

Chapter 2 Lesson - The Great Plains

Life on the Plains

The Great Plains cultural region of the United States was unlike the Eastern Woodlands Cultural Region. The tribes of the Great Plains included the Lakota (Sioux), Pawnee, Osage, and Cheyenne.



The Plains tribes followed a farming and hunting life. The Great Plains didn't get a lot of rain, so they settled their villages close to rivers. This allowed them to get water for their crops. They grew corn, beans, squash and pumpkins. The Plains Native Americans built large round huts over a deep hole called lodges.

The buffalo was a major source of meat for the Plains Indians. They used buffalo hides to make clothing and blankets. They carved buffalo horns into bowls and even used their stomachs to make cooking pots.

The Plains Indians had to hunt the buffalo on foot. Because the buffalo were fast and hard to catch they had to wear a disguise to get close enough to catch one. Another way they killed them was to make the buffalo stampede over a cliff. While the Indians were hunting buffalo they lived in tepee, which were made from poles that came together into a point covered with buffalo hide. Heavy loads of buffalo meat would be lashed on to a pole. A travois made of poles. Dogs were used to pull the travois.



Hunters disguise themselves as wolves so they can get close enough to the buffalo to capture them.

The Cheyenne



Horse drawn travois and teepee

By 1700 the Cheyenne tribe had acquired horses. This made buffalo hunting much easier and changed the way of life of the Cheyenne Indians. The horse also made it easier for the Cheyenne to move their settlements. The horses were able to pull heavier travois than the dogs had been able to. They could also move them faster. Horses became so important that a person's wealth was measured by how many horses they owned. Riders became skilled in war and in hunting.

The Cheyenne Today

Today about 12,000 Cheyenne live in present day Montana. A traditional pow wow is still held every 4th of July in Lama Deer, Montana. A pow wow is a gathering of Native Americans.



The Eastern Woodlands - Chapter 2 Lesson 1



The Iroquois people made up a tribe of American Indians. A tribe is a group of families bound together under a single leadership. The five tribes were the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk. The five tribes sent 50 representatives – all men, to a Great Council. This council made decisions for the League as a whole. A league is an organization that people form which unites them for a particular purpose.

The Iroquois lived in the Eastern Woodlands cultural region of North America. Native American tribes within these regions developed similar cultures, using the resources of their environments. A cultural region is an area in which people with similar cultures live.

The Eastern Woodlands provided many resources for the Iroquois. Thick forests provided wood. People hunted deer, bear, elk and beaver for food. They used the skin and fur of these animals for clothing. The Iroquois grew corn, beans and squash for food as well.



The Iroquois lived in buildings called longhouses. Each longhouse was 150 feet long and could hold as many as 12 different families. The Iroquois also used trees to make canoes.



The Iroquois used the woodlands for food and clothing. They used animal hides for clothing and the meat for food.

The Iroquois felt a deep connection to the animals and trees of the forest. When an Iroquois hunter killed a deer he would thank it for the food and clothing it would provide for his family.

Wampam were polished seashells that were hung on string or woven into belts. It was highly valued by the Iroquois. It might be given as a gift or an invitation to peaceful talks.

There are about 50,000 Iroquois today. Many live on reservations. This is land set aside by the United States government for Native Americans. The Iroquois reservation is found in New York. Fifty members still form its Great Council and they meet once a year. Many members of the Mohawk tribe have become skilled builders.

