SONGS AT THE WOODS' EDGE

The Earth Songs of the Seneca Nation

Bill Crouse, Sr., and Andrew A. Cashner

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Preface

Genesee Vallee Park Golf Course in Rochester, NY, just east of the Genesee River, early spring 2022 (All photographs by Andrew Cashner unless noted otherwise)

Goals for the Project (Bill)

Bill Crouse introduced his goals for this project this way in an April 2024 video:

1.1

> *Nya:wëh sgë:nö' gagwe:göh. Gaha'dagëya:' ni' gya:söh, ageswë'gai:yo', Ohi:yo' ni' tnö:ge'.*
>
> I greeted you in the Seneca language and I said that I am a member of the Hawk Clan of the Seneca people of the Alli-

gany Territory, and I said my Hawk Clan name, that I'm Flying Above the Woods, Flying Above the Forest.

I hope that this project is able to give you better insight into the importance of Native American music to the various communities that it comes from as well as our view on how we utilize song and dance for a number of different purposes in our communities. One of the hopes of this project is that I'm able to give you a better understanding of this as well as to leave a record of where we are now in the ongoing progression and evolution of our Native music.

I have been fortunate as a Native singer to grow up with a wealth of knowledge from my elders. I came up in the 1970s and 80s as a young man, learning to sing from my extended family. I was able to learn from people like my great-grandfather Richard Johnny-John as well as my uncles Avery Jimerson, Sr., and Herb Dowdy as well. I was lucky to be able to learn social songs and ceremonial songs of my people from this Allegany Territory.

I am involved in this project because it's the kind of thing, the kind of opportunity, that I wish that my elders had done, maybe when they were my age, to be able to pass some of this on to generations yet to come. I think since we have this technology it's a good thing for us to use it ***ögwe'owe:ka:'***, to use it in an Indian way, a Native American way.

I'd like to take a second to define the term ***Seneca social dance***. These social dance songs are the songs and dances that we use in social settings on the territory and we use them usually in conjunction with a big ceremony. These social gatherings would be held at the longhouse or even sometimes in a community building, in a setting where we all come together for a social event. They are not our ritual songs and dances or ceremonial songs and dances. They are not the music that would be termed in that way, but they do tell our history, and the unique part of these social songs and dances is that they

> do have great overtones of giving thanks and they do also align with our view of what we call ***Ganö:nyök***. Ganö:nyök is the opening that we give at all of our social events and ceremonial occasions, where we give thanks for everything in our surrounding: we give thanks for the Earth itself, the water, all of nature, the sun, the moon, the Thunderers, the Stars. We look at it as a way to celebrate this idea that we feel as a people everyone should have, and it's our way of reminding ourselves and our young and our community of this relationship and these great gifts that we've been given.
>
> This project has utilized the recordings of contemporary Native singers as well as past recordings of singers from mostly the Allegany Territory. One of the things that I always like to point out and that as a singer I always like to share is the Allegany version or ***Ohi:yo'*** version of songs, as that's what I was brought up with. So the majority of these recordings are are just that. So we're able to share mostly Iroquois or mostly Allegany versions of these songs.
>
> This project is a collaboration between myself and Mr. Andrew Cashner, who currently works for the University of Rochester [until July 2024]. One of the unique things about this collaboration is that it gives a unique view of Native American social dance music and songs from an outsider's perspective as well as from somebody who has grown up with this as a part of their life. And you know, it's really posed some unique questions and it has given me also a way of looking at things from a different lens. I think that regardless of what lens you have when you view these recordings or when you study this music, hopefully it will give you something worthwhile and powerful to identify with.

Please see the introduction for more on the project's background, goals, and methods.

About the Project Leads

Bill Crouse, Sr. (Seneca)

William Crouse, Sr., is a member of the Seneca Nation of Indians of the Hawk Clan. He is a faithkeeper, singer, and speaker of the Coldspring Longhouse. As group leader, singer, lecturer, and dancer of the Allegany River Seneca Dancers, Bill has traveled all over the United States and Canada. He has performed in Rome, Italy and Wurtzburg, Germany as well. He has worked with the American Indian Dance Theater as a choreographer and consultant and was featured in their video "Dances of a New Generation." His music recordings of Iroquois social-dance music, smoke-dance music and "re-mix" are a hit with young and old alike. As a graphic artist his work is displayed at the Seneca Iroquois National Museum, the Iroquois Museum, Howes Cave (New York), the Seneca Allegany Casino, and many private collections. He has also illustrated many designs for Native Stitches and Seneca Language Publications.

Andrew Cashner

Andrew A. Cashner, PhD, is a musician and musicologist. He grew up in Richmond, Indiana, a descendant of Anglo-German settlers, and he lives with his family on ancestral Seneca land in Rochester, New York. Winner of the 2015 Alfred Einstein Award of the American Musicological Society, he is the author of ***Hearing Faith: Music as Theology in the Spanish Empire*** (Brill, 2020), two volumes of critical editions of music from seventeenth-century Mexico and Spain, and six journal articles on topics including race in colonial Mexico and music in the history of science and computing. He earned the PhD in the history and theory of music from the University of Chicago in 2015, after studying sacred music and organ at the University of Notre Dame and piano performance at Lawrence University and the New England Conservatory of Music. He taught music at the University of Southern California and the University of Rochester. He is an active performer as a pianist, organist, ensemble director, and com-

Figure 1. Bill Crouse, Sr., (photo courtesy of Bill Crouse)

poser, and he teaches keyboard in the ROC Music after-school program in Rochester.

Technology and Design

This project was created and published using a digital authoring system created by Andrew Cashner and available on GitHub. The text was written in an extension of XHTML that enables automatic citation and bibliography generation as well as automatic numbering and cross-referencing for tables, examples, and diagrams. The source files were converted using XSLT to HTML for web display and PDF, via LaTeX, for the printable PDF. The system uses LaTeX's own citation and referencing systems in the print backend (BibLaTeX and Biber) but provides its own for the web backend. Custom CSS stylesheets determined the layout and style of the website and custom LaTeX classes and packages styled the print version.

Larger music examples were created in Dorico, while small, inline music clips were rendered with Lilypond. The main text font is EB Garamond, and section headings are in Venturis ADF Goth Titling and Venturis Sans ADF (all available free of license). Unless indicated otherwise, all photos and videos were created by Andrew Cashner for this project, using Final Cut Pro for editing video and Logic Pro for audio.

Acknowledgments

The project was made possible by a Fellowship for Digital Publication from the National Endowment for the Humanities and by funding and research leaves provided by the University of Rochester. For opportunities to share and discuss this research Andrew is grateful to the University of Chicago, the University of Louisville, and the Conference on Iroquois Research. Space to work and record was provided by Ganondagan State Historic Site, the Seneca Nation Library in Salamanca, NY, the Seneca Nation Education Department, the Coldspring Community Center, the Faithkeeper School, the Monroe County Public Library, and our families. For access to archival

sources we thank Paul Sutherland at the American Philosophical Society, Melissa Mead at the University of Rochester, the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Canadian Museum of History.

For allowing us to record songs, dances, and interviews, we thank the Allegany River Indian Singers and Dancers, including Lynn George, Jake George, Jacob Dowdy, Courtney Dowdy, and John Block; the Indigenous Spirit Dancers, led by Martin Jimerson, Jr.; along with Al George, Roslyn George, Ashlyn Crouse, and Brett Maybee, who also contributed audio engineering. Ja:no's Bowen, director of the Allegany Language Department of the Seneca Nation, advised the project on language and protocol.

From Andrew: Thanks to Peter Jemison for intially connecting me to Bill Crouse. To Ja:no's and to the other students in her Seneca language class, Bradley Jimerson, Michael Nephew, and Robert Mele, thank you for welcoming me, being patient with me, and providing meaningful community during the pandemic. Thanks to Brianna Theobald, Doris Aman, and James Warlick at the University of Rochester. Peyton DiSiena at Cornell University helped with proofreading and website testing. For help with the NEH grant and methodological advice, thanks to Ellen Koskoff and Robert Kendrick. Thanks to Devin Burke for asking good questions, as always.

We owe our deepest gratitude to our partners, Lynn George and Ann Cashner. Above all we acknowledge our mutual Creator for our lives on this Earth and for the gift of music.

Part I

Lay of the Land

Chapter 1

Introduction

Songs at the Woods' Edge: The Earth Songs of the Seneca Nation is a digital-humanities project on the traditional social-dance songs of the Onöndowa'ga:' people. This digital book was created by Seneca master singer and faithkeeper Bill Crouse, Sr., and musicologist Andrew A. Cashner, PhD.

Significance and Contribution

The original inhabitants of the land now occupied by western New York, the Senecas are one of the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy. Traditional Seneca music is primarily vocal, supported by water drum and rattle, and usually combined with dance. The songs are divided into ceremonial and social functions. Ceremonial songs hold sacred power as part of longhouse ceremonies including healing rituals; they are closed to non-Senecas and many are even kept private within the Seneca community, reserved only for those who need them. Social songs, by contrast, are used for recreation and are shared openly.

Known as Earth Songs (*yöëdza'ge:ka:' gaë:nö'shö'*), these songs have been used for centuries to build reciprocal relationships within the Seneca community and with outsiders. The earliest European interlopers in

Seneca country report being greeted at the woods' edge with songs. At Ganondagan, the Seneca Arts and Culture Center near Victor, New York, visitors pass through an entryway designed around the traditional woods'-edge greeting to hear regular presentations of Earth Songs by Seneca singers like Bill Crouse. These presentations create a space like the woods'-edge clearing of earlier days in which to share Seneca teachings and values with outsiders. To sing at the woods' edge means to stand at the boundary between indigenous traditional knowledge and modern experience under colonization, and between Seneca communities and Euro-American ones. As an ancient oral tradition that practitioners are constantly finding new ways to employ to meet present needs, the Earth Songs sung in that space connect history and tradition, memory and creativity.

With the collaboration of Bill Crouse and other Seneca practitioners, this project presents Seneca Earth Songs to the general public and the academic community for the first time accurately, sensitively, and on Seneca terms. Through a digital book of public scholarship, the project presents new videos of the songs and dances with information about the songs' origins, structure, and significance. It draws on Bill Crouse's expertise as a practitioner of the oral tradition, and Andrew Cashner's archival research into historic accounts of Seneca song and dance from the Jesuit Relations through Lewis Henry Morgan and William Fenton. The project benefits from the dialogue between Bill's traditional knowledge and Andrew's Western-influenced analytical approach, while prioritizing indigenous ways of thinking. The project is available in the non-linear, multimedia format of a website, and in a more traditional print book format.

Relationship to Existing Studies

This study aims to address a lack of trustworthy, in-depth resources for learning about this type of Native American music. According to G. Peter Jemison, recently retired director of Ganondagan State Historic Site near Victor, New York, the cultural center staff were flooded after 2020 with requests from educators for information on how to include Native culture in their curricula (Jemison 2021). For Haudenosaunee and Seneca music,

though, there are few reliable sources available. In the first scholarly description of Haudenosaunee dance (based on Seneca sources), Lewis Henry Morgan wrote in 1851 that the dances "contain within themselves a picture and a realization of Indian life," to the extent that when the dance "loses its attractions, they will cease to be Indians" (Morgan 1851, 262, 263). Morgan viewed the dances as static relics of a traditional past that Native people would have to surrender in the face of progressive "civilization." Twentieth-century ethnographers William Fenton and Gertrude Kurath made no distinction between privileged ceremonial songs and social-dance songs, and as a result their books are full of information that Seneca faithkeepers today do not want to share with the public—not to mention the inaccuracies and non-indigenous categories of their analyses (Fenton 1998; Fenton and Kurath 1953; Kurath 1964; Caldwell 2008; McCarthy 2008).

The proposed project differs from these previous studies because it focuses on music that Seneca people are actually willing to share, and builds on the way they are already using this music to build intercultural relationships. The methodology follows the model of recent collaborative work between non-Native scholars and Native experts, such as Beverley Diamond's excellent though brief introduction to Haudenosaunee music (Diamond 2008) and with a growing literature that emphasizes the modernity and creativity of Native music as a contemporary practice (Browner 2002, 2009; Levine and Robinson 2019; Woodland Cultural Centre 1990). This project has a somewhat more historical focus than those, however, as it combines ethnographic fieldwork with archival research, including seeking out indigenous perspectives on the archival documents. Even the best historical studies of early American music that include Native peoples focus primarily on archival documents from Euro-American colonial communities rather than drawing from traditional indigenous knowledge and oral tradition (Goodman 2012; Eyerly 2020). No history of American music can claim coherence without including the music of indigenous Americans, and no attempt at inclusion can succeed without the collaboration of practitioners of the oral traditions.

Benefit to Scholars and the Public

This project will benefit humanities scholars, educators, and members of the public by providing them with reliable information on Native American music. The knowledge shared through this project will help all of us to gain a deeper understanding of the land we share. Some indigenous people may deepen their connection to their own traditions; non-indigenous people will be better equipped to build relationships with Native American communities. The interlinked nature of a website is well suited to the relational and participatory character of the Earth Songs and the way they are shared in Seneca communities. The digital format makes the book/website to be freely accessible to a wide public audience. The accompanying YouTube channel enables users to find and share Seneca songs through social media, and as of July 2021 has already attracted over 370 subscribers and 60,000 views.

Concepts, Organization, and Methods

The key concepts in this project are three pairs of terms: Earth/land, relationship/reciprocity, and tradition/history. Seneca social songs celebrate and enact a relationship with the Earth in both ecological and spiritual terms, while also connecting Seneca people to the land of their ancestry (Mohawk et al. 2005; Deloria, Jr. 1985; Hill 2017). Relationship and reciprocity are widely acknowledged core values for Native North Americans, and they define the way Haudenosaunee people teach and present songs. The concept of the Covenant Chain—linking the first European ship to the Haudenosaunee longhouse—recurs throughout colonial treaty negotiations (Richter 1992). Both sides had an obligation to keep it free from rust. For Andrew as a descendant of white settlers, this project provides a way to take up the long-overdue work of polishing the chain of friendship, working toward restoring mutually beneficial relationships between indigenous and settler Americans. Exploring the complex relationship between history and tradition in both indigenous and Western conceptions, this project demonstrates that Native song is neither stuck in a primitive

present tense nor lost to the past. At the same time, the goal is not simply to fit Native music into a Western historical framework; for indigenous North Americans, singing itself constitutes a form of historical knowledge and provides its own ways of connecting past, present, and future (Diamond 2013).

The website features new videos of Bill Crouse and others singing Earth Songs in significant locations across ancestral Seneca territory, alongside archival recordings from as early as 1911. The project also provides users with information about issues of cultural sensitivity, appropriation, and ethical use. Sources include contemporary performances, interviews, and fieldwork observations; ethnographic recordings at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, the Library of Congress, and the Canadian Museum of History in Ottawa; and archival documents at the University of Rochester (Lewis Henry Morgan papers). One of the chief benefits of the site to Seneca people, according to Bill Crouse, is to make accessible a library of historic recordings, effectively repatriating the ethnographers' materials (Fox 2013; Christen 2018). The bibliographic citations prioritize Native writers and are not limited to peer-reviewed academic literature when other kinds of sources are better sources of Native knowledge.

The project first introduces the Seneca Nation and their Earth Songs and helps readers understand these traditional social-dance songs within a worldview grounded in reciprocal relationships with the Earth, its beings, and other people, including between Natives and settlers. Drawing on interviews and ethnographic observation, the project shows that Seneca people preserve their dance traditions not as static customs of the past but as dynamic, creative adaptations that enabled their survival and ongoing revitalization. The second part looks at five individual Seneca dances in depth, examining their origins, history, and structure through a combination of traditional knowledge and Western scholarship. Readers may engage with the different sections in any order.

The project focuses on Seneca song and dance traditions as practiced on the Allegany Territory of the Seneca Nation, and shares information about them according to the protocols of the faithkeepers of Coldspring

Longhouse. We have tried to resist the temptation to generalize too much from this local tradition about Senecas or Haudenosaunee people everywhere, as some previous scholars have done. We recognize that protocols differ, for example on the question of whether Corn Dance is a social or ceremonial song (it is social at Allegany). With respect for others whose practice or understanding differs, we hope people will receive this project with a generous spirit. This project can only be starting point for the study of Seneca and Haudenosaunee song, and indeed, we hope there will be many future studies that will flesh out all the rich continuity and variations in song and dance across Iroquoia.

Andrew wrote the text of this project with the full collaboration of Bill Crouse. The traditional knowledge contributed by Bill Crouse comes from many sources and is in many ways the collective property of the Seneca Nation. Certain portions of the project represent Andrew's views alone, such as the detailed and admittedly speculative music analysis of some of the individual songs. All of the videos created for this project were made with the permission of the participants, who were paid for their time and expertise. We have experimented with different modes of presentation, including interviews and a video essay. Readers of the PDF version should remember that this is a multimedia project, and the videos, which center Seneca voices, are integral parts of the project, not just supplements. Marginal links in the PDF version lead to a web page containing all the media examples in the book.

We prioritize Seneca terms and titles throughout, and with only a few simple rules readers should be able to pronounce them. The vowels are the same as in Spanish or Italian, except for the following: ***ä*** is similar to English ***back***; ***ö*** is a nasalized ***o*** like French ***non***; and ***ë*** is a flat, nasalized ***e*** somewhat like English ***meant*** but more nasal. Consonants are the same as in English, except that ***g*** is always hard like ***good***, ***dz*** sounds like English ***measure*** or French ***je*** (though for some Seneca speakers it is the same as ***j*** as in ***jot***), ***š*** or ***sy*** sounds like English ***sh***, and ***tš*** sounds like English ***ch***. A colon after a vowel (as in ***Ohi:yo'***) marks it as long, meaning that it is held an extra beat relative to the unmarked syllables. An apostrophe indicates a glottal stop, a sudden stop of air like in English ***uh-oh***. Some words are pronounced

with a rising or falling pitch indicated by acute or grave accents (*á* or *à*). As we discuss elsewhere, we do use the spelling ***Haudenosaunee*** instead of the Seneca ***Hodínöhšö:ni:h*** because it has become more familiar and is used more widely across the Six Nations, each of which has its own language with a different version of that term (though we still pronounce it the Seneca way).

The musical transcriptions only represent the way one person with Western-trained ear hears them. The real version of the song is when it is sung live by practitioners of the oral tradition. When that is not available, video and audio recordings give the best access to the traditional material. The notated scores, however, are interpretations made with specific analytical goals. They intentionally simplify some aspects of the music to clarify its structure, focusing on pitch and rhythm as they can be notated in the Western system. Since the pitch level of Seneca songs is variable, based on the preference of the lead singer, the transcriptions approximate the pitch level used most consistently throughout a particular recording. Most Earth Songs do not convey a regular pattern of metrical groupings, so the transcriptions only use barlines where necessary to indicate repeats and endings. When the lyrics are Seneca language, the transcriptions use the correct spellings for the words as they would be spoken according to the writing system created by Wallace Chafe (Chafe 2015). When the lyrics are vocables without linguistic meanings, the transcriptions spell them phonetically according to Chafe's system, using long-syllable markings (where ***a:*** is long and ***a*** is normal) according to the musical rhythms. The term ***haënögweni:yo'*** indicates the part sung by the lead singer, and ***hadigwe:göh*** means "everyone."

We do not give authorization for the written transcriptions to be used as the basis for performance in any context. Any attempt to present Seneca music must involve Seneca people, on their own terms. Our list of presenters and other resources can provide a starting point for beginning your own relationships.

We invite readers, especially members of the Seneca Nation, to contact us (crouse@senecasongs.earth or cashner@senecasongs.earth) to report mistakes or technical problems, discuss concerns, or ask questions.

Chapter 2

What Is the Seneca Nation?

Bill Crouse (in green) prepares to compete in the Marvin “Joe” Curry Memorial Veterans Pow-Wow on the Allegany Territory of the Seneca Nation of Indians, Salamanca, NY, July 2022

This project focuses on a particular type of traditional song and dance of the Onöndowa’ga:’ or Seneca Nation. Bill Crouse is a member of the Seneca Nation of Indians and lives in Salamanca, New York, on the Seneca Nation’s Allegany Territory. Though much of what we present here will be similar to song and dance practices of Seneca people elsewhere, Bill’s expertise is specific to the practices on his own territory.

The Onöndowa'ga:' People: A Living Community with Deep Roots

The Seneca Nation is a living community of people, indigenous to northeastern North America, who share kinship, culture, language, and history (Hauptman 1999, 2019a, 2014). Seneca people continue to live in their ancestral homelands as well as many other places. For at least a thousand years before Euro-American settler-colonialists invaded, Senecas were the caretakers of more than six million acres of land: its approximate bounds stretched from Lake Ontario on the north to the Allegany River in the south, and from the Niagara River and Lake Erie on the west to Seneca Lake on the east (Richter 1992; Fenton 1998).

The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy

When Europeans arrived in the sixteenth century, the Seneca Nation was one member of a longstanding confederacy of indigenous nations who called themselves *Hodínöhšö:ni:h* ("They Extend the Longhouse"). Following the teachings of the Peacemaker, they governed themselves through a representative democracy, which today is the oldest continuously operating democratic government in the world (Mohawk et al. 2005).

These nations lived in longhouses, with multiple families arranged along a row of fires. Peacemaker taught them to see themselves as all living in one longhouse stretching across the territory claimed today by New York State: the Senecas were the Keepers of the Western Door for the confederacy, which also included, moving west to east, the Cayugas, the Onondagas (keepers of the central fire), the Oneidas, and the Mohawks (keepers of the eastern door). The Tuscaroras were added in the eighteenth century (Tehanetorens [Ray Fadden] 2000; Hertzberg 1966).

Names and Identities

Those tribal names like *Seneca* are still used today, but they were imposed by Euro-American based on their mishearings and distortions. In their own

language Seneca people call themselves ***Onöndowa'ga:'*** (people of the great hill). The Seneca word for the Six Nations Confederacy is ***Hodínöhšö:ni:h***. Because there are six related but distinct languages in the confederacy, each with its own variation on the term, many writers today use the Anglicized spelling ***Haudenosaunee***.

Seneca people differ on whether they prefer to be called Native American, Indian or American Indian, or First Nation. In any case, most people prefer using their tribal or national name (in this case Onöndowa'ga:'/Seneca and Haudenosaunee/Iroquois). The Seneca language does not have a term for Native Americans as a race or category of people; instead a Seneca person is an ***ögwé'o:weh***, a "real person" (Bardeau 2010; Chafe 2015).

Tribal Governments since Colonization

Through the colonialist policies of Great Britain, the United States, and Canada, Euro-American settlers stole most of the historic Seneca land-base through forced treaties and fraudulent land deals. The US and Canadian governments forced many Seneca people to emigrate, and instituted their own governments that fragmented the Seneca nation. Nevertheless today more than two thousand Seneca people still live on their ancestral territory, and more than eight thousand more live elsewhere across North America. Today there are four distinct political entities that represent Seneca people living on several territories:

1. the Seneca Nation of Indians, three primary territories (Allegany, Cattaraugus, and Oil Spring) within southwestern New York State (US); government headquarters in Salamanca, NY; 8,000 enrolled members (figure 2.1)
2. the Tonawanda Band of Seneca, one territory within western New York State; headquarters, Basom, NY; about 1,200 enrolled members

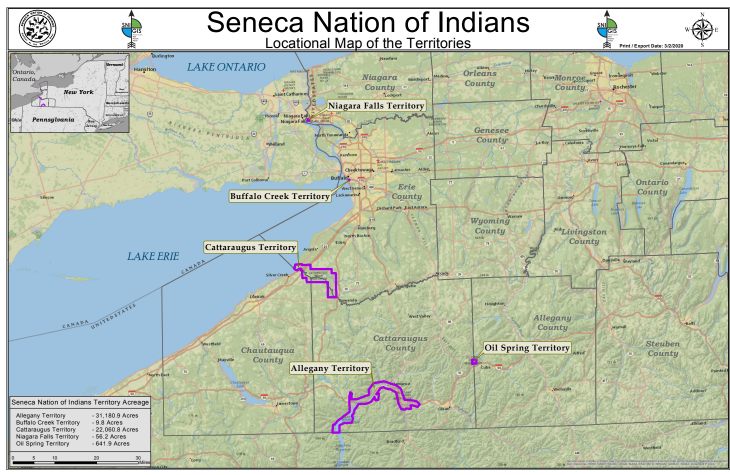


Figure 2.1. Present territories of the Seneca Nation of Indians (Map by Seneca Nation Geographic Information Services)

3. the Seneca-Cayuga Nation of Oklahoma (US), one territory with headquarters in Grove, OK; about 5,000 members (including Cayugas)
4. Six Nations of the Grand River, one territory in Ontario (Canada) shared with the other Haudenosaunee nations; headquarters in Ohsweken, ON

The Tonawanda Band of Senecas maintain their traditional form of government by male chiefs, appointed by clan mothers, and send representatives to the Haudenosaunee Confederacy councils at Onondaga. The Seneca Nation of Indians was founded after a revolution in 1848 in which the people rejected the traditional government by chiefs and adopted a representative democracy (Hauptman 2019a).

Belonging to the Seneca Nation

Beyond the administrative reality of the tribal governments, though, Seneca people have a broader sense of belonging to a Seneca Nation that includes all Seneca people, as well as an affiliation to the other five Haudenosaunee nations. This attitude is rooted in the belief that indigenous peoples have the right, affirmed by the United Nations, to determine their own identity, independent of the history of colonization (United Nations 2007).

This broader sense of identity is also important because the United States did not negotiate its federal treaties with the tribal governments listed above but with the Seneca Nation as part of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The Canandaigua Treaty of 1794 was an agreement between the United States under President George Washington and "The Six Nations," including "The Seneka Nation" (Nĕhdöwes [Randy A. John] 2018). This treaty is still the only legally valid treaty between the Haudenosaunee and the United States: unlike later treaties, this one alone was ratified by both the consensus of the Haudenosaunee Council and a two-thirds majority of the US Senate, as required in the US Constitution (Oberg 2016; Hauptman 1999; Deloria, Jr. 1985). That treaty provided almost all the territory now in New York west of the Genesee River to the Seneca Nation. Pretending the Seneca Nation no longer exists could be one way for the US government to dodge its historic treaty obligations.

Seneca identity is not determined by blood quantum or family legend, but by community standards of establishing genealogical kinship based on the maternal line. A person is a member of the Seneca Nation if they are an enrolled member of a tribal government that represents the Seneca people. The United States and Canada grant dual citizenship to members of the Seneca polities within their borders, but not all Seneca people consider themselves to be citizens of those colonial nations.

Chapter 3

What Kinds of Songs Do Seneca People Sing?

Oak trees along what is likely an ancient Seneca pathway on the east bank of the Genesee River, in Rochester's Genesee Valley Park, May 2022

This project focuses on one particular type of Seneca music, but before describing the Earth Songs it is important to point out that Seneca people make and enjoy all the kinds of music that other North Americans do. On the reservations, hip hop, classic rock, and country music are especially

popular. (Bill Crouse is a Lynyrd Skynrd fan.) Many Seneca people think about music and use it in the same ways as their non-indigenous neighbors.

At the same time, other Senecas hold those widespread Western concepts of music in tension with those they have inherited from their own tradition (Diamond 2008). Those views are also shaped by interactions with other Native nations, particularly through intertribal powwows (Browner 2002).

Onöndowa'ga:' Concepts of Music

The Seneca language does not have a single general word equivalent to ***music***. Singing and dancing are usually linked so closely that there are not clear ways to distinguish them linguistically; if someone is singing, someone else is probably dancing. Traditional Seneca singers tend to think of different types of singing according to their purposes and occasions rather than lumping them together into an abstract category. There are general words for singing, dancing, and fiddle-playing, and many more precise terms for specific traditional songs. Those more particular terms all point to specific reasons, times, and methods of singing and dancing.

