

Essential Readings
for the Study of History

Humanitas

American Origins

BOOK

1



Indigenous Americans to the Colonies

Christopher Maiocca, Series and Volume Editor



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Update

A fine, intelligent, and new approach to history that will find a wide audience. The readings are apposite, the design is excellent, and the illustrations are beautiful. A first-rate work.

Sir Harold Evans
Editor-at-Large, Reuters (2011–2020)

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*Chapters 25–50 can be found in *Humanitas: American Origins, Book 2*.

To Mitten, Bee, Ki-Ki, Phebes, B'miah, and EE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Several years ago, my former boss, Dr. Jeff Pratt, challenged me to create a humanities curriculum that (1) used only source documents and (2) was designed for discussion-based classrooms. The *Humanitas* series is the fruit of his provocations. Thinking of Jeff reminds me of the gratitude I owe to so many from the Horizon Prep community—to Heather Dalton, who first got me interested in curriculum writing; to Brent Hodges, who sent me to Philips Exeter Academy in order to have my pedagogy reoriented; and to Tony Groesbeck, who was hugely influential to my early understanding of Socratic discussion and student-led inquiry. I owe thanks also to graphic designer extraordinaire, the one and only Jamie Urbina, whose early design help was invaluable. Thank you to Dr. Alex Kim, a true patron of the arts and a champion of the great renewal in education. Keep fighting the good fight.

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Classical education is not for the faint of heart. My deepest gratitude to Joe Gerber, my steady-handed dean who has—more than once—led me through the Slough of Despond and unlocked the door of Doubting Castle when Giant Despair has come howling.

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I would be remiss not to express my thanks to Classical Academic Press's omniscient managing editor, Lauraine Gustafson. She has patiently pointed out errors, that, in absence of her watchful eye, would have remained strewn throughout these volumes. Alas, whatever errors remain must now be laid at my door.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1509** Henry VIII becomes king of England.
- 1517** Martin Luther nails his "Ninety-Five Theses" to the door of Castle Church in Wittenberg, marking the commencement of the Protestant Reformation.
- 1523** Luther pens his famous treatise "On Secular Authority," addressed to the German nobility, in which he defines the limits of human governments.
- 1534** England's Parliament passes the Act of Supremacy, declaring King Henry—and not the pope—to be supreme head of the Church of England.
- 1536** John Calvin publishes *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the most widely read theological work in the Western world.
- 1546** Martin Luther dies.
- 1547** Edward VI, the "incomparable prince," becomes king of England and a great champion of the Protestant cause.
- 1553** After Edward's death, "Bloody" Mary becomes queen of England and begins a brutal persecution of Protestant Christians.
- 1555** Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley are burned to death at Oxford University, becoming two of the most prominent Protestant ministers killed by Mary.
- 1556** John Ponet, the bishop of Winchester, pens his famous essay, *A Short Treatise of Political Power*, while in exile. This work argued for the physical removal of despotic monarchs.
- 1558** Elizabeth I becomes queen of England after her half sister, "Bloody" Mary, dies.
- 1564** John Calvin dies.
- 1598** James Stuart, king of England and commissioner of the King James Bible, publishes *The True Law of Free Monarchies* in defense of the divine right of kings theory.
- 1607** The Jamestown Colony is established near the Chesapeake Bay in Virginia, becoming the first English settlement in America and marking the beginning of the British Empire.
- 1608** Pilgrims reach Holland after fleeing England.
- 1610** "Starving Time" for the Jamestown Colony results in nearly 90 percent of settlers dying during their first winter.
- 1620** Pilgrims reach America and establish the Plymouth Colony.

- 1622** Powhatan Indians massacre 347 English settlers in Jamestown, Virginia, decimating the population of the infant colony.
- 1631** John Winthrop becomes the first governor of Massachusetts.
- 1636** Harvard College is established in Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- 1641** Charles I appoints Sir William Berkeley as governor of Virginia.
- 1642** Charles raises an army, claiming that Parliament is in rebellion against him. This marks the beginning of the English Civil War, pitting monarchists against supporters of Parliament.
- 1644** Samuel Rutherford pens one of the most famous political works in history, the treatise entitled *Lex, Rex*, in which he argues that kings do not rule by any special command of God.
- 1649** Charles I is captured, tried, and executed by parliamentary forces, bringing an end to the English monarchy for over a decade.
- 1660** The monarchy is restored in England, Scotland, and Ireland, with the rise of Charles II to the throne. Many who conspired against his father, Charles I, were put to death.
- 1661** Rutherford dies in prison awaiting trial.
- 1673** Jesuit missionary Jacques Marquette becomes the first European to explore the interior of the Mississippi River.
- 1675** Several New England colonies enter a brutal, three-year war with local American Indians. This conflict is known as King Philip's War.
- 1676** Nathaniel Bacon rebels against the government of Virginia, bringing ruin to that colony.
- 1682** William Penn leaves England and establishes Pennsylvania as a refuge for Quakers.
- 1689** John Locke writes *Two Treatises of Government*, a pair of essays that will greatly influence America's Founding Fathers and their understanding of the state's role in safeguarding inalienable rights.
- 1692** The Salem witch trials begin.
- 1693** William and Mary College is founded in the Virginia Colony, making it the second oldest institution for higher education in America.
- 1701** Yale College is established in New Haven, Connecticut.
- 1741** The Great Awakening begins to crest under the influence of George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards.
- 1748** Charles Montesquieu writes *De l'esprit des Lois*, an essay in which he explains the need for the three powers of government to be balanced.
- 1752** Benjamin Franklin performs the kite experiment, proving the electric nature of lightning.
- 1754** John Woolman writes his influential treatise *Some Considerations on the Keeping of Africans*, and becomes one of the prominent voices for abolition in America.

- 1756** England and France pull Europe into a global conflict known as the Seven Years' War.
- 1762** Jean-Jacques Rousseau pens *Principes du Droit Politique*, a treatise in which he explains how social contract can be applied to democratic governments.
- 1763** England wins the Seven Years' War but accrues massive amounts of debt in the process. They attempt to alleviate this debt by taxing the American colonies.
- 1764** Thomas Pownall writes *The Administration of the Colonies*. This essay warns Parliament that the American colonies will not accept taxation without representation.
- 1765** For the first time in history, England imposes a direct, internal tax on the American colonies for the express purpose of raising revenue. This legislation is called the Stamp Act, and it requires printed materials in the colonies to be produced on stamped paper manufactured in London.
- 1766** Parliament repeals the Stamp Act in response to protests from merchants and manufacturers with colonial interests.
- 1767** Parliament imposes a new wave of taxation, known as the Townshend Acts, which places import duties on items such as paint, lead, glass, and tea.
- 1767–1768** John Dickinson writes a series of essays entitled *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*, which greatly unite the colonies against the Townshend Acts.
- 1768** British troops arrive in Boston with the goal of forcing compliance with the Townshend Acts.
- 1789** Olaudah Equiano publishes his autobiography, which details the horrors of the slave trade. This work greatly energizes the abolition movement in England.
- 1770** British soldiers open fire and kill several aggressive protesters. The incident is publicized as the Boston Massacre.
- 1772** The first violent uprising against the British Crown in America occurs when a group of men attack and burn the *Gaspee*—a British schooner sent to address commodities being smuggled into the harbors of Rhode Island.
- 1773** A group of colonists, disguised as Indians, board British ships and destroy the cargo by dumping it into the Boston Harbor. The event is subsequently called the Boston Tea Party.
- 1774** In response to the Boston Tea Party, Parliament issues a sweeping wave of punitive legislation, known as the Intolerable Acts, which shuts down the economy of the colonies and takes away their rights of self-governance.
- 1774** Facing increased British aggression, the colonies respond by sending delegates to Philadelphia. This gathering is known as the First Continental Congress.
- 1775** In April, British and Continental forces formally engage each other for the first time at the Battles of Concord and Lexington.

- 1775** In early May, the Second Continental Congress gathers in Philadelphia and, two months later, publishes their intent to take up arms against Great Britain.
- 1775** In June, George Washington is appointed commander in chief of the Continental Army.
- 1775** Later that month, British forces win a Pyrrhic victory at the Battle of Bunker Hill.
- 1775** In October, William Howe replaces Thomas Gage as commander of the British forces in North America.
- 1776** In January, Thomas Paine publishes *Common Sense*, the most widely read political pamphlet of the Revolutionary period.
- 1776** After a yearlong siege, British forces evacuate Boston in March.
- 1776** Continental Congress publishes the Declaration of Independence in July.
- 1776** In late August, Britain delivers a severe blow to Continental forces at the Battle of Long Island.
- 1776** Washington crosses the icy Delaware River in December and surprises British troops at Trenton and then soon after at Princeton, giving Continental forces a desperately needed victory.
- 1776** England wins an overwhelming victory at the Battle of Fort Mifflin, securing the surrender of 3,000 American soldiers and solidifying their control of New Jersey and New York.
- 1777** Washington is forced out of New Jersey and moves his detachment south in an attempt to frustrate Howe's plans for the capture of Philadelphia.
- 1777** In September, Washington is defeated by Howe at the Battle of Brandywine.
- 1777** Later in September, British forces capture Philadelphia without resistance.
- 1777** Howe defeats Washington again at the Battle of Germantown in October.
- 1777** In October, General Horatio Gates turns the tides of the war in the northern department and forces General John Burgoyne to surrender approximately 6,000 troops to the American forces at the Battle of Saratoga.
- 1777** Washington winters his troops at Valley Forge in December. Over the next several months, around 2,500 American soldiers die from disease, starvation, or exposure to the elements.
- 1778** At the turn of this year, Washington responds to a consorted effort by some of his leading officers to have him replaced as commander in chief. Historians refer to this incident as the Conway Cabal—named after General Thomas Conway, whose letters criticizing Washington were forwarded to the Second Continental Congress.
- 1778** France formally enters the war in February, joining forces with America.
- 1778** The Battle of Red Bank commences in late August. It proves to be a disastrous first attempt of military cooperation between America and France, as the French fleet of ships retreat without engaging the enemy.

- 1779** Spain declares war against England on June 21.
- 1780** Benedict Arnold is court-martialed on several serious charges but remains in the service of Washington.
- 1780** The war moves south, and the American forces soon suffer a tremendous blow, as General Benjamin Lincoln surrenders well over 3,000 troops to British General Henry Clinton at the Siege of Charleston.
- 1780** In September, a plot by Benedict Arnold to hand West Point over to the British is foiled by the capture of his coconspirator, Major John André.
- 1780** As the year draws to a close, American forces string together several critical victories in the South, such as the Battle of King's Mountain and the Battle of Cowpens, encouraging them that the war can still be won.
- 1781** Washington orchestrates a "perfect storm" at the Siege of Yorktown, when his army traps British forces against the Chesapeake Bay as two French fleets cut off any hope of escape. General Lord Charles Cornwallis surrenders more than 7,000 British troops, effectively ending the Revolutionary War.
- 1782** In February, the British House of Commons votes against further war.
- 1782** British evacuate Charleston, South Carolina, on December 14.
- 1783** The Treaty of Paris ends the American Revolutionary War.
- 1783** On November 25, British troops evacuate New York, marking the end of English rule and occupation.
- 1783** General George Washington resigns as commander in chief of the Continental Army on December 23.

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

The classical tradition of education has regularly emphasized the importance of approaching the great ideas of human wisdom *ad fontes*, going “to the fountains or sources” themselves. The reasoning for this is that, though secondary sources certainly have their place, we ought not make what is secondary primary.

Consider, for example, that students are reading about Benjamin Franklin. While reading about him can be a pleasure, reading Franklin’s own words is an even greater delight. What is more, it is often true that the works of a writer such as Franklin are just as accessible as writings *about* Franklin, if not more so. A source such as Franklin’s *Autobiography* deserves its rank as primary—first in importance, influence, and consequence. Secondary sources may help us understand Franklin, but no one can aid us in that understanding better than Franklin himself. While secondary writings about Franklin will come and go with each generation, Franklin’s voice will endure.

The *Humanitas* series attempts to bring primary source writings to high school students so that they may hear from the great authors themselves, thus gaining an understanding of history from those who lived it. Put another way, this series seeks to keep what is primary, primary.

As much as we believe that students should hear directly from original sources and writers, we also know that it is very helpful to provide some orientation to these sources as well as some practical guidance throughout their reading. In this series, we have carefully arranged the sequence of readings but also included brief introductions to each reading as well as many explanatory annotations to provide clarity and context for students. Our goal has been to create just the right blend of the primary (original source readings) and the secondary (introductions, annotations, timelines, questions).

