

# Hudson River Native Americans

Their Culture, Food, Spirituality, Diseases,

by  
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# Native Tribes

- ◆ Lenni Lenape Tribes
  - ◆ Part of the Eastern Algonquian Linguistic group
- ◆ Among these tribes were the Delaware, the Mahican, and the Wappinger



# Culture



Susie Elkhair (d. 1926-age 77) of the Delaware Tribe of Indians (Lenape) based in Bartlesville, Oklahoma shown wearing traditional Lenape clothing.

- ◆ Native Americans demonstrated their proficiency and adaptation to their environment through their use of tools, clothing, and food.
- ◆ Their devotion to nature contributed to their religious practices
- ◆ A strong sense of community was built upon these foundations of religion, culture, and tradition.

# Tribal Numbers

- ◆ Population estimates indicate six thousand to twelve thousand natives inhabited the Hudson River Valley prior to European settlement
- ◆ These tribes lived along the Hudson River, also known as "Muheakantuck," during the Woodland Period (1500 B.C. to A.D. 1600)

# River Life

- ◆ Living in close proximity to the river allowed for access to transportation, ample food, and fertile soil
- ◆ Natives burned, cleared, planted the land, and built a collection of wigwams.



Algonquin style wigwam



Effects of Slash and Burn farming techniques

# Food



- ◆ Diet relied on weather conditions
- ◆ Fall was primarily the hunting season, catching deer, bear, birds, and weasel.
- ◆ Fishing became the principal food source of spring and summer

# River Provides



- ◆ The Hudson River was (and is) filled with striped bass, sturgeon, and eels, providing a variety of food
- ◆ Fish were caught with stone-weighted seines, weirs, nets set on poles, hooks, and bow and arrow
- ◆ The dugout canoe, hollowed-out from the trunk of a tree, allowed for fishing and transportation

# Agriculture

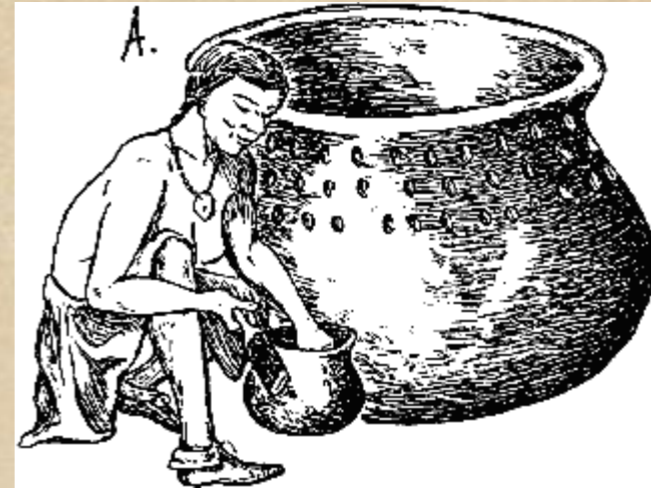


Various corn ears

- ◆ Corn, beans, squash, pumpkins, sunflowers, and tobacco were integral crops
- ◆ Advanced their farming techniques as it became a more important source of food



# Eating Habits



- ◆ Native Americans cooked meals in clay pots or baked in corn husks
- ◆ Daily meals typically consisted of cornmeal mush, fish, or meat
- ◆ Artifacts discovered in the Valley indicate the utilization of cooking utensils

# Medicine



Algonquin Medicine Man

- ◆ Native American medicine attempted to combat a variety of illnesses that afflicted its people
- ◆ Sweat baths were common, and the spiritually skilled shaman treated the sick with local herbs and plants

# Disease

- ◆ Before European arrival, Native Americans lived with little exposure to disease and relied on herbs and holistic medicine to treat medical issues
- ◆ One of the primary reasons the spread of disease wreaked considerable havoc on the native populations was their lack of immunity

# Smallpox



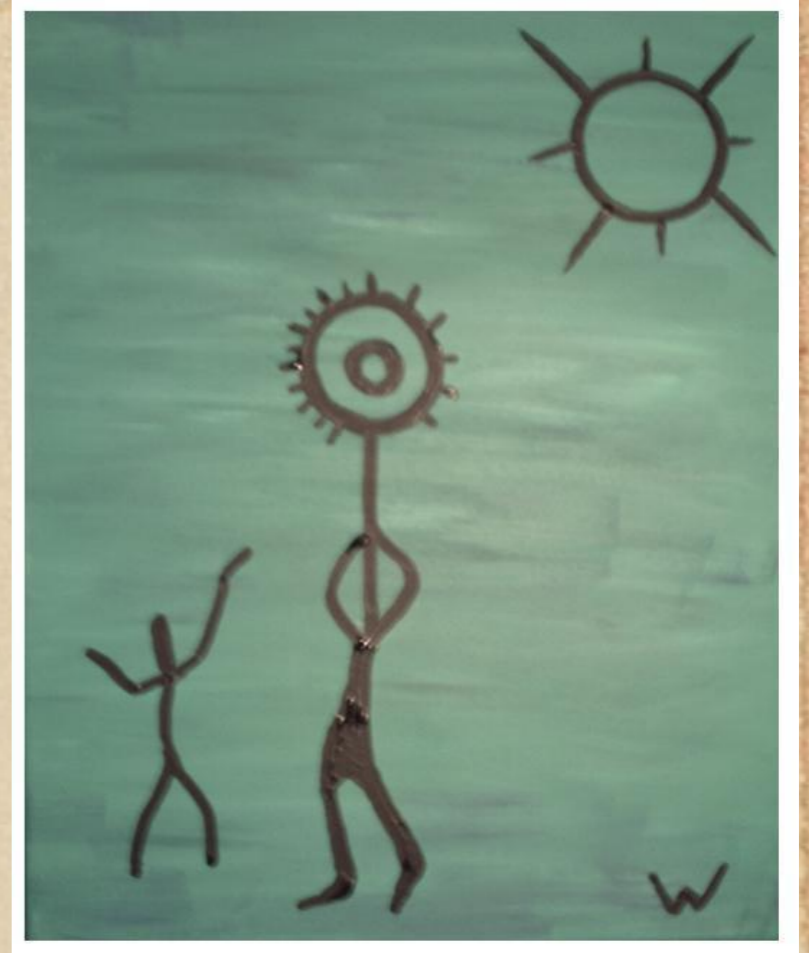
- ◆ During the 1770s, smallpox eradicated approximately 30 percent of Native Americans in the Northwest coast of the United States
- ◆ Due to the lack of knowledge for treating disease, there was no alternative but to allow the disease to run its course

# Beliefs

- ◆ Tribes were led by a chief or sachem, acting as both a mediator and religious leader
- ◆ Traditions and way of life dictated by spiritual, mythic beliefs

# Mythology

- ◆ Belief in the in lesser gods influenced their daily lives since these spirits inhabited the earth, water, and sky
- ◆ The great god Manitou was thought to confine defiant spirits in the Highlands until the Hudson broke through this antiquated “prison”



Depiction of the Algonquin God  
Gitche Manitou found in Ontario