Iowa History Connections Lesson Plan

Your name and school: Monique Cottman, Longfellow Elementary School

Lesson grade level: 4th Grade

Lesson title: Agriculture in pre-1700s Iowa

Essential Question: How has farming in the Midwest changed over time?

Lesson abstract: Students will explore a different digital resource each day to learn about the farming practices of Native peoples in Iowa before the presence of American settlers. There is also an opportunity to reserve farming tools from the University of Iowa for students to handle.

Learning Objectives: Students will be able to identify the farming practices and crops of the Native Americans in the Midwest.

Iowa Core Standards:
Understand historical patterns, periods of time and the relationships among these elements.
Understand the role of innovation on the development and interaction of societies.
Understand how physical processes and human actions modify the environment and how the environment affects humans.

Materials/Equipment/Websites:
Chapter 9 of TCI’s Social Studies Alive! Regions of our Country Textbook
http://www.iptv.org/iowapathways/mypath.cfm?ounid=ob_000145

Detailed Procedures/Questions/Activities:

Lesson 1 – What was the land like before American settlers?

Iowa today is known for having the best soil in our country and a lot of our land is used for farming. But, what did the land look like before the farms were there?

Close your eyes and imagine the land of Iowa after the dinosaurs have died, after the Ice Age, before it became land belonging to America. What does it look like?
(expected answers: prairie, lots of animals, trees)

Here is an excerpt from an Ioway named Forester:
When I came to Iowa, I could taste the chemicals which ensured the sweep of the agricultural monoculture that spread before my eyes. I was shocked when I learned that Iowa is the state which has been most transformed from its primeval condition in the United States, its prairies stripped, its wetlands drained, its forests decimated, and its animals eradicated.

The pastoral countryside of Iowa is something of a lie. No matter how it is measured, more than ninety percent of Iowa has been changed, through agriculture and urban growth, from the way God made it, and the way my Ioway ancestors knew it and took care of it.

Read more about the land of the Midwest before farming on http://ioway.nativeweb.org/iowaylibrary/seiowa.htm.

Lesson 2 – Which crops were grown before the American farms were planted?

Use this website to learn about crops that were cultivated in Iowa before corn. http://archaeology.uiowa.edu/cast-plants

This is an excerpt from the website.

These first farmers of southeastern Iowa had access to a wide array of microenvironments teeming with the resources of upland and tributary valley forests, backwater wetlands, and the Mississippi channel itself. The Government Land Office Survey map of mid-nineteenth century Iowa offers a reasonable view of the upland vegetation at the time Euroamerican settlers arrived. Prairie dominated most of the state with wide swaths of wetlands particularly in the north central region.

Native American societies first domesticated varieties of plants that continue to impact the modern world economy. Some of the earliest plant species brought under cultivation were local weedy and oily seeded varieties, such as marshelder, sunflower and goosefoot. These were largely replaced by the better known and higher yielding tropical cultigens—corn, beans, and squashes—a legacy for later pioneer farmers and stock for early American seed companies.

Students should use the website to see what the different plants were used for. They can sort the plants two ways: Early Species & Later Species or Species I Know & Species I Don’t Know

http://archaeology.uiowa.edu/cast-plants

Lesson 3 – How did the Ioway Indians farm the land?

About seven hundred years ago, new Indian groups began to move up the Mississippi River valley and into Iowa. They discovered that corn grew well in the rich Iowa soil. Corn originally came from Mexico. As the Indians migrated north, they brought corn with them.
In the late 1600s, French traders and explorers first contacted Indians living in present-day Iowa. The Ioway Tribe was one of these groups.

The Ioway built their homes and villages near Iowa's many streams and rivers and migrated to a new area every few years as they followed the buffalo and elk herds.

Their larger villages may have numbered from 1,000 to 1,500 people, and large fields surrounded these villages. Women tended the gardens of corn, beans, pumpkins, and squash in these fields while men hunted deer and buffalo.

The Indians did not have metal farm tools such as the breaking plow that could slice through the tough prairie sod. For this reason, they lived near the river valleys where the soil was easier to farm.

Early accounts report that they may have planted one-quarter to one-half acre for each member of their tribe.

http://www.campsilos.org/mod2/pfintro2.shtml

Lesson 4 – What was life like in an Ioway village?

Visit the Living History Farms in Urbandale or see their website for the following information.

The farming techniques practiced by the Ioway Indians in 1700 pre-dated written history and varied somewhat from European methods. Ioway farmers raised corn, beans and squash. Women did the farming in the Ioway culture while men were responsible for hunting and making tools. Ioway families were subsistence farmers, raising just enough for their family to survive throughout the year and having a little put away in case of a bad year.

Ioway Indians had separate summer, winter and traveling lodges. Bark houses called nāhachi kept the Ioway cool during hot summer months, while winter mat-houses called chākirutha, made from layers of sewn cattail leaves, protected the Ioway from harsh winters and stayed around 50 degrees inside. While traveling on hunting expeditions, the Ioway lived in a chibóthraje, or tipi made from buffalo hides. Their villages also contained sweat lodges, food-drying racks, cooking areas, work areas, hide-scraping racks, pottery pits, and gardens.

http://www.lhf.org/en/visit/farm_sites/1700_ioway_indian_farm/

The Iowa Indians ate different foods just like people today. They hunted animals and grew crops. Some of the animals they hunted for food included buffalo, deer, elk, black bear, turkey, raccoon, and turtle. They also fished. They raised different varieties of corn, beans, squash, pumpkins, and sunflowers. They also gathered many wild plants in season, like mushrooms, greens, nuts, and berries. For special ceremonies they might eat dog, or a special dish called minke dashla (MEEN-kay dahsh-LAH), "singed raccoon." Their food was mostly cooked either roasted or as a soup or mush.
Today, Ioway eat the same food as everyone else. On special occasions we eat corn soup and frybread (dough fried in hot oil).

http://ioway.nativeweb.org/student.htm

Students can identify the roles for men and women on the farm, and the sizes of the farms.

**Lesson 5 – What kinds of tools did Native American farmers use? (optional)**
Reserve traveling trunks from the University of Iowa

Corn Farmers and Effigy Mound Builders
Early Farmers and Traders

Students will observe the early farming implements and compare them to tools used today.

**Assessment(s):**
At the end of each day, have the students answer the day’s focus question as an assessment based on the information from the website.