



[First Peoples Menu](#)
[The Canada Site.com](#)
[Boer War Museum](#)
[Coming Back Alive](#)
[Goldi Productions Ltd](#)
[The Store](#)

[First Peoples](#)
[Contact & Conflict](#)
[Treaties & Change](#)
[The Metis & Rebellion](#)
[Production Credits](#)

[Email Us](#)

Eastern Woodland Farmers

**Groups in
this Region**

**Environment /
Housing**

**Food
/ Tools**

**Transportation /
Migration**

**Family / Social Structure /
Leadership**

**Tribal
Relations / War**

The Eastern Woodland Farmers inhabited the shores of the Great Lakes to the St. Lawrence River, and up towards Georgian Bay, in Southwestern and South-Central Ontario.

Religion

- Elders in the villages, during the long winter nights, huddled around longhouse fires, and passed on stories of creation- how things came to be- to the younger generations.
- Nothing was recorded, everything was oral- passed down through stories.
- Each myth or legend had a purpose - to explain an element of creation (ex. How something got to be the way it was.) Legends did this by using characters with symbolic representation.
 - In the creation story, a young woman Aientsik represented the fertile earth; her husband was Tharonhiawakon or 'He who Holds Up the Sky.' A turtle's back became the ocean floor on which the earth is settled, and Aientsik's daughter represents the wind.
- All creatures of nature- trees, plant, animals, the moon- had spirits of their own that either helped or impended a person. A spirit could be prayed to for help and guidance.
- For guidance, members of the village also interpreted their dream, which held hidden guidance.
- If they needed help, they visited a spiritual doctor, a shaman, or contacted the False Face Society.
 - The False Face Society was a collection of healers who used special masks with spiritual properties they carved themselves.



False Face Mask

Ceremonies

- There were six annual ceremonies, four relating to the corn crops, each lasted several days.
- All included feasting and music produced by rattles and drums.
- Festivals were: the New Year Festival, the Maple Festival, the Corn Planting Festival, the Strawberry Festival, the Green Corn Festival and the Harvest Festival of Thanksgiving.

Check this out

The Sacred Bowl Game was played during the New Year Festival.



4 of the 6 annual ceremonies were centered around corn

The bowl was decorated with four clan symbols- the bear, turtle, wolf and deer, and the object was to place six half-painted nuts on one side and to through the bowl on the ground.

If five of the six pits turned up the same colour, the player scored and could play again.

Art

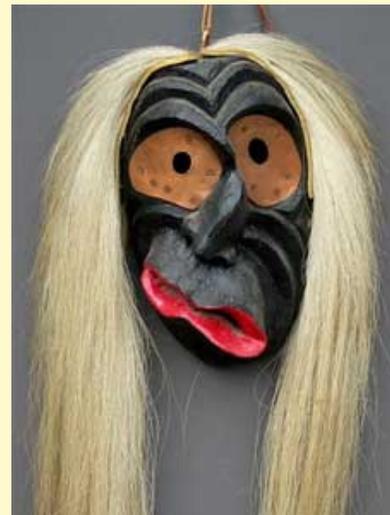
- The Clay pipe of the Eastern Woodland Farmers, were ornately decorated and crafted, and reserved for special occasions.
- The 'Peace Pipe' was reserved for council use only.
- Clan logos and symbols continually decorated longhouses, war posts, trees, clothing and moccasins.
- Men and women would sometimes have tattoos, which had symbolic significance.
- The False Face Society had masks which were very expressive.
- Rattles were made from deer toes, tied to a piece of hide, which was tied to a person's knee. When they moved, the rattle shook.



Clay Pipes



Flase Face Mask



False Face Mask

Clothing

- Clothing was made from fur and hides, along with

cornhusks and plant and tree fiber.

- Sewing needles were made from a small bone near the ankle joint of a deer.
- Thread was either animal sinew or twisted elm-bark fibers.
- Porcupine quills and moose-hair were used for decoration.

Moccasins

- Everyday footwear (although often going barefoot was easier), made from one piece of tanned and smoked hide seamed together at the heel and toe, with the top folded down to produce a cuff.
- A separate piece of fabric decorated with floral designs or celestial symbols was attached to the cuff and removed afterwards to become attached to a new pair of moccasins.



Iroquois moccasins

Kastoweh

- A feather ceremonial hat.
- Three splints of black ash made the base; two crossed over the crown of the head and the third one circled the head.
- The exterior was decorated with symbols, and the number of feathers added was significant to the nation.

Men's Clothing

- Summer
 - Leather kilts were fringed along the edges and secured by a sash
 - Breech cloth- long piece of deerskin 10 to 12 inches wide- passed between the legs and up, and was secured with a sash or leather belt.
 - Sashes made from plant fibers or deerskin cascaded over right shoulders and attached to the waist.
- Winter
 - Leggings and winter shirts were made from deerskin and embellished with fringes and porcupine quills.



Typical clothing worn by an Iroquois Warrior

Women's Clothing

- Deerskin dresses- sometimes fitted at the waist, the neck had a collar and the bottom had an upside-down V shape.
- Sometimes leather belts secured the waist.
- In winter, the dress was worn with a skirt that fell to about the calf, and leather leggings that were tied at the knee and long enough to overlap with moccasins.



Iroquois women at work, grinding corn

Groups in this Region

Environment / Housing

Food / Tools

Transportation / Migration

Family / Social Structure / Leadership

Tribal Relations / War

Back to the top

Back to Canada's First Peoples Menu

© Goldi Productions Ltd. 2007