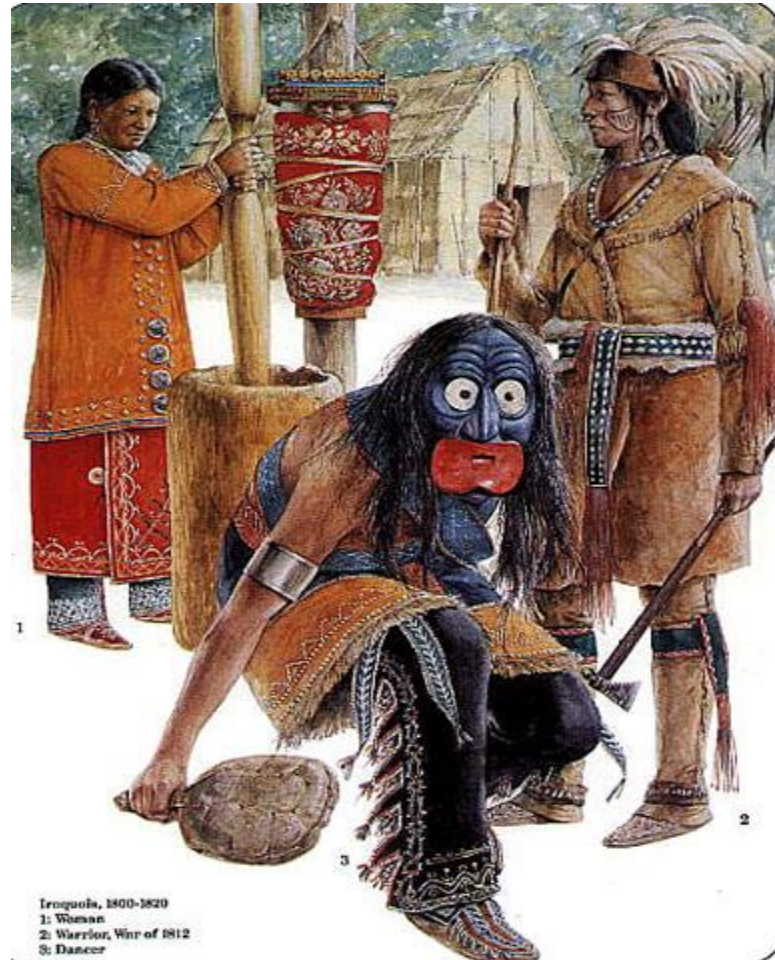


The Iroquois

- The **Iroquois** were perhaps the most advanced Canadian based tribe
- This was largely because they lived partly off the avails of farming
- Hence they were **Settled** as opposed to **Nomadic**
- Being settled allowed them the time to become more advanced



Uncivilized Nomads



- Indeed, nomadic peoples tend to be more primitive
- Nomadic peoples spend almost all of their time hunting and gathering and hence surviving
- Because of this they are generally **not considered to be civilizations**
- They never stayed long enough in one place to build cities or organize governments

Farming: A great leap towards creating a civilization

- The ability to **farm** is that great leap forward towards civilization
- Farming frees people from spending all their time searching for food
- As improvements in farming occur, fewer people are needed to produce food



