



The Environmental Adaptation of the Native American Indian

Curriculum Unit 98.03.08
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This curriculum unit addresses the social studies standards of the New Haven School System by providing some understanding of Native American cultures and their history to our children. It integrates the art class with the study of the everyday life of Native Americans through the re-creation of various artifacts and their dwellings in the village. I intend to teach the students the concept that Native Americans (as all indigenous people close to the land) used all the resources available to them for their needs, and that the various environmental differences that characterize the North American landscape led to the great variety of crafts and shelters created by the diverse civilizations. This is accomplished by a sequential set of lessons aimed at first creating particular Native American Indian crafts and then working up to village dioramas of various tribes. As the art teacher in an elementary school, I offer this unit at a fifth grade level. The students will learn by creating. In recent years there has been a plethora of books published about Native Americans. Some of these books are suggested in the bibliography for language arts teachers and students wishing to extend any of these projects. Native American Indians believed that a Great Spirit dwelled in all things of nature, from rocks and wind to man and animals. That credo guided everything crafted with the intention of giving thanks and homage to the medium or material, whether it be a piece of wood or an entire animal hide. Native Americans created objects that embodied a kind of aesthetic reverence in addition to their utilitarian role. Everything was made knowing that a part of the Great Spirit was sacrificed for the Indian in order for the Indian to survive. The Great Spirit required in return some kind of recognition and appreciation manifested through the expression of the artifact.

In this unit I concentrate on four tribes that exemplify some of the diversity of the North American continent. The Inuits people of the Arctic region, the Iroquois of the Eastern Woodlands, the nomadic Plains Indians of the Sioux tribe and the Southwestern Hopi. For each of the above tribes I inform and demonstrate the creation of some artifact endemic to their culture. For instance, the Inuits crafted many masks to be used in rituals to ask for assistance in the hunt for arctic animals. The Iroquois used Wampum Beads in a wide variety of ways. The Sioux documented important events on buffalo hides, which were called winter counts. The Hopi had Kachina dolls that were the personification of spirit helpers.

Even though these items are particular to each of these tribes, the concepts behind them are not. All Native American created some type of mask that was used in rituals to ask the Spirit-that-moved-in-all-things for help or to give thanks. Likewise, many other tribes besides the Iroquois had items which had symbolic value for trading. The Sioux were certainly not the only people to come up with pictographic writing, and there are many other Native Americans that used some type of miniature spirit helper like a Kachina.

After the students have created their own interpretation of each of the above artifacts, they move on to learning about the shelters and the villages of each of these tribes. For the Inuits the class will construct a diorama of a typical snow covered igloo, the longhouse of the Iroquois, a tepee for the Sioux and a pueblo for the Hopi. In this unit I demonstrate what materials work well and suggest ways to develop those materials to construct entire village dioramas for maximum authenticity.

It is my hope that the students will start to get a grasp of the similarities and differences of some of the five hundred nations that inhabited this continent before Columbus left Europe. I also hope to leave the classes with the impression that they may also create a more personal environment with what they have around them. At a time when it seems that fewer and fewer people are hand crafting the objects and environments around them, I believe it is imperative to impress upon our students the possibilities for them to do just that, to satisfy the primal urge to create one's own aesthetic.

INITIATION

I like to start every unit by assessing the students to find out what they already know about the subject matter. Many of the students can tell you about Native Americans, everything from they lived in igloos to how they bow hunted wild animals. It is a priority of mine that students understand that it is possible to gather everything necessary for survival from what nature has to offer. The Native Americans epitomized this belief.

After the students relate what they know, continue by asking what the Native Americans had available. What weather, what animals, what plants, what types of water sources, etc. These are questions that can be constantly solicited throughout the unit to measure the level of comprehension. It will become obvious to the students that the specifics of each of these answers informs us as to how each tribe of Native Americans lived.