Seneca singers assume that the whole created world, including humans, animals, and other spiritual beings, is listening whenever they sing. Bill Crouse would say that you do not sing a song; you "send" it. Songs are spoken of as being "made," not composed.

Bill Crouse distinguishes two main types of traditional Seneca song and dance: ceremonial and social. There are two main types of ceremonial singing, in turn: singing in seasonal ceremonies and singing for healing ceremonies. Seneca ceremonies are only open to members of the Haudenosaunee nations, and some healing ceremonies are restricted even within that community only to people in need of a particular ceremony (see below). Social songs, the subject of this project, are open to anyone to hear and enjoy, though their performance is generally limited to Seneca people.

Season	Ceremony
Winter	Midwinter Ceremonies
	Okhi:we' (Remembrance of those who have died)
Spring	Thunder Dance
	False Faces (House-to-house cleansing)
	Seed Dance
Summer	Strawberry Festival
	Green Corn Ceremonies
Fall	Harvest Dance
	False Faces (House-to-house cleansing)
	Thunder Dance
	Gaiwi:yo:h (Code of Handsome Lake)

Table 3.1. The Annual Ceremonial Cycle

Ceremonial Singing

Though ceremonial singing is closed to non-Haudenosaunee people and Seneca faithkeepers limit what can be shared, it is important to know how Earth Songs fit into the basic pattern of ceremonial life. The annual cycle of seasonal ceremonies celebrates and maintains human beings' connection to the rest of Creation (table 3.1). These rituals are linked to seasons such as the Midwinter Festival or Strawberry Festival. In the healing ceremonies, members of different medicine societies bring specific kinds of physical and spiritual healing to people in need.

The ceremonial center is the longhouse. Today a typical longhouse is an ordinary-looking one-story frame building, not the birchbark-covered structure seen in historic illustrations (figure 3.1).

The Handsome Lake Longhouse Religion

Most traditional Senecas today follow the *Gáíwi:yo:h*, the "Good Message" of *Sganyodaiyo'* (Handsome Lake). Sganyodaiyo' was a Seneca reformer who, around the year 1800, experienced visions of four heavenly messengers. These "Sky Dwellers" (*Hadiöya'ge:onö'*) revealed to Handsome Lake

Figure 3.1. Coldspring Longhouse on the Allegany Territory of the Seneca Nation near Steamburg, NY (November 2023)

that Senecas had lost track of the Peacemaker's Great Law. They needed to ban dangerous vices such as drinking alcohol, gambling, domestic violence, and abortion, and adopt practices like farming that would help them survive in their new situation after colonization. They also needed to purify their ceremonial system to avoid superstitions and anything connected to witchcraft. The teachings of Sganyodaiyo' are preserved in oral tradition, which is recited annually in the fall.

Originally Sganyodaiyo' taught that Senecas should dispense with all their old ceremonies except for four:

1. Great Feather Dance
2. Drum Dance
3. *Adö:wë'* (a personal chant)
4. Dish Game

Sganyodaiyo' later allowed the community to restore some older ceremonies in modified form; and after his death the Senecas revived almost all of the traditional ceremonies. Today the four Gáíwi:yo:h ceremonies are integrated into the Midwinter and Green Corn Ceremonies.

Social Songs and Dances

Social songs are sung for social dances. These dances can be held in connection with a ceremonial festival (such as in the evenings during the Gáíwi:yo:h ceremony in the fall), in a social event known as a Sing, or in other public events such as presentations of Seneca culture at schools and community centers (Krouse 2001). Social songs are also used in modified forms for Smoke Dance competitions, often as part of a powwow.

Participants in a dance follow a traditional dance step and movement pattern specific to that dance. One group sings and plays instruments, while the rest of the people are invited to dance. There must be at least one singer, but preferably there is a lead singer and an accompanying group of singers. One or two people are also needed to play the necessary instruments; often a few people play or sing at the same time.

Terms: Songs vs. Dances

The name of a dance refers to the whole dance event that uses that physical dance pattern. It also refers to the collection of songs that the singer "sends." For one Old Moccasin Dance, there might be fifteen songs. The songs all share the same basic tempo (speed), beat, and other characteristics, which enables the dance to continue from song to song. Each song is typically around a minute long. All of the songs used for a particular dance are traditional and learned orally, and it would be bad form to use the songs for one dance with another. The precise selection and order of the songs for one dance, however, is the lead singer's choice. Sometimes oral tradition requires that the same song always be used at the beginning or end of a certain dance, while the inner ones are flexible. A social dance always begins with *Ga'da:šo:t* (Standing Quiver Dance) and includes *Ë:sgä:nye:'* (New Women's Shuffle Dance).

The songs are all selected from a vast library preserved in the singers' memories through oral tradition. Only in the New Women's Shuffle Dance can singers contribute new songs, as long as they fit the style and structure of the dance. Ë:sgä:nye:' can include completely new songs, songs created by other singers of recent generations, and older songs whose makers no one can remember anymore.

The Sing and Smoke Dance

A *Sing* is an event focused on social-dance songs, typically held twice a year (spring and fall). Members of groups known as Singing Societies gather together with other members of the community and compete.

Earth Songs are also sung for Smoke Dance, which is a competitive dance demonstration done at intertribal powwows or special Smoke Dance events. Singers sing traditional Earth Songs sped up with a faster beat to enable dancers to do athletic show dances similar to those cultivated by Plains Indian nations in the powwows.

Instruments

Most traditional Seneca music, ceremonial or social, is vocal. The voices are accompanied by water drum, rattles, or sometimes other kinds of drums like frame drums. The turtle-shell rattle is used in ceremonial song only. ***The turtle-shell rattle is a sacred instrument and images of it should not be shared.***

Ga'nöhgo:öh (Water Drum)

A water drum is made from a small cylinder of wood, about six inches in diameter, and closed on one end. The open end is covered with a deerskin top which must be tightened to tune the drum using a technique Bill demonstrated in a video. There is a small hole in one side, and a straw is inserted into the hole. Through the straw, the drum is filled with water, and the drum is turned to wet the skin. The amount of water changes the pitch of the drum. As the skin dries during a song the pitch will rise, until the player turns the drum over and wets the hide again.

4.1

Onö'gä:' Gasdöwë'sä' (Horn Rattle)

A horn rattle is made by filling a section of cow horn with beads—today, steel BBs are commonly used.

Protocol: Privileged vs. Public Knowledge

It is important to know that the whole category of ceremonial singing is closed to people outside the Seneca community. These ceremonies are the most sacred traditions of the Seneca nation, and the faithkeepers no longer allow non-Seneca people to observe or record them. Faithkeepers are people entrusted with safeguarding these ceremonies and using them for the good of the people. (Bill Crouse is one of the head faithkeepers of the Seneca Nation.) Ceremony is privileged knowledge, not open to all even within the Seneca community (Diamond 2008, 103).

When the ceremonies were more open, several generations of white anthropologists in the twentieth century abused the trust that Seneca community members placed in them; they gained access to these longhouse ceremonies and then made recordings and transcriptions. They went on to publish books and articles with their own interpretations of what they meant, often far removed from the correct traditional teachings. They filed their recordings away in university and institution archives and did not give Seneca people access to them. Some even claimed to know more than Seneca practitioners did about their own traditions. With an arrogant posture sometimes linked to racist attitudes, these researchers assuming authority and ownership over traditional knowledge that was not theirs to use (McCarthy 2008; Smith 2012; Deloria, Jr. 1969)

Not only were their interpretations incorrect and inappropriate, from a Seneca perspective what they were doing was dangerous. To Seneca participants, ceremonial rituals and their songs give people access to extraordinary power. One might like to say supernatural, spiritual, or religious power, but those terms are inaccurate for a way of life that sees humans as an integral part of the natural world, recognizes spirit in all living things, and does not distinguish a religious sphere from the rest of the world (Mohawk 2010; Fixico 2003; Tinker 2008). When that power is directed in the right way it can do great good, but if abused or misused it can also cause harm.

Healing rituals, for example, are meant only for people in need of a particular kind of medicine. Even within the Seneca community, the only people who will ever hear the Bear Dance are people who need the kind of healing that the Bear Dance Society provides. Once they hear it and are healed, they belong to that society for life. An ordinary person cannot, and should not, want to hear the songs of the Bear Dance, any more than they can just walk into a Walgreens and demand OxyContin without a prescription.

This project does not deal with ceremonial song, beyond what has been shared in this chapter. Seneca people who want to learn more about longhouse ceremonies are encouraged to contact Bill Crouse or other faithkeepers. Non-Seneca people should know that the information they can find

about Seneca ceremonies in books by white anthropologists is not reliable or accurate. Relying on that incorrect and inappropriately-shared information will only make it harder to connect with real Seneca people.

In contrast, this project focuses on a kind of song that Seneca people are comfortable sharing, social-dance songs. In fact, Seneca singers like Bill Crouse often use these songs specifically for the purpose of sharing Seneca culture and values with outsiders, such as in school and community-center presentations.

Who Can Sing Seneca Songs?

That said, we should note one more caution: ***Seneca people in general do not welcome non-indigenous people to sing their songs***, of any type. All are welcome to hear and learn about social-dance songs through this project, but all are not welcome to ***take*** the songs and use them in a setting that does not include any Seneca people. Song sharing must be done in the context of relationship according to Seneca protocols. The transcriptions in musical notation are provided for learning and study only. They are not to be used for performance by non-Seneca people, including school or university choirs.

These songs and dances are part of the cultural heritage and patrimony of the Seneca nation. The United Nations has affirmed indigenous peoples' inherent rights to preserve, safeguard, and set bounds for sharing of their own intellectual property, traditional knowledge, and cultural expressions (United Nations 2007).

Chapter 4

Relationship and Reciprocity

A circle of Haudenosaunee dancers of all genders and ages in traditional regalia dances, surrounded by onlookers, at the Salamanca Powwow (July 20, 2024)

Seneca people, like many other indigenous nations, have traditionally emphasized that all people, animals, and other beings and forces on Earth are connected to each other in reciprocal (two-way) relationships. This idea is fundamental to Seneca song and dance practices. As the name suggests, Earth Songs connect people to Mother Earth and all the other beings that

draw life from her. The songs and dances extend the daily Seneca practice of saying ***Ganö:nyök***, the Thanksgiving Address that gratefully acknowledges the people's reciprocal connection to the rest of Creation and its Creator.

Seneca oral tradition says that many songs were gifts to people from other beings like the robin or the Corn Spirit, and they were given to enable humans to have healthy, mutual relationships with those beings. Likewise, Seneca people have shared songs as a way to allow others to have good relationships with them, including the Haudenosaunee, other Native nations, and settler nations. The Earth Song repertoire includes several dances that were borrowed from other Native nations. Earth Songs are shared in an event called a Sing in which a song competition is integrated into a communal mutual-aid activity. The songs shared build relationships across local communities, between different Haudenosaunee nations, and across generations. Another form of Native intercultural sharing happens through Smoke Dance, an adaptation of traditional Earth Songs for the purpose of competitive powwow dancing.

These ways of using Earth Songs to build reciprocal relationships stand in stark contrast to the exploitative and abusive uses of music by settler-colonialists throughout Seneca history. From mission churches to residential schools, colonizers sought to eliminate Haudenosaunee traditional songs and replace them with Euro-American music. Nevertheless, many Haudenosaunee people still found creative ways to adapt, demonstrating success in Westernized forms while also integrating and adapting them into their own traditions. While anthropologists and scholars have made a few efforts at cataloging, collecting, and analyzing Seneca music, their work has had little impact because it has not reflected Haudenosaunee views or served Haudenosaunee needs.

Earth Songs today continue to serve their traditional purpose in fostering reciprocal relationships, as demonstrated by the work of Bill Crouse and other Seneca presenters when they share these songs outside current Seneca territory. Two images from colonial-era Seneca diplomacy still provide a viable framework for Seneca-settler relationships: the Two-Row Wampum and the Covenant Chain. Our work on this project is informed by both concepts, and adds the image of the Dance Circle as a picture

of these relationships. These principles were also embodied in an event in summer 2023, in which the town of Caneadea, New York, formally invited the Seneca Nation to establish friendship with them, and celebrated the relationship through an event that centered on Bill Crouse's group sharing Earth Songs including the Friendship Dance. That event gives a glimpse of how Earth Songs might enable a new growth of reciprocal relationships between Native and non-Native peoples.

Ganö:nyök: Everything Starts with Gratitude for Relationships

Every traditional Haudenosaunee formal gathering begins and ends with an address known as *Ganö:nyök*, or the Thanksgiving Address (Chafe 1961; Kimmerer 2013, 105–117). This speech is also called The Words before All Else. On Seneca territory, the speaker would normally be a male elder, and each speaker would give his own version of the address reflecting the circumstances of time and place, but always following a set traditional pattern.

In 2023 the town of Caneadea, New York, which is located on the site of one of the Seneca Nation's former reservations, began holding an annual Seneca-Caneadea Field Day in conjunction with the Seneca Nation of Indians as a way of celebrating friendship between the town and the nation. In accord with Seneca protocols, they chose to open with Ganö:nyök. Bill Crouse delivered the address in Seneca and then explained it in English. In 2024 introduced the speech this way: 🎞 5.1

> Whenever we gather in our territory we always start off by offering these words that we call *Ganö:nyök*. We also refer to this as *Öëdö:h Gaiwadehgöh*, these are the Words that Come before Everything Else. And the reason our people have always used this this opening is because it puts our minds as one and it reminds us of what is really important. And I'm pleased to say that this opening is used for ceremonies, and gatherings on our territory as well as even tribal council starts

> off with being of one mind, and all of our art and all of our celebration waits until we get this one mind.

Bill began his address by inviting all present to join their minds as one with him in giving thanks, and then began to move through a series of thanksgivings addressed to different beings or elements of the world. Following the traditional pattern, the first element was ***ha'deögwe'da:geh***, all the different kinds of people, and then he thanked Our Mother the Earth:

> Now with that opening I started off by giving thanks for the earth itself and I said that we are here, we are gathering and we want to acknowledge all the people, that all the people from all across all the four corners of this world are here and that we need to be of one mind. And I said that we're thankful and we give honor and respect to all the people all over the world.
>
> Then I said the first thing that he created was Our Mother the Earth. It's a place for us to rest our feet. And that we are of one mind at this time in giving thanks to our Mother the Earth.

Bill then acknowledged, in turn, the waters, grasses, medicinal plants, berries and strawberries, animals, birds, the Three Sisters (corn, beans, and squash), the wind, Our Grandfathers the Thunderers (the beings who create thunder), Our Elder Brother the Sun and Our Grandmother the Moon, the stars, the prophet Handsome Lake, and the Sky Dwellers who visited him. (Many addresses also include the forests and maple trees; Mohawk speakers include fish and insects.) Bill concluded by thanking ***Shögwajënö'kda'öh***, Our Creator:

> I said that we save our best words for the Creator himself, and we're thankful that everything has been provided for us that we don't need or shouldn't want for anything, that it's already here. And on this beautiful day as we're here to celebrate and enjoy our combined history at this place, we are all of one mind and giving thanks.

> So let me hear you all say this: if you're of one mind let me hear you say, ***nyoh***.

Each speaker emphasizes different things, depending on the season, circumstances, and personal preference, but the basic outline of the Thanksgiving Address has been consistent through at least the past century, and the theme of relationship is always central (Chafe 1961; Sundown 1959; Bowen 2021, 1–3; 2022; Bowen, Dowdy, and Chafe 2019, 2–10). In a simplified version of the address written by Sandra Dowdy, learned by students at the Seneca Nation's Seneca-immersion Montessori school in Steamburg, NY, the opening item for all the people stresses that people were made to love each other (Dowdy 2017, 4, 6, 8):

> He intended that we should have love for one another as we are walking about on this earth. And so now we will give it all our thought and carefully give thanks to all of the people. And let it be that way in our minds.

The relational worldview expressed in the address is intimately connected to the structures and idioms of the Seneca language. The English versions are only paraphrases or explanations of the real address, which must be given in Seneca. Many concepts, including the fundamental idea of "thanksgiving," cannot be neatly translated, as linguist Wallace Chafe notes: "The trouble is that the Seneca concept is broader than that expressed by any simple English term, and covers not only the conventionalized amenities of both thanking and greeting, but also a more general feeling of happiness over the existence of something or someone. One result is that the English distinction between 'give thanks to' and 'give thanks for' has no relevance" (Chafe 1961, 1). Allegany Language Department Director Ja:no's Bowen's interlinear translation of a Ganö:nyök (table 4.1) gives a glimpse of how differently the language works.

In addition to stressing humans' relationships to the natural world, the speech is relational in that all those present must agree to it in order to be of one mind. As Bill invited his mostly English-speaking hearers to respond, in Seneca communities the community affirms each item by saying ***nyoh***. In

Da:h ne:'dih	**nigëjohgo'dëh**	**ëswadiwatö:da:t**	**gaiwayëdahgöh**
now this	kind of crowd	you all will listen to	a responsibility
o'wa:dö'	**ne:' hëdwaiwaje:ëto'**	**ganö:nyök**	
it has become	it will be our habit	giving thanks for	
shögwa:wih	**Shögwajënö'kda'öh.**		
what he has given us	our Creator		
Ne:' neh aö'e:sat	**sgë:nö'**	**dwënöhdönyöh.**	
it is enjoyable	well-being	we are all thinking	
Da:h o:nëh dih	**ëdwe:he:k**	**sga:d**	**hëdwa:yë'**
And so now	we all will in thought	as one	we will put
ögwa'nigöë'	**dëdwadahnö:nyö:'**	**ha'deyögwe'da:ge:h.**	
our minds	we will greet one another	all of the people	
Da:h ne'hoh	**nëyo'dë:ök**	**ögwa'nigöë'.**	
let it be	this way	in our minds	

Table 4.1. Opening of the "Ganö:nyök for the Woodland Cultural Center," Seneca translation and interlinear English translation of the Seneca by Ja:no's Bowen from a version in Cayuga (Bowen 2022)

Seneca this is a general-purpose affirmation used for "okay," "understood," and "you're welcome," but in this context it has a more ceremonial register reminiscent of the Hebrew term ***amen*** (so be it).

Ganö:nyök as a Window into a Seneca Worldview

The Thanksgiving Address provides traditional Seneca people with one of their most central concepts and tools for making sense of the world. For example, the Seneca-Iroquois National Museum in Salamanca is spatially organized according to Ganö:nyök. Visitors move in the traditional Haudenosaunee counterclockwise circle through exhibits highlighting the different parts of the address, and the other topics on history, arts, and dance are organized in relationship to those parts. The Woodland Cultural Centre at Six Nations Reserve in Canada has dedicated a full wall at the entrance of its museum to a parallel display of Ganö:nyök in all six Haudenosaunee languages (figure 4.1). The Seneca intellectual John Mohawk used the address as the organizing structure for several of his writings, rather the way Christian theologians used the Apostles' Creed or the Lord's Prayer to structure their works (Mohawk 2010, 3–13). Ja:no's Bowen, director of the Seneca Language Department on the Allegany Territory, starts and ends all of her language class sessions with some version of Ganö:nyök. In her classes (which Andrew attended 2020–2024) she uses the Thanksgiving Address as a source of vocabulary, grammar, and a focal point for teaching Seneca values and worldview.

The Thanksgiving Address provides the particular Seneca way of centering life in a web of reciprocal relationships, as most other indigenous American traditions do (Kimmerer 2013, 105–117; Wilson 2008, 80–125; Fixico 2003, 6–7; Tinker 2008, 68–70; Richter 1992, 18–23; Diamond 2008, 32–32; Broyles-González, Figueroa Hernández, and González 2022, 54; Fox 2013). Humans are understood to be lesser, weaker members of a larger extended family that includes non-human creatures, animals, and plants, and beyond-human beings like the spirits of sun, moon, and stars, within a worldview where, as John Mohawk says, everything that is real has spirit and can be related to as a being (Mohawk 2010, 7–9). Bill stressed

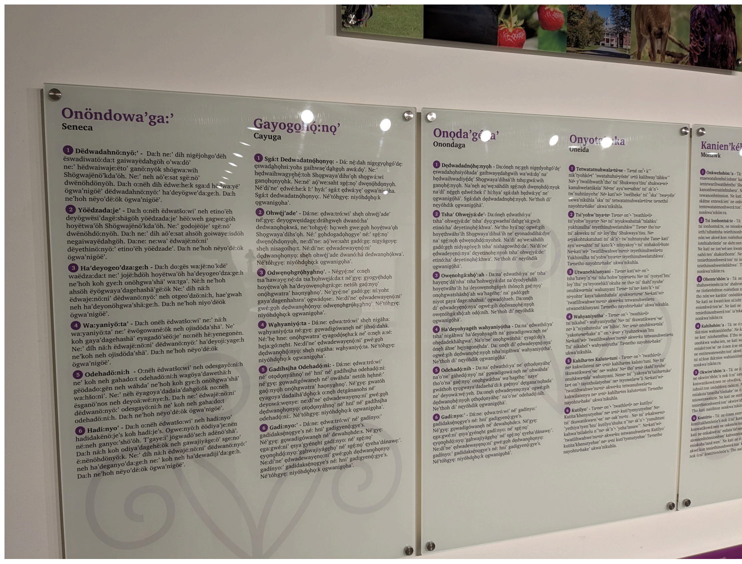


Figure 4.1. Ganö:nyök in all six Haudenosaunee languages, at the Woodland Cultural Centre, Six Nations Reserve, Ontario, Canada (see table 4.1 for Seneca text and translation of the first item shown)

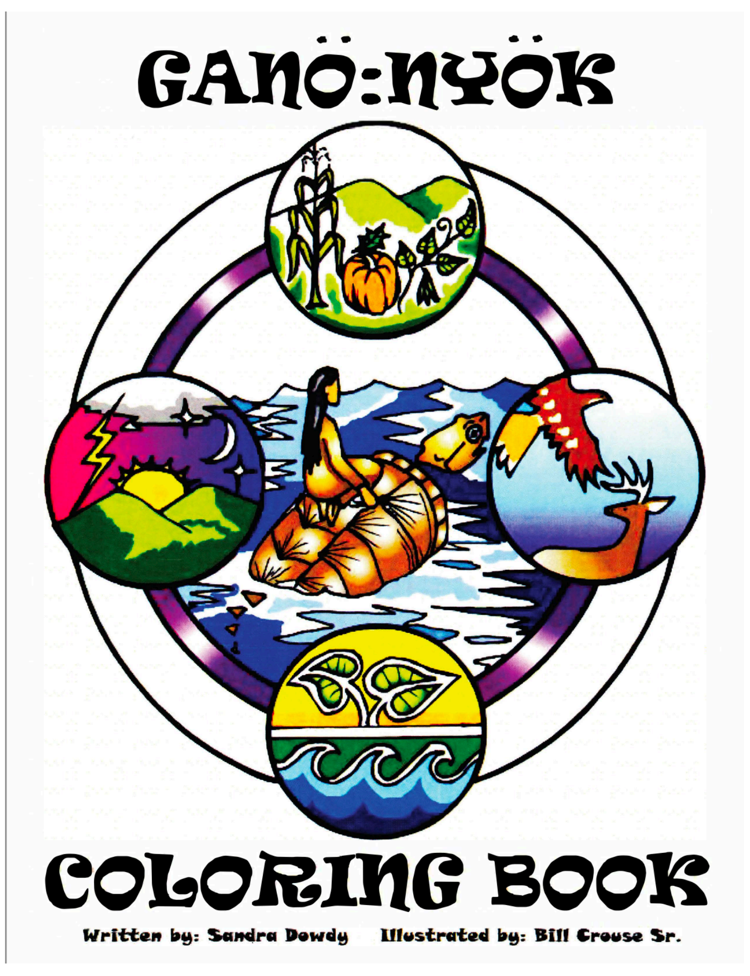


Figure 4.2. Coloring Book used to teach Ganö:nyök on the Allegany Territory, illustrated by Bill Crouse

in his address at Caneadea that each being has its own duty: for example, "I gave thanks for Our Grandfathers the Thunderers, that they protect us and they watch over us as they go and cleanse the earth; also giving thanks for Our Eldest Brother the Sun, that every day he goes on his journey, and we give thanks that he's always there and always doing his job." If each being has a job to do, then it is the task of humans to give thanks as Haudenosaunee Chief Leon Shenandoah (*Tadoda:ho'*) taught (Shenandoah 2001, 38):

> The Creator planted us here.
> He planted lots of things.
> So our duty is to keep thanking the Creator.
> When we pray it's a greeting. We don't ask for anything.
> Church people ask for things in their prayers.
> We don't. We greet him by thanking Him
> for all the things He has left for "Human Beings" to survive.
> There is no reason to ask.
> He has given us everything for us to enjoy.
> That's why our greeting is thanks.
> That's why we have to thank Him for all He left here.
> We give thanks for all kinds of medicine,
> the berries, water, the air, and the land.
> To show this appreciation to the Creator
> we have ceremony.
> We must show our appreciation for what He has given us
> because without the earth we wouldn't survive.

Giving thanks, the chief taught, was part of the "Original Instructions" given to humanity from the Creator, and it is a fundamental part of being a Real Person or a Natural Person—the term that speakers of Haudenosaunee languages use for themselves and Native people generally, *ögwé'ö:weh* in Seneca.

The Seneca language used in the address aids in this way of thinking because Seneca grammar generally requires constant attention to relationships. There are fifteen nominative pronouns in Seneca and some thirty

transitive pronouns that convey highly specific relationships (Chafe 2015; Snyder 2018) such as "that group of three or more people including at least one male to those two females," or "those two females to us excluding you." There is no generic term "son" or "daughter": the parent must say ***hea:wak*** for "my son" (***he-*** indicating a relationship of I to him) or ***kea:wak*** for "my daughter" (***ke-*** indicating I to her). To someone else the child would be ***hoa:wak*** (his son, ***ho-*** meaning he to him) or ***shagoa:wak*** (his daughter, ***shago-*** meaning he to her), or other terms depending on which relationship the speaker wanted to stress. For another example, the everyday equivalent of goodbye is ***ësgö:gë'ae'*** (I will see you again), but only if the speaker is addressing a single person. To say goodbye to two people (but not more) of mixed genders, it would have to be ***ëskni:ge'ae'***; saying farewell to a whole group would be ***ësgwa:ge'gae'***.

This relational grammar is why the Ganö:nyök speaker addresses not "Earth" generally but ***Ëthino'ëh yöëdzade'***, where the ***ethi-*** prefix means a relation of all of us to her—"***Our*** Mother the Earth." Likewise, the ***shogwa-*** in "Our Creator" means all of us to him. The language aligns with a cultural pattern in which people generally keep close track of who everyone is related to. A member of the Seneca community always knows how they and others are situated in relation to others.

Those relationships are understood to be two-way reciprocal exchanges, and for that reason gift-giving is an important way to demonstrate those bonds. Each item in the Thanksgiving Address enacts that kind of reciprocal communication among relatives: an expression of gratitude for the gifts offered by that person, animal, force, or being that solidifies a two-way relationship.

Earth Songs as a Practice of Reciprocal Relationships

Earth Songs are a central way for traditional Seneca people to establish, celebrate, and renew these relationships according to the spirit of Ganö:nyök. Many dances are explicitly linked to specific beings mentioned in the ad-

Being	Earth Songs
People	Standing Quiver, Old Moccasin
Mother Earth	New and Old-Fashioned Women's Shuffle Dance
The Three Sisters	Corn Dance
Animals	Raccoon
Birds	Robin, Pigeon
Winds	Dance of the North
Thunderers	War Dance

Table 4.2. Speculative alignment of Earth Songs with beings thanked in Gano:nyök

dress, and we might extend the concepts a bit to include others, as intable 4.2. If we were to include ceremonial songs for seasonal celebrations like the Strawberry Festival or for healing, this table would easily have an entry for every item in the Thanksgiving Address. Many people also make and share***Ë:sgä:nye:'*** (New Women's Shuffle Dance) songs that relate to items of the Thanksgiving Address, as in a"Water Song" shared on YouTube by the Akwesasne (Mohawk) Women's Singers, or the song about strawberries that Allegany singer Jake George sang at the 2024 Seneca Powwow (July 20, 2024). These songs link people to each other—literally—and help them maintain relationships with the other beings to whom different songs are addressed.

