

Summary: Haudenosaunee

Life in the Forests

The Haudenosaunee are American Indians who lived in the forests in New York State. Long ago, they depended on the forest for food, clothes, and shelter.

In the summer, women grew corn, beans, and squash. The winters were cold and snowy. The Haudenosaunee saved food for winter. The men hunted deer, bear, and beaver for meat and skins. The Haudenosaunee made warm clothes from the skins.

The Haudenosaunee built long, narrow houses of wood, bark, and skins. About six to ten families shared a longhouse. The houses were in towns with tall walls around them.

A New Government

There were many Haudenosaunee nations. At first, they fought about who could hunt or farm in some places. Then, a holy man called the Peacemaker visited. He told the Haudenosaunee to live together in peace.

A Haudenosaunee leader named Hiawatha helped spread this message. Five Haudenosaunee nations formed a government to help them live in peace. It was called the Iroquois League. The League talked together to solve problems.

The Constitution

The Haudenosaunee constitution was not written down. The people used beads to help them remember it. When the nations didn't agree, their leaders talked.

Today, thousands of Haudenosaunee live in New York, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, and Canada. The Haudenosaunee government works to protect Haudenosaunee land and traditions.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

government *noun*, an organization that makes laws and keeps order

constitution *noun*, the basic laws and ideas that a government and its people follow



After You Read

REVIEW What did the Haudenosaunee do to prepare for winter? Underline sentences that tell the answer.

REVIEW What was the purpose of the Haudenosaunee government? Highlight the sentence that tells the answer.

REVIEW What does the Haudenosaunee government do today? Underline the sentence that tells the answer.