With the aid of a North American map, some key facts that students should learn can be how the first natives arrived from Asia over the Bering Straits land bridge some time during the last Ice Age, 10,000 - 30,000 years ago. They spread throughout the North and South American continents to inhabit virtually the entire western hemisphere, including some very remote islands in the Caribbean. Depending on which source one reads, the population of North and South America when Columbus set sail was somewhere between 40 and 80 million inhabitants. In 1865 by official count in the U.S. and its territories the number of indigenous peoples was reduced to some 300,000.

Handout 1 at the end of this unit is a reproducible topographical map of North America for each student. This handout can be referred to throughout the unit. Explain the map legend to the students so they can understand the geological differences between the arctic, the eastern seaboard, and the deserts. Continue with these maps by asking what would be some of the weather differences between the northern and southern regions. Ask how these features would effect the living conditions of the Native Americans. How would people live in the dense forests of the East, in the flat open Plains of the Midwest, the cold tundras of the North, and the dry deserts of the Southwest? Elicit from the children answers to these questions so that they can become problem solvers in regard to these diverse environmental conditions. Show photos of these regions so the children can get a better feel for the landscape.

SECTION 1: THE ARTIFACTS

Lesson 1: The Inuits

At this point the class is ready to create the first project, an Inuit mask.

Pass out Handout 2, called The Inuits Go over some of the information about the Inuits and have the students write in the tribe's name in the appropriate place on their map handout. After some discussion about the purposes masks had for the Inuits, the class is ready to create their own version.

MASK MAKING

Materials

- a gallon size plastic milk jug per student
- newspapers
- paper-mache mix (there are many forms with various properties, the best is Artpaste available at art stores)
- one paper plate per student
- acrylic paints
- feathers
- elastic string

Tools

- one razor knife
- mixing bucket
- magic marker
- gallon size cans of water for painting
- various size stiff bristle brushes
- plenty of paper towels
- egg cartons
- hot glue gun and glue
- paper punch

Step 1 Time: 20 minutes

The teacher needs to spend a little time preparing for the class by cutting the plastic milk jugs with the razor knife. If cut properly and with a little practice, the jugs create the correct size and shape to fit on a child's head. (See illustration A.) Start by holding the handle of the jug and cut the entire handle side of the jug off, including the spout or opening of the jug. Leave half of the bottom of the jug intact. Cut a wide circumference around the spout. When held up-side down, the reconfigured jug will shape the basis for a mask, with the bottom of the jug forming the forehead region. All that is necessary is cutting the eye holes. Cut these in a wide variety of shapes, for the Inuits used all kinds of outlines with some eyes not even being symmetrical. After this, prepare the paper-mache mix according to the package directions in the bucket.

Step 2 Time: 20 minutes

The students are ready to dip the newspaper strips into the paper-mache mix and place them over the plastic masks. First cover the entire work area with newspaper for easier clean up. The paper-mache procedure is rather elementary with just a few guidelines required to make a suitable mask. It helps if the students can work with partners. The strips should not be dripping with the mix, but moist or damp. Place the strips over the entire mask with some overlap to the inside. There should be three layers that can be completed in one session. Emphasize that the paper-mache soaked strips need to be flat to the mask with no wrinkles. When completed, the masks need to dry thoroughly before painting, at least overnight. Place the masks to dry on the paper plate with each student's name written with the magic marker. After the masks are dry, the students can write their names on the inside.

Step 3 Time: 30 minutes

Review with the class some Inuit mask references. Describe the broad areas of color and lack of minute details and patterns. There is a minimum of stripes and very many with fingertip size dots. There are very few geometric shapes. White, red, blue and brown were the dominant colors.

The students can try their own hand at painting the masks. Prepare the work area with a cover of newspaper, cans of water and paper towels. After passing out the brushes, inform the students to clean their brush with the paper towels between color changes. Pour the paint into the egg cartons and encourage a minimum of colors, much like the Inuit masks.

Step 4 Time: 20 minutes

The students can place their feathers for the teacher to attach using the hot glue gun. The last step is punching two holes with the paper punch on each side and tying on the elastic string.

