

# Tuscarora Heroes Steeped in Native Symbolism

## New monument at the corner of Center Street and Portage Road has messages hiding in plain sight

You've driven by the beautiful monument on the corner of Center Street and Portage Road hundreds of times. You may have visited the monument while having a custard. It honors the Tuscarora Nation for defending our local residents during the War of 1812 British attack on Lewiston.

But what you may not realize is that the monument has a number of symbols which are hiding in plain sight. For example, when you were standing next to the bronze sculptures did you realize that you were also standing on the back of a turtle? Did you notice both the large and small scales on the turtle's shell?

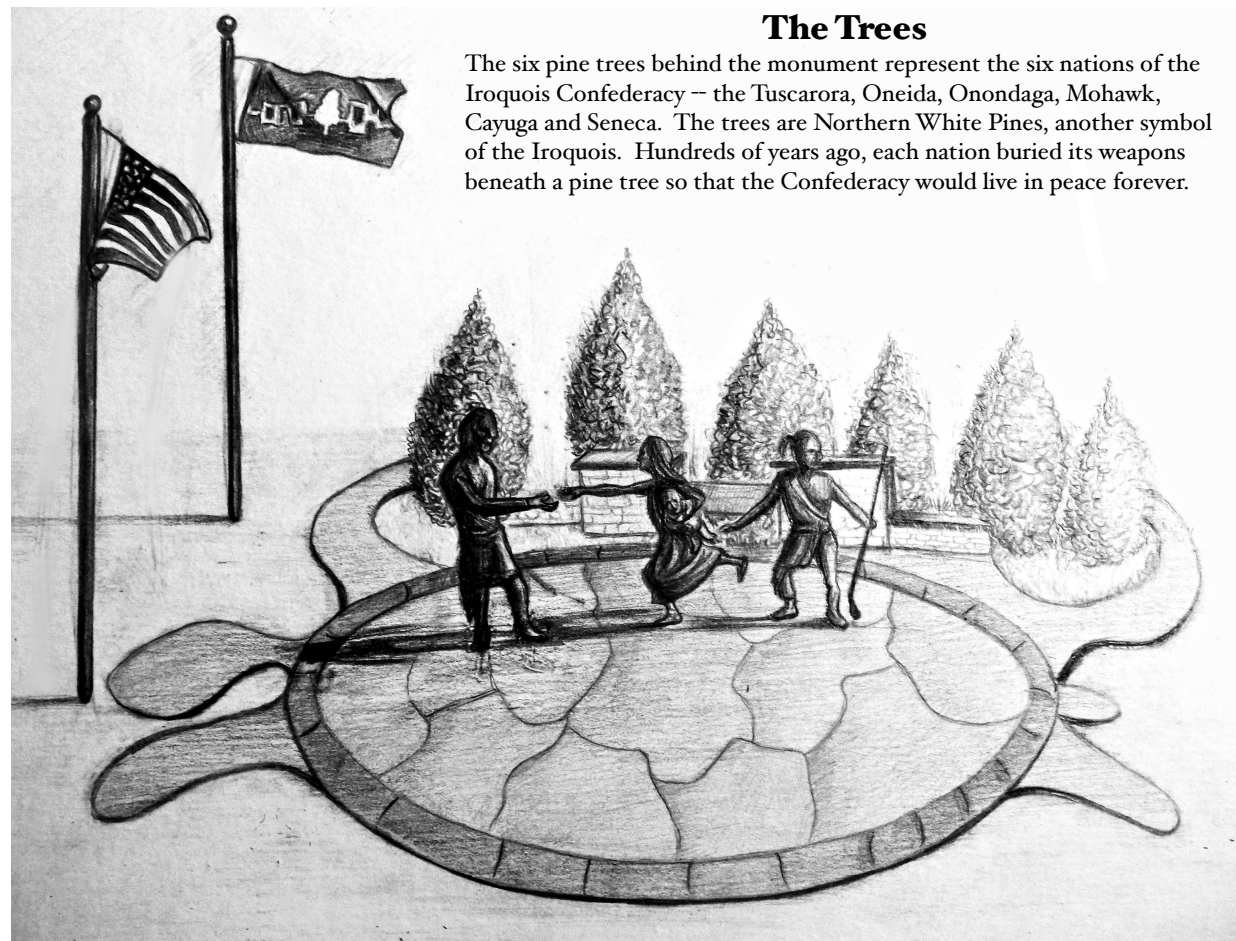


Hidden on one of the bronze sculptures is an engraving of the GPS coordinates of where the Tuscaroras ran down the escarpment to defend Lewiston and buy time for the local citizens to escape. On your next visit, try to find it.

Organizers are hoping to surround the monument with one of the finest gardens in Western New York. The care-taking of the monument site and garden is done by a dedicated all-volunteer group who takes pride in Lewiston's beauty and heritage. If you are interested in volunteering or making a contribution to support our efforts, please email: [editor@historiclewiston.org](mailto:editor@historiclewiston.org). We need and appreciate your help!

### The Flags

The 15-star, 15-stripe, American flag was used during the War of 1812 and is well known for being the Star-Spangled Banner flag. There are 15 ornamental grass plantings under the flags. The purple flag represents the Iroquois Confederacy, one of the oldest governmental entities in the world. The Great Law of Peace (the Iroquois-Haudenosaunee constitution) was used as a model for the United States Constitution.



### The Trees

The six pine trees behind the monument represent the six nations of the Iroquois Confederacy – the Tuscarora, Oneida, Onondaga, Mohawk, Cayuga and Seneca. The trees are Northern White Pines, another symbol of the Iroquois. Hundreds of years ago, each nation buried its weapons beneath a pine tree so that the Confederacy would live in peace forever.

### The Turtle

Have you noticed that the bronze sculptures are mounted on a platform that is shaped in the form of a large turtle? The Iroquois creation story describes the Earth as being created on the back of a turtle. The turtle's hard shell represents perseverance and protection.

Most turtles have 13 large scales on their back shell, surrounded by 28 smaller scales. The Haudenosaunee believe these represent the 13 full moons of the year and the 28 days of each lunar month. The turtle's head is pointed toward the American flag, recognizing the American-Tuscarora alliance that has existed since the American Revolution. Tuscaroras have fought along side Americans in all the major wars throughout our country's history.



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Get our free email newsletters by sending an email to: [join@HistoricLewiston.org](mailto:join@HistoricLewiston.org). You can also see and download our past placemats at our website, [HistoricLewiston.org](http://HistoricLewiston.org).

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

**HistoricLewiston.org 716-754-4214**



**Tuscarora Heroes Book**  
The amazing story of how the Tuscaroras saved Lewiston citizens from the brutal British attack in 1813. Available at DiCamillo Bakery and the Lewiston Museum for \$10.



**Tuscarora Heroes Coin**  
This beautiful new commemorative coin represents the "good luck" the Tuscaroras brought to Lewiston citizens. Available for \$10 at Apple Granny, Village Hall, and the Lewiston Museum.

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