



Exploring Northeast Native Americans: The Iroquois

Denver Public Schools

In partnership with Metropolitan State College of Denver

El Alma de la Raza Project



Exploring Northeast Native Americans: The Iroquois

Seneca, Cayuga, Tuscarora, Onondaga, Oneida and Mohawk

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Grades 6–8

Implementation Time
for Unit of Study: 4 weeks

Denver Public Schools

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Unit Concepts

- Understand the contribution of the Iroquois Nation to the United States Constitution.
- Discover the unique characteristics of the Iroquois/six nations and their historical journey.
- Experience the cultural crafts, games and religion of the Iroquois/Six nations.
- Understand the importance of oral tradition and how the stories contributed to the cultural identity of the Iroquois/ Six nations.
- Learn about the diversity that exists among Native Americans.

Standards Addressed by This Unit

Reading and Writing

Students read and understand a variety of materials. (RW1)

History

Students understand the chronological organization of history and know how to organize events and people into major eras to identify and explain historical relationships. (H1)

Students understand that societies are diverse and have changed over time. (H3)

Students know that religious and philosophical ideas have been powerful forces throughout history. (H6)

Introduction

The Haudenosaunee or People of the Longhouse, were historically known as the Iroquois Confederacy. They are Native American Indian Nations located in the Northeast portion of the continent. They straddle the United States and Canadian border and are situated around Lake Ontario. The Iroquois consist of six nations: Seneca, Cayuga, Tuscarora, Onondaga, Oneida and Mohawk. Five of the nations banded together centuries before the arrival of Columbus, with the Tuscaroras Nation joining the Confederacy around 1720.

There were many other Iroquois groups who are now extinct. Some sought the shelter of the Iroquois Confederacy and are now blended with the surviving nations. (e.g., Susquehannock-Pennsylvania, Erie, Wenrow, Neurals, etc.)

Iroquoian is a language group, one of the two main groups in the Northeast, the other being Algonkian speaking peoples. These languages are as different from one another as French is to English making communication difficult

The Iroquois are unique in their style of government, whereby they are Six Nations governed by their own constitutional-type law. They maintain one of the few surviving traditional confederacies in North America. The longhouse is the old style of lodge, covered with bark, extending up to 300 feet long, housing several families, who were related through common female ancestry. The longhouse was also the central council house where meetings and ceremonies were held. Today, in the Longhouses, which still exist, and on their territories, the Iroquois people continue to live and practice their ceremonies and customs. The long house is both the political center where the Chiefs meet, as well as the spiritual place where the annual ceremonies are still held. Authors, historians and scholars have acknowledged the Great Law of Peace served as one of the inspirational models for the governance concepts of the United States Constitution. This solidifies the Iroquois' historical and ongoing contribution to the world culture. The lands where the Six Nations are located still remains as their own territories and are governed by their own laws, on a Nation-to-Nation basis with the United States and Canada.

The Iroquois are a proud and righteous people who value their cultural identity with the many traditions and beliefs they maintain. Each nation has similarities, but also differences that make them unique. Their unique style of beadwork is an expression of their cultural identity. They use flowers, bird and symbols in either plain white or a wide array of colors.

Lacrosse is probably the most recognized of the Iroquois traditional and ceremonial games. The game was played in various forms by other Native American Indian Nations, but the Iroquois' version was the one that gave rise to the present-day international sport. By the 1850s, Iroquois teams were playing across the continent and in Great Britain. In 1878, lacrosse had reached Australia and New Zealand. However, the Indian teams were barred in 1880 from international amateur competition because they accepted expense money for their trips. It would be a century later before an Iroquois team reentered the global arena in the form of the Iroquois Nationals.

Implementation guidelines

It is recommended this unit be taught to 6th and 8th grade-level students. The lessons are intended to increase students' knowledge of Native Americans and their contribution to the United States. In addition, the lessons broaden information about diversity among Native Americans through study of less familiar areas and people.

Instructional Materials and Resources

Access to the Internet for downloading reading assignments

www.Tuscaroras.com

www.sixnations.org

Iroquois: Their Arts and Crafts by Carrie A. Lyford

Realm of the Iroquois by Time Life Books

Lesson Summary

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LESSON 1:

Who are the Iroquois today?

What will students be learning?

STANDARDS

Students read and understand a variety of materials. (RW1)

Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences. (RW2)

Students understand the chronological organization of history and know how to organize events and people into major eras to identify and explain historical relationships. (H1)

Students understand that societies are diverse and have changed over time. (H3)

BENCHMARKS

Students will use information from their reading to increase vocabulary and language usage.

Students will use comprehension strategies.

Students will write and speak for a variety of purposes.

Students will use chronology to examine and explain historical relationships.

Students will understand the history of social organization in various societies.

OBJECTIVES

Students will understand the similarities and differences between the six groups that belong to the Iroquois.

Students will gain an understanding of the uniqueness of the Six Nations.

SPECIFICS

This lesson plan is intended to introduce the Iroquois Nation to students. Many students may not be familiar with the location and uniqueness of the groups. This is an opportunity for students to read general information about the groups. It may be helpful to access the Internet site <http://www.sixnations.org> to gain additional background on the Iroquois.

What will be done to help students learn this?

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Questioning

Class discussion

Characteristic worksheet

Summarizing

Independent reading

PRELIMINARY LESSON PREPARATION

Make copies of the worksheets prior to placing the students into groups.

PRETEACHING

Review the concept of similar and different. This will support the students' ability to identify the unique characteristics on the worksheet.

ACTIVITIES

TO THE TEACHER: Pass out the worksheets and instruct the students to read "The Six Nations" by Denise Engstrom (included in this lesson). After reading, students will break into groups to complete the Characteristics Worksheet. When the students have finished, use the chalkboard or butcher paper to gather the information they have pulled out from the text. Write the location and four characteristics of the six groups. When this is done, discuss the similarities and the differences between the nations.

TO THE STUDENT: Read the summaries your teacher gave you on the six different groups of the Iroquois. When you are done, break into groups to complete the Characteristics Worksheet. Participate in the class discussion and give the teacher facts you gathered from the reading.

RESOURCES/MATERIALS

"The Six Nations" by Denise Engstrom (included in this lesson)
Characteristics Worksheet

ASSESSMENT

Students will turn in the completed Characteristics Worksheet.

Rubric Points

Rubric

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 4 | Student identifies all the required elements on the worksheet. Student can differentiate between individual nations. |
| 3 | Students identifies most of the required elements, but may miss one or two unique characteristics. Student can differentiate between individual nations. |
| 2 | Student identifies some of the required elements, but only includes one or two unique characteristics for each individual nation. Student may not demonstrate clear understanding of difference between nations. |
| 1 | Students does not identify most of the required elements. Student is missing key information and unique characteristics for more than one nation. Student does not seem to know the characteristics of each nation, or may not have read the required material. |

Reading Assignment:

“The Six Nations”

By Denise Engstrom

The Iroquois are a group of American Indians located in the northeast region of the United States and Canada. They are called the Six Nations by the English and “Haudenosaunee” by themselves, instead of “Iroquois.” The word “Iroquois” is a French word, derived from a Huron Indian meaning “black snakes.” Haudenosaunee means “People building an extended house” or People of the Longhouse.”

According to oral history, over 1,000 years ago, five nations banded together to form a union now called the Iroquois confederacy. The five nations of the confederacy are the Mohawk, Cayuga, Seneca, Oneida and Onondaga. In the 1700’s, the Tuscaroras joined the union making the confederacy Six Nations. It is important to remember that oral history often conflicts with written history making consideration of all sources helps to better understand history. The Council of Chiefs is the governing authority and follows its own laws. The majority of the Six Nations function under the Great Law of Peace, which promotes peace, power and righteousness. The Iroquois confederacy established that each nation should handle their own affairs. Each nation has representation on the Council. The Great Law is a unique representational form of government, with the people in the clans having say in what information is passed upward. Historically, the Iroquois were ruled by 50 council members. It has been reported that Benjamin Franklin used many aspects of the Iroquois system in the development of the government of the United States.

The Iroquois are considered a matriarchal society because descent is passed through the mother, rather than the father. Both men and women have equal roles in the social, political and economic life of the community. The balance of the gender roles makes the society unique. For example, children of either sex are affiliated with their mother’s clan.

