugus County (US Congress, 1915). This land base was to change later in the twentieth century. Around the year 1954, Cattaraugus Territory received $175,000, or about $22 apiece, for

construction of the New York State Thruway (Wilson, 1959). The US Army Corps of

Engineers, after much legal battling, built the Kinzua Dam in 1964, flooding one-third of

the Allegany Territory. The Cornplanter Grant was completely inundated. Approximately

130 Senecas were moved as a result of this dam construction (Fenton, 1967). The

longhouse had to be moved from Cold Spring to Steamburg since it was located in the

"take" area. On June 12, 1965, Longhouse followers had a nine-hour ceremony to mark

the occasion (Abler & Tooker, 1978). Every year to this day, they gather for a

"Remember the Removal" event to commemorate the tragedy.

The struggles to maintain land, language, and culture continue, and the people

still do not give up easily. "None of these events have occurred without resistance from

our peoples. In all of our territories there have been confrontations with police forces.

There have been many attempts to stop these attacks against our landbase, and many

court battles have been fought" (*Basic Call*, 1978, p. 5). In continuing the summary of

their own history, *Basic Call* explains that "to this day, the United States and Canada

deny the existence of the lawful governments of the Haudenosaunee and other Native

nations, a continuation of the policy of genocide which has marked the process known as

colonialism" (p. 85).

European Missionary Invasions

A dominating force that resulted in the loss of Iroquois power and land began

with the European invasions, made possible in part by efforts toward religious

conversion. Missionary-minded Christians believed that "[r]eligion has always elevated

the human mind" (Wright, 1842), and this sentiment was used as a reason to invade

Iroquois territory.

Undoubtedly, some missionaries saw in themselves a divine purpose. One missionary statement represents the mentality of many: "By the missionaries they were taught our language, and many of the arts of husbandry, and of domestic life; from them they received the Bible and the precepts of Christianity. … There are but two means of rescuing the Indian from his impending destiny; [sic] and these are education and Christianity" (Morgan, 1851/1962, p. 447). These missionaries took a "more 'liberal' approach" toward indigenous people than governments and land speculators in that they "had little respect for Indian culture but at least believed the people should survive. In the early days of North American colonization, it was often the case that the missionaries learned to speak the language of the people they came to proselytize" (Hinton, 2001b, p. 40). Still, to these missionaries, Christianity and 'civilization' were virtually interchangeable words" (Abler & Tooker, 1978, p. 510). Their plans to "civilize" the indigenous people included teaching homemaking skills to girls and agricultural skills to boys, in addition to English and the three "R's." *Basic Call to Consciousness* gives its own interpretation:

> The European invaders, from the first, attempted to claim Indians as their subjects. Where the Indian people resisted, as in the case of the Haudenosaunee, the Europeans rationalized that resistance to be an incapacity for civilization. The incapacity for civilization rationale became the basis for the phenomenon in the West which is known today as racism. (1978, p. 84)

Various denominations of Christians entered Iroquois territory in hopes of converting the indigenous people there. Jesuit missions were active among the Senecas as of 1626 (Hawley, 1884); "[t]he first such recorded visit was by Father Pierre Joseph

Marie Chaumonot in 1656" (Abler & Tooker, 1978, p. 505). Yet "[e]fforts to convert the

Senecas to Christianity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had proved

unsuccessful" (p. 509). Father Julien Garnier also worked among the Senecas at the end

of the seventeenth century. The Jesuits later established missions in the Gannagaro, or

Ganondagan, area near Rochester (Robinson, 1976). Samuel Kirkland, a Protestant, lived

among them in the 1760s (*History*, 1976). His first dealings with Senecas took place near

present-day Geneva, NY (Kirkland, 1980). The Western Missionary Society of

Pittsburgh, a Presbyterian group, established a school on the Cornplanter Grant from

1814 until 1818 (Abler & Tooker, 1978). Before that, in 1798, Quakers tried to establish

a school in the Cornplanter Grant area near the Pennsylvania – New York line (Miller,

1958). Cornplanter had changed his mind about allowing these schools to operate in his

territory, forcing them to close (Miller, 1958). Preaching and missionary work conducted

by the Western Society continued at Cornplanter Grant until 1825 (Congdon, 1967).

When Cornplanter died a decade later, the Presbyterian school re-opened, but the state

took over operations in1857, and eventually closed the school in 1953 (Miller, 1958). The

New York Missionary Society tried several times to establish a school at Buffalo Creek

in the nineteenth century, a site where a church was built in 1823. The United Foreign

Missionary Society also established churches, one at Cattaraugus in 1827 and one at

Allegany in 1830 (Abler & Tooker, 1978). Methodists and Baptists were present among

the Senecas at Allegany and Cattaraugus in 1850 (New York, 1889). In 1890, 21 people

at Allegany were Baptist, and 110 Presbyterian. There was one Presbyterian Church there

(*Six Nations*, 1995).

Basic Call to Consciousness indicates a summary of the missionary efforts. "The initial assaults against our culture were carried out by missionaries and 'educators.' The historical record provides ample proof that there was a deliberate effort during this period to destroy our laws and customs and our spiritual beliefs, and a concerted effort to destroy our languages" (1978, p. 4). Since there are more Christians than Longhouse followers among the Senecas, it seems that these efforts to destroy the traditional religion were largely successful.

Quakers

The Quakers had a special place in relation to the Senecas. The Quakers, also known as the Society of Friends, were the first whites in Cattaraugus County, at a place called Old Town, around 1797 or 1798 (New York, 1889; Kelsey, 1917). By 1806, they bought land near the Allegany Territory and started a school, with 12 boys and 25 girls enrolled in separate buildings (New York, 1889; Kelsey 1917). They also established a school at Tunesassa, where they bought a 700-acre plot of land from the Holland Land Company. Joseph Elkington, who began the school, faced much initial opposition and moved the school just off the reservation lands, so the school was established on mission land in 1822. Since the years of political unrest and wars had caused deterioration in the traditional ways of life, Quakers were also interested in persuading the Senecas to return to farming, a transformation which they recorded as taking place at Allegany (Fenton, 1956). Some of these efforts to get the men farming were met with resistance since women traditionally fulfilled the role of farmer.

Quaker schools in this area were in operation for more than a hundred years. Unlike missions of other denominations, Quakers did not establish churches on the

reservations (Abler & Tooker, 1978). Although the Quakers had tried to assimilate the Senecas and abolish their language in Quaker schools, the Quaker policy of nonviolence, along with their advocacy of the Senecas during treaty negotiations with the US, caused many Senecas to view the Quaker presence among them as a benign entity (Barton, 1990).

Education Policy

Thomas Indian School

In 1855, on the Cattaraugus Reservation, religious missionaries established the Thomas Asylum for Orphan and Destitute Children. This institute was initiated by Phillip Thomas, of the Society of Friends, and Asher Wright, a Presbyterian missionary, as noted earlier (Hauptman, 1988). Thomas was the first president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (*Centennial*, 1955). Fenton (1956) claims that the Thomas School and its purpose, to care for and educate orphaned children, was "readily sanctioned" by the Seneca Nation (p. 579).

In 1887, there were 124 children at the school; 55 were from Cattaraugus and 20 from Allegany (New York, 1889). Wright, although he developed an excellent Roman-based alphabet and typographic system for the Senecas, helping to keep the language alive, thought that the Longhouse religion was a device of the devil to keep him from converting them to Christianity (Fenton, 1956; Wilson, 1959). Fenton (1956) describes Wright's involvement: "Convinced that a knowledge of Seneca would greatly aid his work, he studied it with vigor, devising a phonetic system of his own, constructing verb tables, and collecting vocabulary, until he soon spoke the language with fluency" (p. 575). As Chafe (1996) points out, "[t]here is almost no written record of the language"

before Wright's work with William Jones[13] (p. 252), aside from the work of Father Julien

Garnier, outlined below.

Eventually, New York State took responsibility for administering the school

(Hauptman, 1988) in 1875 (*Centennial*, 1955). The State Board of Charities, established

in 1867, and now known as the Department of Social Services, provided health care at

the school. The Department "served many of the present functions of the contemporary

departments of education, health, housing, and mental hygiene as well as the Division of

Youth," yet it was inadequate and plagued with racism (Hauptman, 1988, p. 72). It

continued to operate for generations, and the institution was renamed Thomas Indian

School in the early twentieth century.

Schooling Initiatives from 1846 until the Present

The state gradually took more control over Iroquois education. Hauptman, SUNY

Distinguished Professor of History at SUNY New Paltz, in his comprehensive analysis of

policy in New York State, explains, "The State of New York became increasingly

involved in providing for the educational and social welfare needs of American Indians in

the mid-nineteenth century. In 1846, the state legislature provided $1,200 for the erection

and operation of school houses on the Allegany and Cattaraugus Indian Reservations"

(Hauptman, 1988, p. 9). This era was the beginning of the state's education department,

one of the largest bureaucracies in the state involved in Iroquois affairs. "The New York

State departments of Social Services and Education are the two state agencies with the

longest involvement in administering policies and programs to American Indians"

(Hauptman, 1988, p. 70). In 1889, the state made attendance at school compulsory for

Indian children (US Congress, 1915), a measure that was marginally successful.

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[13] Jones was a Seneca who worked with Wright to help him learn the language.

State administrators from these two departments (Social Services and Education) have met with much criticism. Many Iroquois distrust the state regime, and for good reason. Hauptman acknowledges that "[b]oth agencies … have to bear the burden of past assimilationist policies and paternalistic administration toward Indian communities" (p. 70). Making a point of particular relevance to this study, Hauptman adds that "[u]ntil 1975 the educational philosophy of these schools was largely to assimilate American Indians into American life" (p. 75). *Basic Call to Consciousness* shows the distrust that this philosophy engendered:

> In North America, educational institutions operate under the same colonial process. Schools are chartered by a sovereign (such as the state, or the Bureau of Indian Affairs) to penetrate the Native community. The purpose in doing so is to integrate the Native people into society as workers and consumers, the Industrial Society's version of peasants. The sovereign recognizes, and practically allows, no other form of socializing institution for the young. (1978, p. 86)

Some of this paternalism can be traced to the words of the administrators themselves. A.C. Hill was State Director of Indian Schools for the State Department of Education in 1919. He stated that schools make "men and women out of boys and girls" and that "modern education among the Indians began with the missionaries" (Onondaga, 1919, p. 41). He assessed the situation with teaching and learning of English at the time, lamenting that the Indians were not familiar with the new language "because of their intense racial attachment to their own tongue and because of their isolation in community life" (p.43). He also attributed the lack of learning English to the parents' "indifference," as well as the "vagrant impulses of children" and the lack of morals (p. 43).

Later in the twentieth century, federal and state initiatives changed the landscape of schooling for Senecas. The Johnson O'Malley program (JOM) was initiated by the US government in 1934 and has undergone several revisions since its inception. The federal program provides educational services to over 90 percent of Native students who are not enrolled in Bureau of Indian Affairs schools (National Advisory Council, 2006). JOM "is a vital and unique program that involves community, parents and students" (National Johnson O'Malley Association, 2008). Yet the BIA has cut funding for JOM by 50 percent since 1994.

JOM only serves students who are federally recognized; the Title VII Indian Education Act serves "self-identified" Indians who attend public schools and schools off the reservations (National Johnson O'Malley Association, 2008). Title VII funds "are the only sources of funding that specifically address the cultural, social, and linguistic needs of Indian students" who fit this self-identified category (National Advisory Council, 2006, p. 3). Title VII is run by school districts, while JOM is administered by tribes. Today, the Seneca Nation of Indians Department of Education provides JOM services in several locations, while the Salamanca City School District offers Title VII programming in the public schools.

In 1973, New York State established the Native American Indian Education Unit, which worked to secure federal funding, to establish a Board of Regents policy statement, and to create culturally-sensitive programs. The Education Unit has had problems in the administration of these initiatives; it has a large workload, it has not always been properly consulted by the state education system in the creation of curriculum materials, and it has

had difficulty in gaining district-level political support for its initiatives (Hauptman, 1988).

There has been a shift, albeit a slow one, from eradicating the language and culture of the Senecas in the schools to a gradual acceptance of speaking and teaching the language. Now the state-run schools offer Seneca classes in the Salamanca City School District, although they are extracurricular offerings at present.

Seneca Language

Census and Number of Speakers

In the late seventeenth century, Europeans estimated the Iroquois population at 15,000 (US Congress, 1915), but other sources differed; at the time of Dutch "discovery" in 1609, one source estimated 5,000 in the New York State area (New York, 1889). Fenton (1953) explains that "[e]stimates of their population vary between 3,500 and 20,000" (p. 570). Morgan (1851/1962) also illustrates that the estimates vary greatly, stating, "It is difficult to form a correct estimate of their [Iroquois] number" (p. 25), listing others' estimates at 70,000, 15,000, and 17,000, all made between the years 1677 and 1763. He stated that the Senecas alone may have numbered 17,760. Around 1650, the total number of Iroquois was around 25,000, with 10,000 Senecas, he stated. Some other estimates in the literature of the Seneca population are as follows:

- 1771: 4,000 (Abler & Tooker, 1978)

- 1790s: 1,800 Senecas in New York State (Abler & Tooker, 1978)

- 1819: 597 at Allegany, 389 at Cattaraugus, and 456 near the Genesee River (O'Reilly, 1838).

- 1846 census: Allegany, 811; Cattaraugus, 1,142; Buffalo Creek, 58 (Wright, 1846).

- 1850, 2,712 Senecas (Morgan, 1851/1962).

At the turn of the nineteenth century, there were few Senecas who knew English, but that was about to change (Abler & Tooker, 1978). A century earlier, Ganyödaiyo´, in the Gáíwi:yo:h, had advised followers to select twelve people, two from each of the six nations, to learn English. He explained that since whites were among the Iroquois, it would be wise to learn their language and customs (Parker, 1968). In 1890, the US government began a systematic census of reservations as a way of establishing whether the Iroquois were ready "to join the American mainstream" and to gauge how many were "eager for assimilation" (*Six Nations*, 1995, p. vii). In 1892, at Allegany, it was determined that there were 880 Senecas (*Six Nations*, 1995). The total Iroquois population, according to the 1890 census, was estimated at 5,133.

Of that last number, 2,844 spoke English and 1,985 did not. No explanation was given to describe how they measured whether one can speak a language or not. This census further delineated language speakers at Allegany: 306 people aged 20 and over could read English; 181 people under age 20 could read English; 165 people under age 20 could write English; a total of 502 Allegany Senecas could speak English; and 275 Allegany Senecas could not speak English. There reportedly were 275 school-aged children who were taught 32 weeks per year. As for schools at Allegany in 1890, there were six; Schools Number 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7. School Number 5 had been abandoned. There were also six teachers; all but one was white.

At Thomas Indian School, Asher Wright taught Seneca children to spell and to read scriptures in Seneca, most actively by printing *Ne Jago'nigöëgesgwata'* (*The Mental Elevator*) in the 1840s, "our best source on the language" of the time (Fenton, 1956, p. 575). He also translated the four Gospels into Seneca (Abler & Tooker, 1978). However, as of 1889, "the rule forbidding the children to use the Indian language [sic] is carefully enforced;" moreover, "the improvement of the Senecas in morals and education has been slow; so slow, in fact, as to be almost imperceptible to all" (NYS, 1889, p. 61-66). The children were described by New York State Assemblyman Van Valkenberg as physically degenerate in food, morals, clothes, and sanitation, which he blamed on lack of money and charity. Thomas Donaldson, who worked as an Expert Special Agent on the US Census Bureau's bulletin on Indians in New York, claimed in 1890 that "the great number of the Six Nations who can not [sic] speak or read the English language is a drawback to their advancement" and that not knowing English is "one of the greatest evils" afflicting them. The youngest people were taught to read and speak English, but he lamented that there was "not much hope" for the adults (*Six Nations*, 1995, p. 3). By the end of the nineteenth century, many children were sent to boarding schools far away, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, at the Carlisle Indian School or to Hampton Institute in Virginia (Abler & Tooker, 1978).

Several Senecas who attended state, Christian, and boarding schools in the early twentieth century were interviewed in the 1980s by Alberta Austin (1986), a Cattaraugus Seneca who conducted the interviews as part of a Seneca Nation Curriculum Development Project. The school experiences were quite a mixed patchwork, since schools differed widely in their practices. Among those interviewed was Sally Crow,

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born in 1910, who attended a Quaker school. She said she liked the school although the teachers and school employees were "strict" (p. 20), and the children had to do chores. She claims that she would have lost her language had she stayed at the school longer, since she may have benefitted from the continued use of Seneca at home, and that "[t]here are some children now who can sing in Indian but cannot speak the language. The older people want the young ones to learn but they themselves do not speak their language at home" (p. 20). She blamed her own generation for the children's lack of knowledge of the Seneca language. Austin also interviewed Lucinda Coyle, born in 1899, went to the school on Plank Road on the Cattaraugus territory, where she had a Seneca teacher who allowed the students to speak their native tongue. But when she went to the Quaker school, which she had to take a train or ride in a wagon to reach, teachers sent her to stand in the hall as punishment for speaking Seneca. Nevertheless, she said that she liked the Quaker school.

Arnold Doxtator, born in 1903, attended Thomas Indian School. He iterated that although he was not permitted to speak Seneca there, he "sneaked" Seneca conversations with the other boys. Martha Hatch, born in 1897, remembered that she had to attend the Quaker school because she was sickly; living at the Quaker school spared her from a long walk to the public school. She said, "I think a lot of Indians understand the Seneca language but are ashamed to speak it. There are some who used to speak it constantly when we were kids, and when I speak Seneca to them now, they just look at me" (p. 37). Lucinda Lay described her experiences learning in English-only and in bilingual settings:

"It was quite a while before I could learn English because we had bad teachers. The only time I learned [English] was when Salina Maybee came to teach over

there [in the Cattaraugus district school]. That's the only time I learned because she taught me in Indian and in English" (p. 100).

George Heron, who was born in 1919 and served as President of the Seneca Nation of Indians for two, two-year terms, in 1958 and 1962, characterized his schooling thus: "My education started in a one-room schoolhouse …. The school wasn't any too warm either. … The Indian children were not taught anything about their culture. It was strictly reading, writing, and arithmetic. Matter of fact, the children were getting away from their Indian heritage" (p. 44). Austin commented, "In 1931, there were only nine or ten Indians in high school [in the Ohi:yo' area]. By 1935, when Heron finished high school, there were about twenty-five" (p. 45).

These anecdotes, which are typical examples of Austin's large collection of interviews, help to portray what schooling was like from the perspective of the students themselves, and they show how the policies of the state and other schools affected the generation of Senecas who attended decades after the policies were implemented. The people of this early twentieth century generation represent a pivotal moment in the change of Seneca language use in the community, from a first language to a second language for many of the people in the community.

History of the Language

The Seneca language belongs to one of over 170 language groups in the United States. The *Handbook of North American Indians* catalogues US indigenous language into 11 regions: Arctic, Subarctic, Northwest Coast, California, the Southwest (two volumes), Great Basin, Plains, Plateau, Southeast, and Northeast. Seneca is primarily a language of the Northeast, along with other language families such as Algonquian. The

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Handbook places Seneca in the St. Lawrence Lowlands group that includes the extinct languages of Huron (Wyandot; currently beginning to be revitalized), Erie, Neutral, Wenro, Susquehannock, and Petun, as well as the living languages of Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Onondaga, and Tuscarora.

Scholars still debate the origin of Iroquoian languages, including Seneca. Foster (1996) notes that Laurentian, a linguistic relative, "has the distinction of being the first language in North America to be recorded by Europeans" (p. 105). Seneca is further categorized as Northern Iroquoian, which may have split from Southern Iroquoian around 1800-1500 BCE (Foster, 1996; Lounsbury, 1978).

Scholars began to meet annually to discuss Seneca and other Iroquoian languages in the mid-twentieth century at the Conference on Iroquois Research (Mithun, 1996). Grammars and dictionaries were written by Chafe (1959, 1960, 1961, 1963, 1967, 1977, 1983, 1996, 1998), and other grammars were produced by Chafe and Foster (1981), Foster (1982), Dahl (1985), Holmer (1952, 1953, 1954) and Voeglin and Preston (1949). Chafe provided the first modern dictionary, the *Seneca Morphology and Dictionary*, in 1967.

According to Chafe (2009), the earliest orthography was developed by Father Julien Garnier. Garnier was a Jesuit born in 1643 in Mans, France (Hawley, 1884). He came to Canada in 1662 and did missionary work with the Senecas around the year 1700. Chafe explains Garnier's system: "His was the fairly standard Jesuit orthography, reasonably accurate, but ignoring glottal stops. Garnier put together a French-Seneca and a Seneca-French dictionary" (Chafe, 2009). Today, this dictionary is in a state of

physical decay in Montreal. Chafe asserts that Garnier's work is "extremely valuable, anyhow, because the language has changed a lot since then" (Chafe, 2009).

After Garnier's system was Asher Wright's. In the mid-1800s, Wright first suggested "idiosyncratic symbols, probably getting the idea of doing that from Sequoyah's Cherokee syllabary" (Chafe, 2009). But the Board of Foreign Missions in Boston convinced him to use conventional letters since conventional fonts were easier to typeset. Chafe acknowledges that Wright's answer to this typesetting issue "is amazingly accurate for the time, even including glottal stops. It's too bad it wasn't continued after his death" (Chafe, 2009). His system eventually fell out of use, except for a few hymnals and a translation of the four gospels.

Following Wright was J. N. B Hewitt's orthography later in the nineteenth century, which was similar for all the Iroquoian languages he worked with. Chafe (2009) remarks, "Nowadays people would say it's too bad he didn't know about phonemes, since, for example, he wrote the nasalized vowels in several different ways. He pretty much ignored vowel length, but otherwise had a good ear."

Chafe's system, the orthography currently adopted by many Seneca people, was the first to be produced in the modern era. Chafe (2009) describes the evolution of his system:

> I've used various spellings at different times. At first I didn't distinguish d and g from t and k, as with other Iroquois linguists (and the Jesuits), but I changed during the 1970s. Nasalized vowels appeared differently at different times, but the current system with umlauts took hold in the late 1970s, and now I can't change it even if I want to. Right now I'm actually operating with two systems: one with

Polish hooks[14] for nasalization, which I use in my big dictionary database, the other with the umlauts, which I use for general distribution.

It is often related by white scholars that the Iroquois have a gift for language."The Indian has a quick and enthusiastic appreciation of eloquence" (Morgan, 1851/1962, p. 107). As John Wentworth Sanborn, Methodist minister, noted, "If the head of the household can speak the English [sic], you are treated to long, minute, accurate accounts of the exploits of the tribe in the olden time" (Sanborn 1878). Sanborn also noted the changes affecting the language during his time working with the Senecas, commenting that "[i]n thirty years the Seneca language has felt the abrasion of time" (p. 68). Fenton (1956) described "Asylumgeh" as "a kind of English once favored there [Thomas Indian School] by the children" (p. 581).

Old Words

There are many examples of language change and hybridization with English. These are too numerous to note, but Phyllis Bardeau, a Seneca working on language, explains one example in *The Fundamentals of Seneca*:

> The study of the old words which exist [sic] today show that "time" was measured according to the obvious occurrences of nature. For instance, when the Juneberry tree blossomed, it was thought of as the time to plant white corn. Another example of the measure of time was the use of a small short stick decorated at one end with shells, known as the invitation wampum or *ganoˊskä:ˊ* [*ga:noˈsgäˈ*]**.** The stick was notched accordingly to indicate the number of days prior to a planned

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[14] Chafe explains, "In the Polish writing system they use a hook under the vowel to indicate nasalization. I think it's called an ogonek. That's been adopted for a number of Indian languages, including Onondaga and Cayuga. It requires a special font, and it's easier for Seneca to use the two dots (nostrils) because they're immediately available in Times New Roman. Before personal computers, we could backspace on a typewriter and type double quotes over the vowel. We couldn't do that with the hook."

council meeting. The vocabulary words which identify a particular time to a plant, [sic] or a designated council date are old words. They are the words used by our ancestors (Bardeau, 1994, p. 1; italics in original).

Pidginization

The period of transition from the mission schools to state-controlled education saw a rapid movement from Seneca as a first language to its gradual erosion and replacement by English as a first language. The transition phase, as happens in many other transitions, resulted in some pidginization, blending the two languages together. But it was relatively short-lived, as a rapid succession toward English phased out the pidgin language. Bardeau (1994) describes this phenomenon:

> Young adults returning to their communities after many years spent at the missionary schools had a different perspective toward the "old ways." Parents and grandparents who spoke only their native tongue had to learn some English to communicate with their children and grandchildren. Pigeon [sic] Seneca, partly Seneca and partly English, was a result to compensate the language gap, the changing times. The "old timers" were still holding on to the original language but some incorporation of languages was taking place. For instance *agejacketda´* (my jacket) and *gastovesyo:d* (the stove there). (p.2; italics in original)

New Words

As is common in language loss and revitalization, speakers who come in contact with people who speak other tongues and follow different cultures often incorporate the unavoidable and the useful terms of the new language and culture. Bardeau (1994) describes an example from Seneca:

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Our language began to expand when another culture entered this hemisphere. New ways were introduced, and our people developed a vocabulary that was descriptive of these new items. For instance, there was the "clock." The word given to clock was *gaista'es* which means "that which strikes the metal." Gradually and surely, the telling of time by the use of a clock replaced (for the most part) the observation of time according to natural time – when the sun showed the 1st [sic] rays at dawn, or straight above to indicate mid-day, or when the sun set. (p. 1; italics in original)

Some of this borrowing helps to keep the language contemporary and useful to its current speakers. Their flexibility is what helps to keep the language in a state of potential vitality. Also to maintain vitality, the speaking, teaching, and learning of the language have undergone rapid changes in the twentieth century. These changes mirror the changes in general language revitalization outlined earlier in Chapter 2. There have been emphases on speaking, recording, documentation, dictionary developments, and other changes as Bardeau (1994) shows:

[N]ow in the 1960's [sic], there was a renewed interest in Seneca language as a generation of Senecas became aware that the fluent speaking, traditional thinking elders were becoming very few in number, a realization that the language was on the edge of extinction became of grave concern. It was at this point that a methodology of teaching Seneca changed from being totally oral through life-involvement to conscious instruction as a means of "preserving" the most important aspect of culture. The teaching of Seneca language in group sessions

was the start of Survival Seneca. In addition to basic communicative vocabulary, [sic] was the development of new words." (p. 2-3)

Wallace Chafe

Wallace Chafe is the foremost linguist collaborating with Seneca on preservation issues. Currently, he is working on developing an online Seneca dictionary. He says that he is "also spending a lot of time with 'texts,' and right now I'm in the middle of transcribing Hewitt's Creation Story ("Cosmology")" with a fluent speaker (Chafe, 2009). Chafe is also working with other Seneca speakers on developing a kind of text messaging system for Seneca speakers as well as an automated Seneca dictionary project with the Rochester Institute of Technology. Chafe adds, "I'm also writing a grammar of Seneca, and that's a big story in itself. … There's more than enough for the rest of my life and beyond."

Seneca Now

During the 1970s, many communities in Iroquois territory "underwent a revitalization of community culture — with a strong emphasis on economic, educational and spiritual self-sufficiency" (*Basic Call*, 1978, p. 6). The Seneca-Iroquois National Museum and Seneca Nation Library were established. Later, the Seneca Allegany Casino was constructed. Its role in the community is contentious; in some ways, traditional people support its creation of jobs and revenue, yet in others, the gambling and alcohol conflict with traditional teachings. These institutions exemplify the ways that growing with modernity has offered both support and obstacles to the maintenance of Seneca ways.

Other means of increasing Seneca vitality followed: "In the 1990s, "the very few fluent speakers of Seneca are concentrating on recording as much vocabulary as possible using various types of media to 'preserve' the correct pronunciation and vocabulary, and to record by writing and diagramming" (Bardeau, 1994, p. 3).

Today, after the turn of the twenty-first century, recording efforts have been augmented to include several other language teaching initiatives throughout the community. This diversification is due to the fact that "[t]he goals of a language revitalization program must depend on the situation in which the language finds itself" (Hinton, 2001a, p. 5); Seneca finds itself in both public and private circumstances. Recording was the first step in the revival of the language; preservationists have moved beyond the stopgap initiative of recording to include other types of revitalization, such as immersion classes and media productions.

In the public sector, the Salamanca City School District offers elective Seneca language classes for middle and high school students under the Title VII program. The Seneca Nation of Indians' Department of Education offers its own comprehensive services, such as curriculum and materials development, Early Childhood programming and summer immersion camps, conducted in the public and private realms. The department provides higher education assistance, summer immersion camps, history and language classes, tutoring for public school students, internships, and Johnson O'Malley programs. In 2008, there were 22 employees in the department. There are plans to open a K-3 Seneca Academy, but, due to disagreements on the scope and nature of language teaching at the future school, these plans are tentative and controversial. For these reasons, people's attitudes about this school are explored further in this study.

Ganöhsesge:kha' Hë:nödeyë:sta' is a small, private language-culture school founded in 1998 to teach and preserve ceremonial and religious traditions. Due to frequent changes in the community, each school year the student body has included different groupings of children and adults. In 2009, there were eight adult students and two children learning the language and customs of Ganyodaiyo´, or Handsome Lake, and the Longhouse belief system. Most recently, a language nest has been developed for preschool children and features a parent committee who assists in the administration of this part of the school. The teachings at *Ganöhsesge:kha' Hë:nödeyë:sta'* reflect Fenton's (1956) recommendation of a half-century ago: "The past is prologue to the future. … Does change really occur? A study of conservatism among the New York Indians might yield some really practical results" (p. 581). The work of the people at *Ganöhsesge:kha' Hë:nödeyë:sta'* is an effort at language preservation and cultural survival and is mostly initiated by those Senecas who still hold conservative, or traditional, beliefs, yet they have often had to change their strategies to keep with challenges of the modern world. Their work is conducted in the hope and sincere intention that "[t]he Haudenosaunee, the People of the Longhouse, still have a long history ahead" (*Basic Call*, 1978, p. 107).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Introduction

Qualitative Research and Ethnography

The purpose of my study — to synthesize, document and analyze the culture and

language preservation efforts of a small Seneca community —was well-suited for a

qualitative, ethnographic approach. The study had a focus to the inquiry, yet it had

flexible boundaries (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Following Lincoln & Guba (1985), such a

study may be perceived to have three phases: an "orientation and overview" phase, a

"focused exploration" phase, and a "member check" phase (p. 235-236). To demonstrate

why these approaches fit the context of this study, an explanation of qualitative inquiry

and ethnographic methodology follows. After this broad introductory discussion, this

chapter offers a detailed picture of my relationship and role as a researcher, the setting of

the study and participants, the design of the study and the research instruments and data

analysis; the chapter then closes with some comments on trustworthiness and

acknowledgement of the study's limitations.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research, according to Schwandt (2007), is difficult to define, but it is

often explained as a postmodern construct that has arisen as an oppositional approach to

conventional, positivist epistemologies. Qualitative inquiry is a conceptual framework

guiding research that cuts across different fields and disciplines (Denzin & Lincoln,

2008). Clarke (2005) characterizes positivism as embodying dualism and "naïve

objectivity" and embracing discovery, simplification and conclusiveness. In positivism,

Clarke posits, there is one expert voice of the researcher. Alternatively, a postmodern paradigm, within which qualitative inquiry is one possible "set of interpretive activities" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 8), embodies "continuities of subjects and objects" rather than dualism, constructing rather than discovering; it includes subjectivity and reflexivity, emphasizes multiple positions, and embraces complexities, complexities which are sometimes troubling and tentative in nature (Clarke, 2005, p. 32). Denzin and Lincoln (2008) view the qualitative researcher as a quiltmaker who pieces together different methods, instruments, and strategies during the formation and evaluation of a study.

Clarke (2005) states that qualitative research grew from the need to move from strictly empiricist and "mechanistic" methods to "a reasonable inductive approach to collecting and analyzing qualitative data that seriously attempted to be faithful to the understandings, interpretations, intentions, perspectives of the people studied on their own terms as expressed through their actions as well as their words" (p. 3). In positivism, there was a tendency to adopt a "god's-eye view" in approaching research; postmodern theory and qualitative methods instead understand knowledge as situated, ambiguous, messy, and even contradictory.

Positivistic research, from Lincoln and Guba's (1985) conception, is not a suitable approach for the present inquiry for several reasons. First, positivism often employs deductive reasoning, in which there in only one possible conclusion. But in this study, there is a possibility of multiple conclusions, all of which are unknown at the outset of data collection and analysis and which inter-relate in ways that cannot be hypothesized beforehand. Also, positivist research often ignores the implications of the study due to its dependence on "shallow" operationalism and its emphasis on "facts" (Lincoln & Guba,

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1985, p. 26). Arriving at implications for this project is vital to understanding the factors that affect preservation of culture and language. Finally, positivism is deterministic in nature, "subject to a single set of laws," a single reality, or a single ontology (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 27). This single-mindedness fails to serve the interests of this study, interests which are bound in multiple ontologies and realities due to the complex of historical and political forces that must be considered, and the values that diverse people bring to our understanding of what they are facing as they contemplate, experience, and/or work to reverse the disappearance of their language and culture.