We are convinced that students who study the sources in this series will be led through a rich collection of important ideas and questions that have shaped our past and present. This journey will impart the prudence and wisdom students will need to lead and serve future generations. Our great hope is that students will come to understand humanity well, and therefore serve it well in the years to come.

A NOTE FROM THE SERIES EDITOR

 As I recall the first time I heard of classical education, I can remember exactly where I was: driving down Washington Street in San Diego, about a quarter mile from Bronx Pizza. I was in my company car, listening to R. C. Sproul's radio broadcast "Renewing Your Mind." His guest that day was a man named Doug Wilson and they were talking about a school Wilson had started somewhere in Idaho. As I listened to Sproul and Wilson unpack the contours of classical education and how this school in Idaho was attempting to revive that model, "I felt my heart strangely warmed," to use Wesley's words.

I was raised just outside of Boston and, like most New Englanders, I always held a deep respect and even a romantic reverence for the academy. Yet even this could not account for what happened to me that day. Completely unaware that there was another model of education, I assumed that what schools did *now* was exactly what they had always done. Looking back from the vantage of hindsight, it is evident that as I was being awakened to this new universe, I was also receiving what the Reformers called a *vocatio*, that is, a call or summons to a particular occupation.

In response to that call, I returned to the Boston area two years later to pursue graduate work at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. There, studying among great scholars, amidst ivy-covered buildings and rolling landscapes dotted with ancient trees, the memories of that radio program would often return to my mind.

Upon graduation, I went to work at Harvest Academy, a classical school in Sonoma County, California. Those were precious years of raising a family in a beautiful part of the country. It was also the birthplace of my family's non-profit called Bread for Life, which is now in its twelfth year and has raised almost a million dollars in order to build bakeries and schools and to assist farmers in Uganda, Africa.

After my time at Harvest Academy, I received an invitation to create and chair a humanities department at Horizon Prep, a school in Southern California that had recently converted to the classical model. These also were tremendous years during which I had the opportunity to introduce an entire community of hungry teachers, willing students, and excited parents to classical education. Yet as fate would have it, although I was brought there to train others, I was the one who was about to get schooled.

The same year I had arrived at Horizon Prep, a new dean of students had also been hired. Unbeknownst to me, this gentleman had a son who was

attending the great Phillips-Exeter Academy in New Hampshire. Seeing the intellectual transformation that this school had wrought on his own progeny, he secured two of their department heads to come train his new staff in the art of Socratic discussion. Those were some of the most powerful days I had ever experienced in my life.

As simple as it may sound, the unadorned act of sitting around a table, in community, musing over some great poem, work of art, historical treatise, or piece of literature, was utterly transformative. I realized then that my unexamined commitment to the lecture model of teaching had robbed my students, and myself, of what was unquestionably the intellectual engine behind Western civilization: discussion-based education. In terms of my pedagogy, this was not simply a Copernican revolution, but it would set into motion a sequence of events that ultimately led to the creation of the *Humanitas* series.

I committed myself to teaching students primarily through discussion rather than declamation, but I immediately ran into a problem. Most of my classes at Horizon Prep were in the area of history—American, ancient, and medieval. Committed to the Socratic model, I tried having discussions using traditional textbooks, but it did not work. We needed to wrestle with *ideas* and *events*, not summaries of decades-long epochs condensed into a couple of paragraphs. Truth be told, my first year experimenting with this new pedagogy was a dud.

Recognizing that I needed some fresh vision, my dean was kind enough to send me off to the summer Humanities Institute at Phillips-Exeter Academy. There I spent a week with dozens of other educators who were equally blown away by the power and simplicity of sitting around a table and discussing great texts. It was as though I died and went to heaven.

Toward the end of my time there, I was sitting next to a teacher from Philadelphia who verbalized exactly what I was thinking: “The key to making this whole thing work is showing up to class with the best possible texts for our students to discuss.” At that moment I realized that the only way I could pull this off in a history class was to begin compiling a collection of source documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, Pericles’s *Funeral Oration*, and Martin Luther’s famous treatise, “On Secular Authority,” with which my little community of students could begin interacting.

With these tools in hand, my second year experimenting with Socratic methods went much better than my first, but I was still running into two major obstacles. First, it was exhausting trying to find all these primary source documents. For starters, one had to be a scholar in the different epochs of history to know what documents should be read, or even where to look. And while it is true that there are scores of online sourcebooks, I found that they were often disorganized messes of broken links, terrible translations, and shallow redactions.

Second, even when these sources could be secured, I realized that there was a big difference between having a good *class* and teaching a good *course*. In other words, while it is true that we had many wonderful class discussions, at the end of the year, I knew my students were not getting a sense of having been exposed

to an unfolding, cohesive, and chronological narrative. In that sense, I was still falling short as a teacher. These were, after all, courses in *history*.

Then came the great supposal: What if we could create a resource that had all the accouterments of a traditional text—beautiful art, copious annotations, clear prose, explanatory essays, and an obvious, historical progression—yet that was completely built around the source documents that turned the wheels of history in the first place? That is, what if we could get the *sources* to tell the story and send the pedagogue into the background where he belongs? Then, instead of our students spending hours reading the thoughts and opinions of Mr. or Mrs. Scholar from such-and-such university, they will instead be in direct dialogue with the likes of John Locke, Susan B. Anthony, and Frederick Douglass. If this could happen, then students will have received, in the truest sense of the word, an *education*.

As C. S. Lewis once observed in his introduction to Athanasius’s *On Incarnation*, “The simplest student will be able to understand, if not all, yet a very great deal of what Plato said; but hardly anyone can understand some modern books on Platonism. It has always therefore been one of my main endeavors as a teacher to persuade the young that firsthand knowledge is not only more worth acquiring than secondhand knowledge, but is usually much easier and more delightful to acquire.”¹

In this vein, we humbly offer you the *Humanitas* series: texts filled with beautiful art, instructive annotations, and thoughtful commentary, all of which serve to adorn the source documents themselves. We designed the books so students and teachers can experience unfettered delight in *discussing* the most profound specimens of firsthand knowledge in the Western historical cannon. This is the story of humanity, told in an unfolding narrative, through primary sources. This, in the simplest terms, is *Humanitas*.

—Christopher John Maiocca
Series Editor



Christopher Maiocca received a Master of Arts from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts. Since graduating, he has taught at three classical schools and currently resides in Boise, Idaho. He is married to Robin, his wife of twenty years, with whom he has four children—Hannah, Christopher, Phoebe, and Jeremiah.

1. Lewis, introduction to *On the Incarnation*, 5.

Introduction to *Humanitas*: *American Origins, Book 1*

In this installment of the *Humanitas* series, we seek to wrap up the history of Late Medieval Europe and join the scores of immigrants as they set sail for a New World called America.

UNIT I *Indigenous Americans*

North America had been settled for well over ten thousand years before the first European settlers arrived. The traditions, worldview, origin stories, and advanced systems of government of the indigenous peoples are all fascinating subjects to explore.

UNIT II *Toward a New World*

The heft of our story, after touching on the critical roles of Martin Luther and John Calvin, begins in Tudor England as we help students understand how difficult life was under those European governments which tended to be thoroughly despotic. These chaotic conditions forced many great thinkers of the period to wrestle afresh with some very old questions about how societies should be ordered to secure at least a modicum of human flourishing for their citizens. This led to a slew of debates and treatises—half favoring the traditional, monarchical system and the other half wanting to separate from this ancient institution and discover whether softer forms of government could indeed be established.

Long before America became a sovereign nation, it was, from the White man's point of view, simply a collection of colonies, claimed by and annexed to the several European superpowers who were vying for supremacy on the continent. Because of this, and because the history of Europe goes back so far, the decision of where, and when, to begin telling the story of America proves to be a challenging one.

If we approach the origins of Anglo-America simply as a phenomenon, then our point of departure would not matter as much. Just as forests change, and sometimes expand—through succession, when one community of species replaces another—it became inevitable that once the Age of Exploration had commenced, Europeans would begin to populate newly discovered lands.

However, the records demonstrate that the migration west was much more intentional than natural processes are. America first presented itself as a refuge for religious dissenters and, later, as a laboratory for the political philosophies of the Enlightenment. Once we acknowledge this, the Protestant Reformation is an obvious opening chapter to the story of US history.

With the possible exception of Nicolaus Copernicus, no one disrupted the medieval worldview more than Martin Luther. He did so in two primary ways: First, he challenged the authority of the Catholic Church, and second, he challenged the authority of human governments. As you would expect, both of these actions landed the reformer in some pretty hot water, including getting kicked out of the Catholic Church. This precipitated the creation of a new branch of Christianity called Protestantism.

The secular magistrates were not crazy about Luther either, and understandably so. In fact, from the Reformation on, Protestants would have a rather complicated relationship

with their governments as they questioned the role, function, and, especially, the limits of the authority of those governments.

In terms of the origins of the United States, it is fairly easy to draw a line from Luther to Plymouth Rock. First, the Protestant Reformation traveled from Germany into England. This resulted in some fairly significant religious disputes, most notably the persecutions by Mary Tudor. The rest, we might say, is history. Many Puritan dissenters fled England and settled in America. The ones who remained behind eventually rose to places of power, most notably in Parliament. There they developed Luther's understanding of the limits of secular authority even further and ended up executing their king.

UNIT III

Coming to America

Life under the often-despotic European governments led not only to many debates but eventually to a mass immigration of foreigners to America. Some of these were Pilgrims who came on ships in search of a place where they could practice their faith without government harassment and attempt to establish their own vision of what a truly Christian society could be. Other immigrants were simply planters or explorers sent as direct agents of the English, French, Spanish, and Danish crowns with orders to harvest America for her natural resources, thus enriching those kingdoms in the process.

UNIT IV

Life in the Colonies

Throughout the next century of settlement and exploration, something rather interesting began taking place. The inhabitants of this new land started forming their own identity and a distinct American culture began to emerge. On the happy side of this was the establishment of schools, early attempts at building firehouses and public libraries, and a fresh commitment to creating a truly liberal society. The underbelly of American culture revealed a growing disdain for indigenous people groups, a crass triumphalism, and the formal institutionalization of slavery.



This icon notes a facet in a source document that anticipates or foreshadows something that appears in a source document later in the book or series. The information about what is being anticipated or foreshadowed will appear in the teacher's guide that goes along with this text (available as a downloadable PDF for purchase at www.ClassicalAcademicPress.com).



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Welcome to *Humanitas*

The *Humanitas* series seeks to provide high school students and educators with a comprehensive course in the human story, told through primary sources. The importance of exposing students *directly* to the great works and minds of the last 2,500 years is summed up neatly by C. S. Lewis in his introduction to Athanasius's *On the Incarnation*:

There is a strange idea abroad that in every subject the ancient books should be read only by the professionals, and that the amateur should content himself with the modern books. Thus, I have found as a tutor in English literature that if the average student wants to find out something about Platonism, the very last thing he thinks of doing is to take a translation of Plato off the library shelf and read the *Symposium*. He would rather read some dreary modern book ten times as long, all about "isms" and influences and only once in twelve pages telling him what Plato actually said. The error is rather an amiable one, for it springs from humility. The student is half afraid to meet one of the great philosophers face to face. He feels himself inadequate and thinks he will not understand him. But if he only knew, the great man, just because of his greatness, is much more intelligible than his modern commentator. The simplest student will be able to

understand, if not all, yet a very great deal of what Plato said; but hardly anyone can understand some modern books on Platonism. It has always therefore been one of my main endeavors as a teacher to persuade the young that firsthand knowledge is not only more worth acquiring than secondhand knowledge, but is usually much easier and more delightful to acquire.¹

This emphasis on the importance of firsthand knowledge has been traditionally communicated by the term *ad fontes*. A Latin phrase meaning "to the fountains," it was used as a banner by both humanist scholars and reformers of the High Medieval Period to describe their renewed interest in studying the primary documents that contained the ideas most responsible for precipitating the civilizations and cultural milieus in which they found themselves.

Any teacher who has ever been present with students as they awaken to some revolutionary new idea through reading one of the great geniuses of history can attest to the truth of Lewis's words, that "firsthand knowledge is not only more worth acquiring than secondhand knowledge, but is usually much easier and more delightful to acquire." In other words, it is exponentially more powerful for students to study Montesquieu, Socrates, and Lincoln *directly* than it is for them to read books *about* those great men.

Those teachers who have learned to instruct their students using primary sources are easy to

1. C. S. Lewis, introduction to *On the Incarnation*, by Athanasius, trans. Religious of C.S.M.V. S.Th. (Louisville, KY: GLH Publishing, 2018), 5.

recognize. They can usually be seen at the copier, frantically reproducing a set of recently discovered source documents that they are deeply excited to introduce to their students.