For the Iroquois the clan is the basic unit of social organization. Members of one clan are considered to be relatives and intermarriage in the same clan is forbidden. Each clan is led by a Clan Mother. The responsibilities of the Clan Mother include the naming of all those in the clan, as well as the selection of the male candidate for Chief, which the rest of the Clan must approve. She can however remove that same chief if he fails in his duties.

The historical Iroquois lived in villages with long wooden buildings called “longhouses.” Families would live together in the structures with extended family members. Today the longhouse is either a frame building or a large, log house.

The Haudenosaunee view the concept of the longhouse like six families living under one roof, with each nation representing a family. The Iroquois Nations could be described as similar to a large longhouse that extends from where the sun rises in the east, to where it sets in the west. The earth is the floor of this longhouse and the sky is considered the roof. In this great longhouse the Mohawk nation are the keeper of the eastern door. The Seneca is the keeper of the western door. The Onondagas in the middle are the keepers of the central fire. Together these three are referred to as the elder brothers and they represent half of the longhouse families. The Cayuga, Oneida, and Tuscarora nations are the younger brothers and they represent the other families that complete the house.

Children were valued and respected by Haudenosaunee people. The children received much

love and attention from the family members in the long house. During this time, the women owned the long houses and the land. Today, longhouses still exist on some Haudenosaunee reservations and are used for ceremonial purposes.

The Haudenosaunee grew a variety of vegetables, such as corn, beans, and squash. Hunting and fishing contributed to part of the food they ate. They also grew tobacco that was used for ceremonial and medicinal purposes. The men and boys usually hunted for deer, bear and small mammals. Although much hunting was accomplished by bow and arrow, many men also used snares, traps and guns.

The Iroquois Nations Today

Seneca

The Seneca Nation is called the People of the Great Hill. The Seneca Nation is located in the Allegheny River valley in western New York. People of this nation reside on three reservations, the Cattaraugus, Allegany and Oil Springs. There are actually two political entities called the Seneca Nation. One is the traditional form of government, operating under the Great Law of Peace. They are called the Tonawanda Seneca Nation, located near Akron, NY. The other political entity is called the Seneca Nation of Indians (SNI), who operate under their own constitution. Each entity has its own membership and thus is sometimes confusing. The Tonawanda Seneca are the keepers of the Western Door of the Haudenosaunee, while the SNI is not part of the confederacy. The Seneca Nation is the only group that owns a United States city. The city, Salamanca, is built on land leased from the Allegany Indian Reservation.

Cayuga

The Cayuga do not have a reservation or land base. They are involved in a major land claim to recover 64,000 acres of their aboriginal land. Most of the enrolled members live on or near the Seneca Nation reservation. Cayuga means “the People of the Great Swamp.” The Cayuga are governed by a traditional Council of Chiefs and Clan Mothers.

Tuscarora

The Tuscarora Nation is called the People of the Long Shirt. The Tuscarora reservation, is located in Niagara Falls, New York. The Tuscarora were the last group to join the confederacy. They originated in North Carolina and were forced to move to New York and seek the support of the Iroquois. Many of the people were converted to Christianity. Currently, there is a Baptist church, an elementary school (Kindergarten through sixth grade), and a medical and dental clinic on the reservation.

Onondaga

The Onondaga Nation is called the People of the Hills. The Onondaga, in the middle of the territory, are considered the keepers of the fire. The reservation is about five miles south of Syracuse. The reservation is located on approximately 7,300 acres of land. One of the chiefs, named Todadaho, has a special responsibility and calls for the Grand Councils of all Chiefs to be held in their territory in order to address issues that affect all the Haudenosaunee. They do have a health clinic, dental clinic and fire department. There is an elementary school on the reservation (kindergarten through eighth grade). Most children go to high school off the

reservation to a public school.

Oneida

The Oneida Nation is called the People of the Standing Stone. The Oneida reservation is located in Madison County, south of Oneida, New York. The government is called the Oneida Nation of New York and does not operate under the Great Law of Peace. This reservation is the smallest of all six and has only 32 acres of land. The Oneida Nation has its own curriculum called the Oneida Creation, which focuses on passing down the oral traditions of the Oneida.

Mohawk

The Mohawk Nation is called the People of the Land of the Flint, and are the Keepers of the EasternDoor, meaning that any nation that wanted to approach the Haudenosaunee from the east had to be introduced by the Mohawk Nation. The reservation is located on the United States/Canadian border along the St. Lawrence River. The government of this group is unique in that they are the only nation across North America that is divided into three components; one council governs the Canadian side, and another governs the American side, and the third council is a traditional form of government that oversees the other two councils.

TEACHER'S COPY

Lesson 1: Characteristics Worksheet

Individual Nation 1: **SENECA**

Location of the group: ***Located in the Allegheny River Valley in Western New York.***

Unique characteristics: ***1) They refer to themselves as the "People of the Great Hill" 2) they are referred to as the keepers of the western door; 3) they have two different political entities in their nation; the Tonawanda Seneca Nation and the Seneca Nation of Indians (SNI) ; and 4) they are the only nation that owns a U.S. city, called Salamanca.***

Individual Nation 2: **CAYUGA**

Location of the group: ***Most live on or near the Seneca nation.***

Unique characteristics: ***1) Cayuga means "People of the Great Swamp;" 2) they do not have a reservation; 3) most enrolled members of the nation live on or near the Seneca Nation; and 4) they are governed by the Council of Chiefs and Clan Mothers.***

Individual Nation 3: **TUSCARORA**

Location of the group: ***Niagara Falls, New York***

Unique characteristics: ***1) Tuscarora means "People of the Long Shirt;" 2) they were the last group to join the Iroquois Confederacy; 3) they originated from North Carolina; 4) the reservation has a medical and dental clinic***

Individual Nation 4: **ONONDAGA**

Location of the group: ***Located five miles south of Syracuse, New York***

Unique characteristics: ***1) Their name means "People of the Hills;" 2) the reservation covers approximately 7,300 acres of land; 3) the Grand Council of all Chiefs meets on this reservation; and 4) they are known as "Keepers of the Fire".***

Individual Nation 5: **ONEIDA**

Location of the group: ***South of Oneida, New York in Madison County.***

Unique characteristics: ***1) Their name means "People of the Standing Stone"; 2) they teach their own curriculum called the Oneida Creation, which focuses on the passing on of oral traditions; 3) they do not operate under the Great Law of Peace; and 4) their reservation is the smallest of the six.***

Individual Nation 6: **MOHAWK**

Location of the group: ***The reservation is located on the United States/Canadian border along the St. Lawrence river.***

Unique characteristics: ***1) They are called the "People of the Land of Flint"; 2) they are the keepers of the eastern door; 3) their government is divided into three councils; and 4) one council governs the Canadian side, one the American side and the third council oversees the other two councils.***

Lesson 1: Characteristics Worksheet

Individual Nation 1:

Location of the group:

Four unique characteristics:

Individual Nation 2:

Location of the group:

Four unique characteristics:

Individual Nation 3:

Location of the group:

Four unique characteristics:

Individual Nation 4:

Location of the group:

Four unique characteristics:

Individual Nation 5:

Location of the group:

Four unique characteristics:

Individual Nation 6:

Location of the group:

Four unique characteristics:

LESSON 2: Discovering the significance of the wampum

What will students be learning?

STANDARD

Students read and understand a variety of materials. (RW1)

Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences. (RW2)

BENCHMARKS

Students will write and speak for a variety of purposes.

Students will use information from their reading to increase vocabulary and language usage.

Students understand the history of social organization in various societies.

OBJECTIVES

Students will use a variety of materials to increase their knowledge of the Iroquois.

Students will gain an understanding of the historical characteristics of the wampum and the Great Law of Peace.

Students will use a variety of materials to increase their knowledge of the Iroquois' contribution and connection to the United States Constitution.

SPECIFICS

The wampum has been an important aspect of the Iroquois way of life. The wampum consists of sea shells and are woven into belts and other items. The beads themselves served as memory reminders to record the oral traditions of tribal history. The beads are white (signifying purity) and purple (signifying grief).