The allowance for messiness and contradiction in the qualitative paradigm much more accurately fits this study since there are multiple activities and perspectives involved in language preservation, even in the small core group of potential participants to be studied here. The community features some instability due to several of the outside forces delineated in Chapter 2. Also, community resources fluctuate, so programs, initiatives, and the availability of individuals change frequently in this community and its various sub-communities.

Additionally, qualitative inquiry is applicable to "indigenous pedagogies" (Denzin, 2008), since "indigenists resist the positivist and postpositivist methodologies of Western science because nonindigenous scholars too frequently use these formations to validate colonizing knowledge about indigenous peoples. Indigenists deploy, instead, interpretive strategies and skills that fit the needs, languages, and traditions of their respective indigenous communities" (Denzin, 2008, p. 449). By employing these strategies, indigenous pedagogies ultimately embrace a restorative ecology that can offer

hope to others in their quest to "decolonize, heal, and transform" their communities (Denzin, 2008, p. 455).

The qualitative approach has strengths that were appropriate for this study. Maxwell (1996) lists several strengths, including a way to understand the meaning of situations, events, and actions from participants' perspectives, and to attend to the "accounts that they give of their lives and experiences" (p. 17). Another strength of qualitative study is its ability to understand the participants' context(s) as well as the ways in which the context(s) influence them. This quality is useful when studying a small group of individuals rather than a large-scale group, so that the researcher can help to find "how events, actions, and meanings are shaped by the unique circumstances in which these occur" (p. 19). Qualitative research also enables people to identify the unexpected occurrences from which new theories may develop, as well as understanding the processes that lead to certain outcomes. Qualitative inquiry is advantageous when conducting inductive, open-ended study and in collaborative research projects.

Collaboration was an appropriate concept in relation to my study, since I have collaborated on several small projects with some of the core participants in the past. The understanding of context was critical for the present study, since the context was unique to this language community and the splintered and sometimes isolated language preservation activities that have been evolving there during the past two to three decades. Allowing unexpected occurrences to emerge is a quality of research that was important to me and to this study, since there was no way to predict who will value what, or why certain approaches work and others do not, or why people engage in the activities that they do. According to Freire (1970), collaborative methodology "requires that the

investigators and the people (who would normally be considered objects of that investigation) should act as *co-investigators* (p. 106). This study was a co-investigation of the community language revitalization processes and ideologies.

Ethnography

Ethnography is one methodology that falls under the realm of approaches to qualitative inquiry. Like the broader domain of qualitative inquiry, ethnography defies simple defining (Hammersley, 2006). Ethnography embodies a range of methodologies. Hammersley (2006) offers a description of sociological ethnography which is relevant to my study. He posits that ethnographers "typically insist on the importance of coming to understand the perspectives of the people being studied if we are to explain, or even to describe accurately, the activities they engage in and the courses of action that they adopt" and that "sociological ethnographers focus on what happens in a particular work locale or social institution when it is in operation" (p. 4). Other scholars have offered insights that are equally related to my project.

For instance, Rubin and Rubin (2005) describe ethnographies as "studies that sketch an overall cultural setting" that describe the "key norms, rules, symbols, values, traditions, and rituals in that setting, and [show] how they fit together" (p. 7). Heath and Street (2008), referencing Leung (2005), assert that ethnographers should strive to document the ways in which institutions and organizations help to form cultural patterns and influence the values held in a culture. An ethnographic approach made sense in the present research project, since there are traditions and rituals that are key to the preservation efforts, and the values of preservationists as well as those not active in preservation were investigated. The uniqueness of this internally diverse culture, as well

as its maintenance, were also critical factors in understanding the preservation phenomena in this small language community. Perhaps most importantly, as Hammersley (2006) succinctly characterizes it, "ethnography is simply one means among others for telling stories about the social world" (p. 7).

Other Relevant Research Methodologies

Community-Related Research

In acquiring information substantial enough for an overview of language revitalization, it was important to base the research with several aspects of the community clearly in focus. Grenoble (2009), quoting Smith (1999), mentions elements of community-related research:

- The community decides what is needed from the research

- The research should be collaborative

- The research process is as important as the outcome

Thus, the process involved collaboration and participation in community members' activities related to language revitalization. With these elements in place, the process became flexible enough to undergo systematic change in the process of my study. In addition to enriching the research perspective, the elements of community research were critical to developing a good relationship with the participants, since they are the experts on their own cultural and linguistic preservation endeavors. Since I have worked with them before, a collaborative study was the most natural step; what we co-discovered in the process was a key to understanding the influences and values shaping preservation. They are the experts who had been accurately identifying their needs for decades before this study was even conceived.

Language Ideological Research

In order to establish an understanding of the initiatives that the community chooses or avoids, it was necessary to consider their values and beliefs. This was possible, in part, through careful language ideological analysis. Kroskrity (2009) defines language ideological analysis as a process that "synthesizes an interest in interrelatedness of linguistic awareness, linguistic beliefs, feelings, and practices, and relations of political power" (p. 72). Heath (1983) contends that these "ways of acquiring, using, and valuing language adapted in response to structural changes" in settings such as families and schools helps us to see how these relations reshape the community. This analysis dovetails Freire's (1970) notion that discourse must be sensitive to the "doubts, hopes, and fears" of oppressed people (p. 96).

Kroskrity also emphasizes that researchers should be aware that there may be multiple ideologies even within small communities that are working toward language revitalization. "Language ideological research attends to members' awareness and notes when such beliefs and feelings are largely taken-for-granted aspects of 'practical consciousness' or when they are elevated to the 'discursive consciousness' (2009, p. 73). Even the social history of the group itself may have influenced the values and motivations (Heath, 1983). Since the people at Allegany have a complicated social history, understanding these differences in consciousness was critical for developing sensitivity toward the participants' varying values and motivations.

Role of the Researcher

Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that the researcher-as-instrument conceptualization stems from classical anthropology and modern sociology. As an

effective human instrument of a study, researchers typically exemplify such characteristics as responsiveness, adaptability, an ability to expand knowledge and see holistic contexts, and an ability to seek summary and clarification as well as to see the idiosyncrasies of a situation and setting. Of utmost importance is a healthy tolerance for ambiguity. These characteristics also help researchers to identify and formulate their relationship and role with participants of a study.

My Relationship

My relationship with a handful of Seneca people at the Ohi:yo' territory began in 2002 when I worked as a graduate assistant helping to teach cultural lessons while pursuing my master's degree. Cathy Pedler, a friend who worked as an archaeologist at the college where I studied, invited me to work with her at Ohi:yo'. She knew that I had pedagogical experience and cultural sensitivity, and she also knew that they needed a teacher to help at Ganöhsesge:kha Hë:nödeyë:sta, a small culture-language school in the territory. She thought I would be a good fit. I jumped at the chance to experience something new and to explore a part of our regional heritage, as well as to establish new friendships and relationships with colleagues in language teaching. I taught classes in science, world cultures, math and other traditional subjects to a group of about 13 children aged 8 to 14, while the school's co-founder, Sandy Dowdy, taught the Seneca language, regional and community history, and culture. The co-founder served as my mentor during the years that this arrangement endured, from about 2002 until 2004. Dar Dowdy, the other co-founder and my mentor's husband, directed cultural activities and offered spiritual guidance. Since he is a Faithkeeper, he also served as a liaison between the school and community. The above description of my relationship is what Rubin &

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Rubin (2005) consider "culturally understood roles in which obligations and responsibilities are known to both parties" (p. 84). This personal history was the particular context of this research project. Context is necessary to consider, according to Maxwell (1996).

My Role

My role in this study as well as in the community is complex, and this situation was suitable for a qualitative ethnography, since "researchers often have to cross the boundary from being an outsider to being an insider" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 86). The combination of both roles is not as problematic as it first may seem, according to Rubin & Rubin (2005), since both roles have their strengths. The outsider role is perhaps more traditional in qualitative research and has been traditionally viewed as leading to satisfactory results "because the interviewer would not be caught up in the cross-currents of a group" (p. 87). Yet the insider role finds its strength in a less-threatening, sympathetic understanding of participants' "language, concepts, and experiences" (p. 87).

I am an outsider in terms of my role as a person who is literally located outside the community. I live in a city an hour away from the research site that is the focus of this study, and I am also a person who is not of Seneca heritage and who is unable to speak the language. Because of this outsider position, I am not privileged to participate in certain religious ceremonies at the Longhouse or in language teaching activities of a religious nature. Since I do not know the language, I am not directly a part of revitalization efforts. Yet in some ways, I am an insider who has been invited into the community to assist with several projects, including second language teaching ideas, and who on occasion is someone who may simply relax and enjoy the company of many of

the participants in this study. We share interests outside of language preservation, such as gardening, food preparation, learning about medicinal herbs, and valuing our respective extended families, among many others. In addition, since I have developed the role of friend, I am privy to the non-religious activities in the school and community, such as dances, commemoration days, and cultural activities.

My participation level fluctuates from time to time, and this fluctuation was a natural part of conducting the research. Angrosino & Mays de Perez (2003) explain that "[i]nteraction is always a tentative process that involves the continuous testing by all participants of the conceptions they have of the roles of others" (p. 124). The role I have should be conceptualized instead as roles in the plural, and these multiple roles are still in the process of changing and evolving (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2003; Maxwell, 1996). Angrosino and Mays de Perez also note the importance of realizing that what I observed would necessarily be affected by who I am, and that I should be aware of this complex reality. I am a friend, a visitor, teacher and colleague, student, language lover, politically conscious activist, and daughter-like figure for some elders in the community. I am all these at various times, to different people, and in different ways. People in my study already knew me as an educator as well as an interested outsider who sometimes has insider status depending upon the situation. I also had to remember that as a researcher, I am "still in a privileged position, at least insofar as actually doing the research and disseminating its results are concerned" (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2003, p. 137). More information on these roles is described in the Limitations section below.

Setting

The general setting for this study was the Ohi:yo' territory, located in the southern

tier of New York State, near the City of Salamanca (See Figure 3 below) . This area is

bisected by *Ohi:y:oh*, 'beautiful river,' or Allegany River, flowing in an oxbow shape

running mainly east-to-west where it flows through Salamanca toward the eastern part,

with a hook to the south as it flows southwesterly toward the Pennsylvania border.

Interstate 86, an east-west artery, also traverses the territory; a long bridge carries it over

the river. Activities such as fishing and boating often take place on the river, near the city

to the northeast and also to the southwest of the city. Alongside both banks of the river

along its entire span in New York is the Ohi:yo' territory, with its rolling hills and

densely forested areas. A county road travels parallel to the river on each side where it

hooks toward the south – Route 280 on the east side and Perimeter Road on the west,

connecting each from I-86 to the Pennsylvania border.
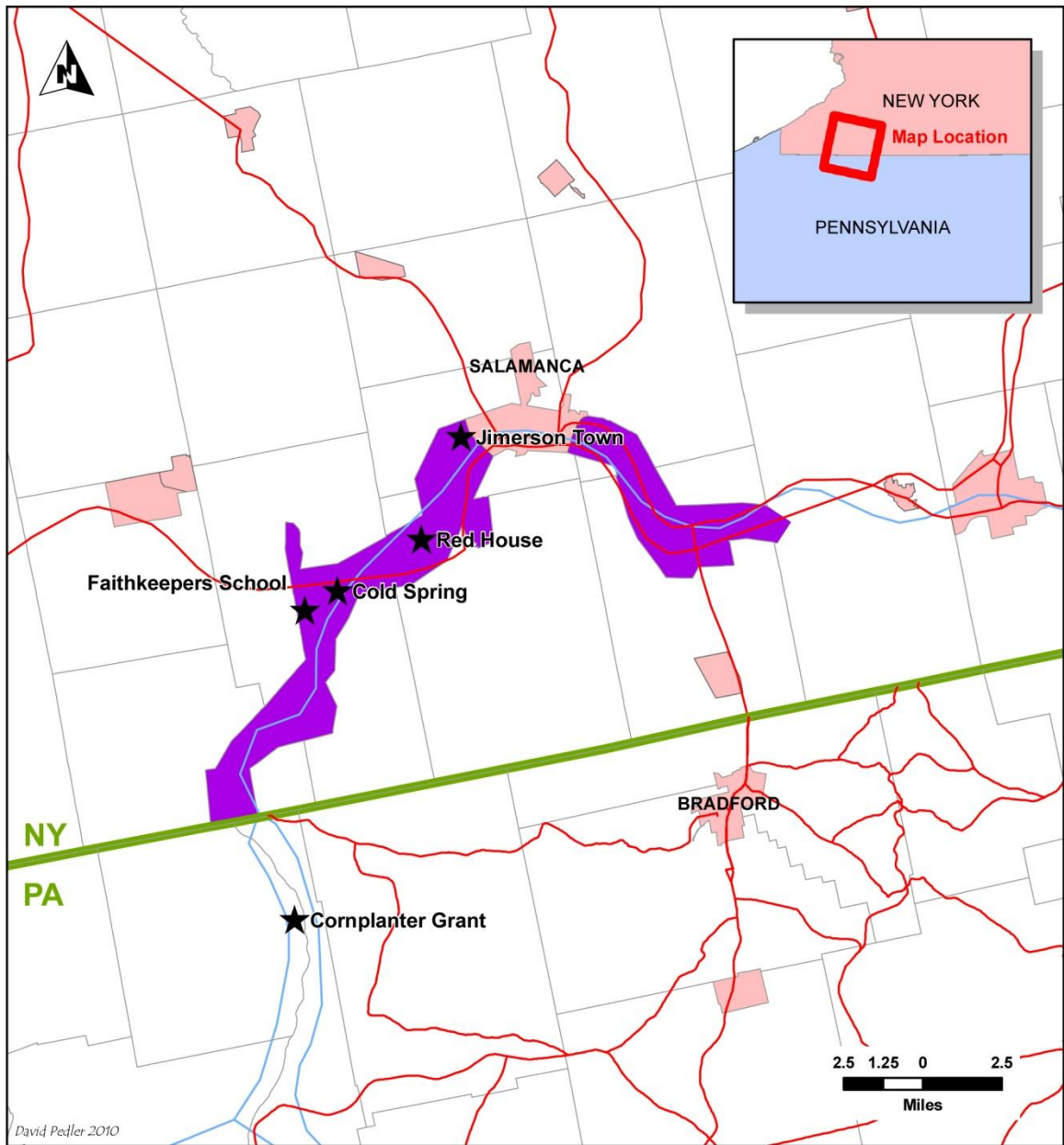
Figure 3: Contemporary map of Seneca Allegany Territory. Lines indicate Township (PA) and Town (NY) borders (Courtesy David Pedler).

Several smaller communities straddle the river in the valleys of these hills. Census

2000 figures show that half the 1,100 in the Territory are "Native American," but there

are varying Seneca figures that differ with the Census numbers and also with each other

since the Senecas have a complicated system of counting enrollees. *Ganöhsesge:kha'*

Hë:nödeyë:sta', or the Faithkeepers School, is at the top of a hill, known as Hotchkiss Hollow, which is about two miles south of I-86 along Perimeter Road. The school is constructed to look like a traditional longhouse, and its name, roughly translated, means "they learn Longhouse ways." The building has a central door that leads into a kitchen, with a large room on either side of the kitchen. For the most part, activities for adults take place in the room on the left, and for children in the room to the right. On either extreme end of the building is a staircase leading to a finished lower level that contains classrooms, bunk rooms, and storage areas. Interpretive trails surround the building on three sides, with signage in the Seneca language translated into English. A gravel parking lot is in front of the building. A new housing building is being constructed to the right of the school.

Traveling north from the school along Perimeter Road toward the interstate, the hill gives way to a valley that has a few houses alongside the road, as well as the Turtle Pit, a locally-owned convenience store and gas station. The small village of Cold Spring is located In the valley. This area, which is located on a series of two connected tar-and-chipped loops that veer off Perimeter Road to the right toward the river, is where several people were relocated after the building of the Kinzua Dam. There are about 160 modular homes on one-acre plots along these loops. The traditional Longhouse is in the center of this location, having also been moved from its previous location during the removal. Next to the Longhouse is a building that houses the Cold Spring branch of the Seneca Nation Education Department as well as a building for services for elders.

Back on the Perimeter Road are a scattering of houses and a few gas stations that are just a short distance south of the interstate. On the north side of the interstate is the

village of Steamburg. Once on the interstate, proceeding east, one sees the signage marking the boundary of Seneca territory; at this stage, the river is to the east. To the east of the river crossing is the junction with Route 280, which travels south along the river toward the state line. The old location of Quaker Bridge is to the west of 280 a few miles south of the interstate junction. The Quaker Run camping area of the Allegany State Park is further south along the road and off to the right.

Back north on the interstate, traveling east a few miles, travelers will cross the Red House camping area to the south, Bay State Brook, and a few more miles to the east, the exit for Salamanca. At the exit from the interstate onto Route 417, the Allegany Seneca Casino is to the south of the exit at a dead-end of 417. A north turn off the exit leads to Salamanca's Broad Street, the main street through town. To the northwest just before town is the Jimersontown area, the second relocation area created by the Kinzua Dam. Jimersontown has its own loops off the main street, and along these small roads are approximately 145 modular homes on one-acre plots, the Haley Building, which hosts recreation activities, a pool, gym, classrooms, the education building, a Head Start and early childhood facility, and a Christian church.

Heading back out of the loops, going south again and back onto the Broad Street junction are several businesses, restaurants, the Seneca library, the Seneca-Iroquois National Museum, and further into town, off Broad to the north, is the high school. The school is near Veterans Park, where the annual Veterans Powwow takes place. The downtown district is further east along Broad where the river crosses again through town.

Interviews were conducted at *Ganöhsesge:kha' Hë:nödeyë:sta'*, at the Seneca Nation Library, the Seneca Nation Education Department, the elders' housing complex, VIP Gas station, Seneca Artz, and participants' homes in the Salamanca area.

This setting at Ohi:yo' was critical for several reasons. First, it is the location of Ganöhsesge:kha' Hë:nödeyë:sta', a unique facility since its purpose is to maintain language and cultural traditions. The setting is near the Longhouse and also includes administration and education buildings, central places to locate documents and find interviewees carrying out their jobs and daily lives. It is one of the few places in which I have access to Seneca speakers. These speakers hold the unique perspective of people who are preserving this endangered language.

<center>Participants</center>

Due to time constraints and availability of speakers, I conducted several in-depth interviews and engaged in conversations with a limited number of people at Ohi:yo' territory. Ideally, I wanted to invite a handful of people at Ganöhsesge:kha' Hë:nödeyë:sta', a few members of the wider community, and administrators at the education building, library, and museum. These people were my core group, since "[a] key to the success of language learning … is having on hand a core group of native speakers" (Furbee & Stanley, 2002, p. 117).The core consisted of Dar and Sandy Dowdy, the two co-founders of Ganöhsesge:kha' Hë:nödeyë:sta', a couple in their mid 60's to early 70's. Dar Dowdy is also a head Faithkeeper. Also included was Bill Crouse, one of Sandy Dowdy's children, a forty-something administrator, father and Faithkeeper, as well as his two daughters — both language teachers — and one of their elementary school-aged sons. Some of the adults in this group are fluent speakers of the language; the

youngsters are learners. Five other people who are active in teaching and learning at

Ganöhsesge:kha' Hë:nödeyë:sta' were invited, four males in their 20's to 30's and one in

his 50's. Two former students participated in interviews as well. Also, George Heron, an

elder from the community in his 90's was invited to participate, as well as an

administrator, Todd Waite, from the Seneca Nation of Indians Education Department.

Also, Sandy Dowdy's daughter, who is not active in language preservation, was invited

to participate. Several other people participated; a few more, such as the curators for the

Seneca-Iroquois National Museum and Ganondagan State Historic Site were invited but

could not arrange to be interviewed within the times constraints of this study. Table 1

below shows the distribution of the participants in the present study.

Table 1

Distribution of Participants

Location	Number of Participants
Ganöhsesge:kha' Hë:nödeyë:sta' *Ganöhsesge:kha' Hë:nödeyë:sta'* Group	2 founders 5 adult learners 1 young learner 3 former students 1 administrative assistant
Wider Community	2 elders 1 non-traditionalist family member 3 language department teachers 3 community /family members
Administration	

Education	1 Language Department director
Health	1 Health Department controller

Participant selection was important since these participants are "experienced and have first-hand knowledge" about the research topics and issues. Participants should be selected "whose views reflect different, even contending, perspectives" to avoid imbalance (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 64). Participants were carefully chosen to represent both elders and youth, as well as those who are involved with Ganöhsesge:kha' Hë:nödeyë:sta' and those who are not, in order to provide a balance that included people who are interested and active in language revitalization and as those who are not. Including this distribution was intended to help us to trace the causes of the changes in the community regarding language programming and initiatives that have taken place during the past several decades. The balance was also designed to help "to establish particular comparisons to illuminate the reasons for differences" across participants (p. 72). At the same time, these participants were to reflect "representativeness or typicality" (p. 71). This careful selection is often termed "purposeful sampling" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 102), an alternative approach to the positivistic randomized, generalized, representative sample. Instead, a purposeful approach to sampling is "contingent and serial" (p. 224).

<center>Design of the Study</center>

The study combined several methods conducive to inquiry into language revitalization in a community facing language endangerment. Observation was combined

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with interview, participation in community activities, analysis of artifacts offered by participants, and a regular research journal. This multi-approach design was proposed to keep in mind Freire's (1970) conception that reflection and action are interactive. Methods were linked to the research questions in a design that Maxwell (1996) describes as "one in which the different methods fit together compatibly and in which they are integrated with" the other components in the study (p. 81). Put simply, the methods must elicit data that answer the research questions being asked. Thus, a broad design at the outset of a study gives way to more specific elements as the study evolves. Allowance for emergence is critical in qualitative design "because meaning is determined by context to such a great extent; because the existence of multiple realities constrains the development of a design based on only one (the investigator's) construction; because what will be learned at a site is always dependent on the *interaction* between investigator and context, and the interaction is also not fully predictable; and because the nature of mutual shapings cannot be known until they are witnessed" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 208, italics in original).

<div align="center">Research Instruments</div>

<div align="center">*Interview: Formal and Informal Conversations*</div>

Interviews are optimal for "supplying evidence about informants' general perspectives or attitudes" (Hammersley, 2006, p. 9). I wanted to find out the elements that the participants value in terms of linguistic and cultural preservation activities and beliefs. Moreover, methods such as active interviewing are especially necessary in situations when there has been insensitivity toward the people under study. "Eager outsiders are usually aware of the shameful history of people like us coming in to be

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'helpful' … There is just one way in which our ancestors rarely tried to be helpful: by listening to what Indian people said they wanted and then supporting those goals" (Speas, 2009, pp. 24-25). Questions were elaborated as necessary throughout the data collection phase of the study.

Instead of the classic interview, which certainly should not be abandoned altogether, qualitative interviewing involves dialogue which "comes into activist research because it reduces the 'objective distance' between ourselves and the people from and with whom we make knowledge" (p. 31). It was important to maintain the same informal, relaxed friendship that I established with my participants years ago, so that the dialogue could flow as a normal activity and the participants could remain open to sharing ideas and feelings. It was also important to conduct slightly more formal interviews with education department and other administrators. Structured interviewing was appropriate when I knew the questions whose answers I sought, while less structured interviewing fit when the respondent provided the questions or when the questions were unknown (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Less structured interviews have the potential to afford depth and breadth (Fontana & Frey, 2008), particularly in the context of the ethnographic approach adopted here. Some interviews shifted between a structured and unstructured format. Qualitative interviewing allows for creativity that can elicit "life histories" across sessions and days (Fontana & Frey, 2008, p. 134).

The goal of the interview was to develop a narrative from the participants' conversations. Narratives are facilitated by active interviewing. "The active interviewer's role is to incite respondents' answers, virtually *activating narrative production*" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, p. 75; emphasis in original). Holstein and Gubrium emphasize the

interaction during this process, "consciously and conscientiously attending to the interview process and product in ways that are more sensitive to the social construction of knowledge" (p. 68). Interviews that are informal and part of everyday activities are what Rubin and Rubin (2005) call "extensions of ordinary conversations" (p. 12). These informal interviews were not entirely free of structure, though; such interviews must have some direction in the form of a topical focus (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Topical interviews have a preconceived body of information that the researcher plans to address. These interviews "seek explanations for puzzling situations" when "the problem is highly visible at the beginning of the study" (p. 11). The participants in this study had a clear idea about its topic – language preservation in their community—and they realized that I would be asking them questions about their activities related to preservation, so topical interviews made sense in this situation. I wanted to be sensitive to Rubin and Rubin's (2005) idea that "[t]he interviewer can offer to help memorialize a vanishing way of life, a skill, a religious practice, or a long-gone set of events" (p. 90). Questions, they assert, "communicate to the interviewee that what he or she knows is valuable, should not be lost, and could be taught … to others" (p. 90). Alberta Austin, herself a Seneca interested in preservation who conducted biographical interviews with elders in the community in the 1980s as part of a state Title IV grant, suggests that researchers should know a little of the background of interviewees as a way to develop conversation topics, and to maintain a relaxed and easygoing atmosphere conducive to humorous exchanges, since that is the preferred way to communicate in many parts of the community. My own experience witnessing interviews conducted with an elder in the community taught me to be patient

and honor the elder's tendency to ramble. Austin says that it is important to not be pushy and not to interrupt an elder, who may lose the train of thought (Austin, 1986).

I also intended to give the participants who engage in these informal conversations "attention and recognition" by recognizing and valuing their accomplishments (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 90). These conversations helped to establish "conversational partnerships" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 79) in which the interviewer is obligated to make conversational partners feel at ease and safe to express opinions and feelings and to establish empathy. Rubin and Rubin warn researchers not to become too empathetic since this could lead to incomplete data gathering through avoidance of questioning others with alternative views. This is why I intended to include participants who actively engage in language preservation as well as those who do not, older as well as younger people, those whom I knew and those who were strangers, and those who follow traditional culture as well as those who are more assimilated into the wider culture.

Preliminary interview questions and prompts explored the participants' experiences and family histories speaking the Seneca language, accounts of schooling in both English and Seneca, where possible, values and feelings of the participants and their perceptions of the values and feelings of their family members and the community toward both languages, and assessment of the Seneca language programs and their importance to in the community, both past and present. Other topics emerged on their own as the participants felt free to discuss topics of their own interest.

Research Journal

I used a research journal of field notes in this study. Notes were used for interviews as well as observations. I combined these notes with "conceptual memos" written at regular intervals after the data was collected (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 77). In these memos I included "reflections, projections, and reminders" to myself (p. 77) as well as questions and ideas. I labeled them with tags or phrases that helped me locate them during data analysis. Heath recommends using categorizations such as "problems and setbacks," "overview," and "patterns, insights, and breakthroughs" (p. 80). Lincoln and Guba (1985) characterize such research journals as "reflexive journals" that are introspective, revealing the researcher's thought processes, decisions, and philosophical underpinnings (p. 109).

Protection of Human Subjects

The Institutional Review Board process is designed to protect the participants from harm that may be incurred during the study. The board received a listing of example interview questions and activity descriptions and was informed that these interviews and activities were samples and may evolve during the study. Confidentiality was not possible in this study, but participants were fully notified of this. Informed consent forms were provided to all participants; these forms described the purpose of the study, my background, and benefits and risks to participation in the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) prefer the term "fully informed" (p. 254). To fully inform is to explain that results will be shared with participants in the study. Participants were instructed that they may withdraw from the study at any time, no questions asked, and that there would be no

effects on the relationship between myself, the researcher, and any participants who may choose to withdraw. Since I have previous relationships to the participants, I intended to engage in comfortable, natural conversation on everyday life before I discussed and presented the consent form. Many of the participants in this study were already familiar with such consent forms. They were reminded that although the forms may suggest a passive role for them, they could continue to be active partners in the research (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

I intended to "[b]e unfailingly polite" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 98), and I asked permission to record every activity and conversation; I was prepared to turn off the recorder if I was asked to do so, yet no one asked. I tried not to interrupt participants, especially if what they said did not fit the research question or predetermined topic. Participants were free to choose whether to answer questions and whether the recording and/or notes could be written into the study, and requests to remain "off the record" were honored. When participants answered freely, I attempted to follow Rubin and Rubin's (2005) advice to "use a nondirective questioning style that allows the conversational partners the scope to determine the boundaries of what they discuss" (p. 103). I made every effort to refrain from disrupting the lives of the participants. Data was stored in a safe location that was off-limits to others.

I do acknowledge that "*all* methods have the potential to harm" (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez, 2003, p. 140, italics in original) but that the exact nature and extent of this harm is difficult to predict. Angrosino (2008) advises choosing the route that causes the least harm possible. When such harm is minimized, sometimes the choice is to proceed rather than to avoid further action since "there is real value in disseminating the

fruits of ethnographic research so as to increase our knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity, the nature of coping strategies, or any number of currently salient social justice issues" (Angrosino, 2008, p. 172). In order to achieve this goal, I tried to establish trust with each of the participants as I proceeded through the study. I planned to discuss the concept expressed in the following statement with my participants wherever necessary: "[s]ome truths are not worth the pain that they cause. Others might be necessary for the pain they can prevent" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 104).

Data Analysis

My approach to data analysis was to fit the analysis to the type of data or instrument and the research question that the data attempt to answer. I wanted to be sensitive to a qualitative paradigm when conducting the analysis. Schwandt (2007) describes qualitative analysis as both an "art" and a "science" that is interested in "making sense of, interpreting, and theorizing data" (p. 6). In qualitative inquiry, data analysis is a continuous process that is both "open-ended and inductive" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 224), "so that every new act of investigation takes into account everything that has been learned so far" (p. 209). The data derived from the research instruments described above was organized in terms of the date, time, place, speaker(s) and setting. The data, whether from a recording or document, interview or observation, was then read and described in detail, noting the "ordinary" and "nonordinary" occurrences through the use of memos (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 84), and from this process, the information was re-read and interpreted. The whole process was recursive in nature. The interpretation was based upon classification and coding of information in a "constant comparative" (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 32; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 339), to find patterns of the

realities and social worlds of the participants that may emerge. In addition to categorization, contextualization strategies such as narrative analysis and microanalysis — noting the particular individuals and situations — added a "well-rounded account" of the occurrences (Maxwell, 1996, p. 79). The analysis took place as soon as possible after the data was collected (Maxwell, 1996; Heath & Street, 2008). Rubin & Rubin (2005) explain this process as moving from recognition to clarification and synthesis to elaboration to coding and sorting to final synthesis. When coding, I attempted to be sensitive to the situational context and to understand that they are not necessarily "objective" measures (Anrgosino & Mays de Perez, 2003, p. 139).

Qualitative, ethnographic analysis benefits from noticing patterns or ideas that are both above and below the surface of the participant's conscious activity. "This process will hopefully encourage productive dialogue among community members. Heath and Street's (2008) principles of field study note that these members, or insiders, also may differ between "expressing *ideals* of behavior rather than *manifest*, or actual, behavior" (p. 8, italics in original). Themes can emerge from the type of question asked, thoughts that are frequently discussed, discrepancies between what is said and the emotion that is expressed, and comparison of interviews and activities (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Also helpful is the awareness and evaluation of nonverbal behavior (Fontana & Frey, 2008).

Noting co-occurrences greatly enhanced the analysis process. "Knowledge that comes in patterned symbolic structure works in constant interdependence with context, emotion, embodiment, and many other aspects of being human" (Heath & Street, 2008). So this study used the recursive process of comparing data from interviews and other sources to the theories obtained from the literature. Then the comparison is further

analyzed by noting co-occurrences, or patterns that may not be conscious processes for

the insiders (Heath & Street, 2008). Examining the patterns of language use in

correspondence with cultural patterns, when analyzed against the backdrop of past

patterns, allowed speculation on future habits (Heath, 1983). Noting such patterns

assisted in the analysis of the "linguistic forms of agency," which Cushman (1998) terms

the "tools" of the community, rather than focusing only on their struggles.

It was helpful for me to use Lincoln & Guba's (1985) conceptualization of each

instrument as "a sensitive homing device that sorts out salient elements and targets in on

them" (p. 224). The sensitivity may be enhanced through the use of "thick description,"

which Schwandt (2007) characterizes as an interpretation based "by recording the

circumstances, meanings, intentions, strategies, motivations, and so on that characterize a

particular episode" (p. 296).

<div align="center">Trustworthiness</div>

Golafshani (2003) asserts that "[t]o ensure reliability in qualitative research,

examination of trustworthiness is crucial" (p. 601). In order to examine this

trustworthiness, Golafshani contends that reliability necessarily results from validity, and

that validity "is not a single, fixed or universal concept" (p. 602); it is "a goal rather than

a product" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 86). Maxwell defines validity as "the correctness or

credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort of

account" (p. 87).

