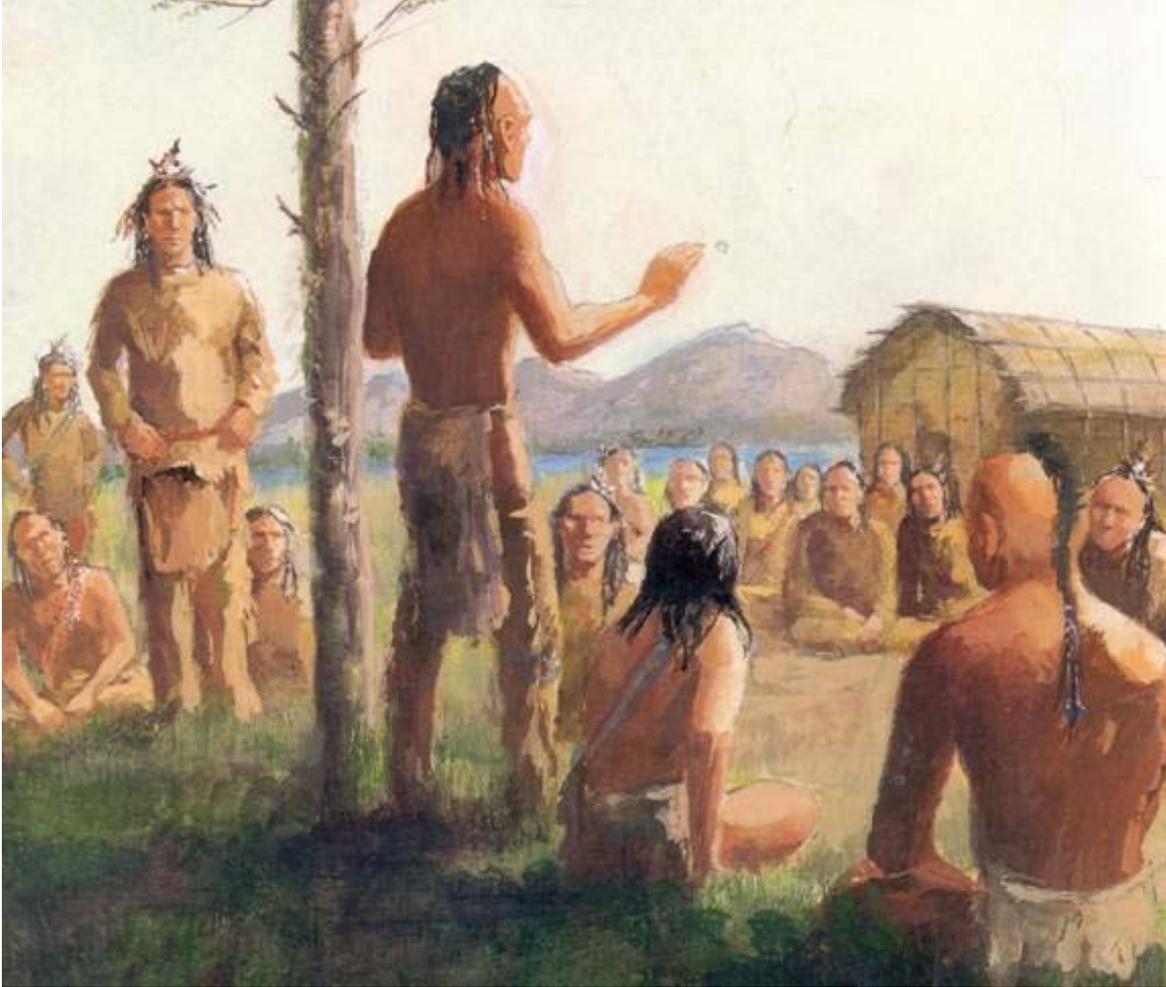




The Oneida Nation of Wisconsin

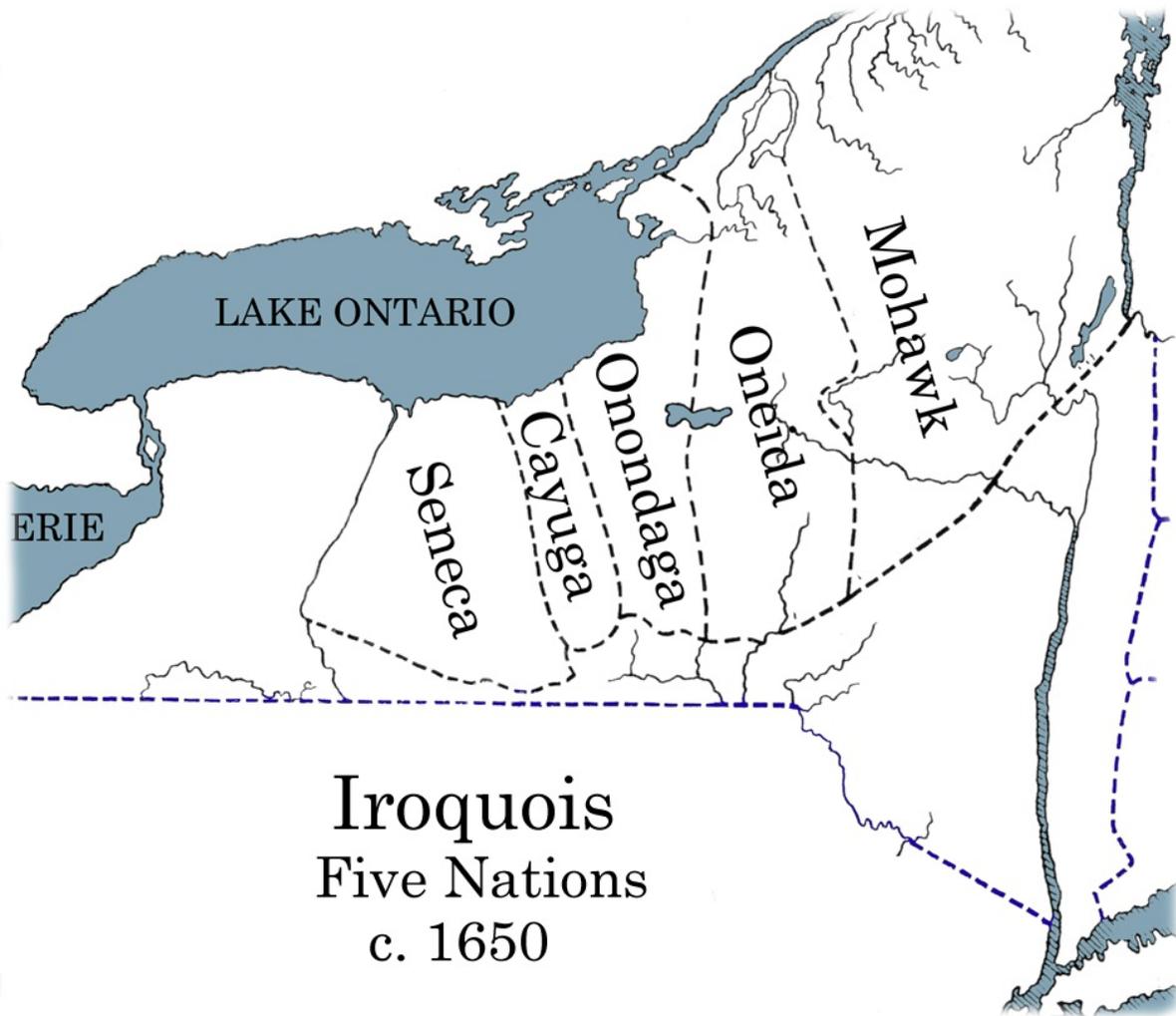
Prepared by Ava L. McCall

*Based on Native People of
Wisconsin by Patti Loew*



The Oneida were part of the Five Nations Confederacy.

