

Eastern Woodlands

The Eastern Woodlands are also called the Northeast Woodlands. The region stretches from the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River south to South Carolina and from the East Coast west to the Mississippi River. All parts of the region have the full change of seasons. The physical environment includes coastal plains, river valleys, mountains, and lush forests. Farming is possible in most areas, and the main crops that Native Americans grew were corn, beans, and squash. They also hunted small game and fished to supplement their farming. They used the skins of the animals they killed for clothing.

There were two main house styles in the Woodlands, the longhouse and the wigwam. The longhouse was built in the shape of a rectangle but had a rounded roof. The top and sides were covered with bark. Some Woodlands Native Americans lived in villages of longhouses that were surrounded with a wooden stockade. In other areas of the Woodlands, the people lived in wigwams. A wigwam had a pole framework, which was either cone- or dome-shaped. The framework was covered with mats, bark, or hides.

The Woodlands Native Americans worshipped the spirits of nature. They believed in a Supreme Being who was all-powerful. Shamanism was part of their religious practices. A shaman is a person who, while in a trance, can communicate with the spirits. They speak and act through him. Shamans were also medicine men whose job it was to cure the sick.

Iroquois

- Group of Indian nations known as the Iroquois League, Iroquois Confederacy, and later the Six Nations: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca (c. 1570) and Tuscarora (c. 1722) **45**
- Matriarchal society: mother and her children as basic unit
- Each of the six Iroquois nations is a group of related family units traced through the mothers.
- Sachems, or chiefs representing each nation at a tribal or league council, are chosen by female heads of families.
- Allies of the British in the French and Indian War
- Allies (except Oneida and Tuscarora) of the British in the American Revolution

- Today, more than 22,000 in New York State and Ontario, Canada
- Mohawks today known for their special skills as steelworkers building skyscrapers

Mohican

- Originally along the Hudson River in what is New York State; driven east by the Mohawks
- Fought against white settlements but ultimately sold land
- Today, few surviving Mohicans on a reservation in Connecticut

Delaware (Lenni Lenape)

- Originally in Delaware River basin in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware
- Made treaty with William Penn in 1680
- Forced out by whites and the Iroquois in 1700s
- Allied with British in the American Revolution
- Remaining members on reservations in Oklahoma and Ontario, Canada

Susquehannocks

- From southern New York, across central Pennsylvania, to the north end of the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland
- Agreed to live under English colonial governments but lost their land to white settlers who could not be controlled by the governments
- Last group massacred in 1763

Massachusett

- Original people in what is today the area of Boston and its suburbs; Massachusetts Bay Colony
- Sided with the colonists in Metacom's War (King Philip's War) in 1675–1676 but lost land to white settlers anyway
- No known groups had survived by 1800

Powhatan Confederacy

- 30 tribes in some 200 settlements enclosed with stockades along the coasts of Virginia and Chesapeake Bay
- Colony of Jamestown established on their land
- Marriage of Powhatan's daughter, Pocahontas, to John Rolfe eased tensions for a while
- Warfare erupted and continued off and on until 1644 when the tribes were effectively crushed.
- A few groups still exist in eastern Virginia.