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Eastern Woodland Farmers

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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.

Tribal Relations / War

- 1500 yrs ago- Ontario was ruled by Algonquians- who shared land with the Huron, Neutral and Petum nations- when the Iroquois traveled south to settle among those nations peacefully.
- Iroquois were originally called Aganuchioni, or 'House Builders'- and included five different tribes, like the Mohawk and Seneca.
- 1000 yrs ago- Legend has it a Huron man killed a Seneca chief; alliances were made and war broke out.
- Iroquois were exiled to less fertile land south of the Great Lakes.
- The Iroquois tribes fought amongst themselves and became weak and poor, while the nations north of the Great Lakes became strong and peaceful civilizations.
- The Iroquois kept asking to return to their old lands, but the other nations insisted on their decision .
- 800 yrs ago- the Iroquois decided to work together and form a confederacy based on peace among their five nations.
- For hundreds of years, the 'Five Nations' grew stronger and sub-councils by different tribes are formed, like a war party with a separate war chief. The main council remained peaceful.
- Upset over the Huron Indian's control of trade with the French, and wanting to move up north, the Iroquois decided to attack the other Eastern Woodland Farmers.
- 1642- The Five Nations war party attacked Contarea, a major Huron village on Lake Simcoe. Within hours, the village was ravaged.
- In the years following, Iroquois guerrillas spied and quietly interceded the fur trade in Southern Ontario.
- 1648- Conquest by the Iroquois began. Moving quickly, they surprised the Hurons, claim the lands, and wiped out the people within a year.
- Within the next year, the Petums and Neutrals were obliterated.

Check this out!

Legend has it, that around 1200 AD, there was a Mohawk chief, or sachem, named Deganawideh who had a vision that changed the fate of the Iroquois.

One day he sees a child breaking sticks for firewood. When the child holds one in his hand, he breaks it easily. However, when he gathers five sticks and tries to break them together, he fails.

At this, Deganawideh has an epiphany. Separately, the tribes of the Iroquois will be weak if they fight each other. Together, under a united confederacy based on peace, the Iroquois could grow stronger.

Deganawideh decides to meditate on this idea, and retreats to the woods. Eventually, a young Mohawk warrior, Ayontwatha, crosses Deganawideh's path and finds him meditating. He asks Deganawideh, "Why are you here?" Deganawideh discloses his hopes for the Iroquois nation to the young warrior. Ayontwatha understands, and swears he will visit each tribe's village, and spread Deganawideh's word. From this, the concept of the 'Five Nations' is born, and a federal council based on peace and loyalty is formed.



Five Nations Council

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