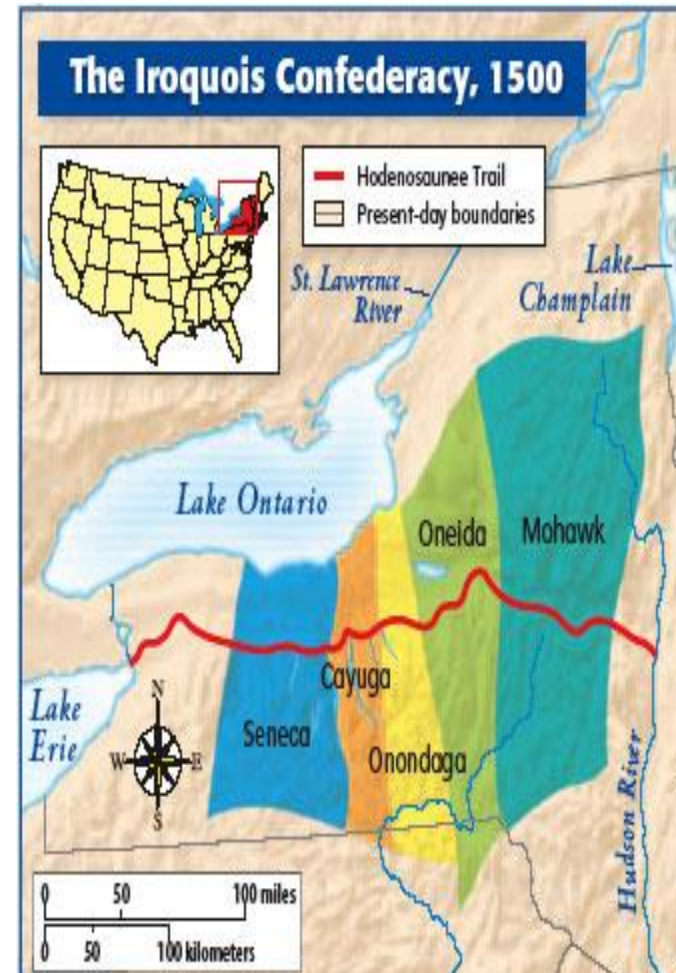
From Farmers to Tradesmen

- Farming efficiency, in turn, frees people from the land so they can engage in non-farming activities e.g. trade, crafts, specialized jobs, etc.
- Before long people centralize these business-like activities into one place e.g. villages, towns, and cities
- Hence, they become “civilized”



Five Nations of the Iroquois

- The Iroquois were very well organized
- They consisted of **five nations**:
- **Cayuga** (People of the Great Swamp)
- **Oneida** (People of the Standing Stone)
- **Onondaga** (People of the Hills)
- **Seneca** (People of the Great Hill)
- **Mohawk** (People of the Great Flint)
- The Tuscarora (**Hemp Gatherers**) joined later to make it six nations



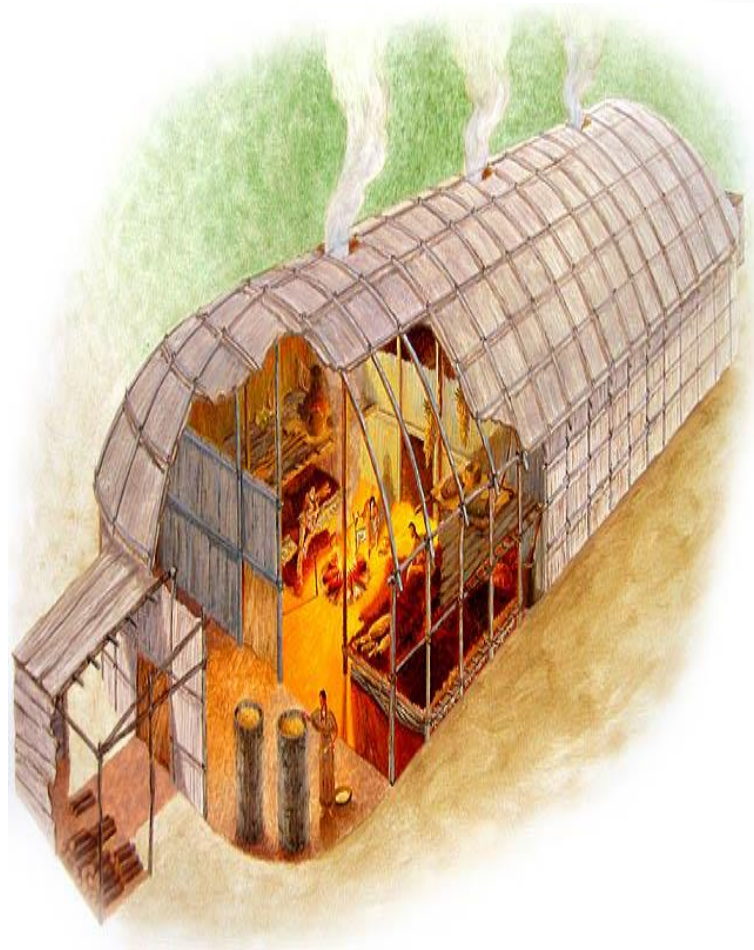
Towns

- The Iroquois lived in towns that were surrounded by **palisades** of logs
- These palisade of logs had the dual purpose of
 1. Protecting their towns from attack
 2. Preventing their children from wandering into the wilds



Long House

- The Iroquois lived in **long houses** made of elm and elm bark
- Each house was home to a **clan** or extended family
- Individual compartments would house nuclear families.





