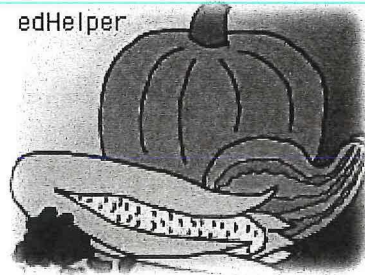


The Iroquois

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!