The wampum has been said to have played a major role in the development of the Constitution of the United States. The Great Law of Peace, or Iroquois Constitution, was originally recorded through the bead communication on the now famous Hyawentha Belt.

What will be done to help students learn this?

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Reading and writing in the content area

Discussion

PRELIMINARY LESSON PREPARATION

Make copies of the reading assignment. Access the Internet to download the reading assignment, "What is the Great Law of Peace" and "The Three Principles of the Great Law". The assignments are located at <http://www.sixnations.org> in the Great Law of Peace section. It is recommended the teacher enlarge the printouts or photocopies since the article may be difficult to read.

PRETEACHING

Be sure to have the Iroquois classroom set available for students to look up additional information related to the wampum.

ACTIVITIES

Have students read “The Significance of the Wampum” by Liz Montour (included in this lesson). Students will use journaling to document the significant aspects of the Great Law of Peace.

RESOURCES/MATERIALS

“The Significance of the Wampum” by Liz Montour (included in this lesson)

“What is the Great Law of Peace?”

http://sixnations.buffnet.net/Great_Law_of_Peace/?article=what_is_great_law

“The Three Principles of the Great Law”

http://sixnations.buffnet.net/Great_Law_of_Peace/?article=three_principals

ASSESSMENT

Evaluation of individual completion of reading journals.

Reading Assignment:

“Discovering the Historical Significance of Wampum”

Origin story of the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy

By Elizabeth Kawenaa Montour

Oral history passed down through the generations of Iroquois people acknowledges that they originated from one group, who gradually developed into five separate nations known as the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida and Mohawk. However, there was intertribal warfare and the Iroquois people were very distraught and saddened by what was happening. This was when the Peacemaker arrived and, with the assistance of Hyawentha, there was a unification of the five nations. It was later, in approximately the 1700's, when the Tuscarora, a southern Iroquoian group, joined the confederacy to form the present-day Six Nations Confederacy.

But before the Peacemaker met Hyawentha, Hyawentha discovered wampum beads at the bottom of the Tully Lakes, south of Onondaga when he was wandering in the forest, seeking consolation for the death of his daughters. He began to string these beads together reciting words of comfort as he did. This is how the ceremony for condolence was created and is still in use today among the traditional people.

Hyawentha's message of unity and peace resulted in the coming together of all the Iroquois people and ended the internal warfare and killing among the Haudenosaunee. This was done under the Great Tree of Peace on the northeast shore of Onondaga Lake where all the leaders of the Nations had gathered. This became the first Grand Council of 50 Sachem chiefs to be in session. They accepted the Great Law of Peace to be the binding law that would hold them together for their perpetuation and survival. The peacemaker and Hyawentha spent many years traveling to various villages, transforming the most evil-minded leaders with their message of peace, power and righteousness. The roots of the tree of the Great Law of Peace extend in four directions, inviting any group or individual to come under its protection.

Introduction

The progression of the wampum's significance through history is an important journey, for not only the Iroquois and the Algonquin Tribes that used it, but its impact on the formation of the United States Constitution. Oral histories passed down through the surviving generations of the Iroquois can recall the earliest times of the Six Nations Confederacy through the wampum. These oral histories mention how the wampum shell bead held ceremonial and political significance. It was used as an aid to record tribal history, political accords and sacred pacts. Among Atlantic coastal Indian tribes it was used for personal ornamentation and decoration. Then with the arrival of the Colonists its use turned monetary. It was now used to pay compensation and tribute. The last major role it had was in the George Washington Covenant belt commissioned by President Washington in the 1790's to pledge peace and friendship to the Haudenosaunee. It has been associated with the last treaty made, the Canadiaguua Treaty of 1794. We shall look at its simple origin, its history and evolution to try and understand its importance.

Its Origin

Wampum originated on the eastern North American seaboard with the Algonquin nation who inhabited that area. They produced wampum from purple quahogs, white whelks and other mollusk shells that washed up on their shores. It was produced by these groups and traded inland to other tribal groups. The two leading producers were the Shinnecock Tribe and the Montauk Tribes, who bordered the southern side of Long Island Sound. The original Algonquin word was “wampumeag” which translated means “strings of white.” Wampum shell beads are either purple or white, with variations in the deepness of the purple color and the purity of the white color.

The purple beads were made from the colored lip of the quahog clam shell (*venus mercenaria*), while the white beads were fashioned from the columellae of the conch.

Producing wampum beads was done by clamping a portion of the seashell onto a wooden vise and shaping it with a grindstone. After shaping this piece of the shell in to a cylindrical shape, it was then pierced with a drill. Originally, this cylindrical piece was created using a stone drill and rotating it by hand. Eventually, a bow-powered drill or pump drill simplified the process. The stone drill was also replaced by more efficient and productive metal drills.

Wampum was introduced to the Dutch pilgrims around 1627. Captain John Smith said that he saw young Indian women surrounding Chieftain Powhatan “wearing great chains of white beads over their breasts and shoulders.” Another of the earliest sightings of wampum was by Drake the historian, who wrote, “King Philip had a coat all made of wampumpeag, which, when in need of money, he cut in pieces and distributed plentifully among the Nipmoog sachems and others.”

Wampum was used for compensation, tribute and eventually developed into its own monetary system. For the Algonquin it changed and pushed them out of their previous value systems and into modes that were foreign. It would eventually bring them to their demise. Instead of following their normal seasonal regiments of travelling to fishing and hunting areas, they now tended to stay by their “wampum factories.” The value of a fathom of wampum, which is approximately six feet, was all that mattered to them.

At the height of the buying frenzy for wampum, the manufacture of beads became such a thriving industry among the whites in several parts of the New York and New Jersey coastal region that the beads became known as “Dutch wampum or counterfeit wampum.” Eventually the bottom of the wampum market fell out as the demand for wampum declined and the Algonquin didn’t have access to the markets they had come to depend on.

Strings of Wampum and Wampum Belts

All Iroquois Councils are called by the Onondaga Nation, who appoints runners to bring a string of wampum to each Confederacy Seat or Nation. No action of public council could be proposed or ratified unless sealed by wampum, nor was any treaty, proffered by the paleface, recognized or considered valid until authorized by the exchange of wampum belts.

Belts of wampum were produced by the Iroquois and the Delaware. In addition, wampum belts were used by other nations including the Huron, Odawa, Ojibwa, Cherokee, and Shawnee. Information was conveyed through the use of the color of the beads and their designs. They served to record tribal history, political accords, sacred pacts and were essential for diplomatic reasons on a Nation to Nation basis.

The Iroquois Confederacy belts were woven to document their rituals, traditions and laws. There is a “keeper of the wampum” from the Onondaga Nation. His duty is to have memorized the meanings of the belts and then to read the wampum at all Confederacy Council meetings.

Women have also been custodians of belts that were sent to the seats of government for the purposes of politics or war.

The Delaware had also used wampum in the form of belts for recording agreements between Nations. However, they abandoned this practice in the late 18th century in favor of the written word. They were the only Algonquian group to use wampum belts.

Beads for use in the highly prized and rare wampum belts were kept fairly uniform in size. The steel drills obtained from the early colonists enabled the Indians to create the size beads that were needed for the wampum belts. The beads ranged from 1/8" to 5/16" in length and 3/16" to 1/8" in diameter. Beads produced by non-natives were often made much longer than those made by the Indians. There was no fixed measurement for the length or width of a wampum belt. They varied from five or six beads, with the widest known belt being 50 beads wide. One of the longer known belts is 66" long and is (or was) at the Museum of the American Indian.

The average wampum belt has a bead count of 1,000 to 3,700 wampum beads. The exceptions are larger belts, which are: Onondaga belt (10,000), Washington (8,355), Tatataho (7,740), Hiawatha (6,574), and Oneida (4,515) belts.

The best early historical account was given in 1850 by Lewis H. Morgan, an ethnologist, for whom a wampum belt was made by the people of Tonawanda (Seneca and Cayuga Nations). It is believed that the loom and weaving process correspond with the methods and devices of an earlier period. The loom used was a bow loom, but this wasn't the only method employed. There have been other methods that have been given, but only with vague details. In ancient times both the cord, which went lengthwise, and the thread, which went on the vertical, were made of sinew. However the fiber used to thread the beads for Morgan's belt were eight strands of elm bark that were twisted.