Lesson 2: The Sioux

The students are ready to learn about another Native American group of Indians, the Sioux. They are a Great Plains tribe. Handout 3, which gives some basic history, can be copied for the class and then they can write the Sioux name on their map of North America. The following is a lesson plan to create a Winter Count with the students. If it is possible, try to arrange to have an actual deer hide or other animal skin available for display before creating this next lesson. It will add to the interest of what a Winter Count is.

WINTER COUNTS

Materials

- a 36' x 30' sheet of dark brown paper for each student (cut from a roll of craft paper)
- pencils
- lined paper
- oil pastels or dry chalk

Step 1 Time: 5 Minutes

Explain to the class that they are going to try creating their own Winter Count. Start by passing out a sheet of brown paper to each student and have them fold it lengthwise in half. Illustration B explains the rough shape the students need to resemble a buffalo hide. This is more authentic looking if it is done by ripping with their hands instead of cutting with scissors.

Step 2 Time: 45 Minutes

Pass out Handout 4 that displays various symbols important to a Sioux Indian. On lined paper, the students can come up with a short narrative, using the handout as a guide. Afterwards they are to draw what they wrote in sequential order on the brown paper in pencil. When they are pleased with their drawing, have the class use the colored media to trace over their pencil lines. The pastels or chalk look very bright on dark brown paper. When they are completed, display them for all to see.

Lesson 3: The Iroquois

The Iroquois were a band of five tribes legendary throughout the Northeast. Handout 5 gives a short history for the students to have along with some information about wampum. Wampum beads were used in a wide variety of ways. In early colonial days, before there was a standard and acceptable currency, the colonists would use wampum as money to be traded. The following lesson details how students can make their own wampum.

WAMPUM BEADS

Materials

- old magazines
- pencils
- white glue
- string

Tools

- rulers
- scissors
- thin painting brushes (thinner than a pencil)

Step 1 Time: 60 Minutes

Pass out a sheet of magazine paper, a ruler and a pencil to each student. They are to draw then cut long, thin equilateral triangles that measure approximately 10' x 11'. Encourage the students to make accurate and straight cuts. Have the class cut at least 8 triangles. They may cut as many as they like. Afterwards they are to roll the triangle up onto the handle of the brush, starting with the wide end of the triangle. (see illustration C). Encourage the students to wrap the triangles as tightly as possible around the handle. They can dab ever so lightly a spot of glue onto the apex of the triangle and then finish rolling the triangle. Once the triangle is a solid cylinder, pull or twist the roll off the handle. This is their first bead. Repeat the process for the other triangles of magazine paper. When the class is finished, they can string up the beads and tie the ends together. It is not necessary to paint the beads.

Lesson 4: The Hopi

The Hopi still practice some of the oldest customs and lifestyles of any Native American tribe. They are considered a Pueblo group of Indians, descended from the Anasazi people, the original inhabitants of this part of the country going back 2,000 years ago. Pass out the Handout 6 and discuss the reading with the class. Ask guided questions about some of the similarities and differences of the various tribes of Indians learned about so far. Have the class write the Hopi name in the southwestern part of the United States. The following is a lesson on how students can create their own version of a Hopi doll.

Kachina Dolls

Materials

Each student should have the following;

- toilet paper tube
- 2 clothespins
- 6' x 9' brown felt
- sheet of newspaper
- 6' x 6' piece of burlap
- 6' x 6' piece of oaktag (stiff paper)
- small feathers
- a pair of google eyes

Tools

- white glue
- pencils
- scissors
- thin markers

Step 1 Time: 15 minutes

Cut two $\frac{1}{2}$ ' x 3' strips of oaktag and tie their ends together so that you have 2 circles. Then glue each circle perpendicular to the handle end of each clothespin to create the legs and feet of our Kachina. (see illustration D). Two $\frac{1}{2}$ ' x 2' pieces of oaktag glued to the top of the circles finishes the moccasins. Then cut two 1' x 2' strips of felt as wrap-arounds for the leggings.

