

SENECA-CAYUGA TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA

Tribal Headquarters: Miami, OK



A brief history

The Seneca and Cayuga nations were part of the great Iroquois League whose influence extended from New York throughout northeastern United States and Canada. Members of the League had a sophisticated government based on clan systems, general councils and decision making by consensus.

During the 16th-18th centuries the League made alliances with the British against the French and eventually the Americans. A group of Cayuga moved into Canada. As American prominence rose in the late 19th century some Seneca migrated to Ohio where they allied often with the Shawnee. This group became independent of the League.

In 1831 the Seneca and Shawnee sold their Ohio lands and accepted a reservation in Indian Territory only to discover it overlapped with Cherokee land. An 1832 treaty adjusted the boundaries for a single reserve for the Seneca and Shawnee. This group fled to Kansas during the Civil War.

After Kansas became a state in 1861 there were many efforts to open the state to settlement by consolidating tribal lands. The Seneca and groups of Shawnee moved to Oklahoma. In an 1867 treaty the Seneca-Shawnee were separated, the Shawnee became known as the Eastern Shawnee of Oklahoma. In 1881, a band of Cayuga from Canada joined the Seneca in Indian Territory and have been united since. In 1936 the Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of

Oklahoma organized under the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act. Today, the tribe has approximately 3,600 members.

About the flag

The Seneca-Cayuga flag consists of the tribal Seal on a sky blue field. At the center is the sacred Great Tree surrounded by a bear claw necklace – a symbol of power and strength. “Seneca-Cayuga Tribe” appears across the top and “of Oklahoma” appears across the bottom. Circling the necklace below the word are animal symbols of the eight Seneca and five Cayuga clans. They include the Deer, Turtle, Snipe, Snake, Porcupine, Hare, Bear, Beaver, Heron, Eel, Hawk, Squirrel and Wolf.

Educational Activity

The Seneca-Cayuga people have many stories and legends about the important symbols on their flag. Read some of these at <http://www.firstpeople.us>. How do they add to the meaning of the flag?