The white wampum bead on certain belts were sometimes reddened with ocher which is thought to have symbolized war. Other theories are that belts of purple wampum were symbols of death and if adorned with red paint or a red feather they signified war. These belts were also exchanged as a ransom for someone's life or many lives.

The Penn Wampum Belt held in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania was painted red with what is thought to be hematite. This pigment is still retained on the leather thongs and is also adhering to the ends of some of the beads.

Wampum's Role in the Development of the Constitution of the United States

The Iroquois had developed the Great Law of Peace to reunite the five nations of their confederacy. This was recorded in what is probably the most famous of the wampum belts, the Hyawetha Belt. Iroquoian elders have long proclaimed that the Confederacy served as a political model for the United States Constitution. The elders say that over 200 years ago an Iroquois Confederacy Chief advised Benjamin Franklin. Then Franklin challenged the colonists to create a similar united government. According to Jake Swamp, an elder of the Mohawk Nation, he states that in the writings of Benjamin Franklin, George Morgan and other founding fathers, that it is acknowledged that the frontier democracy of the Iroquois and Delaware had an influence on the framework of the U.S. Constitution.

Wampum use in the Iroquois Confederacy today

In early 2000, runners were sent out to the council fires of the Confederacy. Following ancient Iroquois protocol, wampums were delivered to the various nation's Council of Chiefs, calling

them to attend an historic Grand Council meeting at Onondaga, New York, on March 4–5, 2000, to discuss major issues of concern.

The traditional chiefs decided to put aside their differences, some which resulted from divided loyalties at the time of the Revolutionary War, and reunite under the Great Law of Peace. The chiefs of all the nations decided that they would act as one people again, with one grand council and with one mind toward the future survival of their unique culture and laws. It was evident that the Great Law was still alive and would continue to guide the thinking of the Chiefs.

The Chiefs then decided to install a Mohawk chief according to the ancient protocol established by the Peacemaker and Hyawentha. After much meetings and practice, a new chief was installed in the Wolf clan at Akwesasne on May 6, 2000. The chief was installed through the Condolence Ceremony that takes all day to perform. He is given his duties and then takes his place with the other chiefs of his nation. For the Mohawk chief to be “condoled” the Younger Brothers had to conduct the ceremony. When a chief is to be installed among the Cayuga, Oneida or Tuscarora, then the Elder Brothers would perform the ritual. In this way, the two sides of the longhouse help each other to keep the traditions going.

LESSON 3: Sharing oral traditions

What will students be learning?

STANDARDS

Students read and understand a variety of materials. (RW1)

Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences. (RW2)

Students use appropriate technologies to obtain historical information, to study and/or model historical information and concepts; and to access, process and communicate information related to the study of history. (H7)

BENCHMARKS

Students will use comprehension strategies.

Students will write and speak for a variety of purposes.

Students will prepare written and oral presentations using strategies.

Students use appropriate and electronic technologies in a variety of formats to extend and enhance learning of historical facts and concepts.

Students use appropriate technologies to enable historical inquiry.

OBJECTIVES

Students will use independent reading, library research and the Internet to gain an understanding of oral tradition.

Students will use a variety of resources to develop an oral presentation.

Students will use oral tradition (storytelling) to present a story to the class.

SPECIFICS

Oral histories have been shared since the beginning of time. Prior to develop writing systems, the only way to share knowledge or useful information between the generations was through oral history.

Oral history is a crucial piece to any culture. It is a way of passing the history, customs, traditions, and folklore of a people to the next and future generations. Often these oral traditions are shared in the communities by the elderly and passed to the youth. The sharing of these stories provide a key link between the past and the future.

Most cultures share oral histories even today with the development of writing systems and ways to record history in books and computers. There are many reasons for this, such as a belief in the value of gathering as a community to share stories and histories, and also the mistrust in putting the value of oral histories in the position where they can be manipulated or changed by others.

Every culture has oral histories, whether it is the story of Saint Patrick among the Irish, or La Llorona among the Mexicans and the people of the southwest United States. These oral

histories almost take the form of proverbs or folktales, used to teach values or morals.

What will be done to help students learn this?

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Independent reading

Class discussion

Oral participation

Group activities

Researching

PRELIMINARY LESSON PREPARATION

Be sure to have materials on hand to assist in students in developing visual aids for their presentation (markers, poster board, construction paper, etc.). If possible, secure Internet access or reserve the library for students so they can research oral traditions. Two websites that focus specifically on oral traditions of the Iroquois are: <http://www.oneida-nation.net/oral/index.html> and <http://www.indians.org/welker/iroqoral.htm>.

PRETEACHING

If students do not have experience giving oral presentations, have them practice presentation techniques. In addition, students may need to be introduced to the components of a presentation so they understand what should be included.

ACTIVITIES

TO THE TEACHER: Begin a discussion on oral history. Ask students what they think an oral history is and why it is important in various cultures. Ask students if they have any oral histories from their family or cultures they can share with the class. Following the discussion, have students read “Sharing Oral Traditions” by Elizabeth Montour (included in this lesson). If possible, take students to the computer lab or school library to research oral history and find examples of oral history. Use the websites provided in Preliminary Lesson Preparation to access oral histories about and by the Iroquois. Divide the students into groups of three and have them develop an oral presentation on a story they are familiar with or one they write themselves. Distribute the grading rubric to help students familiarize themselves with the grading criteria. The students will each choose a story they know and practice the oral tradition with the entire class. When the students are done with putting their story together, have them present their stories in front of the class.

TO THE STUDENT: You will have a class discussion about oral history. Share what oral traditions you have in your culture, where you learned them from and the meaning or purpose of the oral history. Following the class discussion, read “Sharing Oral Traditions” by Elizabeth Montour. This will give you an idea about the oral traditions of the Iroquois. Following the reading assignment, go to the library or computer lab to research oral history. As you do this, remember what types of stories there are and what kind of meaning is being expressed through the story. When you return to class you will review the grading rubric for the presentation. If the teacher has not assigned groups yet, get into groups of three to develop your own oral history. This story can be about stories that you already know, one you found in your research or your group can make one up. Remember in your presentation it is required to have visual aids such as drawings, posters, or pictures. Each group needs to choose one story to present

orally to the class.

RESOURCES/MATERIALS

“Sharing Oral Traditions” by Elizabeth Montour (included in this lesson)

Internet access

Library access to research oral histories

ASSESSMENT

In evaluating the group presentation, remember that for many this may be their first experience working with oral histories and their interpretation of this concept may not be quite on the mark. Allow for flexibility in the student’s interpretation of an oral history.

| <u>Rubric Points</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|----------------------|---|
| 4 | Students clearly understand the concept of oral histories. Their presentation is well-thought-out and creative. They have worked well together as a group. |
| 3 | Students understand the concept of oral histories. Their presentation is good, but not very creative. They have worked well together as a group |
| 2 | Students have a general understanding of oral histories. Their presentation was somewhat disorganized and lacking creativity. They may not have worked well together as a group. |
| 1 | Students do not demonstrate comprehension of oral histories. Their presentation does not indicate they worked as a group. It is disorganized and has little information about oral histories. |

Reading Assignment: "Sharing Oral Traditions"

By Elizabeth Montour

The presence of oral traditions is most evident in Native American Indian cultures.

Before the arrival of the written word brought overseas by explorers and colonists, it was the only means of passing on events and traditions. Oral traditions have now been recorded in books, but are still referred to as oral tradition because of its oral origin.

While non-native society tends to lean toward scientific analysis of the past, Native American traditionalists follow the teachings of their elders. Therein lies the problem of disputes between scientific beliefs and cultural beliefs.

There are several well-known oral traditions that explain the Iroquois' origins, rituals and traditions. With these thoughts in mind, we will tell the origin story of the Iroquois people and look at the Thanksgiving Address, as passed on by generations of families.

Skywoman

The Sky World is the world beyond the sky, inhabited with beings that look like humans. Below the Sky World was an endless sea, inhabited by water animals, birds and reptiles, but with no sunlight

Skywoman lives in that world and visited a village that had this tree of brown lights. This tree was uprooted and created the whole through which she fell.