<div align="center">Validity Threats</div>

Maxwell (1996) explains that there are three major types of validity: description,

interpretation, and theory. Each type of validity may possibly become compromised if

careful steps and considerations are not achieved. Description validity may become

compromised if the data are incomplete or inaccurate. This threat is mitigated through

the use of audio- and video- recordings of interviews and observations and by

transcribing the recordings in detail. Interpretation validity suffers when the researcher

imposes his or her own framework rather than upholding the participants' meanings and

understandings of their own words and actions. This threat can be minimized by avoiding

leading or closed questions. I tried to avoid this threat by maintaining a relaxed and

comfortable rapport and conducting natural conversations just as I have done with these

participants in the past. Theory validity is threatened when "discrepant data" (p. 90) are

ignored or when alternative explanations are left out. Also, blindly accepting what the

participants say at "face value" in an attempt to honor their rights may actually "lead to

systematic error" (Hammersley, 2006, p. 11), so I wanted to be cognizant of any

reluctance to question and cross-check interview material by asking the same question of

different participants or of the same participant at different times.

<center>Bias and Reactivity</center>

Other validity threats Maxwell notes are researcher bias and reactivity. My own

bias inevitably affected the data selection and interpretation, and this bias was impossible

to remove. One of my biased views is the enthusiastic support of the preservationists'

efforts and the admiration of and belief in their seemingly unwavering hope that the fate

of their language is not sealed despite the grave reality of its endangerment. The

extinction of Seneca may seem inevitable to some but not to many of the participants in

the present study, and I share that optimistic goal of preservation with them.

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Maxwell, drawing from Hammersely and Atkinson's work, claims that "this impossibility [avoiding bias and reactivity] is one aspect of what has been called the inherent *reflexivity*" (p. 91, italics in original) of qualitative research. Objectivity is not attainable in a qualitative study since there is no inherent, single "truth." To help assuage bias and lack of objectivity, what I needed to do was to be blunt and open with myself during the research process about these biases and preconceived theories. After the recognition was made, though, I tried to avoid interjecting my opinions during interviews or participation. If and when my opinions were solicited by participants, I attempted to offer them non-judgmentally (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Reactivity, in a related sense, is the researcher's influence on the study's participants and/or setting, and, like bias, reactivity is impossible to eliminate. Maxwell states that "the goal in a qualitative study is not to eliminate this influence but to understand it and to use it productively" (p. 91). Explaining and understanding my position as an insider yet also an outsider was a critical step in this process. Debriefing by participants and the dissertation committee helped me to explain and understand these complex realities.

Triangulation

Several instruments were employed in this study, since "engaging in multiple methods, such as, observation, interviews and recordings will lead to more valid, reliable and diverse construction of realities" (Golafshani, 2003, p. 604). The use of the several different types of instruments described above helped to establish triangulation. Selecting diverse participants were other ways to achieve triangulation. The participants' assistance in analysis also achieved the goal of trustworthiness in the study. In sum, "[t]he combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and

observers in a single study is best understood … as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 7).

Member Checking

The assistance of the participants in analyzing data gathered by observation or interview and the subsequent feedback they provided is what is termed "member checking" in a qualitative study. Participants had the right to inquire about and to examine the data reports and notes generated during the study. "If the outcome of naturalistic inquiry is a reconstruction of the multiple constructions that various respondents have made, it would seem obligatory that the inquirer check out that reconstruction" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 212). According to Maxwell (1996), "[i]t is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpretation of the meaning of what they say and the perspective they have on what is going on" (p. 94). Member checking does not assume that the participants' perspectives will be valid by themselves, but when they are checked against the researcher's interpretation as well as existing theories, checking helps achieve validity and a productive level of trustworthiness. My dissertation committee is another element in member checking, offering additional voices to check representations and meanings.

Limitations

It would be disingenuous for me to omit the limitations of this study. First, since I am not an insider, I cannot fully understand the perspectives, histories, and tribulations of the participants in this study. Yet I already know many of the participants, so, as mentioned above, I wanted to be to be careful to be honest about these prior relationships and understand how they influenced this project. I can certainly be empathetic to them

and to their perspectives. But I am not an indigenous person; I follow a tradition of researchers that have been viewed as "agents of colonial power" who have "extracted, appropriated, commodified, and distributed knowledge" of indigenous communities and individuals (Denzin, 2008, p. 438). I had to make it clear that I understand this history, and that that I am sensitive to the disastrous yet typical colonial approach to research about indigenous peoples. I sought participants' assistance in being vigilant of my outsider interpretations by asking them to review my data.

Another limitation is that I have no language expertise. I cannot offer assistance in this area. One consolation to this lack of fluency is that all the participants speak English and were comfortable conversing in English with me. I even asked my friends during previous projects whether my limitation in terms of language would be an obstacle to conducting interviews with elders who might prefer to converse in their native language, but my friends explained that there are almost no people left who cannot converse as freely in English. There are no participants who can only speak in the native tongue. So this obstacle did not affect my ability to communicate with participants. But identity is still an issue in other aspects; my identity as an Italian-American, 40-something female may have affected some of the relationships in different ways — some may have more closely identified with me than others — since none of the participants are white and only some are middle-aged and/or female.

Also, this was a short-term study that lacked "prolonged engagement" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 109) when put in perspective with older studies that tended to take place over several years. The danger of condensing a study into a short-term engagement is that the study may suffer from an "ahistorical perspective" (Hammersley, 2006) that ignores

the history of the setting and participants, but I have tried to negate this problem by being well-versed in historical literature of the setting as well as the stories that the participants know about their own local and oral histories. Additionally, I gathered personal biographical histories of the participants wherever possible. I have already been engaged with many of these participants before, so I could draw upon that knowledge and comfort level when building interviews and conducting analyses. Although I needed to set an arbitrary end date to this particular study, Lincoln and Guba (1985) have noted that setting an end date to a qualitative design is impossible. I can ameliorate this problem by continuing to be engaged with these participants well after the study is complete, for as long as they desire my involvement in their lives.

Additionally, some may insist that the study was too localized and lack a holistic perspective, but microethnography is a legitimate endeavor (Philips, 1983; Hammersley, 2006). A holistic or generalizable study is no longer privileged in postmodern ethnography. Hammersley purports that "any attempt by an analyst to place actors and their activities in a different, 'external,' context can only be an imposition, a matter of analytic act, perhaps even an act of symbolic violence" (p. 7). This is not to say that the research proceeded in a vacuum or that we had to reinvent the wheel in terms of language preservation. Both researchers and participants in diverse communities have collaborated on preservation efforts and analyzed them in terms of their relevance and applicability to this context. Other studies have been criticized for selecting a homogenous group which does not reflect the reality of the setting, but my group was not actually homogenous — participants in the group do not always hold the same values or partake in the same

activities — and the people that are part of this study were indeed typical of the people engaged in language preservation in this community, which is the focus of this study.

Finally, it may seem at times that I am too sympathetic to their cause, since it is my desire that their preservation efforts meet with success and the language and culture resist extinction. I have a great interest in the people's ability to assert their power and challenge the dominant surrounding society so that they can maintain their individuality. Also, due to my sympathetic nature, it was hard to avoid interjecting opinions, but when I did, I tried to remember Austin's recommendation to relax and let the speaker continue uninterrupted as much as possible and to keep my opinions to myself. The ultimate advantage of qualitative inquiry is that my sympathies are not entirely undesirable; empowerment and consensus-building are advantageous. Angrosino (2008) contends that the researcher's "main aim is to work with the community to achieve shared goals" (p. 175). This main objective is precisely what this study was designed to achieve.

CHAPTER 4

PARTICIPANTS AND ELICITED THEMES

Introduction

In the first section of this chapter, I will introduce the participants in the study. I introduce the participants individually, grouping them under sub-headings where it is necessary to identify their position in the community. Following the participant introductions, I discuss a set of themes that were directly elicited by questions. These themes emerged from the interviews and observations of participants in their homes, workplaces, and schools. The relevant questions asked whether the language was or is spoken at home, which generations in the family spoke or speak Seneca, and the presence or absence of conversational use of the language. Also, I asked questions designed to pinpoint when the language usage for given participants shifted from Seneca to English, which evoked themes of reversal in some participants — i.e., a shift back to Seneca. Other questions asked participants to comment on their school experiences, as well as sharing their attitudes toward the language and culture within the participants' families.

It is worth noting here that many of the participants in this study are themselves central figures in the Seneca community, and have been active in cultural events related to Seneca revival efforts. In fact, most recently, several were involved in this year's Seneca Allegany Veterans' Powwow, an event that draws crowds from all over the nation[15]. For the Iroquois Division Head Staff, Bill Crouse was the Emcee/Singer. The Head Man Dancer at the event was Blaine Tallchief, and the Head Boy Dancer was

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[15] The exact origin of the powwow tradition is often debated, but it probably evolved from sacred dancing. Powwows have grown in popularity over the last century, and they have developed to include both intertribal and competition dancing, and feature dancers of many nations and all ages. This year's Veterans' powwow included Traditional, Grass, Fancy, Jingle, and Smoke dances.

Dylan Harris. Refer to the tables at the end of this section below for a general overview of participants, the relationships in the Dowdy family, and the participants' positions in the community and relationship to the study.

<center>Participants</center>

Participant descriptions vary in length and content. Some participants disclosed more than others, and my personal knowledge of certain people allowed me to say more about some than others. This section describes participant background information in as much detail as possible, grouping participants into families or roles where appropriate.

<center>*Founders of Ganöhsesge:kha:':' Hë:nödeyë:sta''*</center>

Sandy Dowdy

Sandy Gajehsöh (nicknamed 'Jehsoh) Dowdy, 63, is a member of the hawk clan[16]. She has taught Seneca language and customs at the Salamanca School District, at Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta' (the Faithkeepers School, for which she is a co-founder), and for the Seneca Nation. During her teaching career spanning more than thirty years, she has taught students of all ages. Currently, among other projects, she is working on building a language nest where she is teaching language and culture to three of her great-granddaughters as well as the daughter of a local Seneca teacher. She is in a unique position as one of the youngest fluent speakers of Seneca; she learned the language from her adoptive parents.

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[16] Cf. Chapter 2, Brief History of the Seneca, for an explanation of the Seneca clan system.

Dar Dowdy

Lehman Dagaedö:ja or "Dar" Dowdy, 72, is a member of the turtle clan. He is a

Faithkeeper[17] at the Cold Spring Longhouse. He is a Korean War veteran. With Sandy,

his wife, Dar co-founded Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta', or Faithkeepers School, in

their home in 1998. Later, the community came together to build a school at its current

location on Perimeter Road. Dar guides the students who are learning the Longhouse

ceremonial language; he presides over certain ceremonial events such as births and

funerals, and conducts spiritual conferences in the region.

Students and Teachers at Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'

The student makeup at Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta' is constantly changing

due to funding issues, community interests, and other outside influences. In the past,

there was a cohort of 8 to 10 middle school-aged students taught by Sandy. That

configuration gave way to a smaller group. Currently, there are 5 adult students taught by

Dar, and one middle-school aged children taught by Sandy. Steve Hodeoezoewe'o

Gordon, 58, member of the turtle clan, assists Dar in guiding the adult students to learn

ceremonial responsibilities and speeches. Blaine Sosigwëöwa' Tallchief, 35, also a

member of the turtle clan, has been an adult student there the longest. The newest adult

students, aside from Blaine, are Travis Haogeyota' John, 23, Lee Haezo'oh Jimerson, 26,

and Jessie Naseetdeh George, 32, all of the turtle clan. Ryan Töyagethöh or "Gethöh"

Abrams, 19, also of the turtle clan, is a former student who was taught by Sandy. Dylan

Jaëse' Harris, 11, Sandy's great-grandson and member of the turtle clan, is currently

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[17] For a description of Faithkeepers and speakers of the Longhouse, see Chapter 2, Brief History of the Seneca.

learning from Sandy as well as Dar, Steve, Blaine, and many other adults in the community.

George Heron

George Hasenigwas Heron, 91, member of the hawk clan, served as President of the Seneca Nation for two, two-year terms, in 1958 and 1962. He is 91 years old, and is a World War II Navy veteran. He received numerous medals for his war-time efforts. He taught Seneca language and culture in the Salamanca School District. He loves to share stories of the past, especially those of his youth where he grew up on a farm with a large, extended family, many of whom spoke Seneca fluently.

Seneca Nation Education Department

Bill Crouse

Bill Gaha'dagë:ya:t Crouse, 47, member of the hawk clan and Sandy Dowdy's son, is a singer, dancer, artist, speaker, and teacher. He has taught for the Salamanca School District and the Seneca Nation. Bill is a curriculum developer for the Seneca Nation Education Department. He is a graphic artist and also choreographic consultant for such notable groups as the American Indian Dance Theater; he is speaker in the Coldspring Longhouse and a Faithkeeper, in addition to leading the Allegany River Indian Dancers. He owns his own art studio, Seneca Artz, on Broad Street in Salamanca.

Todd Waite

Todd Waite 41, of the bear clan, is the Director of Education for the Seneca Nation of Indians. He studied History, Education, and Counseling and Administration at Saint Bonaventure University near Olean, New York. He has also worked in Early Childhood Education in Chautauqua County and Rochester, New York.

Adrian John

Adrian Yadeo' John, 34, of the hawk clan, is the Project Coordinator for the Kinzua Dam Issues Committee, part of the Seneca Nation Tribal Historic Preservation Office; he has also taught Seneca language and culture for the Seneca Nation Education Department, and he teaches summer language programs for middle school-aged children at Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta'. Also an artist, he participates in and conducts presentations on Seneca culture and history at public schools and colleges.

Rachael Wolfe

Rachael Deyawëö:yë' Wolfe, 29, of the turtle clan, is Bill Crouse's daughter and Sandy Dowdy's granddaughter. She teaches Seneca language for the Seneca Nation Education Department at Salamanca High School. She is director of the Seneca Youth Dancers, a local dance troupe that performs in schools, for elders in the community, at socials, and regional school districts and colleges, and even at the national level. She also leads the Seneca Youth Council at the high school.

Autumn Crouse

Autumn Awe:i:yöh Crouse, 29, also of the turtle clan, is Rachael Wolfe's twin sister who works for the Seneca Nation Education Department as a Seneca language teacher for students in kindergarten through second grade. In addition, Autumn is an adviser for the Seneca Youth Dancers.

John Block

John Nö'jahëh Block, 26, is the partner of Autumn Crouse and a member of the bear clan. Together they are raising four children in their household. John was a member of the first cohort of students at Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta', around the year 1998,

when Dar and Sandy taught students in their home. John has also served as an intern at the school, teaching younger students many songs, dances, and language. Currently, John is a student at Jamestown Community College, and he speaks and sings at the Coldspring Longhouse on occasion.

Jackie Crouse

Jackie Gawo:wi Crouse, 44, is Sandy Dowdy's daughter, a member of the hawk clan, and Bill Crouse's sister. When Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta' taught the first cohort of middle school-aged students on a regular basis, she was the parent committee chairperson. Currently, she is the self-employed proprietor of Harvest Moon, a food service delivery provider for Salamanca businesses and organizations.

Brooke Crouse-Kennedy

Brooke Gayanose: Crouse-Kennedy, 20, hawk clan, is Jackie Crouse's daughter and Sandy Dowdy's granddaughter. She works at VIP Gas on Broad Street in Salamanca, and she is considering an education in nursing or history at Jamestown Community College.

Dianna Beaver

Dianna Beaver, no age, Seneca name, or clan given, works at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford's Hanley Library as an Acquisitions/Special Collections Specialist. She lived for a time in Minnesota, where she worked in Adult Basic Education and General Education Development at a maximum security prison. She has a varied and extensive background in teaching. She is also a Faithkeeper at the Coldspring Longhouse.

Olive Buck

Olive Ganiyëöh or "Orla" Buck, 77, is a member of the deer clan. She is one of the elder fluent speakers in the community and a head Faithkeeper at Coldspring Longhouse. She is Reggie Redeye's mother.

Reggie Redeye

Reggie Gaha:do's Redeye, 40, is the daughter of Olive "Orla" Buck and member of the deer clan. Reggie is a Faithkeeper at the Coldspring Longhouse. She is married and has two sons, and she provides care services in her home for children of families in the community.

Darlene Miller

Darlene Ganëhdëta' Miller, approximately 60, is a member of the hawk clan. She is a Faithkeeper in the Coldspring Longhouse. She has a background in accounting and works for the Seneca Nation Health Department as a Controller. She was born and raised in Salamanca. Darlene is the grandmother of two of Sandy's former students at Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta'.

Nikki John

Nikki Gaëde̓s John, 33, of the turtle clan, is an administrative assistant at Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta'. She is the sister of Ryan Abrams, one of Sandy's former students. Nikki attends the Coldspring Longhouse, and her two young daughters attend the Nation's summer language and culture program, housed at Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta' this year.

Table 2 gives an overview of the participants, with their Seneca names, ages, clans, and the family members' knowledge of or involvement with Seneca.

Table 2

Participant Overview

English Name	Seneca Name	Approximate Age	Clan	Family Members Speaking Or Learning Seneca
Adrian John	Yadeo'	34	hawk	Great-grandparents, great uncles, grandparents
Autumn Crouse	Awe:i:yöh	29	turtle	Grandmother (Sandy), father (Bill)
Bill Crouse	Gaha'dagë:ya:t	47	hawk	Mother (Sandy), children (Autumn, Rachel, others), grandchildren (Dylan, others)
Blaine Tallchief	Sosigwëöwa'	35	turtle	Grandmother, great aunts and uncles
Brooke Crouse-Kennedy	Gayanose:	20	hawk	Grandmother (Sandy), mother (Jackie), cousins (Autumn, Rachael, others)
Darlene Miller	Ganëhdëta'	early 60s	hawk	Grandmother, mother, uncles, aunts, children, grandchildren
Dianna Beaver	Not provided			Grandparents
Dylan Harris	Jaëse'	11	turtle	Great-grandmother (Sandy), grandfather (Bill), parents (Autumn/John), sisters
George Heron	Hasenigwas	91	hawk	Grandparents, aunt, uncle
Jackie Crouse	Gawo:wi	44	hawk	Grandparents, mother (Sandy), brother (Bill), daughter (Brooke), grandchildren
Jessie George	Naseetdeh	32	turtle	Grandmother, brother
John Block	Nö'jahëh	26	bear	Uncle
Lee Jimerson	Haezo'oh	26	turtle	Grandfather, father, brother
Lehman "Dar" Dowdy	Dagaedö:ja	72	turtle	Parents, sisters, brothers, wife (Sandy)
Nikki John	Gaëde's	33	turtle	Grandparents, mother, aunts, uncles, brother (Ryan)
Olive "Orla" Buck	Ganiyëöh	77	deer	Grandmother, mother
Rachael Wolfe	Deyawëö:yë'	29	turtle	Grandmother (Sandy), father (Bill)
Reggie Redeye	Gaha:do's	40	deer	Mother ("Orlah")
Ryan Abrams	Töyagethöh	19	turtle	Mother, sister (Nikki), nieces
Sandy Dowdy	Gajehsöh	63	hawk	Grandfather, step-parents, mother, uncles, husband (Dar)
Steve Gordon	Hodeoezoewe'o	58	turtle	Grandparents, mother
Todd Waite	n/a	41	bear	Grandparents

| Travis John | Haogeyota' | 23 | turtle | Grandmother |

Table 3 shows the relationship of Sandy and Dar Dowdy's family members who

participated in this study:

Table 3

Dar and Sandy Dowdy Family Tree
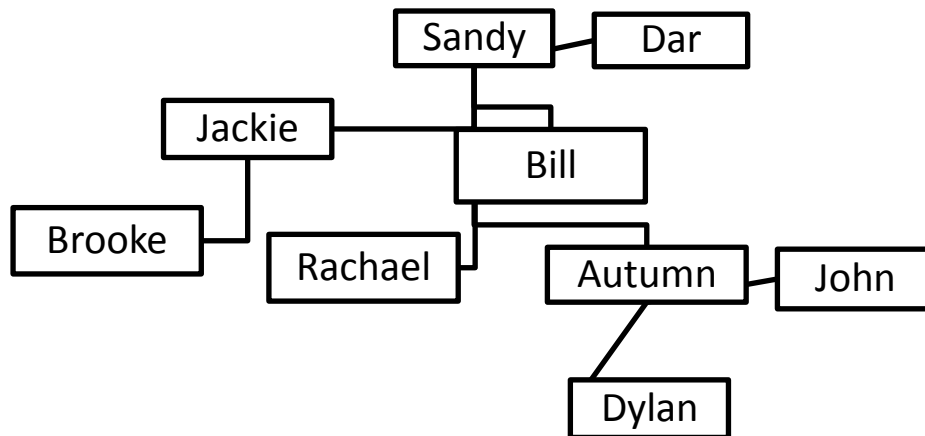
Table 4 lists each participant's position(s) in the community:

Table 4
Participants' Positions in the Community

Participant Name	Position
Adrian	Teacher for the Seneca Nation Education Department
Autumn	Teacher for the Seneca Nation Education Department, Seneca Youth Dancers adviser
Bill	Faithkeeper, Curriculum Developer for the Seneca Nation Education Department, teacher, artist, singer, dancer, emcee
Blaine	Adult student at Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'
Brooke	Former student at Ganöhsesge:kha:'

	Hë:nödeyë:sta'
Dar	Faithkeeper, co-founder of Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'
Darlene	Faithkeeper, Seneca Nation Health Department Controller
Dianna	Faithkeeper, former adult student and teacher
Dylan	Student at Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'
George	Retired teacher
Jackie	Former parent committee director at Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'
Jessie	Adult student at Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'
John	Speaker, former adult student at Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'
Lee	Adult student at Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'
Nikki	Administrative assistant at Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'
Olive	Faithkeeper
Rachael	Teacher for the Seneca Nation Education Department, Seneca Youth Dancers director
Reggie	Faithkeeper
Ryan	Former student at Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'
Sandy	Teacher, co-founder of Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'
Steve	Adult student at Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'
Todd	Seneca Nation Education Department Director
Travis	Adult student at Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'

Interview Themes Elicited From Questions

The interviews revealed several common themes among participants. Naturally,
several themes were elicited directly as answers to my interview questions (See
Appendices A, B, and C). These themes, presented in the next five sections, include the
usage of Seneca in the home, using Seneca in conversation, the shift from Seneca to

English, participants' school experiences, and family attitudes toward the language and culture.

Speaking Seneca at Home

With regard to the presence of the language in the home, answers varied; a patchwork of patterns emerged, with mixed fluency and familiarity with the language within most family groups. With regard to the young adult participants, Lee, Jessie, Ryan, and Blaine said that the language had been spoken in their homes. Lee's grandfather spoke it; his father spoke a little, yet his mother did not. Currently, his brother is trying to learn. Jessie's grandmother used the language at home when he was younger; his father is Cayuga[18] and began learning his language later in life. Jessie commented that his family currently can understand but not speak Seneca, although his younger brother is learning from Sandy. Ryan's mother speaks the language and was formerly employed by Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta' as an administrative assistant. His sister, Nikki, now holds that position, and his nieces — his sister's daughters — are being taught the language now. Blaine answered that his grandmother used the language and taught it to him when he was young; his grandmother's siblings spoke Seneca with the family as well. Travis's responses to the question differed from the other young men's. He said that his family only used it a little when he was growing up. His grandmother was the one who spoke Seneca, not his parents, and he is now the only one in his family to use the language. Autumn and Rachael, who are twin sisters, responded that during their childhood, their father, Bill, and grandma, Sandy, used the language at home. They said that Seneca was definitely used at meal times. Autumn said, "Most of the time that I

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[18] Please refer to Chapter 2, Brief History of the Seneca, for details on Cayuga and other nations which are related to the Senecas.

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remember growing up, using Seneca language in the house was for … basic and easy commands as well as, like around the dinner time. Meal times, that's mostly when the language was used, that I can remember, because it was used every day so that we could use it, remember it." Rachael said, "It wasn't used all the time; it wasn't a fluent thing that was done, or immersion thing. It was … a natural thing; discipline … that kind of stuff."

Dylan, Autumn's son, Bill's grandson, and also the youngest participant at eleven years old, commented that his great-grandmother, grandfather, parents, and sisters are all using the language. John's family, on the other hand, used it only a little when he was young. He stated that "there was a lot of things that we used when I was growing up … just for …. I guess basic Seneca things. My mom didn't know a whole lot, and my grandma used it a little bit; not a lot." He said that when he was 14 or 15, things changed, explaining, "I didn't really know anybody in my family that could speak Seneca probably until I was about, again, probably around 14 or 15. I met an uncle who we didn't know we had, and he was a fluent Seneca speaker. He's from Cattaraugus, out in Indian Hill, is where he was from. And it was kind of neat, I guess. He passed probably about, at least 5 years ago." John said that he had learned some Seneca from this uncle, but it had been difficult to see him since he had lived in Rochester. Brooke noted that when she was a child, her grandmother, Sandy, used the language, and that her mother, Jackie, spoke it a little, using it for "some things, but not a lot." She added that currently, her cousins speak it as well. Nikki lived with her grandparents and mother when she was growing up, and she heard Seneca in the home until she was about eight years old. After that time, her mother moved into her own house, and Nikki had less opportunity to hear Seneca. Her

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grandmother "spoke Seneca a lot, like when she'd speak to my aunts or other elders, she spoke, but not really to me or any of the other grandchildren."

In the older adult generations, the answers were slightly different; these participants remembered family situations with fluent, active, even exclusive use of the language, but they had also experienced the general shift away from Seneca and toward English. Steve remarked that his family no longer uses the language much; when he was young, his mother spoke it yet his father did not, but in the generations before his parents, his family spoke Seneca only. He explained that his mother "somewhere along the way … thought it would be for our own good that we would speak English." He commented that his generation was the last to have "real access" to the language. Dianna's grandparents spoke Seneca, but her parents did not. She explained that her grandparents "spoke it in the home with my parents growing up. My mother did not want to learn, and I don't know if my father learned or not. His family was Mohawk[19]." When Darlene was young, she heard Seneca used by her grandmother mother, uncles, and aunts. She said, "Every time they came, the language was used" in conversation. She added that the younger generations were not ordinarily part of those conversations, yet she did understand her elders when they spoke to each other.

Todd's grandfather teaches Seneca in places in the community such as the Seneca Nation library and the elder's housing complex. Todd remarked that "my grandparents used it when they were talking about other people, gossiping, and that sort of thing. But they didn't speak to us directly in Seneca, other than the usual sit down,

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[19] Mohawk is another nation related to the Seneca. For more, refer to Chapter 2, Brief History of the Seneca.

stand up, hurry up, those basic commands, but never included in fluent conversation." He added that his parents barely used the language, except when giving basic commands.

Like Jessie, Bill said that his family as a whole currently can understand more than they speak Seneca. His siblings are all at different levels of language proficiency. Of course, his mother, Sandy, speaks Seneca, and his children and grandchildren are learning it. His two daughters are teaching it in the public schools as they learn more of the language.

Jackie spoke at length on the theme of language across the generations in her family. I asked her who spoke it in the family when she was young, and she said, "My mother, my brother. That's about it, really." As far as her understanding of the language now, she said, "I understand some of it. I understand some phrases. And again, I don't hear it often enough and I don't use it, so it's kind of, I kind of lose a lot of it. I lost a lot myself, but general phrases, yes." Her grandparents' generation spoke the language also. Regarding the youngest generations, she replied, "My daughter can speak a little bit because she went to the Faithkeepers School [Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta']. She doesn't use it every day. I think that tends to make it so they don't remember it as often because they don't use it daily. I questioned her about the little ones in the family. "They're learning it … I've got a granddaughter in kindergarten [Prospect School] and she has a Seneca culture class that they have there and she's learning it there. She comes home and she belts things out left and right, so she's learning it good there, but not from me." Jackie continued to comment on the generational patterns in her family:

> My mother being one of the youngest fluent speakers of the Seneca Nation, it's
> not something that she, she doesn't force me to do, but she's a little more

encouraging. And my brother's very active, and I have two other brothers that know basically nothing. They know less than me. My dad doesn't really know anything. My daughter, she does very well … there needs to be something where it's um, or have somebody in her life where it's consistent, something that she hears every day. Because I'll tell you what … lately, she's learning more Spanish. They learn it in those songs; they learn it on the radio in those songs and stuff. But I think that the next generation coming up, it's kind of thought that, that should be expected, you know, you need to learn this. You want to learn this. And so, it would be kind of easier for them to pick it up, too. And like my mother works with those young kids, and has worked with young kids quite a bit, and I see it with my own grandchildren. They go to a childcare provider that speaks Spanish. She doesn't really know English to speak it, so she speaks to them in Spanish and they can understand it. But they don't speak it. They're not expected to speak it. They would pick it up very, very quickly and understand it very easily. So I can see where appealing to, encouraging the younger, younger, little, little ones because they pick it up so well.

Reggie said that her family used the language "somewhat" when she was young, but since she grew up in Jamestown, her grandparents died early, and her father passed away when she was only 11 years old, she had limited opportunity to hear the language until she moved in with Herb Dowdy's [Dar's brother's] family when she was a teenager.

As far as the elders are concerned, Sandy and Dar answered that their families had exclusively spoken Seneca in the home when they were growing up. Sandy said that her step-parents, mother, uncles, and grandfather spoke it, yet her siblings did not:

I was adopted by an elderly couple who were very fluent and very traditional

people. I learned a lot about ceremonials and ceremonial language, and I …

attended all of the Thanksgiving ceremonies with them that were held at the

Newtown longhouse. I grew up on the Cattaraugus Reservation, and they passed

when I was 13 and 14. When I attended school, I couldn't speak English, and I

would come home with all of this new language that I was learning in school. My

[adoptive] father would refuse to acknowledge anything that I was saying because

he said we're Ögwéöweh in this house and we speak Ögwéöwe:kha, so I learned

after a while not to bring that information home because he was not impressed

with it. As I got older … I realized that my father was a businessman and he was

able to write these very eloquent letters to do business … and hearing all of this

English that he knew, which was way beyond my understanding at that time … I

was just amazed that he was able to speak such good English, so that's how I

grew up with Seneca in my home.

Since she was adopted by elder parents, she had the unique situation of being raised by

fluent speakers, making her the youngest fluent speaker in the community. She explained

that her generation "was the generation where there were no fluent speakers … so I was

an exception to the rule. I was one of the youngest fluent speakers and still am."

Dar, also a fluent speaker, responded that Seneca was the only language spoken in

his home. He said that Seneca was "all we spoke in my house. My Dad and my Mom

said, 'You leave English over there by the road. Don't bring it into my house.' But then,

that was 60 years ago. But all my sisters, my brothers, we all spoke the language; we

were all fluent you know. And that was good ... Now, it's not like that anymore now, see. It's just a few chosen ones that can do the language; that can still do."

Olive's mother was Cayuga and her step-father was Seneca, so Olive, now age 77, grew up speaking both languages in addition to English. Her father used English with visitors. She said, "Whoever came to the house, neighbors" were the people who conversed in English with her step-father. Both of her grandparents spoke Cayuga. At 91, George is the oldest fluent speaker in this study. George's aunt, uncle, and grandparents spoke Seneca at home, so he learned the language early and is still a fluent speaker. He interspersed his interview answers with Seneca words and phrases. His grandparents were bilingual. Still, even in George's generation, some close to him were losing the language. His sisters understood the language but did not speak it. He also spoke Seneca with his coworkers. "I worked on the Erie Railroad in 1941, and there were 32 of us in what they called the Extra Gang. All of us Senecas. And that's all we spoke there. The only one that didn't talk it was the foreman. He was a Swede. He'd stand there, and finally he'd say, 'All right, all right, enough of this diggity-dog, diggity-dog, diggity-dog.' That's how our language sounded to him, I guess." Today, George's grandchildren, who learned from Sandy five to ten years ago, are speaking Seneca. Over the years, in the two or three generations since the early twentieth century, maintenance of Seneca in the home has been in steady decline, although there are a few people who still try to maintain it, even if in limited situations with a select few people.

Using Seneca in Conversation

Another question I asked the participants concerned the use of Seneca in everyday conversation. George said that they used Seneca every day in his family. Lee said that he

is trying; Jessie tries to talk with his younger brother, who "gives" him "words." Dylan explained that they use a lot of commands at home, and he speaks it a bit more at school. Ryan uses it at home a lot every day. Steve remarked that he is trying to do so "because there's opportunity now ... To me, it's a feeling of nationalism. To me, that identifies who the Seneca people are." Bill related these thoughts:

> Of course, we grew up with all the general expressions, I guess, and commands, I guess, that people use with kids and so forth. But we had it; it was around us. It was nice because we'd hear it in different levels from different people … I could always understand more than I could speak, really. And it's just been over the past, oh, since my adulthood that I've really tried to focus on using more of it. When I hear speeches, I understand it pretty well. I was able to learn certain things from being involved in ceremonies, even at a young age. I was real familiar with some of the sounds and some of those actual words that are in songs and so forth … It was nice to kind of polish that conversational stuff, and it really made things a lot easier to express things and so forth.

