



# **NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN GALLERIES CURRICULUM GUIDE**

Grades K-12

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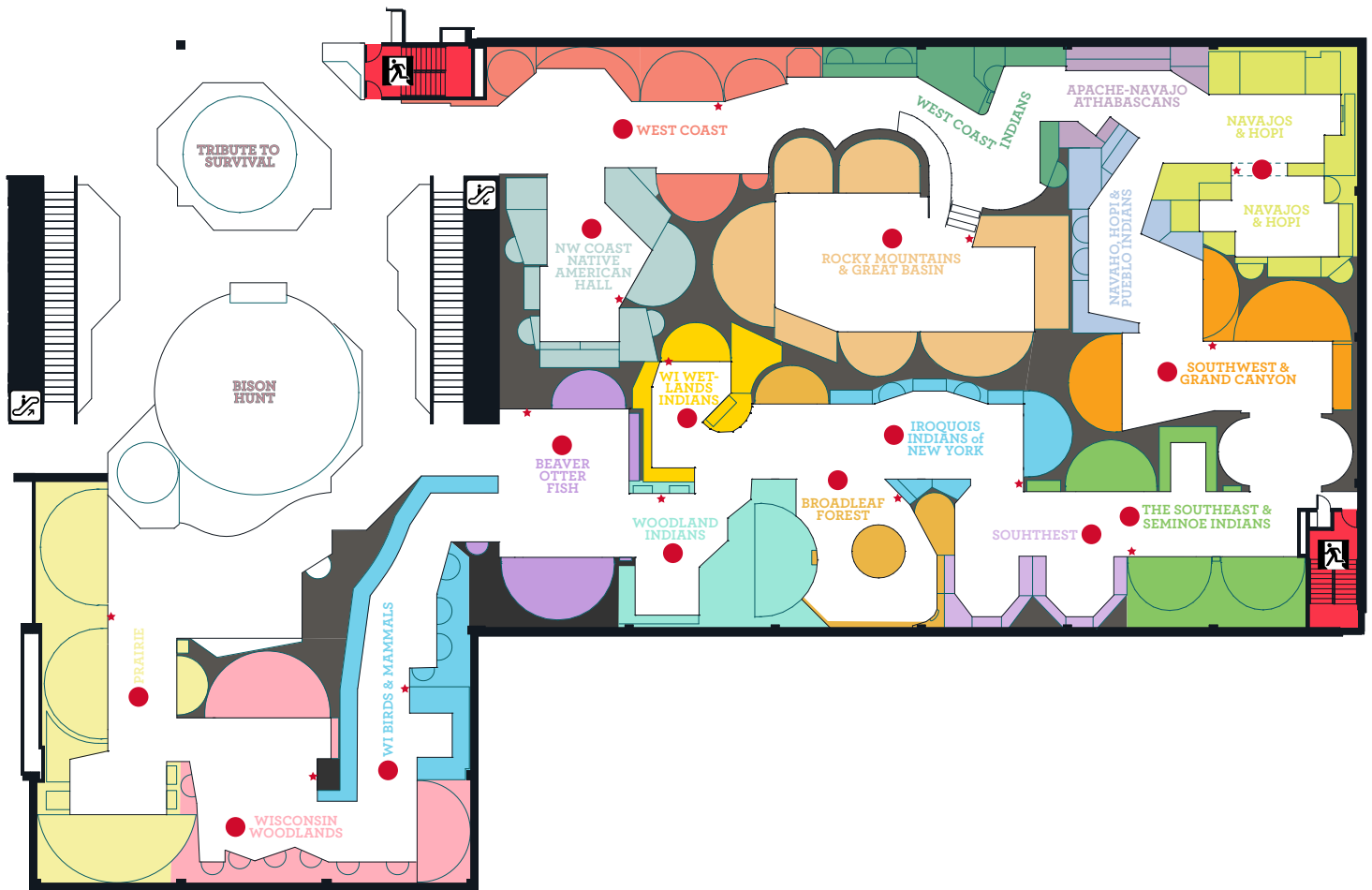
9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday

10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday

# INTRODUCTION TO THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN GALLERIES

The galleries, located primarily on the second floor of the Museum, explore North American Indian culture and history—past and present—through an array of dioramas, interactive components, and artifacts. These include the world-famous Bison Hunt Diorama, the Pow-Wow Grand Entry Scene, an exhibit on traditional games, Wisconsin archaeology, and life-size models of a Northwest Indian plank house and Hopi Pueblo. Visitors can explore the habitats of Wisconsin’s Woodland Indians, and observe excellent examples of porcupine quillwork, beadwork, weaving, and other crafts. The Wisconsin archaeology section features artifacts from Aztalan, the state’s most significant archaeological site, and more than 50 different projectile points from Wisconsin.

## EXHIBIT MAP



## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### Native Americans before European Contact

During the most recent ice age, lasting from 30,000 to 10,000 years ago, Paleo-Indians, the ancestors of Native Americans, followed herds of animals from Siberia across Beringia, a land bridge connecting Asia and North America (or via a coastal route) into what is today Alaska. These early inhabitants did not settle in one place but moved continually, living in short-term, seasonal settlements. By 8000 BCE, they had spread throughout North and South America.

Many have an image of pre-Columbian North America as a sparsely populated virgin land. In fact, millions of native people inhabited North America by the mid-fifteenth century, and the pre-contact population is estimated at approximately 112 million.

Although few textbooks today use the word “primitive” to describe pre-contact Native Americans, many still convey the impression that North American Indians consisted simply of small migratory bands that subsisted through hunting, fishing, and gathering wild plants. In fact, Native Americans eventually developed rich, diverse, and sophisticated societies. Food discovered and domesticated by Native Americans would transform the diet of Europe and Asia. Native Americans also made many crucial—though often neglected—contributions to modern medicine, art, architecture, and ecology.

During the thousands of years preceding European contact, the Native American people cultivated plants for food, dyes, medicines, and textiles, domesticated animals, established extensive patterns of trade and built cities, produced monumental architecture, developed intricate religious beliefs, and constructed a wide variety of social and political organization ranging from kin-based bands and tribes to city-states and confederations. Like other early societies around the world, Native Americans adapted to diverse and demanding environments, and reshaped those environments to meet their needs.

At least 2,000 distinct languages were spoken in the Americas in 1492. Cultural differences were marked. Some Indian peoples belonged to small bands of hunters and gatherers; some practiced sophisticated, irrigated agriculture.

### Native Americans after European Contact

Contact with the New World led to the European colonization of the Americas. While the population of Eurasian peoples in the Americas grew steadily, indigenous people were pushed into other territories and the population plummeted. Eurasian diseases such as influenza, measles, smallpox, bubonic plague, and pneumonic plagues devastated the Native Americans who did not have immunity to them. Conflict and outright warfare with Europeans further reduced populations and disrupted traditional societies. The extent and causes of the decline have long been a subject of academic debate, along with its characterization as a genocide.

## Native Americans in Wisconsin

Archaeological evidence suggests that the early peoples of Wisconsin arrived about 14,000 to 12,000 years ago. Archeologists have found many clues to the past lives of the native peoples in this region through the excavation and study of sites across the state, including effigy mounds, petroglyphs, and burial sites.

Mississippian culture was also a significant era in the history of the early populations in Wisconsin over 1,000 years ago. In Wisconsin, these people are called Oneota. They lived in villages and planted gardens to grow crops such as corn, beans, and squash. They had a complex trade network that extended to both the Atlantic and the Gulf coasts.

Before European contact, Native Americans lived throughout the region farming, hunting and gathering, and maintaining strong family ties and cultural traditions within their respective tribes. American Indians in Wisconsin have a rich cultural heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation by tribal elders.