Her fall from the heavens led to the development of earth as we know it. This is probably the reason that the Iroquois people refer to earth as Our Mother the Earth.

She peered under a hole beneath a tree and fell through it. She hurtled down toward a body of water. Some birds spread their wings below her, which slowed and cushioned her fall. Then a turtle offered its back for her to fall upon. This turtle became the foundation for the earth. With the assistance of sea diving creatures such as the muskrat and otter who dove to the bottom of the ocean, brought back dirt. They piled the dirt on the Turtle until Turtle Island was formed.

She was with child at the time and gave birth to two twins, one with a good mind and one who was evil. The children would spend the rest of their lives challenging each other's disposition and so would their children and so on.

If we probe deeper and go back further the story is richer. This version is presented by David Cusnick.

In the ancient times, as far back as anyone can remember, there was a lower world and an upper world. The lower world was very dark and was in the possession of a great monster. The upper world was inhabited by human life. In this upper world was a woman who was with child, actually twins. As her term reached the end, she was laid on a mattress and while she slept it fell down into the lower world. The monster saw her falling down toward the waters and summoned all the creatures. A large turtle volunteered his shell to keep her afloat in the waters. Dirt was then piled upon the turtle until land was formed. Not long after the mother gave birth to her twins, she died.

The twins had the ability to survive in this dark environment. One twin possessed a gentle temperament and was named Enigorio, the good mind, while the other twin possessed a insolence of character and was named Enigonhahetgea, the bad mind.

Enigorio, the good mind, was anxious to bring some light into this world, while Enigonhahetgea wanted to keep things the way they were. Enigorio went ahead with the work of creation. He bestowed light upon the New World by making the sun out of the deceased parent's head. He used another part of the deceased's body to make the moon and the stars. Whenever the light extended to the dark world, the monster(s) were displeased and would immediately hide themselves in deep places, so they wouldn't be discovered by any humans.

He continued his work of creation by forming creeks and rivers on the Great Island, creating numerous different species of animals and fish, both small and large to inhabit the forests, land and water. He created man and woman in his likeness by shaping some dust and then he breathed this into his nostrils to give them living souls and name them Ea-gwe-howe, or the Real People. He then appointed thunder to water the earth with frequent rains, which caused the land to be bountiful for the animals and man.

Meanwhile, Enigonhahetgea, the bad mind, was busy setting about the Great Island adding treacherously high mountains and high waterfalls. He also created animals that would be dangerous to mankind. The bad mind tried to make two forms out of clay to be like mankind, but when they were brought to life, they turned into apes.

Today, good and evil still battle one another to keep the earth in balance. The light world and the dark world coexist as day and night. That is the original story of the Iroquois people.

The Thanksgiving Address

Giving Thanks to the Creator or the Thanksgiving Address pulls together the beliefs of the Iroquois people. Whenever the Haudenosaunee gather they begin their meeting with the "words that come before all others", which is the Thanksgiving Address. These words explain the order of the universe and the many gifts of creation. Pay close attention:

Greetings to the Natural World

- **The People**, today we have gathered and we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as people. Now our minds are one.
- **The Earth Mother**, we are all thankful to our Mother, the Earth, for she gives us all that we need for life. She supports our feet as we walk about upon her. It gives us joy that she continues to care for us as she has from the beginning of time. To our mother, we send greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.
- **The Waters**, we give thanks to all the waters of the world for quenching our thirst and providing us with strength. Water is life. We know its power in many forms — waterfalls and rain, mists and streams, rivers and oceans. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to the spirit of water. Now our minds are one.
- **The Fish**, we turn our minds to all the fish life in the water. They were instructed to cleanse and purify the water. They also give themselves to us as food. We are grateful that we can still find pure water. So, we turn now to the fish and send our greetings and

thanks. Now our minds are one.

- **The Plants**, now we turn toward the vast fields of plant life. As far as the eye can see, the plants grow, working many wonder. They sustain many life forms. With our minds gathered together, we give thanks and look forward to seeing plant life for many generations to come. Now our minds are one.
- **The Food Plants**, with one mind we turn to honor and thank all the Food Plants we harvest from the garden. Since the beginning of time, the grains, vegetables, beans and berries have helped the people survive. Many other living things draw strength from them too. We gather all the Plant Foods together as one and send them a greeting of thanks. Now our minds are one.
- **The Medicine Herbs**, now we turn to all the Medicine Herbs of the world. From the beginning they were instructed to take away sickness. They are always waiting and ready to heal us. We are happy there are still among us those special few who remember how to use these plants for healing. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to the Medicines and to the keepers of the Medicines. Now our minds are one.
- **The Animals**, we gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to all the Animal life in the world. They have many things to teach us as people. We are honored by them when they give up their lives so we may use their bodies as food for our people. We see them near our homes and in the deep forests. We are glad they are still here and we hope that it will always be so. Now our minds are one.
- **The Trees**, we now turn our thoughts to the Trees. The Earth has many families of Trees who have their own instructions and uses. Some provide us with shelter and shade, others with fruit, beauty and other useful things. Many people of the world use a Tree as a symbol of peace and strength. With one mind, we greet and thank the Tree life. Now our minds are one.
- **The Birds**, we put our minds together as one and thank all the Birds who move and fly about over our heads. The Creator gave them beautiful songs. Each day they remind us to enjoy and appreciate life. The Eagle was chosen to be their leader. To all the Birds — from the smallest to the largest—we send our joyful greetings and thanks. Now our minds are one.
- **The Four Winds**, we are all thankful to the powers we know as the Four Winds. We hear their voices in the moving air as they refresh us and purify the air we breathe. They help us to bring the change of seasons. From the four directions they come, bringing us messages and giving us strength. With one mind, we send our greetings and thanks to the Four Winds. Now our minds are one.
- **The Thunderers**, now we turn to the west where our grandfathers, the Thunder Beings, live. With lightning and thundering voices, they bring with them the water that renews life. We are thankful they keep those evil things made by Okwiseres underground. We bring our minds together as one to send greetings and thanks to our Grandfathers, the Thunderers. Now our minds are one.
- **The Sun**, we now send greetings and thanks to our oldest Brother, the Sun. Each day without fail he travels the sky from east to west, bringing the light of a new day. He is the source of all the fires of life. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Brother, the Sun. Now our minds are one.

- **Grandmother Moon**, we put our minds together to give thanks to our oldest Grandmother, the Moon, who lights the nighttime sky. She is the leader of woman all over the world, and she governs the movement of the ocean tides. By her changing face we measure time, and it is the Moon who watches over the arrival of children here on Earth. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Grandmother, the Moon. Now our minds are one.
- **The Stars**, we give thanks to the Stars who are spread across the sky like jewelry. We see them in the night, helping the moon to light the darkness and bringing dew to the gardens and growing things. When we travel at night, they guide us home. With our minds gathered together as one, we send greetings and thanks to the Stars. Now our minds are one.
- **The Enlightened Teachers**, we gather our minds to greet and thank the enlightened Teachers who have come to help throughout the ages. When we forget how to live in harmony, they remind us of the way we were instructed to live as people. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to these caring teachers. Now our minds are one.
- **The Creator**, now we turn our thoughts to the Creator, or Great Spirit, and send greetings and thanks for all the gifts of Creation. Everything we need to live a good life is here on this Mother Earth. For all the love that is still around us, we gather our minds together as one and send our choicest words of greetings and thanks to the Creator. Now our minds are one.
- **Closing Words**, we have now arrived at the place where we end our words. Of all the things we have named, it was not our intention to leave anything out. If something was forgotten, we leave it to each individual to send such greetings and thanks in their own way. Now our minds are one.

LESSON 4:

The importance of chiefs, clans and clan mothers

What will students be learning?

STANDARDS

Students read and understand a variety of materials. (RW1)

Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences. (RW2)

Students write and speak using formal grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. (RW3)

Students understand that societies are diverse and have changed over time. (H3)

BENCHMARKS

Students will use comprehension strategies.

Students will write and speak for a variety of purposes.

Students will demonstrate correct punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

Students will use chronology to examine and explain historical relationships.

Students will understand the history of social organization in various societies.

OBJECTIVES

Students will increase their understanding of the social structure of the Six Nations.

Students will have the opportunity to learn more about the form of government that is used by the Iroquois.

