

Who Were The First Inhabitants of America?

Native Americans were the people who lived on the North American continent thousands of years before European settlers started their voyages to the new world. Most scientists agree that the Native Americans traveled to this land from Asia through the Bering Strait in Alaska. Some scholars will argue that it could have been as far back as 25,000 years ago!

Some Native Americans alive today believe that these ancestors were always here on the North American continent and that they did not come from another continent. They offer stories that have been passed down through generations in their families to support their theory.

However they got here, these first Americans had a lot of work to do to survive. They had to adapt to a changing climate as well as new environments and land. They began as hunters of large animals, which became extinct and then they moved to smaller game. Many of them gradually became farmers and artisans. They really knew how to use their natural resources.

In the Northeast, for example, the Native Americans used the forests to get wood to build houses and tools. The Native Americans in the Pacific Northwest hunted the water for food. In the desert, the Native Americans grew corn and built adobe dwellings. There were many different ways of life. However, the ties to the land remained a common thread among all the groups.

In the 15th century, European settlers and explorers began to arrive. For many years, Native Americans were called Indians because European explorers thought they had reached Asia, or "the Indies." Some Native American groups coexisted with these new settlers while others fought and lost land. Besides the physical loss of land, though, disease was by far the biggest threat to the Native Americans. These diseases spread quickly and utterly destroyed huge portions of the Native American population. In the 2000 census, only 2.48 million people identified themselves as American Indian.

1. Explain how scientists believe the first Americans arrived on the North American continent. _____

2. Where did the name "Indians" come from in reference to Native Americans? _____

3. Explain why the land was important to these first inhabitants of the continent. _____

Who Were the First Americans?

<p>1. Explain how scientists believe the first Americans arrived on the North American continent.</p> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>2. What does the word migration mean?</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>3. How did the climate change after the Ice Age ended?</p> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>4. Where did the name Indians come from in reference to Native Americans?</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>5. What was ultimately the biggest threat the Native Americans experienced due to the European explorers?</p> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>6. Name three of the cultural areas scientists refer to when discussing Native Americans.</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>7. What do you think it was like to cross the Bering Strait? Do you think you would have risked everything and crossed into this new land or would you have stayed put? Explain your answer.</p> <hr/> <hr/>	



Iroquois - The Six Nations

By Mary Lynn Bushong

¹ When you think of the Native Americans of the East, what comes to mind? Do you think of longhouses and wigwams, hunters with bows and arrows, or blood-curdling war cries? If you lived among the Iroquois, you would know that politics was one of the most important parts of their culture. Surprised? Many people are.

² For their daily lives, Iroquois were like other natives. They hunted their meat and grew several kinds of corn for food. Hides were saved from their kills to make clothing, while bones became tools.

³ The Iroquois lived in longhouses rather than wigwams. The name Iroquois was given to them, and it stuck. The name they called themselves was Haudenosaunee. It meant "people building a longhouse."

⁴ You should remember that when the New World was being settled by Europeans, the Iroquois were major players and power brokers. They were not a simple people as some would like to portray natives. The men had a reputation for being great warriors, and even more important was their reputation for being even greater diplomats.

⁵ Many of those coming to the Americas wanted to set up feudal systems just like the system they were used to back home. The Iroquois, by contrast, were already using a democratic system of government. It is thought that many elements of their constitution were used in the development of the U.S. Constitution.

⁶ The Iroquois were not a single nation but a confederation of six nations: Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk, and Tuscarora. By banding together they could ensure peace in their region. The peace allowed their people to not only grow in population but to enjoy the stability of a strong government.

⁷ The Iroquois Confederation was ruled by a Grand Council who used the "Great Law" which

was their founding constitution. Contrary to European society, women held an important role in the Grand Council. Each clan had a "Clan Mother." This Clan Mother led the clan and selected the male chief. The Clan Mothers could also remove any chief from office who did not act responsibly.

⁸ The reasoning for using Clan Mothers was simple. Men might hunger for conflict from time to time, but mothers knew the value of life and would encourage the men to seek peaceful solutions to problems. Peace was possible because those nations around them knew their strength as warriors.

⁹ This reputation also attracted the English and French to seek them out as allies. They were not concerned so much with what the Europeans were trying to accomplish. They were most concerned with keeping their own lands and way of life. The Iroquois were a strong people that did what they had to do to defend their land and culture.

¹⁰ The Iroquois today are still a sovereign nation. They were never a conquered people. They are able to make treaties with other governments and maintain their independence, although their territory is now split between Canada and the United States.

