

## Northeast Region Document A

**Source Description:** This is a primary source written by European Christian missionaries about their firsthand accounts of the Iroquois peoples. The Iroquois nation, also known as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, is a unified nation comprised of six (originally only five) tribes that united for mutual defense.

### Term Definitions

**Ingenuity:** Being clever and creative in solving problems or making things.

**Communal:** Shared by everyone in a group, not just one person.

**Cohesion:** Sticking together or working well as a group.

**Cultivate:** To prepare and take care of land so plants can grow.

**Abundant:** Having more than enough of something; plenty.

### Source Text:

"The villages of the Iroquois are well-constructed and exhibit a degree of ingenuity in their communal living arrangements. Their longhouse homes are large wooden structures covered with bark. These longhouses can house multiple families, each occupying a designated section. The communal nature of these homes reflects the strong emphasis on family and social cohesion within Iroquois society. They cultivate the earth and derive from it a goodly portion of their sustenance. They plant their fields with Indian corn, beans, pumpkins, sunflowers, and tobacco. The women do the planting, hoeing, and harvesting, while the men clear the land and build the dwellings. The fields, carefully tended and enriched by the ashes from the burned trees, yield abundant harvests.

The government of the Iroquois nations are led by their Chiefs, who are generally the oldest and the wisest men, have great authority, but they do not act without consulting the elders and the warriors. Every village has its own Chief, who is advised by a council of elders and warriors. The Chiefs of the different villages meet in a general council for the important affairs of the nation. Each tribe might have its own issues, but the Iroquois Confederacy is about...unification through mutual defense, and it conducts foreign affairs."

## Northeast Region Document B

**Source Description:** This is a secondary source written about the Peacemaker Story. This is a story about how the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, also known as the Iroquois Nation, became unified and how the “Great Law of Peace” came to be.

### Term Definitions

**Democratic:** A way of making decisions where people have a say or vote.

**Unity:** People coming together and working as one group.

**Political:** Having to do with government, leaders, or how decisions are made for a community or country.

### Source Text:

The Great Law of Peace instructs them (the Haudenosaunee) on how to treat others, how to maintain a democratic society, and how peace can be kept only through good judgment. The Haudenosaunee believe that long ago their prophet, known as the Peacemaker, brought the first five nations together. At the time, the five nations were often at war with each other. The Peacemaker wanted to spread peace and unify the nations. He soon met Hiawatha, who also wanted to spread peace. Eventually, the Peacemaker and Hiawatha were able to join the Five Nations together with the message of peace. The leaders of each tribe buried their weapons under a pine tree, known as the Tree of Peace, to symbolize their unity. Each nation then selected men to be their leaders. These 50 chiefs, called *hoyaneh*, formed the Grand Council.

The Grand Council is still an active political body. It makes decisions based on the Great Law of Peace. All decisions made by the Grand Council have to be agreed upon by all members. These laws have made the Haudenosaunee the oldest living democracy in the world. The Haudenosaunee Grand Council influenced the creation and development of the United States government.

## Northwest Region Document A

**Source Description:** This is a secondary source about Indigenous groups living in the Northwest Region. This document doesn't talk about one tribe in particular; rather, it discusses similarities between tribes in the Pacific Northwest.

### Term Definitions

**Potlatch** – A special ceremony or feast where a family gave away gifts to show wealth and gain respect.

**Status** – A family's position or respect in the community, often based on wealth or generosity.

### Source Text:

The people of the mountainous Northwest Coast lived in an area with mild temperatures, plenty of rain, and abundant natural resources. The sea provided rich harvests of fish, especially salmon, which was a main food source. Nearby forests offered tall cedar trees, which the people used to build strong houses and long canoes for fishing and travel. Because food was plentiful, the communities did not need to move constantly. Instead, they built permanent villages where families could live year-round and focus on other activities, such as fishing, crafting, and trading.

Trade was very important, both within the village and with neighboring groups. In these villages, a family's status depended on how much it owned and could give away. Families often competed to gain prestige. One way to show wealth and earn respect was by holding a potlatch, a ceremonial feast that could last several days. During a potlatch, a family invited many guests and gave them gifts such as food, blankets, or tools. The more a family gave away, the more respect it received. Guests who received gifts were expected to hold their own potlatches in the future, continuing the cycle of generosity and status. Through ceremonies like the potlatch, the people of the Northwest Coast built strong communities and maintained social order.

