

[19] The houses described by Van den Bogaert are typical of the “longhouses” of Northern Iroquoian populations. In general, such houses were approximately 20 to 25 feet wide, with lengths varying from 40 to more than 200 feet, the average being about 90 to 100 feet long (Van der Bogaert estimated the lengths of the houses by simply stepping them off). Poles made from sapling, several inches in diameter, were set in the ground following a generally rectangular floor plan. The tops of these poles were drawn together and secured, forming vertical or near-vertical walls and an arched or arborlike roof 15 to 20 feet high. Once this framework was erected, it was covered with sheets of elm bark, leaving an entrance, usually at each end. Movable bark sheets at the apex of the roof could be adjusted to provide for light and ventilation. The interior of the houses were divided into compartments placed along each side with a central aisle the length of the house. Hearths, placed in the aisle, were shared by occupants of opposing compartments. The compartments constituted a module of about 20-25 feet in length within the house. Each of these compartments housed a nuclear family, while the whole house was the residential unit for a household or extended family related through the lineage of the mother. There was often a storage area at either one or both ends of the longhouse. In addition, storage space was available between compartments and in and among the sleeping platforms built against the house wall within each compartment. These platforms, generally constructed one or more feet off the ground to avoid dampness, cold, vermin, were sometimes covered with reed mats or animal skins. At the same time, bark sheet and mats used for sleeping or sitting were placed on the house floor below these platforms.

[22] *Onesti*. Corn is the most important and popular of the domesticated plants used by the Iroquois.

[24] Skipples. A dry Dutch measure equivalent to .764 bushels.

[25] Anonsira. The modern Mohawk equivalent is squash.

[26] Beans were an important domesticate among the Iroquois. A great number of varieties was grown. They formed one part of the triad of corn, beans, and squash, “The Three Sisters.”

Activity for Journal Readings

After reading the journal entries and the explanatory notes do the following:

- 1) Draw a picture of the castle as described by Van der Bogaert. Do a sketch of the castle and a sketch of a longhouse showing the methods of construction and the interior space.
- 2) Use the drawing of the wigwam to compare a wigwam to a longhouse. How are they the same and how are they different.
- 3) Now compare the two kinds of Native American houses to your house model from the “Make a Shelter” Activity. How are they the same and how are they different.
- 4) What were “The Three Sisters”? Make a list of any foods mentioned in the journal entries and put a star next to any of the foods in the “Three Sisters” group. Are the “Three Sisters” still important crops today? Give specific information to back up your answer.

V. Vocabulary

1. Saratoga – Indian word of the Iroquois language, meaning “hillside country of the great river” and/or “place of salt springs”
2. Shanantaha – Mohawk word meaning “deer or deep water;” used by Mohawks as name for Ballston Lake
3. Kayaderoseras – Mohawk word meaning “the land of the beautiful lake of the winding river”
4. portage – to carry
5. Iroquois – Native American tribal group of New York State; group inhabiting areas closest to Saratoga County
6. Abenaki – Native American tribal group of New England
7. Haudenosaunee – Iroquois meaning “People of the Longhouse”
8. nuclear family – one’s immediate family, such as mother, father and children
9. extended family – family including immediate family plus grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, etc.
10. Maquasen – term meaning Mohawks
11. Simnekens – Dutch word for all Indians west of the Mohawk River
12. castle – the Dutch term for a large settlement often with a palisade for fortification and located on a hill above the river
13. palisade – a fence or stakes set firmly in the ground for defense
14. onesti – corn
15. anonsira – squash
16. venison – the meat from deer
17. pelts – animal skins
18. sapling – a young tree
19. hearth - fireplace