When I asked Jackie if the language was used in conversation in the home, in contrast to her brother, Bill, she answered, "No. Not often. A little phrases here and there." I wondered why there was a difference between her and her brother as far as learning and using Seneca. She replied:

> I think it was not … It wasn't expected of me. And so, I didn't do it. I didn't want to. Whereas now, I think, with the younger kids … the parents realize the danger of the language being lost. I think our generation was the lazy generation. But at [sic] the same token, I think the reason that it wasn't expected of us was because

our parents experienced where they weren't allowed to. It was taboo. They weren't supposed to, so they didn't pass it on to us.

When asked about using Seneca in conversation, John explained the difference between conversational Seneca and ceremonial Seneca. When I asked him whether he used the language in conversation, he related this anecdote:

Not as much as I would like to. I guess I kind of swayed away from that a little bit. When I was working at the school, it was a lot easier to … because I had 'Jehsoh [Sandy] right there. She was right there, and she was always accessible. She is now, but again, I've got several other things going on. And so I try to … when I think about it, yes. But half the time, I'm thinking about 10 million other things, and I end up … not doing it. I talked to one of my friends about that, and he's kind of in the same position as I am, and he's from out in Tonawanda … Me and him were sitting out on the porch one night, and he said something about … I was just picking his brain, because he seems to learn really fast also. And I've really got a lot of good advice from him. And what he said was that, he goes, 'You know, 'he said, 'I can talk for any kind of ceremony; I can talk for this and that, and so on, and this going on in the Longhouse.' He said, 'What I can't do,' he said, 'I can't sit down and talk to somebody. Regular conversation.' And I said, 'That's funny,' I said, 'I can't either.' And he said, 'Well, my focus has never been that.' He said, 'My focus has always been the ceremonial side.' And I told

him, I said, 'I guess that I'm the same way.' So, as far as conversation goes, I lack a lot of basic conversation.[20]

With regard to other participants and their use of Seneca in conversation, Autumn remarked that her conversations with her family contained Seneca mixed with English. Reggie said that she and her husband are trying to learn to use it. Reggie, like John, said that although she can speak at ceremonies, she can't hold a conversation just yet. "It's getting there, though," she said. She practices at home with her sons and her husband, of whom she said, "[he] does do a little bit of speaking, and teaches himself from CDs that Sandy made, and Bill made."

Dianna discussed the struggles she has had trying to converse in Seneca. I asked whether she is able to hold conversations, and she replied:

I don't think so; not in the way I would like to. I know kind of what I want to say, and if I put it together, it might be technically correct, but not correct in pronunciation. Or something might be pronounced well, but it needs to be changed a little bit to make it grammatically correct for the situation. So I have yet to be able to put those two things together … I want to … say something, or add to a conversation, but I can't … I know how to use this term in this situation, but how do I convert it to that situation?

Sandy discussed the unique position of being a fluent speaker who has the ability to converse daily with her husband, who is also a fluent speaker. She described the lapse into Seneca conversation as a 'spell' that is broken when the need to use English intrudes:

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[20] For an explanation of the variations of Seneca conversational and ceremonial language, see Chafe, W. (1993). Seneca speaking styles and the location of authority. In J. H. Hill and J. T. Irvine (Eds.), *Responsibility and Evidence in Oral Discourse*, (pp. 72-87). Cambridge: Cambridge U P.

My husband [Dar] who is also a fluent speaker…both of us being fluent speakers,

we try to have a time when we only spoke the language with each other … and we

would be doing just fine with that, you know, carrying on conversations and

talking about the news … anything and everything under the sun ... what's going

on in the world and our prophecies, to what we're going to have for our next

meal, and what we're going to do throughout the day. And all of that was very

comfortable. And then, the phone would ring, or somebody would show up, or

we'd have an appointment … and the spell would be broken. And so it would just

be easier to lapse back into English and we would have to make a date to speak

our language with each other non-stop.

Of the few people who are fluent, Dar said, "I can walk [up] to them and say, 'Hey, can

you talk Seneca?' Start a conversation. Sit down; let's have some coffee and talk. Yeah,

there's just a few of us left. Just me, Zeke, and everybody else, all my-age guys are

mostly all gone." Blaine said that of the remaining elders, "Hopefully, it'll come to a

point where we'll be able to converse with them again." He expressed hope that younger

language learners are working hard to learn Seneca and will be able to learn it well

enough to converse with elder, fluent speakers some day. Like the use of Seneca in the

home, those who can still converse fluently in Seneca have been in a steady decline in the

past three generations. Many people in the middle generations understand more than they

can speak, pointing to a gradual loss of mastery. The younger generations still express a

desire to learn, although the challenges in doing so are great. In the next section, I explore

this gradual process of the shift from Seneca to English as seen through the participants'

eyes.

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Shifting Between Seneca and English

In my interviews, two movements clearly emerged: the first involved the change away from Seneca toward English as the dominant language; the second trend, more recent and as yet uncertain as to its effects, represents a return to nurturing the Seneca language. To fully understand the current situation, the timing and nature of these two moves need to be understood. When did the ability to converse in Seneca start to deteriorate with the majority of the Seneca people? When did the use of the language start to gain momentum for some people once again? These are difficult questions to answer, but they are critical to the present study, and the participants shared various opinions.

A few of the older participants were able to reflect on the shift that they had noticed in their lifetimes. Dar noted that "everybody uses English now. It kind of took … over." He thinks that it started shifting "way back, way back, probably early 1900s, even before that. They started the boarding schools back then." George stated, "I don't know, it started dying out … I think that for a time there, we really started losing it. The longhouse attendance was low for a while there. And then finally, it came back up again, which is a good thing." When I asked him when it was lower, he responded, "I think before the war years; '38, '39, around there. A lot of guys in that era went to the CCC camps. I was in a CCC camp for 28 months." These camps took people away from their homes. "They went way out to Montana. I never went to Montana. They had a CCC camp in the [Allegany] State Park. They had 4 of them there. Two hundred guys in each camp. There were 24 of us Buckskins in the Red House camp. We had our own CCC." I asked whether George thought that the war had something to do with the language being

lost; he commented, "Oh, yeah. Definitely. Some of them never came back to the reservation. And some that did, left again."

Sandy explained how the schools tried to enforce English-only:

You can imagine how those teachers felt like, "Oh, I just taught them this and they're going back and speaking their language when they go home. Now they come back here and I've got to start all over again …"

But she continued, noting that the same frustrations apply now to those trying to revive the indigenous language and culture. Noting the success of the mainstream efforts to impose English language and culture, she imagined a situation where a similar tactic, viewed in the abstract, might work for Seneca revitalization, but she quickly rejected this imagined solution, recalling the draconian measures taken in the boarding school settings:

… almost just like we do when we're trying to teach the Seneca language to students who go home to an English-speaking family. It's not reinforced. Now it's almost at this point all reversed. Some people said that we should have a boarding school and reverse everything. That's how they made us learn English. We should do the same thing so that they can learn Seneca. But we can't do that because we don't do that to our children. We don't punish them for speaking their mind.

In short, all interviewees acknowledged the loss of Seneca in the face of the encroachment of English. But some participants see a sort of revival of the language in more recent times. Addressing the loss of the Seneca language, Dar remarked, "Now, today, it's just the other way around. Now we're trying to get it [i.e., the indigenous language] back. We're trying to get our people talking the language." Sandy placed the desire for revitalization in the late twentieth century: "I don't think it was until after the

'80s or so even that it started … late '70s and early '80s, that a movement was made where people were starting to realize that 'Oh, I guess Seneca language is something that we should be thinking about, that we should be trying to teach.'" She noted that it had never been necessary to consciously teach Seneca in the past, since it was used by family members in the home; but now, it must be actively taught, since fluent speakers in the home are rare. Steve, 58 and the oldest of Dar's students, echoed Sandy's sentiments. He thinks that the catalyst for revival is "probably a realization of how important the language and culture is to our survival as a distinct people." I asked whether he sees it as an internal thing, not an external thing, and he responded, "Yes, totally internal. Because I don't think there's anything external that can make anybody do anything. But that internal thing is knowing that something's missing. Because we've heard it all of our lives, we've heard the importance of the language. That realization has really made us want to learn it now." Steve's comment addressed the shift from Seneca as it was used in the home, when he was a youngster, to the current state of the language, where it is heard more frequently in educational and institutional settings.

Experiences in School

Another theme elicited by my questions concerns the participants' experiences in school, which also seem to be shifting from negative to positive, overall, with reference to three distinct educational settings. This shift coincides with the transition from compulsory attendance in boarding schools, to public school education, and more recently to Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'.

Boarding school experiences were prevalent topics of conversation in the interviews. The younger participants had not experienced compulsory boarding schools

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themselves; but their close relatives had done so in many instances, and the memories had been passed down to the younger generations. In many of the cases reported first-hand by older speakers or reported second-hand by younger speakers, teachers had used punishment as a way of enforcing the exclusive use of the English language. The Thomas Indian School, discussed in Chapter 2, figured prominently in testimony on this topic. Without referring to details, Travis explained simply that his grandmother does not speak Seneca "much anymore because… she went to Thomas Indian School." Blaine spoke in some more detail about the suppression of indigenous language at this school: "My dad went to Thomas Indian School, boarding school, the boarding school that Dar went to, and he was there. Of course when they got caught talking, they got whipped or beat. He went through that. Whatever he knew from the age that he could speak until the age of five when he started there, he lost it. He quit speaking."

The boarding school featured as a theme in the responses of many other participants. Speaking of older respondents, Sandy said, "My mother … the generation just before us … are from the boarding school era." She described her perceptions of the beginnings of boarding schools, citing well-meaning intentions that gave way to later abuses and coercive policies. As she talks about this issue, her speech is marked by hesitations and false starts, as if she is groping for a way to express the transition:

It really started out as a caring thing where it just grew… they were taking care of children who had nobody to take care of them … And so as time went on it became almost mandatory that all native children of a certain age … if there was a family that was getting public assistance … well, they must have gotten public assistance because they weren't able to take care of their children; and so they

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would take the children and put them in a place where they could be better taken care of, and that's what the boarding schools turned into … and they weren't … to me, a boarding school is where you can go to school during the week and then go home on the weekends; you're boarding there because it's too far away from home … Well, in this case it wasn't, although, some of them were sent away if they kept running away. Then it was too close to home, so they would send them farther away so that they wouldn't be able to run away and go home. Children were here from other tribes, from Western tribes. Children from here were sent to Chilocco or Carlisle.

Sandy here brings up indirectly a strong negative feature of the boarding school movement, namely that students did not routinely go home for weekends, or even for school breaks. Still, she was eager to acknowledge the positive features of these schools: "The boarding schools weren't always [negative] to some people … it wasn't a bad thing, because they [the students] were taught to be temperate, and they learned about the scriptures, and they learned how to be good Christians, and to some people that wasn't a bad thing." Yet, "The nurturing skills were almost non-existent for the young women and even the young men. They weren't taught child-rearing skills; they weren't taught nurturing skills because they weren't nurtured themselves." In a particularly telling comment, Sandy spoke of the lingering sense of trauma that caused former boarding school students to contribute to a second generation of linguistic suppression: "They didn't want that to happen to their children, and so they wanted them to learn English, and they wanted them to go to school and to learn how to defend themselves so that the same thing won't happen to them that happened to the grandparents."

George's sisters did not speak Seneca much. He gave details about the reasons why they lost the opportunity to learn the language, again citing the names of a series of boarding schools: "They could understand it. Of course, they were away at school. They went to Thomas Indian School out in Cattaraugus. And they went to Haskell way out in Kansas. And so they kind of lost it. They didn't come back but once a year, in the summers." Dar commented on the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, which operated in the decades just before and after the turn of the twentieth century:

> That's when things started changing. Things started happening. And we had
> boarding schools around here… they didn't want us talking. They didn't want us
> talking, or dancing, or singing, in Seneca. So that's what happened back in them
> days. That's not too long ago; 60 years ago, 90 years; 100 years. It hasn't been
> that long. You figure this world's been here 65 million years.100 years is nothing.
> We've lost all of that [i.e., the Seneca customs and culture has been lost in this
> short time span].

He also reflected on his own boarding school experience, sometimes in terms that hinted at the depth of the remaining emotional trauma that this experience may leave even years later: "I didn't care for school …Thomas Indian School. I was about 9 years old, 10 years old; something like that." I asked whether he was forced to go there. "Yeah. Had no choice. I was there until 1956. And I had no choice; we didn't have no choice." I asked whether he received punishment for speaking Seneca. "Oh yeah … They gave you discipline. Sometimes, it's a little bit much. I don't really like to talk about it. That's one side of the story that I don't think anybody wants to talk about. Most of us that went

there. Yeah, they disciplined you, because they don't want you talking. They're trying to take it [the language and culture] away from you, is what they want."

Those who attended public school fared a bit better, but not much, at least for the older respondents who experienced public school education in the years after the boarding school movement faded.[21] Sandy recalled, "In the boarding school … it didn't really happen to me or well, maybe I just didn't see it … when I went to kindergarten, it was the first year… I went to Thomas Indian School, but it was a state school by then; it wasn't a boarding school anymore. There were even Seneca teachers there; [but] they were not patient … again, I was an exception to the rule, because I only spoke Seneca and they didn't." I asked her if she was ever punished at school. She responded, referring to Seneca cultural values, which she realized only belatedly that she did not share with her Seneca teacher in the public school:

> Yes. I didn't understand a lot of what they wanted me to do and many times I
> would … I guess they tried to show me … but I was… I grew up as an only child
> so I was … I didn't have a lot of playmates … I was thinking that I was
> comfortable or that I was going to be taken care of because this was an Indian
> woman. This was a Seneca woman being my teacher. She would understand, you
> know… but no! They didn't at all … [The] second grade classroom was right next
> to the lavatory on the second floor, and … the teacher would grab me by my hair,
> by my braids, and open the door, and push me in there and say, 'You stay in there
> until you can … until you're ready to learn how to do this.' Whatever it was,

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[21] Although New York State had taken over operations of Thomas Indian School under the State Board of Charities in 1875, it was run as a boarding school until the State Department of Education took it over, approximately in 1951.

math, or whatever it was that she was trying to make me do, that I was just not

getting it, because to me, it was, like, not important.

As a result of the value system she had grown up with, Sandy found it difficult to adjust

to mainstream values, values which she associates with assimilation efforts and

Christianity, especially in the ways that mainstream gender roles contrast with traditional

Seneca roles. Her response continues, addressing the emotional component of her

rebellious spirit, and the dampening of that spirit in the school system. In particular, she

seems to address what seemed to her to be an artificial kind of bonding, expected in

mainstream classes, with others who were strangers to her. It seems that her Seneca-

based values had taught her to form alliances over time with experience; but at school,

she felt "thrown into" a situation where collaboration with numbers of new people was

required, without the requisite time for getting acquainted. Sadly, reflecting in retrospect,

Sandy felt she had learned to cope with her new situation, to "comply," rather than to

collaborate in the sense assumed by her instructors:

> So I wasn't a belligerent student, not that I knew of anyway. I was a happy-go-
> lucky kind of gal that just wanted to make friends with kids my own age, which I
> had never had that opportunity to do because I was so sheltered, and all of a
> sudden I was thrown into this, it's like, 'Why? Why, *ha'nih* [kinship word for
> father]? Why are you making me go there? Because they're mean to me there.'
> But eventually my spirit did get to be where I was able to … not cooperate … but
> to, I was more … what is that word where we have to … I complied. I learned
> how to comply.

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Olive also discussed punishment received by students in the public schools long ago. She attended several schools in the area, including Robinson Run, Red House, Maple Street, and Jimerson. She said that she liked her teachers, even though they delivered punishment when students spoke Seneca. She recalls students' receiving punishment, although she never broke the rule and so did not herself experience the punishment. She also suggested the teachers' reluctance to carry out these punishments: "You were supposed to hold out your hand while she'd hit you with a little ruler, and then … they'd have to do it again because they didn't do it. They were slapping their [own] hand with the ruler." In spite of her not having experienced this punishment first-hand, and in spite of what seemed to be the teachers' reluctance to impose the punishment, it clearly was a feature of schooling that all students would remember.

When asked whether he spoke Seneca at school, George addressed restrictions placed on the language, including those by Quaker educators:

> We weren't supposed to [speak the language], but we did. Oh yeah. If they'd catch us kids talking Seneca, they'd put you in the sandbox. They had a big sandbox there where they'd use for play. You'd have to sit there for ten minutes… It was the same way at Quaker school … run by the Quakers…they didn't want [the students] talking Seneca neither.

George contrasted these situations with the context of a school where his mother worked. In his words, "She was a Seneca woman. But it was different there." I asked him how it was different, and he responded, "Well, they had a Seneca school teacher for one. She was the only one on the reservation that taught in a reservation school. There were seven

reservation schools, starting up the other side of Killbuck and on down to Old Town. Old Town was School 7. It's the only school still standing. Stands there in Steamburg."

Other participants shared a different kind of reflection; some of these had been educated largely at a stage when mainstream Anglo-centric culture had achieved dominance, if sometimes in the context of a veneer that acknowledged indigenous language and culture. Steve described his school experiences: "Well, from kindergarten to sixth grade, I went to an all-Indian school, of course with white teachers [Red House Indian School]. I didn't realize any difference. I just assumed everybody was like us. It was only until I got to high school in seventh grade that I realized the cultural differences, and that was pretty traumatic." I asked Steve, 58, if he was ever punished for speaking Seneca, and his response again illustrates the generational effect of the prohibition, which over time becomes a simply accepted fact even in subsequent generations: "Even in my mother's generation; in fact, it was forbidden. That was the difference, in her day it was forbidden; when I came through the school system, it was already assumed we didn't know it anyway. It wasn't a threat. All the way from kindergarten to sixth grade to graduation, I never heard it." Steve did take a course in Seneca 101 at the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1969, which helped him to become more familiar with the language.

Darlene, in her early 60s, also attended the school at Red House after attending one year in the Salamanca District for kindergarten. Unlike Steve, she did not speak about the issue of Seneca in the school system, and she expressed only positive recollections of her school years based largely on social connections that formed for her at the school. Darlene's comments take a neutral tone with respect to factors that may

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have promoted Seneca culture (Coldspring Longhouse) as well as others that may have worked against the culture and language, however inadvertently (the reference to the Quaker Bridge school):

> It was a school where you knew everyone; everyone was your friend. It was a small setting, and we lived in the school area, so we had extra benefits I think, because we had the playground; we had all of that there, right in our backyard. And so, even though there was a few of us, um, the children from … Quaker Bridge, and Coldspring[22] – the other areas, would come up and we'd play. Softball was our … biggest event, I guess.

Jackie's (age 44) response to this question about experiences in school made little mention of Seneca language and culture, although she did express concern in other parts of the interview. As far as education goes for her, Jackie's cares were those of a typical teenager. She said that she liked public school as well, although she had no exposure to Seneca during the school day. I asked whether she learned any Seneca in school and she said, "You know what? I learned, what language I took in high school [Salamanca City School District] was French. But that was 30, almost 35 years ago. They didn't have anything like that [i.e., Seneca language] then." Yet, she said, "I loved school." She seemed to be reflecting the values of a fully-integrated mainstream learner. Bill's (age 47) alienation from Seneca was even more complete: he had French in school, not Seneca, stating that "we didn't have [Seneca] language [classes] then."

Todd also liked his school experience, which he characterized as "fun." Several years younger than Steve, he graduated from high school in 1986. He was the oldest participant to have discussed receiving a Seneca education at school, so his experience

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[22] See the maps of the Ohi:yo' area in Chapter 3, Setting.

was markedly different from many of the older respondents' stories. When I asked him whether he had experienced any punishment in school, he recalled, "I can't even say [in] high school that there was any negativity about being Seneca." He also discussed elementary school, sharing these memories of learning the Seneca language both at school and in the community:

> I can remember when I was in elementary school, we started Seneca language; we were at Seneca School in Salamanca … So we had a table in the boys' locker room, is where we had our Seneca language and culture every day … It was called the 720 Club; I don't know why it was called the 720 Club. That would have been about 1972 … I can [also] remember coming with my mom to this building [Haley Building], and on the other end there … was a classroom, and we would go there for language in the evening, and there was classes through JOM[23] when I was a kid, during the summer programs.

Although Todd's experience, embedded as it was in a transitional time, allowed exposure to Seneca language and culture, he seems to have belonged to a social context in which these were optional, "extracurricular" activities, and not an integral part of his identity.

Reggie, age 40, was the only participant who had lived in the nearby city of Jamestown, New York, and attended schools in the Jamestown Central School District, where she had no opportunity to learn the language. Her experience in school was not as favorable as the other participants of her age. Commenting on her experiences in Jamestown, she spoke of a sense of alienation:

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[23] Refer to Chapter 2, Education Policy, for an explanation of JOM (Johnson O'Malley) federal education programming for Native students.

I felt out-of-place. So once I was old enough to kind of take care of myself, and

be out on my own, that's when I went to the reservation. I knew Jamestown

wasn't me, and I had to be with people from Longhouse. So that's where I came

from; Jamestown to Steamburg; now I'm in Salamanca … because my father

passed away at 11, and after that, I just sort-of lost it. I just ran away from home. I

found [her friend] Kim, and them me and Kim, you know, were buddy-buddies;

yeah, I spent all my teenage years at the Dowdy family.

Her children have limited opportunities to study Seneca at school; one son attends

Randolph Academy, where no Seneca is taught, and the other goes to Seneca, part of the

Salamanca City School District, where he does learn a bit of the language.

Nikki, 33, went to school in the Salamanca District. She took Spanish in high

school, since she did not have the opportunity to learn Seneca at school. She recalled her

school years fondly, nevertheless: "I had, you know, my typical little bunch of friends,

and they were all Seneca girls. I didn't really have many White friends, and we just more

or less had our own clique we hung out with." Although they did not learn Seneca

language in the schools, she and her friends managed to bond with each other based on

their Seneca identity.

The younger participants shared mixed experiences with public schooling. Jessie

did not learn Seneca at school, although his sister did. He said, "I moved to Buffalo, and

they didn't have Seneca language in Buffalo. But I had to take a secondary language, [so]

I took Italian and I took French. I liked it, but I could have been around the Seneca

language more. That would have been helpful, actually." Blaine, who also did not have

the opportunity to study Seneca while attending public school in Silver Creek, suggested

that a family-mediated sense of cultural alienation kept him from feeling like a full participant in mainstream education: "It was, I would have to say, it was my dad's point of view and his perspective on school; he said that the education system wasn't built for us, it was meant for the *Hadi:nyö'öhs* [white people]. That being said, I figured, school's not for us. I might as well just kind of slack off whenever I want."

In contrast to his own experiences, Blaine also acknowledged recent revival attempts: "They got different little classes and programs going on, trying to teach the language in the school now." Travis explained that his sisters, now in their 30s, did study Seneca at Silver Creek. He expressed a kind of lethargy in regard to tolerating his time in school: "I went to Lake Shore. It was alright. Just get it over with." I asked whether he had ever been punished for speaking Seneca in school, and he related this story: "Actually, I got sent to the office once for not telling them what I was saying. I was calling the teacher *Hadi:nyö'öh* [white person]. And she didn't know what I was saying, so she sent me down to the office. A couple other kids were laughing, too." In contrast, Lee attended school in Gowanda, where he did have the opportunity to study Seneca. "It was a separate class but it was easy." I asked whether he enjoyed it. He said that he did, and that they "encouraged us to use it."

Autumn also had a favorable experience in the public school. She attended the Salamanca City schools; she attributed her satisfaction with school to the Seneca classes that her family taught and to her bonding with other young Senecas. In fact, her memory of this time carries an almost infectious exuberance:

The only time I remember taking Seneca language, however, was when we were in the middle school, because I don't remember it being a part of our learning

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experience when we were in the lower grades … my dad taught us for a long time when we were in middle school. And then we moved from middle school up into high school, and that's where my grandma taught, in the middle school and high school, so this is kind of something that's been through our family … I really, really enjoyed high school, basically because … the crew that we hung out with were all Seneca kids, and we were like, the ones who were marching down the hallways singing *Gadasho:d*, singing Stomp Dance down the hallways. We were taking powwow drums, and we were singing in the classrooms. So we were really, really free to be who we were. We were free, and it was cool to be Indian. It was cool; we marched down the hallways, we would put signs up and … we were proud of that. And so for us, for me, I had a good experience in high school because we were free to be that way. I think a lot of it too, um, around the time when we were in high school, we took advantage of all of the programs that were offered to the Indian kids, like the STEP program, and … my grandma's classroom seemed to be kind of like a haven for us as Native students because we would go there, we could hang out all the time. You know, we were just free to be who we were. We were free to be Indian there, so for me, it was a good experience. I had a really good time.

Not surprisingly, her sister, Rachael, described school in much the same way. She also felt pride in being Indian and taking language classes from her family members. Since her family taught in the middle and high schools, she noticed a great difference between her education there and in elementary school. She begins this excerpt by addressing the minimal Seneca lessons at the elementary level:

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We had, like in elementary schools, we did … maybe 30 minutes every six days

or something like that. It wasn't every day, and it wasn't even that long of a time.

It was used more as like an enrichment activity … rather than an actual everyday

language lesson, except for when I got into middle school and high school; then it

was a class offered every day … My dad taught in the middle school, and my

gram taught in the high school. So it was really, actually, quite awesome to have

them there and to have them as a resource, and I rely on them now, today, when I

teach my classes. …

Rachael, too, spoke of bonding with other Seneca students and dancing in the high school

hallways; she also elaborated on her sister's claim that it was "cool to be Indian," noting

that their circle of Seneca students held social power among their peers and shared an

exuberant enthusiasm within their Seneca identity, which is remarkably positive among

people who do not have much of the language:

We had a blast in school … we weren't afraid to be Indian when we were in

school. I think that's a lot different. We're getting that back now in school, but,

you know there was … a wave of when kids were embarrassed to speak, or

embarrassed to sing or dance, but when … I was in high school … There was no

way you could separate us from it. We would sing social dance songs up and

down the hallways, in between classes, when classes were changing. We would

stand outside of the classroom doors and sing "Birthday Round Dance" to our

friends outside the doors. We were just; that's the sort of stuff that we did. We

weren't afraid to do that. We weren't embarrassed … I think a lot of that had to

do with my gram and my dad being there in the schools, and that they provided us

with the space to do that, and so we weren't afraid, and of course, they were our family members, and me and my sister were pretty … we were a force, I'd say, and it really was influential to our friends who didn't have that part of their life, and so … we had a little group of us that, that's what we did. We went to powwows and went to socials, and went singing and dancing, and we weren't afraid to do it, and we were proud of it, and no one could make us stop. And luckily … teachers didn't really try to because they couldn't win, but there's no way that they could have made us, anyway.

Among all the participants, John had a quite a unique experience with education. He lived in diverse locations across the state, and he had varying experiences both in and out of schools. He explained his special circumstances: "I was homeschooled because my parents traveled a lot to powwows" where they were food vendors. "My parents asked me if I would want to get pulled out of school and be homeschooled and just travel, or of course, stay in school. So naturally, I chose to go on the road. I said, 'Sure. Geez, I want to travel.'" Before his homeschooling years, he went to school in the eastern part of the state, and when his family returned to that area, he felt alienated, not really belonging to any group in the public school:

The school that I went to at that time was called Fallsburg Central; it's about 6 hours away from here [near Poughkeepsie]. So we didn't grow up here. My family lived here, and we came back a lot … pretty frequently … and I think it was about … when I was about 13, we started slowly coming back, really, spending time out here … it was a very different … I didn't fit in there, was the thing. I didn't fit in there, and I didn't know why … I had a select few friends …

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people that I could actually call my friends. And I didn't fit in with this group, and

I didn't fit in with this group, and then there was no, nothing. And it wasn't until,

really until we started doing powwows that I … got along with these people a lot

better than I did the other people I was going to school with … probably because

of who I was, and who I am. So I didn't fit in with the Hispanic kids; I didn't fit in

with the Black kids; I didn't fit in with the White kids … I was just kind of on my

own.

John's experience is the flip side of those cited earlier. In his case, the lack of bonding

made him feel like an outsider. After moving to the Salamanca area, John eventually

went to Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta'. He was a member of the first cohort of

students there, back in 1998. I asked him about his experiences at the school. He told this

story filled with mixed emotions at the prospect of attending a special Seneca school:

It was scary at first. I remember the first day, I walked in, and I met Gajehsöh.

The first day, I walked in and I met her, and I went in on the porch, and she sat

down with me. My mom and dad were the ones who talked to them, and they

said, "He wants to learn; he's interested." Well, I didn't know that [they had that

discussion with Gajehsöh and Dar] … I fell behind in schoolwork, you know,

being homeschooled … it's not that hard to do. You can find distraction

anywhere, and it don't matter how much they said to go down and, get to work on

this, or get to work on that, it was [not] very hard to sway from the path,

obviously. There's so many other things you want to do, and being a teenager,

you don't want to do schoolwork, of course. So that didn't really work out, so,

basically what my parents said was, "Well, you're not doing this; you might as

well be doing something" … So … they told me, "We'll take you up there [Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta'], and you're going to meet so-and-so," and so, when I first got there, she started explaining stuff a little bit, and it was something that was just totally, again, it was foreign to me.

John recalled the first intimidating experience trying to learn the *Ganö:nyök*. He indicated an eagerness to please Sandy despite his fear of the unknown:

So when she started talking about whatever, talking about *Ganö:nyök*[24], really … and I remember, she says, "Okay; here's this one part, and when I get done," she says, "You say, '*Nyoh*'" [word indicating "yes" or acknowledgment]. And so she explained the importance of that. And I was just like, "Okay; all right. Yeah, *nyoh! Nyoh*!" So at first, I was very intimidated. I was very, I really was. It was so new, and it was a new person. It was somebody that I really didn't know. And again, it was material that was just so foreign to me.

John went on to describe the gradual process of adjustment to his new surroundings. He mentioned that after he began to settle in, other demands often pulled him away from his new learning:

But when I got there, she worked directly just with me … she told me everything, and I just went, "Alright." And I was completely blown away, because even the short version [of *Ganö:nyök*] takes, what, 10 minutes or so? At that time, it was a lot to me. It was a lot. And I just went, "Okay; okay." It was … like, overstimulation almost. I went home, and I was tired. That was my first experience … I was around 13, maybe 14. So it was an intimidating experience … As I settled in … I remember … going back to my age, I wanted to do this, and I

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[24] Cf. Chapter 2, Brief History of the Seneca, for a description of the *Ganö:nyök*, or Thanksgiving Address.

wanted to do that instead. I was a teenager. And so sometimes, I would go there, and then it would be almost a week before she saw me again. And I remember doing that. And there were times when I would sit down, and I would go, "Okay; I need to do this." And go through my stuff; everything that she gave me, and I would go through it … and there were other weeks that I was just like, "I don't want to do that. I think I'm going to go fishing today."

He described how his family would travel to powwows, taking him away from the school for as long as a month at times. He remarked that his learning progressed slowly as a result, and that he was not meeting Sandy's or his own expectations. He said that he eventually "snapped into it," although daily demands still require his attention to be divided and take him away from learning language and culture.

Ryan, now age 19, also had the unique experience of attending Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta'. Ryan characterized his experiences at the school in a positive way, noting that it afforded him opportunities that did not exist in the public school system. He explained that in addition to learning Seneca language and culture, he learned about practical experiences, such as outdoor survival, at Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta'. He recalled, "I learned a lot of language here … It [Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta'] was fun. I liked coming here because we learned new stuff … I learned a lot of different things you probably wouldn't really learn in a public school … How to start a fire, different things about the trees outside. Just stuff you wouldn't learn at a public school. I thought it was pretty cool."

When Ryan was approximately 17 years old, he transferred to public school since Ganöhsesge:kha:':' did not teach students beyond that age at that time. Sandy explained

why the cohorts of preteen students no longer continue to form classes at Ganöhsesge:kha:':'. Most students carry the on the traditional role of being competitive athletes, but in order to be eligible to compete, they must be enrolled in the public schools. They may play on community teams, but only until they are 12 years old, so students usually leave the private school once they are around 12 so they may compete on teams.

But this transition came with costs that in some cases might only be realized years later. Speaking of his transition to public school in Salamanca, Ryan commented on the loss of opportunities to experience diverse cultures:

> It was different. I had to get back into their routine. Go by their rules and stuff. When I quit here [Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta'], it was just different. I had to get used to [the public school] thing. I missed it here. I quit learning more language here, and different other things; other people, coming in and learning their stuff. I didn't really meet as [many kinds of] people. We had different people, like people from South Africa, from China, coming here. When we went there [public school], we didn't have nobody like that.

Jackie's daughter, Brooke, also went to Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta' at the same time that Ryan did. While her daughter attended, Jackie served on the parent committee for the school. She described the importance of parent involvement at the school:

> When we had the Faithkeepers School [daily program for the first cohort of middle school-aged students], I was very involved, and it was a requirement, and that's why I was involved. And that's why it was important for my daughter to

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learn new things. It was important to me, and as it turns out, it'll be important to

the community. It's important to the survival of the Seneca Nation, the tribe. So

that's when I became involved, and that's when I picked up more that I had in my

whole life, was then. I do think it's important, but I also think it's important for

parental involvement, community involvement.