Step 2 Time: 15 minutes

Fit the rest of the felt around the toilet paper tube as the main torso of the Kachina. Wrap the rest of the oaktag around the felt as a kind of cape, the students may cut the oaktag into any kind of interesting shape they would like. They may also draw and color designs over the oaktag before they glue it around the felt tube. After this they are to clip the clothespin legs up under the tube felt. With a little adjustment, they should be able to make the tube stand over the clothespin legs.

Step 3 Time: 15 Minutes

On to the head. This is done by balling up the sheet of newspaper and wrapping it with the burlap. Twist the burlap in such a way so that it resembles a lollipop wrapper. This makes it easier to jam into the toilet paper tube to get a head-like look. Glue on the google eyes and attach feathers in any kind of interesting combination and design. Illustration E gives an idea of what a finished Kachina could look like.

Section 2: THE VILLAGE DWELLINGS

After completing the various artifacts, the students are ready to proceed to the village dioramas, starting in the Arctic. I believe that the dioramas would be more effective as a teaching aid if they were created and presented on a single half sheet of $\frac{1}{2}$ ' plywood that could be sectioned off ahead of time into four quadrants. Most lumber yards will cut a sheet of plywood in half to end up with 48' x 48'. Then nail or screw from the underside four pieces of 1' pine and nail or screw these as a perimeter edge. Then attach three more pieces of 1' x 2' pine, two of them cut at 24' and one at 48' to create a simple four square grid (see illustration F). Each corner of this base will represent one of the tribes and their dwellings.

Lesson 5: Inuits in the Arctic

Referring to the North American map and to Handout 2, the class will need to review the arctic environment to

get a feel for the conditions the Inuits lived under and how they adapted. This lesson will replicate a winter igloo settlement of central and eastern Canada.

Inuit Diorama Materials

- 1 1/2' Styrofoam balls, (craft store item) each student will need half a ball, precut with a serrated kitchen knife by the teacher.
- plaster-impregnated gauze, (craft store item)
- white latex paint
- white glue

Tools @UL:- large mixing can or bucket with water

- newspaper to work over
- scissors
- wide paint brushes

Step 1 Time: 20 minutes

It may be easier to prepare the plywood base with a smaller group of students, with a different group for each corner; this is left to the discretion of the teacher.

The students can cut with scissors 15-20 squares of gauze approximately 6' x 6'. Dip these into the can of water for a few seconds and then shape them into snow drifts on a corner of the plywood base. Layer the entire diorama corner with strips of 6' x 20' moistened gauze to create a uniform snow covered landscape. After the gauze has dried, it can be painted with the white paint.

Step 2 Time: 15 minutes

Each student can glue down a Styrofoam hemisphere to create an igloo look onto the arctic environment. With some visuals from any book on the Inuits, the students can get an idea of what an encampment of igloos looked like. The Reader's Digest book, *Through Indian Eyes*, has an excellent photo of an encampment on page 267. The arctic diorama is essentially finished after this step; of course if the teacher desires any of these dioramas can be populated with small figures, animals or other accessories.

Lesson 6: The Sioux in the Plains

With the North American map and handout 3, review with the class the Sioux Indians and how they lived in tepees. This lesson will replicate the Plains and a tepee settlement. There are some photos to show the class in Peter Nabokov's book, *Native American Architecture*, pages 151-167.

Sioux Diorama

Materials

- 5' x 3' oaktag pieces per student
- four toothpicks per student
- white glue
- thin markers
- 2 pounds of dry peat moss or clean dirt
- green and yellow sand
- Field Grass produced by Woodland Scenics, a railroad modeling manufactory

Tools

- pencils
- scissors
- paint brushes

Step 1 Time: 30 minutes

Photocopy the pattern for a tepee from illustration G. While it is still flat students should color patterns and designs onto the oaktag with the markers to replicate Sioux tepees. Once finished, have the students roll the oaktag into a cone shape and glue the straight edges together. Glue the toothpicks from the inside so they protrude through the hole at the top.