The Role of Women



- In terms of the gender roles, women were mainly confined to the domestic realm
- They cooked, cleaned, and made clothing
- Women were, however, in charge of farming

The Role of Men



- Men, on the other hand, were in charge of the world at large
- They hunted, fished and went to war

Chiefs or Sachems

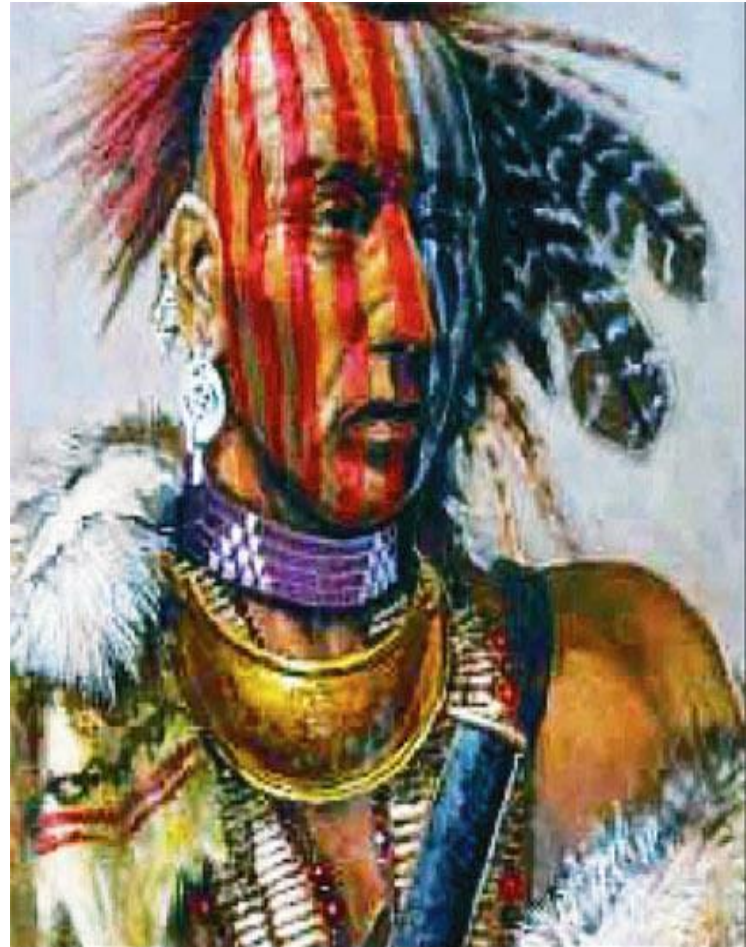
- Iroquois society was run by a council of **50 chiefs called Sachems**
- These men were chosen by the women who led the maternal families