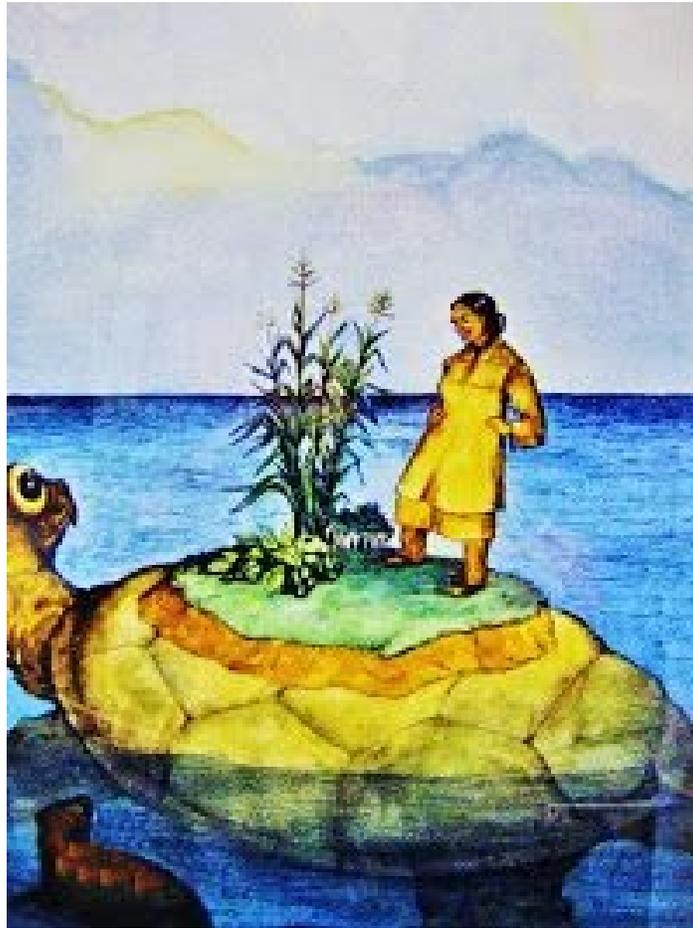
The Oneida were once part of the Five Nations Confederacy before Europeans arrived in America. The Oneida joined with the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, and Mohawk Nations. They agreed to stop fighting with one another and have peace. They also became very strong. The Five Nations also called themselves the Haudenosaunee (ho dun a show nee) or “People of the Longhouse.”



The Oneida homelands in the state of New York were nearly six million acres in size.

At first, the Oneida lived in the state of New York before they moved to Wisconsin. They lived on nearly six million acres in New York when they first met Europeans. Six million acres is about the size of the state of New Hampshire.

Oneida Tribal Traditions



The Oneida believe the world was created on a turtle's back.

The Oneida believe the world was created on a turtle's back. Sky Woman planted seeds from the Tree of Life on the turtle's back. The seeds grew to become the plants needed on Mother Earth.