Step 2 Time: 60 minutes

Mix enough of the glue with the peat moss to cover the bottom of the Sioux diorama. Add in touches of colored sand to reproduce the Plains. While the glue is still wet, the students can place their tepees in the peat moss or dirt. Once it is dry, have some students cut the field grass and with a small dab of glue they can stick the blades into the peat moss.

Lesson 7: The Iroquois in the Eastern Woodlands

As with the first two dioramas, review with the class the Iroquois and the Eastern Woodlands using the North American map and Handout 6. Both the Reader's Digest book, *Through Indian Eyes*, and Peter

Nabokov's book, *Native American Architecture*, have chapters on longhouses.

IROQUOIS DIORAMA

Materials

- 1 ½' x 3' cardboard per student
- 4 pieces of 4' brown pipe cleaners
- 5' x 5' brown burlap
- 5' x 5' birch bark
- thick glue (tacky or sobo glue)
- peat moss
- white glue
- Assorted Trees, produced by Woodland Scenics

Tools

- sharp pencils
- scissors

Step 1 Time: 10 minutes

Start the longhouse assembly by carefully pressing 8 holes through the cardboard with the pencil, 4 along each of the long edges. Refer to illustration H for a better understanding. Then bend the pipe cleaners into a U shape and poke these through the 4 pairs of holes and give another short bend underneath the cardboard to keep the pipe cleaners standing. This step provides the basic structure of the longhouse, much as saplings did for the frames of the original longhouses.

Step 2 Time: 15 minutes

This process involves layering a shell over the pipe cleaners. Cut 2 half round pieces of burlap with door openings to be placed over the ends of the structure. The thick tacky glue works well for providing a quick adhesion. Cut the remaining burlap into a 3' x 4' rectangle to be glued over the entire structure. The birch bark can then be carefully cut, shaped and glued over the burlap for a more authentic look.

Step 3 Time: 60 minutes

Mix the peat moss and white glue together to recreate a forested landscape surface. Create a small creek bed somewhere in the diorama. The students can place their longhouses end to end into the ground surface to replicate an Iroquois village. After they are secured down, have some students work on gluing the model trees in place. Provide a wide assortment of trees to duplicate the eastern woodlands.

Lesson 8: The Hopi in the Southwest

Review for the Hopi and their location in the Southwest on the North American map. This lesson will duplicate a Hopi village at the top of a mesa. In the last chapter of Native American Architecture there are some factual photographs of the various Pueblo tribes and their villages.

HOPI DIORAMA

Materials

- 6' x 5' pieces of oaktag per student
- thin black markers
- sand
- white glue

Tools

- scissors

Step 1 Time: 45 minutes

Have the pattern ready from illustration I photocopied onto the oaktag sheets for the students before they arrive. The class can cut the solid lines and then fold over the dotted lines. With some patience and concentration, they are to fold this pattern into a box shape and glue the small fold-over flaps in each corner of the box (see Illustration J). Once completed, they can draw a door and some windows around the sides with the black markers.

Handout 1

North America

INUITS

IROQUOIS

SIOUX

HOPÍ

Handout 2: The Inuits

The Inuits, or Eskimos as they are sometimes called, were an Arctic region peoples who were exceptionally resourceful in coping with the environment they lived in. It was always cold, and many times extremely cold. The sun in the winter months shone for only a few hours a day when it was not overcast with clouds. The winter could prove to be a deadly season if there was not enough preparation with food stores and housing.

The main food staple was meat from a wide variety of animals including large polar and grizzly bears, walrus, caribou, elk and a wide variety of fish. Also small creatures like mice, beavers and various birds. This carnivorous diet was supplemented with berries, nuts and roots or tubers. In the winter, they could hunt the seals that would come up for air from under the ice through pre-cut holes.

