

SIX NATIONS OF THE GRAND RIVER

Community Profile

Research Branch
W.I.C.E.C.
May 1985

Six Nations of the Grand River

Cultural/Linguistic Affiliation: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, Tuscarora, Delaware.

<u>Population:</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1983</u>
Total Band Membership	8,680	9,509	11,000
On-Reserve Population		5,384	7,900

Location:

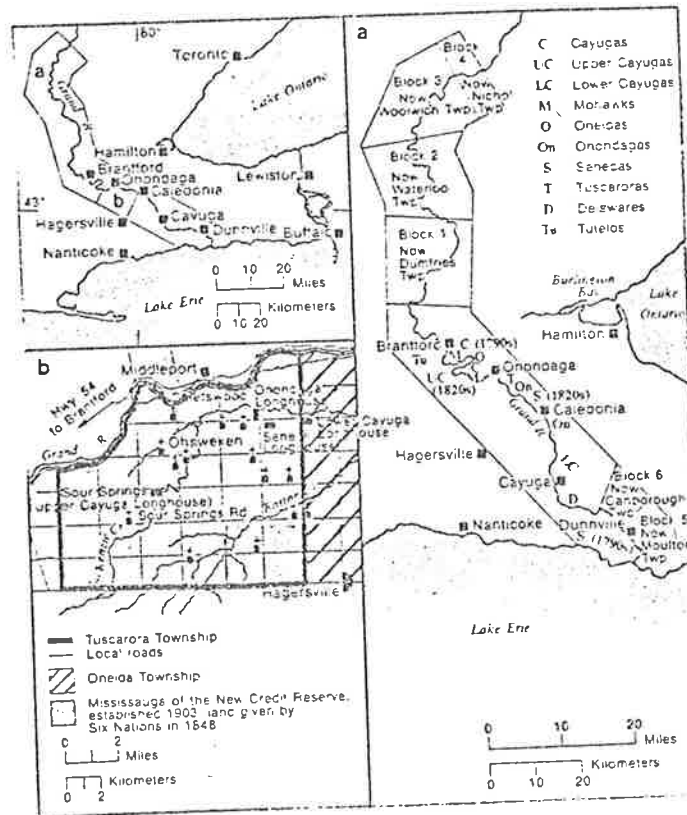


Fig. 1. Area of Six Nations Reserve. a, Tribal locations along the Grand River in the 1820s, with blocks 1-6 surrendered to Whites in 1790s (after Johnston 1964:figs. 2-3; A. Jones 1791); b. Six Nations Reserve in 1970.

Six Nations of the Grand River comprises 45,078 acres of land and is one of the largest of the 2,200 reserves in Canada. The major portion of the reserve extends along the south bank of the Grand River in Tuscarora Township, Brant County, between the towns of Caledonia, Hagersville and the city of Brantford..

The reserve also extends into Oneida Township, Haldimand County and Onondaga Township, Brant County. Small parcels of land, belonging to the Six Nations also exist within the City of Brantford.

History:

In 1784 following the American Revolution, Joseph Brant, the prominent Mohawk war chief and British ally, led some 1843 Iroquois from New York State to the land granted them in Ontario by Sir Frederick Haldimand as restitution for their losses in the war. The original tract, an estimated 675,000 acres, lay six miles deep on each side of the Grand River from its mouth to its source.

This tract of land had been purchased by the Crown from the Mississaugas of the Credit River on May 22, 1784. Representatives of the Delaware moved to Grand River in 1784 while the Nanticoke and Tutelo Nations, who had taken up residence in Iroquoian villages prior to the Revolutionary War, made the journey to the Grand River with the Mohawk, Cayuga, Onondaga, Tuscarora, Oneida and Seneca. Each nation established its own village and council house along the River.

By 1841, life along the Grand was significantly changing. Increased white immigration into Upper Canada and the massive land surrenders executed earlier by Joseph Brant had taken its toll on the once vast Grand River tract. 1841 was a significant year in the history of Six Nations, for it marked the beginning of the reserve period. Most of the Iroquois lands were surrendered to the Crown and several villages including Mohawk Village, were abandoned as the Six Nations took up residence on the reserve in Tuscarora Township.

By 1850 the residence pattern was changed when the chiefs assigned 100 acre parcels of land to the male head of each Six Nations family. Farming remained the main economic activity during this period. In addition, the village of Ohsweken grew after the establishment of a new Council House there in 1864.

The impact of World War 1 on the reserve was significant and was one of the factors involved in a political transformation from the Confederacy to the elective system. The Proclamation of 1924 announced the change.