5.2

Earth Songs, then, may be understood as an extension of the Seneca thanksgiving practices that Leon Shenandoah refers to as the fundamental duties of human beings. In the Haudenosaunee Creation story, the Earth itself was formed through dance. Sky Woman, the story says, fell from the Sky World and landed on the back of a giant turtle (Bardeau 2017; A. C. Parker 1923, 59–73; Hertzberg 1966, 11–22; Fenton 1998, 34–50). The muskrat and other animals brought up soil from the sea floor for her and she danced in a counterclockwise circle to spread the soil across the turtle's back and make the world we know. Bill Crouse's daughter Ashlyn told this story to explain how Earth Songs, and especially New Women's Shuffle Dance, connects them to the Earth (Crouse and Dowdy 2023). They see

themselves as part of a long line of dancers stretching back to Sky Woman. Earth Songs enable the human family to join together in a circle of gratitude linking them to all the rest of Creation and its Creator. Even more, the being referred to as Creator was one of Sky Woman's twin sons, and Ja:no's Bowen points out that even the Creator was part of a family.

Earth Songs are social dances, not ceremonial; but that distinction must be understood within a worldview that understands the sacred***in terms of*** social relationships.Elder Al George describes Earth Songs not only as a form of relaxation, recreation, and simple fun for the community, but also as something that grounds them in who they are and connects them to their ancestors and to the land (George 2024). The community makes the dances and the dances make them. They renew relationships to each other and the whole extended, more-than-human family. The language ofone older New Women's Shuffle Dance song says this well: 5.1

> The way they do are doing things in the Sky World,
> that is how our ways are as Real (Native) People.
> It's good fun and it occupies our minds.
> While we are doing it now on the Earth
> they are also doing it up there.

The circle of dancers on earth mirrors one in the Sky World and joins all together as one community. Part of the reason the dances are "good fun" is because when people are dancing with a spirit of gratitude, they are doing exactly what people were made to do.

Earth Songs make place in the circle for ***Ha'deögwe'da:geh***, all different kinds of people, in a beautiful model of inclusion. At social dances like the intertribal dances at powwows on Haudenosaunee territory, different body types, genders, ages, tribes, clans, and even settlers are invited and welcomed to join. A social dance involves the active participation of everyone present who is able-bodied enough to move. Outside of educational presentations, the normal practice is that there are no spectators for social dancing. The dances are structured loosely enough that everyone can participate in their own way, from babies being carried to athletic young people to the very elderly who can barely shuffle one foot in front of the other.

This is why Earth Songs have always been used on the literal and figurative woods'-edge clearing to welcome outsiders into the community and enable exchanges among Native nations and with settlers.

The practice of reciprocity is emphasized in Seneca stories about the origins of Earth Songs. As Bill tells the story, Robin Dance was a gift to humans from the robin. Likewise certain dances for the corn (though not the social Corn Dance) were gifts from the Corn Spirit to enable a healthier relationship after a period of neglect. Without sharing the details, Bill also notes that there are stories about private ceremonial songs in which someone at the margins of society becomes an intermediary to an animal or other being who gives them songs to take back to the human community. In all these cases the animal or spirit knows that humans need a way to relate to it and so give them the song to enable reciprocal relationship.

As the animals and beings did for their human family members who would have been helpless without their gifts, the Haudenosaunee people did likewise for the Euro-American guests who came to their territory. They adapted the Condolence Council and the woods'-edge protocols to use for treaties (Richter 2001, 129–150; Fenton 1998). Building on the practical symbols that Peacemaker had used to establish good relationships among the Six Nations before colonization, Haudenosaunee diplomats created the Two-Row Wampum and the image of the Covenant Chain to teach the Dutch and later the English how they could work together.

Earth Songs and Reciprocity in Local Communities: The Sing

Earth Songs build relationships in local Seneca communities whenever they are shared, but the aspect of reciprocity is highlighted especially in the event known as a Sing. Starting in the early twentieth century, mutual-aid groups began holding singing competitions to raise money for the needy in the local community, especially widows (Jemison and Reuben 2024; Diamond 2008, 95–100; Woodland Cultural Centre 1990, 83–100). People would gather from all over for joint-aid work like chopping firewood for the winter. In the evenings they would relax by sharing ***Ë:sgä:nye:'***, New

Women's Shuffle Dance songs. In this setting only the songs were shared, not the dance. Singing societies developed like the Allegany Singing Society, and these groups competed as they shared sets of Women's Dance songs contributed by their members. The songs document and preserve relationships among singers, between teachers and students, and between different towns and territories.

More than other types of Earth Songs, Ladies' Dance songs celebrate human experience and community life. Singers make songs expressing everyday experiences. Songs shared by the Allegany Singers in a September 2022 recording session included topics of hunting, strawberries, and singing itself. In style, too, these songs engage with contemporary culture, making reference to popular songs, major-key sounding implied harmony, and even polyphony.

Songs are shared and remembered from teachers and relatives, making each set of songs a portrait of local community relationships—a way of remembering the community (see). The memory of who created each song is passed on as part of the song, particularly on the Allegany Territory. Very old Ë:sgä:nye:' songs are remembered as "Used-To-Be Songs" and still appear in sets at Sings, though their makers's names may be forgotten.

Relationships and reciprocity, then, provide the motivation for a Sing as part of community mutual-aid efforts, and they shape the style and subject matter of the songs shared and the ways they are shared. The songs remind the community who they are and where they have been, strengthening reciprocal bonds of friendship and family. These events also gather people from different territories and Haudenosaunee nations and allow for exchange. Bill often hears Women's Dance songs from Allegany sung on other territories, and Allegany Ë:sgä:nye:' found a worldwide audience with Joanne Shenandoah's New Age and pop-style remixes.

5.6

Intertribal Exchange in the Earth Songs Repertory

Just as the repertoire of New Women's Shuffle Dance songs incorporates layers of contributions from community members over time, the broader Earth Song repertoire also includes songs shared by other, non-

Haudenosaunee tribes. These shared songs record and preserve the reciprocal relationships among those nations.

Alligator Dance was a gift from the Miccosukee Nation of Florida. As Bill Crouse tells the story, Haudenosaunee singers heard the song at a folk-dance festival in Washington, DC, and liked it. The Miccosukee singers gave their permission for them to take it back to their own community. Bill Crouse tells how years later he was dismayed when a boy came up to him at a powwow and asked him if he could record the Alligator Dance on his tape recorder. The boy's grandmother related to Bill that since the time when the Senecas learned this song, her people had lost it and no one remembered it any more. So the Seneca adoption of the song actually led to it being preserved for its original tribe as well.

As Susan Taffe Reed has shown, Delaware Skin Dance came to the Haudenosaunee brought by the many Delaware refugees they harbored in the eighteenth century after wars and displacement in the East (Reed 2022). Like its originators, the dance has become so thoroughly adopted that it is now the traditional closing song in any set of Earth Songs at a social. Integrating the song and adopting the people went hand in hand, following the Haudenosaunee concept of "extending the rafters" to welcome more families into the extended longhouse of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

The dance's names show that Haudenosaunee singers recognized a cultural difference in the original dance and adapted it to their own context. The name Skin Dance (*ganehwaeh*) refers to the skin drum the Delawares used for this dance; the other Haudenosaunee name for this dance is Stick Dance because Haudenosaunee singers imitated the sound of the Delaware instrument by beating the rhythm on the bench with wooden sticks. Reed says one longhouse preserves a skin drum they use for this dance (Reed 2022). Bill remembers that in his youth, at Newtown Longhouse on the Cattaraugus Territory two singers would stretch out a stiff square of hide and slap it with wooden sticks.

The Cherokee Stomp Dance may have come to the Haudenosaunee in a similar way, from their Iroquoian-speaking relatives to the south. Round Dance was borrowed from tribes in Oklahoma, and Shake the Bush came from the Tutelo (Diamond 2008, 99–100). Other dances may have been

borrowed directly or developed through intercultural exchange, though more research will be needed. Kurath and William Fenton theorized that the Eagle Dance was "an offshoot of the Calumet Dance" practiced further west among Anishinaabeg peoples, but we will not discuss it further here because it is a ceremonial dance (Fenton and Kurath 1953). Moreover, our point here is not simply to trace cultural "influences" the way we often do with Western musics, as purely musical features that result from a composer's exposure to other kinds of music. As is often the case, thinking about the Native American context requires a shift from thinking about individuals and their objects to thinking about communities and their relationships. The Eagle Dance may ultimately have been influenced by the practices of other tribes, but if so that is not part of the dance's purpose or identity to the Haudenosaunee today. By contrast, Alligator Dance was intentionally shared according to a kind of diplomatic protocol, and actively preserves a relationship between two Native nations.

Today's communications media make musical intercultural exchange far easier than it would have been in the past, and this enables superficial connections as well as appropriation and outright theft. Within oral traditions without recordings or music notation, the only way to transfer a song from one community to another was for someone from the first community to teach it to someone in the second. That requires repetition, time, and patience. It requires an already developed aural ability and an understanding of common, shared musical conventions. Above all, it requires a relationship between two people and their communities. It is much harder to steal a song that can only be taught orally. This is even more the case for dance: to learn another community's dance, people from both communities would actually have to dance together. Just as wampum belts were objects whose meanings derived from oral communications that were carefully transmitted and then preserved on both sides of the communication, so songs and dances that are passed from one nation to another embody a whole process of cultural exchange. Reed argues that the Delaware Skin Dance as practiced in Haudenosaunee communities embodies the history of relationships between those peoples, going back to the eighteenth century if not before.

Native Values of Reciprocal Song-Sharing

The story of Alligator Dance reveals much about Seneca concepts of music and provides a model for those who wish to share their music, especially settlers. Singers of both Seneca and Miccosukee nations understood the dance neither as an individual creation under copyright nor as something in the public domain. Rather, the dance belonged to the nation. The dance could be shared as a gift from nation to nation, with the appropriate permission. The Seneca singers could have simply recorded or memorized the dance and copied it on their own, but they would have viewed that as inappropriate, so they asked for permission. Instead of some kind of business transaction, they began a reciprocal relationship that has continued to the present. Eventually they were able to give back by re-sharing the song.

We would ask readers to follow this model in using the materials shared here. Seneca Earth Songs belong to the Seneca Nation, and Seneca singers like Bill Crouse follow community protocols for how, when, and with whom to share them, and for what purpose. The stories, recordings, transcriptions, and other information we share here are meant to help create and strengthen relationships between Seneca people and settlers. Settlers who would use the songs without involving Seneca people would not only be missing the opportunity to build reciprocal relationships; they would actually be damaging the relationships that exist.

Smoke Dance and Relationships among Native Nations

Today powwows on Haudenosaunee territory have become one of the main sites for sharing Earth Songs between Haudenosaunee nations, among Native nations, and with settlers. At the Salamanca and Akwesasne powwows, the Grand Entry goes in a counterclockwise circle, reverse of the normal practice elsewhere, and is led by the veterans bearing the flags while the singers sing Earth Songs. The normal events of Northern and Southern powwow dance and song are rooted in grass dances of the Western plains (Browner 2002), but at the powwows on Haudenosaunee territory they are supplemented with the distinctively Iroquois competition category of Smoke Dance.

Smoke Dance originated in exhibition shows, in which singers sped up traditional social-dance songs and dancers heightened the traditional moves of*wasa:se’* (War Dance) to create a unique Haudenosaunee version of competitive, showy powwow dancing. Smoke Dance was first included in the powwow arena as a competition category at the Salamanca Powwow, which Bill Crouse’s family helped start in the 1990s, and it is now a widespread category on Haudenosaunee territory and increasingly outside as well.

5.3

The high, piercing cries of plains powwow songs and their huge drums, and the spiky, feather plains regalia contrast strikingly with the much more mellifluous tunes and singing style of the Haudenosaunee, coupled usually not with water drum but with a larger frame drum. The traditional songs are amped up—literally, on the giant powwow PA systems—but not as much as other powwow music. The traditional regalia of Haudenosaunee dancers is also plainer, closer to the body, and more modest than the alternatives.

Smoke Dance allows Haudenosaunee dancers to present their own distinct heritage in the context of an intertribal gathering. A powwow is in one sense a diplomatic event, a kind of congress of Native nations projecting an alternative, anticolonial vision of North America as an indigenous-dominated Turtle Island. Smoke Dance builds on earlier traditions of Haudenosaunee diplomacy. Earth Songs have been part of the reciprocal relationships among Haudenosaunee nations since the time of Peacemaker, and gatherings of nations for Haudenosaunee councils and treaties all likely included social dances. Since most of the Earth Songs are fundamentally the same across the Six Nations in both their melodies and their vocable words, these songs enable Haudenosaunee powwow participants to downplay their distinctions and project a sense of pan-Iroquois solidarity. This commonality is what enabled Bill Crouse to be the featured singer at the Akwesasne Powwow in September 2023 though it was Mohawk territory.

Apart from powwows, Smoke Dance competitions and exhibitions are regular occurrences in Salamanca and elsewhere, with categories for each gender and age group. One memorable moment came in a Smoke Dance

competition at the Seneca-Iroquois National Museum in Salamanca for Seneca Nation Heritage Day (June 11, 2022), when in the middle of the Golden Age Men's dance, a toddler found his way out into the circle and the elderly dancers included him in their dances. Unlike other social dances, Smoke Dance competitions do create a distinction between participants and observers. There is a seated audience who applaud at the announcer's invitation after each dance. Smoke Dance competitions often feature substantial cash prizes, which encourages participation and also raises the stakes for the audience.

Smoke Dance is one of a few occasions in which Earth Songs are sung in a completely different style and context from their original use. When Bill sings Robin Dance for Smoke Dance (one of his favorites for this purpose) it is at nearly double the normal tempo and follows a different structure of repeats. Bill has also on occasion repurposed Earth Songs in other settings. In summer 2023 he organized an exhibition "lacrosse dance" which coupled a choreographed lacrosse exhibition with ***Dzo'ä:gá' Oënö'*** (Raccoon Dance). In these ways Seneca singers continue to use Earth Songs with creativity and flexibility as tools to build reciprocal relationships.

Anti-Reciprocal Relationships: Colonizers and Seneca Song

In contrast to this relational approach, Euro-American colonizers failed to understand Haudenosaunee values of reciprocity, and with regard to music their relations to the Haudenosaunee might be termed anti-reciprocal. Settlers either ignored Haudenosaunee music, tried to suppress it and impose their own, or tried to steal it. Contributing to ignorance and erasure, few scholars have given serious attention to Haudenosaunee Earth Songs or incorporated Haudenosaunee music into broader accounts of American music history. Suppression and imposition came from missionaries who introduced European hymns, residential schools that punished children for speaking or singing in Native languages and required them to sing hymns (figure 4.3), and government policies that restricted performance of

Figure 4.3. "Help me please": Graffiti carved by a student in the wall of the Mohawk Institute, a residential school in Brantford, Ontario

Native ceremonies (Graham 1997; Baron 2024; Johnson-Williams 2022). The 1883 Code of Indian Offenses of the US Department of the Interior "punished Indian dances and feasts by imprisonment or withholding food (treaty rations) for up to 30 days" and its restrictions were not fully repealed until the passage of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (Zotigh 2018).

Theft is not too harsh a term for the practice of scholars like William Fenton, who recorded hundreds of Earth Songs sung by Bill Crouse's relatives and teachers but never published scholarship on them or shared them with the Seneca community, while instead sharing other privileged information and artifacts with the result that the name of Fenton became profoundly unwelcome in Seneca communities (McCarthy 2008). It also applies to the atrocious"arrangement" of Pigeon Dance example 4.1) and other Haudenosaunee songs, including restricted ceremonial songs, as a sentimental Victorian parlor song with pseudo-Indian lyrics (MacPherson

5.5

1904). The original words, meaning, and musical character of the song are discarded and replaced with other features the audience perceived as more authentically Indian (Deloria 1998, 2004). Obviously, the composer did not learn these songs through a relationship with a singer of the oral tradition; instead they were simply copied from an 1898 printed transcription (Boyle 1898, 149). Without the full context of how Haudenosaunee singers sang, how they accompanied the songs with instruments, or what the songs meant, the composer simply copied the pitches from the transcription with the result that everything distinctive about the original songs was lost (Levine 2002).

A similar pattern of taking Earth Songs without a relationship may be seen in British composer Colin McPhee's orchestral rendering of a tiny fragment of Corn Dance and three ceremonial songs that should not be shared (McPhee 1945). As with the parlor songs, the composer did not learn the songs through relationship with a singer, but simply took them from Fenton's recordings, ignoring their context (which Fenton, for his part, did try to provide). Like the parlor-song composer, McPhee ignored so much of what makes the real Corn Dance songs interesting and instead treated the original as simply raw material for the Western composer to work into true "art" according to Western aesthetics, following the same pattern that Dylan Robinson has identified in Canada (Robinson 2020). These were all one-sided, anti-reciprocal, often painful and traumatic interactions that resulted only in an increase of strain between settlers and the Haudenosaunee, and a decrease in understanding. The cruel irony is that not only did these arrangements publish ceremonial songs without permission, they were making it possible for settler musicians to play Seneca ceremonial songs at the same time that the Interior Department was restricting Native people from performing their own ceremonies. Because this music did not come from reciprocal relationships, it could do nothing to build reciprocal relationships.

In the face of ignorance and suppression, however, the Haudenosaunee quietly preserved their own oral traditions. When we asked Seneca elder Al George why people should know about Earth Songs, he said that his people needed to know their language and their songs so that set-

Figure 4.4. Looking north across Seneca Nation lands flooded by the Kinzua Dam, from just south of the Pennsylvania border (July 2024)

tlers couldn't claim they were no longer Indians and try to invalidate their treaties (George 2024). When the United States "forgets" about its treaty obligations, it causes tragedies like the Kinzua Dam (figure 4.4), when in 1961 President Kennedy violated the United States' very first treaty with a Native nation and flooded one third of the Seneca Nation's territory (Hauptman 1986, 105–122; 2014, xvii–xxi). Keeping Earth Songs alive is thus intensely political and anti-colonial for many Seneca singers, as a way of resisting the willful amnesia of settlers about their relationships with Native nations.

In the face of imposition and theft, Haudenosaunee musicians mastered Western music and created their own cultural fusions. Haudenosaunee musicians distinguished themselves in Western forms, from the brass bands of the nineteenth century (Hauptman 2019a, 59–60) to celebrated rock musician Robbie Robertson (1943–2023), a Mohawk from Six Nations. Cattaraugus Seneca violinist Cleo Hewitt (1889–1987) stud-

ied at Hampton University, the United States Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and the Dana Musical Institute in Warren, Ohio; she was a distinguished solo, chamber, and orchestral performer of Western Classical music, and"she became an innovative and beloved teacher combining Iroquoian and western musical traditions in her reservation classrooms as well as in her private lessons in her home" (Hauptman 2019b, 268). Oneida/Onondaga singer and composer Joanne Shenandoah (1957–2021) brought Earth Songs to an international audience through a stylistic fusion with New Age, folk, country, and pop elements.

5.6

Haudenosaunee Christians adapted the hymn-singing practices imposed on them by the missionaries according to their own cultural patterns. Contemporary hymn-singing societies like the Oneida Hymn Singers function as mutual-aid societies serving primarily to comfort the mourning, much like the traditionalist singing societies and perhaps building on much older practices of condolence (O'Grady 1991; Green 1993; Diamond 2008, 115). Their singing style also fuses European harmony and form with distinctively Haudenosaunee vocal style. More research is needed to tell how much traditional Seneca language and thought made its way into the Seneca-language hymns that were published by Buffalo Creek missionary Asher Wright and others, and how they were or still are sung (Wright 1846; Sanborn 1892).

Haudenosaunee communities also fought theft and appropriation by developing stricter protocols for sharing and withholding information from settlers (McCarthy 2008). A prominent Seneca artist told Mohawk anthropologist Audra Simpson that "anthropology was declared off-limits in Seneca territory after William Fenton betrayed the Seneca elders who allowed him to observe Longhouse ceremony" (Simpson 2014, 214, note 14). (That is why this project was designed exclusively around publicly shared social dance.) At the same time, and despite the pain and betrayal in their history, Seneca people keep finding new ways to use Earth Songs to build better relationships with settlers, according to their own values of reciprocity.

The Woods' Edge Clearing and the Way Forward

Seneca people continue to use Earth Songs to build reciprocal relationships. Those relationships include their links to Mother Earth and her plants, animals, and natural forces, as well as the family and social relationships that make up the Seneca Nation and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. They also extend to their connections to their non-Native neighbors. If settlers can listen to Earth Songs and understand the values of relationship and reciprocity that animate them, then new kinds of relationships may be able to grow between settlers and Natives in Seneca territory, rooted in the protocols the Haudenosaunee originally established for relating with Euro-Americans at "the edge of the woods."

In Seneca villages before contact and well into the colonial period, the woods'-edge clearing was the meeting place of local insiders and visiting outsiders (Fenton 1998, 180–190; Richter 1992, 18). Visitors sang as they approached a village, and village residents began preparing for their meeting when they could hear them singing through the woods. They met at the edge of the woods and the locals greeted their visitors with a protocol based on the ceremonies for condoling the grieving, which included songs (select transcriptions by Gertrude Kurath in Fenton 1998, 733–737). They ritually wiped the tears from their eyes, opened their ears, and cleared the block in their throats caused by the griefs and hardships of the journey. This prepared both parties to receive each other and enter into relationship with a Good Mind. Once the guests were welcomed into the community, the outsiders would often be invited to participate in a community social dance in the evening. Starting with Standing Quiver, the lead singer would recruit the other singers and in turn draw the whole village into the dance. The songs and dances solidified the reciprocal connections among everyone present.

Earth Songs have continued that relational function up to the present day. Today the woods' edge is found not only at the edge of a city or a reservation boundary, but at the meeting place of Seneca people following traditional and not-so-traditional Seneca lifestyles and religious practice, those living on and off territory, as well as indigenous and non-indigenous peo-

Figure 4.5. Bill Crouse, Sr., and the Allegany River Indian Dancers present at Ganondagan State Historic Site near Victor, New York, July 24, 2021

ple. It is a meeting place for past and present, history and tradition. It is a liminal (threshold) space where old relationships can be strengthened and new relationships formed.

The Seneca Arts and Culture Center at Ganondagan State Historic Site was built around the concept of the Woods' Edge Protocol. The walkway up to the center from the parking lot takes visitors through the stages of the woods' edge greeting. Settlers and people of all kinds are welcome to the many free events at Ganondagan like the Winter Indigenous Arts Festival. When Bill Crouse and his group present Earth Songs there (figure 4.5), they are continuing the traditions of using these songs to create reciprocal relationships.

Bill Crouse's Earth Song Presentations

Bill and others use the songs to educate settlers not only about Seneca music but about worldview and values, care for the Earth, and history. Bill's presentations give settlers a way to connect with Seneca people and begin a reciprocal relationship with them. His events call on everyone to partic-

ipate in the Native style; they are not for bystanders or objective scholarly observers.

For this settler (Andrew), Earth Songs are invitingly simple to dance but also surprisingly challenging and physically taxing to keep up. Settlers tend to be at first flattered and then humbled by the experience of dancing Earth Songs. They emerge from the last dance sweaty and smiling, with new relationships to their neighbors, and new friends in Bill and his group.

The 2023 Indigenous Peoples' Day presentation by Bill Crouse and the Allegany River Indian Singers and Dancers at Genesee Valley Park in Rochester exemplified Bill's typical program and themes. Bill began as he always does by introducing himself in Seneca and then in English. After giving a basic introduction to his group, the Seneca Nation, and Earth Songs, he told a simple version of the story of Standing Quiver Dance and then led his group dancing in a counterclockwise circle around the park shelter. He invited everyone to follow them and participate in the dance and around forty people did join their line, while as many watched from the side. Among other dances, Bill responded to recent unseasonably cold weather by including the Dance of the North, dedicated to the cold North Wind. In the Corn Dance, someone brought her retriever along with her in the line, prompting Bill to conclude by remarking, "That's the first time that I ever saw a dog doing Corn Dance," and then, to groans, "I gotta say, it must be a corn dog!" Bill took time to introduce each member of the group and explained their regalia, having first the women and then the men showcase their beautiful, handmade clothes and moccasins. The show included a presentational version of a Smoke Dance contest, with dancers of each gender and age group showing off their finest moves, with the youngest coming last and winning onlookers' hearts. In accord with typical social-dance protocols, the final dance was Delaware Skin Dance.

Bill knows how to entertain a crowd of settlers, and his presentations are extremely diplomatic with regard to politics. This is partly because he was raised to believe that faithkeepers were not supposed to be partisan, something he said his mother continually reminds him. But every presentation still includes the themes of Seneca sovereignty, history, survival, and excellence. Bill always reminds listeners that the Seneca Nation is a living

Figure 4.6. Bill Crouse, Sr., and the Allegany River Indian Dancers lead settler (and canine) participants in Corn Dance for Indigenous Peoples' Day 2023 at Genesee Valley Park in Rochester, New York

community with ancient roots deeply connected to their specific land with its creatures and its seasons. He stresses the longevity of their oral traditions as evidence that "we're still here." And he celebrates excellence by showcasing Seneca virtuosity in dance, singing, and regalia, always emphasizing that even his youngest children are learning these arts and well on their way to mastery. He also demonstrates a corny, irreverant Native humor that is so characteristic of American indigenous people despite being still so little recognized by non-Natives (Fixico 2017, 153–176; Deloria, Jr. 1969, 146–167).

Bill's approach is to counter stereotypes not through direct confrontation but by showing people what Seneca people and their traditions are really like. He knows that there will be attendees who only think of Indians in the past tense, and so while he does stress the continuity of their traditions, he also will say, "I should point out that we don't dress like this every day," for the benefit of hearers who imagine the dancers have stepped out of a time machine or a "primeval forest" somewhere. One woman came up to Bill after a show at Ganondagan and asked how well the corn-husk outer moccasins she'd seen in the museum worked in the snow. "I wouldn't

know," he told her. "Most of the time I just wear my boots." Bill's shows create a woods'-edge clearing, and settlers who may enter with ignorance or stereotypes will leave with the beginnings of a relationship with real Seneca people. The songs and dances serve as a gift from the Senecas back to settlers, providing a way for to enter into a healthy, mutually beneficial relationship.

Sharing the Land in Caneadea

In 2022 the town government of Caneadea, New York, reached out to the Seneca Nation government and asked how they could formally establish friendship—something that had never happened before (Ross 2023). After a long process of collaborative planning their efforts culminated in the Seneca-Caneadea Field Day on July 1, 2023. Intended to be an annual celebration of friendship, the Field Day was held a second time in June 2024 (Ross 2024).

Caneadea has been the site of one of the Seneca Nation's reservations, one of the last ones they lost before ending up with just the territories they occupy now (Oberg 2016, 141–142). In a large field on the west bank of the Genesee River that was part of that reservation, on a hot day in midsummer, there was a formal ceremony followed by social dancing and a lacrosse demonstration game. Vendors and exhibitors from the Seneca Nation set up tents all across the field. The ceremony included speeches by Caneadea and Seneca Nation officials including SNI president Ricky Armstrong. Gifts were exchanged that had been custom-made for this occasion.

Bill sang the"Seneca anthem" he learned from Avery Jimerson, Sr., as they raised the Seneca Nation flag next to a town flag. Notably, they did not fly a New York State flag, the US flag, or the Haudenosaunee Hiawatha-belt flag, as the agreement of friendship was only between the town of Caneadea and the Seneca Nation of Indians. There was a humility and a specificity to that choice that reflected the relational understanding on both sides. This was certainly a political event but it was very specific to the communities involved. The type of relationship they hoped to build was

5.7

pictured in the third flag they added in 2024, representing the Two-Row Wampum.