Most Inuit lived in houses that were a combination of sod and animal hide over a structure of driftwood and whalebone. There could be a see-through opening in the roof to let in light made from the intestine of a seal. With a crawl-through door on the downhill side of the house, heat would naturally stay inside. Only the Inuits of central and eastern Canada lived in dome-shaped snow igloos and then during the coldest parts of winter. These structures would melt in the spring and could become dangerous. A typical igloo could be constructed in a few hours by two people. With the use of just a whale or seal oil lamp, these structures with walls 18 inch thick would be fairly comfortable and warm for an Inuits family.

Like all indigenous tribal people worldwide, the Inuits used all the resources and imagination at their disposal to help in the daily trials of life. For the Eskimo especially there was little room for mistake in foraging and hunting of food. An unexpected storm could devastate and kill whole villages if they did not prepare constantly for the worst. A major part of Eskimo life was taken up with appeals of all kinds to the spirit world for guidance and assistance. Each group or clan had a specially ordained person, either a man or woman, who had successful and frequent visionary experiences affording access into a spirit world. In most tribal cultures these people are called 'Shamans'. The Shamans were regarded very highly for advice in all matters. The Shamans would try to create the best possible conditions to enhance their connections to the spirit world. One way was to create masks and then to use them in formal rituals along with song and dance.

Like everything else in their life, the Shamans would use whatever was available from the earth to create these masks, including wood, animal skins and hides, sticks, and feathers. For colors, they would grind up rocks, minerals, roots, or berries and mix these powders with various liquids to come up with a variety of dyes or paints.

Handout : The Sioux

The Sioux are a Plains Indian tribe from one of the largest flat areas on the earth, the North American Midwest. If you consult your map you will see that it stretches from north central Canada to the Caribbean, east to the Appalachian Mountains and west to the Rocky Mountains. The Midwest or Great Plains experiences harsh weather conditions from very deep snow with wind speeds over 60 miles per hour in the winter to summers with extreme heat and humidity. In addition, the summer can bring not only thunderous lightning storms but frequent tornados of spectacular intensity that could lift large animals and rip trees right out of the ground! It

was this environment that made the Plains Indians humble in the face of nature's awesome power.

This flat area gave rise to some of the biggest herds of animals ever witnessed. The buffalo numbered up to 60 million throughout the plains and at any time 100,000 in a group. It was the buffalo that provided much of what the Plains Indians required to live, including meat, clothing, all kinds of tools and utensils from bones, glue from boiled hooves, tepee coverings, as well as many other items.

The Plains Indians lived a nomadic existence to keep up with the roaming herds of buffalo. They took advantage of the lodge pole pine trees and buffalo hides to create tepees. Lodge pole pine trees are known for their very long, straight and thin trunks, perfect materials for constructing houses. With three poles tied together at one end, they could be lifted and assembled as a tripod with another 12 poles placed over the original three. Then 5-7 buffalo hides sewn together in a semi-circular shape could be hoisted up over this lodge pole framework.

Inside a family of Sioux gathered around a center fire could stay relatively warm and comfortable. In less than an hour a family could assemble or disassemble a tepee and move it when necessary. The poles would be lashed onto the backs of dogs (before the introduction of horses by Europeans) along with the covering to drag to other sites. The size of the tepees, along with the distance traveled, would be limited to the strength of the dogs. This changed after the arrival of the horse. The horse made it possible to travel farther distances and carry heavier loads.

Though Native Americans did not have letters and a written language in the way we are familiar with today, the Sioux did create Winter Counts. These were an attempt by the chiefs to save for posterity the history of the tribe. Simple and obvious symbols were drawn on the inside of a tanned buffalo hide designating highlights in a leader's life. These symbols of great battles, hunts, or famines would be drawn in sequential order over a lifetime so that someone viewing the hide could interpret how the tribe lived. These hides were called Winter Counts because this was the simplest way a Native American could count the years; one could report that they had been around for 52 winters. These Winter Counts could be handed down to the next generation so that the history could be continued. At the time of European contact, there were some Winter Counts that had recorded over 200 years!