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Iroquois - The Six Nations

<p>1. The Iroquois name "Haudenosaunee" meant:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A People who make war</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B People who work together</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C People who hunt together</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D People who build longhouses</p>	<p>2. What type of government did the Iroquois use?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>3. How was it different from the one the colonists had?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>4. What did the colonists learn from the Iroquois?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Diplomacy</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Democracy</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Peaceful negotiation</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D How to fight</p>
<p>5. What skills of the Iroquois did the Europeans seek to use?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>6. List three of the six nations in the Iroquois Confederacy.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>7. How did women influence the Iroquois</p>	<p>8. How did the fate of the Iroquois differ from</p>

government? _____	most other Native American nations? _____
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The Iroquois

By Jennifer Kenny

¹ The Iroquois people lived in the northeast. When they talked about themselves, they named their tribe such as Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, or Seneca, or they called themselves the people of the longhouse. They believed they were part of a huge longhouse of people with the Mohawk tribe guarding the eastern door near the Mohawk River and the Seneca guarding the western door near Lake Erie.

² Each town of Iroquois had a longhouse where the people lived. It was a building with a roof that could hold 12 or more families. It had doors at both ends. There was a smoke-hole in the roof because a fire was made inside the longhouse. Each family had its own section, but there was a part in the middle of the longhouse where everyone could meet.

³ Iroquois tribes organized into clans. A clan was a family with a common ancestor, or a person who lived in the family a long time ago. Each clan had a clan mother in charge. She was an older woman. She owned the crops and the houses. She held a lot of power. The Iroquois also had chiefs.

⁴ The Iroquois fished. They also hunted deer, rabbits, squirrels, and beavers. Most of all, they farmed. They called three of their crops – corn (or maize), beans, and squash – the Three Sisters! Later on, they grew apples and peaches, too.

⁵ The Iroquois used small beads called wampum to decorate tools and weapons. They also used them to keep records. Wampum were part of jewelry, too. Sometimes a certain color of wampum would tell another tribe about war and peace.

⁶ The Iroquois made clothes out of deerskin. They wore shirts, leggings, dresses, skirts, and

moccasins!

⁷ The Iroquois believed Orenda was the Great Spirit and the Creator. All spirits came from him. Medicine men called shamans wore False Faces, or wooden masks, to scare away spirits that they thought made someone sick.

⁸ Today, many Iroquois live on reservations, or land the government set aside for them to use, in New York and Toronto. They still hold Grand Council meetings to make decisions and celebrate who they are!

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The Iroquois

1. What part of the country did the Iroquois live in? _____ _____	2. The Iroquois people lived in homes called _____. _____ _____
3. A _____ was a family with a common ancestor. _____ _____	4. The Three Sisters were corn, beans, and _____. _____ _____
5. The Iroquois used small beads called _____ to keep records. _____ _____	6. The Iroquois made clothes out of _____. _____ _____

Native Americans of the Northeast Cultural Area

By Jennifer Kenny



¹ The Eastern Woodlands area is the eastern part of the United States, which runs from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. It includes the Great Lakes. Most scientists divide the region into the Northeast and the Southeast. The Northeast portion of the region runs from Canada to Kentucky and Virginia. It has a temperate climate. It is somewhat humid. There are widespread forests and hundreds of rivers. Much of the soil is adequate for agriculture.

² Approximately 10,000 years ago, ancient hunter-gatherers followed game animals into the region. Around 9,000 years ago, the climate warmed and these Native Americans became dependent on deer, nuts, and wild grains. Then, 5,000 years ago, they began cultivating plants. By the year 400 AD, maize agriculture was common. Women tended to plots of corn (or maize), squash, and beans. To the Iroquois in this area, those were the three most important crops. They planted them on small earthen hills. The Iroquois called these crops "The Three Sisters."

³ The Algonquians introduced the Pilgrims to these crops. Squanto shared the traditional Native American harvesting festival with the English. The Pilgrims had the first Thanksgiving with members of the Wampanoag.

⁴ Food was plentiful. Besides farming, people here hunted animals such as rabbits, deer, squirrels, beavers, turkeys, partridges, ducks, and geese. Far in the north, they hunted moose, elk, and bears too. In areas closer to the prairie, they sometimes found buffalo as well. The Northeast Indians also used traps and deadfalls, traps that made heavy things fall on prey to hunt or kill them. They were able to fish with hooks, spears, or nets in the numerous rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds. The Indians near Nova Scotia liked to fish at night using torches. Fish came to the surface because the light attracted them. Then the men in the canoes speared the fish. They gathered wild plant foods such as berries too. Where there were maple trees, the Native Americans had maple syrup and sugar, as well to enjoy. Food in the Northeast was cooked in wooden vessels or simple black pottery.