Herein lies one of the fundamental reasons we felt that *Humanitas* needed to see the light of day. Source documents are (1) often very difficult to find, (2) sometimes written or translated in a form of English that is no longer intelligible, and (3) filled with mountains of chaff that students cannot be expected to sift through in order to get to the kernel of the author's mind.

Samuel Rutherford's *Lex, Rex* is a case in point. It is one of the most important treatises of the last 500 years, yet in its original form, it is long, laborious, and nearly impossible to read. Unless someone can cut away the fat, update the language, and present to students the absolute center of Rutherford's great idea (that political authority resides in the community), it will forever remain a closed treasure chest. Thus, *Humanitas* has sought to accomplish what no teacher really has the time to do—prepare, clean up, and present these great documents in a format that students can both engage with and digest.

There is another problem that comes with teaching exclusively from primary sources, one that every teacher who has attempted it has encountered. It is this: What makes for a great lesson does not always make for a great course. In other words, an instructor (and her students) may have a grand time discussing the significance of Locke's doctrine of inalienable rights, but unless this doctrine is placed in its natural context and proper historical chronology, the students will have no sense of how it belongs in the larger, unfolding narrative.

The final reason we felt it imperative to publish *Humanitas* is the recent and happy reemphasis on discussion-based classrooms. Learning is best accomplished in community and in conversation and least through lectures and monologues. The greatest moments in the classroom will always

occur as some great idea is discussed around the table. Conventional textbooks were not designed to facilitate this type of learning—and thus *Humanitas* was born.



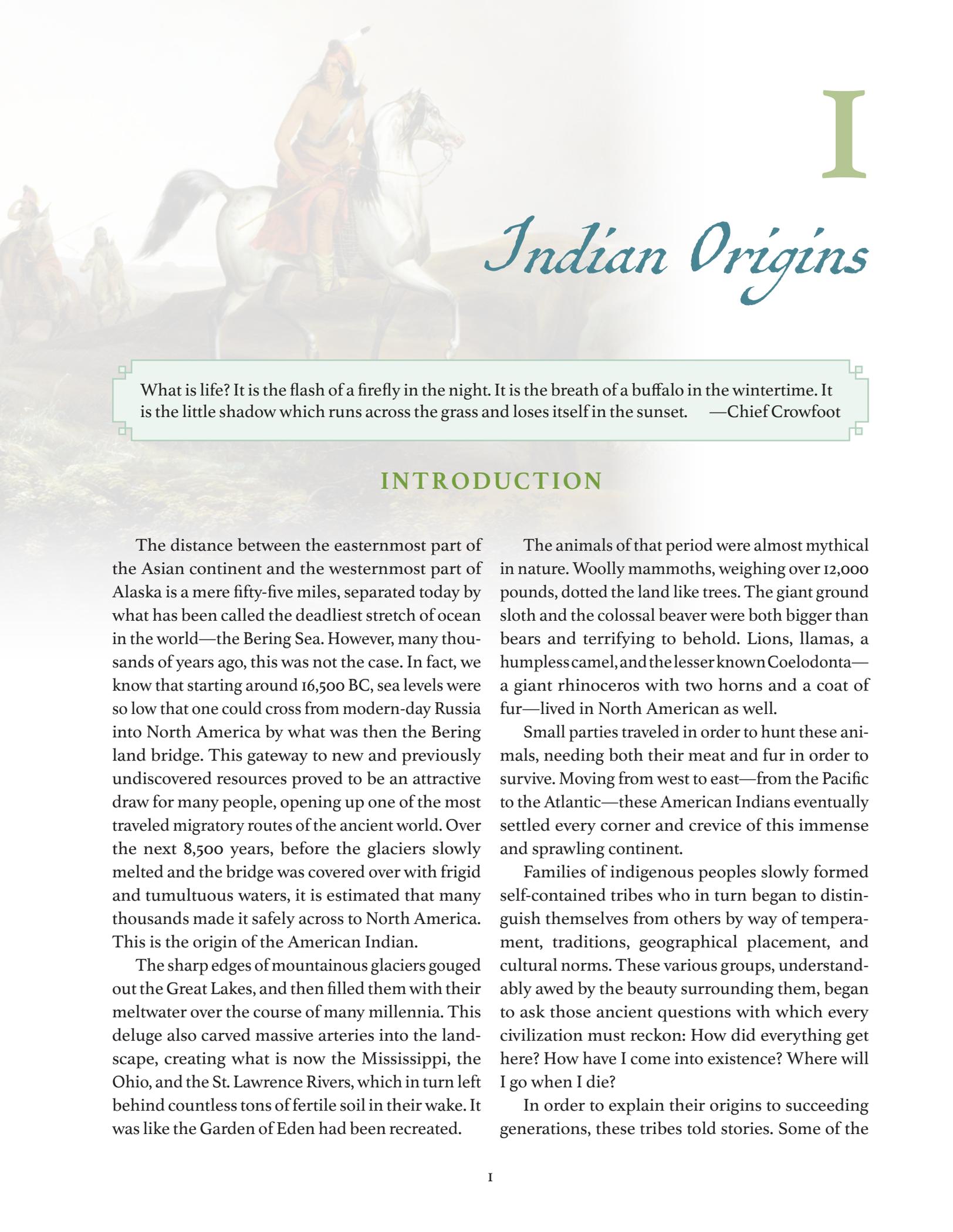
Each book is centered around a select number of source documents that have been carefully chosen to help students gain a mastery-level understanding of the human story for the particular epoch covered.

In turn, each source document has been painstakingly edited so that students, unencumbered by archaic language or superfluous material, will understand the great idea or events the document purports to explain.

To help further facilitate an understanding of the source document, the text has been enhanced with scores of annotations. Hard-to-understand terms, difficult trains of thought, critical background information, and pertinent historical context are all conveniently addressed in the margin of the text. In order to further facilitate ease of reading, descriptive section headings have also been added to each document.

Each chapter introduction presents a robust explanation of how the document connects with what has gone before, and how the idea it expounds, or the event it describes, dramatically altered the course of the human story. Then, after students interact with the document, they will read an afterword that explains how the document anticipates what they will encounter in the next chapter and how the two documents are related.

Beyond all of these aids, students will discover that each chapter is brimming with information about the culture of that period and with examples of some of its most beautiful and important art.



I

Indian Origins

What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset. —Chief Crowfoot

INTRODUCTION

The distance between the easternmost part of the Asian continent and the westernmost part of Alaska is a mere fifty-five miles, separated today by what has been called the deadliest stretch of ocean in the world—the Bering Sea. However, many thousands of years ago, this was not the case. In fact, we know that starting around 16,500 BC, sea levels were so low that one could cross from modern-day Russia into North America by what was then the Bering land bridge. This gateway to new and previously undiscovered resources proved to be an attractive draw for many people, opening up one of the most traveled migratory routes of the ancient world. Over the next 8,500 years, before the glaciers slowly melted and the bridge was covered over with frigid and tumultuous waters, it is estimated that many thousands made it safely across to North America. This is the origin of the American Indian.

The sharp edges of mountainous glaciers gouged out the Great Lakes, and then filled them with their meltwater over the course of many millennia. This deluge also carved massive arteries into the landscape, creating what is now the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the St. Lawrence Rivers, which in turn left behind countless tons of fertile soil in their wake. It was like the Garden of Eden had been recreated.

The animals of that period were almost mythical in nature. Woolly mammoths, weighing over 12,000 pounds, dotted the land like trees. The giant ground sloth and the colossal beaver were both bigger than bears and terrifying to behold. Lions, llamas, a humpless camel, and the lesser known *Coelodonta*—a giant rhinoceros with two horns and a coat of fur—lived in North America as well.

Small parties traveled in order to hunt these animals, needing both their meat and fur in order to survive. Moving from west to east—from the Pacific to the Atlantic—these American Indians eventually settled every corner and crevice of this immense and sprawling continent.

Families of indigenous peoples slowly formed self-contained tribes who in turn began to distinguish themselves from others by way of temperament, traditions, geographical placement, and cultural norms. These various groups, understandably awed by the beauty surrounding them, began to ask those ancient questions with which every civilization must reckon: How did everything get here? How have I come into existence? Where will I go when I die?

In order to explain their origins to succeeding generations, these tribes told stories. Some of the

tales explained the creation of the world, others described how animals came to look as they do, and still others sought to imagine what the afterlife was really like.

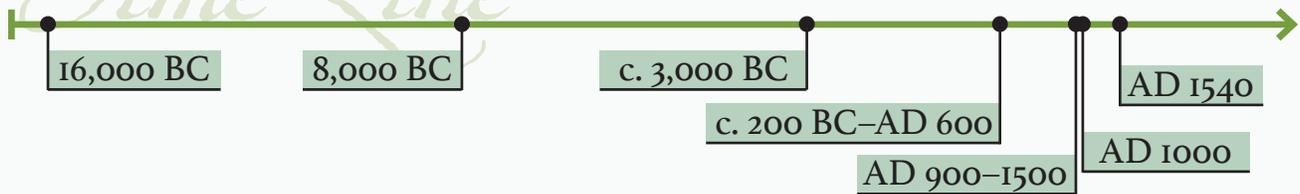
Some of the best-preserved stories come from the Cherokee—the largest and most powerful Indian tribe to ever settle North America. A mountainous people, they inhabited the totality of the Allegheny, Blue Ridge, and Smoky Mountain Ranges, which stretch all the way from Pennsylvania in the north to Alabama in the south.

Forcibly removed by the United States Government in 1838 to the west of the Mississippi in present-day Oklahoma, there was a small contingent who refused to leave and sought refuge in the heart of the Carolina mountains. There, nestled in the ancient forests, the passing of time left them untouched and unchanged. Among these peoples, the stories of the past have been carefully preserved.

In the year 1887, an American anthropologist named James Mooney went to live among this remnant for the better part of three years. Over that period, he was able to meet with Cherokee priests and write down over one hundred of their most cherished legends. The ones you are about to read are the most important, as they give us an American Indian perspective on how the world began, how it was shaped and populated, and what ultimately happens to us when we die. These are the Cherokee Indian origin stories.



Time Line



c. 16,000 BC — Discoveries over the last thirty years have determined that the oldest archaeological evidence of settlement in the Western Hemisphere dates from this period.

8,000 BC — The ancestors of the Cherokee begin to settle the great mountains of western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee, and northern Georgia.

c. 3,000 BC — People begin the domestication of plants, the grinding of seeds into flour, the creation of pottery, and the cultivation of corn.

c. 200 BC–AD 600 — Trade networks now cover at least half of North America.

AD 900–1500 — The bow and arrow become the predominant weapon, replacing the throwing spear or atlatl.

AD 1000 — The Cherokee are living a “woodland” lifestyle, centered on the harvesting of corn, beans, and squash.

AD 1540 — The first contact between Cherokee and Europeans occurs during Hernando de Soto’s expedition.

Myths of the Cherokee

HOW THE WORLD WAS MADE

The **earth** is a great island floating in a sea of water, and suspended at each of the **four cardinal points** by a cord hanging down from the sky vault, which is of solid rock. When the world grows old and worn out, the people will die and the cords will break and let the earth sink down into the ocean, and all will be water again. The Indians are afraid of this.

When all was water, the animals were above in **Gălûñ' lăti**, beyond the **arch**; but it was very crowded, and they were wanting more room. They wondered what was below the water, and at last Dâyuni' sî, the little Water Beetle, offered to go and see if it could find out. It darted in every direction over the surface of the water, but could find no firm place to rest. Then it dived to the bottom and came up with some soft mud, which began to grow and spread on every side until it became the island which we call the earth. It was afterward fastened to the sky with four cords, but no one remembers who did this.

At first, the earth was flat and very soft and wet. The animals were anxious to get down, and different birds flew down to see if it was yet dry, but they found no place to land and came back again to Gălûñ' lăti. At last, it seemed to be time, and they sent out the Buzzard and told him to go and make ready for them. This was the Great Buzzard, the father of all the buzzards we see now. He flew all over the earth, low down near the ground, and it was still soft. When he reached the Cherokee country, he was very tired, and his wings began to flap and strike the ground, and wherever they struck the earth there was a valley, and where they turned up again there was a mountain. When the animals above saw this, they were afraid that the whole world would be mountains, so they called him back, but the Cherokee country remains full of **mountains** to this day.

