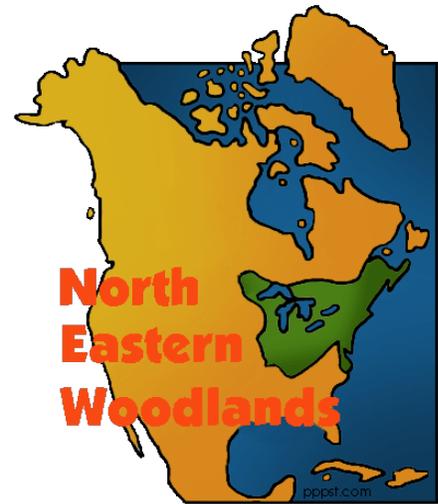


THE IROQUOIS TRIBES

The Iroquois are a group of six Native American tribes (also called the “Six Nations”) who joined together to form the Iroquois Confederacy. They lived in the Northeastern Woodlands of the American continent. The Iroquois tribes include:

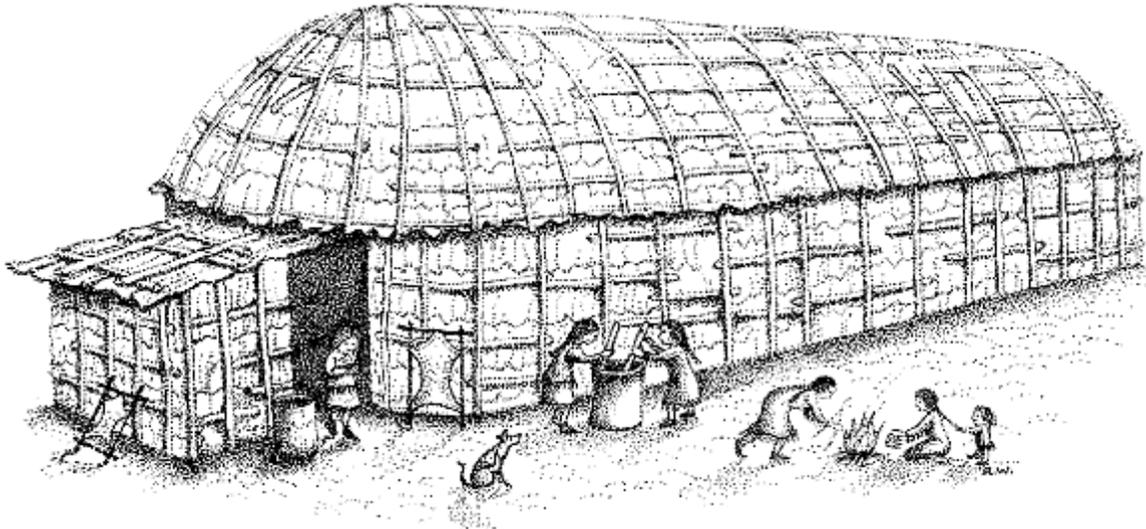
1. Mohawk
2. Seneca
3. Oneida
4. Onondaga
5. Cayuga
6. Tuscarora

Together, these six tribes form a confederation. You can see where they lived on the map to the right.



LONGHOUSES- The Iroquois people lived in villages of longhouses. A longhouse was a large wood-frame building covered with sheets of elm bark. Iroquois longhouses were up to a hundred feet long, and each one housed an entire clan (as many as 60 people.) The longhouse was officially owned by the oldest female residing within it. Clans were named after animals. A clan symbol was painted above each longhouse door. The symbol identified the family inside. Bear, Turtle and Wolf are Mohawk Clans. Clans are passed down from mother to child.

What do you notice about the longhouse below and the people surrounding it?



FARMING- The Iroquois were farming people. Iroquois women did most of the farming, planting crops of corn, beans, and squash and harvesting wild berries and herbs. Iroquois men did most of the hunting, shooting deer and elk and fishing in the rivers. Iroquois Indian dishes included cornbread, soups, and stews cooked on stone hearths.

THE THREE SISTERS- Corn, beans, and squash were the most important crops. They were called the Three Sisters. The Three Sisters were mixed together to make a vegetable dish called succotash. Women had stewardship over those huge gardens.

TOOLS- Iroquois hunters used bows and arrows. Iroquois fishermen generally used spears and fishing poles. In war, Iroquois men used their bows and arrows or



fought with clubs, spears and shields. Other important tools used by the Iroquois Indians included stone adzes (hand axes for woodworking), flint knives for skinning animals, and wooden hoes for farming. The Iroquois were skilled woodworkers, steaming wood so they could bend it into curved tools.

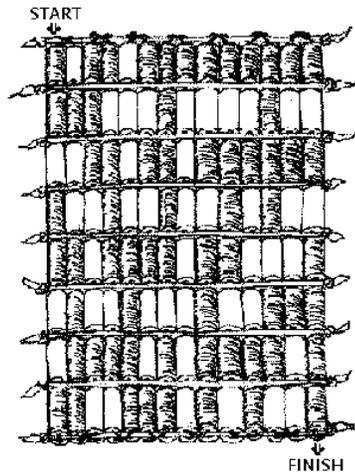
Corn husk was used to make corn husk dolls, rugs, sleeping mats, and sandals. Long pieces of the plant were dried and then woven together. Women pounded corn as you can see in the drawing to the left.

TOYS AND GAMES- Iroquois kids did have cornhusk dolls, toys, and games, such as one game where kids tried to throw a dart through a moving hoop. Lacrosse was also a popular sport among Iroquois boys as it was among adult men. Steamed wood was



often used to make lacrosse pieces.

CRADLEBOARDS- Iroquois mothers, like many Native Americans, had the tradition of carrying their babies in cradleboards on their backs--a custom which many American parents have adopted.



THE WAMPUM- The Iroquois Indians also crafted wampum out of white and purple shell beads. Wampum beads were traded as a kind of currency, but they were more culturally important as an art material. The designs and symbols on Iroquois wampum belts often told a story or represented a person's family.

A Wampum Maze

The wampum to the left is made from dark quahog beads. See if you can find your way through it from start to finish. You can only move down and across- no diagonal movements are permitted.

MUSIC- Most Iroquois music is very rhythmic and consists mostly of drumming and lively singing. Flutes were used to woo women in the Iroquois tribes. An Iroquois Indian man would play beautiful flute music outside a woman's longhouse at night to show her he was thinking about her.