A mixed but largely white crowd listened to the speeches and many joined in the social dancing. Bill, Al George, and Jacob Dowdy sang as Bill's group (mostly consisting of his extended family) danced. The first dance was a Friendship Dance followed by a typical social set starting with Standing Quiver and including New Women's Shuffle Dance.

5.8

The format the next year was similar, with more Seneca presenters: joining Bill Crouse's Allegany River Indian Dancers were the Indigenous Spirit Dancers led by Marty Jimerson, Jr., from the Cattaraugus Territory, and a hoop-dance group. The Indigenous Spirit Dancers began with a Seneca Welcome Dance, in which the women and men faced each other in parallel lines and at several points in the dance, came toward each other, interweaving the two lines to switch sides. The hoop-dance group danced to a variety of recorded contemporary Native music, including selections by the Mohawk and Cayuga hip-hop group The Halluci Nation (formerly A Tribe Called Red) and Robbie Robertson. They added a dose of humor by including *NDN Kars* by Anishinabe musician Keith Secola. Their presentation emphasized relationships with the Earth and with people.

I (Andrew) was struck by how much of the language used in the speeches stretched back to eighteenth-century treaty sessions—the Two-Row Wampum, the Covenant Chain, the Tree of Peace, and other metaphors were foundational. The whole event, held in a literal woods' edge clearing, seemed almost to reverse the old ceremony in that it was not Seneca people welcoming outsiders to their village but settlers welcoming Senecas back to their own land, now as guests. One YouTube commenter titled the day, "Caneadea Field Day. The Return!."

But one could also read it the other way. Here as in the eighteenth century, the settlers had few protocols that would suffice. The Senecas assumed the main burden of ceremony. Two hundred years later somehow it was still the Senecas creating a dance circle and inviting whites to join in friendship, welcoming settlers to step onto familiar land with a new understanding—that the settlers had been the guests all along. Senecas understood land through the worldview articulated by the Thanksgiving Ad-

dress, not as an object to be owned or a set of privileges to be bestowed, but as a web of relationships to living beings. Others could become part of that web of relationships, even settlers. They could share the land and its resources for the same reason we all must share our friends: we are grateful for their friendship but we do not have the right to limit who else they are friends with.

In our view, since this land was guaranteed to the Senecas by the 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua, which has not been supplanted by another legally ratified treaty, it would be better for the town of Caneadea to actually give this land back to the Seneca Nation, and only then to work together to figure out how the Senecas could share the land with *them*. But establishing friendship and sharing the land, even for one day a year, are at least good steps on the path forward. That no other city in the region has yet made such a step indicates how far settlers have to go.

In this event all three of this project's dialectic themes come together. *Earth and land* define not just Mother Earth or the Genesee valley in themselves, but reciprocal relationships with *Our* Mother the Earth through a specific place. "The Creator's Game," lacrosse, was played probably on that very field in Caneadea, for centuries before "the return" in July 2023. The Fish Dance songs sung on that day were made to honor the same fish swimming in the Genesee only a few hundred yards away.

History and tradition are at play here because of the way traditional ceremonies, metaphors, songs, and dances, were used to shape a historic event and respond to the history of that place. Several of Bill's choices were rooted in history: the flag song, Friendship Dance, Standing Quiver. But the whole event responded to history by creating a new tradition: this event is intended to recur annually. The answer to a cycle of betrayal and abuse is a new cycle of trust and friendship. People forget that places are defined by how we use them, and we can therefore start using them differently.

Above all, the event was a picture of what can happen when settler guests listen to their Native hosts and learn how to build healthy patterns of *relationship and reciprocity*. Three images that were highlighted at the Caneadea Field Day show the way forward for other communities: the Two-Row Wampum, the Covenant Chain, and the Dance Circle.

Figure 4.7. Replica of the Two-Row Wampum belt, at the Woodland Cultural Centre, Six Nations Reserve, Brantford, Ontario (Oct. 2023)

Three Ways of Picturing Settler-Indigenous Relationships

The Two-Row Wampum

The Two-Row Wampum or *Gaswëhda'* was originally a treaty with the Dutch in the seventeenth century (Tehanetorens [Ray Fadden] 1999, 72–75; Hill 2017, 79–131; Oberg 2016, 12–13, 161; Fenton 1998, 224–242). Wampum beads were made from clam shells and woven into strings or belts that served as mnemonic devices used to communicate messages and make agreements. The belt encoded a message or an agreement through symbols. All the people involved in the communication had to remember the message and preserve it in their own oral traditions; the belt would only remind them. This particular belt (figure 4.7) had two rows of dark wampum beads down the center with a narrow row of white beads between.

Seneca Nation President Ricky Armstrong, Sr., explained the significance of the Two-Row Wampum at the second annual Seneca-Caneadea Field Day: 5.10

> Good afternoon, everyone. As we say in the Seneca language, "we are thankful that you are well." It is my pleasure to be back here with our friends and neighbors in Caneadea and to continue a tradition that was started last year, marking an important but meaningful return to the lands of our ancestors. I'm happy to be here again on behalf of the Seneca Nation government.
>
> It was more than 225 years ago when our ancestors signed the Treaty of Big Tree in 1797. As part of that treaty the United States officially recognized eleven Seneca reservations. Among them was Caneadea. All of us here today share roots in this beautiful territory "where heaven rests upon the earth." Like our Seneca ancestors did centuries ago before being relocated, many of your ancestors made this land home as well and just like us, part of your heart and your history will forever be connected to this place. In that way we are to be forever connected. Last year we reestablished this important connection between our communities. Today we again rekindle our friendship and the spirit of community.
>
> You may have noticed that the bottom of this year's logo for the Seneca Caneadea Field Day events displays a white belt that contains two purple lines running through it. This represents the Two-Row Wampum belt. Here is a replica of the original. In our culture wampum belts are crafted from white and purple shells created from clamshells. Traditionally the clam shells beads were woven to create various patterns and symbols to record significant events and agreements or treaties.
>
> The Two-Row Wampum belt represents a treaty entered into in the year 1613 between the people of the Longhouse

> also known as the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch people. On the Two-Row Wampum belt the white background represents a river, the River of Life. One purple line represents the path of the Natives, the Haudenosaunee, traveling the river in our own canoe, with our own culture, laws, and traditions. The other purple line represents the path of the non-Native settlers in their own boat with their own laws and culture. We won't disembark from our canoe and attempt to steer your boat, and we expect you to stay in your boat and not interfere with us or try to steer our canoe.
>
> That is the Two-Row concept: two parallel lines that never cross. It's based on peace and friendship and most important, on mutual respect: live and let live. We honor and live by that Two-Row concept to this day. Today is a celebration of culture, a celebration of history, and above all else a celebration of mutual respect expressed in the Two-Row Wampum belt.
>
> I hope that you will enjoy today's events and you will engage and appreciate the demonstrations and exhibits of our culture and traditions, and most of all that we will share in the spirit of community and togetherness that we will carry forward with us not just today but every day. So for being here and for celebrating our shared history and for renewing our friendship, ***nya:wëh***, thank you.

The Two-Row Wampum portrayed an image of peaceful coexistence, sharing space and natural resources, but also leaving each other be, according to the same ideal for how Native nations were supposed to relate to each other. It implied respect and cooperation but also healthy distance.

Not only is the Two-Row Wampum a way of remembering a relational agreement of the past; it is also a tool for thinking about settler–Native relationships today. Algonquin/Mohawk scholar Bonnie Freeman presented a whole paper at the 2023 Conference on Iroquois Research just on the three rows of white beads in the middle of the Two-Row (Freeman 2023). Did

they only represent distance, like a Demilitarized Zone between the two communities? Or did they represent a more active relationship of peace and cooperation? She actually got grant funding to take the Two-Row message almost literally, by going on a canoe trek with a settler friend and writing about what they learned in a shared experience where they had to cooperate closely or be capsized. In her reading, the Two-Row directs us to create space for an ethical co-existing of friendship, respect, and peace, where one way of being and doing does not overtake the other.

The Two-Row Wampum makes clear that Native people sought ways from the beginning to live in mutually beneficial ways with the European newcomers. In multiple treaty negotiations, Haudenosaunee speakers said something to the effect that "Our roads have always been open to you" (Fenton 1998; Richter 1992). There was plenty of land to spare, which the Haudenosaunee did not claim to own anyway. There was an assumption both of reciprocity and of respect for differing ways of life.

Many Native people today, despite all the intervening history, still cultivate this kind of open, sharing attitude. Even though the Allegany Territory has never been part of the United States, it has no border checkpoints or customs. Despite being a settler living off Seneca territory, all Andrew had to do to begin learning the Seneca language was sign up for a free online course through the Nation's Language Department. Bill is coauthoring this project with the support of his community, though there will always be differing attitudes about how much to share. That openness comes with an expectation of reciprocity, that the settler with whom knowledge is shared will be responsible for that knowledge and use it for the community's benefit (Diamond 2019, 248).

The Two-Row might also be read to mean something like "separate but equal" or "stay in your lane," and some settlers still need to hear that. There are situations where Native people would prefer to just be left alone. Native people don't need help from settlers because of a supposed deficit inherent in their biology or culture. The problems well-meaning settlers want to help with—poverty, addiction, language and culture loss—are ones that settlers created. Native nations would not need grant funds or studies from linguists for language revitalization if generations of forced re-education in

abusive boarding schools had not nearly driven the language extinct. They would not need economic aid if the US and Canada had not taken away the land that was their economic base. There would be no need for digital-humanities projects like this one to document oral tradition if all the conditions that allowed oral tradition to work effectively for thousands of years had not been so violently disturbed. Native people are perfectly capable of determining their own needs and developing ways to address them, and when they are able to define their own space the results are beautiful to behold, as anyone can see at a powwow. There you see a glimpse of a modern America that is a confederation of hundreds of ancient but living and thriving indigenous nations—plus a few immigrant guests living in their midst, sharing the land.

On the other hand, the Two-Row is not a cop-out for settlers who just don't want to do the work or take the risks required to remedy their relationship with Native people. In music schools and concert halls, a much greater risk than assimilationism is segregation, and greater than that is the danger of pure erasure. But the Two-Row Wampum challenges settler institutions to rethink how they approach their goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion with respect to Native people, because Native nations are not necessarily looking for inclusion. Instead of programming music by a white composer that "integrates" Native elements, or even programming music by a Native composer that conforms to Classical canons and can be played on European instruments according to European aesthetics, the leaders of these institutions might consider whether it would be better simply to create space on their stage for Native performers to present according to their own agenda; or perhaps to dedicate some of their funding to support the work of Native cultural revitalizers even if the results can't be immediately showcased on stage. Settler scholars who are concerned about watering down the canon by including Native American music in their courses might consider the alternative: funding an entire course of study in the local Native nation's music, taught by local Native teachers compensated at a rate on par with the settler faculty (even if they don't have PhDs), and making it required for all music majors ***in addition*** to the content focused on the European canon. University music schools and departments could

be organizing Native-run indigenous music and arts festivals to be held annually in the nicest building on campus and promoted heavily to the whole community. Let the settler institution handle the finances and logistics, since the space and the money originated with Native land anyway; let the Native community take the lead on the actual content presented. That kind of initiative would embody the Two-Row Wampum as a cooperative gesture that shares resources but also allows for cultural difference.

The Covenant Chain

The second image that the Haudenosaunee provided to Euro-Americans was the Covenant Chain, which also originated in negotiations with the Dutch and then was later extended to the English (Hill 2017, 79–131; Venables 2010). One notable account comes from the 1744 Treaty of Lancaster, published by Benjamin Franklin (Virginia and Six Nations of New York 1744). As Haudenosaunee orators envisioned it, the first Dutch ships to anchor off the shore of Turtle Island were tied by a bark or reed rope to a tree on land. Recognizing that the Dutch seemed weak and perpetually in need, the Haudenosaunee diplomats offered for the Dutch to tie their ship metaphorically to the Great Tree of Peace that stood at the center of their confederacy, at Onondaga (or to the Great Hill there). As the relationship between the nations strengthened, they spoke of replacing the rope with an iron chain, and later a silver one. Both sides had an obligation to keep the chain bright and free of rust.

When they met in treaty it was to "polish the chain of friendship." Often the reason for a meeting between Haudenosaunee and Dutch or English ambassadors was some breach of their agreement: for example, at the 1744 treaty three Native men had been killed in Ohio. The Haudenosaunee orators said to the English, in effect, "You have let down your end of the agreement and allowed the chain of friendship to become rusty. Now we are prepared to do what is necessary to polish the chain and make it bright and strong again. But next time please remember your obligation."

The Covenant Chain goes beyond the live-and-let-live ethos of the Two-Row Wampum. It says that settler and indigenous nations have an ac-

tive relationship—we are actually bound to each other, and not as equals. Settlers depended on Native people for survival in the early colonial period, and their prosperity has been derived from Native land ever since, including its crops and the knowledge of how to grow them. The perilous state of our environment after "settlement" and industrialization is a sign that settlers do not actually know how to survive in this land. Settlers need the ancient wisdom of America's indigenous peoples to save them from the damage they have done. Native people do not need settlers' help nearly as much as the reverse.

At the 2024 Caneadea Field Day, the former Town Supervisor Philip Stockin's remarks, following President Armstrong's teaching about the Two-Row, drew on the image of the Covenant Chain:

> It's my privilege and honor to be part of this historic gathering once again, the second annual Seneca Caneadea field day. We welcome each of you from near and far.
>
> Last year I mentioned that I grew up right across Route 19 from here and spent many hours exploring this area being fully aware that this was Seneca land. Indeed the history of the Seneca nation here in the Genesee Valley is deeply woven into the fabric of this place and we are honored today to welcome members of the Seneca nation back to their ancestral land while also celebrating our growing friendship for a second year. When nurturing a friendship the Senecas compare it to polishing a chain and not letting it become rusty. May today's events in a park along the banks of the beautiful Genesee River polish that chain that connects us.
>
> We trust that today will be an opportunity to listen to learn and a chance to gain new appreciation for the timeless traditions and culture of our Seneca neighbors. In a moment when politics and people are so polarized, our hope is that this event continues to serve as a positive model of renewed friendship, bringing people together in a spirit of respect and honor.

Figure 4.8. The Hoop Dance presentation at the 2024 Seneca-Caneadea Field Day reminded Andrew of the Covenant Chain

> So on behalf of the town of Caneadea we welcome you to this special place where the heavens rest upon the earth.

Though the Covenant Chain was a specific agreement of the peoples in a particular region, the basic concept applies throughout North America, which is that settlers are guests on Native land and that every non-Native person living on this continent today has inherited a legacy of relationship between Native people and settlers that preceded them. Settlers are already bound to Native people; it is just that they have allowed the chain of friendship to rust, even to break, or to be buried and forgotten. So part of how I (Andrew) can be faithful to my own settler ancestors is to honor the commitment I was born into, and find, restore, polish, and strengthen that Covenant Chain. Settlers don't need a PhD in indigenous studies to connect with Native people, they don't need to have an Indian fetish or a beadwork hobby, they don't need to believe their great-grandmother was an Indian princess—they are already connected in a reciprocal relationship, and the question is simply what kind of relationship they will cultivate from now forward.

The Covenant Chain is not one of penance or guilt, nor of exploitation and control; it is a chain of friendship. People don't conduct studies on their friends and present theories about them at academic conferences. They don't steal from their friend, present their friend's work as their own, or "improve" it by changing it into something radically different that the friend wouldn't recognize.

The Covenant Chain embodies relationship work that requires both sides to be actively involved. A strong link results from ongoing, never-ending, and hopefully joyful work.

The Dance Circle

Seneca Earth Songs provide a third image of settler-Native relationships in addition to the Two-Row Wampum and the Covenant Chain: the circle of dance. The Two-Row emphasizes separateness but also sharing. The Covenant Chain emphasizes dependency, legal bonds, and reciprocal mutual obligation. The Friendship Dance, then, emphasizes movement, energy, and embodiment. It is a picture of sharing the same space, dancing on the same Earth, moving forward but also staying in a traditional circle, connected to ancient, ongoing, eternal patterns of seasons. Hence, the Seneca-Caneadea Field Day was "the Return": another turn around the same circle of settler-Native relationships, an ongoing dance now centuries old, but somehow just beginning.

The Relational Goals of This Project

The *Songs at the Woods' Edge* project is explicitly intended to contribute to reciprocal relationships between Seneca people like Bill and their settler guests like Andrew. Much as we are concerned about harmful appropriation, we are more worried about erasure and ignorance. Better to make good, authentic material available with proper context than to allow people to continue thinking Haudenosaunee people exist only in history books, if that.

For me (Andrew) this project provides a way to polish the Covenant Chain of friendship that my own ancestors passed on to me, whether they

knew it or not. What I initially envisioned as a traditional Western research project, where I extract sources from the field like minerals and then refine them into a scholarly product, turned into something much more interesting, rewarding, challenging, and unpredictable—a relationship. I hope that it can be the beginning of a new relationship for you, too.

Example 4.1. Pigeon Dance transformed into a Victorian parlor song: "May and September (The Two New Moons)," from Six Songs based on Iroquois Melodies by Stewart MacPherson (1904)

Chapter 5

Tradition and History

Historic marker near Avon, NY, indicating the location of Canawaugus, a Seneca town where the prophet Handsome Lake was born (Dec. 2023)

Whereas relationships and reciprocity are ancient and integral Native concepts, the pair of terms *history* and *tradition* come from a distinctively Western way of thinking, especially if they are seen as opposites. Scholars going back to Lewis Henry Morgan's 1851 study of the Haudenosaunee

have assumed that Native music and dance was a static tradition rooted in the past and incompatible with "civilization" (Morgan 1851). They relegated Native people to the past while somehow also denying them a history (Smith 2012, 19–41).

In reality, Seneca Earth Songs are a living, contemporary practice that continues an ancient tradition. The deep history of Seneca songs threads all throughout this project, especially in the discussion of individual Earth Songs like Standing Quiver or Corn Dance. At the same time, our knowledge about them comes mostly from oral tradition as known and practiced by contemporary knowledge-keepers like Bill Crouse, and they are part of a vibrant contemporary Native culture. Native powwow, hip hop, and modernist music are not the only kinds of contemporary Native music; Seneca Robin Dance and Old Moccasin Dance are contemporary musical practices, too.

We can study the history of a tradition, just as the tradition can be a way of preserving historical memory and bringing it into the present. Robert Taft, a historian of Roman Catholic liturgy, spoke about the unique challenges of writing the history *of* a tradition, especially when people understand their rituals as transcending time and even granting access to eternity (Taft 2018): "Tradition is not history, nor is it the past. Tradition is the church's self-consciousness now of that which has been handed on to it not as an inert treasure, but as a dynamic principle of life. It is the church's contemporary reality understood genetically, in continuity with that which produced it."

In a similar way, Seneca singers preserve ancient traditions through contemporary performance and for contemporary purposes. Earth Songs are a good example of what ethnomusicologist Beverley Diamond calls "Native American ways of (music) history," since for Seneca people as for many other Native nations, singing is a practice by which people remember and their history and relive it in the present (Diamond 2013). As the Creek historian Donald Fixico says about Native oral traditions, the purpose of telling stories is not to gain a scientific timeline of the past, but to use past experiences to equip people alive now to face the challenges ahead of them (Fixico 2017). Seneca music has a deep history but it is not just a histori-

cal artifact, a fossilized cultural form that failed to adapt to civilization. As Seneca singer John Block put it, these Western concepts do not work for Seneca music "because it's living" (Block et al. 2022).

The best image for understanding history and tradition in Seneca Earth Songs is the circle of dancers. As Andrew explored in the video essay "Memory and Community in Seneca Earth Songs," Bill Crouse learned to sing by envisioning each song coming before him like dancers in a circle. Even as Seneca singers remember songs by visualizing the community, they also remember the community in the songs. Seneca singers tranform a local network of social relationships into a localized song repertoire that embodies the community's history. A community that remembers itself through song can dance confidently into the future.

6.1

Seneca singers use social relationships to remember songs, visualizing a line of faces dancing by; the same image matches the story and structure of Standing Quiver Dance; and this approach enables singers to lay down ever new layers of New Women's Shuffle Dance songs that are tied in their memory to relatives and teachers who sang them. This social memory enabled the preservation of thousands of songs in oral tradition and makes the songs powerful conveyers of a Haudenosaunee worldview rooted in gratitude within a circle of reciprocal relationships. Being grounded in relationships with ancestors, parents, and teachers enables them to respond creatively and inventively to the needs of the present and future.

Instead of positioning indigenous people on one side or the other of a modern rupture, we can see them moving forward, as they always have, in a long and unbroken line. As Yolanda Broyles-González says of indigenous people in Mexico, "appropriation and adaptation of new elements is integral to the evolution and survival of Indigenous musical forms, heritage, and civilization" (Broyles-González, Figueroa Hernández, and González 2022, 60). Or as many indigenous artists have put it, "It has always been traditional to be contemporary."

These songs survive because their singers survive, within a social framework that preserves them and their cultural heritage. Recordings have been a great help, but Seneca social-dance songs live because they are actively preserved through an oral tradition in which the methods of teaching and per-

Figure 5.1. Bill Crouse, Sr., with Seneca elder Al George (March 2024)

formance embody the same social structures that are needed to keep these things alive, and in this way the line of dancers keeps moving ever forward.

Interviews with Seneca Singers Al George and Bill Crouse, Sr.

For the remainder of this section, we present two extended interviews with Seneca master singers Bill Crouse, Sr., and Al George, an elder of the Allegany Territory (figure 5.1). The interviews discuss genealogies and methods of teaching and learning in the oral tradition, and reflections on the meaning and importance of social-dance. As this is a multimedia project, the videos constitute the core of this section, not just a supplement, and we ask readers of the print version to follow the links to watch them online.

Part II

Songs and Dances in Depth

Chapter 6

Ga'da:šo:t (Standing Quiver Dance)

On Huyck Road near Farmersville Station, NY, May 2023

The Standing Quiver dance is always the first dance whenever Earth Songs are sung. It is distinct from many other Earth Songs because it features a call-and-response (or antiphonal) texture throughout. The song originated from the way Seneca men would recruit parties to go out hunting or traveling: the leader would take his arrow and drive it into

Figure 6.1. Seneca quiver basket and arrows, made of wood, woodsplints, feather, and sinew, from the collection of Joseph Keppler, Jr. (National Museum of the American Indian 2/9741, used by permission)

the ground, and as he went around the village enlisting other men, they would drive their arrows in next to the leader's, resulting in a "standing quiver"(figure 6.1). In the same way then, this dance calls everyone in the community to gather together and join in the dancing.

The music imitates the actions: the leader calls out and the other singers respond. Sometimes their melody is the same as the leader's but more often there are two separate phrases, like a question and an answer. The first song features short call-and-response pairs, each repeated multiple times. The same pattern continues in the other songs but the phrases tend to get longer as the song continues. The singers and dancers maintain a steady, walking beat, which distinguishes this dance as a kind of stomp dance.

Story

Bill Crouse tells the story of how this dance came from the practice of a leader calling his community to form a traveling party. 7.2

Bill Crouse's teacher Ed Curry told the same story to William Fenton in 1951: in earlier times, the people danced Standing Quiver when assembling for travel. 7.1

> WILLIAM FENTON: *Ga'da:šo:t* comes from an old Indian word meaning "quiver." Tell us about that, Mr. Curry.
>
> ED CURRY: *Ga'da:šo:t* is the quiver used in the olden days. When they used to gather, they always carried the quiver, you know. And, they'd gather 'em and bunch 'em up, in whole, one big stack. Then they'd start this *Ga'da:šo:t* and they'd dance around this quiver, *ga'dä:shä'*.
>
> FENTON: *Ga'dä:shä'* is the quiver where the arrows go.
>
> CURRY: Yeah, they'd dance around that. That's the reason they give it the name *Ga'da:šo:t*.
>
> FENTON: What about this song that's "They come making a big noise" and "they come rowing a boat"?
>
> CURRY: Well, that is probably meant on their way coming on their journey, you know. Sometimes they come in loud—
>
> FENTON: Is this a war party coming?
>
> CURRY: Yes, yes. And they have times to rejoice from day to day and they take their quivers and stack them up and they start the *Ga'da:šo:t* and dance around it.

(Note that it is Fenton who supplies the detail of a "war party," which was only one of several possible reasons to gather.) Curry emphasizes that the dance was for "rejoicing."

Jesse Cornplanter gave a slightly different explanation to William Fenton in 1954, situating the dance in the war party's campsite during a break while traveling: "In the old days when the Indians used to go on the 7.7

Figure 6.2. Seneca quiver, bark with incised decorations, from the Cattaraugas Territory of the Seneca Nation, collected in 1939 by George Gustav Heye and Joseph Keppler, Jr. (National Museum of the American Indian 8/7819, used by permission)

warpath and they rest on their march, they stand up their quivers where they rest their arrows, just like the soldiers stack their arms on their marks when they rest. And as they stand up the quivers in a row, then the leader leads this stomp dance or the Standing Quiver Dance." There are descriptions of this dance from Euro-American observers as early as 1744 (Fenton 1998, 426).

According to oral tradition, originally each singer had his own song in this dance, reflecting his own style and personality. Hearing the Standing Quiver Dance now we can imagine a portrait of a whole team of hunters or warriors setting out, proud of themselves and enthusiastic to start their adventure together.

The story about Standing Quiver mirrors the way that Bill was taught to learn long sets of songs. His teachers told him to picture a line of people coming before him, each to sing a different song. So when he thought of each new song in his mind, he pictures the next person coming forward.

In this way the song links memory and relationship, tradition and community.

As Bill explained to music-history students at the University of Rochester, this dance embodies the pride that Seneca men felt in their own strength, pride which continues to be reinforced through this dance as it has been passed down despite the trauma of colonization:

7.3

> So think about those guys paddling along, wearing their good clothes… maybe they're going to trade somewhere, or going somewhere; maybe they're dressed for war—maybe that's what they call it—but as they're going along, they're singing this. How cool is it to have history like that?
>
> I think about music and ceremony and social dance that it's a miracle that we have anything, because I know a lot of tribes don't have that. […] So to me it seems that all the stuff that happened in our past, no matter what happened, they kept singing. […] There was times when they didn't feel like singing and dancing, you know, but they kept going, and they kept it going. They kept that ceremonial circle going.
>
> So to us, we look at it not as a job but as a responsibility, I guess, to pass it on, 'cause they didn't let it go, so there's a reason that they did that. And now, when I do that and sing that and everybody dances that, it's like, it's strong: we're still here, and we celebrate that. So that's what music is about for us.

Songs

Words

As in other Seneca Earth Songs, most of the words are vocables. Though meaningless, they are always sung the same way and are an integral part of each song. Standing Quiver also includes some Seneca-language words in a song that appears in every recorded version discussed here.

In Kyle Dowdy's song 10 (same as Bill's song 4) they sing "Hodigawenöje/henögwe:' doges daweda:ke'/henögwe:'." This is the song Fenton asked Ed Curry about. ***Henögwe:'*** means "men," referring to the members of the traveling group. ***Hodigawenöje*** means roughly that they are coming in a canoe, and ***doges daweda:ke'*** means that they are sounding good. With these words this song preserves a memory of older times when Onönodowa'ga:' people traveled confidently within territory stretching from Ontario south to the Carolinas and west into the Ohio valley and beyond, for trade, hunting, and, when necessary, war.