Students will develop a general understanding of the connection between a Matriarchal Society and how chiefs play a significant role.

Students will use the Internet to locate required reading articles.

Students will increase their knowledge about Iroquois clans, chiefs, clan mothers and Grand Council.

SPECIFICS

This lesson will expand on the student's knowledge of the Iroquois Nation and the systems that support the society. Because the Six Nations are sovereign, that is separate from the United States government, the system that guides their government is unique and interesting. The clan system is an important component of their government structure. Chiefs play a significant role in how decisions are made and the overall governance of the Nation.

What will be done to help students learn this?

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

KWL

Class discussion

Independent reading

This lesson plan would be an excellent opportunity to use a computer lab with Internet access. If your school does not have this ability, the reading assignments will need to be downloaded for the students to review.

PRETEACHING

If students have not utilized KWL before, it will be important to review the components of what is expected for the lesson plan.

ACTIVITIES

TO THE TEACHER: Have each student read the three assignments downloaded from the Internet. Each student will need to complete a KWL worksheet that identifies what they know about the clans, chiefs, clan mothers and Grand Council. When each student has completed their KWL worksheet, ask students if they would like to share the information with the class and have a discussion. For the section of “What I want to know,” have the students generate a list of resources where they might find this information.

TO THE STUDENT: Prior to reading the three class assignments, fill out the Know and What I Want to Know (K & W) sections about each group: clans, chiefs, clan mothers and Grand Council. After reading the three assignments fill out the, What I Learned (L) section for each worksheet. Participate in the class discussion, you can add to your KWL chart from information that gained from the class discussion. Remember to write in complete sentences and watch your spelling while filling out the KWL sheet

RESOURCES/MATERIALS

<http://www.sixnations.org> - see articles under the CULTURE link: “What are the clans?”, “What is the role of the Chief?”, “What is the role of the Clan Mother?”, and What is the Grand Council?”

KWL chart

ASSESSMENT

The students will complete four different KWL charts, for clans, chiefs, clan mothers and the Grand Council. Use the rubric below to assess students’ KWL charts.

| <u>Rubric score</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|---------------------|---|
| 4 | Each section of the KWL chart has at least six facts or statements about that particular group. The facts or statements contain no more than five spelling and/or grammar errors. |
| 3 | Each section of the KWL chart has at least four facts or statements about that particular group. The facts or statements contain no more than eight spelling and/or grammar errors. |
| 2 | Each section of the KWL chart has at least three facts or statements about that particular group. The facts or statements contain no more than 10 spelling and/or grammar errors. |
| 1 | The KWL chart has less than three facts listed for each group in each section. There are over 10 spelling and/or grammar errors |

Name _____

Period _____

Page 1 of 4

KWL Chart

Instructions: Complete each worksheet for the group indicated.

CLANS:

What I **know** about clans:

What I **want** to know about clans:

What I **learned** about clans:

Name _____

Period _____

Page 2 of 4

KWL Chart

Instructions: Complete each worksheet for the group indicated.

CHIEFS:

What I **know** about chiefs:

What I **want** to know about chiefs:

What I **learned** about chiefs:

Name _____

Period _____

Page 3 of 4

KWL Chart

Instructions: Complete each worksheet for the group indicated.

CLAN MOTHERS:

What I **know** about clan mothers:

What I **want** to know about clan mothers:

What I **learned** about clan mothers:

Name _____

Period _____

Page 4 of 4

KWL Chart

Instructions: Complete each worksheet for the group indicated.

GRAND COUNCIL:

What I **know** about the Grand Council:

What I **want** to know about the Grand Council:

What I **learned** about the Grand Council:

LESSON 5: The Arts of the Haudensaunee

What will students be learning?

STANDARDS

Students read and understand a variety of materials. (RW1)

Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences. (RW2)

Students write and speak using formal grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. (RW3)

Students understand that societies are diverse and have changed over time. (H3)

BENCHMARKS

Students will use comprehension strategies.

Students will write and speak for a variety of purposes.

Students will demonstrate correct punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

Students will use chronology to examine and explain historical relationships.

Students will understand the history of social organization in various societies.

OBJECTIVES

Students will gain an understanding of the crafts that are generated by the Six Nations.

Students will use their new knowledge to complete their worksheet.

Students will use their new knowledge to share their reading information with other students.

SPECIFICS

Many students have learned about the way of life and the crafts of the Plains Indian. The crafts of the Iroquois are different than those of other tribes due to influences from their geographic location and individual styles. The crafts of the Iroquois hold a significant amount of historical importance as well as continuing to serve as a symbol of cultural identity.

What will be done to help students learn this?

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Reading and writing in the content area

Oral presentation

PRELIMINARY LESSON PREPARATION

This lesson has each group of students reading a different assignment and presenting the information to the class. If students have not done this before, it might be helpful to review different ways of sharing information. This is an opportunity for students to be creative in how they present the information (in a song, through pictures, a report, story boards, class presentations, etc.).

The teacher needs to make copies of the worksheet prior to breaking the students into small groups. It may be beneficial to choose the students for each group ahead of time.

ACTIVITIES

TO THE TEACHER: Break students up into four groups. Each group will need to read their assigned craft section. When each group member has completed their reading assignment, they will complete a craft assignment worksheet. Once the groups have completed their assignments, each group must give a presentation on their crafts to the entire class.

STUDENT DIRECTIONS: Each student will be a participant in a small group. Once the teacher has made the assignments, read the sections assigned to your group. Once the entire group has completed their reading, each student will be responsible for completing their own craft worksheet. Each group will need to decide how they are going to share the information with the entire class.

Group #1: Pages 27–36: Pottery, Pipes, Bark, Canoes, Ropes and Trumplines.

Group #2: Pages 36–45: Burden Frames and Cradleboards, Wooden Utensils, Basketry, Snowshoes.

Group #3: Pages 46–48, 65–67, 75–78: Corn Husk and Cob Products, Tanned Hides, Moccasins, and Bags.

Group #4: Page 79–86: Woven Yarn Sashes, Silver Ornaments, Embroidery and Beadwork.

RESOURCES/MATERIALS

Iroquois: Their Arts and Crafts by Carrie Lyford

ASSESSMENT

The students will be evaluated on their individual completed worksheet.

Craft Worksheet

Each group is responsible for completing the following worksheet for each of the crafts mentioned in their reading assignment. Please answer the following questions:

What was the craft? _____

What purpose did the craft serve? _____

What materials were used for the craft? _____

What additional information is important to know about the craft? _____

LESSON 6: Lacrosse — an indigenous game

What will students be learning?

STANDARDS

Students read and understand a variety of materials. (RW1)

Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences. (RW2)

Students understand that societies are diverse and have changed over time. (H3)

BENCHMARKS

Students will use information from their reading to increase vocabulary and language usage.

Students will use comprehension strategies.

Students will write and speak for a variety of purposes.

Students will use chronology to examine and explain historical relationships.

Students will understand the history of social organization in various societies.

OBJECTIVES

Students will understand the origination of lacrosse and aspects of the current game.

Students will familiarize themselves with the vocabulary common with lacrosse.

SPECIFICS

This lesson is intended to expose students to the origination of the lacrosse game and how the game has evolved into the popular sport today.

What will be done to help students learn this?

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Independent reading

PRELIMINARY LESSON PREPARATION

Make a copy of the worksheet for each student. If students have not developed crossword puzzles before, teachers may need to discuss how to develop a puzzle and techniques that work. It may be helpful to demonstrate one for the students.

ACTIVITIES

TO THE TEACHER: Have each student read the lacrosse assignment. Once they have finished, each student will complete a crossword puzzle using the words provided in the lesson plan.

TO THE STUDENT: Read the assignment provided by the teacher. Once you are finished, develop your own crossword puzzle using the words provided.

RESOURCES/MATERIALS

“Lacrosse: Its origin and where it is today,” by Elizabeth Montour (included in this lesson)

ASSESSMENT

Evaluation of the completed crossword puzzle.

