



Iroquois Indian Museum

Caverns Road, Box 7
Howes Cave, NY 12092
t. (518) 296-8949
f. (518) 296-8955
e. info@iroquoismuseum.org
w. www.iroquoismuseum.org

Iroquois Indian Museum Resource and Curriculum Guide

Welcome to the Iroquois Indian Museum's Resource and Curriculum Guide, a guide designed to help educators better teach their students about the culture, history, and art of the people. It is meant to be used to prepare students for a field trip to the Museum. We welcome your suggestions about the Guide. The Museum's web site www.iroquoismuseum.org contains a section called the "Learning Longhouse." This section is filled with many pages containing activities and information for teachers and students to share. We encourage you to utilize the Learning Longhouse in conjunction with this Guide.

Haudenosaunee means the "People of the Longhouse." They are also known as the Iroquois. The Iroquois Confederacy is a United Nations made up of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora Nations. Haudenosaunee traditional territory extended from the Schoharie Creek through the Mohawk Valley to the Genesee River. There is some debate regarding when the Iroquois Confederacy was established. Historians and archeologists agree that it was in existence by 1630. The oral tradition of the Haudenosaunee state that the Confederacy was founded more than 1,000 years ago "on the last day that the green corn was ready". From this point on we will refer to the Iroquois has the Haudenosaunee.

The organization of the Guide follows along the content areas, which are of central focus at the Museum. These areas are 1) contemporary Haudenosaunee arts, culture, and society; 2) archaeology and Haudenosaunee history; 3) Haudenosaunee stories and oral traditions; and 4) Haudenosaunee views of nature. When you arrive at the Museum with your students, your group will receive an introduction to the Museum. During this introduction, we bring up the following points:

- Native Americans are human beings.
- The Haudenosaunee are still very much alive today.
- All human cultures and societies change through time.
- The Iroquois Museum celebrates the cultural survival of Haudenosaunee people.

About Anthropology: The Iroquois Museum is an Anthropology Museum. (Learning Longhouse; Additional Resources; Longhouses and Archeology)

The Iroquois Indian Museum is an anthropology museum dedicated to educating the public about Haudenosaunee art, culture, and history. Our central method involves the use of artworks made by Haudenosaunee people to stimulate thought and consideration of these subjects. When you teach your students about Native Americans, it is important to remember that most of the information you provide them has probably been gathered through anthropological research.

WHAT IS ANTHROPOLOGY?

Anthropology is, at the broadest level, the study of human beings. Anthropologists are people who are professionally trained in colleges and universities to address the question of what it really means to be a human being. In general, anthropologists address this question from a global and historical perspective, which takes into account all humans that have ever existed. Within this perspective anthropologists look for human universals: those traits and characteristics more or less found in all human societies. But they also are interested in human variation: the differences between different peoples and societies.

Language is a good example of both a human universal as well as human variation. The use of language is present in every single human society that has ever existed, so far as we know. But not everybody speaks the same language. At the moment you are reading this, there are hundreds of different languages being spoken just in North America, and thousands of languages being spoken around the world. There is enormous variation in human language, but the use of language is universal.

In North American anthropology today, there are typically five recognized sub-fields of anthropology: cultural anthropology, biological anthropology, linguistic anthropology, archaeology, and applied anthropology. Cultural anthropology focuses on the relationships between ideas and behaviors in human worlds. Biological anthropology focuses on the human body. Linguistic anthropology focuses on language and languages. Archaeology focuses on the study of material culture. At the Iroquois Museum, we specialize in cultural anthropology and archaeology.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE HAUDENOSAUNEE

The relationship between anthropology and Haudenosaunee culture is enduring and complicated. Some anthropologists, like Arthur Parker and J. N. B. Hewitt, are also Haudenosaunee Native Americans. Many other anthropologists of the Haudenosaunee are not Native.

1. Contemporary Iroquois Art, Culture, and Society (Learning Longhouse; Who are the Haudenosaunee? If you click on the each individual group it will give a map with additional information.)

How many Haudenosaunee people are there today?

Overall estimate of Haudenosaunee population in the year 2000: ca. 100,000.

Where do Haudenosaunee people live?

About half of the Haudenosaunee people live in special communities that are called Nation Territories, Indian Reservations, and /or Indian Reserves. These are places where most of the people and families that live there are Native American. Because of this, these communities are often the places where the Native culture is the strongest. Today there are seventeen such communities for the Haudenosaunee Nations.