## Northwest Region Document B

**Source Description:** This is a secondary source about the Chinook peoples who lived in the Pacific Northwest.

### Term Definitions

**Longhouse** – A large home made from wood and bark that housed extended families.

**Vision quest** – A spiritual journey for adolescents to gain guidance or insight for their future.

**Shaman** – A spiritual leader or healer; in Chinook society, both men and women could serve as shamans.

### Source Text:

The Chinook are best known in Euro-American history from their 1805 interaction with the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1806) when they aided the party, but the Chinookan peoples had lived for centuries before that time along the waterway now known as the Columbia River. According to some scholars, Chinook may mean "fish eaters", owing to their reliance on fish as a staple in their meals (though this claim has been challenged). They were originally hunter-gatherer people before establishing permanent communities distinguished by their longhouses, which were homes to extended families of sometimes up to 40 or 50 people.

Men hunted (primarily elk), fished (usually spearfishing for salmon), defended the village, made war, and brought home captives. Women built the homes, gathered herbs, edible plants, nuts, and roots, made clothing and footwear, raised the children, and prepared the meals. Both girls and boys could participate in the vision quest when they reached adolescence, and women and men could both serve as shamans ("medicine men" and "medicine women") in the community.

The Chinook believed (and still believe) in a single Great Spirit Creator God (*Neahkanie*) who made and maintains the world with the assistance of other supernatural entities such as elemental spirits of the earth, water, air, and fire. Nature spirits are understood as a simple reality of life for the Chinook, as are guardian spirits who assist and guide one through life. As with most, if not all, Native American peoples, the Chinook believe in an afterlife similar to their experiences on earth but without sickness, sorrow, disappointment, deprivation, or, of course, death.

## Southwest Region Document A

**Source Description:** The following is a secondary source about the Pueblo peoples who lived in what is now the American Southwest.

### Term Definitions

**Four Corners** – The area where Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico meet.

**Check dams** – Small barriers built to slow and hold water for crops.

**Pumice** – Light, porous volcanic rock that absorbs and slowly releases water, used to help plants grow.

### Source Text:

The Pueblo lived in the Four Corners region and later moved into the Rio Grande Valley in what is now northern New Mexico. They settled in canyon floodplains and on mesa tops, like the Pajarito Plateau. Many of these areas, including Frijoles Canyon (home to Bandelier National Monument), are still culturally important to Pueblo people today.

The Ancestral Pueblo grew corn, beans, and squash, called the “three sisters.” These crops were essential because together they provided most of the people’s food and nutrition. Farming in the canyon was difficult because rainfall was less than 20 inches a year. Farmers used dry farming techniques, conserving water with check dams, gravel mulch, and sometimes carrying water from Frijoles Creek.

The temperature was also challenging. The canyon and mesas are 6,000–7,000 feet above sea level, so the growing season was about 150 days. Corn needed 120 days to mature, but the last frost in spring and the first frost in fall were unpredictable. Days were hot with strong sunlight, and nights could be very cold, which affected crop growth.

Terrain mattered, too. Pumice, a light volcanic rock, absorbed water and released it slowly, helping plants survive. Farmers planted seeds with digging sticks in scattered plots to protect against crop failure. They saved seeds each year and used these methods to farm Frijoles Canyon for about 400 years.

## Southwest Region Document B

**Source Description:** The following text is from the Navajo people, a group that lived in what is now the American Southwest. This secondary source discusses the “Diné Way of Life” that guided the Navajo in their everyday life.

**Source Text:**

The Navajo people, the Diné, passed through three different worlds before emerging into this world, the Fourth World, or Glittering World. The Diné believe there are two classes of beings: the Earth People and the Holy People. The Holy People are believed to have the power to aid or harm the Earth People. Since the Earth People of the Diné are an integral part of the universe, they must do everything they can to maintain harmony or balance on Mother Earth.

It is believed that centuries ago, the Holy People taught the Diné how to live the right way and to conduct their many acts of everyday life. They were taught to live in harmony with Mother Earth, Father Sky, and the many other elements, such as man, animals, plants, and insects. The Holy People put four sacred mountains in four different directions: Mt. Blanca to the east, Mt. Taylor to the south, San Francisco Peak to the west, and Mt Hesperus to the north near Durango, Colorado, thus creating Navajoland. The four directions are represented by four colors: White Shell represents the east, Turquoise the south, Yellow Abalone the west, and Jet Black the north.

The number four permeates traditional Navajo philosophy. In the Navajo culture, there are four directions, four seasons, the first four clans, and four colors that are associated with the four sacred mountains. In most Navajo rituals, there are four songs and multiples thereof, as well as the Navajo wedding basket and many other symbolic uses of four.