Musical Structure

As with all Seneca social dances, the participants dance while singers sing a set of songs specific to that dance, accompanied with instruments. The lead singer selects which songs to include based on the time available and personal preference. In general for Seneca social dances, most songs last between one and two minutes, and it is common to select between ten and fifteen songs, making a full dance of fifteen minutes or more. In the version of Standing Quiver recorded by the Allegany Singers in 2002, Kyle Dowdy selected ten songs. The transcription is how Andrew hears this—which is to say, this is one interpretation, the result of a set of choices about what is important to record and show. –>

7.4

Ga'da:šo:t always begins with the first song in that recording. The leader and singers sing short phrases in a call-and-response (or antiphonal) pattern: ***ah/hwih***, ***eyo'/hwe***, ***ahe'/ahe'***, ***wiha'/wiha'***, ***ë-ë'/ë-ë'***, ***hayo'/hayo'***. The whole set begins on a single pitch sung in a two-beat phrase (one beat for the call, one for the response). The first three phrases are sung on one pitch, approximately A_4 in this recording. (The precise pitch level is not significant for Seneca singers and can vary across performances and even within a single song.) The next phrase dips down to a pitch just below the center and the following starts a half-step above it.

Rhythmically, the song moves at a slow walking pace, without any drum accompaniment, just the sound of stomping feet. (Bill used to like to wear cowboy boots to a singing session to make a stronger sound.) The

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	A	B♭	B♮	C	C♯	D	D♯	E	F	F♯	G	G♯
1	■	■										
2	■		■	■	■			■				
3	■		■			■		■				
4	■		■		■			■				
5	■		■		■			■		■		
6	■		■		■	■		■		■		
7	■			■		■		■		■		
8	■		■		■	■		■		■		
9	■		■		■			■				
10	■		■		■			■		■		

Table 6.1. Pitches included in Ga'da:šo:t songs, Kyle Dowdy's version

stomping begins with slow beats that line up with the call and response, then begins playing one subdivision below the main beat. In other words, if we would notate the singers' phrases in quarter notes, the drum would be playing eighth notes. With a tonal center on A, most of the songs emphasize the pitches A, B, C♯, D, and E (in solfége, ***do re mi fa sol***; or in pitch-class set notation, `/0 2 4 5 7/`), but some include fewer pitches and others more (table 6.1).

After this introductory song, the remaining songs follow the pattern of song 2. The call-and-response pattern continues, now with longer phrases. The singers do not repeat the leader's phrase but sing a separate response. The melody has two phrases, which Andrew labels A and B: A is the first antiphonal phrase (or two), repeated several times; and B is the one or two contrasting phrases that follow, usually with a higher pitch center. The song closes with another repeat of A, so the pattern is ABA. Many singers, however, repeat the AB to create a total form of ABABA.

Most of the Standing Quiver songs follow a pattern we can hear in Song 5 (example 6.1). The A phrase is a three-beat call (***hogea:ne'***) followed by a two-beat response (***hodiganeye'***); this is repeated four times. The B phrase consists of two call/response pairs also in a 3 + 2 beat pattern. The A phrase emphasizes $\hat{1}$ and the notes below it, then the B phrase contrasts by going

Song	Phrase A	Phrase B
2	2 + 2	2 + 2, 2 + 2
3	3 + 3	3 + 3, 3 + 3
4	3 + 2, 3 + 2	3 + 2, 3 + 2
5	3 + 2	3 + 2, 3 + 2
6	2 + 1	2 + 1, 2 + 1
7	3 + 3, 3 + 3	6 + 3
8	4 + 3, 4 + 3	4 + 3
9	5 + 3	3 + 3, 5 + 3
10	3 + 2	3 + 2, 3 + 2

Table 6.2. Length of Call-and-Response Groups in Ga'da:šo:t, Kyle Dowdy's version

higher, to the notes above the tonic. All of this is then repeated, and then at the end the A is repeated again. Bill says he does not count repetitions and there is no rule about them, but Andrew notes a consistent pattern in these recordings where each time the singer sings the A section again he repeats it fewer times: for example, in song 5 of this recording, Kyle sings A four times, then three, then two.

The other songs in this recording follow a similar pattern, but in songs 4, 7, and 8 only, the A phrase has two subphrases. Among these songs 7 and 8 compensate by having only one subphrase in the B phrase (table 6.2).

Because Andrew was trained in Western music to look for patterns across large compositions, he hears a pattern in this recording where the songs get longer over the course of the set, from 35 beats for song 1 up to 100 beats for song 9. Similary song 1 starts on a single pitch and the subsequent songs include more pitches (table 6.1). This is just "coincidence," counters Bill: each singer chooses the songs and arranges them according to personal preference, so it does not make sense to analyze the set like a single composition.

Other Versions

Bill Crouse, 2022

In September 2022 the Allegany Singers recorded two different versions of the songs: the first was the version led by Bill Crouse, based on continuous oral tradition. The second was an alternate version led by Jake George, who though much younger than Bill, has studied earlier recordings by some of his relatives, and based this new/old version on the way they sang it.

Bill's version follows the same basic pattern as Kyle Dowdy's: an opening call-and-response section followed by songs in ABABA form. With a shorter video length in mind, Bill selected a smaller group of four songs: "Those are ones I just picked out that seemed to flow good." In other circumstances he might choose more or order them differently, and each singer makes these choices based on how he learned the songs, personal preference, and the needs of the occasion.

The character and rhythmic feel are consistent across versions, though Bill's is a tad slower in tempo and higher in pitch. The opening section is partly the same and partly features different vocables and melodic gestures, notably an ascending fourth leap on *weheya'* that breaks out of the limited pitch selection in Kyle Dowdy's version. Bill says that the individual call/response pairs within the opening song are interchangeable much like way the other songs are in the set and selected by the lead singer on the occasion.

Bill's song 2 has the same basic tune outline and words as Kyle's song 4, though small details differ. Bill's song 3 was not included in Kyle's set, but the singers' response (on *yahodinë:'*) matches the lead's call in Kyle's song 6. Both sets end with the same song (Crouse song 4 and Dowdy song 10).

Bill attributes minor differences in words and pronunciation between him and Kyle to the fact that Kyle was not equally familiar with all the songs on that recording. He and Kyle normally alternated lead on Standing Quiver, but Bill was not there for that recording, so Kyle was leading the songs that Bill usually led, including the one beginning *Hodigawenöje*.

Jake George, 2022

Jake's version begins with yet another variation on the opening call/response section, and then his song 2 is closely related to Kyle Dowdy's song 2, with different words and slightly different pitches in the lead part. Jake's remaining songs are all unique, not included in the other versions. Song 3 is notable for its syncopated rhythms (example 6.2).

Jake's songs are all pentatonic (`/0 2 4 7 9/`), without the contrasts of pitch collections notable in the Dowdy version. Jake's singing is a bit clearer and sweeter in tone than Kyle and Bill, partly because he is more of a tenor voice type than their baritone. Bill Crouse and fellow Allegany Singers member John Block hear the influence of Western pop music in Jake's singing. Bill says his own style is "smoother" than that of some of his teachers, while Jake's is smoother yet.

Jesse Cornplanter, 1954

7.7

Jesse Cornplanter (1889–1957) sings according to his distinct Tonawanda Seneca traditions, in 1954 recordings by William N. Fenton. In the first recording he has to sing both call and response parts, with some awkward pauses between. A second singer, possibly Charles E. Bartlett (1904–1976), joins on the second recording. They sing five songs: the first is almost identical to Kyle Dowdy's opening song and fits the pattern of the opening in all versions; the third song is the same as Dowdy's second song; and the others are unique to this recording.

Ed Curry and Avery Jimerson, 1951

7.2

Ed Curry and Avery Jimerson were Bill's teachers, and Avery was his uncle. With Ed taking lead they sang a full set of songs for William Fenton to record in 1951. The recording was made at Quaker Bridge, a place on the Allegany Territory that was since flooded by the Kinzua dam, in violation of the United States' treaty agreements with the Seneca Nation. Ed was a generation older than Avery, and Bill notes that some of the songs in this set are so old that Bill had never heard them before.

Figure 6.3. Jesse Cornplanter in 1935 (photo, Rochester Museum and Science Center RM2141u; used by permission)

A Full Quiver of Ga'da:šo:t Songs

Except for their openings, these are not really variant versions—that is, alternate ways of singing the same songs—as much as different selections of songs from out of the vast storehouse of songs preserved in oral tradition. Where there is true variation, the basic outline of the melody is preserved and the main vocables, and most of the variation happens in the shorter note values often at the beginnings of phrases. The overall structure of the song set has to follow a predictable pattern in order for the dance to work, but the selection of songs, number of repeats, minor melodic variations or embellishments, and pitch level can be set by the lead singer without disrupting the community's expectations. Keeping in mind both the story of this dance as a way of summoning the community, and Bill's memory practice of recalling the faces of individual singers, each of these song selections may call to mind the voice and character of singers in ages past, from Kyle Dowdy, Bill's cousin and one of his teachers, back to hunters and warriors of ancient times.

Movements

The dance follows the story of a men recruiting a band to go out traveling from the village. The leader begins dancing with a shuffle step in a counterclockwise circle, and he is followed by pairs of men and women. As Bill explains, "even though the women aren't going, they're supporting their men."

Each song has an AB structure with an initial call-and-response, then a section that often starts with a higher pitch and then returns to the tonic. When the higher-pitched B section begins, the dancers turn and face the middle. At the repeat of the A, they turn back to face in the direction of movement around the circle. The basic step for Standing Quiver is the same one used for several other dances of the stomp-dance type.

Example 6.1. Ga'da:šo:t song 5, as sung by Allegany Singers, Kyle Dowdy, lead (2002) (all transcriptions by Andrew Cashner unless indicated otherwise)

Example 6.2. Syncopated rhythm in Ga'da:šo:t song 3, as sung by Allegany Singers, Jake George, lead (2022); transcribed by Andrew Cashner

Chapter 7

Gayó:waga:yöh (Old Moccasin Dance)

A farm in Livingston County, NY, September 2022

Gayó:waga:yöh or Old Moccasin Dance is a lively dance for pairs of men and women moving together around the circle. This dance is of the same type as Fish Dance and Sharpen Stick Dance, in that it features pairs of men and women who dance facing each other. In the middle of each song, the members of each pair switch places with each other. Old Moc-

8.1

Figure 7.1. Beaded and quilled Seneca moccasins, ca. 1840–1880 (National Museum of the American Indian cat. 13/5376)

casin Dance can be sung on any normal social-dance occasion and at any point in the set. This dance can also be used as a medicine ceremony as part of the Midwinter Ceremonies.

Bill speaks of Earth Songs like Robin Dance or Corn Dance as a means for people to honor and give thanks to elements of Creation, in just the same way that Haudenosaunee people extend gratitude to these elements in the daily ***Ganö:nyök*** or Thanksgiving Address. Old Moccasin Dance, like Standing Quiver, focuses directly on the dancing of the human community, and this fits with the first traditional element of the Thanksgiving Address: ***ha'deyögwe'da:ge:h***, all the different kinds of people. Human-centered Earth Songs provide a way to celebrate human beings and their relationships with each other, including male–female relationships.

Story

Bill's great-grandfather Richard Johnny-John used to tell a story about Moccasin Dance when he presented it in shows, and other presenters still repeat this story. One time in the old days they were having a social at the old Coldspring Longhouse, and since it was open to the public and not far from the highway sometimes outsiders would sit in. On this occasion there was a white man that no one else knew, there with his family. He listened and took lots of notes in his notebook. Years later Bill's great-grandfather saw this white man in the news and realized he was Arthur Murray. He was doing the Charleston, which he said he invented. Bill's great-grandfather realized he had based it on the Seneca Moccasin Dance.

What connection could there be between the Seneca Old Moccasin Dance and the Charleston? The Charleston dance first emerged in the 1920s, and oral accounts and documentary evidence all point to an origin among African-American communities of the early twentieth century (Conyers 2013). The Charleston became famous after it first appeared on the Broadway stage in the 1923 musical ***Runnin' Wild*** with words and music by prominent Black composers Cecil Mack and James P. Johnson (Mack and Johnson 1923). While the song and dance probably descend from earlier Black dances (of the "Buck" and "Wing" varieties), Mack and Johnson's song emphasizes the song's newness: it is "a new tune,/ Funny blue tune/ [...] Made in South Caroline." Johnson said he was inspired by the dance routines and ring-shout calls of Gullah Geechee dockworkers, and other accounts of the time suggest these dances were popularized by tours of Charleston's Jenkins Orphanage Band (Butler 2020).

8.2

What about Arthur Murray, then? Could he have profited from appropriating Seneca dances? At the time the Charleston was surging in popularity, Arthur Murray (1895–1991) was busy expanding his franchise of dance studios aimed at common people, until his name had become synonymous with dance in the United States. He grew up in New York City, the child of Jewish immigrants from Austria, and started his first dance studios in North Carolina (Pace 1991). Arthur Murray certainly had nothing to do with creating the Charleston, but he did much to popularize it. As he

lived many years in the Hudson River Valley, he may have passed through the Allegany Territory at some point, but it seems unlikely that he ever observed enough Seneca dancing to be able to draw on it in any significant way.

On the other hand, it is not at all far-fetched to suggest that an American pop culture trend should be inspired by Native culture, since so many have been. Indeed, the vogue of "playing Indian" in white communities was at its height in the 1920s (Deloria 1998). The fashion trends embraced by "flappers" centered on unstructured, tunic-like dresses with long fringe, and headgear that often featured headbands. Feathered headdresses could still be seen (a holdover of Edwardian fashions from the preceding decades), some of which featured close-fitting hats with one or a few upright feathers (Thomas 2022). These trends seem clearly inspired by Native American clothing as it was known then, and a Seneca observer could easily see the round-cap-with-feathers fashion as resembling a Haudenosaunee *gasdo:wä'* (figure 7.2, 7.3).

Some aspects of the Charleston do parallel those of the Old Moccasin Dance: both are lively dances with repeated pulses on a single foot while the other foot is free to move, and both feature partners facing each other. You can, in fact, do the moves of Old Moccasin Dance to the music of the Charleston, and vice versa. (See the section on the movements below.) For a Seneca traditional singer of the Jazz Age, the Charleston would stand out as the American popular dance most like the Old Moccasin Dance.

Even if this particular example was not appropriated from indigenous culture, then, so many other things before and since have been that it seems reasonable to look at another hot new trend in mainstream US culture and say, "hey, we made that!" Arthur Murray represented dance as a popular commercial enterprise and would therefore be an obvious target in a story about profiting from appropriation. Of course, even in Bill's story, the Charleston connection is presented as something of a guess, as is the link between the Charleston and *Gayó:waga:yöh* specifically.

Making this connection could express a desire to acknowledge the indigenous roots of American popular culture, to see a Seneca contribution in the mainstream spotlight. The story insists that Seneca dances are as

Figure 7.2. Mae Murray in just one example of her feathered headgear in A Broadway Rose (1922) (public domain, courtesy Wikimedia Commons)

Figure 7.3. Bill Crouse wearing gasdo:wä', ribbon shirt and traditional regalia, and beaded moccasins (At the University of Rochester, April 2023; Photo by Andrew Cashner)

modern as any and that Seneca people are not stuck in the past. As Haudenosaunee singer Sadie Buck declares, "Today I'm modern; tomorrow I'll be modern 'til tomorrow; yesterday I was modern for yesterday" (quoted in Avery 2019, 198).

The story also reminds Seneca hearers that their culture is a treasure that outsiders will want to exploit. The teller highlights the pattern, well established by scholars from Morgan to Fenton, in which white men visit the Seneca community, take things that they learned away with them, and then profit from those things in the outside world without acknowledging the source (McCarthy 2008). Outside observers in the community are likely to steal and misrepresent what they see. Andrew hopes that his involvement in this project as a settler musicologist breaks that pattern of exploitation and instead helps to strengthen Native sovereignty and promote deeper respect and understanding in the non-Native world.

Speaking of Lewis Henry Morgan, that nineteenth-century ethnographer singled out "the moccason" as the greatest type of footwear ever invented, one of few aspects of Native culture that he believed were superior to European civilization (Morgan 1851, 359–360):

> The moccason [...] is preëminently an Indian invention, and one of the highest antiquity. It is true to nature in its adjustment to the foot, beautiful in its materials and finish, and durable as an article of apparel. It will compare favorably with the best single article for the protection and adornment of the foot ever invented, either in ancient or modern times. With the sanction of fashion, it would supersede among us a long list of similar inventions. Other nations have fallen behind the Indian, in this one particular at least. The masses of the Romans wore the calceus ligneus, or wooden shoe; the masses of Germany and Ireland, and of many of the European nations, formerly wore the same. With the cothurnus and sandal of the ancients, and the boot of the moderns, the moccason admits of no unfavorable comparison. It deserves to be classed

among the highest articles of apparel ever invented, both in usefulness, durability, and beauty.

The Minnetonka Moccasin company, whose annual revenue in 2022 was $37.5 million, would seem to agree with Morgan that the old moccasin still holds plenty of value in the modern world. Whether or not Arthur Murray stole Old Moccasin Dance, white businesses certainly have made plenty of profit from indigenous inventions.

Songs

Words

As with most other Seneca Earth Songs, the words of Old Moccasin Dance are vocables without linguistic meaning. A given song is always sung to the same words, such as ***We:hanayögeh*** for the traditional first song, but these words do not signify anything. The lyrical text in Andrew's transcriptions is phonetic, according to Wallace Chafe's orthography (Chafe 2015). The division between "words" is somewhat arbitrary: the spelling reflects the relative length of the vowels as sung, so the same vocables may be spelled differently. The traditional second song is a good example of both problems, as the words repeat the sounds ***weno*** and ***yane***, but each time with a different length and emphasis in the song: one of several possible transcriptions is ***Wenoyane: weno:yane: wenoh ya:ne:***.

There is Seneca language in the closing song (in both recordings by the Allegany Singers): the single word ***gayó:wah***, moccasin. Other songs include vocable words like ***gayoweh*** that sound similar, but this may just be coincidence since variants of ***gayowaneh*** are among the most common vocables in Seneca songs. The vocables help singers remember the songs by preserving (one might even say encoding) aspects of their sound and structure, though much more research is needed in this area.

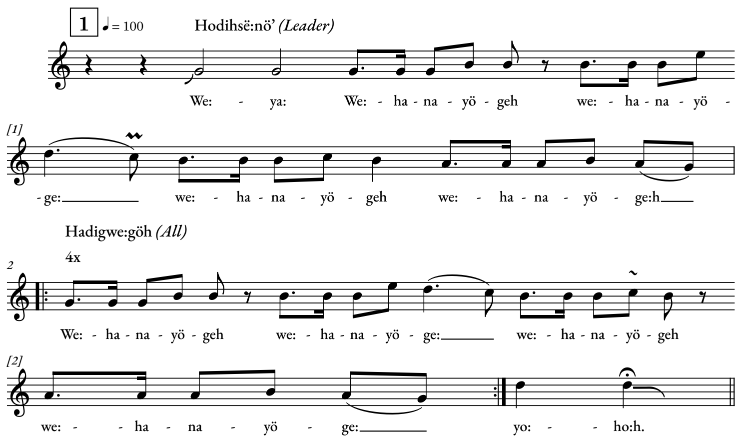
Figure 7.4. Beaded Seneca moccasins, velvet and deerskin (National Museum of the American Indian cat. 24/3505)

Musical Structure

The basic structure of the song features an introduction by the lead, a refrain sung by all two or more times, and a concluding *yo:ho:h!*, as demonstrated by the first song (example 7.1). The lead singer introduces each song by singing the first phrase. Beyond that, though, these songs do not feature call-and-response; the singers continue in unison. The singers repeat each song at least once and there are no other internal repeats. Most of the songs have three or four phrases; the phrases contrast but also echo each other, with small motives repeated or varied in subsequent phrases. The rhythmic patterns in song 1 and song 2 recur throughout the other songs. See the analysis for a more detailed look at the patterns that tie together these songs.

Versions

Bill's teacher Avery Jimerson taught him always to begin *Gayó:waga:yöh* with the specific songs heard first on both Allegany Singers recordings. Kyle



Example 7.1. Gayó:waga:yöh, first song as sung by the Allegany Singers, Kyle Dowdy, lead (2002)

Dowdy led with these in their 2002 recording. After that, Kyle Dowdy's choices as lead in the earlier recording featured more songs that he had learned from singers on other territories, particularly Six Nations in Ontario. The song selection in the more recent recording (with Jacob Dowdy singing lead) are more traditional to *Ohi:yo'*, according to Bill.

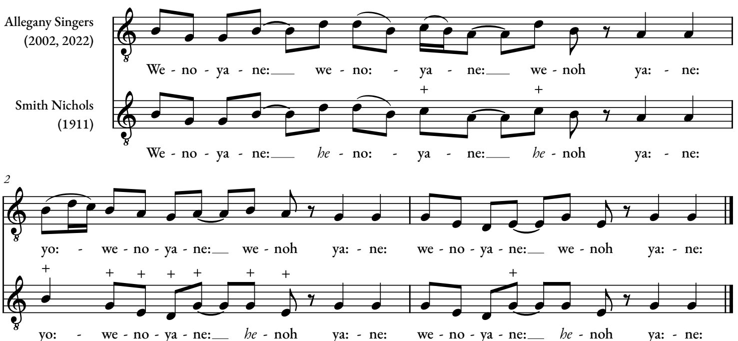
8.3

One of the oldest known recordings of Haudenosaunee songs includes at least one song from Old Moccasin Dance as known today. In 1911 a Huron (Wyandot) man named Smith Nichols sang several songs for Canadian ethnologist Marius Barbeau. The wax-cylinder recordings are preserved today at the Canadian Museum of History, and one is recognizable as a*Gayó:waga:yöh* song still in living oral tradition.

8.1

Barbeau transcribed the "burden" or refrain of this song (his number 119) as "wenuyane henuyane," and the recording is nearly identical to song 2 in both recordings by the Allegany Singers (example 7.2). The earlier singer's words differ by only one syllable: his sixth syllable is *hë* rather than *wë*. The rhythms are identical except that Nichols sings a long note instead of a sixteenth-note run on the second *yane:*. His pitches are different in the second phrase, but follow the same contour.

Example 7.2. Comparison of Allegany Singers' Old Moccasin Dance song 2 with 1911 recording by Smith Nichols (different words in italics, differences in melody marked with +)



In addition to the matching music, the description and context of this song in Barbeau's archive suggest this was part of Old Moccasin Dance. The transcriber described Song 119 as a "dance around the fire" for men and women, which would fit this dance (though not excluding others). The title of the previous entry (Song 118) in the notes also points to Old Moccasin Dance, though its melody does not correspond with one of the songs recorded by the Allegany Singers. Barbeau cataloged it thus:

> Kăyúwa (no meaning) is the name of that song: hiyeyuwahine, wenuyiehine hiyuweyuwahine … (burden) … Men's + women dance, around the fire. It is probably the property of the Wyandot originally.

Gayó:wah is Seneca for moccasin, of course; the song after this is an Old Moccasin Dance song today; and the vocables for other songs in this series closely resemble Moccasin Dance songs. Further research would be needed to evaluate the claim that this song was originally Wyandot (Huron) and not Seneca.

When Joanne Shenandoah recorded her own take on Old Moccasin Dance songs in 1993, her vocal style and sensibility were markedly Western-

influenced, but her melodic and rhythmic readings of the traditional songs demonstrate remarkable continuity back to those earliest recordings in 1911.

8.4

Movements

Old Moccasin Dance starts with a circle of only men dancing counterclockwise as usual. Women line up and step into the circle in between the men, in the pattern female-male-male-female (so the first woman steps in front of the first man and the second woman steps behind the second man). In the middle of each song, the two members of each pair will switch places. Thus the head of the line at the start will be two couples arranged FM–MF; when they rotate it will become MF–FM; when they rotate again in the next song they will be back to FM–MF.

Each song starts with an introduction by the lead singer, in relatively free rhythm, with the rattle shaking continuously; during the intro the dancers just walk forward at a free pace. Next the rest of the singers join in to sing the melody and the rattle and drum begin to play a regular beat, typically emphasizing the smaller rhythmic subdivision (eighth notes in the transcription; table 7.1). During this section, which we will call the first refrain, the dancers begin to dance with a slow step, right–right, left–left, one step per beat (quarter note). When the singers repeat the melody, the rattle and drum shift to a "half-time" feel, emphasizing the main beat (quarter notes); this is the second refrain.

Now the second dancer in each pair moves ahead of their partner and turns around to face them. Men moving forward should go on the outside of the circle while women should go on the inside. The dancers shift to a faster step that includes a step and shuffle on the right foot, a quick change to the other and back, and ends with a longer step on the left (table 7.1). The rear-facing dancer does this step in reverse. When the song ends with ***yo:ho:h***, the front dancer turns again to face forward and the dance repeats for the next song. The traditional last song features a special rhythm and a

Place in Song	Position	Rhythm and Step
First refrain	Dancers facing forward in line	R R L L
Second refrain	Male-female pairs, first facing partner (steps reversed)	R R L R L
End of final song	Pairs facing each other	ga yowa:h R L R

Table 7.1. Dance steps in Gayó:waga:yöh

step to match: the dancers stop and hold their step for a quarter note on the words *yo:h ga:yowa:h*, while the rattle and drum also stop.

The fast dance step is a three-beat pattern, while the other steps are in two-beat groups. These groupings do not cause any metrical problem for the dancers, though, because individual dancers do not all begin the fast step at exactly the same moment, and the songs do not have regular metrical groupings.

The pattern of when to dance, when to rotate positions, and the basic steps are all prescribed, but within that this type of dance allows people freedom to move in their own ways. There is freedom and opportunity for creativity in moving the upper body and arms, and dancers can also do more complex variations on the basic step.

Other than the traditional gender pairings, there are no restrictions on who can dance with whom in Old Moccasin Dance, and no one assigns any meaning to the pairings. The exact pairings of men and women results somewhat randomly from the way women line up and insert themselves into the circle of dancers, though Bill says some women have been known to time their entry just right to end up with someone in particular. Even then, however, this is not any kind of lovers' dance, but an energetic, even athletic, dance of the whole community.

Figure 7.5. Seneca moccasins, before 1912, Cattaraugus Territory of the Seneca Nation (National Museum of the American Indian cat. 2/9623)

Musical Patterns in Depth (Andrew)

Listening to the set of*Gayó:waga:yöh* songs recorded by the Allegany Singers, why do these songs can sound so varied and yet still seem to have a close family resemblance? They sound like they belong to the same dance even though there are different types of melodies and rhythms. This analysis explores musical patterns in Old Moccasin Dance and suggests some possible ways that these songs are related to each other, which might further point towards understanding how they were created.

8.3

I (Andrew) would stress that these are my own interpretations of what I hear. I am trying to listen in a way that is informed by Seneca worldview, and to avoid importing Western categories and methods, but I also believe that there is value in sharing my own way of hearing, as what I hope is the beginning of a discussion with others who may hear differently.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	G	G♯	A	B♭	B	C	C♯	D	D♯	E	F	F♯
1	■		■		■	■		■		■		
2	■		■		■	■		■		■		
3	■		■		■	■		■		■	■	
4	■		■		■	■		■		■	■	
5	■		■		■	■		■		■		
6	■		■		■	■		■		■		
7	■		■		■			■		■		
8	■		■		■			■		■		
9	■		■		■	■		■		■	■	
10	■		■		■	■		■		■	■	
11	■		■		■	■		■		■		
12	■		■		■	■		■		■		
13	■		■		■	■		■		■		
14	■		■		■	■		■		■		
15	■		■		■	■		■		■		

Table 7.2. Pitches included in Gayó:waga:yöh songs, Kyle Dowdy's version

Melodic and Rhythmic Patterns

I hear recurring patterns of pitches, rhythms, and phrasing within each song and across the set, so that the individual songs seem to have been built in similar ways from a small set of musical ideas, and some of those musical ideas recur in other songs. One common thread is that all the songs draw from the same set of pitches, like a limited palette of colors in visual art. These songs are consistently diatonic, with most songs using six notes of the major scale (i.e., a major hexachord) and a few adding $\flat\hat{7}$ as well (table 7.2).