When the earth was dry and the animals came down, it was still dark, so they got the sun and set it in a track to go every day across the island from east to west, just overhead. It was too hot this way, and Tsiska' gîli', the Red Crawfish, had his shell scorched a bright red, so that his meat was spoiled; and the Cherokee do not eat it. The conjurers put the sun another handbreadth higher in the air, but it was still too hot. They raised it another time, and another, until it was seven handbreadths high and just under the sky arch. Then it was right, and they left it so. This is why the conjurers call the highest place Gûlkwâ' gine Di' gălûñ' lătiyûñ', "the seventh height," because it is seven handbreadths above the earth. Every day the sun goes along under this arch, and returns at night on the upper side to the starting place.

There is another world under this, and it is like ours in everything—animals, plants, and people. Only the seasons are different. The streams that come down from the mountains are the trails by which we reach this underworld, and the springs at their heads are the doorways by which we enter it, but to do this one must fast and go to water and have one of the underground people for a guide. We know that the seasons in the underworld are different from ours, because

earth

From the Cherokee perspective, dry land not only floated on the water but was also supported by cords attached to the sky.

four cardinal points

i.e., north, south, east, and west

Gălûñ' lăti

the sky

arch

i.e., the sky vault

mountains

The Cherokee were the mountaineers of the South. At one point, they occupied all the territory in the Allegheny and Blue Ridge mountain ranges located in the modern states of Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama—a total of 40,000 square miles.

the water in the springs is always warmer in winter and cooler in summer than the outer air.



THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

Almost every civilization has an origin story and a cosmology. An origin story is an account of how everything got here. A cosmology seeks to explain how the universe is ordered. This painting by Giovanni di Paolo represents a medieval, Christian cosmology. The universe is pictured as a giant sphere with earth in the center, the sun circling it, and God presiding over all.

When the animals and plants were first made—we do not know by whom—they were told to watch and keep awake for seven nights, just as young men now fast and keep awake when they pray to their medicine. They tried to do this, and nearly all were awake through the first night, but the next night several dropped off to sleep, and the third night others were asleep, and then others, until, on the seventh night, of all the animals only the owl, the panther, and one or two more were still awake. To these were given the power to see and to go about in the dark, and to make prey of the birds and animals which must sleep at night. Of the trees only the cedar, the

pine, the spruce, the holly, and the laurel were awake to the end, and to them it was given to be always green and to be greatest for medicine, but to the others it was said: “Because you have not endured to the end you shall lose your hair every winter.”

Men came after the animals and plants. At first there were only a brother and sister until he struck her with a fish and told her to multiply, and so it was. In seven days a child was born to her, and thereafter every seven days another, and they increased very fast until there was danger that the world could not keep them. Then it was made that a woman should have only one child in a year, and it has been so ever since.

THE ORIGINS OF FIRE

In the beginning there was no fire, and the world was cold, until Ani’Hyûñ’ tîkwălá’skî, the Thunders, who lived up in Gălûñ’lătî, sent their lightning and put fire into the bottom of a hollow sycamore tree which grew on an island. The animals knew it was there, because they could see the smoke coming out at the top, but they could not get to it on account of the water, so they held a council to decide what to do. This was a long time ago.

Every animal that could fly or swim was anxious to go after the fire. The Raven offered, and because he was so large and strong they thought he could surely do the work, so he was sent first. He flew high and far across the water and alighted on the sycamore tree, but while he was wondering what to do next,

the heat had scorched all his feathers black, and he was frightened and came back without the fire. The little Screech Owl (*Wa'huhu'*) volunteered to go, and reached the place safely, but while he was looking down into the hollow tree a blast of hot air came up and nearly burned out his eyes. He managed to fly home as best he could, but it was a long time before he could see well, and his eyes are red to this day. Then the Hooting Owl (*U'guku'*) and the Horned Owl (*Tskili'*) went, but by the time they got to the hollow tree the fire was burning so fiercely that the smoke nearly blinded them, and the ashes carried up by the wind made white rings about their eyes. They had to come home again without the fire, but with all their rubbing they were never able to get rid of the white rings.

Now no more of the birds would venture, and so the little Uksu'hĩ, black racer, snake said he would go through the water and bring back some fire. He swam across to the island and crawled through the grass to the tree, and went in by a small hole at the bottom. The heat and smoke were too much for him too. After dodging about blindly over the hot ashes until he was almost on fire himself, he managed by good luck to get out again at the same hole. But his body had been scorched black, and he has ever since had the habit of darting and doubling on his track as if trying to escape from close quarters.

After he came back, the great blacksnake, Gũle'gĩ, The Climber, offered to go for fire. He swam over to the island and climbed up the tree, as the blacksnake always does. But when he put his head down into the hole the smoke choked him so that he fell into the burning stump, and before he could climb out again he was as black as the Uksu'hĩ.

Now they held another council, for still there was no fire, and the world was cold. But birds, snakes, and four-footed animals all had some excuse for not going because they were all afraid to venture near the burning sycamore. At last, Kǎnǎne'skĩ Amai'yěhĩ, the Water Spider, said she would go. This is not the water spider that looks like a mosquito, but the other one, with black downy hair and red stripes on her body. She can run on top of the water or dive to the bottom, so there would be no trouble to get over to the island. But the question was, how could she bring back the fire? "I'll manage that," said the Water Spider; so she spun a thread from her body and wove it into a **tusti** bowl, which she fastened on her back. Then she crossed over to the island and through the grass to where the fire was still burning. She put one little coal of fire into her bowl, and came back with it, and ever since we have had fire, and the Water Spider still keeps her *tusti* bowl.

PROMETHEUS BOUND

The ancients were fascinated with fire and created stories to explain its origins. For the ancient Greeks, fire was stolen from Mt. Olympus and given to humans by the Titan Prometheus. Outraged, Zeus ordered him bound to a mountainside in Scythia, where an eagle would gnaw on his liver for all eternity.



tusti

*Water spiders have a white mark on their back that looks like a tiny woven basket, what American Indians referred to as a *tusti* bowl.*

THE ORIGIN OF GAME

Long years ago, soon after the world was made, a hunter and his wife lived with their only child, a little boy. The father's name was Kana'ti (The Lucky Hunter), and his wife was called Selu (Corn). No matter when Kana'ti went into the wood, he never failed to bring back a load of game, which his wife would cut up and prepare, washing off the blood from the meat in the river near the house. The little boy used to play down by the river every day, and one morning the old people thought they heard laughing and talking in the bushes as though there were two children there. When the boy came home at night, his parents asked him who had been playing with him all day. "He comes out of the water," said the boy, "and he calls himself my elder brother. He says his mother was cruel to him and threw him into the river." Then they knew that the strange boy had sprung from the blood of the game which Selu had washed off at the river's edge.

Every day when the little boy went out to play the other would join him, but as he always went back again into the water the old people never had a chance to see him. At last, one evening Kana'ti said to his son, "Tomorrow, when the other boy comes to play, get him to wrestle with you, and when you have your arms around him, hold on to him and call for us."

The boy promised to do as he was told, so the next day as soon as his playmate appeared he challenged him to a wrestling match. The other agreed at once, but as soon as they had their arms around each other, Kana'ti's boy began to scream for his father. The old folks at once came running down. As soon as the Wild Boy saw them, he struggled to free himself and cried out, "Let me go; you threw me away!" But his brother held on until the parents reached the spot, when they seized the Wild Boy and took him home with them. They kept him in the house until they had tamed him, but he was always wild and artful in his disposition, and was the leader of his brother in every mischief. It was not long until the old people discovered that he had magic powers, and they called him I'näge-utäsün'hī, He-who-grew-up-wild, or Wild Boy.

Whenever Kana'ti went into the mountains, he always brought back a fat buck or doe, or maybe a couple of turkeys. One day the Wild Boy said to his brother, "I wonder where our father gets all that game; let's follow him next time and find out."



A few days afterward Kana'ti took a bow and some feathers in his hand and started off toward the west. The boys waited a little while and then went after him, keeping out of sight until they saw him go into a swamp where there were a great many of the small reeds that hunters use to make arrowshafts. Then the Wild Boy changed himself into a puff of bird's **down**, which the wind took up and carried until it alighted upon Kana'ti's shoulder just as he entered the swamp, but Kana'ti knew nothing about it. The old man cut reeds, fitted the feathers to them, and made some arrows, and the Wild Boy—in his other shape—thought, "I wonder what those things are for?" When Kana'ti had his arrows finished, he came out of the swamp and went on again. The wind blew the down from his shoulder, and it fell in the woods. Then the Wild Boy took his right shape again and went back and told his brother what he had seen.

down

fine, cotton-like feathers that grow beneath a bird's sturdy exterior feathers

HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

◆ Say It Again!

On March 25, 1857, the French government issued a patent to Édouard de Martinville for his invention of the phonautograph—a machine which could transcribe sound waves on paper. Twenty years later, Thomas Edison became an international phenomenon when he invented the phonograph—a device which not only recorded sound, but played it back! In 1894, James Mooney took a similar device onto an Indian reservation and made recordings of their famous Ghost Dance songs. You can hear these songs today at the Library of Congress website.¹



◆ Apocalypse Now?

In 1869, an Indian elder named Wodziwob had a series of visions in which he claims to have seen a time in the future where all the Europeans would be removed from North America, immediately followed by the renewal of the entire earth. Then in 1889, another Indian named Wovoka had some remarkably similar visions. Europeans left, the buffalo returned, and the land was restored. Word of Wovoka's prophecies spread. He taught those who sought him out several Ghost Dance songs that, when performed, would enable them to see the same vision. James Mooney was present at one of these ceremonies and was amazed at the trancelike state into which the participants fell.²



◆ Chill Out!

The explorer Hernando de Soto first introduced pigs to Tampa Bay, Florida, in 1539, and historians consider this the origin of the pork industry in America. The importance of this event can still be felt in Tampa Bay. For example, consider that their professional football team is named the Buccaneers, which refers to people who smoke buccan—or as we now call it, bacon. Though delicious, the flesh of swine is notorious for how quickly it spoils, thus the business of pork only really took off with the advent of the refrigerated railroad car. This was introduced in 1880 by the company Swift & Co., and from that point on, pig production went from a local to a national industry.³

◆ World Class

In the mid-nineteenth century, anthropologists began to see the need for studying cultures as a whole and, in turn, how they relate to or differ from other cultures. This demand gave birth to the field of ethnology. In 1885, James Mooney was offered a position at the newly established *Bureau of American Ethnology* at the young age of twenty-four. He remained at that post until his death thirty-five years later in 1921. Over that time, he became regarded as the foremost scholar of Native Americans in the world. It is possible that his knowledge of indigenous peoples will never be surpassed. He truly established ethnology as a legitimate discipline and set the standard in that field for years to come.⁴



Keeping out of sight of their father, they followed him up the mountain until he stopped at a certain place and lifted a large rock. At once there ran out a buck, which Kana' tĩ shot, and then lifting it upon his back, he started for home again. "Oho!" exclaimed the boys, "he keeps all the deer shut up in that hole, and whenever he wants meat he just lets one out and kills it with those things he made in the swamp." They hurried and reached home before their father, who had the heavy deer to carry, and he never knew that they had followed.

A few days later, the boys went back to the swamp, cut some reeds, and made seven arrows, and then started up the mountain to where their father kept the game. When they got to the place, they raised the rock and a deer came running out. Just as they drew back to shoot it, another came out, and then another and another, until the boys got confused and forgot what they were about. In those

days, all the deer had their tails hanging down like other animals, but as a buck was running past the Wild Boy struck its tail with his arrow so that it pointed upward. The boys thought this good sport, and when the next one ran past the Wild Boy struck its tail so that it stood straight up, and his brother struck the next one so hard with his arrow that the deer's tail was almost curled over his back. The deer carries his tail this way ever since. The deer came running past until the last one had come out of the hole and escaped into the forest. Then came droves of raccoons, rabbits, and all the other four-footed animals—all but the bear,



THE FROG TSAREVNA
Nearly every ancient culture has some tradition of shape-shifters. This painting, by Viktor Vasnetsov was inspired, by a famous fairy tale called "The Frog Princess." Dating all the way back to ancient Greece, this tale of how a frog is transformed into a beautiful princess through magic, is preserved in dozens of cultures.

because there was no bear then. Last came great flocks of turkeys, pigeons, and partridges that darkened the air like a cloud and made such a noise with their wings that Kana' tĩ, sitting at home, heard the sound like distant thunder on the mountains and said to himself, "My bad boys have got into trouble; I must go and see what they are doing."

So he went up the mountain, and when he came to the place where he kept the game he found the two boys standing by the rock, and all the birds and animals were gone. Kana' tĩ was furious, but without saying a word he went down into the cave and kicked the covers off four jars in one corner, when out swarmed bedbugs, fleas, lice, and gnats, and got all over the boys. They screamed with pain and fright and tried to beat off the insects, but the thousands of vermin crawled over them and bit and stung them until both dropped down nearly dead. Kana' tĩ stood looking on until he thought they had been punished enough, when he knocked off the vermin and made the boys talk.