Brooke, her daughter, attended Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta', where she began at

the age of seven. Like Ryan, she discussed the difficult transition she had to make to the

public school in Salamanca, where she began at age fourteen or fifteen. She said, "When

I went back to public school, they [the public school students] were like, 'Oh, you were at

Faithkeepers.' It was like, the coolest thing to do; it was the coolest thing to learn the

language; it was cool. Now that nobody [cohort of middle school-aged students] goes

there, no one really does anything like, out in the community; no one really takes time out

of their schedule." It is difficult to know what she was referring to when she stated that

nobody does anything in the community, since that statement contradicts the statements

of the other participants on this matter, but she may have been referring to the small

cohort of former students who attended Ganöhsesge:kha:' with her. I asked her to go into

detail about Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'. Her recollection was at times an animated

one:

 It was different. It was fun. When we first went, it was like, just uniting with

different Native American kids and being able to like, bring us together because,

when I was younger, I really didn't know those kids until they came to school … I

was more like … a home-based kid. I'd just go out and play. But when we all

went there, we got along, for most of the part. We did fight like brothers and

sisters, but it was fun. And it changed every year. It's amazing how close we were … it was a mixed age group, so we all had to act … our age. Because we were older, we had to … try to be some kind of role model for the younger kids.

Dar addressed the basic pragmatic values of the school, locating his comments in the context of traditional values and expressing an impassioned plea for the school's continuance: "The school is doing what it's supposed to [do]; it's what it was built for. It's a survival school … I want it to survive; I want these guys to survive. I want them to teach their kids to talk the language." Dar was speaking of the newest group of students, the young adult males, who had recently begun their apprenticeship a few months before Dar gave his interview. Of these adult learners, he spoke approvingly, "That's what they're here for, they're here to learn. And they've come a long way in 90 days; it's a short time."

George expressed his appreciation that his great-grandchildren, Frankie and Tyson, attended the school five to seven years ago: "I'm glad about it ... Tyson speaks good Seneca. Yeah, I was surprised. And so does Frankie. Those classes they used to have up on the hill, Faithkeepers School … when they had that going; that was a good thing. Yeah, I can talk pretty good to Tyson. He has to think a little while first, but he knows the words."

Darlene also mentioned Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta' in positive terms several times during her interview. She has noticed an increase in the use of Seneca among the younger generations of her family members who have attended the school. Her grandchildren attended Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta' five to ten years ago, at the same time that George's great-grandsons attended. Her other two grandchildren have

been attending the summer program there for the past three or four years, and "they use it quite a bit, you know, with their daily greetings, leaving, as much as they can." She also has had occasion to see some of the summer program students give presentations at the Seneca Nation Health Department where she works. She gives Sandy a lot of credit: "Sandy's been a lot of our teachers, even though she's a peer, she always had that; she's the one that helps you with your questions, or how to … helps you to find your answers."

At 11, Dylan is the only young participant who is currently attending Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta'. He has been learning Seneca language and culture for about four years now. I asked him to describe the things he was learning about the Seneca language there, and he replied, "All of it. All the language. I'm learning how to say *Ganö:nyök*, how to sing, how to do all that stuff. How to speak, stuff like that. I'm working on the Feather Dance and the Drum Dance." He expressed pride and satisfaction at being able to experience learning Seneca ways from his family and their friends at the school.

Besides the different language programs at Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta', several participants discussed Sandy's language nest, the most recent Seneca language teaching setting in the community. In 2009, Sandy began teaching three of her great-granddaughters — twin sisters and their cousin — and one other girl from the community. The girls are all four years old, and Dylan, older brother of the twins, helps on occasion. The nest originally took place in Sandy's granddaughter's house, but due to interest among parents of local preschool children, she moved the nest to Ganöhsesge:kha:' in the Fall of 2010, when she started to teach a total of 11 young children. As I observed, Sandy provides daily care for the children, plus she gives

structured lessons based on the Montessori method. She also incorporates the *Ganö:nyök*

into the lessons. Participants in this study supported Sandy and her language nest

teaching, expressing their hope that it continues and helps revitalize the language with the

youngest generation.

Dar said, "Sandy has the little kids over there [in the language nest]; they can

speak. They understand … I feel good about that; there should be more. If I had my way,

that's all they would be doing." Jackie, Sandy's daughter, felt that her mother's nest

holds some of the greatest promise for language teaching and learning in the community,

since the youngest children have great potential for learning. She stated, "I think it's very

important. I really think my mom's involvement with the little babies — and it's a proven

fact that they can learn more before they're six than they do almost the rest of their life —

I think that's a good direction that she's going in." John and Autumn's twins are learning

in the nest, which takes place in his home during parts of the year. John is pleased with

his daughters' progress, and he tries to reinforce what they learn. He said:

> I love it; I really do. I think that it's something that they need. And we try to do as
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> much with them as possible, and I think it really is amazing, and I think ... it's
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> working right now, having it in the home, and having it from their grandmother
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> … I think it's something that they're going to remember for the rest of their lives,
>
> even being as little as they are, they're going to remember this.

Autumn is also contented with the nest, and her remarks were much like John's. She feels

fortunate to have her family's support and expertise. She stated:

> With my little ones, um, I'm really, really lucky to have family as well as myself
>
> as well as a partner who … we really, really encourage and try to use as much

language in our house as we possibly can. We've got signs hanging up here and there, and we really, really try to encourage that. Not just the language, but also the morals that come along with our religion and our culture just as a whole; we try to really enforce that and use it and encourage that as well.

Reggie, who sometimes helps Sandy with meal preparation and other duties in the nest, said that she has been amazed at the speed at which the children are learning. She commented, "These little kids now, you know [in Sandy's language nest] … I was listening to them, and it's like, wow! They really are learning. I texted my husband that. I was like, 'Oh my God, they really are learning.' It's so cute." Reggie said that Sandy has encouraged her to try teaching children that she babysits, creating her own nest. She explained, "You know, I do a lot of babysitting. I babysit all these little, tiny kids, mostly on the weekends. That's what Sandy said; I can start my own nesting where I can teach them."

Overall, the participants helped to paint a picture of the progression of schooling of Senecas, past to present, which indicates that as schooling has moved from the control of outsiders such as religious-run boarding schools and the state-controlled public school systems, to internal Seneca control, progress, albeit slow, has been made toward creating new language learners. Since outside influences nearly eradicated the use of Seneca in people's homes, these participants, as well as many other Seneca people in the community, understand this and are trying to re-locate the use of Seneca to their own schools and institutions, run by the Seneca Nation in the local public schools[25] and by individuals, who are exercising more of their own control over time. Much more difficult is the re-importation of Seneca back into the homes, which is why Sandy and her

[25] See Chapter 5 for details on the Seneca Nation's language programs.

supporters are beginning to establish language nests, hopefully regenerating the language in the homes as well as in the schools by teaching young children as much of the language as possible.

<p style="text-align: center">Attitudes toward the Language and Culture</p>

Unlike some of the diversity in the narratives on educational experiences mentioned above, attitudes toward language and culture are slightly more uniform across age groups for these participants. I asked questions about the attitudes in the families as well as the ways in which having the opportunity to experience the Seneca culture and language makes them feel. Although Sandy cautioned me that for traditional Seneca people, expressing feelings is not common, through discussion, the attitudes and feelings did emerge, and they were positive in connection with their own culture.

When I asked Travis, 23, whether the experience of learning the language made a difference in his life, he referred to cultural issues that he felt were important to him: "Yeah. Now I know a lot of what's going on in the Longhouse, at the ceremonies and stuff." I asked him how it makes him feel, and he said, quite simply, "Happy." He said that the attitudes toward the language and culture in his family have stayed the same over time. "They think it's good that we have the language and all of that stuff." He added that they are encouraging him. When asked the same question, Lee, 26, responded, "It's been good; yeah, it's been real good to me." He stated that the experience learning the language at Ganöhsesge:kha:' has made a difference in his life and it is good for his self-esteem: "Makes me feel good about myself." With regard to his family's disposition toward the language, he said, "Well, it seems they seem more interested in it." His brother tries to learn, but his mother does not. He explained that the non-learners in the

family do attempt to understand the Seneca words he uses: "If I ever say something, they ask me what I've said and I'll tell them what I said. But other than that, that's pretty much it." Yet they encourage him. "They make sure I come to work [apprenticing at Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'] all the time. They don't want me to be late, either. They encourage it." I asked Ryan, "When you're all speaking the language at home, how does that make you feel?" He replied, "It feels good. I like it. When I go to somebody else's house, like an elder or something, they'll talk Seneca. I like it. We just sit there and talk." I also asked Dylan, age 11, whether he liked his experiences learning the language and culture, and he answered, "Yeah. It's pretty cool; makes me feel pretty cool. I think it's cool to say my own language." Brooke, 20, commented on the knowledge she was fortunate to have received from Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'':

> It makes me feel good … to know that someone's spent so much time to teach us. And you look around, and nobody else knows the things we know. Nobody can say the same things we do, and we were young when we knew it. Everyone knows us now as like, the kids from Faithkeepers School. We'll always be the kids from Faithkeepers School even though we're in our twenties now. But it feels good to know that you have that … we don't know fluently, but … that little bit that we have, it feels good to have that.

When I asked Todd, 41, whether being Seneca made a difference in his life, he replied tentatively at first: "I don't know. I've never not been Seneca. I wouldn't know, because I am Seneca. I am who I am, and that's how the Creator made me." But he continued in terms that testified to a strong allegiance with his Seneca community: "Being Seneca … is … really in the heart. It's who you are, knowing the community, and

supporting your community. It's what it's about. It's not a claim; it's about relationships, so I don't know what it means not to be Seneca." Todd also discussed what it was like to be Seneca in a "non-Seneca world." He described the differences between Seneca and mainstream culture, and he talked about the influence of Seneca culture in the wider community. He said, "We think different, we laugh different, we have a different sense of humor, uh, sometimes my non-Native friends don't get me. But they're learning. The more they come down here, they're becoming more Seneca; they're catching it."

Blaine, age 35 and an adult student at Ganöhsesge:kha:', also connected his learning of Seneca and being Seneca with developing strong relationships with others. When I asked him whether it made a difference in his life, he replied, "Oh, yeah. Yeah. A big difference, yeah … Feels good to be able to know what somebody's saying, like Dar, or Clayton Logan, or anybody like that that's fluent in the language. It's good to be able to understand what they're saying." He noticed that his family is growing more receptive to the language as they learn more of it. "It's more; I would have to say because we've become more proficient in using the language and using the culture. It's like pretty much an everyday thing for me, because I use it a lot with my son. And he understands different little phrases here and there, what I tell him." George mentioned that it makes him glad to hear his great-grandsons speaking in Seneca. Nikki explained that the difference with being Seneca is that it has connected her family with a strong involvement with the Longhouse, tying them to the Seneca community. Steve reflected on the spiritual aspect of growing up Seneca. He responded, "Well, what it's done; it reminds me of my relationship with all of creation. I feel closer to our creator. And I think that's the intent of beliefs … I feel that closeness now." Like Nikki, Steve

associated feelings of being Seneca with family ties to the Longhouse. Attitudes toward the language in his family, "basically stayed the same. They've always traditionally been speakers, and of course they've always been Longhouse followers. So they've always had that closeness to the language. I know there's some kind of a wishing or a wanting, wishing that they learned more at the time." Reggie shared a feeling of pride in her Seneca identity, saying that being Seneca "you know, makes me more proud of who I am."

Darlene shared a similar feeling of Seneca pride and spiritualism. She mentioned contentment in her family's attendance at the Longhouse "especially when you see them mature and get the confidence, and they participate. And they participate on their own. To see them do anything, you're just so proud … it makes me feel like … I'm doing my job and I'm doing it well … to carry on." She encourages her family to carry on as much of the language and ceremonies as they can. She connected the younger generations in her family with her own values regarding being a Seneca woman:

> It's who I am and it's what I believe. It's given me the satisfaction of … my purpose and values, and me as a female, pretty much what my job was given to me when I came here, and so hopefully I may have fulfilled it, you know, to the max, hoping that my children will carry on in our beliefs and our traditional ways and who they are, always remember who they are, even though you were exposed to many other environments, you always have your home … I think it's the reality of identity. Of who we are, and I think that everyone values the language. The language is, belongs to us. It was given to us by the Creator.

John related his experiences with learning Seneca language and culture to his family's identity as Seneca people. "It's made a big difference, a very big difference. It's a completely different outlook on the world. And I had so many experiences with it that … just where it's led me and where it's taken me … a lot of it's been eye-opening … because again, through learning the language, you understand more of the … culture, the religion." He shared a particular story about the difference that Seneca has made in terms of his family's Seneca identity:

You know … we try to reinforce everything as much as possible … it was funny, the other night … I made wild onion soup … and … being that it's a limited season, and we only get it for, what is it, maybe six weeks, if that; not even six weeks; I'd say probably closer to four weeks. They're up for about a month, so when onions came up, I went and I picked as many as I possibly could, and I said, "I'm freezing those," for special occasions, or even when we just want it, or when we don't have much money, you know, we can cook that. It's a very inexpensive meal. And it feeds everybody, well, for the most part; some of our kids are pickier than others but … the little girls love it; they loved it. The other night ... I was doing the soup; I was making the bread … and … me and [my partner] are kind of opposites as far as language goes. She's more towards the … everyday vocabulary, and I'm more fluent in the ceremonial stuff. So we kind of, we complete each other … but we were laughing to ourselves the other night. We said, "Geez, here we were just being all-Indian, all night. We had a nice Indian meal, and geez, the kids were talking Indian." It was nice. It was really nice.

Bill related a story about Herb "'Dago" (pronounced *'Duggo'*) Dowdy, Dar's brother, who was a fluent speaker and singer. Bill learned many Seneca songs from him, and it helped shape his identity as a Seneca singer. He reflected on the legacy that Herb left:

> He would only sing those particular ladies' dance songs ... And I was like, whoa, and I didn't know about [them], because we didn't hear them. He only sang them once a year. And I was like, man, I would tell him, and say, "'Dago', you know, I want those." And he'd say, "Yeah, yeah," you know, and laugh about it. And then one day, he came up and had a tape with those on it, and it had my name on there. You know, and he says, "For you, Billy" and gave it to me. I was like wow, I was touched by that. And then he says, "But, I want you to learn this other one, too." And I was like, yeah, yeah. And when he passed away, what was in his tape player was the tape that he made of those songs. I was like, oh, geez, you know. So, that was a hint and a half. Yeah, he says, "Here it is." That was what he was recording.

In turn, John discussed Bill's influence on him when he was a teenager, drawing him into an identity as a Seneca dancer and singer. Bill worked with John's mother, John believes, when Bill was a teenager and John's mother was in her 20s. John remembered vividly meeting Bill at a powwow in New Jersey, and he expressed pleasant feelings on developing bonds with him and his family:

> As far as singing our stuff, again, traveling through the powwows, Gajehsöh's son, Bill … of course, he emceed a lot, and he sang a lot, and everything, and sure enough … through the work of powwows, next thing you know, I'm meeting him

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… and meeting the family …"Hey, you know, he's from back home" … He found

out that we danced, and the next thing you know, he was hiring us at different

places … me and my sister, to dance, and the next thing you know, my sister

didn't want to do it, so then I was getting hired by him, and I just kind of got to

know the family really well like that.

John remarked that getting to know Bill and his family helped draw him closer to

learning more about Seneca culture and language and becoming the Seneca man that he is

today.

In light of Bill's influence on other Seneca people, I commented on his work

promoting awareness of the Seneca culture and language, and I asked him whether he had

any particular successes or setbacks. He felt positive about his efforts, which related

again to powwows and singing and dancing; he spoke of his trademark development of

some traditional dances which earned him some fame:

I don't know, I would say [I've had] successes more than anything, and I guess

that … talking about powwow, for instance. Using powwow as an example, when

we were kids, we saw powwow when we were teenagers, and it was like, wow,

you know. We would wind up trying to dance plains style, you know, so I was a

Fancy Dancer for a long time. And people danced traditional or whatever, or

Grass Dance[26]. So we had to dance their style. But as my powwow career kind of

was moving along, what I started to do was — it had to do with a lot — here,

actually was really, one of the big places that pushed it was we had a Smoke

Dance contest. And then [late '80s, early '90s] it really got big.

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[26] The Grass Dance is of Plains origin. Grass, Fancy, and Smoke dances are popular at Powwows in North
America.

Once it starts to catch on, I started teaching in the school, and I was there about a year, maybe, and then I got a chance and worked with a dance theater, the American Indian Dance Theater. So what I did with that was taught them, kind of choreographed, the Iroquois portion of their show. And it promoted the Smoke Dance even more. We wound up; I wound up singing Smoke Dance for a special, at the Gathering in Albuquerque. A lot more people saw it, and then pretty soon I was getting emcee gigs. Like I emceed for the Red Earth powwow, sang Smoke Dance up there. I mean, it was like, I had a DJ that was there, that was playing AC/DC stuff, and I had a light man, and the whole deal. It was like WWF coming out, like "Ta-da."

It was funny, but … that was how far it went. It was like, Smoke Dance was pretty big. Like, for instance, they would have it at, like, Hamburg Fair, would be one of them. They had a Smoke Dance contest there. They would have it at the state fair, places like Tonawanda, Field Days, and stuff like that. But it was never really in the powwow arena until the powwow was here. Not until the late '80s was the powwow here. And I kind of jumped on board with that because I was already kind of locally famous for announcing powwows. So when this powwow started, it was like, natural that I would be involved in that. It was good. And it was kind of like, giving back, I guess, to the powwow people.

Autumn, at age 29, had the benefit of growing up with Bill as a father. Her identity as a Seneca is very strong, and her attitude about being Seneca is very positive. She

commented that being Seneca is "who I am; it's what I do … It encompasses everything

that I do." She said that she feels lucky to have had such strong influences:

> A lot of times, I find myself in my class talking about how, you know, as a
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> culture, we are so closely tied with our environment; everything we do is a part of
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> our environment. I find myself on a soapbox quite a bit talking about that sort of
>
> thing, too. But yeah, I definitely think it really has influenced who I am today, and
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> I'm really, really fortunate to have that because some people don't get that
>
> chance. So I was really, really lucky growing up as well as now I can pass that
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> down to my own kids, too.

When I asked her about her problems or pleasures working to promote Seneca, like her

father, she felt positive about her efforts. She replied that the success comes from having

a dedicated family that upholds Seneca values:

> Several of my family members also … really had a movement to preserve Seneca
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> … language, dance, and music as well, so I am an adviser for Seneca Youth
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> Dancers which teaches kids who might not otherwise have a chance to sing or
>
> dance or learn it, or learn what the dances are about, or ... what the message in
>
> them is. You know, they might not have that other chance, so we're really …
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> happy to be able to pass that down to kids who might not otherwise know, or also,
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> just keep our kids active, keep active with it, so as an adviser for the Seneca
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> Youth Dancers, I've got to shamelessly plug that.

Her sister, Rachael, also talked about leadership in the Seneca Youth Dancers as well as

leading a small organization for youth at the high school. At times, it is difficult to get the

young students interested in the larger issues facing the Seneca community, but she presses on to get the message out:

> I am the leader of two … extracurricular organizations. One is the Seneca Youth Dancers, where we teach traditional singing and dancing, and the whole ethics of show business, but also with speaking and singing and leading; there's a lot of dynamics that go into that, and what the kids gain out of it. And then, I'm also one of the leaders for Seneca Youth Council … it's more of a group that we can get together and … pretty much, I try and get the students to think of issues and things that they want to talk about, or changes that they want to make in the school, or topics that they want to inform about. It's been a little bit more tough, because they're allowed to meet every other week, and so … it's been tough to get that one going, but I am involved in that one, too.

Keeping the youth involved is a theme that permeated everyone's conversations about being Seneca and continuing Seneca values. Rachael linked it to her own family and young daughter:

> I grew up since I came back, and I'm here now with a family, and I think once I had my daughter, too I realized that … this is bigger now than just me learning language or teaching language. It's … bigger … than that. It's about teaching it for her and making sure it's here for her and letting her know that it's important and making her know what it is.

> Not everyone shared solely positive attitudes about Seneca culture and language. Jackie had mixed experiences with being a Seneca person in the community, and her feelings oscillated accordingly between shame and pride, moving toward the positive

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with the upswing in popularity for Seneca culture. She commented on the subtle ways that being Seneca has made a difference for people in the community:

> When I was in kindergarten [early 1970s], my first experience in kindergarten with being Seneca was my kindergarten teacher was prejudiced, so she was not nice to me. And so it kind of was something that you didn't want to broadcast that you were Seneca. And of course, I don't look like my brother. My brother was definitely Seneca, where myself, I could go either way. And so it [being Seneca] was not something that you were not really proud of then. But now, with all the perks and benefits [such as annuities] and everything, everybody wants to be Seneca.

She continued on a more specific topic involving the benefits of special legal status accorded to the Senecas:

> So, as far as benefits, that's pretty much it. I wouldn't be able to do this. I wouldn't be able to work out of my home and do what I do if I were not Seneca, because being Seneca, I'm not subjected to the same health code rules and regulations that non-Seneca food services would be. There's just things that we can do that other people can't do. And it's funny because some enrolled Seneca, they think like, 'Oh, they're Seneca on the right side.' Because there is a wrong side, they don't have the same privileges [such as tax-exempt status], even though it's the same, if I have the same quantum that another person might, but it's on the wrong side.

Jackie is referring to the matrilineal system of membership in Seneca clans, or "enrollment."[27] Being an enrolled Seneca is what grants the rights to the privileges Jackie mentioned. She brought up the controversial topic that some people whose mothers are not Seneca are not given the same privileges as those who are descended from Seneca mothers, thus causing contentious relations between some community inhabitants and even family members.

Sandy expressed mixed feelings about the language and culture and the current endangered status of Seneca. She expressed frustration because the traditional values may currently be learned in a superficial way by many people:

> When I see somebody, and somebody, I know that they can speak the language …it's just a natural thing. And obviously I feel very good about that. At other times I feel frustrated when people are using the language and they're talking about something or other many times with formal speeches, a lot of that is memorized, and I think a lot of it has to be memorized anyway, because they aren't really feeling what they're saying … where in our culture, it's understood. Or it's inferred.

She continued, elaborating on the deeper experience of being part of the culture, in her view, one in which connections cannot be memorized:

> Or we can point with our lips, for crying out loud! We can tell by face-to-face conversations how people are feeling about what we're saying, or about us, and we know that people that speak English to each other are looking someplace else … they're already done with that part of the conversation, they're already thinking of what they've got to do next, or how to end this. We just don't have the

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[27] See Chapter 1, Background of the Seneca, for more information about the Seneca membership system.

time anymore. There's so many aspects of everyday life that pertains to our culture and language that we even get lost and get caught-up in the time and the appreciation of everyday gifts that we have that are given to us. That's what needs to start our day.

Sandy returned to a feeling of regret because the conditions of life today are working against the deeper cultural awareness she would like to promote. She then ends with a wish to at least foster what can grow in young people today:

And we get caught up in everything and forget that [cultural awareness], because we're just too busy anymore, and that's a shame. It's important to me because … I want other people; I want our young people to at least have an inkling of maybe how the language works.

Similarly, Dianna described the nuances of how the language works as well as its value as a unique means of communicating about the world. She first learned a related concept from learning Ojibwe when she was in Minnesota. Like Sandy, she mentioned the importance of understanding how languages work, something that people do not always realize:

If they don't understand much about languages in general, they just want to know the word for, and put it into the language that they do know, and that's all, without realizing that there is another way of expressing things, and by expressing things in a different way, you look at the world in a different way. Well, I learned this from Ojibwe, from learning Ojibwe. A lot of times, people would in Ojibwe say, 'Well, what's the word for 'father.' Well … in Ojibwe, there's no generic term for 'father;' it's 'this man is related to that person.' And that's what you're

expressing is the relationship, not the term for father the way it is in English. So you can't have a generic 'father;' it's got to be a father-like relationship with someone else: his father, her father, our father, your father, and all of those. It's just a different way of looking at the world. And I found that same kind of thing with Seneca. There are so many different ways of looking at the world because of the way the language works and how it's put together, and a lot of it is cultural, and it's really a beautiful culture, and you diminish it by saying, 'What's the English word for …' You know, you lose some of that beauty.

Dianna brings in two other important cultural values: first, she compares the competitive nature of learning as it is understood in mainstream American culture, with the collaborative values held in Seneca society; she then also cites the deep respect for and relationship with nature, as shown in a person's relationship to something as simple as a tomato plant:

In using Seneca, for example, in English, when we were learning Seneca; in one place I was learning it and they were real competitive about it and they had all these games, you know, and they were trying to be first and trying to beat each other; you know, but that's just the way that class went. You know, it was like, "I'm first! I'm first! You're second!" But you know, in Seneca, there's no ordinal numbers like that, and I'm thinking, well that's because that kind of thing is not really important in Seneca. What's important is that we all learn these words, that we all do it together, and that whole communal aspect. It's kind of diminished when you're only stuck with English. And respect for how the world fits together is diminished when you only use English. Someone said to me, 'Oh, I know you

Indians; you're all into nature and everything like that,' and I thought, well, kind of, but that's a real superficial way of looking at it. And … especially at this time of year, they'll say … ask about your tomato plants. "Oh, I'm growing some tomato plants" … Well, in Seneca, we don't grow a plant. The Creator grows plants. What we do as human beings, is we plant. That's our job, and the Creator with the rain and the sun and everything else, and the special instructions that he's given to the plants, does the growing. We as individuals don't do that. So when you're looking at … when you're only using English, you're missing a lot of our culture. You're missing a lot about how things all fit together, and even the Americans are missing those kinds of things when they have this false idea that they're actually growing things, and they don't understand, really, the relationship there.

From these elicited themes, participants' perspectives showed much variation. Responses eluded easily-defined patterns. Especially complex was the theme of the use of Seneca in participants' homes when they were growing up; it could not be simply defined by saying that older participants experienced more Seneca in the homes, or certain families used it more than others. Across the board, though, the use of the language has declined drastically, although certain uses, such as singing and ceremonial speeches, have been on the upswing, if only slightly. Also evidenced in the responses was the decline in the use of Seneca in conversation as well as the desire for a resurgence in conversation in the community. Participants' opinions also diverged sharply on the causes of the shift from Seneca to English.

Concerning school experiences, in contrast, respondents voiced similar opinions; unfortunately, most of them described schooling with negative or ambivalent feelings. The exception regarding schooling was notable for the people who attended Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta'; their impressions of school were overwhelmingly positive, which is ironic in light of the gradual decline in enrollment. These differences show a stark contrast between state-sanctioned education and private, locally-controlled teaching of Seneca language and culture. Attitudes toward Seneca showed a similar overall uniformity. Most participants felt strong positive connections with being Seneca people and linked it with self-esteem and pride, although some did demonstrate mixed emotions and expressed regret at the loss of the traditional way of life.

In the next chapter, spontaneous themes that emerged from the interviews are discussed. Such themes include poverty, assimilation, being 'civilized' and 'educated,' influences on the Seneca community such as World War II and the Kinzua Dam, teaching Seneca, Longhouse traditions, and the future of Seneca.

CHAPTER 5

PARTICIPANTS AND EMERGENT THEMES

Introduction: Spontaneously Emerging Themes

Aside from themes elicited by my direct questions, remarkably, other themes

emerged from many of the participants, some quite coincidentally, suggesting ideas that

hold particular significance to them. Several interviewees made remarks on themes such

as poverty; assimilation; being 'civilized,' 'educated' and 'professional.' Some spoke

about other issues: the influence of World War II and the Kinzua Dam; the significance

of and relationships with elders; traditions and being traditional; teaching the language

and learning respect; ceremonies; the Longhouse, *Ganö:nyök*, *Gáíwi:yo:h*[28], and the

future of Seneca. The recurrence of these themes across participants suggests that these

ideas are vital to the participants and to the wider community. In the following sections,

each of these themes are discussed in turn.

Poverty

Throughout the interviews, the theme of poverty surfaced in discussions with

three participants, and assimilation was also mentioned several times, mostly by Sandy

and Dar. Regarding poverty, Sandy was not always aware that her family was poor when

she was growing up. She stated, "I was very sheltered, and I didn't know a lot of things

about how other kids dressed and how other kids acted and so…of course, everything I

had was second-hand … but I thought I was all that … I thought I had nice clothes and I

never thought of myself as being different; but I found out soon enough, not only by the

students, my classmates, but also by the teachers … I didn't know that we were poor. I

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[28] The Gáíwi:yo:h, or the Code of Handsome Lake, is a central tenet of the Longhouse religion. For more information, see Chapter 2, History of the Seneca.

didn't know that [before attending school], and I was fine." Steve discussed that his family associated the rise from poverty with leaving Seneca behind. He described conversations about poverty with his mother. "She constantly told us, because we were a poor family, she constantly said, 'I want you guys to get a good job when you grow up.'" He explained that her desire for better things for her children is what ushered in the primary use of English in his family.

Dar talked about striving to revive the Seneca language and culture without funds, namely, starting Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta' without the benefit of financial support:

I've been doing this [teaching the language and culture] 11 years, 12 years now … we don't get paid; we never got paid for nothing. We did it on our own. We survived. We didn't ask for any money; I didn't ask for any money; she [Sandy] didn't ask for any money. We were just here. We wanted what we wanted. It didn't cost nothing.

He then shifted to the current situation at the school. He and Sandy, as well as the interns, now receive funds from the Seneca Nation to support their work. Still, Dar feels that although they can make do without money, he admits that they could do much more with additional funding:

But now, they're paying us … The Nation said they'd give us a hand. Gas money anyways. But I don't worry about the money part … It's just a piece of paper with George Washington's picture. It don't mean nothing. But these are things that we need here today. If I can find somebody … with lots of money … I wouldn't have to work. I'd have a lot of people working here. I'd have a lot of students here.

That's what we were trying to do before. I'm going to do that yet; I've been pushing that idea around for about 10 years now.

Assimilation

Shifting from the theme of poverty and the lack of funding to the idea of assimilation at several points during our conversation, Sandy described racism and being forced to comply with the mainstream. She explained, "My own parents … were forced to assimilate to save themselves." She discussed the distance she felt from teachers she had at school, who had already been assimilated into the mainstream. "Again, I was an exception to the rule, because I only spoke Seneca and they didn't because they were already products of the assimilation. So they had no tolerance for us Longhouse, pagan believers of spirits, and we were … I think they were afraid of me more than anything else…and when there's fear, they don't understand … They didn't understand because they didn't grow up the same way that some of us Longhouse children did."

Later, she discussed the "termination" policy of the US government, which was a move to refuse to recognize Indians so that they had no claim to their land and other benefits. She linked the move toward termination with complete assimilation of indigenous people. She iterated:

And I think that when we were told by the government … When there was a termination policy, at one point, they said, "Well, they're all assimilated now; we'll just terminate them and make them all United States' citizens" … I believe Andrew Jackson, said, "No, we don't have to terminate them. They'll terminate themselves."

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Dar also mentioned forced assimilation into mainstream culture. He attributed much of the drive toward assimilation to the boarding schools, stating that they "assimilated us here, too … They wanted to assimilate us. They wanted to teach you how to use a knife and fork and stuff like that." He recalled boarding school memories painfully, regretting being forced to adopt mainstream ways.

Being 'Civilized,' 'Educated,' and 'Professional'

Related to assimilation is the discussion of Indians' becoming "civilized" and getting an "education." Several participants referred to these ideas during their interviews. Dar and Sandy introduced the topic of becoming "civilized" in several ways. Sandy equated the "civilization" of her parents to domestic work in the home and on the farm, at the cost of Seneca religious and traditional ways:

> They were forced to assimilate to save themselves, so that they would become civilized and assimilated into the white society. And so they learned a lot of ways to be good homemakers, to be good wives, to be able to do household chores. The men learned about farming … their roles were identified so that they would know what they were required to do to become citizens of the United States, or the State, or the new culture. And so anything spiritual as far as culture went was discouraged.

Dar expressed almost a sense of disgust at being deemed "uncivilized" by white society. He commented on the government's efforts at "civilizing' his people, stating that such a trend was prophesied by his people: "I don't know why they'd want to do that. I never could get no explanation. Take what I have away from us. They wanted to civilize us, because we were savages. That's what we were told. They wanted to civilize us. Well,

I guess this is an ongoing thing. We were told this is what's going to happen." Likewise, Jackie referred to assimilation and being "civilized," but she related those themes to the Kinzua Dam, discussed below in the section on the influence of the Kinzua Dam.

Regarding becoming "educated," Steve reflected on his mother's wishes for him to leave Seneca behind in favor of a mainstream education: "She stressed education, and I guess that was her formula: Use English and you get a better education." Blaine, who also grew up hearing about the importance of mainstream schooling, remarked that his father expressed conflicting ideals toward education, which delayed his progress in school: "This is where I get torn, and I got pulled in two different directions," he said; although his father had explained that the education system was not appropriate for Seneca people, "He would tell us, 'You have to get an education.' That's why I didn't graduate until I was 21. I graduated in 1996, actually three years after I was supposed to graduate."

