

Seneca

by

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The Seneca were great conquerors and very skilled at fighting wars. One of the features of the Iroquois warriors' appearance was their hair. They kept their heads shaved in a "Mohawk" fashion, and tattooed their bodies. The Iroquois politics were the most advanced in all of the North-American Native cultures. The Seneca tribe was known for having a democratic form of government. The Seneca women were in charge of elections, and decided who would become tribal leaders. Leaders usually held their positions for life. They could lose their positions if they were

dishonest or could not do their job. The Seneca politics included a constitution, which is believed to have been a model for the American Constitution. The Seneca were the largest of the 5 tribes of the Iroquois Five Nations. Along with the Seneca, the Iroquois League includes the Oneida, Mohawk, Onondaga, and Cayuga. Later, the Tuscarora, or "shirt wearing people" became the 6th nation to join the confederacy. Today, nearly 10,000 Seneca live on reservations in Western New York.



The Seneca are part of a rich heritage. They valued art and every other form of cultural expression. The popular artifacts of the Senecas are woven baskets, bone and wood sculptures, and bead work.

The Iroquois Natives were skilled at agriculture, and their warriors were also great hunters. Among the foods they grew were corn, squash and beans. The Iroquois also hunted from the beginning of the fall to the middle of winter, and fished in the lakes during the summer.