“Now, you rascals,” said he, “you have always had plenty to eat and never had to work for it. Whenever you were hungry all I had to do was to come up here and get a deer or a turkey and bring it home for your mother to cook; but now you have let out all the animals, and after this when you want a deer to eat you will have to hunt all over the woods for it, and then maybe not find one. Go home now to your mother, while I see if I can find something to eat for supper.”

THE ORIGIN OF CORN

When the boys got home again, they were very tired and hungry and asked their mother for something to eat. “There is no meat,” said Selu, “but wait a little while and I’ll get you something.” So she took a basket and started out to the storehouse. This storehouse was built upon poles high up from the ground, to keep it out of the reach of animals, and there was a ladder to climb up by, and one door, but no other opening. Every day when Selu got ready to cook the dinner, she would go out to the storehouse with a basket and bring it back full of corn and beans. The boys had never been inside the storehouse, so they wondered where all the corn and beans could come from, as the house was not a very large one; so as soon as Selu went out of the door the Wild Boy said to his brother, “Let’s go and see what she does.”

They ran around and climbed up at the back of the storehouse and pulled out a piece of **clay** from between the logs, so that they could look in. There they saw Selu standing in the middle of the room with the basket in front of her on the floor. Leaning over the basket, she rubbed her stomach, and the basket became half full of corn. Then she rubbed under her armpits, and the basket was filled with beans. The boys looked at each other and said, “This will never do; our mother is a witch. If we eat any of that, it will poison us. We must kill her.”

When the boys came back into the house, she knew their thoughts before they spoke. “So you are going to kill me?” said Selu.

“Yes,” said the boys, “you are a witch.”

“Well,” said their mother, “when you have killed me, **clear** a large piece of ground in front of the house and drag my body seven times around the circle. Then drag me seven times over the ground inside the circle, and stay up all night and watch, and in the morning you will have plenty of corn.”

So the boys killed her with their clubs, and cut off her head and put it up on the roof of the house with her face turned to the west, and told her to look for her husband. Then they set to work to clear the ground in front of the house, but instead of clearing the whole piece they cleared only seven little spots. This is why corn now grows only in a few places instead of over the whole world.

Then they dragged the body of Selu around the circle and wherever her blood fell on the ground the corn sprang up. But instead of dragging her body seven times across the ground they dragged it over only twice, which is the reason the Indians still work their crop but twice. The two brothers sat up and watched their corn all night, and in the morning it was full grown and ripe.

clay

Clay or mud was often used to seal the logs in a log cabin together.

clear

Corn typically needs large fields to grow in.

Wolf

The Wolf people were probably shapeshifters, since they are presented later in the story as wolves.



CORN HARVEST IN PROVENCE

Corn, often referred to as maize, was a staple of the Native American diet. It was reportedly brought to Europe in 1492 by Christopher Columbus. Because of the crop's ability to thrive in a multitude of altitudes and climates, it soon became a staple of the European diet as well. This painting by Vincent Van Gogh depicts a corn harvest in the late 1800s in Provence—a region of southern France.

When Kana'ti came home at last, he looked around but could not see Selu anywhere, and asked the boys where their mother was. "She was a witch, so we killed her," said the boys, "there is her head up there on top of the house."

When he saw his wife's head on the roof, he was very angry and said, "I won't stay with you any longer; I am going to the **Wolf** people."

So he started off, but before he had gone far the Wild Boy changed himself again to a tuft of down, which fell on Kana'ti's shoulder. When Kana'ti reached the settlement of the Wolf people, they were holding a council in the townhouse. He went in and sat down with the tuft of bird's down on his shoulder, but he never noticed it. When the Wolf chief asked him his business, he said: "I have two bad boys at home, and I want you to go in seven days from now and play ball against them."

Although Kana'ti spoke as though he wanted them to play a game of ball, the Wolves knew that he meant for them to go and kill the two boys. They promised to go. Then the bird's down blew off from Kana'ti's shoulder, and the smoke carried it up through the hole in the roof of the townhouse. When it came down on the ground outside, the Wild Boy took his right shape again and went home and told his brother all that he had heard in the townhouse. But when Kana'ti left the Wolf people he did not return home, but went on farther.

The boys then began to get ready for the Wolves, and the Wild Boy—the magician—told his brother what to do. They ran around the house in a wide circle until they had made a trail all around it except on the side from which the Wolves would come, where they left a small open space. Then they made four large bundles of arrows and placed them at four different points on the outside of the circle, after which they hid themselves in the woods and waited for the Wolves. In a day or two, a whole party of Wolves came and surrounded the house to kill the boys. The Wolves did not notice the trail around the house, because they came in where the boys had left the opening, but the moment they went inside the circle, the trail changed to a high brush fence and shut them in. Then the boys on the outside took their arrows and began shooting them down, and as the Wolves could not jump over the fence, they were all killed, excepting a few that escaped through the opening into a great swamp close by. The boys ran around the swamp, and a circle of fire sprang up in their tracks and set fire to the grass and bushes and burned up nearly all the other Wolves. Only two or three got away, and from these have come all the wolves that are now in the world.

Soon afterward some strangers from a distance, who had heard that the brothers had a wonderful grain from which they made bread, came to ask for some, for none but Selu and her family had ever known corn before. The boys gave them seven grains of corn, which they told them to plant the next night on their way home, sitting up all night to watch the corn, which would have seven ripe ears in the morning. These they were to plant the next night and watch in the same way, and so on every night until they reached home, when they would have corn enough to supply the whole people. The strangers lived seven days' journey away. They took the seven grains and watched all through the darkness until morning, when they saw seven tall stalks, each stalk bearing a ripened ear. They gathered the ears and went on their way. The next night, they planted all their corn and guarded it as before until daybreak, when they found an abundant increase. But the way was long and the sun was hot, and the people grew tired. On the last night before reaching home they fell asleep, and in the morning the corn they had planted had not even sprouted. They brought with them to their settlement what corn they had left and planted it, and with care and attention were able to raise a crop. But ever since, the corn must be watched and tended through half the year, which before would grow and ripen in a night.

As Kana'ti did not return, the boys at last decided to go and find him. The Wild Boy took a **gaming** wheel and rolled it toward the **Darkening** land. In a little while the wheel came rolling back, and the boys knew their father was not there. He rolled it to the south and to the north, and each time the wheel came back to him, and they knew their father was not there. Then he rolled it toward the Sunland, and it did not return. "Our father is there," said the Wild Boy, "let us go and find him." So the two brothers set off toward the east, and after traveling a long time they came upon Kana'ti walking along with a little dog by his side.

"You bad boys," said their father, "have you come here?"

"Yes," they answered, "we always accomplish what we start out to do—we are men."

"This dog overtook me four days ago," then said Kana'ti, but the boys knew that the dog was the wheel that they had sent after him to find him. "Well," said Kana'ti, "as you have found me, we may as well travel together, but I shall take the lead."

Soon they came to a swamp, and Kana'ti told them there was something dangerous there and they must keep away from it. He went on ahead, but as soon as he was out of sight, the Wild Boy said to his brother, "Come and let us see what is in the swamp." They went in together, and in the middle of the swamp they found a large panther asleep. The Wild Boy got out an arrow and shot the panther in the side of the head. The panther turned his head and the other boy shot him on that side. He turned his head away again and the two brothers shot together—*tust, tust, tust!* But the panther was not hurt by the arrows and paid no more attention to the boys. They came out of the swamp and soon overtook Kana'ti, waiting for them.

"Did you find it?" asked Kana'ti.

gaming

Native Americans played several games involving circular disks made of wood or stone. Players would typically roll a disk and throw their spears at it when it came to rest. The person whose spear landed closest to the disk won the game.

Darkening

the place where Cherokee spirits went to rest

Roasters
i.e., cannibals

“Yes,” said the boys, “we found it, but it never hurt us. We are men.”

Kana’ tĩ was surprised, but said nothing, and they went on again.

After a while, he turned to them and said, “Now you must be careful. We are coming to a tribe called the Anăda’ dũntăskĩ, the **Roasters**, and if they get you, they will put you into a pot and feast on you.” Then he went on ahead. Soon the boys came to a tree which had been struck by lightning, and the Wild Boy directed his brother to gather some of the splinters from the tree and told him what to do with them.

In a little while, they came to the settlement of the cannibals, who, as soon as they saw the boys, came running out, crying, “Good, here are two nice fat strangers. Now we’ll have a grand feast!” They caught the boys and dragged them into the townhouse, and sent word to all the people of the settlement to come to the feast. They made up a great fire, put water into a large pot and set it to boiling, and then seized the Wild Boy and put him down into it. His brother was not in the least frightened and made no attempt to escape, but quietly knelt down and began putting the splinters into the fire, as if to make it burn better. When the cannibals thought the meat was about ready, they lifted the pot from the fire, and that instant a blinding light filled the townhouse, and the lightning began to dart from one side to the other, striking down the cannibals until not one of them was left alive. Then the lightning went up through the smoke hole, and the next moment there were the two boys standing outside the townhouse as though nothing had happened.

They went on and soon met Kana’ tĩ, who seemed much surprised to see them, and said, “What! are you here again?”

“O, yes, we never give up. We are great men!”

“What did the cannibals do to you?” “We met them and they brought us to their townhouse, but they never hurt us.” Kana’ tĩ said nothing more, and they went on.

He soon got out of sight of the boys, but they kept on until they came to the end of the world, where the sun comes out. The sky was just coming down when they got there, but they waited until it went up again, and then they went through and climbed up on the other side. There they found Kana’ tĩ and Selu sitting together. The old folk received them kindly and were glad to see them, telling them they might stay there a while, but then they must go to live where the sun goes down. The boys stayed with their parents seven days and then went on toward the Darkening land, where they are now. We call them Anis-ga’ya Tsunsdi’, The Little Men, and when they talk to each other we hear low rolling thunder in the west.

AFTERWORD

Almost all cultures have a longing to ponder life's deepest questions, and the American Indians are no exception. Although their origin stories may seem deeply mythical and even fanciful to the modern reader, they reflect both the childlike curiosity and the deep spirituality of the Indians in general, and the Cherokee tribe specifically.

In the early years of the colonization of North America, Indians such as the Cherokee would be looked upon as savages by their new European neighbors. Though admittedly many centuries

behind the White man's technology, hindsight has not substantiated the Anglo claim of having the moral high ground over the indigenous people. In fact, history makes quite the opposite argument.

While many will always regard the legends of the American Indians as rustic, primitive folklore, few can doubt their ability to arrange themselves into very nuanced and ingenious political societies. This ability will be the subject of our next chapter.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. What makes one culture more civilized than another?
2. What is to be more desired: a society deeply connected with nature or one that is technologically advanced?
3. While modernity has brought about technological advances, what is lost when technology changes the way we live?
4. The Cherokee inhabited mountainous regions, and many events in their creation stories happen on or near mountains. Many other cultures also feature mountains in their stories (Mt. Sinai, Mt. Olympus, etc.). Why do you think mountains so deeply capture our imaginations?
5. This Indian creation story uses myth to explain how many animals got their strange appearance. Choose an animal and write a myth to explain how this animal acquired its most peculiar or most prominent feature. For example, how did the leopard get its spots, the elephant its trunk, or the giraffe its long neck?
6. Even though the myths you read in this chapter do not give us true biological facts, what can they tell us about the animals and the people who observed them?
7. Myths from different civilizations have some notable similarities. For example, many different cultures have myths about creation, a flood, and the origin of fire. Why do you think that different cultures have similar myths?
8. If many cultures have a myth about a flood, does this make it more or less likely that a major flood actually occurred? Do you think these myths represent disconnected stories thought up by various cultures or are they shared memories of a historical event?
9. In the modern era, we know many of the scientific reasons for natural phenomena, such as why animals have developed as they have and why certain events have happened in nature. Does having that knowledge mean we should no longer tell and make up stories about the world around us? Why or why not?

2

Indian Polity

The Indian men when young are hunters and warriors; when old, counsellors; for all their government is by counsel of the sages.
—Benjamin Franklin

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter gave us an introduction to American Indians with the Cherokee origin stories. The stories revealed a culture that had a deep curiosity about where they came from, how animals were created, the manner in which primal elements such as fire came into existence, the source of vegetation, and the ultimate destiny of man. In addition, the stories showed that the Cherokee possessed a deep sense of ethics. Like *Aesop's Fables*, their stories were filled with good characters and evil ones—with virtues to be emulated and vices to shun. And although American Indians were not as technologically advanced as their European counterparts, it is clear they inhabited the same moral universe and had many similar questions about how life worked and how everything came to be.