Reading Assignment:

“Lacrosse — Its origin and where it is today”

By Elizabeth Kawenaa Montour

A Scenario

The place we are at is a small present-day Native American Indian reservation, east of the Mississippi River. Outside, two young brothers bounce their lacrosse ball against the smooth stone wall of their home. They go through their motions handling their lacrosse sticks with a natural ease and energetic enthusiasm. Their mother is in the kitchen preparing some traditional corn soup for lunch. She steps out onto the back porch and warns them to be careful where they throw the hard rubber ball. There happens to be two kitchen windows just above where they are practicing and she knows it wouldn't be the first time a window was shattered by a misdirected lacrosse ball. The boys continue doing this while their little sister looks on. She is both fascinated and hypnotized by the constant pounding.

After enjoying their meal with their family, they anxiously head down to the lacrosse rink to join their friends. Here they engage in a more vigorous and demanding lacrosse practice. They spend this time developing their stamina and mental strategies, they try to improve and perfect stick handling techniques. They try to keep their moves smooth and synchronized with the other players. Each of the young Indian boys at the rink might be dreaming of the day they are asked to join the senior lacrosse team and maybe eventually becoming a respected coach. Once they are a member of the team they can travel to other reservations for intertribal tournaments and possibly travel abroad to international events, like their forefathers before them. They know there are other opportunities available for their skills, such as universities that offer scholarships for top lacrosse players. It would be a great honor to bestow upon their family and community.

Introduction

Lacrosse is the oldest, most widely spread and most recognized of Native American Indian traditional and ceremonial games. This brings us to look at the origin of the sport of lacrosse and today's participants. The belief of the Iroquois people and other Native American Indian Tribes is that lacrosse is a sacred gift from the Creator. They played to please and honor him and it was also believed to have medicinal and healing properties.

Once a year in Onondaga, which is the Central Council Fire for the Iroquois Six Nation's Confederacy, players gather with the community for a medicine game. In this game they only use wooden sticks and the ball was made from deerhide or cloth. It is made by a person specially appointed for that purpose. Tobacco is burned with prayer, so the Creator will hear the prayers. Then the game is played to a certain number of goals or points. It is played very physically, but no malicious tactics are used since it is a good will competition.

Today, one of the central figures in Iroquoian lacrosse is Oren Lyons, an Onondaga faith keeper. He states, “When you talk about the lifeblood of the Six Nations ... the game is ingrained in our culture, and our systems and our lives ... there are two times of the year that stir the blood ... In the fall for the hunt, and now (spring) for the Lacrosse.”

Lacrosse was excellent preparation for potential warriors to develop stamina, agility and

strategies for war and survival against other tribal entities. It was also a way for Tribes to settle disputes without doing battle. During periods of peace it was an opportunity to socialize and renew friendships. When the game was used ceremonially, pregame fasts, dances, prayers, music and medicinal drinks were practiced.

Not to give all the credit to the Iroquois, the game was practiced in other regions of North America. There were two other main areas, which were the Great Lakes and the Southeast. However it is the Iroquoian style of equipment and play that gave rise to the present-day international sport.

Before we go any further a basic description of the game of lacrosse is warranted. The only equipment needed was a stick and a ball. The stick was usually made out of hickory that had been cured for at least two years. There was a basket-like netted pocket made out of crisscrossed sinew strips, at one end. The playing field varied in size and so did the number of players on a field. It all depended on what facilities were at hand and who was available to play. Playing fields could stretch for more than a mile and could be filled with several hundred players.

The basic rules of play are for a player to catch the ball in the net pocket of their lacrosse stick. Using different stick handling techniques, players pass and throw the ball between their teammates. The ball must not be touched with the hand. To score a point for their team they must get the ball past the player known as the goalie. The goalie is protecting an area at the end of the field. The area is marked by two posts. If the player can throw the ball past the goalie and between the marked area he scores a point for his team. Each of the two opposing teams has a goalie at each end of the playing field guarding the goal area.

First we will look at the early historical accounts, give a basic description of the three regions, glance at its development and progression from the 1850s, survey its contemporary form and recognition of its Iroquoian origin.

Historically, the first accounts were by French Missionaries, Father Jean Brebouf in 1632 and Father Francois Le Mercier in 1637. Mercier was one of the early missionaries sent to convert and Christianize the natives in the Huron village known as Huronia. Mercier was mystified by the blending of ceremony and sport. He wrote that the medicine men functioned as would today's modern-day coach. Missionaries were also responsible for the development of the word "lacrosse" which is derived from the French interpretation of "la" meaning "the" and "croiser" which was a bent stick or bishop's crook. A third early account was by a French trader Nicolas Peffot who noted that there were rules and that the game was played to three goals. Catlin, a famous painter was able to record and capture what lacrosse looked like when it was played between 1830 and 1850. These paintings showed how the sticks were held, what was worn, the type of playing field used and the positioning of the players in the game. It was in 1750 that the Mohawks taught the game to French Canadians in Montreal.

The basic premise was the same for all tribes that practiced lacrosse, however each had their own distinguishing regional characteristics. American Indian groups from the region of the Great Lakes were the Ojibwa/Chippewa, Menominee, Potawatomi, Sauk, Fox, Miami, Winnebago and Santee Dakota. The pocket at the end of the stick was small and round and was scarcely larger than the three-inch diameter wood ball. In the Southeast Region their version of play included the use of two sticks. Indian groups that practiced the game were the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, Seminole and Yuchi. The term, "Little Brother of War" originated from this area, in that it was a warfare ritual for training young warriors. The game also gave

them a means of gaining status in peacetime. Included in the Northeast Region of the groups practicing lacrosse were the Iroquoian nations, as well as the New England and Maritime eastern Algonquin Tribes. The Iroquoian group's style of play included a stick, which was usually more than three feet in length. This was probably the longest stick used by any tribe.

Indian lacrosse exhibition games were played as early as 1834. By the 1850s Iroquois teams were playing abroad in Great Britain. In 1878 lacrosse had reached the shores of Australia and New Zealand. Unfortunately, in 1880 the Indian teams were barred from International Amateur competition because they accepted expense money for their trips.

This wasn't going to be the last time that athletes of Native American Indian origin would suffer from the rules and regulations of the elitist and monied classes. The first white team was formed in 1839. Prior to 1869 there had been many exhibition games between the Indian teams and white teams playing the original Indian style. The Indian teams always prevailed. Then William G. Beers, a dentist from Montreal, who was an avid promoter of lacrosse, published a book on the rules of Lacrosse in 1869.

He didn't like the no-holds barred approach to the game and wanted specific positions, limit on number of players, numbers on uniforms and so forth. Only when these rules of play had been put in place were the non-native teams able to gain some ground in playing against the Indians. However, a triumphant return was to happen a century later when the Iroquois Nationals team was formed and successfully reentered the global arena, taking their rightful place as warriors on the field. The International Lacrosse Committee sanctioned their return and during that first year after the ban, at the 1990 World Games in Australia, Oren Lyons, the Onondaga faithkeeper, brought back ceremony and ritual to the game. He sang a traditional song and did a traditional dance for the Creator.

Today lacrosse is played mainly in two versions. One is called box lacrosse and played in hockey and sport arena facilities. The sticks used today haven't changed in size. However, natural wood sticks aren't as common, with the trend leaning toward using modern plastics and metal alloy shafts. The playing surface is cement and the ball is kept in the confines of the rink area by a border of rinkboards topped with plexiglass. The ball more than often escapes this area to enter the spectator seating and often becomes a souvenir. Injuries do occur to spectators due to the velocity and density of the hard rubber of the ball. The other version of lacrosse is field lacrosse. Field lacrosse is the choice of most colleges and universities and is played on a field with a grass surface that is much larger than the area used for Box Lacrosse. Here the sticks are all modern materials and have varying lengths for the different field positions.

Involvement in the sport of lacrosse across the continent is estimated to be over half a million recreational, amateur and professional players. Other statistics available state that 195 colleges and universities offer a women's lacrosse program while 380 of these type of education institutions offer a men's lacrosse program. At the high school level, 385 or more offer a women's program and 1,000 or more offer a men's lacrosse program. It is now played in over 30 countries around the globe. There are several variations such as box lacrosse, field lacrosse, mini-lacrosse and several forms of soft lacrosse. Every four years there is a world championship for field lacrosse.