Civil Chief

- Directed the normal activities of the clan

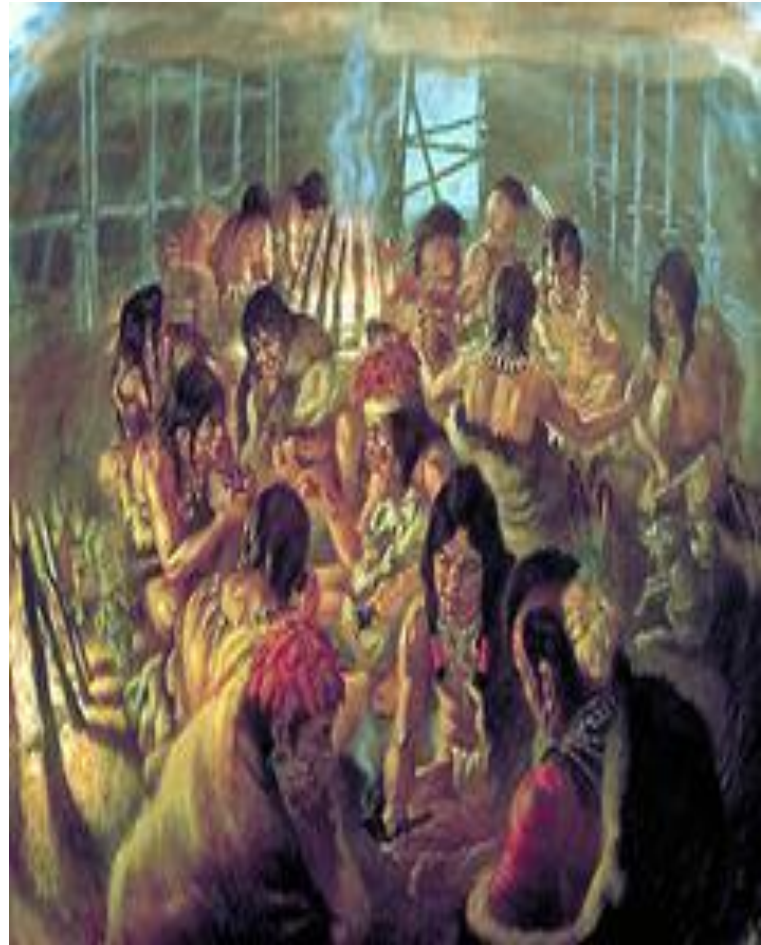
Military Chief

- In charge of settling conflicts with other groups



Government

- Iroquois government showed a high degree of complexity and sophistication
- At the local level, town councils were regularly held
- On a regional level, the five/six nations or Confederacy council would meet.
- Decisions were made democratically and majority ruled
- Iroquois treaties could not be passed unless 75% of the males and 75% of the females voted in favor



Agriculture: The Key to Iroquois Success

- It was the Iroquois's ability to grow food which allowed them to achieve a higher level of sophistication compared to other Canadian tribes
- And while they did hunt and fish as well, the food they grew guaranteed them an abundance of food **to not only feed** their people, but to use as trade with other tribes
- As time went on, the Iroquois' ability to grow a variety of crops on mass improved
- Historians note **three specific Agriculture Eras** for the Iroquois

Early Agricultural Era

- The **Early Agricultural Era** lasted from 500 to 1300 C.E.
- In this era, villages were small (Eight longhouses – 250 people) and about one hectare in size
- Hectare = 100 sq. meters or about 2 ½ acres
- Palisades were built around the villages for protection
- They predominantly grew corn at this time



Middle Agricultural Era

- The **Middle Agricultural Era** lasted from 1300 to 1400 C.E.
- The size of their villages grew to a dozen or more longhouses with up to a 1000 people
- New crops such as **beans, sunflower, squash** were introduced to supplement corn



Late Agricultural Era

- The **Late Agricultural Era** lasted from 1400 to 1600 C.E.
- This involved the period of European contact
- Towns grew to over four hectares with up to 2000 people
- Included the commercial development of a non-agricultural crop – **Tobacco**
- It was used domestically and traded



Tobacco Usage

- Tobacco was used widely in a variety of recreational and social occasions
- All male Iroquois smoked
- They carried a pouch of tobacco and smoked using a pipe throughout the day
- They believed that if you were “**too sick to smoke, then death was not far off**”



Hunting

- The food the Iroquois harvested was supplemented through **hunting** and **fishing**
- They hunted elk, deer, bears, and raccoons for their meat
- All parts of the animal were used – nothing was wasted
- The animal skins were used for clothing
- Antlers for tools
- Intestines for rope



Art



Peter B. Jones - "Untitled" 2005, From The Eugene and Clare Thaw Collection of American Indian Art - Fenimore Art Museum

- The Iroquois did not make many items that we would consider to be art
- They did, however, paint **elk skins** with animal figures or straight line designs
- They also made pottery but it was functional and not usually decorative
- They also made pipes and ornaments of stone

Body Art



- **Tattooing**, however, was common
- An awl was used to make holes in the skin
- Then a thread covered in charcoal was passed through the skin
- Some Iroquois men had their entire bodies covered in tattoos
- Since it was painful, the more tattoos you had, the braver you were.

Lacrosse



- The Iroquois also invented Canada's national sport, **Lacrosse**, around the 5th century
- Their game, however, was a little different from our box and field varieties
- Each team consisted of about 100 to 1,000 men on a field that stretched from about **500 yards wide to a couple of miles long**
- Games lasted from sunup to sundown for two to three days straight.
- It was often played as part of a ceremonial ritual to give thanks to the Creator