Just as every culture has a story of creation, every culture also seems to have a story about a fall and the subsequent need for redemption by a hero. Zeus must destroy Kronos before the glories of Olympus can be revealed. Moses must defeat Pharaoh before the Hebrews can enter the Promised Land. Hercules must triumph through his twelve labors before he is worthy to wear the Golden Fleece. Washington must cross the Delaware through driving wind and sheets of ice in order to check the tyranny of the British crown. Stories such as these unite cultures

at a very fundamental level, providing them with a common identity, a shared set of values, and a similar way to think about the world around them. Such creation and redemption tales are referred to by scholars as etiological (i.e., causation) myths. These stories help cultures explain to their people how their social constructs, models of government, and natural phenomena came into existence.

Interestingly, most of these etiological myths or stories follow the same tripartite pattern. The first part seeks to explain a culture's origin. In the previous chapter, we read about Cherokee origin stories in the *Myths of the Cherokee*. Another example is Virgil's *Aeneid*, an origin story about how the Roman Empire began. What typically comes second, as we mentioned above, is a redemption story about how some unspeakable evil is overcome and the people of that culture are liberated. For example, Romulus, the founder of Rome, must destroy his wicked uncle Amulius, who usurped his father's throne, before the ancient Latin kingdom of Alba Longa can be set right.

Surprisingly, the third and last part of these foundational tales is quite often the story of how the newly emancipated people organized themselves into a political society. Take America, for example. After the British were formally expelled

from the Continent, the next thing the leaders did was formulate a government via the Articles of Confederation and then the US Constitution. The Hebrews of old are another case in point. Immediately after the defeat of Egypt, laws are given to them (i.e., Ten Commandments) and cultural expectations are established before they enter the Promised Land. In other words, they become their own commonwealth.

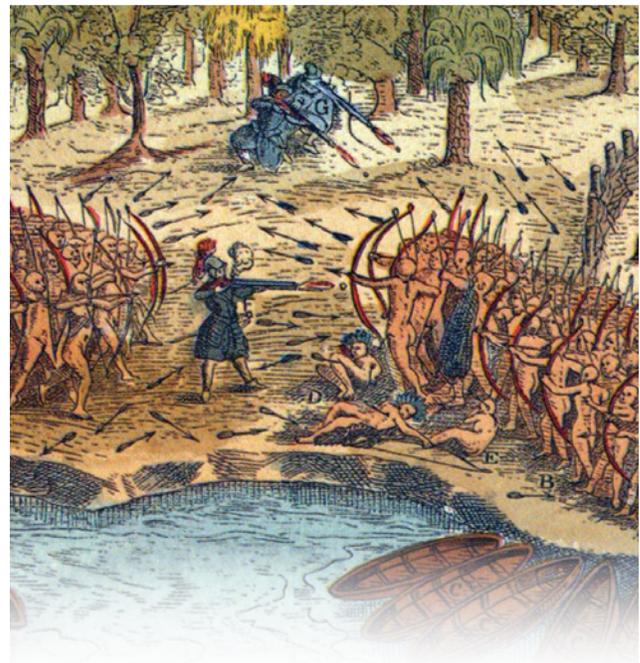
What you are about to read is a classic etiological story that presents parts two and three of the Iroquois Indian's origins. Like so many of these stories, the transition from myth to history is not clearly delineated by the narrator. Oftentimes it is a strange mixture of legend and truth. Was there a historical founder of Rome named Romulus? Perhaps. Was he raised by wolves? Probably not.

In the first part of the Iroquois story, we find five American Indian nations in a state of perpetual warfare with one another and no one knows why. It turns out that the land has been covered in darkness by an evil sorcerer named Adadarhoh. Like Anakin Skywalker who later became Darth Vader in Star Wars or the nine kings of Middle-earth's Second Age who became the Nazgûl in *The Lord of the Rings*, such was the case of Adadarhoh—a powerful Indian chieftain who completely gave himself over to evil. If a savior does not quickly appear, all will be lost. Enter Dekanawida—hero of the Five Nations and forger of their new government.

However fictional the first part of this story was, the subsequent tale which explains the creation of the Iroquois Confederation, known to their own people as the Great Peace, was in fact a historical reality many years before Europeans arrived in America. Dekanawida, the great prophet of peace and diplomacy, is said to be born of a virgin. In many cultures around the world, such a birth indicates either divinity or a divinely appointed mission. The threatened destruction of the visionary reformer in infancy resembles the hero tales of Hercules, Romulus and Remus, King Cyrus of Persia, and, of course, Jesus. Such parallels between Old World and New World heroes are both striking and difficult to explain.

Contrary to the European interpretation of American Indian cultures living in a benighted state of savagery, this particular legend is especially important because it recounts the establishment of a sophisticated civil polity among the aboriginal tribes. The Iroquois Confederation would be governed through a Great Council made up of representative chieftains delegated by each of the Five Nations for that purpose. This polity was a staggering accomplishment and a giant leap forward in terms of statecraft. As a confederation, the Iroquois allowed each distinct nation to be largely self-governing. As a federation, they sent representatives to discuss and debate issues of war and policy that would affect their constituents.

Indeed, men such as Benjamin Franklin and George Washington were amazed to find such a sophisticated arrangement among “uncivilized” peoples, and the Iroquois Confederation influenced their own efforts to create a similar government for the American states. In chapters to come we will trace, in some detail, the long development in Europe of ideas such as representative government, consent of the governed, and the separation of power among various branches to protect liberty. We must not forget, though, that in terms of advanced and visionary political societies, the American Indians were most definitely here first.



Time Line

AD 1100

1451

1535

1609

1677

1722

1754

AD 1100 — Iroquoian-speaking and Algonquian-speaking cultures develop distinctly in southern Canada, New England, and northern New York area.

1451 — A solar eclipse occurs, alluded to in the legend of Dekanawida; this is a commonly accepted date for the founding of the Iroquois Confederation, or the Great Peace. The Five Nations of this alliance are the Mohawks, Oneidas, Cayugas, Senecas, and Onandagas.

1535 — Jacques Cartier establishes an outpost on an island in Canada inhabited by Hurons, an Algonquian tribe.

1609 — Samuel de Champlain leads French and Huron forces in an unsuccessful attack upon Mohawk Indians;

soon after, the Beaver Wars between the French and Algonquian tribes and the Dutch and Iroquois tribes break out over control of the beaver fur trade with Europe.

1677 — The Silver Covenant Chain Treaty establishes an alliance between England and the Iroquois Confederation. Each side is obligated to support the other in case of war.

1722 — The Tuscarora peoples join the Iroquois Confederation, which is also known as the Six Nations after this date.

1754 — The French and Indian War begins, pitting Algonquians against Iroquois as allies of the two European powers.

Bay of Quinte

a long, narrow bay on the northern shore of Lake Ontario

natural

The similarities between the Iroquois origin story and the Christian account of the birth of Jesus are striking. They are also difficult to account for, because even considering the latest possible date for Dekanawida's life (c. 1450), it still occurs at least 150 years before the Jesuit missionaries first came to North America. Therefore, it is unlikely that the Indians were influenced by the Christian gospels.

Dekanawida

This name means "The Peacemaker."

The League of Five Nations

c. 1450

THE BIRTH OF DEKANAWIDA

The beginning of the Great Peace, or the Great League of the Five Nations, took place in ancient times and in the following manner.

North of the beautiful Lake Ontario was a long, winding sea known as the **Bay of Quinte**. Above this was the town of Kah-ha-nah-yenh which lay next to the hill called Ti-ro-nat-ha-ra-da-donh. In this village lived a good woman who had a daughter of stainless character. The young girl had never been married and was indeed a virgin. In the course of time and against any **natural** explanation, she conceived and began to show signs of pregnancy.

On one particular evening, the girl fell into a deep sleep and a Messenger was sent to her in a dream. He announced that she would give birth to a son, and that he would be a great and powerful man who would live among the Flint people and would travel to the Many Hill Nation where he would raise the great Tree of Peace. The Messenger said to her, "You shall call his name **Dekanawida**."

Now the mother of this girl became enraged. “How did you become pregnant? I demand an answer!” The girl would always reply, “Mother, I swear to you, I do not know how I came to be with this child!”

Day after day the mother and daughter fought in this manner till the time came for her to give birth. When the child was born, the grandmother hated him and said to her daughter, “Since you refuse to tell me who the father is, you have brought shame on our tribe and now I know that calamity will strike us. Therefore I say that you must drown the child!”

Thus, in great distress the mother took him to the bay, chopped a hole in the ice, and thrust the baby into the water. Yet when she woke up the next morning—behold, the child was nestled at her bosom.

The next evening the grandmother was visited by a Messenger who said to her, “Stop what you are doing! Your daughter has spoken the truth and does not know how she became pregnant. It was the pleasure of the Creator, that she should bear this child and be called Dekanawida, for he shall bring good tidings of peace and power from heaven, and shall cause the Great Peace to rule and govern on earth.”

When the old woman awoke, she went in to her daughter and said, “Please pardon me, for I was wrong in the way I have treated you. A Messenger visited me last night and has told me everything.”

So the child grew rapidly and became remarkably strong. He was flawless in appearance and his face was profoundly handsome. Then, when he had finally come of age, he said to his mother, “The time has come. I am ready to perform the duty for which I have come to this world. Tomorrow I shall begin my journey to the East.”

THE JOURNEY OF DEKANAWIDA

The next day, Dekanawida began to hew a canoe out of white rock. Then, when he had finished, it was time to say farewell to his mother and grandmother.

“I am now ready to depart. Look there at the tree atop the hill. Whenever you wish to know whether I am alive or dead, take your ax and strike it. If blood flows from the cut, you will know that I have perished at the hands of men, but if no blood flows from the wound of the tree then you may know that my mission has been successful and that I have stopped the shedding of blood among the nations. Now come to the shore and see me off.”

So they all walked together down to the lake, and Dekanawida said, “Good-bye, my mothers. I now depart on the journey for which I came into this world and it may be that I will never see you again.”

The grandmother replied, “I think you will not get far. Your canoe is made of rock! How can it possibly float?”



LOUHI, THE WITCH QUEEN

Many cultures preserve origin stories where some satanic figure needs to be overcome before their commonwealth can be established. For example, the Hebrews needed to be delivered from Pharaoh before they could enter the Promised Land. Clearly Adadarhoh was the archnemesis of the Indians. This painting depicts Louhi, an evil witch queen who ruled over the northern realm of Pohjola in Finnish origin stories.

Dekanawida turned to his grandmother and said, “This shall be the first sign: a canoe made from stone will float.”

He bade them farewell, placed his canoe in the lake, and paddled away toward the East. His mother and grandmother looked on, with great wonder, at the speed which the boat traveled. In just a few moments, he disappeared from sight.

CONFRONTATION WITH THE MOHAWKS

Dekanawida had crossed the lake and came into the hunting territory of the **Flint Nation**. He continued on until he reached the lower waterfall of the nation’s river. There he sat beneath a great tree, made a camp, smoked his pipe, and meditated quietly.

After a little while, a man of the Flints passed by and saw the camp fire burning. He approached cautiously, trying to see if the stranger had a weapon. Unable to tell for sure, he ran back to his town and immediately reported the presence of the stranger to his people. The chiefs gathered all their men and confronted the pipe smoker.

“From where have you come, stranger?”

“I have journeyed here from **Kah-ha-nah-yenh**,” he replied.

“What is your name?” the elder chief inquired.

“My name is Dekanawida, given to me by my virgin mother, who was commanded that this should be, since no one else will ever be called by this name.”

“Why have you come here?”

Dekanawida replied, “The Great Creator, from whom we are all descended, sent me to establish the Great Peace among you. No longer shall you kill one another and no longer shall nations make war on other nations. These things are evil and your Maker now forbids it.”

The elder responded, “All that you say seems good, but we must have proof before we submit ourselves to you and know for certain that you have the authority to establish the Great Peace, as you have claimed.

Dekanawida lifted his eyes upwards. “Here is how I shall demonstrate that I am a messenger sent from the Creator. He has determined that I shall choose the manner of my death. Therefore, if you attempt to kill me in a manner which I have not chosen, it will not work.”

“Very well,” responded the speaker. “Let us proceed at once, for we are ready to destroy you.”

“Look at those cliffs,” Dekanawida said, “and behold that tree which stands at the edge of the precipice overlooking the waterfall. I will climb the tree and seat myself in the topmost branches. Cut down the tree, and the fall into the shallow water below will surely destroy me.”