⁵ There were two main groups in this area – the Algonquian speaking group and the Iroquoian speaking group. Tribes from either group were organized into clans. Clans were clusters of related families who claimed a common ancestor. A clan would take an animal name such as Deer Clan. In the Iroquois society, descent, or family ancestry, and property passed through the female line (matrilineal). A clan mother, an elder woman with much power, headed each clan. The Algonquian society, though, was a patrilineal society. Chiefs or leaders of the woodland tribes were called sachems.

⁶ The Iroquois men owned their clothing, personal possessions, and weapons. The women owned everything else. They were responsible for growing crops, managing stored food, and supervising men during harvest. If the women wanted to discourage a war, they would refuse to give the men their moccasins and food. The girls liked to help with their mother's chores and to chase animals from fields. The boys liked to try to hunt so they could become men.

⁷ The Iroquois lived in longhouses. A longhouse was a communal dwelling, which could hold twelve or more families. There were doors at both ends and it had pointed or round roofs with smoke holes. It was made from post-and-beam and bent sapling frames. It was covered with elm bark. The Iroquois slept on raised platforms in the longhouse.

⁸ The Algonquians enjoyed wigwams instead. Wigwams were domed or cone-shaped dwellings. They were made of pole frames covered in bark, reed mats, or animal hides. They were built over a shallow pit with earth piled around the base. Fires were in the center for heat and light. The Native Americans in this area made clearings in the woods near water. Sometimes they surrounded them with palisades (tall walls made from sharpened logs stuck upright in the earth) for defense.

⁹ Birch bark canoes were used in the Northeast. They were used for transporting people and provisions. They were elegant-looking boats, but they were light and strong as well.

¹⁰ Deerskin material was the choice for clothes. Shirts, leggings, dresses, skirts, and moccasins were made from softened hide. Robes and mittens were made from beaver and bear fur. The Native Americans in this area decorated clothes with feathers, shells, stones, paint, and porcupine quill embroidery. The Indians from this area often painted their faces and men's bodies.

¹¹ The Northeast Indians believed in a spirit world that interacted with the physical world. They believed the Great Spirit was present in all things. The Algonquians called the Great Spirit *Kitche Manitou*. The Iroquois called the Great Spirit *Orenda*.

¹² Throughout the Northeast, wampum were used. Wampum are small beads made from shells or the strings, belts, or sashes made from these beads. The Native Americans placed high value on the wampum. They were used to decorate tools, weapons, and jewelry. They kept tribal records by arranging wampum in pictographs. They also communicated peace or war to other tribes by using them. White stood for peace; black stood for gloomy matters.

¹³ To reduce conflict and maintain unity against enemies, the Northeast tribes organized into confederacies. The Algonquian alliances included the Powhatan Confederacy and the Delaware Confederacy. The Iroquois Confederacy was called the League of Five Nations. It was founded by the late 1500's and included the Mohawk, the Oneida, the Onondaga, the Cayuga, and the Seneca. The famous story of Hiawatha explains the formation of the League.

¹⁴ In the 1600's, the Native Americans traded goods with the Europeans. On the positive side, they were introduced to iron tools and pots, bright clothes, and firearms. On the negative side, diseases and warfare became all too common.

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Native Americans of the Northeast Cultural Area

<p>1. Approximately 10,000 years ago, ancient _____ followed game animals into the Eastern Woodlands.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>2. The Three Sisters, as the Iroquois called them, were _____, _____, and _____.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>3. There were two main groups in the Northeastern cultural area called _____ and _____.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>4. _____ were clusters of related families who claimed a common ancestor.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>5. The Iroquois Indians lived in _____.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>6. The Algonquians lived in _____.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>7. Birch bark _____ were used in the Northeast for transporting people and provisions.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	



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Who Was Sacagawea?

By Cindy Grigg

¹ Sacagawea (sah-KA-gah-WEE-ah) was an Indian girl. Her name means Bird Woman in English. She lived a long time ago. She is on the U.S. dollar gold coin. She is part of our history.

² In 1803, the U.S. bought land from France. This piece of land was very big. Thomas Jefferson was president then. He wanted men to explore this new land. He chose Lewis and Clark. They took about forty other men with them. They set off to explore the West. They needed to see if the Indians were friendly. They needed to find the best way to travel there. They hoped to find a river that could take them to the Pacific.



³ The journey was long. It took two years. It covered eight thousand miles. It was hard, too. They were out in all kinds of weather. They traveled in boats along the rivers. Sometimes they had to walk. To cross the mountains, they needed horses.