In New York State, these communities include:

- Akwesasne Mohawk Nation Territory (a.k.a. St. Regis Indian Reservation); located on the border of New York State, Quebec, and Ontario.
- Ganienkeh Mohawk Territory; located near Altona, north of Plattsburgh, in Clinton County.
- Kanatsiohareke Mohawk Community; located on the north shore of the Mohawk river in Montgomery County, between Palatine Bridge and Fonda.
- Oneida Nation Territory (a.k.a. Oneida Indian Reservation); located in Madison County, off Route 46.
- Onondaga Nation Territory (a.k.a. Onondaga Indian Reservation); located just south of Syracuse, on Rt. 11A, in Onondaga County.
- Tonawanda Band of Senecas Indian Reservation; located near Akron, in Genesee County southeast of Lockport.
- Allegany Indian Reservation (Seneca Nation Territory); located in Cattaraugus County, between Jamestown and Olean.
- Cattaraugus Indian Reservation (Seneca Nation Territory); also located in Cattaraugus County, southwest of Buffalo.
- Tuscarora Indian Reservation; located near Lewiston, north of Niagara Falls, in Niagara County.

In Wisconsin, there is another Oneida Indian Reservation, near the city of Green Bay, which belongs to Oneida peoples whose families moved here from Oneida homelands in central New York State.

In Oklahoma, there is an Indian Reservation which belongs to Seneca and Cayuga peoples whose families moved here from homelands in western New York.

Many Iroquois people live in Canada. Six communities are located there, on lands set aside as Indian Reserves (a.k.a. Nation Territories).

- Kahnawake Mohawk Nation Territory (a.k.a. Kahnawake Indian Reserve): located across the St. Lawrence River from Montreal, just south of Montreal.
- Kaneshatake Mohawk Nation Territory (a.k.a. Kanesatake Indian Reserve): located in the municipality of Oka, on the Lake of Two Mountains, just northwest of Montreal.

- Tyendinaga Mohawk Nation Territory (a.k.a. Tyendinaga Indian Reserve): located on the north shore of Lake Ontario at the Bay of Quinte.
- The Six Nations Reserve; located in southern Ontario along the Grand River, adjacent to the city of Brantford.
- Oneida Settlement (a.k.a., Thames Band of Oneida Indians); Located in southern Ontario, just southwest of London.
- Wahta Mohawk Nation Territory (a.k.a. Gibson Indian Reserve): southeast end of Georgian Bay, near Bala, Ontario.

WHERE THE OTHER HALF LIVES

Not all Haudenosaunee people live on an Indian Reservation or Reserve. Actually, only about half of them do. The other half lives mainly in cities, including New York, Rochester, Syracuse, Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, as well as Santa Fe (NM), and San Francisco (CA). While some of these urban Natives maintain strong ties to one or more of the Haudenosaunee communities, many others do not. In some cases, Native American children may grow up with little or no knowledge about Native culture and heritage.

Topics for Discussion/Study:

1. Have students locate each of the seventeen communities on a map. (Map sent with guide materials).
2. Divide students into small groups, and assign a community to each group. Have groups do research to find out about when the community officially formed, and what were the circumstances surrounding its formation? Find out the size of each community, and compare with your community. (Learning Longhouse; Who are the Haudenosaunee; Clans)
3. Discuss the special case of Akwesasne, which is part in Canada and part in New York State. What kinds of special problems might you face if an international boundary divided your community? (Learning Longhouse; Additional Resources; Community Resources; Mohawk Council Akwesasne Official Website; History and Resources).
4. Discuss the concept of sovereignty. What is it? Why does it matter? What does it mean when an Haudenosaunee person says that her Nation Territory is sovereign? (Learning Longhouse; Who are the Haudenosaunee; Iroquois Confederacy).
5. Discuss “what is in a name.” Why do so many of these communities have more than one name? Discuss the different names we use to refer to the indigenous peoples of the western hemisphere, such as Indians, Native Americans, First Nations, Indigenous Peoples, etc. Make a list of what is good about these names, and what is bad. Or else focus on the use of Native names and imagery as mascots for sports teams. Why might those names be a problem? Why don’t other ethnic nationalities get treated the same way? Why not the New York Caucasians, or the Los Angeles Asians, etc. Be creative. There is one other ethnic group that has received similar treatment in sports. Can you think of which group that is and why? (Learning Longhouse; Sensitive Issues; Celebrate Diversity, Strengthen Community).

6. List all of the multiple roles and identities that students and teachers enact in the course of their lives. Use this list to discuss multiple identities that Native people enact as well. (Template of “I Am Poem” included in guide material).

ART (Learning Longhouse; Material Culture)

At the Iroquois Indian Museum, we use art as a window onto culture. What does that really mean? Art, in the sense of visual material expression in any media, is something found in every known human society that has ever existed. But like language, the practice of art demonstrates enormous variation. Visual art is in some ways much more accessible than verbal and written language. Most of the visitors to the Iroquois Museum are non-Native peoples, with little or no experience of Native cultures. By looking at the artworks made by Iroquois people, they begin to gain a new appreciation and better understanding of Iroquois peoples. There are many, many different definitions of art. We use the broader definition, but recognize that the discussion of the more particular definitions has educational merit.