Thus, Dekanawida ascended the tree, and when he was seated on the highest branch the Mohawks chopped it down. It made a terrible sound as it bounced off the cliffs, crashing into the water below. The men waited till evening, but seeing the violence of the fall, they knew that Dekanawida must have drowned.

However, the next morning some of the warriors noticed that there was smoke rising from a cabin near the place where the tree had fallen. They

Flint Nation

This refers to the Mohawk tribe. At the time this story takes place, the Mohawk people lived in what is now upstate New York.

Kah-ha-nah-yenh

a town near the Bay of Quinte

cautiously approached and behold, Dekanawida was alive! They knew that it was not a ghost when they saw him cooking his morning meal. When the warriors reported this to the chiefs and the people, they concluded that this man had been sent by the Creator to establish the Great Peace.

THE TROUBLED NATIONS

Now in those days the nations were held in darkness by a mighty warrior named Adadarhoh. He was a great wizard that lived in a **bulrush** nest which lay in the midst of a deserted marsh. His body was twisted by seven crooks and in his long, tangled locks lived seven writhing **serpents**. To all who saw him, he appeared as a monster. His food was raw meat and the **flesh** of humans. By his sorcery, all who came against him were destroyed, just as all who were found walking around the marsh. It was said that even birds who flew overhead would die and fall from the sky if they dared to travel over his dwelling. Nevertheless, the people of the Onondaga and the surrounding nations obeyed his commands, so much did they fear his magic.

Life under Adadarhoh was most terrible. There was bitter jealousy between towns, so much that one tribe would send out their young men against another simply in order to make them better fighters. Peril and mourning were everywhere. Men were exhausted with sacrifices and women were cut and scarred with flints. War with other tribes, war between families, war with brother-nations, and war with sister-towns. Even in one's own village, people suspected that their very neighbors might be enemies, and so it was considered unsafe to roam about unless the moon was hidden and the land was pitch dark. Such was the condition of the Nations when there was no Great Law. Alas, the time came when the people of Onondaga could endure this man no longer.

THE SORCERY OF ADADARHOH

In those days, a great dreamer arose and received a vision. He told the chiefs of Onondaga, "I have dreamed that one shall come from far away to help us. **Hiawatha** shall meet with him, and together, they shall prevail."

Adadarhoh heard of the prophecy and became alarmed. "Hiawatha has seven daughters," he thought. "If I kill them, he will flee from sorrow and forget every tie that has bound him to Onondaga."

So that evening Adadarhoh climbed a tree and took the shape of an owl. When he saw Hiawatha's youngest daughter walking below, he sang a short **tune**: "Unless you marry Adadarhoh, you will surely die."

He then descended from the tree and returned to his home. Three days later, the girl was taken with a mysterious illness and died. When Hiawatha heard about his daughter, he became distraught and sat with his head in his hands, yet no one would comfort him.

In the same manner, five more of Hiawatha's daughters died at the hands of Adadarhoh. Finally, when some of the warriors of his clan heard the full report of what was happening, they took up positions outside of Hiawatha's home to see what they could discover. One evening when there was no moon in the sky,

bulrush

a tall water plant which was often used for weaving

serpents

Adadarhoh likely had matted and dreadlocked hair, which led to the legend that his hair housed snakes.

flesh

Part of Dekanawida's legacy was that he helped to end the practice of cannibalism among the Native Americans.

Hiawatha

Hiawatha was a leader of the Onondaga tribe who eventually became Dekanawida's chief assistant.

tune

in this instance, a hex or a curse

HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS



◆ Culture Hero

Like many legendary figures who are credited with founding new civilizations, Dekanawida had somewhat divine characteristics attributed to him, including his birth from a virgin and his supernatural powers to escape death. His name, meaning “Two River Currents Flowing Together,” might refer to a legend that he was born among the Algonquian tribe, who were bitter rivals of the Iroquois in later times. He is unique as a peaceful prophetic figure, which accounts for his success in founding the Confederation, known to the Iroquois as the Great Peace, which ended an era of continuous warfare and horrible practices such as cannibalism.¹

◆ Hiawatha

Hiawatha is believed to be a real historical person who assisted in the formation of the Great Peace. He is said to have been a gifted spokesman for the prophet of the peace, Dekanawida, who suffered a speech defect. The tradition also says that several of his daughters were killed by the chief of the Onondagas, who opposed the joining of the tribes and the ending of warfare among them. The wampum belt, which symbolized the alliance of the Five Nations and was known as Hiawatha’s Belt, was given to him by Dekanawida to cure his despair after his daughters died.²



◆ Adadarhoh

Adadarhoh was a demon-like chieftain of the Onondagas who controlled many surrounding areas through fear, witchcraft, and cannibalism. In an attempt to disrupt the Iroquois Confederation, he allegedly killed all of Hiawatha’s daughters. According to Indian legend, he was delivered from his dark ways and actually joined the alliance as the presiding officer at the Great Council of the Iroquois.³

◆ Fall of Constantinople

Constantinople, second great capital of the Roman Empire, eventually became the headquarters of the Byzantine Empire which succeeded Rome. For centuries, this great walled city, defended by ships and secret technologies such as Greek fire, had guarded eastern Europe from outside invasions by pagan Slavic tribes and Muslim armies. By the fifteenth century, the Ottoman Turks had occupied most of the territories surrounding the city. Sultan Mehmed II besieged the ancient capital for fifty-three days, using some fifty thousand soldiers and cannons against an estimated seven thousand defenders. The city surrendered on May 29, 1453, ending the Middle Ages but also causing hundreds of Greek scholars to seek refuge in the West. These refugees launched a revival of interest in Greek language and literature, expanding the Renaissance in western Europe to embrace classical Greece as well as Rome.⁴



the men sensed that some special treachery was afoot. Walking out from the darkness was Adadarhoh!

He snorted loudly like an animal, drove his staff deep into the ground, and ascended the tree. Sitting there, he waited until Hiawatha's last daughter came out of the house. Taking the form of an owl, he sang the song as he had previously done. "Unless you marry Adadarhoh, you will surely die."

After this, he descended from the tree and one of the men shot him through with arrow, turning him back into the form of a man. Another warrior rushed at him with a club raised above his head. Adadarhoh sat up and pointed to the man, "Stop! Your power to harm me is now taken from you—even now your arm weakens."

As the sorcerer spoke those words, the arrow wound healed and the man dropped the club as his arm went lame. Adadarhoh went back to his home and after three days Hiawatha's last daughter died. All the men who attacked him perished as well.

THE WANDERINGS OF HIAWATHA

The grief of Hiawatha was beyond reckoning, and just as Adadarhoh supposed, he fled far from the Onondaga nation, saying, "I shall forever cast myself away from this place. From this time forth I will bury myself in the forests and become a wanderer of the woods." Departing, he looked up and split the heavens. The skies were rent asunder.

He journeyed to the south and camped atop a mountain. After this, he descended and passed through a hickory grove, altering his journey toward the East. Here he came to a place filled with **Junacaceae** plants. Out of these, he made three strings.

On the fourth evening he came to a valley where there was a group of lakes. Upon one of these lakes there was a flock of ducks. Hiawatha said to himself, "Here is where I shall discover my true powers."

Looking at the birds he said, "You who float upon the lake, take flight and lift up the waters with you so that I may walk across the bottom as on dry ground." And so the ducks flew away, taking all the water with them.

As he walked along the lake bottom, he noticed the purple and white shells of the water snail. Stooping down, he placed some of them on the strings which he made the day before, filling his pouch as well. Then, just as he ascended back to the shore, the ducks returned with all the water they had taken away. Hiawatha was now hungry for the first time since his departure, and so he killed three of the birds and roasted them. Sitting by the fire he said, "If I ever found someone as burdened with grief as me, these strands of shells would become the words by which I would console them and lift his sorrow."

Turning back toward the South, he set up camp, built a fire, and mourned for his daughters. Holding the strings of shells, he repeated what he said the night before, "If I should see anyone suffering like me, I would take these strings from his pole and console him."



HIAWATHA'S SORROW
The story of Hiawatha resembles that of Job—the famous wiseman in the Jewish Scriptures who lost all of his children as the result of a satanic attack. Like Job, Hiawatha must endure a season of unspeakable suffering before he emerges from the ashes as a stronger man.

Junacaceae
long, skinny, grasslike plants with small flowers



JUNACACEAE PLANT

A little girl who had seen the smoke rising from off in the distance hid behind a tree and listened to his words. She immediately ran home and told her father of the stranger who had come into their land.

“From what you have told me, this man can be none other than Hiawatha, the one who left his home nation of Onondaga because of grief for his daughters. According to a seer of that nation, this man shall meet with an even greater man to establish peace among us.”

So the man told the chiefs and they sent messengers to Hiawatha, inviting him into their company. He lived among them for about a month, when a runner came from the South, telling the chiefs that a powerful man had just arrived at a town near the Mohawk’s river.

“We have learned of the dreamer’s prophecy, and I have been sent here to summon Hiawatha. Go now, for the great man is travelling to the village of Kanyakahake. There you shall meet him and together you shall establish the Great Peace.”

HIAWATHA IS CLEANSED

Thus, the chiefs of that town sent Hiawatha away with an escort of five men, ordering them not to leave his side until they had reached their destination. Then, on the sixth day of their journey, they stopped and lit the customary fire, which warned the town that visitors were approaching. This allowed them to enter without being harmed. The leaders sent out messengers and invited the party into their village. When Hiawatha finally arrived, the chiefs asked him what errand he was on and why he had come. He replied, “I understand that a great man has come from the north and is now staying with you. I have come to see him.”

The chief called forth two men and had them escort Hiawatha to the dwelling where Dekanawida was staying. When they had arrived and entered, the one born of a virgin stood to his feet and said, “My young brother, I see that you are carrying a deep grief. You are a chief among the Onondaga people, yet you wander about aimlessly?”

“What you say is true,” Hiawatha replied. “Adadarhoh—that wicked sorcerer—destroyed all seven of my daughters and has made me miserable beyond any reckoning. I am filled with rage and am so bitter that all I do is roam the earth. I have abandoned both my house and my nation, splitting the heavens when I left.”

Dekanawida said to the wanderer, “I shall now remove your sorrow so that your mind may be at rest and so that you may see clearly. Do you have only three strings of shells on your pole?”

“I have only three, but I have many shells in my deerskin,” he answered.

“My brother, I shall string five more because I have eight things that I must say to you.”

So Dekanawida took the five strings of shells and placed them on the pole with the other three and began to speak healing words to Hiawatha. After each part of his address, he took down another string and handed it to his mourning brother. Finally, when the eighth address had ended and all the strings were in

his hand, the mind of Hiawatha was made clear, and for the first time since the death of his daughters, he saw things rightly.

BUILDING THE CONFEDERATION

“My brother, now that your mind is clear and you are competent to judge, we can begin to write the laws which will comprise the Great Peace. Once completed, war shall be abolished among the nations.”

Hiawatha replied to Dekanawida, “I believe everything that you have said. Let us now go and tell the leaders this news.”

They first went to the Mohawks and told them their plan to unite the nations. They explained that from each group of people, great men would be called upon to lead—men of virtue and patience—and that these would wear deer horns as emblems of their position and the custodians of the Great Peace. In this manner, they visited the leaders of all the nations and after five years, the chiefs agreed to enter into **confederation**. Among these were five: the Mohawks, the Oneidas, the Cayugas, the Senecas, and the Onondagas.

THE PACIFICATION OF ADADARHOH

Before the Great Peace could be established, Dekanawida knew that Adadarhoh must first be dealt with, for he greatly opposed any union between the nations. “We must seek his fire and look for his smoke,” he told the leaders.

It was decided that two spies should cloak themselves and try to discover his fire. A pair of men came forward and said, “We are able to transform ourselves into herons.”

The leaders replied, “This will not do, for you will stop at every swamp and become distracted looking for frogs and fish.”

Then two more men volunteered to go. They explained, “By powerful magic we are able to take the form of hummingbirds. This will be ideal, for they fly very swiftly.”

“This will not work, for though indeed you fly very swiftly, you will be always hungry and stopping at every flower.” In the same way the council rejected their offer.

Another pair of men came forward in the form of crows, saying, “By our magic arts we are now crows, perfectly disguised to discover the whereabouts of Adadarhoh.”

Yet the council rejected even these. “Now that your nature is that of crows it will not do, for you squawk loudly and are full of mischief.”

Finally, the last couple came forward. These men had been given power from the deer and the bear respectively to transform themselves into these animals. Dekanawida and the council agreed with this decision and so the men went off in search of the great sorcerer.