Darlene mentioned that her granddaughter had just graduated and is now "going on to further her education." But unlike many of the other participants, she indicated that education need not detract from the Seneca way of life. She said of her granddaughter that "the ceremonies and her beliefs are still number one."

Sandy discussed the effects of boarding school education and their attempts at making Senecas become "professionals." As she had stated above, the boarding schools created a divide between mainstream education and Seneca ways. Yet, in her view, this divide had a mixed effect:

It taught them that they needed to get an education. They taught them how to read and write so that they could become professionals. A lot of them did learn to be

nurses or secretaries … The ones that didn't go to boarding school were more

compassionate, they were more confident … and they were frowned upon by the

students that came out of the boarding school because they [boarding school

students] were educated. Guys that came back from there were refined young men

with a skill — a very marketable skill.

Interestingly, when I asked George whether speaking Seneca has made a

difference in his life, he turned to the high levels of education that some Seneca

community members had attained:

When we got money for education, that made a big difference. All of a sudden,

you got college graduates; you got people who changed their way of thinking

about everything. I don't know; I think we've got nine Senecas that have

doctorates … Hazel has one; Hazel Dean. She has a doctorate from the University

of Arizona. And that John … he has that little business in the mall there. He went

to Saint Bonaventure; he was a professor there for a while … He's got a doctorate

degree, and so does that Mike Taylor, from up Jimersontown … He teaches

school in Colgate now. My granddaughter has a doctorate. Donnell. She teaches

college in one of those universities in Tennessee. She got her doctorate from the

University of Missouri. So, she's educated.

He then reflected on his own education, noting the stark differences in the ability to attain

higher and even secondary education when he was a young man:

I had a high school diploma. That was something in those days. There were nine

of us graduated from the reservation schools that year. 1931. I went to high

school, and out of the nine, there was only one or two of us graduated from high

school. The others dropped out or got married during that time. Frank Pierce and I were the only ones that graduated in 1935.

George reminisced about his own progress in a one-room schoolhouse. Although he did not attain higher education, he was successful for those times:

I graduated when I was 16 years old. I skipped two grades in grammar school. That's because I was paying attention to what was going on. At that time, you know, you had one row of seats up there, a long bench. And she'd call for … history … you know, be seated, sit down and then they'd have about 15 minutes, and then another one; a different class; arithmetic or something. And I was always paying attention as to what they were learning, even though they were in a higher grade than I was. By the time I got to be in that class, I already knew it from A to Z.

Several participants discussed their own process of getting a college education and becoming professionals. Todd, whose mother went to college when he was a boy, talked about her influence on his decision to pursue higher education:

I don't think it was ever a question for me. I can remember as a child: my mom was a single mom; well she wasn't at first; I had an alcoholic step-father, so she ended up finding herself with two kids and no career, so she ended up going to JCC [Jamestown Community College] starting out, and back then the Nation had a mini-van that would take you to campus and stuff. So she started in computer science, way back then computer science was just a fledgling, so she … would be at the kitchen table doing her homework, and I'd be in the living room.

He explained that when it was time for him to begin his own college studies, he was granted admission to attend Stanford, Cornell, and Saint Bonaventure. He chose Saint Bonaventure because of its small size and proximity to home. Staying near home is important to him and to many of the others who went away for college education.

Dianna spoke about living in the Midwest as a younger woman, where she received her AB degree. Approximately 30 years ago, she returned to the reservation, much to her grandfather's and mother's satisfaction. Once she returned, she used her education to work as a teacher for the Nation. She recalled the shift from working as a professional in the Midwest to building her career back home. Of her experience in the Midwest and her family's desire for her to return home, she recalled:

> I went to school in Minnesota [in an] urban area … in a Native community, and every time I got a different job, my grandfather would always say, "We need that kind of person here, too." For example, one of my first jobs, I taught … ABE and GED in a maximum security prison, and I was talking to my grandfather on the telephone, and he said, "Well, we have bad boys here, too, that need an education." So every time I was doing it, he would always tell me to come back, come back, come back.

She explained how she made the move back to the reservation to continue her career in education:

> And then, one year, I was in between jobs, and the Education Department for the Seneca Nation used to lay everybody off through the summer, so they had no summer programs, and they made all those people re-apply for those jobs … they used to put an ad out, and you'd see this long list of positions open, and my

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mother saw that. She had moved back here, and she sent it to me, and she said, "Look, you can get any job you want," and I'm like, "What?" Not true. Not true at all … it just looked like a lot of positions were open … And at the time I was there, I was in Elementary Education, and I was … doing it part time when I was going to school, so because I was in education, you know, "They're going to need someone here, this is where you're going to go," so that's where I went. And even when I came back here, to work, my degree, and I had two years' teaching experience in elementary, but they needed a high school teacher, so that's where I was put. [I taught] Seneca-Iroquois history.

Brooke had conflicting thoughts toward pursuing higher education. She discussed the ways that attaining an education distracts her from her role as a Seneca woman. She described writing a paper for school which described these conflicts between roles:

[In the paper, I was] saying how different it is for a Seneca woman, like, being in a completely Seneca world going into a White man's world and being two different things, different beliefs, different language, different plans for the future … you can't be just Seneca and want to live in a world, and push on … you can't be completely successful and not have an education in the world now, without making little, little, little money … you kind of almost … have to put it to the side. I don't want to sound like a hypocrite or anything, but it's like you kind of have to hold back when you're at school, like, your culture and stuff, just to focus on your work and stuff instead of focusing just like, who you are as a person. You've got to go there and put all that aside and focus on what you're there for.

Rachael's views on higher education were quite different from her cousin Brooke's, partly because she had the benefit of attending an all-Indian college. Rachael went to Haskell in Kansas, the same school that was once a boarding school; it is now the only former boarding school in the country to become a university exclusively for Indian people to attain degrees. She expressed satisfaction with college. When she pursued a college education, she explained, it helped her to develop her identity as an Indian, as a Seneca, and as a teacher:

> When I went to college, I wasn't really sure what I was going to do. I went to Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas; it's a two-year school, and I just got basics there, but I really wanted to know what it felt like to go to an all-Indian school … it was really awesome. It's where I met my husband, so that was good. But then after that, I went to Northeastern State University in Oklahoma. It's in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. And when I went there, that's where I got my teaching degree, so it really wasn't until I found out who I was that I knew what I wanted to do, and teaching … I don't know why I didn't even think teaching would, especially Seneca, wouldn't even be -- I don't know why I didn't even think of it. I really didn't until I came home, and they needed me as a certified teacher.

Rachael also discussed the importance of bringing the benefits of that education back home to serve her people:

> I always knew that I was going to come back and help the people. I always knew that no matter what I was going to do … that [coming back home] was what I would be doing; that's what I wanted to do, because that's a value that's been

instilled in me by my grandma [Sandy] since I was a little girl, that it's okay to go

away and to go to school, but make sure that you come back, and don't forget the

people here; don't forget your home here; don't forget your heart here.

Rachael described teaching Seneca as the perfect job and role for her, one which she was

able to develop fully after gaining the requisite skills in college:

I used the skills that I got as a teacher to gear it towards teaching language … My

education was very helpful with that, but it was still a whole new game and a

whole new thing for me. So I think … I changed completely, because when I first

started doing it, it was like a job, something that I could do, something that they

needed me to do … but … I think … I was made to do it, because it made me who

I am.

The Influence of World War II and the Kinzua Dam

Moving from the theme of education and professionalism to outside influences on

the integrity of the Allegany community, themes such as World War II and the building

of the Kinzua Dam featured in many participants' conversations. George and Sandy

talked about the influence of World War II on the Seneca community; Dar, George, Bill,

and Jackie brought up the building of the Kinzua Dam, and Jackie mentioned the

Remember the Removal event, an annual commemoration marking the anniversary of the

dam's construction. George, Dar, Sandy, Olive, Darlene and Steve are all old enough to

have lived through the experience of the removal back in the mid-'60s.

Sandy explained the relationship between World War II and the purpose of

Thomas Indian School. She said that the school helped by taking in children orphaned by

the war:

At the time the war was going on, and the fathers were away at the war, and many of the mothers had to work … They were in places where they made parachutes and army surplus factories and things like that. So the children were left, and some of them were orphaned because of the war … It really started out as a good thing.

Yet the orphaned children grew up with difficulties resulting from the military-style upbringing they received in the school. This lack of nurturing in turn affected the children they went on to raise once they had their own families, in Sandy's view:

Many of them [children orphaned by the war] went into the military ... because their daily lives were so regimented [in the boarding school] that they had become accustomed to that; and many of them, when they left there, the military was easy for them because they were already in boot camp throughout their whole childhood … So that's where they found their comfort because that's what they had grown up with. So when they had their own children, everything had to be done the way they learned how to do it. Beds had to be made military-style, everything had to be washed and ironed and cooked in a certain way … That's the only kind of skills they learned.

George described his own experience serving in the military and its surprising lack of a detrimental effect on his ability to converse in Seneca. He said, "I've never lost it [Seneca]. I was in the service for four years. When I came back, I talked Seneca as well as anybody." I conducted the interview with him just after Memorial Day, which caused him to share his knowledge about the veterans in the area. Military service still retains importance in George's life. "There's 11 veterans buried in Horseshoe dating

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from the Civil War. I think there's two Civil War vets buried there. There's eight of them [Senecas] buried in Bunker Hill" [Horseshoe and Bunker Hill are cemeteries near Salamanca]. George also mentioned the Kinzua Dam, asserting that he believed the forced removal caused by the construction of the dam had little effect on the language. He believes the language was in decline before the dam process began in the mid-1960s. According to him, the boarding schools and military service had begun to deteriorate the language long before that, but other participants still felt that the dam did continue to erode the language and culture.

Darlene talked about the dam in detail. She recalled living well before her family's forced relocation, as well as the varied effects that the move had on her and her family. She reminisced about life before the relocation:

We had our swimming hole that was naturally-made … along the railroad tracks and we'd walk there. And there was apple trees and berries, and … we lived right next to a huge huckleberry patch, and it was so huge, every year, my grandmother made us all go out, and we picked buckets, water-pail buckets of blueberries, you know, huckleberries, and she made pies and sold them to the local restaurants. Of course, she made blueberry biscuits and pie and made all of that, too. But we took advantage of everything that was growing around us because she taught us that. And strawberry time … there was a church down the road who … every summer would have their gathering and their Bible school. Children of Red House [one of the areas condemned for floodwaters] would go up there, and we'd challenge them to a softball game. It used to be so much fun because they had the best cookies and Kool-Aid in the world. But we went … it was the season, and we

would pick strawberries, we'd pick the wild strawberries, and it was an all-day

event, but the rewards were the strawberry biscuits and all of that.

Darlene also discussed the effect of the relocation once the dam was built. She described

her gradual process of learning from the tragic relocation of her family:

It was sad. I was a teenager when it was all going on and I remember; I recall my

grandmother, she was part of the movement that would go on the buses and they

went to convince the government that it wasn't a good idea, and she was part of

that, and by the time we had to move, when it became a reality was when we went

down, when the people … were, their homes were being burned by the Corps of

Engineers, and my grandmother and my mother, um, you know, felt bad for them,

because we knew that's where it [relocation] started, and then it was just coming

up. It was like a flood. It started here, where there was number one, and it just

went up. We knew eventually … we were one of the last families to move to the

relocation area.

As sad as this gradual understanding of the tragedy was for her, she also mentioned some

of the benefits they received after the relocation and the mixed emotions they caused:

It was exciting, but yet … there was a feeling of leaving … something behind.

But being a teenager, I didn't realize then … 30 years after, you do, once you

have children, and how times have changed … where you grew up and you went

to school, and the values and what you want to teach your children, but in a whole

different environment. Um, the exciting part of it was, we didn't have to pump

water; we didn't have to cut wood, or do the chores, those kinds of things; but I

think back then, though, we realized how much exercise, and all that that was

good for you, but you don't realize that until … you've aged some. But at the time, it was pretty exciting to have those modern conveniences [such as indoor plumbing].

Todd described himself as being of the first generation of people to be raised in one of the relocation areas. He linked his family's relocation to Jimersontown with missing opportunities to hear and speak the language at home:

We're the first generation right after Kinzua. You know, my mother lived in Red House and grew up there but got re-planted in "Jimtown" … and so all of a sudden, here I am, the next generation, the first generation of "Jimtown" too, where we became suburban Indians, I guess, we did the best … I don't know if our parents didn't think learning the language was cool, or if our grandparents felt we needed to learn English more, I don't know what the reason was. You know, I've never asked.

Bill talked about some of the positive after-effects of the dam. He believes that the Seneca singing societies saw a resurgence following the aftermath of the dam. He recalled the leaders of these societies fondly: "The Singing Society in the '70s, was still, was reforming, I guess, after Kinzua. So there was some good leaders, and good singers. Herb Dowdy was here, Avery , Gwë:de, Richard Johnnyjohn; even Phillip Thompson was making songs. Lyford; all those old guys, you know." Several patterns of story-telling also emerged after the dam's construction, some told orally, and some recorded in books such as DuWayne Leslie Bowen's *One More Story: Contemporary Seneca Tales of the Supernatural*.

In contrast, Dar had a more negative perception of the dam's consequences, implicitly linking the dam to the decline in the Seneca language and culture. "We've lost the language; we've been through the Kinzua Dam era. And now the kids can't talk. They can't speak. They're just kind of wandering around lost." Jackie echoed Dar's statements, linking the relocation to a divide among the people who were relocated and those who were not. In her view, people who were removed still vie for reparations and Seneca identity, a concept that mainstreamed members of the community do not always understand:

> I think Kinzua had a huge, huge, huge impact on the identity of the Seneca people around here. Well … my son's step-mother … she doesn't believe in the benefits that the Seneca children get versus non-Seneca children in the public schools. She just doesn't get it; she doesn't think it's right, and she has even voiced her opinion that, um, why are the Seneca … you know, like Remember the Removal commemorations and stuff that we have, and it's a big deal. And, she says, "Why? Why don't they just get over it? Why don't they just move on? If it weren't for the federal government, they wouldn't be civilized."

Jackie talked about the lifestyle on the reservation that existed before the removal, indicating a sense of regret at not having experienced the more communal, Seneca-style standard of living that the people who lived in the removal areas had enjoyed:

> You know, I go down where the old road is [Old Route 17], and think of the kinds of communities that they had, and listen to the stories that they tell, that, you know, "When we were young, on a Sunday afternoon, the whole community would get together. And some would be making corn soup, and some would be

making baskets, and they'd be sitting around speaking Seneca." And I just think

that would have been an awesome, awesome thing, because on a given Sunday

afternoon, nobody has time for anything, anything. And what the federal

government did was they assimilated us, and made us just like them. That's how

we lost … a lot.

I inquired about whether she connects the assimilation with the dam, and she asserted that

it did:

I do. I do, because it relocated them. That's why they called it the relocation.

They relocated not only their way of life, their language, I mean, they had their

own school down there.

She attributed the assimilation ushered in by the relocation to the divide caused by

creating Seneca and non-Seneca enclaves. Senecas in the dam's take area were relocated

into two large, special, all-Seneca neighborhoods, causing those Senecas who were not

relocated to become a minority in the town proper, and to suffer the effects of being

Senecas in a mainstream area:

That's why I think my teacher was prejudiced, because there were no Seneca

children in the school system, and we were on the other side of town. Seneca

children went to Seneca school, but we were on the other end of town … and

everybody else, all the Indians that were Senecas, lived in the relocation projects,

and that's where all the Senecas were.

The Significance of Elders

Many participants discussed the significance of elders in their lives, which is not

surprising given the long tradition of honoring elders in Seneca society. The respondents

noted that the elders had given selflessly and taught them about many important things. Many participants described how important it was and still is to be able to speak with them in the Seneca language. Some even noted their own tendency to take elders for granted, an understanding brought to light during their own process of learning Seneca.

Ryan indicated that it is important for him to maintain regular contact with as many elders as possible, stating, "Yeah, [I] talk to elders, yeah. Talk to different ones." Darlene also mentioned hearing elders speaking Seneca in the community when she was younger. Blaine had a sense of loss of elders in his family, but he was thankful for what they had given him before they passed on. He said that the elders in his life held strong ties to the Longhouse: "I learned a little, what little bit I could from my Grandmother. But she passed away in '93. That's just briefly what I've learned from my elders, especially my grandparents, and everybody else within the Longhouse community. That's where I learned what I know."

Steve reflected on the significance of beginning to be able to converse with his mother and other elders in Seneca:

What I've done most recently, my mother has been quite ill. But what I've been doing with her and my aunt is I talk to them using their language. Because it meant so much more to them when I told them that I loved them in their language. And I could tell just by the expressions on their faces that it meant so much more. They could really; they felt the words versus hearing them. And I remember the look on my mother's face when I first told her that I loved her. She just looked at me. It's probably the first time that I've ever told her in her own language how I

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felt about her. So I know it really made her feel good. And I think that's what

happens when people reconnect with our elders on that level.

Yet he also felt that his ability to converse in Seneca is still limited, and he expressed a

sense of disappointment since he began to learn the language later in life and would not

be able to become a proficient speaker:

Sometimes when I think that I've advanced so far, I can hear Dar when he just ad-

libs and it just flows and I feel like I'll never get to that level.

Sandy shared her thoughts about the wisdom of the elders in her life, stating, "To us,

when we talk about elderly people they're the ones who have the wisdom." She equated

their wisdom with spirituality. She indicated that since her adoptive parents were old

enough to be her grandparents, she was fortunate to have learned firsthand from their

experience and beliefs:

My foster parents were almost like grandparents, not only in their age, but also in

being traditional and spiritual people … with their knowledge and wisdom …

that's "elderly." To me they were elderly because they had the knowledge and the

wisdom and that's what I learned. That's how I learned it. Spirituality was an

everyday thing. That's where I learned and they were almost the generation of

being my grandparents.

Both Blaine and Bill talked about taking elders for granted and coming to realize

that the older generations would not be around to teach them forever. Blaine discussed

the community's growing awareness of the importance of revitalizing Seneca, an

awareness that grew for him as many of the elder, fluent speakers that he knew started to

pass on: "It was different back when I was going to school, I don't know why, but it

[revitalizing Seneca] really wasn't that much of a priority. I think it was just basically

because they kind of figured that these elders are going to be here all the time, but they're

not. A lot of them left us."

Bill spoke of elders at length. He remembered the times when he would visit the

elders in the family, hearing them speak in Seneca as they talked with their friends. He

would eavesdrop on their conversations:

I would visit my Grandma, and her friends didn't talk English at all. You know,

they just talked Seneca the whole time when they came and visited her and so

forth. I kind of had a clue what they were talking about. And they didn't think I

did. So it was funny because I could eavesdrop, and they would see me, listening,

and I was like, "Oh!" I had a clue. But it was just really interesting being around

that, I guess, a lot. Of course, there were people on both sides of my family that

were fluent. So they used [Seneca], I guess whenever they wanted to. It seemed

funny because … I would ask them something in Seneca, and they'd answer me

in English. It was just how it was with some of them. And things got going with

certain elders and certain older family members, and they would talk Indian more

and more.

He also discussed the ways in which elders taught him to sing. He said that he

was reluctant to learn the songs of the elders who were trying to teach him, for fear that

taking over the singing of their songs would take them away, in a sense:

'Dago' would always say [of learning to sing new songs], "Oh, geez you guys

better do that. Study that," he says. So, I says, "Oh, yeah, yeah." I didn't want to.

I didn't want to learn that because that was their thing … I want them to keep

doing it. Because it was powerful; it was good … They were trying to pass it on;

and … maybe that will keep them around longer if I don't take that [song]. That's

kind of selfish to think like that, but … I didn't study it … that was their thing.

But then, Bill's understanding of the imminence of losing elders and his realization of the

importance of letting them teach him their songs hit him hard when 'Dago' passed away:

Then, pretty soon, out of the blue … 'Dago' calls me on the phone, and he says,

"Yeah, come over to my house," and I said, "All right." So he gave me his bag of

rattles. He gave me his bag of rattles, and he says … "Here; use these; take these.

Use them" … so I did. And it was about a week after that, and he was gone. So,

he had a heart attack and just was gone. Just like that.

He described how his sense of loss continued to increase as other elders passed away:

I wouldn't say I took it [the presence of elders] for granted, but when certain

people started to go … I remember … Avery [Jimerson] that passed away … He

was a good influence on me coming up. I learned a lot of songs from him, and a

lot of things from him.

He recalled the moment when he heard the news that Avery passed, describing the

intense despair he felt. He indicated that the experience deepened his sense of

appreciation for elders:

I gave somebody in the community a ride. I gave Zeke a ride. And he says,

"Yeah, too bad about Avery, huh?" … And I was like, "What? What do you

mean?" That's how I found out … I says, "Geez, we were just there last night,

and he was clowning around." It was tough. So, that was far enough back — I

think that was probably the mid-'80s, late '80s when he passed … It was kind of a shock. So then I started to look around a little bit more.

Bill reflected poignantly that when he finally came to terms with the loss of elders in his family and in the community, it was almost too late:

When I was a kid, I didn't know any different, that we were … in danger of losing our language. It just seemed to me that those guys were going to be around forever. It's tough, you know.

Todd shared some sadness about the prospect of losing his grandfather. He feels that losing elders is akin to losing the language. He reflected, "You know, my grandfather's turning 88 this week, and I know he's not going to be here forever. But then who do I learn it from; who do I speak it with? My aunts and uncles don't know it to the degree he does. It's a scary thing to lose your language."

Learning Respect

A few of the younger participants commented on the ways in which learning the Seneca language and culture has taught them to be respectful. Jessie commented that learning Seneca gives him a sense of respect for his surroundings. He said that learning Seneca language and culture "makes you respect things a lot more, like, environment-wise. The things that grow, from all the animals, the water, everything. Makes you thankful." He also said that there is a level of respect for the language in his family. John connected respect and thankfulness more directly with learning the *Ganö:nyök*. He stated, "Within learning *Ganö:nyök* … you're more respectful … you notice things a little bit more … And it really makes you think just about a lot; a lot more. And again, with the language, and with everything, it's the basis of everything." Ryan echoed Jessie's

sentiments on learning to become respectful through learning Seneca language and culture. He said, "I'm not like the other kids that I see … because here, you're taught to have respect. Out there, they don't really teach that. You can see it. I can see it, from [my] having respect and [their] not having any." Brooke described learning thankfulness in the same way as the other young participants did, and she added that learning about thankfulness helped her to respect people, reflecting pride in Seneca values as well as quite a strong implied criticism for those who do not share the same beliefs. She commented:

> We have, like the beliefs, Seneca-wise, and our history … because it makes you look at the world in a different way and makes you appreciative for things instead of everybody else … They're not thankful for nothing. They're not thankful for the water we drink, the land we walk on, the air we breathe. It's different.

Teaching Seneca

Aside from learning from their elders, today's generations are aspiring to teach Seneca customs and language to their children. Blaine tries to teach everyday conversation to his two-year-old son. "It's like pretty much an everyday thing for me, because I use it a lot with my son," he said. While Lee is learning, he tries to teach his toddlers, who are two and one. Jessie is also trying to teach his baby. He said, "I've got a newborn son that was born April 8, so sometimes I try to talk to him as much as I can. I figure, the younger, the better." Nikki is also trying to use Seneca with her children when she can. She feels that she should use it more than she does, since she feels it can be easier to use than English. She uses basic Seneca commands and vocabulary with her

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three children. She also commented on her background with teaching younger children and her struggle to keep teaching her own children:

> You know, I feel guilt myself, because … I was learning there for a while. I did work at the Language Center … for a couple of years … I've been into teaching ever since I graduated high school. I went to BOCES [the New York State Boards of Cooperative Educational Services] for early childhood education, and I worked at daycare, gosh, probably seven years … I worked with Kyle Dowdy; we were both language interns there like these guys … I did learn quite a bit there, and then … I quit using it and … I just get mad at myself for not using it as much, and [not] trying to put it into my girls' life as much, either.

Todd also mentioned feeling guilt at not being a fluent Seneca speaker. He explained that although his grandfather is trying to teach him, other demands of daily life stand in the way: "You know, it really becomes a time commitment. As guilty as I feel; I know I need to learn it, but, by the end of the day, at eight o'clock at night, you go home …and you just want to relax. It's my own selfishness, I guess." He also explained that some have carried the language on more than others have: "It's got to come from the heart of everybody. You know, we do have some core families, core nests, if you will, that are really learning, but it's they who will end up preserving our language."

Aside from guilt, others have noticed a sense of shame at not teaching the language to their children, or for not learning it from their families. Olive also noted that some people in the community have felt ashamed of their culture, causing a reluctance to carry on with the language. Darlene explained that it is not anyone's fault if the language wasn't carried on in particular families, and that people need to realize that and continue

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carrying on with what they do know. She commented on the younger generation's interest in teaching their children as well as the children's interest in practicing what they are learning:

> As adults, it's hard to learn, and children, you know, they absorb it, it's there. And so then you have that middle generation who are struggling, but if it were offered more, would the people use it? Would they take advantage of it? I don't know. There's a generation of parents who are, I want to say, 30 to 40, who have really had that inside them to connect, and they bring their children [to the Longhouse]. They want their children to hear it; they want them to learn. And they practice it.

Dar also talked about encouraging the younger generations to pass down their knowledge of Seneca language and culture. He stated, "I want them to teach their kids to talk the language. This guy here [Blaine], he talks to his kid in Seneca. So when he's 8, 9, 10, 12, 15 years old, he'll understand. He won't have to send him down here [to Ganöhsesge:kha:'] to learn the language; he'll already know it. That's the way we should be."

Sandy commented on the importance of finding the time, although it is difficult, to devote to teaching and learning the language and to appreciate the people who are trying to teach them, lest they let the opportunity slip away:

> Time is so crucial. Every day needs to be centered around language and teaching anybody that has the time to listen to it. And I know that there's going to come a time when all of the people that I've worked with in the past years and years and years are someday going to say … that they will remember the things that I tried to make them learn.

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She said that she hopes that some younger learners don't say wish that they had paid more attention, but that she is "afraid that that's what's going to happen." Yet she keeps trying to influence the younger generations in her family and at her school:

In my immediate family, which is obviously very important, most of my children, and grandchildren, and great-grandchildren are learning about language and learning the attitude of the language is that it's important; and our attitude here at the Faithkeepers School, and myself in particular, which is really the only one I can speak for, is that we just need to keep on doing whatever we can do.

Even though the younger generations make up the majority of today's language learners, Olive mentioned taking classes as an adult, with Bill as her teacher. She stated, "We'd go to education, classes … and we'd speak Seneca." I asked her how taking the classes made her feel. She replied, "Pretty good; I really enjoy it." I questioned whether the students were mostly elders or younger people. She said, "Some elders and younger group that likes learning the words." I also asked about her role in the classes and whether she did more teaching or more learning, and she responded, "Well, both ways."

Dianna also discussed learning Seneca as an adult. She said that some of the teachers were fluent speakers, but were not necessarily adept at teaching. She said that learning Seneca as a beginner "was very difficult because none of them were teachers, and none of them were familiar with the structure of language … They were speakers of Seneca, but they were not necessarily teachers, so it was very difficult. And then, too, you really need to know kind of how the structure of the language works, to explain to somebody." Although some of the speakers lacked teaching skills, she expressed gratitude for all of the people who have taught her the language:

Personally, I've been grateful for the patience of a lot of teachers I've had, you know, who are willing to sit there and listen to you say it wrong for the umpteenth time after they've told you how to say it. So it takes a rare person that's willing to do it.

Dianna explained that although the teachers provided tremendous support, others in the community did not always offer the same level of encouragement for adult learners. She described the conflicting messages she received from other people in the community:

The people teaching it to you, they really loved the language … there was a great fondness, I would say, for the language and how it sounded … and they would encourage whomever would listen. But at that time, there were very few people who would listen, who would take it. And a lot of this negativity, from people who didn't know or who didn't want to learn … they would mock you; they would mock me for trying to learn, or mock me [saying], "Well, why do you want to learn that? Who are you going to talk to after that's done?" … without understanding the language for what it is, not because you want to know more than someone else, or act differently from someone else, but it's just that the language itself; the way you can express your ideas and your feelings is different than it would be in English. And people who don't think about language have a hard time understanding that.

Although she has experienced a lack of support from some others in the community, she has never stopped trying to learn, but lately, she said, it has been difficult because of her busy work schedule. She stated that "recently, I would say [I feel] frustrated because I've

gotten just so far with it, and because I work somewhere else, I haven't been able to continue on. I don't feel I've been able to continue."

Even though Dianna experienced some problems as a learner, she did describe successes as a teacher. She worked for the Nation as a Curriculum Developer, an intern, and other positions in daycare and Head Start. She described becoming an intern, which required both simultaneous learning and teaching:

> Essentially our job was to learn Seneca, which was great, because I learned a lot; however, it was … incredible pressure, because we were supposed to learn language 30 hours a week, and then we were expected to teach it 10 hours a week … so it was an incredibly pressure-filled job.

Despite the contradictory values toward teaching and learning the language that some learners felt, many mentioned receiving support from Bill. Bill's role as a teacher of both adults and youth has certainly grown since he began his career. He reflected on starting his teaching career:

> I learned a lot of stuff — who really helped me a lot with a lot of that was George. I guess in my teaching career; I got out of high school, and there was really only one year when I wasn't working … I was a stay-at-home dad. I raised the twins [Autumn and Rachael] until they were a year old, and then they went into daycare. When they did that, I started working for Head Start. I was teaching Seneca language… real basic stuff … At that time [early '80s], there was a number of elders around … Fidelia Jimerson, for instance, was there, on staff as well. In fact, even Kathy Mitchell was one of the head teachers at that time, for the program.

Bill continued describing his career, moving from teaching young children to working in education administration as well as teaching older students, explaining that working with the language in additional contexts helped him to learn more about it:

> And then, I went from there, and I dabbled in education administration. I was Director of Daycare for the tribe, I think for about three or four years. And then I ran for council, and we lost. So, I no longer had a Nation job … I wound up getting hired by the [Salamanca] school district to teach in the middle school and high school. I had a team teacher, because I'm really not considered like a fluent speaker. But the elder that I had, that I was teaching with, was George. That was nice … It really put me in a mode of having to use it a lot more … George would do the presentations, and I was creating materials to kind of complement what he was doing. So I was doing tests, doing the paperwork, really, for his classes. It was nice. It was helpful to pick up, and kind of fine tune conjugation a little bit, and to hear Seneca that wasn't directly tied with ceremony all of the time.

Autumn, his daughter, also spoke at length about teaching Seneca. She shared this story of her transition from her job at the local museum into teaching:

> I actually used to work at the Seneca Iroquois National Museum. I was the museum educator there for a number of years, actually. And I didn't ever think I was going to ever leave there because I loved it. I loved being able to touch … the history. You know, we would do a lot of accessions for the museum itself, like the collections and stuff, so I loved being able to touch it and feel the history behind all of this beadwork and everything, you know, researching it. So I never thought I was ever going to leave the museum ever, and it just so happened that one of the

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high school's language teachers got too old and then they were in and out of

teachers, so I was approached to see if I would be interested in teaching at the

high school/middle school, and … It took a lot of convincing, but eventually, I

left the museum … and that's kind of where I started my language teaching, at the

middle school/high school.

Like her father, Autumn also worked with young children, except she moved from

teaching older students toward teaching younger people rather than the other way around.

She described the benefits of teaching younger learners:

I left the middle school/high school … I was hired at ECLC (Early Childhood

Learning Center) as a mentor for the language teachers who were there because

those students at the Early Childhood Learning Center were then moving up into

the schools, so they kind of wanted to have a flowing language program, so I was

hired on a consultant basis to … help out the language teachers … and so I did

that for the summer, while it just so happens that one of those permanent positions

opened up there, and so I was offered that job. And I took that right away because

I really liked working with them younger kids, because for me, I really see a big

difference in teaching the little ones and grabbing them now, while they're little,

because they're just like little sponges and they just pick that [the language] right

up. I really liked that opportunity.

Autumn's sister, Rachael, discussed her family's long-time involvement in

teaching Seneca. She said that her family had a great influence on her teaching, since she

learned from them from birth. She stated that her family urged her to become a role

model:

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We've come full-circle. We realized, growing up, we realized what's important and what we want in our lives and what values are important … We were always told … if you don't do it, who's going to do it, my family always said, so here I am.

She also expressed hope that the current situation in the schools will be successful, since she sees the youth she is teaching at the high school as embracing their Seneca identity. She explained:

You know, changes won't happen overnight. We'll see this new surge as the kids get older. But … we have teachers as early as preschools and that go all the way up to the other levels, all the way to the high school, and the students themselves are wanting more. They don't want just what the state requires or what the state has to offer or wants to require. They want more. And so that's good … I'd like to think it's because of me, but it's not always because of me. It's the environment that we've created in my classroom where they are not afraid to be Seneca, they're not afraid to be Native in general … they embrace that … If you take it away from them, they're really going to be upset.