The songs are similar not just in the general palette, though, but also in the process by which they build on small rhythmic and melodic patterns. Repeated vocables highlight repeated musical elements. The refrain of the first song, for example, consists of just the vocable ***we:hanayöge:h*** repeated four times. Each of those times makes up one of the four phrases in the refrain. All four phrases have the same basic rhythm matching with the word:

we: - ha na - yö·ge:h

Example 7.3. Gayó:waga:yöh, song 2 by the Allegany Singers, Kyle Dowdy, lead (2002)

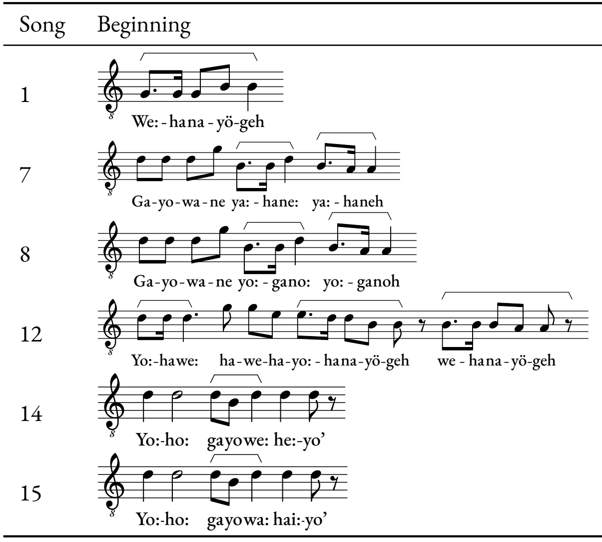
Similarly, in song 2 (example 7.3), the words repeat ***wenoyane*** with different accents and lengths. The basic rhythmic motive is wenoyane: weno, which recurs at the beginning of the first phrase and the end of the other three. This motive is syncopated against the underlying duple pulse played by rattle and drum, and in relation to the strong emphasis on the long notes of ya:ne:. Even though songs 1 and 2 are built from different rhythmic motives, then, they use those motives in similar ways. Melodically, both of the first two songs trace a basic melodic outline B–A–G (***mi–re–do***).

The rhythmic patterns in songs 1 and 2 recur in the rest of the songs. I hear every song in this set as a variation on either the dotted, duple eighth-note pattern of song 1, or the syncopated quarter-eighth-quarter rhythm of song 2 (table 7.3). There are also characteristic patterns at the ends of phrases, which mostly coincide with the other two patterns.

At first song 10 seems distinct from all the others, with its fast syncopated rhythm like a Caribbean ***tresillo*** with 3+3+2 groups of sixteenth notes. Its long-short-short ending pattern is also unique. Bill says that Kyle Dowdy learned this song from singers of Six Nations, Ontario, and thinks it does not fit as well with the other songs. The Allegany Singers did not include this one in their more recent recording. While acknowledging the

Label	Main Pattern	Phrase Ending
Dotted		
Syncopated		
Tresillo		

Table 7.3. Rhythmic patterns in Old Moccasin Dance songs



Song	Beginning
1	We: - hana - yö-geh
7	Ga-yo-wa-ne ya: - hane: ya: - haneh
8	Ga-yo-wa-ne yo: - gano: yo: - ganoh
12	Yo:-hawe: ha-we-ha-yo: - hana-yö-geh we - hana-yö-geh
14	Yo:-ho: gayowe: he:-yo'
15	Yo:-ho: gayowa: hai:-yo'

Table 7.4. Old Moccasin Dance songs with Dotted rhythmic pattern

Table 7.5. Old Moccasin Dance songs with Syncopated rhythmic pattern

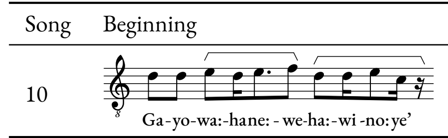
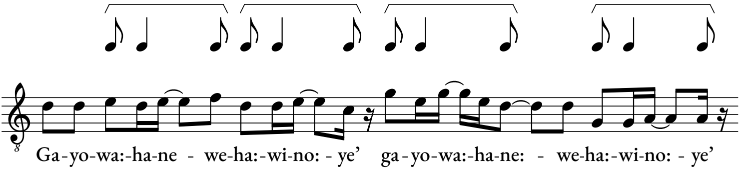


Table 7.6. Old Moccasin Dance song with Tresillo rhythmic pattern



Example 7.4. Old Moccasin Dance, song 10 as elaboration of Syncopated pattern

Type	Pattern	Songs
3 distinct	ABC	9, 10, 11, 14, 15
4 distinct	ABCD	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13
4, last repeated	ABCB	7, 8
	ABCC	2, 12

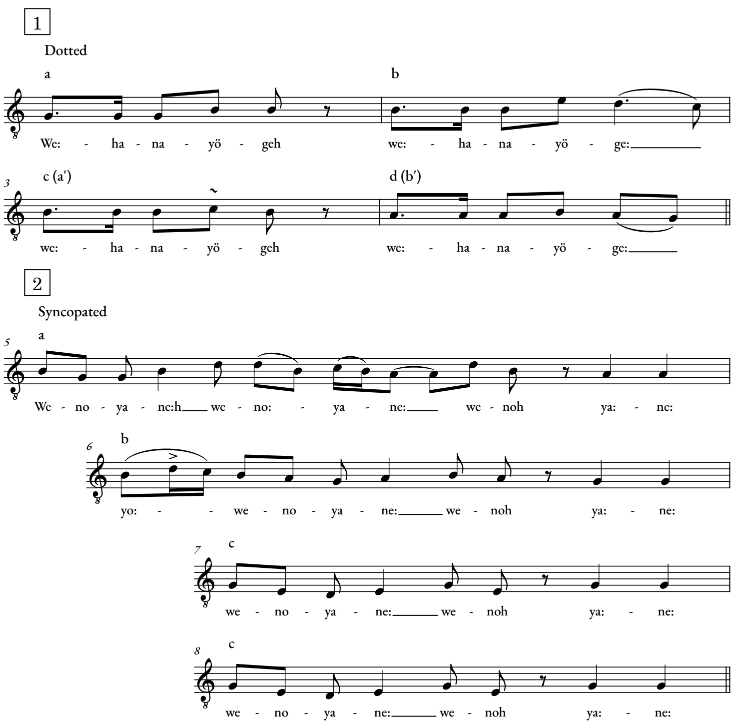
Table 7.7. Phrase structure (degree of difference of musical ideas in each phrase) in Old Moccasin Dance songs

different style of this song, I hear this rhythm as a highly elaborated version of the Syncopated pattern from song 2 (example 7.4).

Phrase Structures

Finally, as we noted in the first two songs, the phrases in each song are built from limited musical elements, and we can also identify two basic patterns of phrase structure across the set. These songs have either three or four phrases. In some of those with four phrases, the last phrase is unique (making an ABCD pattern), whereas in the others, it is a repetition of the second or third phrase (ABCB or ABCC; table 7.7). The phrases contrast but also echo each other, with small motives repeated or varied in subsequent phrases, as can be seen graphically by separating the phrases and aligning the similar ideas (example 7.5). Songs 7 and 8 provide an example of how the same musical ingredients can be mixed together into different phrase structures. Song 8 has a relatively simple structure of ABCB, while in song 7 the first B phrase is extended and there is no C phrase.

Example 7.5. Phrase structures with repeated and varied musical elements in Old Moccasin Dance songs



3, 4
Syncopated
a
b
We: - nu - ye: we - nu - ye: he: - ya:h we: - nu - ye: we - noh ya: - ne:h
Ga - yo - we: ga - yo - we: ga: - yo - we:
c (a′)
d (b′)
we: - nu - ye: we - nu - ye:h he: - ya:h we: - nu - ye: we noh ya: - ne:h
ga - yo - we: ga - yo - we: ga - yo - we:
5, 6
Syncopated
a
Yo: - ho: - oh yo: - ha - wi - ya:h wë - nö' - o - yeh he: - ya:
wë: - no - ye:
a′
yo: - ha - wi - ya:h wë - nö' - o - yeh he: - ya:
wë: - no - ye:
b
yo: - ha - wi - ya:h a - wë - nö' - o - yeh he: - ya:
wë: - no - ye:
b′
yo: - ha - wi - ya:h wë - nö' - o - yeh he: - ya:
wë: - no - ye:

7
Dotted
17 a
Ga - yo - wa - ne ya: - ha - ne: ya: - ha - neh
18 b
ga - yo - wa - ne ya: - ha - neh ya: - ha - ne - ye ya: - ha - neh
19 b
ga - yo - wa - ne ya: - ha - neh ya: - ha - ne - ye ya: - ha - neh
20 b′
ga - yo - wa - ne ya: - ha - neh ya: - ha - ne - yeh
8
Dotted
21 a
Ga - yo - wa - ne yo: - ga - no: yo: - ga - noh
b
ga: - yo - wa - ne yo: - ga - noh yo: - ga - no - oh
23 c
ga - yo - wa - ne - - yo: - ga - noh
b
ga: - yo - wa - ne yo: - ga - noh yo: - ga - no - oh

9
Syncopated
25 a
Ga - yo - a - ne: - hi - ne:h ga - yo - a - ne: - hi -
26 b
-ne:h ga: - yo - a - ne: - hi - ne:h ga - yo - a - a - ne: - hi - neh ga - yo - weh he: - ya:
27 c (b')
ga: - yo: - a - ne: - hi - neh ga - yo - a - ne: - hi - neh ga - yo - weh he: - ya:
10
Syncopated'
28 a
Ga - yo - wa: - ha - ne: - we - ha: - wi - no: - ye'
29 b
ga - yo - wa: - ha - ne: - we - ha - wi - no: - ye' we - ho: we - ho: - we: he - ya'
30 c (b')
ga - yo - wa: - ha - ne: - we - ha: - wi - no: - ye' we - ho: we - ho: - we: he - ya'

11
Syncopated
31
a
We - nu - ye we - nu - ye: he - ya:
32
b
we: - nu - ye' he - ya:' we: - nu - ye' he - ya:'
33
c (b')
we: - nu - ye' he - ya:' we: - nu - ye' he - ya:
12
Dotted
34
a
Yo: - ha - we: ha - we - ha - yo: - ha - na - yö - geh
35
b
we - ha - na - yö - geh we - ha - yo: - ha - na - yö - geh
36
c (b')
yo: - ha - we: we - ha - yo: - ha - na - yö - geh
37
c
yo: - ha - we: we - ha - yo: - ha - na - yö - geh

13
Syncopated
38
a
Yo: - ho: we - ni - yo - ho: - o - we - ni - yä'
39
b
c
e: - yo: - we - ni - yä: ga - yo - we - ni - yäh ga - yo - we - ni - yä:h
40
c'
we - no: - a - we - ni - yä:h ga - yo - we - ni - yä:h
14, 15
Dotted
41
a
Yo: - ho: ga - yo - we: he: - yo'
ga - yo - wa: hai: - yo'
42
b
ya: ga - yo - we: ga - yo - we: ga - yo - we: he: - yo'
ga - yo - wa: ga - yo - wa: ga - yo - wa: hai: - yo'
43
c
yo: - ho - ga - yo - we' yo:' ho ga - yo - we' ga - yo - we: he: - yo:'
ga - yo - wa' ga - yo - wa' ga - yo - wa:

Chapter 8

Jö:yaik Oënö' (Robin Dance)

Mendon Ponds park near Mendon, NY, May 2023

Robin Dance is sung to honor the robin, especially at the start of spring, though it can be sung throughout the year. The song acknowledges and thanks this familiar bird as a harbinger of spring after the long winter: as Bill explains, "We're honoring the robin, so we welcome it back."

9.1

Figure 8.1. Jö:yaik, an American robin, making an alarm call (in Lenape territory, Brooklyn, NY, in 2022, photograph by Wikimedia contributor "Rhododendrites," used by permission)

The Robin Dance songs seem to imitate the song of the *jö:yaik* (American robin), while the side-to-side dance might suggest the bird's hopping movements. The story of Robin Dance, in which a boy transformed into the robin gives his song to humankind, highlights the role of Earth Songs in maintaining reciprocal relationships with created beings and with each other.

Story

According to Seneca oral tradition, the Robin Dance was a gift to the people from the robin, and the robin was originally a human boy. That boy went out into the woods with his uncle on a vision quest, and while he was fasting and waiting for a vision, he grew ill and began to waste away. His

9.2

uncle found him on the point of death, with his chest painted red, but the boy begged to wait another day. When the uncle returned the last time, he found a bird who told him, "I am your nephew. I am ***jö:yaik***," the robin, and from now on he would be the sign that spring was returning. He gave the people his songs as a way of honoring him and celebrating the promise of spring.

The Seneca Robin Dance is evidence of a long, close relationship between humans and robins in this region, which Western science confirms. The American robin (*Turdus migratorius*) already lived all across North America when humans first arrived, but robins seem to have lived close by humans since (Vanderhoff, Pyle, et al. 2020). They prefer to hunt in grassy, open areas with plenty of sunlight, and so they thrive in human-settled landscapes or at the "woods' edge." In recent times robin populations have been documented to expand following patterns of human settlement (Vanderhoff, Pyle, et al. 2020). Robins show awareness of people and their habits: city robins allow people to come much closer to them than their country cousins do, and they are less frightened of people walking on paths without looking at them, possibly because they have learned the predictable pattern that people tend to stay on paths (Eason, Sherman, et al. 2010). Human behavior and culture shapes robin behavior: robins sing earlier in the morning when there is more light pollution (Miller 2006), and robins are quicker to run away from people in cities where people are more aggressive toward them (Clucas and Marzluff 2012).

Because robins live in such close proximity to humans and because their return signals spring, they are widely recognized even by urban denizens of this region who do not otherwise pay much attention to birds. Their song is familiar even to those who have never taken particular note of it. "Because the species is so widespread, virtually all North Americans hear, and are warmed by, the lovely melody of the robin during the spring and summer, although many people do not recognize its song as such. Those who do, however, widely regard the early migrating American robin to be a longed-for harbinger of springtime and warmer weather, because this bird often arrives at the northern parts of its range and sings while there is still snow on the ground" (Freedman and Frost 2023).

The difference between the common folkloric ideas of robins and the Seneca Robin Dance is that Seneca people and their ancestors have lived side-by-side with this species of bird in this territory for thousands of years, and the song was developed and preserved through oral tradition as a sign of their close relationship. That sense of intimacy with robins may be reflected in the way the Seneca story says that the robin was originally a human boy. It is not clear whether this was the first robin, or whether the robins perhaps chose this boy as an intermediary and transformed him into one of them. Either way the story emphasizes kinship with the robin, who shares something beneficial with humankind. The Robin Dance can help us understand how Seneca people understand the relationship between Earth Songs and the Earth.

Relationship and Reciprocity

The story of Robin Dance recalls several other Seneca stories in which non-human beings share songs or dances with people. Often they come through an intermediary person who was isolated and separate from the community. Beings like the Three Sisters gave their songs to this person to take back to the people. The songs were not a human's artistic creation, but a gift from these beings to be used for a specific purpose. The beings gave people a way to relate to them and to draw on their power for the good of the human community.

As we discuss elsewhere, this pattern recalls the way Haudenosaunee people treated Euro-Americans in the treaties of the early colonial era when they adapted their Woods'-Edge Protocols to use in treaty negotiations. Their diplomacy between ***ögwé'ö:weh*** (Original People, Natives) and Euro-Americans was built on the model of relationships between humans and their non-human relatives like corn and the robin.

Robin Dance, like other Earth Songs, provides a way for Seneca people to renew reciprocal relationships with the non-human world and with each other. The dance also provides a way for Seneca people to teach those non-Native neighbors who will listen, how to relate to them and to the natural world in a healthy way.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	E	F	F♯	G	G♯	A	A♯	B	C	C♯	D	D♯
1	■		■		■			■				
2	■		■		■					■		
3	■		■		■			■				
4	■		■		■			■				
5	■		■		■			■		■		
6	■		■		■			■		■		

Table 8.1. Pitches included in Jö:yaik oënö’ songs, 2002 Allegany Singers version

Songs

9.3

The Allegany Singers recorded six Robin Dance songs in 2002. In contrast to Standing Quiver and Old Moccasin Dance, where one song can differ widely from the next, these Robin Dance songs sound more like variations on a single theme.

The set begins with a slow introduction in free time, started by the lead singer and continued by the whole group. This introduction lays out the basic shape of the melody that will recur in all the songs. This melody includes a smaller collection of pitches than some other songs (table 8.1): just ***do***, ***re***, ***mi***, and ***sol*** or ***la*** (songs 5 and 6 include both). Though under Western training Andrew thinks of these pitches as belonging to a scale starting on E, the songs actually emphasize B much more strongly, both by stress and by including both the lower and higher B. When Robin Dance is sung in a reverberant space like the cookhouse used for both 2002 and 2022 Allegany Singers recordings, the repetition of only four or five notes, in short, looping phrases with brief rests between, greatly reinforces the overtones resonating in the room to where Andrew found he could clearly hear the melody an octave and sometimes even two octaves higher resounding in the space.

The melody in song 1 (example 8.1) begins with repeated long one-beat notes (transcribed as quarter notes) on ***yo:ho***, on ***sol*** ($\hat{5}$), then moves down to a syncopated pattern on ***mi–re***, followed by a dip down to low ***sol*** and

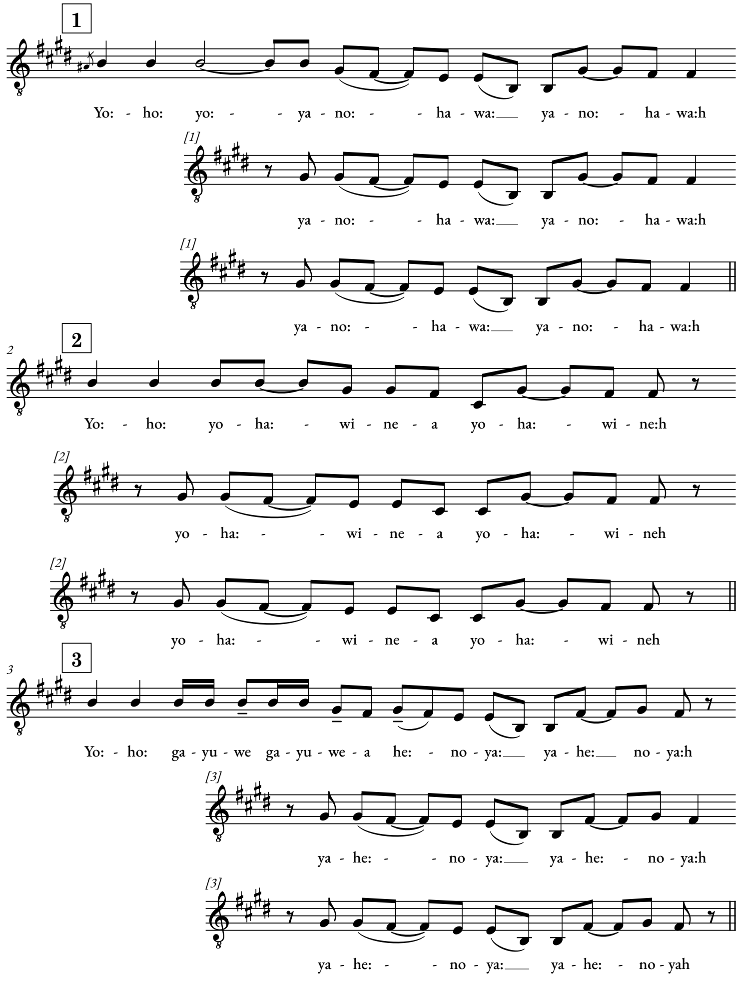
back up to the middle register. There are three melodic phrases, and the second and third repeat the last portion of the first. This structure could be analyzed A-A′-A′ or AB-B-B.

Songs 2 and 3 vary the melody in song 1 in different ways: song 2 shortens the first phrase and alters one pitch (going down to *la* instead of *sol*). Song 3 expands the first phrase (from vocables of 11 syllables in song 1 to 16).

Layout out the melodies graphically to show the repeating portions demonstrates that in each song the second and later phrases start by repeating the latter portion of the first phrase. Songs 4, 5, and 6 all have slightly different patterns of phrasing and repeated motives: song 4 could be labeled A-BC-BC, song 5 as A-BC-C′C, and song 6 as A-B-C-B. What all the songs have in common is that the subsequent phrases repeat and vary some element of the preceding phrases. The effect of these partial repetitions and variations, especially with the frequent rests between phrases, seems to Andrew to create an effect similar to listening to repeating fragments of birdsong.

The rhythmic patterns feature increasingly complex syncopation over a steady, moderate water-drum and horn-rattle beat at 100 beats per minute. The initial eighth-quarter-eighth syncopation in songs 1 and 2 expands in songs 3 and 4 into what sounds to Andrew like mixed meter, switching between groups of 2 and 3 eighth notes. In song 4, these syncopations actually shift the sense of pulse by an eighth note, so that the vocable *ya:ne* sounds like it is on the beat even though it does not actually coincide with the beats played on drum and rattle. The last song is the most syncopated, and here the rattle and drum players actually shift their beat to match with the melody, by adding a third eighth-note subdivision in between beat accents.

Example 8.1. Phrase structures with repeated and varied musical elements in Robin Dance songs



Imitating Robin's Song?

Could the Robin Dance songs have been created by imitating the song of the actual bird? Andrew speculates that it might, though Bill had never thought of it. The bird's own songs feature three or more repeated chirrups at a certain pace, about 100 beats per minute. The first two chirrups stay

9.4

fairly constant in timing and pitch across the sung. When robins vary the song it is usually in the "syllables" after that (discrete vocalizations that are part of a larger song), so that for example there might be four vocalizations and the last one would have a different type of contour (Vanderhoff, Pyle, et al. 2020, "Sounds and Vocal Behavior").

The Seneca dance songs also being with a repeated high-pitched call, *Yo:hoh yo:*, at a similar pace to the bird's, and in both of the Allegany Singers' recordings, settles into a steady beat at 100 beats per minute. The rest of the Seneca melody is built of short, repetitive phrases of just a few notes each. That these phrases come after the opening call may imitate the pattern in which the robin's song variations happen after the first three chirrups. Moreover, the different Robin Dance songs are really variations on one song melody with different vocable lyrics; this pattern is also like bird songs. While this melody does seem to imitate the sound of the bird's song, it could also be inspired by the robin's way of moving, in which it will pause while listening and looking for worms, then hop and run a short distance.

9.1
9.3
9.5

Movements

In the Robin Dance participants line up with all the men first followed by the women and move in a counterclockwise circle. First dancers face the center and shuffle sideways to their right, stepping first with the right foot then in the next step bringing the left foot over next to it. At the first repeat of each song (*Yo:ho: yo: …*) the dancers turn around to face outwards, and then continue the same motions but reversed: now they step to their left with their left foot and bring the right foot next to it. In the last song, when the syncopations shift the beat by an eighth note, the dancers match this by taking two quick eighth-note steps on the accented ***noheyah*** and then continuing with quarter-note steps on the beats stressed by the melody. Perhaps these motions, like the melody, were inspired by the hopping and running of the robin.

Chapter 9

Onëö' oënö' (Corn Dance)

A field of corn ready for harvest along Cox Road, near Ionia, NY, September 2023

Onëö' oënö or Corn Dance honors a food that both historically was one of the most important foods of the Seneca Nation. Corn, or maize (*Zea mays*), is indigenous to America because it was first domesticated by Native Americans in central Mexico. Seneca people, like many other indigenous nations of the Americas, traditionally cultivated corn together with

10.1

beans and squash, and call these three crops the Three Sisters. In Seneca they are called ***Ha'denö:dë:nö:dë' johehgöh*** (the sisters, our Life Sustainers). Seneca people thank the Three Sisters specifically in the ***Gano:nyök***, and this dance connects to that practice of gratitude for the domesticated plants that provide people with food. We could group Corn Dance with other food-centered Earth Songs like Pigeon Dance, originally for passenger pigeons, which were used as food.

Corn Dance is a social dance at ***Ohi:yo'*** (the Allegany Territory of the Seneca Nation), though it is used in seasonal ceremonies for the Three Sisters on other territories. Since this project is based on Bill Crouse's practice at Allegany, we share it here and ask the understanding of those who have a different local protocol.

This social dance demonstrates the deep and ancient relationship Haudenosaunee people have with corn. Given the dance's historic connection with corn agriculture, some form of Corn Dance has likely been cultivated in this land for as long as there has been corn here, which archaeologists estimate to at least two thousand years.

Story

Corn Dance extends gratitude and recognition to corn as one of the Three Sisters along with beans and squash, who are the Life Sustainers of the Haudenosaunee people. In the Haudenosaunee Creation story, corn was a gift from Sky Woman to her children at the beginning of human life. Traditional stories describe the three plants in the forms of human sisters, each of whom offers something unique to help humans, as in this story told by a Mohawk elder (Ganondagan 2023b):

> Once upon a time very long ago, there were three sisters who lived together in a field. These sisters were quite different from one another in their size and also in their way of dressing. One of the three was a little sister, so young that she could only crawl at first and she was dressed in green. The second of the three wore a frock of bright yellow and she had a way of

> running off by herself when the sun shone and the soft wind blew in her face. The third was the eldest sister, standing always very straight and tall above the other sisters and trying to guard them. She wore a pale green shawl, and she had long yellow hair that tossed about her head in the breezes. There was only one way in which the three sisters were alike. They loved one another very dearly, and they were never separated.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Lewis Henry Morgan recounted the Seneca teachings he had heard in almost identical language, explaining the idea of inseparable sisters: "This last belief is illustrated by the natural adaptation of the plants themselves to grow up together in the same field, and perhaps from the same hill" (Morgan 1851, 161). What Morgan does not acknowledge is that the Three Sisters gardens of the Haudenosaunee were no "natural" occurence or accident, but were instead an ingenious invention of ancient Americans that they developed in a dynamic relationship with these plants.

Corn, the Three Sisters, and Indigenous Ingenuity

Indigenous people in what is now central Mexico domesticated corn about six thousand years ago (Waldman 2000, 30), and archaeological evidence shows that people began growing corn in today's Seneca territory as early as 100 CE, with widespread cultivation by 900 CE (Kerber 2007, 91; Hart and Lovis 2013). All of the Six Nations' languages share cognate words for corn with the same root as the Seneca ***onëö'***, which suggests that the languages diverged from Cherokee and others in the Iroquoian family after the first introduction of corn (Schillaci et al. 2017). "The development of more frost-resistant strains of corn, and the full use of the great trio of native plants—corn, beans, and squash—increased storable food resources" and contributed greatly to the flourishing of Native communities (Tanner 1995, 24, 26). Charred remnants from the inside of clay cooking pots from about two thousand years ago indicate that people in this region were cooking corn in ways that would still be recognizable to Seneca people today (Hart, Thompson, and Brumbach 2007).

Figure 9.1. A ripe corncob in the field, on Cox Road near Ionia, NY, September 2023

Two of the most common traditional ways of preparing corn are *onò:hgwa'* (corn soup) and *gá:hdok* (cornbread). Both recipes start by soaking parched corn in water with ash, an indigenous invention (called ***nixtamalization*** after the Náhuatl term for it) that greatly enhances the nutritional value of corn, as Sioux chef Sean Sherman explains (Sherman and Dooley 2017, 47–49). Within the traditional Seneca community, most of the dishes used in ceremonies are corn-based. Non-Native people can find corn soup at powwows and public cultural festivals on Haudenosaunee territory.

10.2

According to the Potawatomi biologist and ecologist Robin Wall Kimmerer, corn, beans, and squash grow in such a way that each complements the other: the corn grows straight and tall, providing a pole for the vining beans to climb, while the squash spreads out along the base, protecting the plants from weeds and insects (Kimmerer 2013, 128–140). The beans provide nitrogen that the other plants need. When eaten together, each food balances out what the others lack to provide complete nutrition for humans.