The reserve community felt the economic hardship of the Depression Years. Following WWII farming as a way of life gave way to seasonal employment off the reserve and full-time jobs in urban areas.

Despite the community's similarity to the rural non-Native community, Six Nations remains distinctive and unique. The traditional Longhouse religion flourishes, the Native languages are still spoken and the Confederacy Council still remains an entity within the community.

COMMUNITY STRUCTURE - Services:

Medical Services:

The modern Gane Yohs clinic provides medical and dental care for Six Nations and New Credit residents.

Iroquois Lodge located adjacent to Gane Yohs in the village of Ohsweken is the community's nursing home.

Educational Services:

Brantford Education District office located at J. C. Hill School in Ohsweken with a staff of 8, oversees the operation of 11 Six Nations schools and the New Credit School.

Reserve children receive their education from kindergarten to grade 8 on the reserve. Native language instruction from kindergarten to grade 6 is provided by 3 full-time language teachers.

Six Nations students are bussed to off-reserve high schools in Brantford, Caledonia, Hagersville, and Cayuga.

The Band Council nominates a reserve resident to sit on the Brant County and Haldimand County Boards of Education.

A day care centre operates in the village of Ohsweken. Native language is part of the teaching program.

Band Council:

An elective system of government was instituted on the reserve in 1924 by the federal government. Since that time the band council consisting of a chief and 12 councillors has been elected by the voters in 6 electoral districts every 2 years.

The band administration building in Ohsweken houses the offices of the chief, band staff and the council chambers. Band Council directed economic development initiatives in recent years have included Sintex, En-Er-Con-6, Plaza, housing subdivision, Chiefswood Trailer Park and White Pines Office Complex.

The band was one of the founding members of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians but is currently no longer a member.

Six Nations of the Grand River
General Delivery
Ohsweken, Ontario
NOA 1M0

519-445-2201

Band Office Manager - Mary Bloomfield
Chief - Wellington C. Staats
Council - Lewis Staats

Dave Green

Leonard Staats

Kerry Bomberry

Shirley Farmer

Nina Burnham

Peter R. Smith

Les Anderson

John W. Staats (resigned effective 20 May '85)

John Peters

Ervin Harris

Raymond Hill

Employment:

On reserve employment is provided by band council, school system and some 170 privately-owned businesses. The majority of the skilled and unskilled labor force commute daily to the neighbouring communities.

Communication:

In the mid-1960's a local newspaper was established reporting council business and the many sports and social activities on Six Nations and New Credit.

Tekawennake currently publishes a weekly paper from its offices at White Pines in Ohsweken.

Six Nations Public Library is located in the former Six Nations Council House in Ohsweken.

The reserve has its own volunteer fire department with 3 fire halls.

Police service is provided by the O.P.P.

Social Service Agencies:

Six Nations Drug and Alcohol Centre and the Crisis Intervention Centre serve both Six Nations and New Credit communities. Other social service agencies serving both reserves include the C.A.S. and Big Sisters.

Voluntary Organizations:

The reserve has numerous organizations which include Ohsweken Agricultural Society, Lions Club, Lioness Club, Grand River Pow-wow Committee, Ojistoh Friendship Club (Senior Citizens), Six Nations Arts Council, Independent Indian Handicrafters, Six Nations Arts & Crafts Club and Veterans Association.

Recreational Facilities:

Located in Ohsweken is the Arena and community centre, race track and ball diamond.

Located throughout the reserve are several neighbourhood ball diamonds.

Chiefswood Park and Trailer Campground is located in Highway 54 midway between Highway 2 and 6. This facility is now easily accessible with the construction of Chiefswood Bridge.

Annual Events:

Bread and Cheese Day held on Victoria Day weekend is celebrated at the community hall. This event was instituted by Queen Victoria and the tradition of distributing pieces of bread and cheese has been continued by the Band Council.

Six Nations Fall Fair is held in September at the Fairgrounds.

Six Nations Pageant is a theatrical production held 3 weekends in August depicting a selected aspect of Six Nations History.

Grand River Pow-wow is held the last weekend in July at Chiefswood Park.

The two reserve craft organizations hold an annual Bazaar the last Saturday in November showcasing the products of local craftspeople.

Historical Sites:

Chiefswood Museum is the home of the poet E. Pauline Johnson and is open during the summer months for tours.

The Mohawk Chapel located in Brantford was recently declared a National Historical Site.

Additional Sources of Information:

Research Files:

Six Nations Reserve
Six Nations Bibliography

Newsclippings:

Six Nations (1973 - current)

Curriculum Unit

Six Nations: A Reserve Community. W.I.C.E.C.

Six Nations and New Credit Reserves Community Resources Directory.

Tekawennake.