Rachael credits her grandmother, Sandy, for setting an example to her as a teacher who nurtures Seneca identity in her students:

That's what I wanted to create for them, because that's the sense that we had when my grandma was there [at the high school]. And so, that's what we wanted to come back again and bring back. So, our program that we have now is going to work better.

One of the challenges of teaching Seneca involves motivating the parents of the children who are learning the language to be active role models for their children. Autumn reflected on the challenges she has attempted to resolve with the parents of students in her Seneca classes. She feels that parents are crucial in fostering their children's appreciation of the language and culture, although parental support is not always consistent:

I think parents like to think that they're encouraging it, but I definitely think that … they're relying on teachers and other community members to take care of and handle and teach their kids that. Because a lot of our kids ... are going back and telling their parents, "Hey, you know this is what I did, and this is what this means." So as a language teacher, I guess that's kind of helpful to us, but the bad part about that is that the kids are the ones who are trying to tell their parents and their parents aren't really caring all too much, you know, or aren't carrying that on at home in their own houses … I don't know how many kids can actually say that their parents … talk to them in Seneca language in their own home.

Autumn teaches Nikki's children at the elementary school. Nikki echoed Autumn's sentiments when the topic of her children's use of Seneca was mentioned. She talked about the pressures of everyday life, offering a parent's perspective. She stated that her children "come home and tell me what they learned. So … what I'd like to do, what I planned on doing was … [to] put the words up around the house, but it's just crazy with them in sports … it's just; I haven't had time to do it."

Since Todd is the Director of Education for the Seneca Nation, much of his interview centered on the Nation's efforts to teach Seneca. I asked him to reflect on the

various Nation programs that have taken place in the past, many of which were short-lived due to the precarious nature of funding. He explained the trends in Seneca language programming:

It's always been around, all these sort of false starts and ideas; we get rolling, get going, and you catch a few phrases, you learn basics, and then, for whatever reason, it just, it'll stop. What we've been trying to do, with the [Seneca Nation] Department of Education, is create a streamlined, educational Seneca language pipeline. So it starts in our preschools, infant room, right through toddler, pre-K, then they feed into the district, if they go to the district. We have an elementary-level, K-3, 3-5, middle school and high school.

He also talked about the certification and recognition of teachers who teach Seneca:

In the last year, we're worked with New York State to actually get certified Seneca language teachers that are recognized as licensed language teachers. Do we need to do that for the Nation? No, but for the non-Native world out there … that just lends more credence to it; that makes it an academically-acceptable program in the non-Native world.

He continued to describe the improvement of programs and their positive effects on students' learning, although a struggle for funding still impedes them. He feels that it is the state's responsibility to assist the Nation in providing sustained, quality education in Seneca language and culture:

So that pipeline exists, and we are seeing kids coming out of it that are, not saying totally fluent, but they know a whole lot more than the rest of us know. So, that's kind of shameful, but it's a good thing, too. So hopefully, we stop the false starts

… we've got it rolling now. It's funded through; it's structured through different

areas so it's not dependent on tribal funding. New York State, through tuition

contracts, is paying for it. I see that as their responsibility, part of their

responsibility, for what we gave up for New York State to exist. You know, they

said they would educate us; that includes our language and preserving our culture.

So as tribe we do it, but I also hold them accountable to do it, too, and to pay for

it. Because I know that sometimes tribal funding can be a little dicey, and you just

never know from fiscal year to fiscal year.

Since Todd mentioned the non-Native world, I asked him why it is important for

Seneca programming to gain acceptance outside the Seneca community. He explained

that the teaching of Seneca deserves more credence in the schools overall:

It's definitely important, especially for non-territory school districts. I think if we

don't take our language and translate it into those more professional materials, the

non-Native world looks at it like we're "playing Seneca." You know, we can

draw a bear on a ditto sheet and teach you how to say "bear," but if it comes in a

plastic case with a CD attached, and it's professionally printed, the non-Native

teachers take it more seriously, and we've seen that happen.

He also talked about the importance of gaining cross-curricular support in the schools to

make the teaching materials more locally relevant:

We have to have their support. We've been working with our district over the last

few years to really understand the integration of the Seneca language and culture

across the curriculum. Do they do it? Yes, but can they do more? Of course they

can do more. And ultimately, we'd like to see it infused into everything from

math to science, so that everything has an Ohi:yo'' flavor to it. Whether it's

biology class, you know, we've got everything here for that, and we can

incorporate Seneca words, all that stuff into it. But it takes the non-Native

teachers to understand why we're doing that.

Todd described the unique circumstances of having public schools on the reservation and

why some teachers and administrators have yet to understand the importance of

integrating Seneca materials into the mainstream curriculum:

I understand; a lot of them didn't grow up here; don't know this community.

They're coming in from wherever they went to school and wherever they grew

up, and all of a sudden, they're thrown onto the reservation, which they don't

really; a lot of people don't even know we're here in New York, that we have

reservations, so they end up teaching here, and here we are, with our culture and

our history, and all those things that we bring into that district.

He believes that non-Native support and careful integration of Seneca materials into the

schools as a whole will help teachers who teach Seneca to be more effective:

So they have to understand; they have to be sensitive; they have to know; they

have to want to learn, and if they don't, then they need to move on. The suburbs

are out there; go live that life. It's important. If they don't buy into the language

stuff, it's never going to take off fully in the school.

Todd also talked about making state-of-the-art materials to teach Seneca in the

schools as well as in the homes, in an effort to appeal to all facets of the educational

system as well as the needs and interests of today's younger generations. He described

the Nation's newest initiatives:

We're going for grants, and we're trying to be as creative as we can in terms of

grants, and taking Seneca language from just a spoken into the digital world, and

trying to capture kids, and using materials that kids want to use, games, and

internet … instead of the old textbook and blackboard realm. The problem is, it

costs a lot of money to hire people to develop, and then we're using a language

that isn't English, which is even more difficult to translate into the digital world,

but we're doing it. So hopefully, in a year, under a year, we'll have websites up,

and learning kits, and all those things fully developed.

Despite financial challenges, Nation administrators and staff are beginning to create high-quality digital materials. He described one particular item for teaching the Seneca language that is ready for classroom use:

[The] Seneca language mastery kit; we just finished that. There's 750 flash cards,

12 game boards, a CD. We're going to sell it for $99 a kit. So we did the

development of them; they're professionally done, so that we can get them into

the school systems, so it's not our old Xerox, photocopy, ditto sheets. Now we

actually have a first-class, number one educational tool that the non-Native

community will look at and take seriously.

Bill, who is a Curriculum Developer in the Education Department, also described

his own efforts within the department to take teaching and learning Seneca into the

twenty-first century, to keep it relevant and appeal to young learners:

I guess really, what my program has been about … is trying to record, and trying

to make it usable for people. Trying to create resources that will help people to

learn it easier, and trying to utilize technology to preserve it and teach it. I think,

any way we can get people to know it and learn it, by hook or by crook, is really

the way to go. And with all of this technology around, somebody needs to be

savvy enough to harness that. So, that's what our program has been about. We've

created a lot of printed materials, but pretty much anything we've done that's

printed has an audio component to it so people can hear fluent speakers speaking

it.

Bill described what it was like creating materials and teaching the Seneca language

before technology took off, and how he was inspired by other language teaching

materials:

As a teacher, there were a lot of things that we made, home-made all the time.

And I thought, man, it would be awesome to have this printed professionally. It

would be awesome to have these materials. You know, because French teachers

could look in a catalogue and buy their stuff. And we didn't have that. So I

decided that with this program, we're going to do some of that … It's funny

because there was a lot of good materials that were already done. The thing is,

getting them in the right hands, the thing was, maybe beefing them up a little bit,

or making them a little more teacher-friendly.

He talked about how he helped teachers from Ohi:yo'' and from other Seneca territories

come together to develop better, more relevant materials, and he also described working

with fluent speakers to record those new materials:

Getting teachers together from this Territory, Cattaraugus, and Tonawanda was

really a goal, and we did that. We had language camps, we got everybody

together. We got a bunch of fluent speakers on board that were willing to record.

And they were willing to record to the point that they were very comfortable with

it.

Initially, he said, recording fluent speakers was not an easy process. He said, "I would

turn on a recorder, and there would be silence. And we had to really prod them to get

anything." But that soon changed. He said that "now, they're relaxed enough that I spend

a lot of time with audio materials, having to edit stuff out, hehhehheh, because they're too

comfortable! … But it's been nice to do that."

Bill also discussed a complex project he and others in the Education Department

are working on with Wallace Chafe to create an online dictionary of Seneca:

Right now … we're working with Wally in creating a dictionary that's a database

that's been all of the materials that he's collected over 50 years, so it's awesome.

So we're working with some of the eggheads at RIT [Rochester Institute of

Technology] to be able to put that in a usable format so that we can access it, and

generations ahead can. We also have in the works the ANA [the federal

government's Administration for Native Americans] grant. We're trying to get

funding to create a voice synthesizer that will speak Seneca. So as long as it is

spelled correctly, there's no reason that it can't say it.

In addition, he described in detail the tedious process of taking older, lower-tech

recordings of Seneca and digitizing them for use today and into the future:

We've really been focused on trying to record and document. I'm always a good

one for that, transcribing speeches and so forth, even social dance songs and

ceremonial songs … For instance, we can take a reel-to-reel tape, or a cassette

tape and put it on CD. And it doesn't sound like much, really, but to be able to

digitize them now, we can clean it up, and we can do some pretty cool stuff with

it. We have a real big archives now, like on our hard drives, of that music and

those speeches, so whatever the next format is, then we just bump it up. We're

smart enough now that we're able to put things in WAV format, and we know

what to do, and we know what MP 3's are ... It's like, we're in demand. I'm

trying to just keep up with stuff so that we'll have it.

I asked him whether people in the community, now that they know about the projects that

are being created by the Education Department and others, are asking for that kind digital

language of material. He replied, "Oh, yeah, definitely." I also asked whether he thought

demand was growing. He said that it is on the increase, and it helps people to understand

even complex ceremonial language:

They're asking for it, and we've had some even come, and give us things, and

say, "Alright, put this on CD, and you guys can keep it. All I want is a copy" …

So it's nice. And when ceremonies now are coming up, for instance, we're able to

give them songbooks, we're able to give them a CD of it, we're able to give them

a CD of a speech with it transcribed, and the whole thing, for a lot of ceremonies.

I asked Bill whether bringing Seneca into the digital age helps people learn, and he said,

"Yeah, I think so."

Traditions and Being Traditional

Even with a concerted effort in the community to take Seneca language teaching

and learning into the digital age, central to many of the respondents' discussions was the

prevalence and value of being traditional and following ancient Seneca traditions. Sandy

said that her foster parents were very traditional people who taught her much about being

traditional and having a traditional identity. Steve explained the growing interest in tradition within the Seneca Nation government. He stated, "There's a realization of how important retaining the Seneca language, culture, and traditions really is to their [the Nation government's] political survival." Reggie explained that keeping with tradition helps her self-esteem: "[Being traditional] makes me feel better about myself, you know, keeping up with the tradition and songs." And in light of the importance of tradition to many language learners, traditional learning continues to be accessible in the community. Jessie stated that learning of the traditions is readily available through language and cultural activities at Ganöhsesge:kha:' Hë:nödeyë:sta': "The Seneca language is important to our people, to us, so that's why I'm taking part in this school, to keep our traditions going and our Seneca language."

Ceremonies and the Longhouse

Ceremonies and participation in the Longhouse are two key themes that are interconnected with the theme of maintaining traditions. These themes surfaced many times throughout the interviews, and they hold strong value for almost all of the participants. George talked about attending Longhouse services there through the years. He said, "When I go down to the Longhouse, I listen to the speakers there. Usually the great feather dance … I don't dance, but I did at one time. When I was 9, 10 years old, I used to go down with Albert Jones. We'd go down and dance." He said that he has fond memories of that. He also recalled the changing location of the Longhouse over time:

> That's when the Longhouse was on the riverbank there. Yeah. I remember when
> they moved that one from Carrolton. They tore it down. I got a picture of it in the
> house; the one that was in Carrolton. They tore it down; I imagine in the '30s,

'31-'32. When they built that cookhouse, they took the lumber from that and built that cookhouse they had in Coldspring there.

Darlene said that when her husband, who is slightly older than she is, attended school at Red House, the school children were taken to the Longhouse at ceremonial time, a practice that was discontinued by the time she attended the same school. She regrets that change in practice, saying, "I thought that was something that, had it been carried on, would have been really influential with a lot of children who are adults now, carrying on and teaching their children what it means, what it's all about, you know, this is you. That part of you that you are entitled to, that you were born with." She also talked about her role in the Longhouse as a Faithkeeper and why it is a key role to hold in the community: "Our jobs are to work for the Creator. The two head ones work for the people … We made a commitment, it's for life, that we would make sure that the Creator's calendar is followed, which is all the ceremonies … so that's our job, and we do it to the best of our ability."

Dianna, who is also a Faithkeeper, explained that there was once a time when the Longhouse was one of the only places in the community where one could hear Seneca. She described the Longhouse as a sort of haven where she could concentrate on learning certain aspects of the language:

> There was a point in time where the only place you could hear it would be through the Longhouse … So I would go to the Longhouse because I could hear it there. And I used to sit in a certain spot where there wouldn't be any kids around, or any other people talking.

Despite the importance of the Longhouse ceremonies to many in the community, both Brooke and Dar disagreed with the other participants about their current vitality. They expressed some concerns about the present welfare of the Longhouse. Brooke felt that fewer people are attending ceremonies. She remarked that the dwindling interest is a result of in-fighting, which is not permitted in the Longhouse, as well as a lack of interest:

> It seems like it was going good for a while, that everybody was going, still trying to get back into the Longhouse, that everybody was trying to be faithful to the Longhouse … and then it seems like, once that little part of evilness gets in our mind and we fight with somebody else, people stop going, people start hating each other, and … you're not supposed to do that there. That keeps people away. So that's just going to keep pushing people away … We just don't have enough people that are interested and want … they don't realize how important it is, like, once it's gone, it's gone. It's never going to come back; we never can revive it again. It's a whole thing; you have to do it as a community, not just one, two people can learn it.

Like Brooke, Dar seemed worried about the vitality of the Longhouse. He felt that, although some young people do attend, those who are attending are not getting the full benefit of the ceremonies. He expressed mixed feelings about the status of ceremonies in the community:

> Our kids can't speak the language; they can't understand. They go to the Longhouse and they dance, but that's about it. They don't know what they're there for. But they're there, I guess. That's something. They need it to be

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explained to them, like we explained to our kids when we were here why you go to the Longhouse. When the time comes, and it's your turn to stand up in the Longhouse, you've got to know what you're doing, what you're talking about. He also described the nuances of language that are specifically used in ceremonial contexts. "There's different words you've got to use for different ceremonies. When you do a funeral, everything's different there. That's the only time you use certain kinds of words, is at a funeral. You don't hear them every day."

Not everyone expressed concern over a lack of interest or understanding of the doings at the Longhouse, though. Nikki said that she takes her children to the Longhouse regularly. She tries to explain the ceremonies to them to the best of her ability. She commented, "I myself don't really know the full extent of what they're even saying, but it's the idea of being there and believing in it; it's what I want them to grow up with." Reggie expressed positive feelings about her sons' participation in ceremonies. She said that her sons are beginning to develop an interest in understanding the ceremonial cycle, which gives her great pleasure:

> [They] sort of know now the cycle. So they know when they hear so many thunders, it's time for Thunder Dance … and when it's time to plant, when it's time for Strawberry Dance, Green Corn Dance. They're starting to go outside [and say], "Oh, the strawberries are almost ready, Mom. It's almost time for Strawberry Dance." … [It] makes me feel proud, yeah. Actually, they're listening … they're learning … sometimes when we don't think they're listening, they really are listening.

Reggie also is a Faithkeeper in the Longhouse, so it is a place that is very dear to her. She said that the Longhouse is where she "was meant to be." Her duties there include "putting ceremonies through," taking care of "doings," giving thanks, and singing *ado:we* songs, a type of personal ceremonial chant. It is where she spent much of her teenage years as well. She talked about how she learned to sing there, explaining, "I got to know Herb Dowdy which [sic] is Dar's brother, and he's the one that taught me ceremonies and how to sing the songs. I learned a lot from him. I was there almost every day, and every day he would teach me something different." Ceremonial singing then grew into social singing with her friends, a practice she continues to this day:

> [Herb] taught us all how to sing, and that's how we made our girl singing group. It was me, Kim, and Marilyn were the main singers … and it's still going on now. I have a lot of singing practices at my house … *Esganye*, ladies' songs, lady dance songs …We sing; we take turns at houses. I have a lot of singing practices at my house with the girls."

She explained that singing is a major activity for her other family members as well, making her home a popular place to congregate for singing: "My husband, he sings with the guys, so they sing, and now my boys are old enough, so they sing. So I've got a lot of singing practices at my house between me and my husband and my boys singing."

Olive, Reggie's mother, is a head Faithkeeper at the Longhouse. She has been a Faithkeeper since 1986. She talked about traveling to the other Iroquoian Longhouses in the region, an activity that is still popular with many Longhouse adherents. She explained the effect of attending Longhouses where related but different languages are spoken: "When you go to other Longhouses, you try to learn what they're speaking. Because

there's Onondaga: they're a little bit different but you can understand what they're saying. And Mohawk, I can [understand] … words here and there. And Oneidas, I think I can understand a little bit of them."

John also said that he continues going to the Longhouse, where he is still learning about the ceremonies and the language. He started attending during his teenage years. He explained how he got started:

I started going to Longhouse again … We'd come home from being off at powwows … and meeting all of my friends … who went to Longhouse … eventually, they'd say, "Hey, we've got this going on; why don't you come down?" And so I would … because … it interested me … I still go to Longhouse.

He talked about learning the language of Longhouse ceremonies, and he explained his growing role as a person who delivers speeches there, even though he is also a singer:

I'm speaking a little bit more than I am singing … The language always intrigued me; it always amazed me … I love learning new words; I love hearing how to use them … but, … I guess I'm mostly considered more of a speaker than I am a singer these days …You know, I'm learning it for a reason, not to just say, "Hey, I know it." And unfortunately, with the amount of speakers that we have … I'm basically considered more of a speaker than a singer these days.

Like John, Rachael is still learning about the ceremonies and the ceremonial language. She described her process of learning the complexities of the ceremonies at the Longhouse:

I am a member of the Coldspring Longhouse … I go regularly for our ceremonies … During our longer ceremonies … I will focus that time on learning and

absorbing all kinds of things. I take notes, or me and my sister will study together, and then after it's over with, then we meet with my Gram and we go over things that we've seen during the day or words or phrases that we've heard or recognized … so it's more like, we have class even after the ceremonies in the day.

I asked participants to explain the activities in the community where they hear or use Seneca, aside from schooling. Many participants, especially the younger ones, listed their attendance at and participation in the Longhouse. I asked Dylan, the youngest respondent, about the kinds of things he does with Seneca and where he speaks it, aside from school. He replied that he hears Seneca regularly at the Longhouse. I asked him whether he speaks at the Longhouse. He replied, "Yes. I say some of it; I announce songs and dances." Lee said that he started attending the Longhouse when he was seven or eight years old. He still attends, and he has a more active role now. Jessie gave a similar response, and he added that being an intern learning the ceremonies provides assistance to others in the community:

> I do things for our ceremonies, basically for the Longhouse. Whatever they need
> help with ... like, say when we go to the ECLC [Early Childhood Learning
> Center], we help out there; stuff around the community. It's always helpful,
> because it's our people. They need help a lot sometimes, too. That's what we're
> here for.

He said that he has always gone to the Longhouse: "It's my way of life."

Travis started going when he was 15 or 16, and he said that he likes attending ceremonies, although when he first started, he struggled with a lack of understanding. He said, "It was alright; I kind of got the gist of what was going on. Now I've got kind of a

full understanding of what's going on … Now I know a lot of what's going on in the Longhouse, at the ceremonies." Ryan still keeps and uses all the paperwork he received and learned from Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta' that taught him about ceremonies. "I still look at the ones I've got when I was coming here, my folders. Songs … speeches, a lot of stuff. I still go. I still participate." He said that it helps him use the language "Pretty much wherever I can go. Wherever I go, if I see someone … I don't care; it don't matter where we are. I can still talk to them."

Blaine described learning ceremonial language and other duties at Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta'. He is learning other kinds of language, but the ceremonial takes center stage: "We have to kind of like [learn conversational language] on our own but they still want us to do both, but mainly here we work on ceremonial language." He then went on to explain that he was not always a Longhouse participant: "I was talking to these guys earlier about my little life story in a nutshell. I've only been going to Longhouse and learning our culture … since I was about 11, 11 or 12. I haven't been going all my life, really."

Steve helps at the Longhouse ceremonies and has attended there "since [he] could walk." He described the Longhouse membership as a sort of extended family. He said that being a lifetime member "gave me the opportunity to understand the socialization of our people. I learned at an early age how big a family I had; not only immediate but extended. I understood the concept of uncles. Grandfathers. Even though they weren't biologically related, I understood the relationship."

Bill reminisced about learning the ceremonies from his elders. At first, he was naïve about the ways that the elders were teaching him. He shared the following

whimsical story about his gradual learning process, explaining that his elders groomed him to become a future Faithkeeper, even when he didn't understand the process:

> I was able to learn certain things from being involved in ceremonies, even at a young age. I was real familiar with some of the sounds and some of those actual words that are in songs and so forth. It's funny because … we'd get to a certain part in a ceremony, and, a particular old guy — Dar's older brother was a good example — he'd get to this particular time in a ceremony, and he's talking about it … "Oh, this is what this is, and this is what we do with that." And I was like, wow. So the next time we'd come to that part, he'd say, "You know what?" And he'd say it again. And I was like, geez, he just said that last time. And I thought; it must be he thinks I forget it. Then the next time he would come, he would say it again. And I was like, geez, thinking, man, does he think I'm an idiot, or something; I can't remember it? … And now, when we come to that part, I'm the one who says that. I'm like, Hoh! Now I get it! I get why he said that.

Sandy also talked about the ways in which she learned about ceremonies from her foster parents when she was a young girl growing up on the Cattaraugus Territory:

> I attended all of the Thanksgiving ceremonies with them [foster parents] that were held at the Newtown Longhouse. I learned a lot about ceremonials and ceremonial language, and still continue to be a part of the ceremonial cycle … I was taken to private ceremonies and all of that language was just always there.

She felt that ceremonial language should take precedence over other forms of language learning, and she stressed an important difference between ceremonial and everyday language when she noted the lack of simple terms in the ceremonial language. She also

expressed the belief that keeping the ceremonies going will ensure that everything else falls into place:

> To us now, our survival is our ceremonies. And that has a language in itself. And we can't be talking about *skad*, *deknih*, *seh* [one, two, three] … when there's thanksgiving that needs to be done to the maple, or to the earth and the sun and the moon, and the stars and the rain, and the waters and the seasons, when we're getting ready to plant something. We can't be talking about colors, we can't be naming *ji:yäh* and *dago:ji*, and *sowak* [dog, cat, and duck], and that, because it's just … not relevant. So we feel that the ceremonial and the sacred language is what needs to be carried on, because it's our ceremonies that are going to keep us safe. And it's our ceremonies that are going to keep us who we are.

Sandy also expressed that the deep concern for the survival of ceremonies should begin with teaching the youngest people about them even while they learn the most basic language:

> We need to know how to bring babies into the world, and how to speak to them, and that's the first language that they need to know, and that they need to hear, and we need to help mothers speak the language while they're caring for their babies … so they know that that's important. They want them to have the culture but they need to have the language also, and even before they're born and then after they're born and continue to speak as much as they can to them, and to have them be involved with ceremonies, and to hear the sound of the language. And then we need to know how to give thanks and to follow each cycle, to follow the

language for each cycle. And to give thanks ... And that's what we want our young people to know how to do because that is our survival.

Ganö:nyök and Gáíwi:yo:h

The *Ganö:nyök*, or the Thanksgiving Address, is part of the ceremonial language, but it is also a speech that is part of everyday events such as opening a social dance or beginning and ending a school day or a typical day at home. Another part of the Longhouse ways that transmits the language is *Gáíwi:yo:h*, or the Code of Handsome Lake, which is recited during a ceremonial period in early fall that reminds Longhouse followers of Handsome Lake's teachings. Respondents mentioned both the *Ganö:nyök* and *Gáíwi:yo:h* during the course of the interviews, and some commented on both their instrumental and complex natures.

Sandy described how the *Ganö:nyök* is a good example of how the language works as a whole. "Our whole language is based on relationships to other living things … trees and natural elements and birds and our relationship to the weather and the seasons and all of it has a whole lot more meaning than just verbs or nouns." Dylan is learning how to say the speech at the Longhouse and at other public events. He has been working on longer versions as well as adding particular elements from his learning of *Gáíwi:yo:h* and other stories of his own to personalize it and make his own special version. George also commented that his great-grandson, Frankie, who also learned it from Sandy, "can go through that *Ganö:nyök*." Jessie noted learning thankfulness from the speech, a message that permeates the recitation. John shared a story about his four-year-old daughter asking his parents to "play" *Ganö:nyök* with her parents. She already knows a short version of it by rote. With respect to the adult students learning about the

ceremonial language in his school, Dar has noticed "A big change in their attitude, a big change in their learning. They do *Ganö:nyök*." Darlene noted that she often hears the *Ganö:nyök* at community events. "It's spoken at every, I'd say the majority of our Tribal meetings, and I would say a lot … of the functions, just a lot of community stuff that's going on, they use it for the opening if they have a meeting."

Bill remarked that learning the *Gáíwi:yo:h* is a complex process since it combines ceremonial and everyday language, but certain speakers were able to make it more accessible for him due to their expert delivery:

> People that are really steeped in things like old school *Ganö:nyök* vocabulary – that's not in *Gáíwi:yo:h*, because they're telling the story, and it's … almost everyday life that they're talking about. Of course, there's some of those [ceremonial] terms in there, but it was like, really awesome to hear that and be able to understand it. People like Huron Miller. His Seneca speaking was … pretty animated, you know, when he was telling that *Gáíwi:yo:h* story, and it was easy to understand him. I didn't have to strain to keep up with it or anything. It was like, "Oh, okay;" I could see the picture. Really … if you're speaking right, that's what you should get from it. So … it made it a lot easier.

Nikki remarked that she is trying to raise her children to live by the *Gáíwi:yo:h* and to start them young since it takes effort and time to learn. John also discussed learning more about the Seneca language while learning *Gáíwi:yo:h*. He explained his process of learning language, culture, and religion simultaneously. It gave him great satisfaction:

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Through learning the language, you understand more of the … culture, the

religion. That's the basis of it. That is the culture; that is the religion. So, when

traveling and hearing *Gáíwi:yo:h* … and then understanding more … I remember

sitting next to one of the guys from Onondaga … and to hear that speaker, and to

understand what he was saying … I think that's probably the biggest thing. I

understood things more, more clearly, I guess, and I was able to uh, just get more

out of it.

Sandy explained that even if the Longhouse is destroyed once again, they will still

continue to maintain their beliefs and their identity as Seneca people. She said that

"having a belief is what keeps us *Ögwéöweh*. Having a, and I don't want to say religion, I

want to say belief, because we're sovereign enough that they can't even terminate that.

We'll always have our beliefs and our ceremonies. I don't care if they burn down the

Longhouse, we will still give thanks every day, in our own way."

The Future of Seneca

Many of the participants shared their views on the future of their own language

and culture. Steve expressed a sense of optimism about the future of Seneca. He said, "I

think … we might never reach the fluency, our generation, but our kids could easily

become fluent again." I asked George whether the Seneca community should continue

their efforts to revitalize the language and culture, and he replied, "Oh, they should keep

it going. Definitely. It's part of our heritage; we should." Ryan found it hard to imagine

life without the language: "That's all we've got. There's a lot out there to be learned. If

we lose it, it would be weird. Really weird. So we've just got to keep it going." Nikki

said that she hopes that it carries on. When I asked Olive if she thought the language

would continue on, she said, "I hope so. We just have to keep trying and teaching the kids, yes."

Dianna described Seneca as "rare and precious." She commented that some people do not realize its value: "When people live here all the time, they kind of take it for granted and they don't realize how rare and precious it is … So when I say it's precious, it's worth learning; it's because it kind of expands your mind and teaches you to look at things differently." She articulated uncertainty about the future of the language, iterating that the whole community will have to make the effort:

> If we're going to revitalize our language, we need to get serious about it and work together for it and realize that everyone's input is necessary. It's not going to be Christians; it's not going to be Longhouse; it's not going to be older people or younger people. It's got to be everybody and in a concerted effort. Because right now, there are people who really care a lot about it and want to do it, but they don't have the resources to do it. And the people with the resources are not interested … and … they have yet to perceive the value of maintaining our language. So I don't know how it's going to work out.

Darlene compared the nurturing of a language with tending a garden. She explained that she loves to garden, and she wove a detailed analogy of Seneca language and culture with gardening. She compared the survival of Seneca with sowing seeds and using the right tools:

> I always say your garden is there. It's up to you to use your tools to make something, an end result, or blossom. Learning your language is not easy, and I guess the biggest thing is to encourage. And that's what our elders do. They

encourage. And the leaders, including myself, I say, "Don't give up." Encourage

them to continue on. Bring those babies; talk to them. Speak to them as much as

you can … you are doing your job. You are serving a purpose … As long as …

that fire keeps burning, we will exist, and we've existed for this many years, but it

takes, it takes everyone … So there's some seeds out there. It goes back to the

garden again. Give it some water; nourish it; encourage it, and we'll get there.

Todd also talked about having and using the right tools for preserving the language. He

explained that revitalization is not a matter of documenting the language, but one of using

the existing tools as a means of teaching and learning it, although not everyone uses those

tools. It takes the masters to teach the apprentices how to use them:

I totally feel we have it preserved very well. It's preserved on tape, and CD, and

video, and DVD, and digital, so it's preserved for archaeologists 200 years from

now to find them and figure out how to play them, and go, "Ah!" … and it's there

for our people to learn, too, but they don't have the heart and desire to do it … I

see a core group of young people really catching on and wanting to and getting

into it … I think if we give them the tools, then they will, because there is that

core group that seems to have a little bit of a fire in them … sometimes, too much

fire … but I like it … they have that extra spirit. And it's really them that we've

got to look to. It's really connecting our elders, and our fluent people with those

young people who still have the brain capacity, not that we don't all have it, but

those windows of opportunity of brain development where you can really capture

language. So if we can just connect them and get them going, and we are; we're

seeing it.

I asked Todd whether he felt that the younger generations are able to learn how to use the tools sufficiently enough to keep the language in daily use. He believes that the schools are doing more than ever to teach the language. The big challenge, he remarked, is getting the language back into the homes again. He characterized the challenge for the community to mobilize Seneca youth:

> They probably know more Seneca than we know, because we structured our educational programs and incorporate Seneca language starting from preschool right on through, so they're getting exposure daily. You know, the problem with that whole system is that the kids are learning in school, but you go home to a home where it's not spoken. And, I know we talked about using English as a Second Language model. The fallacy of that is the fact that [in some places, there are] these kids [who] are Spanish speaking, and are immersed in an English-speaking environment. We don't have a Seneca-immersed environment for the kids to go home to, so that doesn't really work here. So it really takes the commitment of everybody to learn, otherwise it's not going to happen.

Todd explained his views that the culture and identity of the people as Seneca will survive without the language, since he felt that the ceremonies, culture and beliefs are stronger than the language. Yet loss of the language would be profound:

> The language is an integral part of who we are and what we are. And I don't necessarily feel that without a language, we're not going to be Seneca anymore, but we're going to lose a major part of who we are. We'll always be Seneca … so we're always going to have that blood; we're always going to have that genetic part of us. You know, culture is more than language; culture is that interaction

between people, that understanding, that community. If we lose the language …

we lose a major portion of it, but we're not going to stop being Seneca … We'll

still talk to each other in Seneca-English, if you will, or Spanish, or whatever it is

that we end up speaking. You know, the cultural piece is very important, too, you

know, our songs, our dances, our ceremonies, and that goes down to a personal

choice ... But it's important to know, to respect everybody as Seneca, no matter

their beliefs. It's our arts, our crafts; it's all those things that help to make us who

we are, to really set us apart. And those things, I don't think we'll ever lose. The

language, I have a huge fear of that … I do. I don't want to see it die, but then,

I'm not learning it as much as I could. I'm hoping that with independent study,

you could learn it.

Unlike Todd, Rachael views the Seneca language as integral to Seneca identity. She
attributed the strength of the language and identity in her family to her family's support
system, and to their admonitions that the language and culture are in danger:

We were very encouraged, I would say. In fact … my Gram, and the people her

generation, like Dar and others … they've been pounding into our heads since we

were kids about how we're going to lose our language, and it's going to die, and

who's going to do our ceremonies? And so those are the sorts of values about

language that were instilled in us. So we always had a sense of urgency to learn it.