Corn, Colonization, and Resistance

The Euro-American colonizers also understood that corn was a "life sustainer" of the Haudenosaunee; that is why they repeatedly targeted their corn supplies and fields. In 1687 the French Marquis Denonville, in the expedition that destroyed the city at Ganondagan, reported that while they were at "the four Seneca villages [...] all that time we spent in destroying the corn, which in such great abundance, that the loss, including old corn which was in *cache* which we burnt, and that which was standing, was computed according to the estimate afterwards made, at four hundred thousand minots [1.2 million bushels] of Indian corn" (quoted in Morgan 1851, 199). In the midst of the US Revolutionary War in 1779, General George Washington ordered Major General John Sullivan to tear through Seneca country effecting "total destruction and devastation of their settlements," writing, "It will be essential to ruin their crops now in the ground and prevent their planting more" (Washington 1779; National Park Service 2024).

Lewis Henry Morgan, writing in Rochester at the height of the grain-export boom that made that city the "Flour City," described corn as "one of the gifts of the Indian to the world" and recognized that the security of "our entire race"—the white race, he meant—could depend on the corn supplies grown on ancestral Indian land (Morgan 1851, 370–374). Morgan believed that Haudenosaunee people would have to lose their traditions in order to survive in "civilization," but the survival of Corn Dance in living oral tradition shows how wrong Morgan was. Whenever it is sung and danced, Corn Dance testifies that Seneca people like Bill have not forgotten their ancient relationship with corn or their connection to their ancestral lands. For settlers on Seneca territory like Andrew, Corn Dance can remind them that so much of their food is an indigenous product, just as most of the corn fields of western New York are on land guaranteed to the Seneca Nation by the 1794 Treaty of Candandaigua, which was never legally revoked or superseded (Hauptman 1999; Nëhdöwes [Randy A. John] 2018; Deloria, Jr. 1985).

Visionary Seneca leader John Mohawk founded the Iroquois White Corn Project specifically to oppose colonial legacies and foster indigenous sovereignty over food and land (Mohawk 2010). The project, which continues today at Ganondagan State Historic Site, works "to restore the farming, consumption, and distribution of traditional White Corn to Native American communities and to offer White Corn products to the community at large," using "heirloom seeds dating back at least 1,400 years in Haudenosaunee communities" (Ganondagan 2023a). John Mohawk recognized that in order to reestablish traditional agriculture, Seneca people also needed to cultivate the traditional songs and ceremonies connected to food.

No Corn without Corn Dances

From a Western perspective it might seem that songs and dances are merely folkloric, tangential to the science and business of food production, but from a traditional Haudenosaunee outlook, culture and agriculture are closely intertwined. Dances like Corn Dance are not just "about" corn, but

are an integral part of how the community relates to and maintains their food sources, and traditionally were actually part of the planting and harvesting processes. In fact, according to Seneca oral tradition, we would not have corn without dances for the corn.

As Bill Crouse tells the story, when the late-eighteenth-century prophet Handsome Lake was walking between the ripe corn in late summer, he heard the Corn Spirit speaking to him in the whispering of the leaves. The people had lost track of the Creator's Original Instructions, she told him, and were living in disorder; so she had decided to leave the land. The prophet begged her to stay and asked what the people needed to do to repair their relationship. She told him to have the people sing a specific set of songs dedicated to her in a ceremony for the Three Sisters several times a year. These songs, which are still sung at Ohi:yo' today, go through the whole agricultural life cycle of corn from planting to harvest.

Corn Dance is a separate social dance that is not used in ceremonies on the Allegany Territory, though it is used ceremonially elsewhere. Even though the Handsome Lake story is not specifically about the social Corn Dance we are discussing here, it shows that dance and song were integral to the domestication and growing of corn. The people needed songs and ceremonies to revive the agricultural practices. As in the story of Robin Dance, the non-human being gives these songs to the people as a way for them to maintain a proper reciprocal relationship with them.

The traditional teachings reminded people that should they neglect their relationships with the life-sustaining plants, they could lose them, as Robin Wall Kimmerer says about a similar story that recurs across Native North America: "One of our responsibilities as human people is to find ways to enter into reciprocity with the more-than-human world. We can do it through gratitude, through ceremony, through land stewardship, science, art, and in everyday acts of practical reverence" (Kimmerer 2013, 190). Corn Dance, whether done as part of these Three Sisters ceremonies or as a social dance, provides a way for people to orient themselves in a good way in relationships to the corn, a way rooted in gratitude and responsibility.

Ceremonial vs. Social Use

On the Allegany territory of the Seneca Nation, Corn Dance is a social dance and therefore appropriate for sharing with the public. On other Seneca territories, Corn Dance is considered a ceremonial dance, but this project reflects the local traditions at Allegany as practiced by Bill Crouse.

In the 1940s, Jesse Cornplanter told anthropologist William Fenton and dance ethnographer Gertrude Kurath that Corn Dance was changing from social to ceremonial use at Newtown Longhouse on the Cattaraugus Territory and on the Tonawanda Territory (Cornplanter 1948):

> WILLIAM FENTON: And now tell me: when [is] this Corn Dance performed? When do the people dance Corn Dance?
>
> JESSE CORNPLANTER: According to the old custom, it used to be, in the time when they had the ceremonies dedicated to the Three Sisters, the main support of our lives, what we call ***Johehgöh***, that was the time they used to dance this dance. But now, since we lost the old customs and the ways of doing things like the old-timers did, we use them now as a social dance in all occasions.
>
> FENTON: Are there no dances—Is there no time at Newtown longhouse when the Corn Dance belongs to the Three Sisters and is danced especially for them?
>
> CORNPLANTER: It is now. It was introduced, just recently, and for quite a long time they used that dance instead of that Hand in Hand Dance, because this Corn Dance, according to one of the old chiefs, thought it was dedicated to the Corn, one of the sisters that composed the Three Sisters, our main support of life. [...] Now it's used as a social dance.

Bill's teachers told him that all of the social dances at one time were ceremonial, but over time they lost their ceremonial functions. In his view, Corn Dance is just one of the dances to change its function more recently. It would certainly be interesting to scholars to know whether Corn Dance

was originally ceremonial, why it stopped being used that way, and why in some places it was restored but not others. But we must also respect Seneca faithkeepers' restrictions on discussing ceremonial outside the Seneca community and leave such questions for those who can bear the proper responsibility for that knowledge. Additionally, the details of varying practice between the different territories are fascinating but outside the scope of this project, which focuses on Ohi:yo'.

How Old is Corn Dance?

Corn has been cultivated in Seneca territory for around two thousand years. Could Corn Dance be that old? Corn was one of the things the Haudenosaunee nations had in common before Peacemaker visited them, one of the kindred cultural practices like building longhouses that enabled him to form the league to begin with. Those practices have probably always included some kinds of songs and dances offered in reciprocal relationship with these plant beings. Certainly since the time of Handsome Lake, circa 1790, there have been some kind of songs and dances connected to corn growing, and that story suggests that there were much more ancient practices that were actually falling into disuse and needed to be restored.

Jesse Cornplanter, asked by Fenton how he learned the Corn Dance songs, replied, "According to my memory, from what I heard, it has always been used amongst us Seneca longhouses, ages, ages back, handed down from one singer to another. And the way I sing is just the way I was taught" (Cornplanter 1948). Nearly a century earlier in 1850, Eli Parker wrote much the same to Lewis Henry Morgan in response to a query about the age of Maple Dance (E. Parker 1850):

> I cannot tell you when it was instituted, and I will say now in regard to all the dances that I cannot tell when any of them were instituted. They are all among the ancient customs of the Iroquois, and are all, besides many other feats which are now discontinued, spoken of by all the early writers, both French and English.

Without recordings or notated music from before the twentieth century we cannot answer whether or how much these songs may have changed over time in their musical details. One source of evidence for the longevity of music, dance, and ceremonial practices are the archaeological remains of turtle-shell rattles in Haudenosaunee sites from one thousand years ago, when corn cultivation was becoming widespread (Pearce 2005; Conklin and Sturtevant 1953). Turtle-shell rattles have been found elsewhere in North America from as early as ten thousand years ago, from the very earliest period of human settlement on the continent (Gillreath-Brown 2019). Descriptions of turtle-shell and horn rattles appear in the earliest European descriptions of Iroquoian peoples, such as the Jesuit writer Lafitau's 1724 account (Lafitau 1724, 215).

Whether the tunes of Corn Dance songs have changed over the years or not, their social function and meaning remained consistent across centuries. It seems reasonable to conclude, then, that there has been some kind of Corn Dance heard on the fertile fields of the Genesee Valley and across Seneca territory for as long as corn has been planted there. Long before settlers sang of the "amber waves of grain" as a central symbol of their country, before corn became a staple for the whole planet, Seneca people and their ancestors were singing some form of Corn Dance on their territory. That dance is not just as a sentimental celebration of corn; it is an active way of maintaining a mutually sustaining relationship with the plants that sustain human life.

Movements

As inStanding Quiver Dance, the singers head up the line of dancers rather than standing off to the side. The dancers can move in the typical counterclockwise circle, but at times they follow a back-and-forth pattern until by the end of the dance everyone ends up in a kind of knot at the center of the dance circle. Bill Crouse led a settler audience in this pattern in a presentation version of Corn Dance for Indigneous Peoples' Day in Rochester. Seneca singer Al George says he was taught to think of the corn as being

10.3

in the center of the circle as the dance was addressed to the corn (George 2024).

Jesse Cornplanter described the choreography of Corn Dance in this way:

> WILLIAM FENTON: I think that's enough about the Corn Dance. Is there anything more you think of, Gertrude, that we ought to include?
>
> GERTRUDE KURATH: Yes, I think it's an interesting point, that he said that one song, in one song the dancers don't just go in a circle but weave in and out and then wind up into a knot. Now which song was that?
>
> FENTON: The Corn Dance, but where? Where in the Corn Dance do they finally...
>
> KURATH: Yeah, which song was that?
>
> CORNPLANTER: When they start to sing that (sings) "Wi-hah. Yoyowineh wihah..." [song 2] all those songs in a group. Then they all start to wind around, they come back they go round seven times in formation.
>
> FENTON: Yeah, they form into[...] the dance reverses itself if I remember, and the people all end up in a cluster.
>
> CORNPLANTER: Some of them go that way and others going back.
>
> FENTON: Clockwise and counterclockwise.
>
> KURATH: You go in a sort of serpentine path?
>
> FENTON: At the start. They start to weave in a serpentine fashion, and then they end up all in a group, with some of the people going in one direction, and some in another. And then finally the dance breaks up, is that [right]?
>
> CORNPLANTER: Uh-huh. It depends on whether the leader follows them, or leads them.

> FENTON: And how does the leader terminate or end the song?
>
> CORNPLANTER: He just raise up his rattle and shake it two, three times. That shows that's, it's the end of it (Cornplanter 1948).

It seems notable to Andrew that Corn Dance is the only Earth Song that is danced in this pattern. Andrew speculates that the distinctive sinuous shape may have been inspired by corn in some way, perhaps related to practices of planting and harvesting corn. Perhaps a study of the widespread corn-related images in Haudenosaunee visual arts over the centuries might turn up some connection. Bill says that he does not know of any oral tradition about that aspect of the dance. That is simply how it is done. Bill also notes that agricultural practices were already changing in the time of Handsome Lake, and so if the dance did connect to some specific aspect of corn planting, the link was probably lost a long time ago.

Songs

Words

As with other Earth Songs, the words of Corn Dance are vocables with no linguistic meaning (table 9.1). Most of the songs include a version of the antiphonal response ***hai:wihah***. Songs with similar vocables are usually similar in other ways, as in the several songs that include ***weniyo:h***, ***wenuya:h***, and ***weganawiyo:h***.

Musical Structure

As with other social dances, the songs for Corn Dance bear a strong family resemblance to each other even though they contrast in many ways. Most of the songs seem to follow the model of one of the first two songs in their melodic outline, phrasing, and rhythmic patterns. The Corn Dance songs are distinctive for using a limited set of pitches—most use only four pitches. Most of the songs feature call and response, but even some of the songs that

Song	Initial Words
1	Eyo:h ha:dine:h
2	Eyo:h yo:wineëh (wihah)
3	E:yo:wineëh (wihah)
4	Yo:yo:h heyonaweo:h (hai:wihah)
5	Ai:weganaweo:h (hai:wihah)
6	Heyo:h wegoweh yawe:yah wiyoyawe:yah
7	Eyo:ho:h oyono:newo:-o:h (hai:eh ya:hah)
8	Haihaigoyo:neh, goyo:yaneh
9	Haihaigoyo:neh, yoyë:hnewah
10	Ho:yo:gone:h, hoayoahaneye:h
11	We:niyo:ho:h we:nuya:ha-ah
12	Yonëh ne:h yonëh ne:wah
13	Yano:hawa:h yano:hawa:h weniyo:h hoyanohe:hewenih
14	Gayo:yane:h gayo:yanohe:h wegayo:yane:h
15	Hoyowaneh weganaweyo:h hoyonane-eh
16	Yohodineh yoho:dine:hëh gayo:awine:yoh
17	Wega:nawigo:h weganeheyo:h

Table 9.1. Words (vocables) of the Corn Dance songs sung by the Allegany Singers, Kyle Dowdy, lead (2002)

are sung in unsion include elements that seem like implied responses. See the analysis for a more detailed look at the patterns that tie together these songs.

Versions

Jake George and the Allegany Singers, 2022

In September 2023 the Allegany Singers recorded a set of Corn Dance songs for this project in the cookhouse of the Steamburg Community Center on Ohi:yo', next to Coldspring Longhouse. Jake George sang lead. The set was very close to that recorded by the same group 21 years earlier with Kyle Dowdy singing lead. Jake led the group in Dowdy's song 1, 2, 5, 13, and a variant of 9. Suited to his higher voice, Jake chose a pitch level one step higher ("final" on G instead of Dowdy's F). His tempos were much slower, at about 60 beats per minute instead of Dowdy's 78. Otherwise the songs were almost identical, with song 2 differing by only a single pitch, and one different vocable in song 5 (*Hai* for the first syllable instead of *We*) and in song 13 (*weayo:* instead of *weniyo*).

10.1

After the "minor" opening, Jake selected only "major" songs. Jake also selected only songs in a call-and-response texture. As already noted, the group sang a variant antiphonal version of Dowdy's song 9, whereas Dowdy's version was in unison.

Bill Crouse and the Allegany Singers, 2023

In fall 2023 Bill Crouse recorded two sets of Corn Dance songs: one at Ganondagan with his daughters singing the responses, and one with the Allegany Singers and Dancers for Indigenous Peoples' Day at Genesee Valley Park in Rochester, New York. With his daughters, Bill selected four songs, equivalent to Dowdy's songs 1, 2, 4, and 7. Unsurprisingly he sang song 2 the same way Jake did in 2022; the others are nearly identical to Dowdy's version except that Bill sings different words to song 7 (*Yo:nava* instead of *Yo:ono*). He selected all call-and-response songs and only the last one has a "minor" collection. Typical of Bill's relatively more intense singing style,

10.5

10.3

his final was much higher, close to B♭; the tempo was faster than Jake at 75 beats per minute, but slower than Jesse Cornplanter (who may have been hurrying to fit things onto a limited recording medium, see below).

For the Indigenous Peoples' Day presentation, Bill selected Dowdy's songs 1, 2, 4, and 9. All were "major" and antiphonal, since Bill led song 9 as a call-and-response song in the same way Jake did in 2022. Characteristic of this veteran performer, Bill's final and tempo were almost exactly the same as in his recording from a month previous.

Jesse Cornplanter, 1948 and 1954

Three recordings of Jesse Cornplanter singing Corn Dance songs survive among William Fenton's papers (American Philosophical Society Mss. Rec. 138.06/02-01, 138.07/04-01, and 138.07/04.16). They were recorded at the Tonawanda Reservation, on August 26, 1948, and March 23, 1954. The earlier one specifies it was recorded at Cornplanter's house. A third recording is probably from the same 1954 session. Cornplanter introduces the 1948 recording as the Seneca Corn Dance, "Newtown version." That recording also includes an interview with William Fenton and Gertrude Kurath.

Cornplanter sings ten songs on the 1948 recording, comparing to the 2002 Dowdy reference version (tables 9.2 and 9.3). The shorter 1954 recording, a fragment, includes two songs: Dowdy song 12, and then Dowdy song 13 and 2 combined.

In 1948, Cornplanter's final was around F♯, and the 1954 recordings were slightly lower in pitch, on E (longer recording) and F♮. His tempo slowed down for each successive recording, from 92 beats per minute in 1948 to 90 and then 85 in 1954.

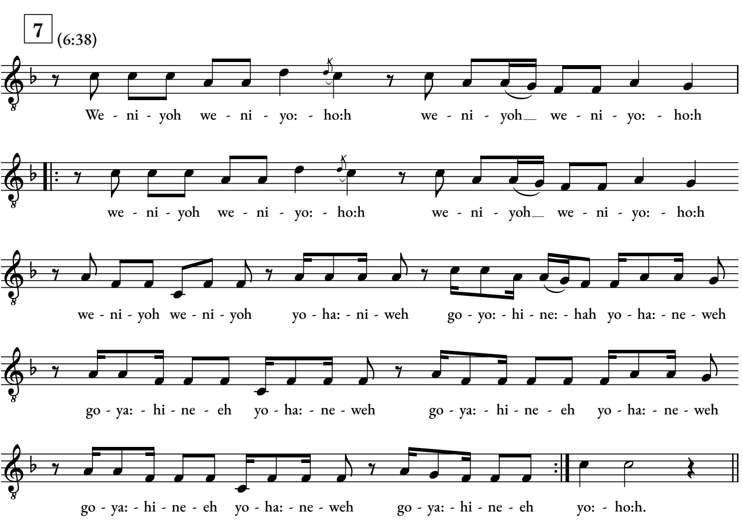
These recordings, stemming from practice at Newtown, include four unique songs that the Allegany Singers never recorded (in the 1948 recording, Cornplanter's songs 2, 3, 7, and 9). The others only differ slightly from those sung at *Ohi:yo'* today. The unique songs are most similar in style and outline to Dowdy's song 14, following a three-phrase pattern similar to ***ab cd cd*** (example 9.1). They all share a "major" pitch collection of /0 2 4 7

Cornplanter	Dowdy
1	1
2	Unique
3	Unique
4	14 + 2 combined
5	11
6	7
7	Unique
8	10 variant
9	Unique
10	13 + 2 combined

Table 9.2. Corn Dance Songs sung by Jesse Cornplanter in 1948 recording, compared to those in Dowdy 2002 recording

Cornplanter	Dowdy
1	1
2	2, melodic variant
3	5, different words
4	7, variant words
5	Unique (= Cornplanter 1948 song 2)
6	11, variant words
7	14 + 2 combined
8	11 variant, repeat of above
9	7 variant, repeat of above

Table 9.3. Corn Dance Songs sung by Jesse Cornplanter in 1954 recording, compared to those in Dowdy 2002 recording



Example 9.1. Onëö' oënö', Jesse Cornplanter's version in 1948 recording, song 7, transcribed by Andrew Cashner

9/ ; in the 1948 recording Cornplanter's song 9 adds $\hat{4}$ to produce a set of /0 2 4 5 7 9/.

In each recorded set, Cornplanter also sings songs that combine separate ones in the Allegany Singers' recordings: he combines Dowdy's songs 13 and 2 as a single song, and does the same with 13 and 2. Though the recording, with only one singer, does not make clear which parts are antiphonal, Dowdy's song 13 and 14 are unison (with perhaps the remnant of what used to be a response), while song 2 has an obvious call-and-response texture.

In an interview with William Fenton and Gertrude Kurath on the 1948 recording, Cornplanter explains how he learned the songs and identifies two songs as originating at Onondaga:

> WILLIAM FENTON: Let's talk about the Corn Dance a moment, Jesse. Where did these songs you sang originate? Where did they come from?

JESSE CORNPLANTER: According to my memory, from what I heard, it has always been used amongst us Seneca longhouses, ages, ages back, handed down from one singer to another. And the way I sing is just the way I was taught.

FENTON: Who taught you to sing these songs?

CORNPLANTER: My father was a great singer of all those social and other ceremonial dances. And then he taught me all those songs.

FENTON: So your father was Edward Cornplanter, the one they call *Sošendo:wah*?

CORNPLANTER: Yes he was.

FENTON: There were two songs that you told me while we were playing it back, that your father brought with him from Onondaga. Which two songs were they? If we could identify those on the record, it would make it easier.

CORNPLANTER: It was that song that goes like this: [sings the start of his song 8] That was one of 'em.

FENTON: And what was the other song that your father brought back from Onondaga longhouse?

CORNPLANTER: [sings the start of his song 7] Those are the ones.

FENTON: Those are the two that came from Onondaga longhouse near Syracuse, New York?

CORNPLANTER: Right.

The first of the two songs Cornplanter says came from Onondaga is the same as Dowdy's song 10; the other is only recorded by Cornplanter. Were these songs originally part of Corn Dance at Tonawanda but then lost, and had to be restored from the Onondaga repertoire? Did they also come to Allegany from Onondaga, or were they part of their practice all along? How many other songs in sets today were brought from other places? Only additional comparative study will tell.

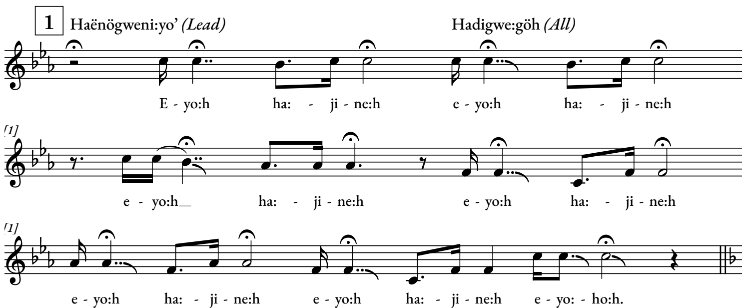
Musical Patterns in Depth (Andrew)

In this section I (Andrew) present my own analysis of the Corn Dance songs, as I hear them, acknowledging that this is only my perspective, not part of the oral tradition, and undoubtedly shaped by my own Eurocentric training.

As with other social dances, the songs for Corn Dance bear a strong family resemblance to each other even though they contrast in many ways. Every live and recorded performance that I have heard includes the same first two songs (or to label it another way, the same introduction and first song). That is notable because all the other songs seem to be related to one or the other of those first two songs. The first song is in unison, uses a pitch collection with a minor third above the final, and has a three-phrase structure, ***a bc dc***. The second song is antiphonal (call and response), uses a pitch collection with a major third above the final, and has a different kind of three-phrase structure where the first phrase is repeated after the second, ***aa b aa***. Many songs follow either song 1 or 2 closely, like variations on a theme; some take only one element like the pitch collection or phrase pattern; but all the songs in the recordings I studied show some link back to those opening songs. These patterns create a sense of continual alternation that seems to fit with the back-and-forth movement of the dance.

Songs 1–2 as Model for the Others

The first two songs lay out the patterns that recur throughout. The opening song, or introduction, is in free tempo, with no steady beat (example 9.2). The lead singer starts with the first phrase (***Eyo:h ha:dine:h***) and then the other singers join in unison for the continuation. Their melody follows a descending outline. In the 2002 Allegany Singers recording with Kyle Dowdy singing lead, Kyle begins on approximately C_4. The phrases move down from C to B♭ and B♭ to A♭, outlining a stepwise major third. Then the last phrase jumps down to F, dips down to low C, and back up to end on F (outlining a perfect fifth), before the concluding ***Yo:ho:h*** on C. To borrow a term from Western plainchant we could say it has a final on F (and



Example 9.2. Onëö' oënö', song 1, Kyle Dowdy's version, transcribed by Andrew Cashner

perhaps even something like a "reciting tone" on C). It outlines the pitch collection `/0 3 5 7/`, which for convenience I will call "minor" because the bottom third (F–A♭) is a minor (smaller) third.

After this slow, solemn, minor-sounding introduction in unison, the next song contrasts in every way (example 9.3). There is now a steady beat supported by the horn rattles; the melody is now a call-and-response between leader and the other singers, and the melody now outlines a major-sounding collection, `/0 2 4 7/`. Though as usual Seneca singers do not have to maintain a steady pitch level, in most versions the final stays the same, so the effect to my ears is of shifting from minor to major keys. The mood shifts with the change of scales, becoming lighter, more energetic, and more conducive to dancing or marching. In phrase structure, there is now a first pair of phrases, repeated, ending on the F final; followed by a contrasting middle phrase on G ($\hat{2}$), and then multiple repeats of the first pair of phrases.

Pitch Collections

The set of pitches used in an Earth Song (its "pitch collection") forms part of the "palette" distinctive to that dance and is one element that creates the sense of family relationships within the songs. All the other songs in Kyle Dowdy's recording can be grouped as being more similar to one of

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	F	G♭	G	A♭	A	B♭	B	C	D♭	D	E♭	E
1	■			■		■		■				
2	■		■		■			■				
3	■		■		■			■				
4	■		■		■			■				
5	■		■		■			■				
6	■			■		■	■	■			■	
7	■			■		■	■	■				
8	■		■		■			■				
9	■		■		■			■				
10	■			■		■		■				
11	■		■	■	■	■		■		■		
12	■		■		■			■		■		
13	■		■		■			■		■		
14	■		■		■			■		■		
15	■		■		■	■		■		■		
16	■		■	■		■		■				
17	■		■		■	■		■		■		

Table 9.4. Pitches included in Onëö’ oënö’ songs, Kyle Dowdy’s version

these two songs, distinguished by having a base of either a “minor” (/0 3 5 7/) collection, or “major” (/0 2 4 7/), with other pitches added in some songs (table 9.4). (I’ll refer to these pitch collections as “minor” and “major” referring only to the size of the third above the final, not implying any kind of Western-style tonality.) Song 11 is the only one that mixes major and minor collections, including both A♭ and A♮.

The Corn Dance songs are distinguished by using a limited number of pitches. Eight of the seventeen songs have only four pitches; five are pentatonic. Only four songs have more than five pitches, and of those, only song 11—the one that mixes major and minor—has seven pitches (example 9.4). Though the songs based on the collection sound minor, no songs in this set include $\flat\hat{6}$.

This is a higher proportion of songs with five or fewer pitches than in *Gayo:waga:yöh* (Old Moccasin Dance, mostly six-tone), and much higher than the mostly diatonic *Ë:sgä:nye:’* (New Women’s Shuffle Dance) songs.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	F	G♭	G	A♭	A	B♭	B	C	D♭	D	E♭	E
1	■			■		■		■				
6	■			■		■	■	■			■	
7	■			■		■	■	■				
10	■			■		■		■				
16	■		■	■		■		■				

Table 9.5. Pitches included in Onëö' oënö' songs, Kyle Dowdy's version, "minor" base collection

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	F	G♭	G	A♭	A	B♭	B	C	D♭	D	E♭	E
2	■		■		■			■				
3	■		■		■			■				
4	■		■		■			■				
5	■		■		■			■				
8	■		■		■			■				
9	■		■		■			■				
12	■		■		■			■		■		
13	■		■		■			■		■		
14	■		■		■			■		■		
15	■		■		■	■		■		■		
17	■		■		■	■		■		■		
11	■		■	■	■	■		■		■		

Table 9.6. Pitches included in Onëö' oënö' songs, Kyle Dowdy's version, "major" base collection (and no. 11, mixed)

Type	Pattern	Songs
3 distinct	A BC DC	1, 7, 11
	A BC B′C	8, 9
	A BC BC′	14
	A B C	12, 13, 15
4 distinct	AB CD, CB CD	6, 10
	AB CB, DB D	16
3 sections	𝄆AB𝄇 C 𝄆AB𝄇	2, 3
	𝄆A𝄇 B 𝄆A𝄇	4, 5
Hybrid	A B 𝄆C𝄇	17

Table 9.7. Phrase structure in Corn Dance songs, Kyle Dowdy's version

Among dances I have studied, only *Jö:yaik oënö'* (Robin Dance) has more songs with five or fewer pitches (out of six Robin Dance songs on the recordeding studied, four have four tones and 2 have five). There is more variation in the *Ga'da:šo:t* (Standing Quiver Dance) songs, which include a similar alternation between major- and minor-sounding collections. Comparison of pitch collections may be one data point that could eventually be used to establish relative dates of the Earth Songs—could those with fewer pitches perhaps be older?—though vastly more research is needed.