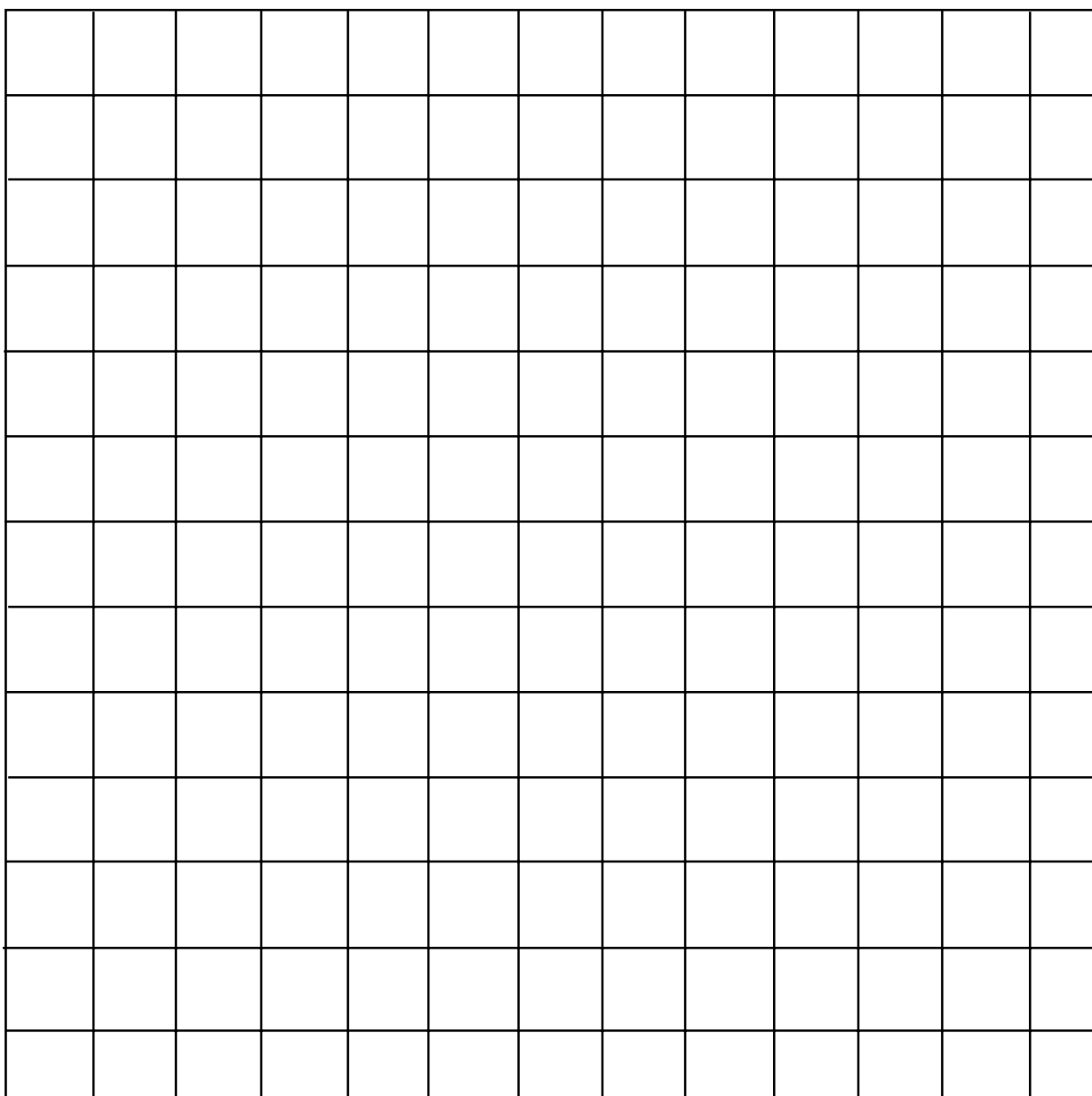
Lacrosse's popularity has led it to become known as the "fastest game on two feet." Lacrosse received its first national recognition in July 1869 by being declared "the national game in the Commonwealth of Canada." Important recognition for lacrosse's origins have been given by the National Congress of American Indians by a resolution (#PHX-96-073) passed in October

1996 in Phoenix, Arizona, which stated: “Whereas, lacrosse is one of the oldest team sports in America and it is an indigenous sport in which many Tribes have or still participate in, such as the Creek, Choctaw, Cherokee, Ojibwa, Dakota, Iroquois Confederacy, Kickapoo, Chumash, Winnebago, Sac and Fox and many others...” It is also immortalized by a sculpture of two Iroquois warriors at the entrance of the Lacrosse Hall of Fame in Baltimore, Maryland, with words inscribed at the base that say, “forever honor the Iroquois from whom the modern game of Lacrosse most directly descends.”

Crossword Puzzle Assignment

Please use the following words to create a crossword puzzle. Use the grid below (or use plain graph paper).

| | | | |
|----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| Lacrosse | reservation | sticks | rink |
| players | team | spectator | warriors |
| field | Iroquois | ball | Nation |
| amateur | sport | goals | traditional |



Bibliography

Books

Algonquians of the East Coast. American Indian Series, Time Life: New York, 1995.

This book was used to research the significance of the wampum. A very good and thorough source.

Doherty, Craig and Katherine. *The Iroquois*. Franklin Watts: 1989.

This book provides a short description on the historical daily life Iroquois, including the social and political structures.

Graymont, Barbara. *The Iroquois*. Chelsea House Publishers: 1989.

This book was used to expand on the social and political information of the Iroquois.

Lyford, Carrie. *Iroquois: Their Arts and Crafts*, Hancock House Publishers: 1989.

This is a comprehensive book on the traditional and popular crafts of the Iroquois nation.

Paterek Josephine. *Encyclopedia of American Indian Costume*: 1994.

This source was used to expand on the information on wampum belts and their meaning.

Wilburn, C. Keith M.D., *Woodland Indians*, Globe Pequot Press

This book provided key information on the traditional game of lacrosse.

Internet Sites

<http://www.OneidaNation.net>

This site provides excellent information on the knowledge of the game of lacrosse.

<http://Sixnations.buffnet.com>

An excellent site that provides in-depth information about the Iroquois.

<http://www.lacrosse.org/museum/history.htm>.

Native American History of Lacrosse: Thomas Vennum Jr. This site was used to expand the knowledge base for the game of lacrosse.

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<http://www.mpacmedia.com/lac/history.htm>

This site provides nation-specific information about the history and background of lacrosse.

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Carpenter, Robert. "Lacrosse: For Some It's more than a Game," *Rebirth of Tradition, Rebirth of Community*, Eagle Lodge.

This excellent publication expresses the cultural importance of Lacrosse for Indian use.

"The Iroquois of New York — Their Past and Present." *Conservationist*, January/February 1976.

This publication provides detailed information about the traditions and cultures of the Iroquois.

About the Author

Denise Engstrom was born in Niagara Falls, New York, in 1966 on the Tuscarora Reservation. She was adopted at the age of three and moved to Denver, where she was raised. Denise had the opportunity to seek out her family on the Tuscarora Reservation in 1991. She is a member of the Beaver Clan and is an enrolled member of the Tuscarora Nation.

Denise received her bachelor's degree in Human Rehabilitative Services from the University of Northern Colorado. She then completed her Master's degree in Early Childhood Education from The University of Colorado at Denver in 1992.

Denise has been working with preschool classrooms and children for eight years. Denise enjoys celebrating her cultural background through Fancy Shawl dancing, traditional beadwork and continued involvement with the Denver Indian Community.

About the Contributor

Elizabeth Kawenaa Montour was born in Kahnawake Mohawk Territory and raised spent her time on both settlements of Kahnawake and Doncaster. She is of the Bear clan and a Longhouse traditionalist. Elizabeth worked in Montreal doing administrative work and spent time volunteering with youth in Kahnawake in the area of sports.

She moved to Denver in 1994 and was Executive Secretary for the North American Indigenous Games Council from 1995 –1997. This lead to her interest in the cultural aspect of the Native American groups she had worked with and she joined the Native American Resource Group of the Denver Museum of Natural History in 1998.

She is presently working as Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Liaison in the Anthropology Department of the DMNH since July 1998.

Elizabeth also trained as a figure skater and holds a silver medal level in their testing standards.