

Ancient Native American “Peace Fort” Located Along Escarpment

Hundreds of years before Christopher Columbus set foot in America, Native Americans lived and thrived in the Lewiston area. Evidence abounds and examples can be found at such places as the burial mound located at Artpark. Archaeologists have found beads, clay pipes, weapons, implements and pottery buried with the dead or found at ancient sites.

When the French arrived in Lewiston in the 1600s, they were greeted by a tribe called the Neuters, who were peaceful and provided a buffer zone between the Hurons in Canada and the Iroquois Confederacy which inhabited New York State. The Hurons and Iroquois were sworn enemies and the Neuters got along with both sides. Experts say the Neuters had a village in Lewiston, near the Niagara River, and at Fort Kienuka several miles east on the Escarpment. Over time however, the Iroquois claimed the land as theirs, and the Neuters were driven from area in 1651.

5000 Year Old Tool Discovered in Lewiston

A remarkable stone tool, used by Native Americans 5000 years ago, has been discovered on a farm on the north side of Ridge Road in the Town of Lewiston. It was found by long time resident, Lloyd Draper.

This is one of the oldest artifacts ever discovered in Western New York -- used 500 years before the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt was constructed. The tool was used to gouge wood.



Welcome to Lewiston, NY

www.HistoricLewiston.org

Phone: 716-754-4214

The Historical Association of Lewiston hopes you enjoy your visit to our historic and quaint village. Mark your calendar for our next spectacular Historic Home Tour on Dec. 5 & 6, 2009.

To get the latest news and monthly program notes, join our free email list by sending an email to: join@HistoricLewiston.org You can also see and download our past placemats at our website: HistoricLewiston.org

Historic Lewiston placemats written and designed by Association volunteer, Lee Simonson

The Legend of Ft. Kienuka

• Fort Kienuka was inhabited by the Squaw-ki-haws who named their fort “Ki-en-uka” which, according to legend, means “elm bark laid down.” Elm bark is very slippery, so Native Americans had to walk slowly to keep from falling down. So in order to stay upright, you could not chase or strike another person, therefore remaining peaceful. (Another reason you wanted to walk slowly was because the Fort was located at the edge of the steep Escarpment.)

• There was a Queen who was charged with keeping peace throughout the region. However, the Squaw-ki-haws were growing resentful of the Senecas who kept winning all of the athletic games. Eventually, emotions erupted and the Queen allowed a party of Indians from another tribe to kill a group of Senecas who had taken refuge in the Fort of Peace.

• Fearing retribution from the Senecas, the Squaw-ki-haws prepared a first strike against the main Seneca tribe. But the Senecas had spies and were forewarned of the attack. It was the Senecas who surprised the Squaw-ki-haws. The Fort of Peace was abandoned and Squaw-ki-haws were chased out of Western New York, disbursed among other tribes and never heard from again.

• It is said that it was 600 years before another Queen was chosen for the Fort of Peace.



First Photographs of Ft. Kienuka Ever Published

These are the first photographs of the remains of Fort Kienuka ever released to the public. Several members of the Lewiston Historical Association explored the site on Nov. 2, 2008. Many of the Native Americans who lived there used the caves and crevices of the Escarpment for shelter and safety. While exact dates are not available, it is believed the Fort was inhabited over 1000 years ago. Over the course of several hundred years, nature has taken whatever man-made structures existed at the location.

Ft. Kienuka is considered a sacred property and the exact location will remain secret.



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