So, because they gave us that urgency to learn it, I do the same to my students …

I get on my soapbox about the same thing in regards to like learning, and who's

going to do it, and it's going to be gone, and then what are we going to do, how

are we going to do our ceremonies, and that it's much of our identity, and that's it

more than just earning a grade, and that it's about our survival as Senecas. And

without our language, we can't call ourselves Senecas.

She places high value on the language and the culture, so in light of the high stakes that

the language holds, I asked her to share her perspective on the viability of Seneca in the

future:

I think … we're getting closer to being able to do that [revitalize Seneca]. I hear it

a little bit more now than when I was a kid ... We've got a pretty good program

established within the last couple of years. And we only can get bigger and we

can only get better, actually.

Reggie linked the survival of Seneca with the significance of the Longhouse. She

stated that keeping the culture and language is critical "so that we have a Longhouse and

somewhere to go, and my kids, you know, they look forward to whatever's coming up

next." Since the Longhouse featured heavily in her conversation, I questioned Reggie

about why it is so vital. She replied that it should be there for future generations. She

said, "It's kind of hard to explain, really. Just keep it going, and make sure that it's

always there for them and then their kids when they have kids." John also linked the

survival of Seneca with the well-being of future generations. He responded at length

about the relationship of language and identity:

There's a lot to it; there's a lot that goes with that … One of the biggest reasons to

keep it going is so the little ones … know who they are … I don't think you know

who you are until you know the language … It's such a big concept … and when

you're hearing these children talk, when you hear anybody talk, it's a language

that survived for years and years and years.

He compared the state of Seneca favorably with that of other Indian nations, although all nations, including the Senecas, must continue to work at revitalization:

> Even though we're doing probably not as good as we would like to be, we're doing a lot better than a lot of other tribes are doing. And you hear people's stories about that … probably in a couple years, those tribes are not going to have their language and they're not going to have their people, those that are down to one fluent speaker, two fluent speakers … I really think that it's important for them to know who they are, and to understand the concept that … basically that we've survived this whole time. I think that that's the biggest thing. They need to understand their culture; they need to understand their religion; they need to understand who we are as people, as Native people.

John also conveyed optimism about his generation's role in passing on the knowledge from the elders to the children to ensure a workable future for Seneca revitalization and identity:

> I've heard Dar say … a ton of times; we're not always going to be here … [We should be] starting with these little ones, and trying to get them interested and everything else; it's … laying a foundation for them. And it's preparing them for when we're not going to be here … I'm just young, so I'm hoping to be here for quite a while, but you never know, I guess. I think … we're preparing them for when we're not here anymore. And so this way, when they have questions, hopefully those questions have already been answered … with the little ones anyway, when they get stuck with something, I think that years down the road, they can say "I remember" … and it continues the way that it's going today.

Things will continue … at least while I'm here. As far as I can see, it'll continue

with the next generation, too, and hopefully they'll see and remember what we

did and they'll do it too, including all, if any, mistakes that we made. And they

can fix it. And they can do it better … it's a big concept … it's intertwined … it's

the basis of everything, at least as far as our culture goes and as far as our religion

goes, and they need to know it. And without it, they're just people.

Adrian, who works in the Nation Education Department, was busy planning,

directing and teaching at the summer program at Ganöhsesge:kha:' ' Hë:nödeyë:sta', so

he was not able to meet for a formal interview. Instead, he provided a 30-page plan to

revitalize Seneca at Ohi:yo', part of a project he completed for an Educational Research

class at Buffalo State College. He envisions a comprehensive organization called the

Onödowa'ga' Institute. The main objective of the Institute is to "work towards restoring

our traditional linguistic and cultural heritage as a central part of daily life. Our people

will be educated, empowered, and involved in the process of ensuring that the way of life

we inherited from our ancestors will continue to be passed on to our future generations."

His plan includes goals in the areas of administration, public relations, pedagogy,

professional development, materials/resources, and curriculum, among others. His

detailed list of language programs includes a language nest; teacher training; master

apprentice teaching; community marketing; an artisans' cooperative; adult language life

ways and community open house projects; curriculum and materials development;

seminars, workshops, and research; and an elders' advisory board. He also delineated

several activities for promoting the language and culture, including a storytelling series in

the local elementary schools, a snow snake[29] club, community road sign and store sign projects, translation of book-of-the-month, establishing language shows on the local community access television channel, and much more. His plan shows a similar optimism for the future of language and culture in the community.

Dar, who drew connections between the distant past and the remote future, talked about the legacy that he will be leaving as an elder, Faithkeeper, and fluent speaker, describing his work as a last-ditch effort to revitalize the language in terms that echoed with regret as well as determination:

> We've got prophecies, from 2,000 years ago, 200 years ago, to now. In our prophecies, this is what's going to happen to us. They were pretty well on the money. And then they told us that the schools and education, the state, were going to take our kids away from us. They already have. There's no way around it. This is our last go-around. There's not going to be no more language. We'll be like other nations across the country that can't speak their language. It's kind of sad, but it's going to happen. We're just trying to keep what little we have left here. We're going to continue. That's what it's all about, because we're a survival school. We're trying to survive. Well, we've survived this long, for the last 500 years. Maybe we'll survive another 500 years.

Dylan, perhaps understanding the urgency at his young age and emulating Dar's legacy, remarked that it is important to keep the language and culture going "Because if you don't, nobody's going to learn it, and we're just going to lose it. We've got to hold on to it tight and don't lose it. Or, we'll just be normal people. Basically, [being Seneca is]

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[29] Snow snake is a traditional game; participants throw a sharpened stick along a moistened chute cut into the snow. The object is to throw the stick the longest distance.

what we were made to be; what we were born to be." Sandy talked about carrying Seneca from this life into the next:

> [Seneca is] whatever it needs to be. We need to be able to take care of our people from the time they are born until the time that they pass, for as long as they're on the earth. That's their language … We were put on the earth with everything that there is including the language and everything that we need to survive, until the time that we don't need that anymore. Everything is here. So we won't need it in our afterlife because it'll already be there.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Importance of Study

This study is a small contribution to the huge topic of language revitalization. Saving a language and culture from oblivion is a goal that is not easy to meet, or even fully understand. Some language communities have worked diligently but were not able to stem the dominance of English and prevent English from replacing their heritage languages; yet some are successful in meeting this challenge.

Many factors contribute to the overall success or failure to revive languages on the brink of extinction, and no two communities are alike. Māori, Hawaiian, and Diné (Navajo) are large speech communities that have made remarkable progress from near-extinction to enjoying relatively large numbers of speakers, in some cases with national support. Others, such as Huron, a language community that has not had a fluent speaker in generations, must rely on documentation to help prospective speakers learn the language. Although fluent speakers are a long way off for small communities with "sleeping" languages like the Huron, it is possible to make inroads; hopeful Huron speakers are now starting to hold classes in communities in Canada near Quebec City. In Leanne Hinton's estimation (2001a), whatever the type of community, large or small, "some level" of revitalization may be reached, although at different rates and to different degrees (p. 6). The Seneca community at Ohi:yo' has its own microcosm of intricacies and nuances that reflect, yet also stand apart from, other communities facing the same situation of language endangerment.

Before I began this project, I had naively thought that my job was to find a solution or key to keeping the Seneca language active in the community; but I soon understood that "finding the answer" is a monumental task that no single person can resolve. Furthermore, I realized that the participants in this study already know how to address their own situations, and that they have been working for many years to revitalize Seneca. They have cooperated with other Nations who face the same monumental task. They have developed a wealth of diverse ideas and initiated many programs and initiatives. As I considered my role in conducting this study, I began to wonder if I could do anything at all to help them. At the very least, the participants of this study have been generally appreciative of the interest and involvement of people such as myself who express interest in their community. Knowing about this appreciation helped me to work with my dissertation committee to understand that conducting a project with a carefully-constructed plan to ask the participants to share their perspectives on their language and culture is helpful in its own right. This project simply became an opportunity to give voice to their opinions and experiences.

To conduct a project that addresses language revitalization for Senecas at Ohi:yo is to forge a new path. Much has been done to describe and disseminate information about the language itself, but an ethnography of any part of the Seneca community has not been conducted in over half a century. I wanted to compile current information that is not available in documented form, and to ask questions that have never been asked before. I had hoped that my study would bring generations together and form a composite image of Senecas toward current language revitalization at Ohi:yo. These gracious participants spoke about what was important to them; and in documenting what they had

to say, I hope that this project offers them encouragement and gives the community a talking point to use in the near and perhaps distant future.

In this chapter, I present an overview of this study, returning to the three original sets of research questions and presenting the results in summary form. I then present the implications of the study, offer a few suggestions, and reflect on the research.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

Returning to the research questions that frame this study, answers from participants varied greatly. I will return briefly here to these questions:

4. *What attitudes are held by selected members of the Seneca community regarding their traditional language and culture? How do they feel about learning the language or engaging in cultural activities such as dance and musical performance? Are they more inclined to favor certain activities over others? If so, which ones, and what reasons do the people in the community give for their preferences?*

As far as the first set of questions is concerned, attitudes in the wider community vary considerably. There is a part of the community that has been assimilated completely and adheres to mainstream values; these were not included in the study, although echoes of the pressures and factors that led to their discussion could be heard in the testimony of my participants. Most of the participants feel that people who maintain mainstream values make up the majority of their community. And in contrast to this group, most of the participants in this study still maintain the traditional culture, if not the language; their attitudes reflect a sense of pride in being Seneca people, and being apart from the mainstream. Yet some did express a feeling of regret that traditional ways are in decline.

In spite of the decline, almost all expressed hope and satisfaction with learning the language and maintaining cultural activities. Many participants engage in singing, dancing, and attending Longhouse ceremonies. Their desire to carry on these traditional activities is centered on the importance of maintaining faith and belief in Longhouse traditions and Seneca culture.

2. *What practices are being carried out by members of the community who are committed to revitalizing the language? What is the community's response to these, and what attitudes do the community members seem to hold toward them? Are some initiatives seen in a more positive light than others in the broader community? If so, which initiatives are these, and why are they favored, given the testimony of people in the community?*

Regarding the second group of questions, there are multiple answers. Adult participants are attending classes where they learn the ceremonial language so that they may become speakers or Faithkeepers in the Longhouse. A majority of those interested in revitalization do attend Longhouse ceremonies and other doings, along with a small minority of other Longhouse followers in the wider community. Some adult participants are trying to teach their young children phrases and commands, while a few others are teaching language classes and summer camps in schools and in a few homes. Several participants and community members dance, sing, and/or work at powwows, at other community-wide events, while some have formed smaller community-based dancing and singing groups, both formal and informal. A few deliver the *Ganö:nyök* or other public addresses at events in the area and the wider region. Groups of people work for the Nation and in other places in the community that indirectly support Seneca teaching.

The traditional community's response to these activities seems to be mainly positive and welcoming, although some people expressed regret at not being able to do more, and others maintain a commitment to less traditional, more mainstream values. As far as the activities that are seen in more positive light than others, it is difficult to judge from the data that were collected in this study. The Longhouse does seem to be the most stable and regularly-attended activity since people who attend are committed to their faith and to the maintenance of the ceremonies and beliefs. Schooling initiatives have been more touch-and-go, partly because of funding problems, and partly because of the competition with public schooling, discussed below.

3. *How do initiatives within the community relate to educational and civic policies in the broader mainstream Anglo society? Again, what are the Seneca people's perspectives on this relationship, and on their own position in the broader society? What is the people's sense of the future of the culture and language?*

Much of the information gleaned for the third set of questions is discussed below. In light of the long history of dominance and takeover of Seneca language and culture by the mainstream society, many Seneca initiatives have been in direct competition with mainstream ones. Many people expressed a feeling of separation from mainstream values, explaining the need to leave Seneca aside at times when mainstream activities consumed their lives. These people described a role conflict between Seneca and non-Seneca roles, causing them to lose focus on traditional ways when they met the demands of the mainstream Anglo culture. Some talked about a sense of guilt at not meeting personal language and cultural goals, causing some to abandon those goals altogether. At

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several times during interviews, respondents described the societal pressures that overwhelm their Seneca goals, since the practical context of mainstream, English-speaking culture subsumes the Seneca community in many ways. The pace of life moves too quickly for them to slow down and learn or concentrate on Seneca tradition.

Yet some expressed the need to adapt the traditional to the modern; several are doing this in their own way, either slowing the pace of their lives in deliberate ways and at selected times, or adapting traditional cultural values, for instance in the area of new technology. A few respondents expressed a need and desire for Seneca policies to hold fast and to work in tandem with educational and civic policies of the wider community. A particularly poignant example of the strain between Seneca and mainstream ways and the need to address this disconnect is Dylan, the youngest respondent and a talented athlete. Dylan is torn between learning traditional Seneca language and culture from Sandy, his great-grandmother, and attending public school so that he can play on the football team.

With regard to their perspectives on the future of the culture and language, respondents gave mixed answers; some participants were wholly ambivalent. They all felt a strong desire to maintain Seneca, but some were doubtful of its future success, some were hopeful, and some had both positive and negative outlooks. More on these issues is discussed below.

<div align="center">Implications</div>

Attempting to articulate what this study implies is a daunting task. There are no simple concepts that can easily be culled from the participants' thoughts. It is very difficult to make generalizations. Attitudes toward revitalization seemed mostly favorable, and participants were fairly cohesive in their dispositions. For the elders, it is

easy to see that the language and culture are still important to many. Many expressed an interest in offering encouragement to people who strive to learn to speak Seneca and maintain the customs. For the younger generations, what seemed salient is an appreciation of their elders and a desire to participate in language learning and cultural activities. Patterns are not always easy to pinpoint: many younger people are positive about learning the language and its future prognosis, yet some young people do think the prospects are dire. Some elders displayed uncertainty about the future of the language and culture, yet many remained hopeful. In many cases, both uncertainty and hope were expressed by the same individual. These differences are owing to the complex history of this small community and also to the wellspring of feelings expressed by people who are considering the prospect that their language and culture may disappear in their own lifetimes. Since the very nature of this topic is quite profound, so is the upshot of the beliefs expressed by individuals.

Events before and after the turn of the twentieth century, such as boarding schools, living in poverty, World War II and the CCC Camps, the Kinzua Dam, and the state's takeover of Indian education have come and gone. Some of these events, such as the young men going away to work at the CCC Camps, were rarely mentioned by people in the community as having had a negative influence on the retention of Seneca; yet some did remember these events, and those who did were aware of the ways in which they hastened the decline of Seneca language and culture. This brings to mind the general principle offered by Hinton (2001a), that "factors that silenced the language," in many cases, are still in effect long after the events themselves are nearly forgotten (p. 13). Also inherent in this process of outside control is Kipp's (2009) description that the taboos

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associated with linguistic, political and cultural dominance may remain ingrained for several generations.

Yet it seems that acquiescence to outside control has shifted in recent years in favor of more autonomous local decision-makings in some cases. Now the pendulum is swinging toward more Seneca Nation control of economic development, health and education. The community commemorates the Kinzua Dam relocation and, although there is still a somber mood and the people express that they will not forget the trauma, they still celebrate the milestones that have been achieved since then. Nation Education since its inception in the latter half of the twentieth century has faced fragmentation in its programming; but a few participants have noted that it is beginning to stabilize and become more streamlined.

Perhaps most significant and the most evident pattern among participants of this study is the importance of Longhouse as well as the *Gáíwi:yo:h*, *Ganö:nyök*, and traditional lifeways; these were emergent themes, not elicited by me for the most part, showing the importance of these ancient customs to the people. Some indicated that these Longhouse-related activities are the only settings and events where they hear the language. Hinton (2001a), in an explanation of the difficulties that often plague native speakers, asserts that perhaps the worst of these becomes evident when one realizes that most people in the community are not able to comprehend or respond in the language. The people who only hear Seneca at the Longhouse face such a difficulty.

Facing problems such as this, there has been a move to concentrate Seneca revitalization into a kind of "triage" protection of ceremonial language. There is great interest and participation in learning the language of songs and dances, yet less ability to

use the language on an everyday basis. This may be because songs and dances are relatively much easier to learn in Seneca than is everyday usage, owing to the complexity of the language and its stark differences to English, the first language of the majority of Seneca learners. Not having fluent speakers in the daily lives of the learners is a huge obstacle. Nevertheless, there is strong motivation to keep the religious use in the Longhouse a vital part of Seneca learning and participation.

There lacks a "critical mass" of fluent speakers of Seneca that other languages, such as Mohawk, enjoy. Returning to UNESCO's (2003) description, if there are no new speakers of a language or it is used in fewer domains, the language is seriously endangered. In 20 years, there may be Seneca used only in songs and religious domains but not in conversation. Different facets of Seneca culture may continue, some in more modernized ways such as Midwinter ceremonies. Even if the language falls into disuse in daily conversation, its practice in the Longhouse remains a critical goal for almost all the participants, and arguably for many others in the community.

Yet at the same time, these participants remain optimistic, even if not realistic about Seneca conversation. Although there is some dissent about politics and language in the community, none of it was discussed in the interviews. Kroskrity (2009) advises researchers to pay attention to various ideas and even disagreement in small communities, but it seemed as if the participants were willing to put them aside to discuss the importance of the language to them all. More is being done to encourage the use of ordinary conversational Seneca; so while the triage continues, many still press on to widen the arena for the use of Seneca, such as offering summer education programs, small adult classes, and language nest teaching. Hinton (2001a) asserts that a half-hour

per week of instruction, although not enough to help children build fluency, may help them develop an appreciation for the language. Hinton also advises that an hour's worth of effective teaching per day may indeed help children to build fluency. This sentiment reflects Sandy's view that it is important just to save and preserve what can be saved. We cannot know the outcome of the nest or the future of the preschool children who attend it, but perhaps there may be opportunities yet undeveloped for these children to follow adult speakers throughout their lives.

The appreciation for language programs is starting to build momentum in public and private educational settings, as seen in participants' testimonies. It is not yet clear whether the outcome of the present movements will be maintenance of only ceremonial language, maintenance of the minimal use of everyday language, or ultimately the fostering of a community of fluent speakers. Still, the enthusiasm and energy of those committed to the language and culture suggest that observers and supporters may have reason to look to positive outcomes, at whatever level the community can achieve them.

Suggestions

For Active Proponents of Revitalization

It is difficult to offer suggestions to a group of people who already understand the gravity of their own situation and who have been adept at finding the most innovative solutions. Participants often commented on the struggle to regain fluency in Seneca. Every bit of language use, even if not fluent use, contributes to the overall increased use of Seneca. For some, fluency is not attainable, but if the community continues to provide various opportunities to learn the language, fluency may yet be a reality for some new

learners, although the work will not be easy. Proficiencies of all types and at all levels should be a welcome addition to the picture of Seneca in this community.

Another concept that enters into the conversation of revitalizing Seneca is immersion. Total immersion teaching of any language surrounded by English and its culture is challenging, and it can be elusive when there is a dearth of speakers. A few participants who do not experience regular use of the language explained that they do not have enough opportunity to use the language with others, reducing their ability to speak the language with versatility, using correct grammar and pronunciation. Somehow, the community needs to develop a cohort of regular users, or at the least, to hold conversation classes that meet for maximal amounts of time, allowing speakers to use the language regularly. In this community, elders are a crucial component to attaining an immersion environment, since they are the only generation that can still use the language fluently. The language nest is perhaps the best setting for joining fluent elders and younger learners and parents, but time and money are limiting factors. If enough financial support can be found, total immersion in the language nest may be an achievable goal.

Since the Longhouse is an essential aspect of the Seneca community, dovetailing Longhouse activities and membership with the Nation Education Department and other community initiatives may increase people's efforts to grow Seneca conversation in the home. Bringing all facets of the community together and keeping elders active may facilitate the process of increasing opportunities for conversation in Seneca. Following Adrian's proposal for the language institute, a comprehensive plan for inclusion of community-wide Seneca programs and initiatives in the schools and in the public sector, will go a long way to establishing or developing these types of opportunities. It may also

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be prudent to groom apprentices for Dar, Sandy, Bill, Todd, and others that hold key positions in the community.

Another hurdle to overcome is the problem of providing continuity for learners of all ages, as well as the lack of involvement of people in the broader community, especially parents of potential young learners. At the present, young children and adults enjoy the most intense learning, provided through Ganöhsesge:kha:'; but few if any children of elementary and preteen age now attend the school, and those that have attended in the past have chosen to leave for public schools, either to compete in sports or for other reasons involving mainstream pressures, as discussed above. Public schools are not able to provide an intense immersion learning environment due to state regulations and budget limitations.

A big stumbling block is also the parents' attitudes; according to Sandy, parents fear that without a state-supported education, their children will not get ahead. Even the parents of her very young language nest learners are saying that they want the children to attend public kindergarten so that they will learn reading and writing skills in English. Parents who wish to send their children to the nest or to Ganöhsesge:kha:' have to explain to state authorities that they want to forego public education, which requires a measure of toughness, as Sandy explained in her interviews.

For Concerned Others in the Seneca Community

Even for non-learners in the Seneca community, there is still an important role to play in Seneca revitalization, as many are supporters of the language and culture and are eager to see the people striving to continue to become successful. Although there are different opinions on issues such as the cause of language shift and the future of the

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language and culture, participants all have the same goals, regardless of their degree of personal involvement in reaching those goals. They all want to see the language and culture continue. Everybody has a job to do, regardless of their language ability. Some people are offering administrative and staff support, some are seeking higher education, some are artisans, craftspeople, singers and dancers, some are parent supporters of students and school and community initiatives, and some are spiritual guides. People are needed in all those roles to help spur on those who are teaching and learning the language, and everyone is indispensible in serving the overall goal of Seneca revitalization. Participants in this study and in the wider community are fulfilling these roles to different degrees.

For Those in the Mainstream Community

There is much to say about the potential for attitudes and support outside the Seneca community. Many individuals offer support for my participants, but more organized assistance is necessary and achievable. It is the responsibility of the state and of mainstream schools to help foster Seneca revitalization, since it is the English-dominant state-funded systems that helped usher in its decline. The school system has augmented its Seneca language offerings, thanks to the Seneca Nation Education Department, but much more can be done. Seneca language and culture classes could be offered during a greater portion of the school day, and culture and language could be infused more into all school subjects. Since more teachers are needed to grow educational programs and serve more students, funding could be provided for more learners of Seneca to work toward achieving fluency as well as developing language teaching skills. Rather than compete against private Seneca education at Ganöhsesge:kha:', that state

could work to support it by facilitating children who want to attend private school but still play for mainstream athletic teams. Funds could also be allocated for special initiatives such as the language nest, which currently operates without much assistance, most of it from the Nation Education Department. Steady and sustainable funding would help more learners to devote more time toward learning ceremonial language and customs. The list of needs is a long one, and sustainability of programming is a perhaps the most serious need that could be satisfied with the help of the very institutions that had sought to eradicate Seneca in the past. The mainstream community practically owes it to the people who have dedicated their lives to revitalize the language and culture. Doing so allows for greater cultural diversity in the area, an appreciation for and benefit from the strengths of Seneca culture, knowledge, philosophy, and spirituality, a positive sense of wellbeing for the Seneca people so that they can continue to function and to thrive in their businesses and institutions in the region, and a continuance of Seneca art, music, dance, and celebrations of the finer aspects of life. Seneca language and culture still have a lot to give to and share with the dominant society.

Concluding Thoughts

Each of these suggestions is a monumental task; without sufficient funding, they may not even be possible. Although many people have begun programs with little to no funding in the past, many programs have become false-starts without sustained support. One of the false starts includes the Nation's funding cuts of the first cohort of adult ceremonial language learners; funding was later reallocated, but for a different set of learners. Time is critical, and people lack the time for language when they have to work to support their families. Since funding would enable many people to make learning

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Seneca their means of making a living, hopefully these participants and others in the community can continue their efforts to seek support and funding from inside and outside the community.

<center>Reflections on the Research</center>

Although the issue of overall Seneca language preservation had not yet been researched before this study, the study itself is not without limitations. I did not interview parents who never chose to send their children to Ganöhsesge:kha:' since it was difficult to identify and contact those parents. Also, due to time constraints, I did not interview anyone in Cattaraugus or Tonawanda territories. Speaking with them might have given a better overall picture of Seneca, since each territory has its own community makeup. Also, I would have liked to talk with more elders and children, as well as former education directors for the Nation. In addition, some potential participants who had indicated an interest in giving an interview did not respond during the time frame for my interviews. Future projects will include input from all these elements of Seneca society.

Nevertheless, I am grateful to the people who were a part of this study and who provided important input. Despite all the assaults on the Senecas from the time of contact with Europeans, to missionary and state takeover of education, to decimation of their landbase to make way for a dam to control floods on the Allegheny River, until the present-day fights for sovereignty, Seneca language and culture are still a vital part of this small community. That in itself is a testament to the strength and resiliency of the people.

All the same, many of the people in this study and in the wider community remain thankful, industrious, hopeful, and confident. They are very future-focused, even if the future of Seneca is unclear. They cherish their family relationships and maintain strong

family values. They are genuinely welcoming; I was invited into busy workplaces, locations within the wider community, and even their homes. Everyone was happy to arrange their busy lives to talk about the language and share their thoughts with me, even if they had never met me before. I hope that I have deepened old friendships and forged new ones along the way. From this project with these people, I have learned to be more thankful for every day and for each person who comes along.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Questions for Founders of the Faithkeepers School, Their Families, Adult

Learners, and Community Members

1. When you were growing up, was Seneca used in your home?

2. Do any of your family members speak it?

3. Who in your grandparents' generation can speak it? In your parents' generation? In your family's youngest generation? If not, when was the last time it was spoken?

4. Do you use the language in everyday conversation?

5. How did schools treat your language learning and use? Did you or family members learn any of it in school? Describe your experiences in school.

6. Were you punished for speaking Seneca in school?

7. Do you or does anyone else speak it in the home? If/when they do, how do you feel about that?

8. Do you take part in activities related to Seneca? What have those been like for you?

9. Has your experience learning Seneca made a difference in your life?

10. How does the speaking or learning the language make you feel? Why is it important or not important to you?

11. What attitudes toward Seneca exist in your family?

Appendix B

Interview Questions for Children and Young Adult Former Students of Faithkeepers

School

1. Is Seneca used in your home?

2. Do any of your family members speak it?

3. Do you use the language in everyday conversation?

4. Did you learn any of it in school? Describe your experiences in school.

5. Do you or does anyone else speak it in the home? If/when they do, how do you feel about that?

6. Do you take part in activities that involve Seneca? What have those been like for you?

7. Has your experience learning Seneca made a difference in your life?

8. How does the speaking or learning the language make you feel? Why is it important or not important to you?

Appendix C

Interview Questions for Teachers and Policymakers at the Museum and Education

Department

1. Describe your experiences growing up in the community.

2. How did you come to choose the work you are doing?

3. How does the community value or devalue Seneca? Which part of the community

   is working on language revitalization? Why?

4. What problems have you encountered in working to promote awareness of Seneca

   culture and language?

5. Why do you think there are differences in whether people speak it or do not speak

   it?

6. What types of programs does the nation Education Department offer? What did it

   offer in the past?

7. Where else in the community can you hear the language spoken? By whom?

8. What do you think has been gained or will be gained by maintaining Seneca?

GLOSSARY

'Aha Pūnana Leo -- Name for the preschool language nests in Hawai'i.

Dasgeowë'ge:onö' -- Tuscarora Nation, 'People of the Shirt.'

Diné-- An indigenous Nation and also language spoken mainly in Utah, new Mexico, and northern Arizona, otherwise known as Navajo.

Gadzë'geka:' – Peach stone game or bowl game played at Midwinter time.

Gáíwi:yo:h – 'The good words;' message from the Creator to Handsome Lake (Ganyödaiyo´), which became the Code of Handsome Lake. It teaches rituals honoring the Creator.

Ganöhsesge:kha' Hë:nödeyë:sta' – Literally, 'they learn longhouse ways;' otherwise known as The Faithkeepers School, a Seneca culture and language school located in Steamburg, NY.

Ganö:nyök – Literally, 'let it be used for expressing thanks;' daily recitation that expresses thankfulness for all of creation, otherwise known as the Thanksgiving Address.

Ga:no'sgä' – A wampum used for invitations; short stick decorated with shells.

Ganyë'ge:onö' – Mohawk Nation; 'People of the Flint.'

Ganyodaiyo'-- Handsome Lake, Seneca leader born ca. 1735 and died 1815. He led a revival of traditional ways and beliefs which later became the Longhouse way of life, or religion.

Gaswëhda' – 'Wampum belt;' refers to the Two-Row Wampum resulting from the Covenant Chain of 1677 between the Hodínöhšö:ni:h and Dutch and English traders.

Gayaneshä'go:wa:h – The Great Law of Peace; a constitution among the Hodínöhšö:ni:h.

Gayógew:onö' – Cayuga Nation, 'People of the Great Pipe.'

Ha'nih – the Seneca word for father.

Hanödaga:nyas – 'Town Destroyer;' name used for George Washington and also for any president of a nation.

Hodínöhšö:ni:h – 'People of the Longhouse;' confederation of Seneca, Mohawk, Onondaga, Cayuga, Oneida, and Tuscarora; also spelled Haudenosaunee and named Iroquois by the French and Six nations by the British.

Hadi:nyö'öh – White people.

Honödi:ön – 'Officials;' used to refer to Faithkeepers.

Jago'nigöëgesgwata' – 'Mental Elevator;' pamphlet series printed by Asher Wright in the 1840s containing scriptures written in the Seneca language.

Jöhehgöh – The 'three sisters,' or 'three sustainers;' refers to corn, beans, and squash planted together.

Neshnabemwen – Language of the Potawatomi nations in Michigan, Wisconsin, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Ontario.

No'yëh – the Seneca word for mother.

Nyoh – Seneca word for acknowledgement, roughly meaning "yes."

Ögwé'öwe:kha:' – 'Indian ways;' also refers to Indian languages or the Seneca language.

Ohi:yo' – The Seneca Allegany Territory.

Ohi:yo:h – 'Beautiful river;' refers to the Allegany River.

Onëyotgé:onö' – Oneida Nation; 'People of the Standing Stone.

Onöda'ge:onö' – Onondaga Nation; 'People of the Hills.'

Onödowá'ga:' – Seneca Nation; 'People of the Great Mountain.'

Otgóä' – 'Wampum;' bead product made from the Quahog clam shell.

Shögwajë:no'kda'öh -- The Creator.

Te Köhanga Reo -- Name for the preschool language nests in New Zealand.

Tsalagi Ageyui – 'Our Beloved Cherokee;' name for Cherokee early childhood

immersion program.

Wôpanâak -- New England language spoken by Narragansett, Mohegan-Pequot, and

Western Abenaki; also spelled Wompanoag.

SELECTED CHRONOLOGY

Origin: Origin of Iroquois/Senecas unknown.
Ca. 4000 BCE: Laurentian Archaic period.
1800 – 1500 BCE: North-South Iroquoian language split.
1700 BCE: Late Archaic period.
1534CE: French contact with Iroquois.
1600: Iroquois range from present-day New England to Mississippi, St. Lawrence to Tennessee.
1609: Dutch contact with Iroquois.
1626: Jesuits among Senecas.
1677: Covenant Chain with Dutch and English.
1687: French destroy Ganondagan.
Ca. 1700: Julien Garnier dictionary of Seneca.
1735 – 1815: Handsome Lake's lifetime.
Ca. 1750 – 1836: Cornplanter's lifetime.
1779: Clinton and Sullivan raids in Iroquois territory.
1760 – 1857: Presbyterian and Protestant missions.
1783: Treaty of Paris; US gains preemptive right to Seneca land.
1791: Massachusetts sells land in Western New York to Robert Morris.
1792: Morris sells land to Holland Land Company.
1794: Treaty of Canandaigua; first treaty between US and another nation; guarantees Seneca rights to landbase.
1796: Cornplanter Grant; Cornplanter is granted land in northern Pennsylvania along Allegheny River.
1797: Quaker missions begin among the Senecas.
1797: "Reserves" created for New York Indians, which become the first Iroquoian Indian reservations.
1810: Holland Land Company sells its lands to Ogden Land Company.
1842: Buffalo Creek is fraudulently sold.
1848: Tonawanda Band of Senecas forms.
1855: Thomas Asylum for Orphaned and Destitute Children opens.
Ca. 1840s – 1860s: Asher Wright develops Seneca orthography.
1875: New York State takes over Thomas school.
1889: School attendance becomes compulsory for Indians in New York State.
1934: Johnson O'Malley program begins.
1954: New York State Thruway built; crosses through Seneca lands.
1964: Kinzua Dam built; floods one-third of Seneca Allegany landbase.
1973: Native American Indian Education Unit forms; allocates state funds for public schools to provide education of Indian students residing on reservations.
Ca. 1970s: Wallace Chafe develops Seneca orthography, still used today.
1980s – Present: Modern education programs of local public school districts and the Seneca Nation provide Seneca education.
1998: Ganöhsesge:kha Hë:nödeyë:sta is founded.