Many days later, they returned. When they entered the room where the council was seated, one of the leaders said, “Our ears are desirous to hear your report. Have you found Adadarhoh?”

THE IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY

This map shows the state of the confederation at a later period, in the early 1700s.



confederation

This league of nations would come to be known as the Iroquois Confederacy.



HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

◆ France Triumphant

After over a century of conflict, France finally won the Hundred Years' War when the English surrendered the city of Bordeaux on October 19, 1453. Beginning as a dispute over English claims to a province in France, the war escalated to the English king, Henry V, claiming the throne of France after defeating the French at Agincourt. The French fought back, uniting under the leadership of Charles VII, and succeeded in driving the English out of all French territory except the city of Calais. This lengthy conflict saw both France and England develop from weak feudal kingships to powerful, centralized nations, setting the stage for both countries to expand into the New World in the following century.⁵



◆ First Printed Bible

In 1454, Johannes Gutenberg used movable type, a labor-saving invention, to publish the first printed Bible in history. The text of the entire Old and New Testament was in Latin, based on Jerome's third-century translation of the original Hebrew and Greek. The Gutenberg Bibles had forty-two lines of printed text per page, and several hundred copies were rapidly run off. This landmark in the history of books made the Bible available much more widely and inexpensively, and it contributed to the criticism of medieval church traditions leading up to the later Protestant Reformation beginning in 1517.⁶



◆ Everything's Rosy

Henry VI of England was born heir to the thrones of both England and France. Sadly, he suffered from periodic insanity. During one such episode, his cousin Richard, Duke of York, was appointed protector to serve as regent. The conflict between Henry and his supporters, the Lancastrians, and the followers of Richard of York turned into a lengthy civil war for the throne of England known as the Wars of the Roses. The Lancaster party used a red rose as their symbol, the Yorkists used a white rose, since both rivals claimed descent from Edward III of England. During this bloody war beginning in 1455, most of the old noble families of England killed each other off, allowing the succeeding dynasty, the Tudors, to create a much more powerful monarchical government.⁷



“We have found him, and almost at the expense of our lives. The reports are true. His body is crooked in seven places, his hair is infested with snakes, and he eats the flesh of men.”

Therefore, the council decided they would travel to back to Onondaga in an attempt to pacify Adadarhoh. In order to do this, Dekanawida composed a great song which came to be known as the Hymn of Peace. He taught it to many people along with other songs and the people grew strong in the magic of them until they were finally ready to embark on their journey.

Then the time had come and Dekanawida summoned the chiefs and the people together. There they were appointed to lead the throng as they all marched to Adadarhoh. The singer led them through forests and groves, through valleys and rivers, singing the Peace songs as they covered many miles of terrain. Through every nation they traveled, more and more people joined them, till it was a mighty multitude that finally arrived on the doorstep of Adadarhoh’s dwelling.

Dekanawida addressed the singer. “Remember, do not be afraid when you see him. Sing the Hymn of Peace perfectly, for if you hesitate or make even a single error, Adadarhoh will not be healed and the Great Peace will not be established.”

So, the singer began, but when he saw Adadarhoh he became terrified and made an error. They appointed yet another singer, but he too panicked and could not recite it correctly. Finally, Dekanawida sang the song himself. It was recited perfectly and without error and he could see that Adadarhoh was beginning to take the form of a man again. Thus, he approached the sorcerer and placed his hand on his body, and strength and life began to enter him. Adadarhoh’s body became straight and his mind was cleansed.

Dekanawida now addressed the representatives of the nations, “We have overcome a great obstacle that has long stood in the way of progress. Now indeed we may establish the Great Peace.”

THE APPOINTMENT OF THE RODIYANER

“The first thing necessary is that the women of each nation present the wisest and purest men from their families. These shall become the advisors of the people, the custodians of the law, and the ones who create new rules as they become necessary. They shall be called **Rodiyaner** and their heads shall be crowned with deer antlers.” So, the women from each nation brought forth the qualified men, each nation giving one man the special distinction of “war chief.”

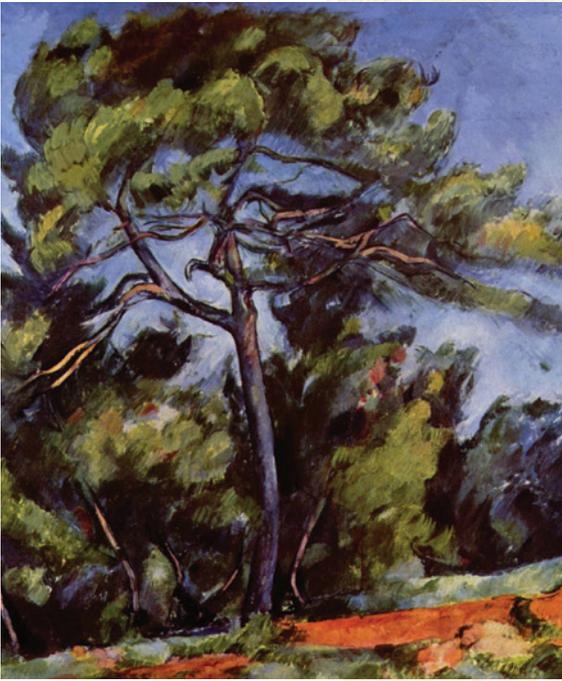
Dekanawida said to them, “Today in the presence of this great assembly, I give you new robes, new names, and antlers to rest upon your head as emblems of power.”

And after these things took place, Dekanawida continued, “Now you are Rodiyaner. You will receive many scratches in this position, and therefore your skin must be thick. Be men of patience and work together in unity. Don’t look after your own interests, but work for the benefit of the people and for the benefit of nations not yet born. You have hereby pledged to govern yourselves by the laws of the Great Peace and all your authority shall come from it alone.”

Rodiyaner

Lords of the confederacy. These are equivalent to US senators today.

THE PEACE TREE AND FIREKEEPERS



PEACE TREE

The Tree of Peace is as symbolically significant to Native Americans as the Kaaba is to Muslims or the Vatican is to Roman Catholics. Should any Indian want to pursue the way of peace and prosperity, they would follow one of the four great roots which spread to the north, east, south, and west back to the Tree, where they would be welcome into the confederacy.

“I am Dekanawida, and with the Confederate Lords of the Five Nations, I planted the Tree of the Great Peace. I planted it in your territory, Adodarhoh, and the Onondaga Nation, in the territory of you who are Firekeepers.

Roots have spread out from the Tree of Great Peace, one to the north, to the east, one to the south, and one to the west. If any man or any nation outside the Five Nations shall obey the laws of the Great Peace, and make known their disposition to the Lords of the Confederacy, they may trace the Roots to the Tree. If their minds are clean and they are obedient and promise to obey the wishes of the Confederate Council, they shall be welcomed to take shelter beneath the Great Tree. To you, Adodarhoh, and the Onondaga Lords, I and the other Confederate Lords have entrusted the care-taking of the tree and the watching of the Five Nations Council Fire. You are the Firekeepers and the smoke of the fire shall always ascend and pierce the sky so that all the nations may always see the fire of the Great Peace.”

THE STRUCTURE OF THE IROQUOIS GOVERNMENT

“I, Dekanawida, appoint the Mohawk Lords as heads and leaders of the Five Nations Confederacy. They are the foundation of the Great Peace and it shall, therefore, be against our Law to pass any measures after the Mohawk Lords have protested against them and no council of the Confederate Lords shall be legal unless all the Mohawks are present.

The Council of the Mohawk shall be divided into three parties. The third party is to listen only to the discussion of the first and second parties, and if an error is made, they are to call attention to it. If the case was handled correctly by the two parties, it then goes to the Seneca Lords for their decision. Finally, once the Seneca Lords have decided in accord with the Mohawk Lords, the case shall be referred to the Cayuga and Oneida Lords on the opposite side of the house. When this is complete, these Lords refer their decisions to the Onondaga Lords, the Firekeepers, for final judgment.”

THE LAWS OF THE IROQUOIS GOVERNMENT

The soil of the earth, from one end of the land to the other, is the property of the people who inhabit it. By birthright, the **Ongwehonweh** are the owners of the soil and no others may claim it. This law has been established from ancient times.

The Great Creator has made us of one blood and of the same soil he has made us, and as only different tongues constitute different nations, he established different hunting grounds and territories and made boundary lines between them.

Ongwehonweh
means “Original Beings”
and refers to the Iroquois

When the Confederate Council of the Five Nations desires to establish the Great Peace among the people of an outside nation, and that nation refuses to accept the Great Peace, then by such a refusal they bring a declaration of war upon themselves and the Five Nations seek to establish the Great Peace by a conquest of the rebellious nation.

When peace shall have been established by the termination of the war against a foreign nation, then the War Chief shall cause all the weapons of war to be taken from the nation. Then shall the Great Peace be established, and that nation shall observe all the rules of the Great Peace for all times to come.

Whenever a war against a foreign nation is pushed until that nation is virtually exterminated because of its refusal to accept the Great Peace, all their rights, property, and territory shall become the property of the Five Nations.

If a nation, part of a nation, or more than one nation within the Five Nations should in any way endeavor to destroy the Great Peace by neglect or by violating its laws, and resolve to dissolve the Confederacy, such a nation shall be deemed guilty of treason and called enemies of the Confederacy and of the Great Peace.

RIGHTS OF THE IROQUOIS PEOPLE

The women of every clan of the Five Nations shall have a council fire ever burning in readiness for a council of the clan. When, in their opinion, it seems necessary for the interest of the people, they should hold a council and their decision and recommendation shall be introduced before the Council Lords by the War Chief for its consideration.

All the clan council fires of a nation may unite with other council fires into one general council fire, and delegates from the council fires may be appointed and sent to the general council and represent the interests of the people there. When a decision has been reached, it must be reported to the Confederate Council by a War Chief.

Before the Original Beings united their nations, each nation had its own council fires. Thus, the five council fires shall continue to burn as before, and they are not quenched. The Lords of each nation in the future shall settle their nation's affairs at this council fire governed always by the laws and rules of the council of the Confederacy and by the Great Peace.

The rites and festivals of each nation shall remain undisturbed and shall continue as before because they were given by the people of old times as useful and necessary for the good of men.

Whenever any man proves himself by his good life and his knowledge of good things to be naturally fitted as a teacher of good things, he shall be recognized by the Lords as a teacher of peace and religion and the people shall hear him.



MOSES WITH THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Iroquois established a constitutional government, that is, one that was based on laws. The full version of this document contains dozens of laws and instructions on how their government is to be run (cf. The Constitution of the Five Nations by Arthur C. Parker).

AFTERWORD

The legend of Dekanawida illustrates the sophisticated government created by the Iroquois people. The genius of that government was that it provided both an effective central government that could manage an extensive territory through a representative body (i.e., the Great Council) while also allowing a great deal of local authority to be maintained by each of the five member nations. Both of these concepts help shape the US Constitution.

Over the next couple of centuries, the bond of this confederacy would remain unbroken. Thus, when European settlers arrived, they understood that aligning themselves with the Five Nations to the west of their colonies in both treaty and trade

would be key to their survival. The relationship was indeed fruitful up until the Revolution, when the Iroquois sided with Great Britain. In the subsequent defeat, they lost all their land and were forced to resettle in Canada and to dissolve their league of nations.

Around the same time that the confederacy of the Five Nations was forged, Europe was beginning to talk about the shortcomings of their own political societies. The main concern was that governments exercised far too much power over their people. For cultures to really flourish, it was deemed that this power would have to end. This is the subject of our next chapter.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Why are origin stories so important to cultures?
2. Do governments prevent or encourage war?
3. Is history mostly true or mostly false?
4. Dekanawida's story indicates that he lived at least one hundred and fifty years before the arrival of the first Christian missionaries in North America. If the Indians had never heard the Christian message, why do you think their description of Dekanawida is so similar to descriptions of Jesus?
5. Why do you think that people tend to create myths about the founders of their country and to explain how their country came to exist?
6. Should myths and legends about a country's origin or famous people from that country be included as history, or should historians and students of history reject such myths and stick to true, factual accounts of people and events? Why?
7. How did the American Indians involve women in the political process?
8. Why do you think other civilizations have been so slow to involve women in politics?
9. Dekanawida called for the "Great Peace" because he saw how terrible war was for his people. What are the effects of war on a society? What are some of the psychological, emotional, spiritual, and/or social impacts of war on a society?
10. Do you agree that war is sometimes necessary to establish peace? Why or why not?
11. Create a chart or diagram showing how the Iroquois government is structured and organized.