When disorder evolves in a Navajo's life, such as an illness, medicine men use herbs, prayers, songs, and ceremonies to help cure patients. Some tribal members choose to be cured at the many hospitals on the Navajo Nation. Some will seek the assistance of a traditional Navajo medicine man. A qualified medicineman is a unique individual bestowed with supernatural powers to diagnose a person's problem and to heal or cure an illness and restore harmony to the patient.

## Great Plains Region Document A

**Source Description:** The following is a legend from the Sioux peoples living in the Great Plains region. This story is known as “The Signs of Corn”.

### Term Definitions

**Kernel** – a single piece of corn.

**Cob** – the central core of an ear of corn.

**Nubbins** – small or undeveloped ears of corn.

**Slovenly** – messy or untidy.

**Hominy** – corn that’s been treated and boiled, often eaten as a dish.

**Tallow** – fat from an animal, like buffalo, used in cooking.

**Bountiful** – plentiful, abundant.

### Source Text:

When corn is to be planted by the Natives, it is the work of the women to see to the sorting and cleaning of the best seed. It is also the women’s work to see to the planting.

After the best seed has been selected, the planter measures the corn, lays down a layer of hay, and then a layer of corn. Over this corn they sprinkle warm water and cover it with another layer of hay, then bind hay about the bundle and hang it up in a spot where the warm rays of the sun can strike it.

While the corn is hanging in the sun, the ground is being prepared to receive it. Having finished the task of preparing the ground, the woman takes down her seed corn, which has by this time sprouted. Then she proceeds to plant the corn.

Before she plants the first hill, she extends her hoe heavenwards and asks the Great Spirit to bless her work, that she may have a good yield. After her prayer, she takes four kernels and plants one at the north, one at the south, one at the east, and one at the west sides of the first hill. This is asking the Great Spirit to give summer rain and sunshine to bring forth a good crop.

For different growths of the corn, the women have an interpretation as to the character of the one who planted it.

1st. Where the corn grows in straight rows and the cob is full of kernels to the end, this signifies that the planter of this corn is of an exemplary character, and is very truthful and thoughtful.

2nd. If the rows on the ears of corn are irregular and broken, the planter is considered careless and unthoughtful. Also, disorderly and slovenly about her house and person.

3rd. When an ear of corn bears a few scattering kernels with spaces producing no corn, it is said that it is a good sign that the planter will live to a ripe old age. So old will they be that, like the corn, their teeth will be few and far between.

4th. When a stalk bears a great many nubbins, or small ears growing around the large one, it is a sign that the planter is from a large and respectable family.

After the corn is gathered, it is boiled into sweet corn and made into hominy; parched and mixed with buffalo tallow and rolled into round balls, and used at feasts, or carried by the warriors on the warpath as food.

When there has been a good crop of corn, an ear is always tied at the top of the medicine pole, of the sun dance, in thanks to the Great Spirit for his goodness to them in sending a bountiful crop.



## Great Plains Region Document B

**Source Description:** Below is a secondary source about the Indigenous groups living in the Great Plains Region.

### Term Definitions

**Tipi** – A cone-shaped tent made from wooden poles and animal hides that is easy to take down and move.

**Smallpox** – A deadly disease brought by Europeans that killed many Native people who had no immunity.

**Resistance** – Efforts by Plains tribes to protect their land, people, and way of life from settlers.

### Source Text:

The Great Plains is a large region in the middle of the United States, stretching from the Rocky Mountains to the Mississippi River. Most of it is dry grassland with little rainfall, which made farming difficult for the people who lived there.

The Plains tribes are usually divided into two categories. The first group was nomadic, meaning they moved from place to place following the seasonal migrations of buffalo herds. They lived in tipis, which were easy to take down, carry, and set up again. Tribes in this group included the Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Comanche, Crow, Arapaho, Assiniboine, and Plains Apache. The second group lived in permanent villages, grew crops, and traded with other tribes. They still hunted buffalo, but their way of life was less focused on constantly moving. Tribes in this group included the Mandan, Pawnee, Dakota, Hidatsa, Omaha, and Osage.

Plains tribes shared Plains Native Sign Language for communication, storytelling, speeches, and ceremonies. Many tribes practiced important spiritual traditions. The Sun Dance was a yearly ritual that involved fasting, prayer, and community celebration. Later, the Ghost Dance spread through the Plains, aiming to unite tribes, honor ancestors, and protect the land from settlers.

Women had important roles, including farming, gathering food, making clothes, and caring for the family's home. Horses, brought by the Spanish, changed Plains culture by allowing easier travel and buffalo hunting. The buffalo provided almost everything the Plains people needed, including food, clothing, shelter, tools, and rope.

Unfortunately, diseases brought by European settlers, like smallpox, killed many Plains people. Those who survived sometimes resisted settlers who were moving into their lands.