⁴ In the fall of 1804, Lewis and Clark came to a large Indian village. Winter was coming. They needed a place to stay. The Indians there were friendly to the white men. They let them spend the winter. It was where the state of North Dakota is today.

⁵ Sacagawea was born about 1788. Her tribe was called the Shoshones (shuh-SHOW-knees). They lived near the Rocky Mountains. They lived where the state of Idaho is today. Her tribe had horses. They used them to hunt buffalo. They did not grow their own food. The tribe moved around to follow the buffalo herds. Other Indians wanted their horses. They often stole them! Sometimes they stole children, too.

⁶ This happened to Sacagawea. She was kidnapped. She was about eleven years old. Another Indian tribe took her. They took other girls from her village. Some people of her tribe were killed. They took Sacagawea to their home far to the east.

⁷ Sacagawea had to work hard there. She was a slave. She helped the other girls. Her life here was unlike her life before. These Indians, the Hidatsa, grew corn. They grew beans. They grew squash. They had no horses. She missed her home and family.

⁸ Lewis and Clark met her in the winter of 1804. She was about sixteen years old. She was married. Her husband was a French fur trapper. He could speak French. He could speak some Indian languages. Sacagawea could speak others.

⁹ Lewis and Clark hired Sacagawea's husband to go with them. Sacagawea would go, too. They could talk to the Indians. They would be **translators**. They could understand what the Indians were saying. Then they could tell Lewis and Clark what was said. Sacagawea had a little baby boy. He was only two months old. He would go, too. Lewis and Clark called the baby "Pomp."

¹⁰ In April 1805, they left North Dakota. Sacagawea carried her baby on her back. She helped

find food for the group. She knew what kinds of plants to eat. She knew how to find berries and roots to eat. She knew what plants were medicine. She found wood for the camp fires.

¹¹ Once, a boat turned over. Sacagawea knew what to do. She stayed calm. She picked up the papers and supplies from the water. She saved things that would have been lost. She had to save Pomp, too. Lewis and Clark were grateful. They named a river after her.

¹² At the Rocky Mountains, they needed horses. They met some Indians. Sacagawea could help. She could speak this language. She remembered some of the places because she lived there. She got a surprise. One of the Indians was Sacagawea's brother. She had not seen him since she was kidnapped. Now he was a chief. She knew many of the other Indians, too. She was happy to be home again.

¹³ Her brother said he would help. He traded horses to the white men. The group moved on. Finally, in November 1805, they came to the Pacific Ocean. They spent the winter there. Pomp was learning to walk. Clark called him "my little dancing boy." In the spring, they started the trip back.

¹⁴ Again, they crossed the mountains on horses. In canoes, they paddled down rivers. They walked. On August 14, 1806, the group came to the Indian village in North Dakota. Sacagawea and her family stayed there. The group went back to St. Louis. Their trip opened the way to settlers heading west.

¹⁵ Most of what we know about Sacagawea came from Lewis and Clark's journals. They wrote about the trip. They wrote about what she did to help. Today there are many rivers, lakes, parks, and statues named in her honor. She is on the U.S. dollar gold coin. She is part of history.

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Who Was Sacagawea?

1. When did the U.S. buy land from France? <input type="radio"/> A 1806 <input type="radio"/> B 1803 <input type="radio"/> C 1804 <input type="radio"/> D 1805	2. Who was president of the United States then? <input type="radio"/> A George Washington <input type="radio"/> B Thomas Jefferson <input type="radio"/> C George Bush <input type="radio"/> D Andrew Jackson
3. What was the purpose of the journey of Lewis and Clark? <input type="radio"/> A To see if the Indians were friendly <input type="radio"/> B To find a river route to the Pacific <input type="radio"/> C To explore the land <input type="radio"/> D All of the above	4. When was Sacagawea born? <input type="radio"/> A 1700 <input type="radio"/> B 1806 <input type="radio"/> C 1788 <input type="radio"/> D 1906
5. About how old was Sacagawea when she	6. About how old was Sacagawea when she

<p>was kidnapped by another Indian tribe?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Twenty-five</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Eleven</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Fifteen</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Sixteen</p>	<p>began the trip with Lewis and Clark?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Twenty-five</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Thirty-five</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Sixteen</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Eleven</p>
<p>7. About how old was Pomp, the baby, when the trip began?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Three years</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B One year</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Two years</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Two months</p>	<p>8. Lewis and Clark hired Sacagawea's husband to be a _____.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Cook</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Canoe paddler</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Translator</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Guide</p>
<p>9. What did Captain Clark call the baby?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>10. How long did Lewis and Clark's trip last?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Two years</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B One year</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Four years</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Five years</p>

Pocahontas and John Smith

By Sharon Fabian



Error!



