



## *Native American and Western Heritage*

### **Skä•noñh – Great Law of Peace Center**

The Onondaga Historical Association is currently repurposing the Onondaga County facility known as “Sainte Marie Among the Iroquois” located in Onondaga Lake Park on the eastern shore of Onondaga Lake in Liverpool, New York (in the ancestral homeland of the Onondaga Nation) into a Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) heritage center named the Skä•noñh-Great Law of Peace Center. Skä•noñh (pronounced “ska-no”) is an Onondaga welcoming greeting meaning Peace and Wellness. Renovations are underway and should be completed by November of this year.

There will be six main permanent exhibition sections plus a temporary exhibition gallery in the renovated center in addition to a re-creation of a 1650s Jesuit mission.

The first section will provide a welcome to the facility, introduce the concept of Skä•noñh, begin the orientation to the Haudenosaunee perspective with the use of native language and explain the oral history tradition of the Longhouse. The Thanksgiving Address and Creation Story exhibit areas are where visitors will learn about the close connection that the Haudenosaunee have to the natural world and the importance of respecting the environment. The Great Law of Peace section will explore the concepts of peaceful coexistence and the unification of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The next section will deal with the controversial subject of European/Native American contact from the native perspective, both on a general scale and at the local level in central New York with the Jesuit mission Sainte Marie de Ganentaa. The final exhibits will look

at Haudenosaunee Contributions and Influences on the American way of life by examining subjects such as food, agriculture, environmental awareness and conservation, music, sports and democracy.

The Skä•noñh Center is located on the eastern shore of Onondaga Lake, which is a sacred place for the Haudenosaunee because it is where five nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and later Tuscarora) came together in peace. The Onondaga Nation, who are the Central Fire of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, remain among the last sovereign Indigenous peoples in the United States who still govern themselves by their ancient ceremonial Longhouse practices. As such, the “Great Law of Peace” has been continuously active from time immemorial until today. This tradition is reflected in the living community of the Onondaga Nation.

The Skä•noñh Center will honor the Haudenosaunee oral history tradition by providing an oral history experience for the visitor that will relate Haudenosaunee history, culture and values from the Haudenosaunee perspective in their own words as these concepts have been handed down from generation to generation. This will be a unique experience for visitors and will be the only such facility in central New York, the ancestral homeland of the Onondaga Nation which is the spiritual and political center of the Confederacy. The Skä•noñh Center will help build a cultural bridge with the Haudenosaunee and show how their resilience in regards to culture, customs, language and an oral history tradition that began over a thousand years ago that still continues through the present day.

For more information and the latest updates on renovations and events visit [skanohcenter.org](http://skanohcenter.org) or phone (315) 428-1864, Ext.319.


**Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center**  
Chadron, Nebraska

The Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center on the campus of Chadron State College, Chadron, Nebraska, opened in 2002

after decades of planning and gathering of private contributions. Named for renowned Nebraska author, Mari Sandoz, the Center is housed in the renovated former Carnegie-style College Library, which is on the National




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The Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center in Chadron offers a variety of services for your group during your visit to Pine Ridge region of Northwest Nebraska or on your way to the Black Hills.

The Center features exhibits on cattle ranching, local and regional topics, and a permanent exhibit on one of Nebraska's premier authors— Mari Sandoz

**For more information, please call 308-432-6401, visit us at [www.sandozcenter.com](http://www.sandozcenter.com), or see our article in this issue.**