CULTURE (Learning Longhouse; Material Culture)

Like art, culture is a term with many different definitions. In our usage, the term culture is used to refer to ideas and behaviors that involve symbols, which are shared and learned. It may be useful to imagine culture as a kind of giant ongoing conversation, in which many different people participate, and in which many ideas and practices emerge and are transformed over time.

CULTURAL SURVIVAL

Cultural survival is a term often used in reference to particular groups of indigenous peoples throughout the world who have been colonized and/or dispossessed, but who have managed to maintain some control over their destiny. The Iroquois are often cited as practitioners of cultural survival. Yet it is important to realize that cultural survival is not just practiced by Native Americans, but by indigenous peoples on every continent except Antarctica. It is a global practice.

2. Archeology and Haudenosaunee history

Archaeology is the study of human material culture. An artifact is any object, which has been modified (however slightly) by human hands. For the most part, archaeologists study artifacts, from which they learn about culture. Often, but not always, archaeologists are engaged in the study of human culture from the past. From the careful study of what people left behind, archaeologists are able to produce interpretations of human history for which there are no written records. Archaeology can be usefully compared to detective work. The detective arrives at the scene of a crime and looks for evidence. An archaeologist arrives at an archaeological site, and also looks for evidence. Perhaps the biggest difference between detective work and archaeology is that detectives usually arrive shortly after the event occurred, whereas an archaeologist may be arriving on the scene thousands of years after the event occurred.

Here in New York State, there has been an extensive amount of systematic archaeology carried out, especially during the twentieth century. This has produced a relatively detailed picture of human history in this land over the last ten thousand years. Certainly the leading figure in New York State archaeology in the twentieth century was Dr. William A. Ritchie, who worked as an archaeologist for many years at both the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences and then the New York State Museum. It was Ritchie who created a chronology for human history in the area. The basis for his chronology comes from the material evidence recovered from numerous archaeological sites in New York and the surrounding regions, many of which he excavated. What made the chronology possible was the development of the Carbon-14 dating method, discovered by Willard F. Libby in 1950. C-14 dating allowed archaeologists to confirm dates of archaeological materials. Ritchie divided the last 10,000 years into four major periods or stages. Within each of these periods he distinguished sub-periods, referred to variously as phases traditions, cultures.

Here is Ritchie's chronology for NYS:

Paleo-Indian Period (about 8000 B.C.- 4,500 B. C.)

Archaic Period (about 4,500 B.C. to 1,300 B.C.)

- The Lamoka Phase
- The Laurentian Tradition
- The Frontenac Phase
- The River Phase
- The Glacial Kame Culture
- The Snook Kill Phase

The Transitional Period (about 1,300 B.C. to 1,000 B.C.)

- The Frost Island Phase
- The Orient Phase

The Woodland Period (about 1,000 B.C. to A.D. 1600)

- The Meadowood Phase
- The Middlesex Phase
- The Early Point Peninsula Culture

The Squawkie Hill Phase
The Middle and Late Point Peninsula Cultures
The Kipp Island Phase
The Hunter's Home Phase
The Sebonic Phase of the Windsor Tradition
The Bowman's Brook Phase of the East River Tradition
The Clawsons Point Phase of the East River Tradition
The Owasco Culture
The Iroquois Culture

The Post-Contact Period (from about 1535 to present)

Each of these periods and sub-periods are characterized by different styles and assemblages of artifacts, as well as settlement patterns and other information. The periods thus represent social change.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION & STUDY

1. Why do archaeologists usually dig square holes?
2. What is a midden, and why do archaeologists like to find them?
3. How do you know the past? What sorts of evidence do we have for knowing the past? List the different types (hint- artifacts, documents, oral traditions). Discuss how each type of evidence may or may not provide accurate information.
4. How are archaeological sites produced? Go through all the steps, including initial deposition of artifact, to its burial by nature under strata of earth.
5. Use groupings of artifacts, which could be placed in a box or other receptacle. Ask the students if these artifacts were found somewhere on the ground how could they be dated. Discuss means of determining the age of artifacts and why these techniques would be most reasonable and why other techniques would be inadequate.
6. Have students study each of these periods and report on five main features for each one.

3. Iroquois Stories and Oral Traditions (Learning Longhouse; Who are the Haudenosaunee; Oral Tradition)

Oral traditions are spoken words that have been passed down through one or more generations. These spoken words might be in the form of epics, myths, legends, ceremonial speeches, or actual historic accounts. Oral traditions are dynamic, and they change in subtle and not-so-subtle ways, depending on circumstances. Haudenosaunee oral traditions are relatively rich, mainly because the Haudenosaunee have maintained some degree of control over their destinies after coming under the colonial domination of the Europeans, and then later the USA and Canada. Probably lots of stories have been lost. Unlike written traditions, the repository for an oral tradition is not a book that has been safely tucked away somewhere, and rediscovered hundreds of years later. Oral traditions reside in the minds of people. The direction of oral traditions flows from the older to the younger. If the older people die before transmitting an oral tradition, that tradition will die with them. No one knows how often this actually happened, but we do know that death from disease and warfare was very common in Haudenosaunee and other Native communities after coming into contact with Europeans.