¹ You know what happens when you play "gossip." Each time another person tells the story, it changes a little. After many people have repeated the story, sometimes it is nothing like the original. The same thing happens with history. At one time history was passed on by word of mouth; now it is usually passed on in written form. Either way, it is likely to change a little each time it is told. That's why there is more than a little "story" in "history."

² The story of John Smith and Pocahontas is a good example. Maybe you've seen the Disney movie, or read about the explorer John Smith and the Indian princess Pocahontas who saved Smith and the other colonists at Jamestown. Maybe you've noticed that each time the story is a little different, or wondered which facts are true.

³ When facts appear in several different sources, such as articles written by different people, that is a clue that they might be true. You can also look to see where the facts come from. For example if the article is in an encyclopedia you might suspect that it is true, although even encyclopedias don't always get every fact right. If the article is by an unknown source, such as some web sites, you might want to verify their facts by checking a few other places.

⁴ There are written records about John Smith and Pocahontas that go all the way back to John Smith himself. Even so, some people think that all the facts may not be accurate. Maybe John Smith was just being creative, or bragging a little, when he told the story of a beautiful Indian princess who saved his life.

⁵ We know that John Smith was an English explorer, and that King James I sent him with a group of people to begin a settlement in Virginia. He was one of the leaders of the colony established at Jamestown, Virginia in 1607. We know that Pocahontas was the daughter of the Algonquian Indian Chief Powhatan. There is lots of evidence that she was very helpful to the English colonists at Jamestown and probably helped save their lives more than once. She also traveled to England and became a link between the Indian people of North America and the British people of Europe.

⁶ As the story goes, John Smith arrived in Virginia and was at first welcomed by the Indians there. Later he was captured by Indians who were either about to really kill him, or maybe performing some kind of initiation ceremony. Pocahontas, about 12 years old at the time, rushed in and saved his life, just in the nick of time. This is the part of the story that some people think really happened, and some people think is just not true.

⁷ Pocahontas continued to visit the Jamestown settlers, and with her knowledge of American foods and medicines, was certainly a welcome visitor. She is credited with saving many lives. Some people think that, without Pocahontas, Jamestown might have become just another "lost colony" that would have soon disappeared.

⁸ In 1614, Pocahontas married the Englishman John Rolfe. This was a move designed to keep peace between the English and the Indians, so once again Pocahontas may have been responsible for saving the English settlers from harm.

⁹ In 1616, Pocahontas was taken to England on a sailing ship. Her visit was well publicized all over London, and she met with King James there, establishing a link between the Indians and the people of England.

¹⁰ Even if the story has been exaggerated a little, it seems certain that Pocahontas, the Algonquian Indian girl, is someone that John Smith and the settlers of Jamestown would want us to remember.

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Pocahontas and John Smith

1. John Smith was an explorer from _____. Error! <input type="radio"/> A Spain Error! <input type="radio"/> B England Error! <input type="radio"/> C Belgium Error! <input type="radio"/> D France	2. John Smith was sent to America by _____. Error! <input type="radio"/> A Powhatan Error! <input type="radio"/> B King James I Error! <input type="radio"/> C Christopher Columbus Error! <input type="radio"/> D Pocahontas
3. Pocahontas was _____. Error! <input type="radio"/> A An Algonquian chief Error! <input type="radio"/> B A European explorer Error! <input type="radio"/> C An Indian princess Error! <input type="radio"/> D Only a Disney Character	4. Powhatan was _____. Error! <input type="radio"/> A An Indian tribe Error! <input type="radio"/> B An Indian princess Error! <input type="radio"/> C An Indian chief Error! <input type="radio"/> D An English colony
5. Written records show that Pocahontas was _____. Error! <input type="radio"/> A Helpful to the colonists Error! <input type="radio"/> B Not a good person Error! <input type="radio"/> C Fiction Error! <input type="radio"/> D Not really an Indian	6. The story of Pocahontas saving John Smith takes place _____. Error! <input type="radio"/> A In England Error! <input type="radio"/> B In Virginia Error! <input type="radio"/> C In Florida Error! <input type="radio"/> D On board a ship
7. Pocahontas married _____. Error! <input type="radio"/> A John Smith Error! <input type="radio"/> B John Rolfe Error! <input type="radio"/> C Powhatan Error! <input type="radio"/> D She didn't marry anyone	8. John Smith was an _____ who was lucky he met Pocahontas. Error! <input type="radio"/> A Explorer Error! <input type="radio"/> B Educator Error! <input type="radio"/> C English king Error! <input type="radio"/> D Indian chief