Handout 4 Winter Count Symbols

Handout 5

The Iroquois

Along the eastern coastline of North America the terrain consists of low rolling hills in front of a long narrow range of round top mountains, the Appalachians. This land is covered with a variety of deciduous and coniferous trees. It experiences the full range of seasons with enough water to sustain a full abundance of life. There is much to gain from this environment. When referring to regions of Native American tribes, this area is called the Eastern Woodlands.

The dominant linguistic root of most of the Eastern Woodland tribes is Algonquin. The major exceptions are the Five Nations of the Iroquois League, which is based just about center of the Eastern Woodlands straddling upstate New York and Canada. Their language is totally different than the Algonquin. There are some theories regarding the language difference, mainly that the Iroquois are from an earlier wave of Native Americans, perhaps thousands of years before the Algonquins. These differences shaped both groups and fed hundreds of years of rivalry. The Five Nations of the Iroquois League includes five separate Iroquois tribes

named the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk that banded together sometime in the last 800 years after a long history of war. The Algonquin and the Iroquois have had the longest relationship of any mainland North American tribes with Europeans, not always hospitable.

In this environment of plenty of trees of all kinds, the Iroquois lived in longhouses that used a variety of these trees. By creating a double frame of thin, pliable limbs, the Iroquois were able to interweave layers of flattened bark to keep out the rain and cold. These dwellings were placed end to end so that it was possible to have several dozen families living in a longhouse hundreds of feet long.

One of the artifacts that Iroquois Indians are known for is wampum beads. These were used and interpreted in many ways, depending on which tribe one was dealing with, but as a general rule wampum was always held in high esteem. They could be used as bartering material and thread onto string to signify important events. A belt woven with wampum beads would be offered by the orators to open council meetings between rival groups. If peace had been accomplished then the belt would be used as a record of that peace. A string of wampum beads could be used symbolically in a marriage proposal, as an apology to someone, as payback for a debt, or as a gift.

Handout 6

The Hopi

In the southwestern corner of the United States the landscape takes on an amazing variety of differences. You can experience extremely hot, dry and arid desert conditions with very few trees in either big open expanses of space or tall buttes and mesas (very large, solid, and flat outcroppings of rock on the land that resemble tables with a dinner cloth spread out big enough for a giant). There are also very tall mountain ranges with snow and glaciers on them all year long. It is in this area that we find one of the continent's oldest settled tribes with some of the most formal and organized year round rituals for crop success, the Hopi.

The Hopi are a Pueblo tribe. Pueblo Indians live in pueblo houses, also called adobe style dwellings. These are permanent structures fabricated from a cement-like material that is a combination of straw, sand, and water. This style of construction made it possible for the Hopi to build levels of living units over each other and along the sides of cliffs in some instances. The oldest continually used communities in North America were created by Pueblo Indians. The Hopi, like the Inuits, are able to survive in some of the harshest environments on the planet. These environmental factors created a culture of very formal rituals honoring the rain and sun, traditions practiced for thousands of years. The Hopi would tell you that their rituals and customs have contributed to their success, and because of their success with farming corn, beans and squash, they along with other Pueblo tribes from the Southwest, are probably the least nomadic of all Native American tribes. By engineering complex canals and irrigation systems, the Hopi are able to harness water in an area that to the outsider seems totally inhospitable for growing conditions.

One of the major components of the customs and rituals is the use of Kachina personas. These Kachinas are assistants from the underworld (the original Hopi ancestors are said to come from the underworld, an idea that still plays out in much of Hopi life). The Kachinas come in a very wide range of personalities and are re-created in two forms, as dolls and as dancers. Their physical portrayals can come in many different interpretations. The dolls can be made for young people as a rite of passage into puberty and adulthood. The dancers are dressed as Kachinas and then perform through the village in certain ritualized parades displaying particular characteristics of a specific Kachina.

SOME BOOKS FOR A READING LIST:

For Educators;

Through Indian Eyes, by Reader's Digest, 398 pages, 1995.