There are three big (known) epics in Haudenosaunee oral traditions, and hundreds of legends and stories, as well as historic accounts. The three epics are The Creation; The Coming of the Great Law and Founding of the Iroquois Confederacy; and The Revelation of Handsome Lake. The Creation concerns the creation of the earth, which was performed by a woman, with the help of a number of animals. The Coming of the Great Law concerns the origination of the Iroquois Confederacy and the establishment of the Great Law of Peace. The Revelation of Handsome Lake concerns the revitalization of traditional Iroquois religion that took place in the first two decades of the 1800s, and which became the basis for today's Longhouse religion. All three of these epics are featured in exhibits at the Iroquois Museum.

Today, storytelling has spilled over from strictly oral tradition into visual arts. Many of the artworks at the Museum express these and other stories.

Topics for Discussion/Study

1. All cultures have oral traditions. Have students discuss or report on oral traditions in their family, whether small or large. (See handout in Guide Packet)
2. How is an oral tradition like the game of Telephone (a.k.a. Buzz)? How is it different? (see handout in Guide Packet)
3. Compare and contrast the Iroquois Creation Story with other stories of Creation, such as Biblical Genesis, or the Hindu account of Creation, or other creation stories from Africa, Asia, and the Americas. How might the differences in these various Creation stories reflect the different values of the societies that tell them? (Learning Longhouse; Who Are the Haudenosaunee; Iroquois Beliefs, Kay Olan)
4. Have students create an artwork that tells a story, and have students perform them.

4. Haudenosaunee Views of Nature

The Iroquois Indian Museum includes a 45-acre outdoor Nature Park with trails. We use the Nature Park to explore Haudenosaunee ideas about Nature, and the place of human beings within the natural world. This exploration of the Haudenosaunee view of Nature continues inside the Museum, as many artists address these relationships in their artworks. Animating the Haudenosaunee view of nature are two inter-related themes: kinship and reciprocity. Kinship speaks to the notion of relatedness. In Haudenosaunee culture, family names like grandmother, grandfather, brother, etc., are extended not just to other people, but also to non-human elements like the Sun and the Moon. In addition, the names of the extended families in Iroquois culture are borrowed from the animal world. Kinship is very important in Haudenosaunee culture. It was 400 years ago. It still is today. There are many different levels of kinship. In its broadest conception, our relations include all living creatures, as well as beings you might not consider to be alive, such as stars and planets. Reciprocity is reflected in the Haudenosaunee notion that in this world, every living thing has a job to do, without which, life comes to a halt. The Maple tree's job is to ignite the Spring with its sap. The strawberries start the summer with their fruit. The human's job is to communicate words of thanks to the Creator up in the sky.

Topics for Discussion/Study(Learning Longhouse; Who are the Haudenosaunee; Clans)

1. Discuss the Haudenosaunee emphasis on relatedness. Does the scientific knowledge of DNA support or refute the Haudenosaunee emphasis?
2. Discuss reciprocity. Do students practice reciprocity in their lives? If so, in what way? If not, why not?

5. Stereotypes (Learning Longhouse; Sensitive Issues, Stereotypes in Speech)

Native Americans (including the Haudenosaunee) have been subjected to stereotyping more than any other ethnic or national group. These stereotypes not only dehumanize Native peoples. They also dehumanize the people who create them. The Iroquois Museum collects objects that depict stereotypes of Native peoples, for the purposes of documenting this widespread practice. If you have made good use of this kit and all it contains, by this point your students will have already realized that Native peoples are in fact as human as they are. But if not, if you need a conceptual sledgehammer, consider the following top 10 list as a point of departure for further discussion:

Exercise: Talk about the top-ten list below. Why is it funny? Or, if it does not seem funny, why not?

TOP 10 THINGS YOU CAN SAY TO A WHITE PERSON UPON FIRST MEETING:

10. How much white are you?
9. I'm part white myself, you know.
8. I learned all your people's ways in the Boy Scouts (Order of the Bullet)
7. My great-great-grandmother was a full-blooded white-American princess.
6. Funny, you don't look white.
5. Where's your powdered wig and knickers?
4. Do you live in a covered wagon?
3. What's the meaning behind the square dance?
2. What's your feeling about river-boat casinos? Do they really help your people, or are they just a short-term fix?
1. Oh wow, I really love your hair! Can I touch it?

Top 10 list contributed by Andre Cramblit, Operations Director-Northern California Indian Development Council.