

Native American History: New York

In 1788, New York became the 11th state to join the Union that made up the early United States. However, New York's history dates back much earlier than this. Within New York lies a region known as Long Island. The European settlers came to Long Island in the 1640s. Upon their arrival, they met Native Americans. These people lived here for many years before the Europeans arrived.

One of the Native American tribes that lived on Long Island when the Europeans arrived was the Algonquins. They were broken up into 13 different communities on Long Island. Many of the names of the towns that exist on Long Island today come from the original Native American names. This includes Massapequa, Setauket and Montauk. Today, the town of Montauk is a popular destination for people to visit during the summer. The town offers beautiful beaches, hiking, bird watching and even a lighthouse, where you can climb all the way to the top!



The Native Americans shared their knowledge of the land. The Native Americans were quite good at hunting, fishing and farming. They were able to do these activities using stone tools that they created. Among these tools were axe heads, hoes, knives and arrowheads. Bone was another material they used to help them obtain food. They created fishhooks out of bone to help them catch fish.

In addition to fish, the Native American diet consisted of deer, duck, turkey and shellfish. They also grew many crops and dined on corn, beans, squash and pumpkins. From the crops and animals that existed during that time period, we can see how some of the traditional Thanksgiving Day foods came into being.

When the European settlers arrived, they brought with them other animals from their homeland. These included horses, cattle, sheep, pigs and chickens. Although these animals provided a new source of food and clothing, some of them also destroyed the crops the Native Americans grew. New livestock also brought with them new diseases that spread from animals to the humans. This included influenza and whooping cough from pigs to humans, and malaria from chickens to humans. The Europeans and the Native Americans needed to find a balance between the old way of life and the new.

Overall, the arrival of the Europeans was the starting point to the merging of two very different civilizations. Each group contributed certain elements of their agricultural traditions and lifestyle. From hunting and fishing to learning how to live with each other, the Europeans and the Native Americans made the best of both worlds and laid the groundwork for life as we know it today.

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1. What is the name of one of the Native American tribes that existed on Long Island before the European settlers arrived?

2. How many different communities of Algonquins lived on Long Island?

3. What were many of the towns that exist on Long Island today named after?

4. If you wanted to see a lighthouse in New York, what town would you visit?

5. Name 3 different activities the Algonquins took part in so they could eat.

6. What were two natural resources the Algonquins used to help them hunt and fish?

7. Name 5 different animals the settlers brought with them from Europe.

8. Name 8 different animals and vegetables that were part of the Algonquin diet.

9. Why was the introduction of livestock both good and bad to the Algonquin way of life?

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10. How did the arrival of the European settlers affect life in America today?

* Bonus Question:



If you could create a new dish using the foods the Algonquins ate, what would it be? Write the name of it with the ingredients and draw a picture of it in the box. Be creative!

THE NAME OF MY NEW DISH: _____

INGREDIENTS: _____

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Answers:

1. Algonquin
2. 13
3. Native American tribes
4. Montauk
5. Hunting, fishing, farming
6. Bone and stone
7. Deer, duck, turkey, shellfish, corn, beans, squash, pumpkins
8. Horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens
9. New livestock gave them a new source for food and clothing. However, new livestock also brought new diseases. People became sick since new germs spread from the animals to the humans.
10. The Europeans and the Native Americans had to learn to live together, share their knowledge of agriculture, and work towards building a new way of life.