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*Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections*

## **Cultural Conservation Narrative Stage: Balladry continued: Conserving American Indian Culture**

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WEBVTT

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<i>Unknown</i>: [[inaudible question being asked by man]]

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<i>Louise</i>: Um, basically, we still have Federal schools. There are still schools like Sherman Institute, but they've recently started programs and started some tribal museum things, but overall I would say that um, when you take children out of their community, and take them away from their elders --

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<i>Louise</i>: For instance, with the Luiseño, I mean it was important, elders were there. They didn't go out and do the work. They stayed with the children and taught the children, while the younger men and women went out and did work.

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<i>Louise</i>: But um, with us, just the fact that you take the children away from the elders because all of us were out far away, and most of the time we have to be bussed to schools, and the way that the schools are set up, and the kinds of things they emphasize, they, you know, by nature, they're not emphasizing traditional things and traditional values.

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<i>Louise</i>: They're training people to um, move into mainstream society, I suppose.

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<i>Louise</i>: So, in my opinion, even though they're making strides to change that, in my opinion, it's now no better than it was; they don't get punished [chuckle], but uh --

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Speaker 2: I think you should know that a number of things are happening though in tribal areas with various Indian peoples all over the country.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: Certain laws have been changed. It's now possible for tribes to, so-called, to contract for their own tribal education tribal health services.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: Not all tribes can do this. In fact, only a few of them are able to do this kind of thing,

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: but in that process, many of them are, have established their own schools, and established other efforts to take control over tribal culture.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: I'd like before we take questions, really, to let some of the other people with us tell you a little about some of the things they

are doing.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: When you talk about some of the things that have happened to Indian people, like the-the removal to schools away from elders, and so forth, this is really been very major.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: The Seneca nation endured in the 18th century; a split of the people themselves.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: Many of the Seneca, after the Big Tree treaty, after the Revolutionary war, were taken to Oklahoma, and now they are very near my own people.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: The Cherokee are Oklahoman, but the bulk of the Seneca nation stayed in New York with several different reservations very much intact.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: They were moved around in various places because of land sales and projects which, um, which really disrupted reservation life for the Seneca who were one of the most powerful and influential nations in the 18th century.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: And yet they did stay, in what is now New York. They did stay intact in communities.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: And many of the things that Seneca people were known for, um, their skill at political negotiation, for example,[laughs],

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: they were the cleverest and some of the most influential political negotiators in tribal politics with other people,

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: became downplayed, and yet many of the things that the Seneca once did have, remained alive,

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: and have changed, and have become vital again; and Seneca basket-making is one of these.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: I'd like to ask both Netty Watt and Ruth Watt, her daughter, what it means to them at this point

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: to be some of the major teachers of a tradition that has so many years behind it, and so much of an intact tradition.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: For example, one of the things they said to me the other day was that many of the people who make certain things for the old style baskets,

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: the handles, for example, have now died out, and yet they are continuing to try and preserve the tradition.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: What's it like now to be able to teach and have learners, and at the same time know that things are changing in a way that you wouldn't always, wouldn't always desire?



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