A history of the Native North Americans first encounters with continent into regions

Native American Architecture, by Peter Nabokov and Robert Easton, published Oxford University Press, 1989, 420 pages. An excellent visual guide to the dwellings of Native Americans divided into nine regions of the continent.

North American Indian Arts, by Andrew Hunter Whiteford, published by Golden Guide Press, 160 pages. A small but densely packed and factual detailing of a wide variety of crafts by Native Americans.

The Mighty Chieftains, by the editors of Time-Life, 1993, 177 pages. One of eight books in a series devoted to the history and culture of Native Americans. This one concentrates on specific chiefs.

America in 1492, an anthology edited by Alvin M. Josephy, Jr. published by Random House, 1991, 472 pages. Essays by scholars on life in North America before Columbus.

Eskimo Masks, Art and Ceremony, by Dorothy Jean Ray, published guide to the purpose and meaning of the by McClelland and Stewart, 1967, 245 pages. A well researched shamans and their masks in Inuits life.

Native Americans: The Sioux, by Richard Erdoes, published by Sterling Publishing Co., 1982, 96 pages. Many photographs accompany this guide filled with pride for the Sioux. Handbook of North American Indians, Northeast, Vol 15, Gen. Ed. William C. Sturtevant, published by the Smithsonian Institution, 1978, 845 pages. One of 20 volumes detailing every aspect of Indian life.

This set was by far the most voluminous I came across in my research. Southwestern Indian Tribes, by Tom Bahti, published by KC Publications, 72 pages 1968. A short survey of the various tribes from the Southwest. This was a slim by enjoyable read with many photos told for the tourist. Book of the Hopi, by Frank Waters, published by Ballantine Books, 1978, 420 pages. A definitive guide to the Hopi tribe through the words of many of their elders from the first part of the 20th century. Beyond Geography, by Frederick Turner, Rutgers University Press, 1983, 320 pages. A hard hitting account of the circumstances through 3,000 years of Judeo-Christian history that led to the decimation of many of the Native American tribes.

North American Indians, by Andrew Haslam and Alexandra Parsons, published by Scholastic, Inc. 1996, 63 pages. An excellent how to guide for teachers and projects.

Indians, an Activity Book, by John Artman, published by Good Apple, Inc., 57 pages. Teacher's manual covering a wide assortment of disciplines and subject matter with easy to understand lesson plans. For Students;

How the Plains Indians Lived, by George S. Fichter, published by David McKay Company, Inc. 1980. 120 pages. A book geared to 4-8 graders explaining much about the Plains Indians. Cloudwalkers, by Joel Monture, published by Fulcrum, 1996, 58 pages. Six contemporary Native American stories for middle school readers. The Earth under Sky Bear's Feet , by Joseph Bruchac and Thomas Locker, published by Scholastic, Inc. 1995, 30 pages. Short poems and creation stories from various Native American people for 5-10 years olds. Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back, By the same people who published the previous book, about the thirteen moons and the myths that accompany the moon each month.

Ravita and the Land of Unknown Shadows, by Marietta Abrams, published by Universe, 1997, 35 pages. A children's book remake of Plato's classic narrative of the shadows in the cave as told about a pueblo girl.

The
Trees selection of
Stand poetry and
Shining, illustrations
published from
by Dial various
Books, Native
1993, 35 American
pages. A tribes.

How Snowshoe Hare Rescued the Sun, by Emery and Durga Bernhard, published by Holiday House, 1993, 40 pages. An amusing children's book about the cunning of a hare in the arctic. [On Video](#)

500 Nations, by Time-Warner, 1993. An 8 part series narrated by Kevin Costner detailing the history of European contact with native cultures in North America. [illustration A](#) [illustration B](#) [illustration C](#) [illustration D](#) [illustration E](#) [illustration F](#) [illustration G](#) [illustration H](#)

ENDNOTES:

1. Through Indian Eyes, p.333.

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