Phrases and Formal Structure

As with pitch collections, songs 1 and 2 set the model of phrase structures that many of the other songs follow (table 9.7). Nine songs use a three-phrase structure, *a bc dc*, like song 1. Three songs use a structure more similar to song 1, a ternary form with repeated first phrase: *aa b aa* (though usually with more repetitions). There is also one other phrase structure not apparently based on song 1 or 2: four songs have four phrases in two parallel groups: *a b c b*. Corn Dance is like Old Moccasin Dance in using a limited set of distinct patterns, and unlike Robin Dance where the songs all follow the same form or Standing Quiver where there is more variety.

Within each of these groups, the songs follow similar melodic outlines. The three-phrase songs follow the basic descending pattern of the open-

Texture	Songs
Antiphonal	2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9 (George version), close of 17
Unison including implied response	6, 8, 9 (Dowdy version), 12, 13, 14, 15, first part of 17
Unison with repeating phrase endings, possible implied response?	10, 11, 16
Unison, no repeating endings or responses	1

Table 9.8. Call-and-Response Texture in Corn Dance Songs

ing song: $\hat{5}$–$\hat{4}$–$\hat{3}$–$\hat{1}$(–low $\hat{5}$–$\hat{1}$). Notably both "minor" and "major" songs with this phrasing follow that same descending outline. The four-phrase songs, all "minor," also outline the same descent but their parallel phrase structure requires them to repeat the last part of it: $\hat{5}$–$\hat{4}$–$\hat{3}$–$\hat{1}$–$\hat{3}$–$\hat{1}$(–low $\hat{5}$–$\hat{1}$). One could certainly hear these four-phrase songs as just the same pattern as the three-phrase songs, extended by repeating the final phrase. The other group, the three-section call-and-response songs, use a different outline, stressing $\hat{1}$ in the first and last sections, and a contrasting $\hat{2}$ in the middle section.

Call and Response

One of the most distinctive features of Corn Dance is that many of the songs are antiphonal, with a call-and-response texture seen also in Standing Quiver Dance but not in most others (table 9.8). After the opening song in Dowdy's set, the next four songs (all with "major" collections) all feature short call-and-response phrases with the response ***hai:wihah***. In Dowdy's version, the following songs are all unison except song 7, until the final song closes with an antiphonal section (***wigoh/aheh***).

Are there traces, though, of antiphonal texture in the other songs? Several of the "unison" songs feature repetitive phrases and response-like phrases that suggest these songs might once have been sung antiphonally,

or that they descend from earlier antiphonal versions. Dowdy's songs 6 and 7 are intriguing in this respect: they contain the same melodic and rhythmic material, but song 6 is unison and song 7 is call-and-response (music examples 9.5 and 9.6). In song 7, the melody that was used in song 6 is now broken up into phrases sung by the lead singer, to which the others respond ***hai:eh ya:hah*** in quarter notes (one-beat notes) on F (the final). That response was already present in song 6 but there it was part of the unison melody. Other songs include the same kind of phrase, what we might call an implied response: song 12 (***hai:eh ga:ha-ah***), 13 (same as previous), 14 (*ya:ha-ah*), and 15 (***hai:eh ga:ha-ah***). Could these songs once have been antiphonal, or are there antiphonal versions of them?

Similarly, in the later Allegany Singers recording (2022) with Jake George singing lead, the group sings a variant that is identical in every way to Dowdy's song 9, except antiphonal instead of unison. In the later version, all the repeated phrases are sung as call and response, where Dowdy had the groups sing both call and response together.

In response to my questions about these different versions, Bill said "It's just a different way of singing it." Variation like this "depends on who the teachers are." It also depends on the other singers: if they know the songs well, they could certainly "jump in" on the responses. After all, sometimes the songs have to be sung by a single singer without antiphonal responses, for example when Bill does a presentation without other singers, or when Jesse Cornplanter recorded Corn Dance for William Fenton.

Conclusions and Questions

The Corn Dance songs contrast with each other in different aspects:

- following the melodic pattern of song 1 vs. 2
- "minor" vs. "major" pitch collections
- different three-phrase vs. four-phrase structures
- call-and-response vs. unison

Two songs may be alike in one category while contrasting in another (e.g., both major but one antiphonal and the other unison). Most of the unison

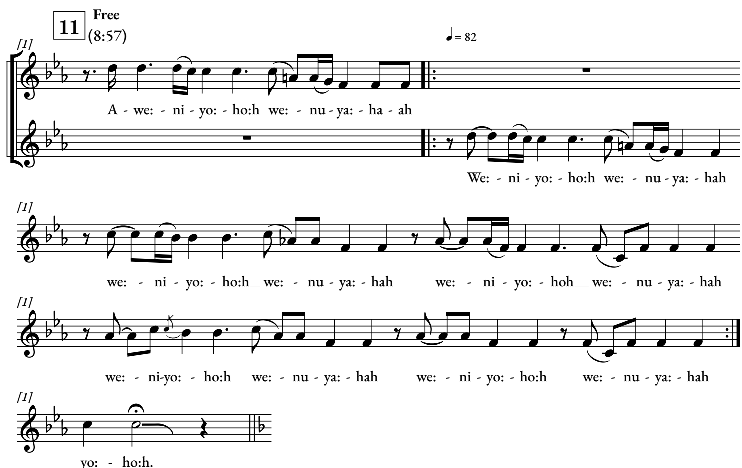
songs follow song 1 in phrasing and melodic outline, while most of the call-and-response songs follow song 2 in collection, phrasing, melodic outline, and style.

These contrasts become clearest in the case of several hybrid-like songs that combine contrasting elements. Song 11 is the only one that includes both major and minor elements within the same song (example 9.4). Dowdy's songs 6 and 7 present the same melodic and rhythmic material but with different phrase structures and textures: song 6 is in unison with four phrases while song 7 is antiphonal, with three phrases (music examples 9.5 and 9.6). Songs 15 and 17 are also closely similar, but song 15 has four phrases and song 17 has three. Since the songs in each of these pairs repeat the same musical ideas, it highlights the other differences between them. The final song begins like a three-phrase song in unison but then ends with a repeated antiphonal section that recalls song 2, reinforcing the contrast between unison and call-and-response textures. The one song with both major and minor emphasizes the principle of contrast that holds elsewhere.

With further research, including comparing variant versions and older recordings, it may be possible to use this kind of analysis to identify historical patterns of development among these songs. Could the prevalence of limited-collection, four-pitch songs perhaps be an indication of the age and longevity of Corn Dance? Could this or any other musical feature be used to establish relative dates of different Corn Dance songs?

Is it possible that Corn Dance was originally all antiphonal? Even most of the unison songs contain elements that sound like responses, or feature repetitive phrase endings that may derive from responses. In any case, is the use of call-and-response connected to the idea of the community going out into the fields, similar to Standing Quiver with its concept of going on a journey? Are there vestigial or embedded responses in other Earth Songs that are now sung as unison? Are the antiphonal vs. unison shifts related to Corn Dance's shifting status as a ceremonial vs. social song?

Example 9.3. Onëö' oënö', song 2, Kyle Dowdy's version, transcribed by Andrew Cashner



Example 9.4. Onëö' oënö', song 11, Kyle Dowdy's version, transcribed by Andrew Cashner

Example 9.5. Onëö' oënö', song 6, Kyle Dowdy's version, transcribed by Andrew Cashner

Example 9.6. Onëö' oënö', song 7, Kyle Dowdy's version, transcribed by Andrew Cashner

Chapter 10

Ë:sgä:nye:' (New Women's Shuffle Dance)

11.1

Ë:sgä:nye:' or New Women's Shuffle Dance, a dance for women only, is both the oldest and the newest of Seneca Earth Songs. In the Haudenosaunee Creation story, Sky Woman falls from the Sky World onto the back of a giant turtle, and after the animals finally figure out how to bring up mud and put it on the turtle's back. As Bill Crouse's daughter Ashlyn explains, Sky Woman "dances in a counterclockwise circle, shuffling her feet to work it in, and the earth grew and grew into what we call North America" (Crouse and Dowdy 2023). According to a traditional view, dancing Ë:sgä:nye:' is the responsibility of women that continues the work of Sky Woman to renew the Earth. As Bill Crouse explained at the first Seneca-Caneadea Field Day (July 2023): "When our ladies do this dance even today, we believe they are re-blessing *Ëthino'ëh yöëdzade'*, Our Mother the Earth."

For this reason, the dance is called New because unlike for other Earth Songs, tradition allows singers to invent new songs for this dance. As we have discussed elsewhere, singing societies gather at a Sing and present sets of Women's Dance songs that they exchange, and built up their own repertoire of songs by ancestors, teachers, and friends (Jemison and Reuben

2024; Diamond 2008, 95–100; Woodland Cultural Centre 1990, 83–100). Singers make songs with Seneca words that talk about their own experiences and with tunes that may draw on other contemporary music, as long as it fits the basic beat and structure of the dance.

Ashlyn said when she dances, she is thinking about her ancestors (Crouse and Dowdy 2023):

> My ancestors couldn't dance, but we could, for them. There were laws and residential schools, and they couldn't dance, so I dance for them, personally.

Likewise her sister Roslyn said "Some of our elders can't get up anymore, so we dance in a certain circle for them." Whether in the context of a social dance or a Sing, Ë:sgä:nye:' enables present singers and dancers to join in the circle of dancers stretching back to their ancestors but moving ever forward into the future.

Movements

At a social, Ë:sgä:nye:' is danced exclusively by women. They use a simple shuffling step that stays close to the earth, as Bill's daughters demonstrated in a dance at the reconstructed longhouse at Ganondagan.

At a Sing, people normally do not dance and instead just focus on the singing. Bill does tell of times, though, when particular elder women got so enthusiastic about songs being sung that they stood up and danced in place.

Words and Stories

People make Ë:sgä:nye:' about everyday life experiences, elements of the natural world like water or strawberries, traditional teachings, and many other topics. Many of the words and melodies came to the makers' minds all at once, sometimes in dreams, while other songs were more deliberately

Yoho:h	**gëöya’ge:h**	**ohdë:jöh**	
(vocable)	in the Sky World	it’s going on	
niyögwayo’dëh	**jögwe’ö:weh**		
how our ways are	the Real People		
awë:notgäh de’tši:yo:h	**deyögwada’nigöëwë:nye:h**		
it’s good fun	and we are stirring our own minds		
yöëdza’ge:ka:’	**onëh**	**odiwahdë:jöh**	**gai:nawea:h he:ah**
on the Earth	now	it is happening	(vocables)

Table 10.1. “Gëöya’ge:h” (Ë:sgä:nye:’), Seneca words with interlinear translation by Bill Crouse, Sr., and John Block

constructed. Many Women’s Dance songs use vocables like other social-dance songs, especially the ending phrase *gai:nawea:h he:ah*. But many more songs of this type use Seneca language.

Some of the lyrics are reminiscent of a haiku: a pithy expression of a specific concept or image in just a few lines. Songmakers take full advantage of the capacity of the Seneca language to pack a sentence worth of meaning into a few words. For example, in the anonymous older song introduced in our discussion of Relationship and Reciprocity (table 10.1), the maker conveys one of the core purposes of Earth Songs with the one word *deyögwada’nigöëwë:nye:h*, literally “we are stirring our own minds” or perhaps better translated “we are occupying our minds.”

In September 2022 members of the Allegany Singers recorded a set of Ë:sgä:nye:’ at the cookhouse next to the Coldspring Longhouse, and shared about the meaning and stories of the songs. Together they painted a picture of the Allegany Territory as a site of intense creativity over many decades, as singers competed to present the best set of Women’s Dance songs at Sings while learning and preserving each others’ songs. They have continued making new songs while still singing ones from their teachers and even older, now anonymous, songs they call “Used-to-Be Songs.” The Allegany community was notable for “passing the drum” and allowing the younger men to contribute their own songs to the sets, as the Allegany Singers did

11.3
11.4

in the set we recorded, whereas on other territories there tends to be one main singer who makes or selects the songs for the group.

In July 2024 John Block, Seneca singer and language teacher at the Seneca Nation's Faithkeeper School in Steamburg, New York, sang three Ë:sgä:nye:' for Bill and Andrew and explained their words and the stories behind them. The songs he selected are a song made by Arthur Johnny-John in the 1950s about the looming Kinzua Dam tragedy (Hauptman 2014, xvii–xxi), an anonymous older song about Handsome Lake's prophecies of the end of the world, and a song John himself made for the close of a Sing. For John, remembering each song pulled up a wealth of knowledge both about Seneca history, religion, and values. Where many Women's Dance songs are "good fun" and emphasize enjoying life, the first two songs John chose show a deeper, darker, and more philosophical side. The Kinzua Dam Song is a snapshot of a community in crisis, dealing with the trauma before its full force had even hit; the first line says, "They are abusing us," or John suggests a better translation might be, "They are raping us."

11.5

The songs John shared also called to mind the people who taught them to him, when they used to sing them, and the stories they told about them. John told a story about someone else singing a song for him that they heard sung at a Sing and were impressed with, and the other person did not know it was actually a song John had made (Block 2024). Likewise Bill told a story about singing an Ë:sgä:nye:' for his teacher, and asking if he had heard it before, when it turned out that the song had actually been made by his teacher.

The last song John shared also highlighted the creative relationship with tradition that is cultivated in Women's Dance songs: for a song he designed to be sung at the end of a Sing as a kind of festive recessional, he borrowed a portion of a *Ga'da:šot*, song, the centuries-old marching dance that traditionally starts a social. John says that his own preferences have always tended toward the older songs and styles, and he worries that essential information about the old songs is being lost as fewer people know the language. He cited a recent experience where a singing group was singing garbled versions of songs that they learned phonetically from recordings without knowing the actual words or their meaning. At the same time, he

remains hopeful about the future of Seneca music and praises the enthusiasm of the younger generation that is adapting Ë:sgä:nye:’ in its own new ways.

Women and Men in the Women’s Dance

In a dance presentation of Ë:sgä:nye:’ by the Indigenous Spirit Dancers at Caneadea in 2024, leader Marty Jimerson, Jr., introduced the dance by highlighting the importance of women in Haudenosaunee culture:

> In our traditional ways, we hold all our females in high regard. Within the longhouses we have the clan mothers, our title holders. They are the life givers.

He then connected the dance back to the Creation story and stressed that the women never let their feet leave the earth.

It may be surprising to outsiders that New Women’s Shuffle Dance songs are primarily made and sung by men. Traditional Seneca society before colonization was organized according to a duality but not a hierarchy of gender (Hill 2017, 53–78). In other words, men and women had distinct roles, but one was not elevated above the other. Yes, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy was governed by male chiefs, but those chiefs derived their authority from the clan mothers who selected them and could depose them at any time. Haudenosaunee communities were both matrilineal (family and clan membership was traced through the mother’s line) and matrilocal (a man moved to live with his wife’s family, not the reverse). In the Seneca language, if the speaker is referring to something or someone of unknown gender, they use the female as a default. The “woods” domain of hunting and warfare was reserved for men, and the “clearing” domain of agriculture and child rearing was reserved for women, but that did not mean that one domain was viewed as superior to the other. Likewise women danced Ë:sgä:nye:’, while men sang it. The key value, as in other aspects of Native societies, was balance, as ethnomusicologist Ellen Koskoff puts it in a comparative analysis of women’s musical roles in ritual (Koskoff 2014, 55):

> When we compare the social and ritual position of Iroquois women to their Jewish and Korean counterparts described above, what is most apparent is the acknowledgment in Iroquois society—but not in traditional Judaism or Confucianism—of the value and beneficial power inherent in both the women and their music, a power that is perhaps feaured, but ultimately acknowledged and respected. [...] Here, combining the power of women with that of music is not threatening but rather seen as a necessary balance to male ritual activity.

Since colonization, the gender situation is a complicated mix of traditional Haudenosaunee and Euro-American values and practices. Traditionalists nevertheless maintain the gender distinction in social dance, though as an integral part of the tradition. Bill Crouse always takes a moment in his shows to educate listeners about his dancers' traditional regalia; since the regalia differs by gender, he introduces his dancers by gender and explains some of the cultural significance of what they are wearing. Bill Crouse plays with the gender distinction a bit in his shows by creating competition between male and female smoke dancers. Bill tells how Smoke Dance developed from men trying to make War Dance into a showy competition dance, and then says that women wanted an opportunity to dance Smoke Dance as well. He often invites the crowd to judge who danced better, the women or the men, and invariably he says the women won.

Bill Crouse's daughters Ashlyn Crouse and Roslyn Dowdy spoke about gender in terms of the ways dancing connected them to other women (Crouse and Dowdy 2023). Each dances in regalia made for her by her mother. When Andrew asked Ashlyn about the traditional gender roles, Ashlyn highlighted her grandmother's authority on the matter: "It's just the way it is. My grandma's old school, so I just don't do some things but I still support people who do." The girls singled out lacrosse as an example of something she and her sister don't do because as Roslyn said, "women don't play lacrosse."

Just because Seneca traditionalists preserve gender dualities in cultural presentations that are rooted in an older way of life, though, does not mean that they endorse those same concepts in other areas of life. There are all-female singing societies like the Six Nations Women Singers, as well as prominent Haudenosaunee women singers like Sadie Buck and Joanne Shenandoah. Haudenosaunee powwows have even welcomed transgender dancers.

I (Andrew) would be remiss not to acknowledge, though, that the world of Seneca singing I have observed is largely male-dominated. I hope that future studies of Seneca song will integrate more women’s voices than I have been able to do.

Songs

Musical Structure (Andrew)

Analyzing the many variations of formal patterns, melodic contours and pitch collections, and rhythms of Ë:sgä:nye:’ across the years, would require a separate study, as would understanding the many ways the makers of these songs have incorporated references to other Earth Songs and even non-Seneca music. But as we have done with other Earth Songs, we hope that it is helpful as a starting point to include some of Andrew’s analytical observations, while acknowledging their Western-influenced approach. Most Women’s Dance songs I (Andrew) have heard use a “major” diatonic pitch collection. Four Ë:sgä:nye:’ recorded by Jake George, Bill Crouse, and the Allegany Singers all used six-note collections, same as the major scale without the leading tone $\hat{7}$ (table 10.2).

In formal pattern, I hear most of these songs starting with a “lead” phrase, sung by the leader solo, and then repeated by the whole group. A contrasting phrase follows, often emphasizing different pitches than the lead phrase. This phrase often concludes with an echo of the ending of the lead phrase, making an ***ab cb*** or ***ab cb′*** pattern.

This melodic and phrasing pattern are exemplified in the Ë:sgä:nye:’ made by Herb Dowdy, as sung by Jacob Dowdy at Caneadea, example 10.1. 🎞 11.1

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	E	F	F♯	G	G♯	A	A♯	B	C	C♯	D	D♯
1	■		■		■	■		■		■		
2	■		■		■	■		■		■		
3	■		■		■	■		■		■		
4	■		■		■	■		■		■		

Table 10.2. Pitches included in the Ë:sgä:nye:' "Gëöya'ge:h," Jake George's version, and three other Ë:sgä:nye:' recorded by the Allegany Singers (transposed to the same pitch level)

The lead phrase has two parts (labeled *A* and *B*), where the first descends from the highest pitch down to the lowest, emphasizing the tones of the major triad ($\hat{8}$, $\hat{5}$, $\hat{3}$, $\hat{1}$), and the second part leaps back up to $\hat{5}$ before settling back down to $\hat{1}$ for the final vocable words *gai:naweaheah*. The first part of the contrast phrase (*C*) moves up to $\hat{6}$ for the first time in the song, and emphasizes $\hat{6}$, $\hat{4}$, and $\hat{2}$ more than the other phrases. (To Western-trained ears like mine, the contrast phrase might sound like it is implying a subdominant harmony.) Then the phrase ends by repeating the *B* subphrase from the lead.

Another, possibly older, anonymous song demonstrates the same patterns, though with a distinct, livelier style. In the song starting "Gëöya'ge:h" (In the Sky World), song 1; example 10.2, the lead phrase starts at the top of the range and then descends, emphasizing the pitches of the major triad on the way down. The first part of the lead phrase (*A*) ends on $\hat{2}$, then the second part steps down from $\hat{3}$ to $\hat{1}$ and ends with the vocable *gai:naweah heah* on $\hat{1}$. The contrast phrase jumps back up to emphasize $\hat{5}$ (*C*), and then descends again to a last subphrase (*B′*) that echoes and extends the end of the lead phrase.

11.3

Rhythmically this song is highly syncopated. I hear a symmetrical pattern in each phrase where on-beat gestures at the beginning and end of the phrase frame more complex syncopated figures in the middle (a *chiastic* or ring structure). In each phrase, on-beat quarter- and eighth-note gestures set up the beat pattern and then give way to more quickly moving synco-

Example 10.1. "Gayowaneh gayowe:h," Ë:sgä:nye:' by Herb Dowdy, as sung by Jacob Dowdy (Caneadea, July 2023), transcription by Andrew Cashner

pated figures. Those figures finally resolve again to on-beat gestures with a clear "downbeat" landing when the melody finally arrives at $\hat{1}$.

Harmony

A remarkable feature of some Ë:sgä:nye:' is that they feature harmony (polyphony). Typically when Seneca singers use the term***harmony***, they mean women doubling the men's melody at the octave. But in some Women's Dance songs, there are separate polyphonic lines as well. In the last song recorded by the Allegany Singers in 2022, one of the old, anonymous "Used-To-Be" songs, some of the singers start singing a separate har-

11.3

Example 10.2. "Gëöya'ge:h" (In the Sky World), anonymous Ë:sgä:nye:', as sung by Jake George and the Allegany Singers (Coldspring, September 2022), transcription by Andrew Cashner

mony part on the contrast phrase. This first time through, this line is a drone on $\hat{8}$, above the main melody. The second time, the harmony singers move down from $\hat{8}$ to $\hat{7}$ just before the final subphrase, creating a feeling (to my ears) of dominant–tonic harmonic movement at the end.

Relative to my own range of musical experience, this drone-based style of harmony reminds me of Euro-American folk traditions like Sacred Harp shape-note singing. Aspects of the rhythm and phrasing in this song also bring Stephen Foster songs to my mind. That said, there is no reason, given how little research has been done on such questions, to conclude that any element of Seneca music that sounds Western to Western-trained ears has a

Western origin; many things in music have been invented independently in multiple cultures and places, and sometimes flows of influence are found to move in the opposite direction than was first thought.

I feel more confident in asserting that, analogous to shape-note singing, Seneca Women's Dance songs were created to be sung loudly at the top of singers' registers with a kind of natural belting technique that creates abundant overtones, especially in wood-panelled indoor spaces like the longhouse or other resonant spaces like the cookhouse that the Allegany Singers selected for this recording. The normal "harmony" of doubling at the octave, then, has the effect of emphasizing the overtones that are already there, exactly analogous to European ***organum*** traditions. The harmony voice serves more as an acoustical enrichment of the main voice, like the components of an organ registration, than as a separate contrapuntal line. The type of polyphony heard in this Women's Dance example brightens up the overtone profile even more by droning on $\hat{8}$, which for most of the contrast phrase is a perfect fourth above the melody—again, exactly analogous to some European organum practices. I am not saying that this tradition descends from organum (though that may actually be the case for Appalachian shape-note singing), but that both musical traditions are going for a similar effect.

Versions

For other Earth Songs, there is a huge repertoire of songs for each, and individual singers will choose a different selection or ordering of songs. But singers are always selecting from the same pool of all the known songs for that particular dance, and that repertoire does not change. With New Women's Shuffle Dance, by contrast, there is no one set of songs that everyone sings. Ë:sgä:nye:' is more like a genre of songs to which singers are expected make new contributions. Some of their new songs get picked up and passed along until they become established parts of singing societies' local repertoires; others exist for a moment and may be forgotten, even by their makers. The Old Moccasin Dance songs that the Allegany Singers recorded in 2002 were largely the same as those they recorded in 2022; but

the Women's Dance sets they recorded in the same sessions were completely different, as they were chosen by the specific people involved in each session, expressive of their own interests, history, and present cirucmstances.

That means there are hundreds or thousands of Ë:sgä:nye:' currently in circulation across Iroquoia, and even more that have been laid aside and are known only from recordings or not at all. Hence Bill Crouse had never heard any of the "Songs of 1947" that Ed Curry sang for William Fenton until we listened to Fenton's recording together in July 2024 (APS Mss. Rec. 138.07/01.03). Many Women's Dance recordings probably survive in cassette tapes gathering dust in the back of Seneca people's drawers and cabinets: Bill tells how in earlier decades, whenever a singing group would finish their set at a Sing, their voices would be followed by a prolonged ***click-click-click*** of everyone pressing Stop on their handheld tape recorders.

Makers of Ë:sgä:nye:' have often incorporated elements they heard from the contemporary world, like the songs Bill's relatives sang for anthropologist William Sturtevant in the 1950s that drew on older white-American popular songs (Conklin and Sturtevant 1953). The influence flowed the other way when Joanne Shenandoah adapted Ë:sgä:nye:' in several of her recordings, most notably the 1996 album***Matriarch: Iroquois Women's Songs***. She opened this album of gentle Ë:sgä:nye:' remixes with a song made on the Allegany Territory by Bill's teacher Herb Dowdy. The original song is still sung today by the Allegany Singers; Jacob Dowdy chose it for the Women's Dance presentation at the historic firstSeneca-Caneadea Field Day in 2023. Shenandoah brings out the diatonic and triadic elements of the song by arranging it as a European-style round, something with no precedent in traditional Haudenosaunee music but with a result sure to please the ears of listeners more used to Euro-American music.

🎞 11.6

🎞 11.1

Indeed, this was the first Haudenosaunee song I (Andrew) ever heard: when I was sixteen and traveling with my family from Indiana to the Navajo Nation in Arizona, I found this track on one of those CD samplers with headphones in a gas station or rest stop, where you could listen to a few minutes of a CD before deciding to buy it. I was so taken with it that, while my family attended to the call of nature, I listened to it over and over again until I was able to go back in the car and write it down (and yes, at sixteen

I carried staff paper with me for just this sort of emergency). Hearing the song again at Caneadea brought me full circle, even more so when Bill told me it had been made by his teacher.

Coming full circle, after all, is what Seneca dances do. Like Niagara Falls and the many other waterfalls in ancestral Seneca territory, Women's Dance is both ancient and continually renewed. Perhaps more than any other Earth Song, Ë:sgä:nye:' links people together in a circle of dance that stretches all the way back to Sky Woman and reaches forward to the next generations. As the circle expands to include new people, even settler guests on Seneca land, the chains of friendship grow stronger as we learn to move forward together, with respect for what came before and hope for the future.

Appendix: Presenters and Cultural Centers

Ganondagan State Historic Site (Victor, NY), Sept. 2023

Seneca Song and Dance Groups

- Allegany River Indian Dancers: Contact Bill Crouse, Sr., Salamanca, NY, crouse@senecasongs.earth

- Indigenous Spirit Dancers: Contact Martin Jimerson, Jr., Lawtons, NY, jimerson78@icloud.com
- Other presenters and educational programs available via Ganondagan Seneca Arts and Culture Center

Seneca and Haudenosaunee Cultural Centers

- Ganondagan Seneca Arts and Culture Center (near Victor, New York)
- Seneca-Iroquois National Museum (Allegany Territory of the Seneca Nation, Salamanca, New York)
- Skä:noñh Great Law of Peace Center (Syracuse, New York)
- Woodland Cultural Centre (Six Nations Reserve, Brantford, Ontario, Canada)

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