

She tells that her people were Seneca-Cayuga, and that most of the language spoken was basically Cayuga. As time has moved on the Seneca and the Cayuga languages have somewhat become one. She speaks what she refers to as the Cayuga language, and although the Seneca language is intertwined, she says there is some of the original Seneca that she does not understand. She states that the tribal language is being preserved in the families, as well as classes being conducted at different places in Ottawa County. To the Seneca-Cayugas it is important that their young people have knowledge of their language and heritage. To have full command of the language, or any Indian language, one almost has to speak it from time of baby, and speak it every day.

Mrs. Thompson's education was all obtained at Wyandotte Indian School, which was in the years before World War One. She says much has changed in the schools since her attendance. She says now they have "grandmothers" at the schools to take care of the kids and see to their needs and guidance. In her school days the children were 'on their own' for whatever education they got. Nowadays, she says, the children at Indian Schools 'dont even have to work !'

In the days of Indian Territory there were few stores or trading posts in the Seneca Nation. She remembers that Turkey Ford was the first store her folks went to for trading. Later there was the Hensley store farther up on Cowskin River. She says Grove was just a little place with only one store when she was a little girl. Tiff City, Missouri, located on the state line, is a very old settlement, and in early days many Indians traveled there to trade and get their corn ground. However, the grist mill was on the Indian Territory side of the line on Buffalo Creek. In later years there was a grist mill at Seneca, Missouri, where many went to get meal ground and to trade. She says Tiff City, in its early days, was a bad place as killings and whiskey peddling, and other unpleasant things took place there. She still remembers traveling in a wagon some 14 miles over almost non-existent roads from their home to Seneca, Mo. She tells that the family used to buy calico cloth for six to ten cents a yard. Somehow they would manage to buy some sugar and coffee, which were very much the luxury staples of that time. At home they always had plenty to eat as there was wild game everywhere and fish in all the streams. Some neighbor was always butchering a beef and distributing it among the community. Very little 'store tobacco' was purchased in the old days, as most families grew their own in their gardens. Now, less than half a dozen people grow any tobacco in her country. Some of the tobacco still raised is the "sacred tobacco" used in rituals and ceremonials. The "sacred tobacco" is used at funerals, dances, naming of babies, prayer time, etc.

Corn has always been the 'staff of life' to the Indian, and she talks about the different ways it can be used. In what she calls the "dough time" of the green corn (roasting ear stage), she says there are many ways it is used and cooked as stew, soup, dumplings, and even as a bread. As the corn matures it taken on other uses such as parching, grinding to make a beverage, meal, etc. At a certain stage in the growth of young corn it is gathered for "soup corn".

Talking again about the plants and herbs, she says many have disappeared with the clearing and development of the land by whitemen. One plant still to be found and used is what the Indians call "nun-ke-ga-ne-yont", or the Strong Medicine. It is used to 'clean you out' when the winter months have passed. It is very bitter and will make you sick for a while, but take three doses and the white scalps hanging high will take on a new beauty.