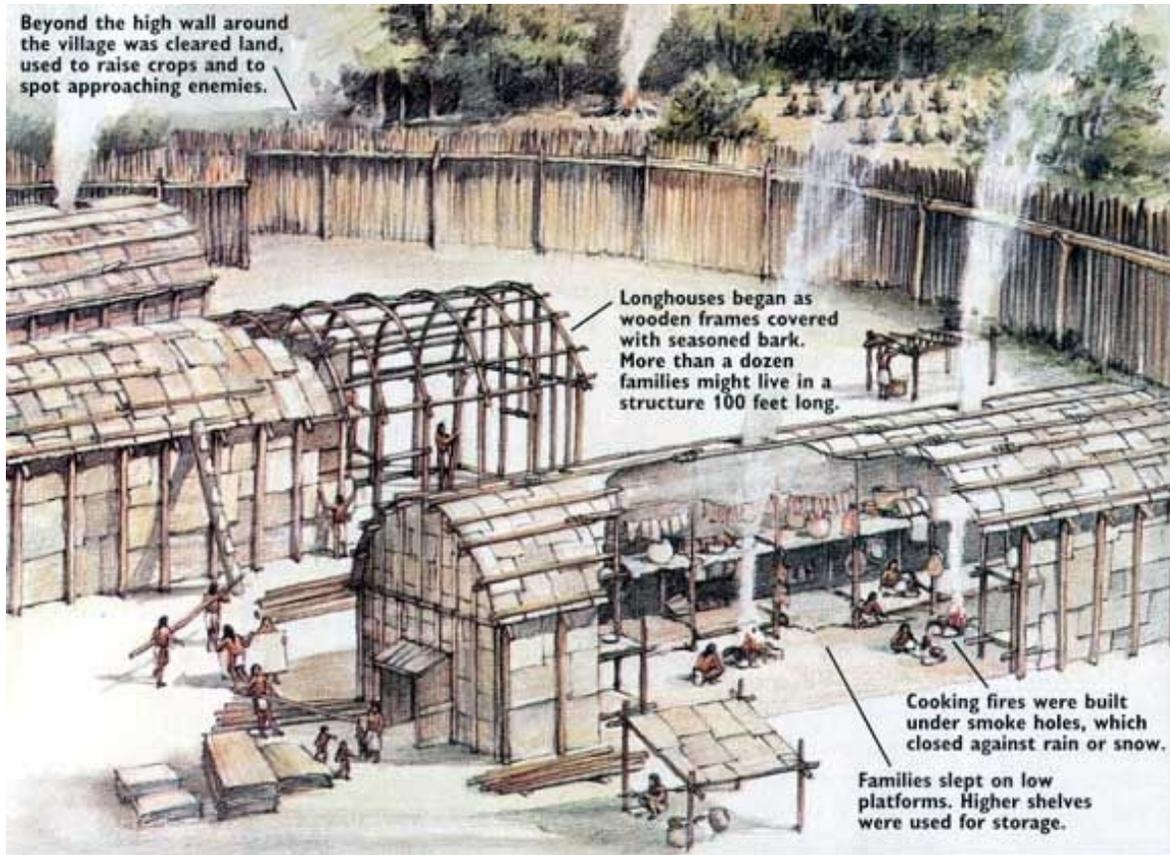


Oneida women grew corn, beans, and squash to eat.



Oneida men hunted and fished for food.

The Oneida were farmers who grew corn, beans, and squash for the people to eat. When their fields no longer grew food well, they moved their fields to a different place. Oneida women made decisions about the land, worked the fields, and gathered roots, berries, and nuts to eat. Oneida men fished and hunted for food.



The Oneida lived in villages of Long Houses with tall, wooden fences all around to protect the people.

The Oneida lived in villages of Long Houses with tall, wooden fences all around to protect the people. All the family members living in one Long House were related to the mother. If a man married an Oneida woman, he moved into his wife's Long House.

Tribal History



The Oneida traded furs first with Dutch fur traders, then with British fur traders.

The Oneida met Europeans in the 1600s when they traded furs for European trade goods. First the Oneida traded furs for metal pots, cloth, and guns with Dutch fur traders. Then they traded furs with British fur traders. Almost half of the Oneida population died from diseases from the Europeans, such as smallpox, influenza, and measles. The Haudenosaunee or Five Nations Confederacy became leaders in the fur trade. They decided what other Native nations could participate in the fur trade.



The Oneida helped the Americans during the American Revolution.

The Oneida helped the Americans during the American Revolution when the Americans fought for independence from Great Britain. The Oneida gave food to George Washington's soldiers. They helped the Americans soldiers in battles with the British. The Oneida also served as scouts, runners, and spies for the Americans.



The Oneida were forced to give up more than 5.5 million acres of their land in the New York state area after the American Revolution.

Even though the Oneida helped the Americans win the American Revolutionary War, the Americans did not treat the Oneida fairly. Government leaders of New York forced the Oneida to give up more than 5.5 million acres of their land.



The Oneida have a reservation in Wisconsin because they made a treaty with the United States government.

In 1824, 100 Oneida and 100 Mohicans moved to Wisconsin and settled along the Fox River. More Oneida joined them. By 1838, more than 650 Oneida lived at Duck Creek, Wisconsin. The Oneida made a treaty with the United States government and obtained a reservation where their people could live in Wisconsin.



Oneida men volunteered to fight with the Union Army during the Civil War.

During the American Civil War, Oneida men volunteered to fight with the Union Army. Many died in the war. Oneida men also volunteered to fight in World War I and World War II. A few Oneida women fought in World War II.



A boarding school was located on the Oneida reservation in Wisconsin. Students could not speak their Native language or practice their traditions at the boarding school. They were punished if they did.

The United States government wanted the Oneida to become more like European Americans. Oneida children went to Christian boarding schools or the government boarding school on the Oneida reservation. Other Oneida children went to school in Pennsylvania or Virginia. Children could not speak their Native language or practice their cultural traditions. They were punished if they did. After many of these Oneida children grew up and had their own children, they encouraged their children to adopt non-Indian ways. Fewer people spoke Oneida and practiced Oneida traditions.



Some Oneida moved to cities, such as Milwaukee, to find jobs.

As some Oneida gave up their traditional ways, they moved off their reservation to find jobs. They often developed another Indian community in a city, such as Milwaukee.

Oneida Life Today



The Oneida created a museum on their reservation to show their history, beliefs, and cultural traditions.



The Oneida provide health care for the Oneida people.

The Oneida set up a casino on their reservation near Green Bay where people can gamble. They use the money they make from their casino to create other businesses. The Oneida also have a public museum and library. They provide health services and housing for their people.



The Oneida created a school in the shape of a turtle. The Oneida believe the earth was created on a turtle's back.

The Oneida built the Oneida Tribal School in the shape of a turtle. The turtle represents the Oneida belief that the earth was created on the back of a turtle. The Oneida have early childhood, Head Start, high school, and higher education programs for the Oneida people.