We do not know the names of the Native American groups of Wisconsin's distant past. The names we know today are often names given to groups by the early Europeans who met them. The tribes that were in Wisconsin prior to European arrival and still remain here are the Ho-Chunk (Winnebago), Menominee, Ojibwe (Chippewa), and Potawatomi. The Oneida, Stockbridge-Munsee Band, and Brothertown Indians arrived in Wisconsin in the 1820s and 1830s. Tribes that once were in Wisconsin, some of them for a short time, such as the Huron, Illinois, Kickapoo, Miami, Ottawa, Sac and Fox, and Santee Sioux have moved on.

## Wisconsin Native Americans after European Contact

The first European to visit Wisconsin may have been interpreter Etienne Brule (ca. 1592-1632). In 1622 or 1623, he traveled around Lake Superior, but the account of his trip was only written down from hearsay after his death. Information about Wisconsin also appears on Samuel de Champlain's map of New France published in 1632 — two years before Jean Nicolet reached Wisconsin — and is presumed to have come to Champlain from Brule. Most scholars agree that another of Champlain's interpreters, Jean Nicolet (1598-1642), did in fact reach Wisconsin and landed near Green Bay in 1634.

Brule and Nicolet were sent west by Samuel de Champlain to see if a water route to the Pacific existed. They didn't find one, of course, but they did find a very rich source of furs on which the French authorities could turn a handsome profit, providing the furs could be brought to Montreal and shipped back to France.

The first traders in Wisconsin were the Sieur de Groseilliers (1618-1684) and Pierre Radisson (1636-1710), who spent 1654-1656 in Green Bay, and 1659-1660 in the Chequamegon region on Lake Superior.

Radisson and Groseilliers brought back to Montreal not only furs but also news of a great river flowing south. This inspired the explorer René Robert Cavelier La Salle to send teenage interpreter Louis Joliet and Jesuit Father Jacques Marquette to investigate. News of Marquette and Joliet's famous 1673 trip to the Mississippi River inspired many other explorers, traders, and missionaries to come to Wisconsin in the seventeenth century.



## The Wisconsin Fur Trade

French explorers were followed by fur traders and missionaries. Indian hunters provided beaver pelts to the French traders who shipped the pelts to Montreal and then on to Europe. In return, the Indians would receive knives, beads, blankets, and other goods. Trade goods were stored in regional warehouses in small settlements, and then redistributed to smaller trading posts at Green Bay, Prairie du Chien, and LaPointe on Madeline Island. As the fur trade economy flourished, the British lured the Indian suppliers away from the French. As these various groups interacted with Wisconsin's Native peoples, change and conflict resulted.

In the fall, traders advanced guns, ammunition, and other supplies to Indian hunters on credit. In spring, the hunters returned to pay off their bills in furs. This system kept Indian hunters in permanent debt to their French employers. The traders packed large canoes with thousands of pounds of pelts for the trip back to Montreal. Beavers caught in Milwaukee or Minocqua ended up as hats for customers in Paris and London. Military garrisons were established throughout the Great Lakes to make sure that trade goods came in and pelts went out with as little interruption as possible.

For most of the eighteenth century, furs came through lakes Michigan and Superior from Wisconsin, Minnesota, western Ontario, and many other regions.

## Here are Wisconsin's Native American cultural periods:

The **Paleo-Indian period (12,000-6500 BCE)** marks the earliest period of human occupation in Wisconsin. It is determined archaeologically by the occurrence of simple stone tools, human-made cut marks on mammoth bones and Clovis and Folsom projectile points.

The **Archaic period (8500-500 BCE)** is defined by an increase in plant subsistence, absence of pottery and burial in natural hills. The Old Copper Culture dates to this time period.

The **Woodland period (500 BCE-1300 CE)** is delineated by more settled communities, the first use of pottery, and construction of earthen mounds.

The **Mississippian period (1000-1650 CE)** is recognized by corn agriculture, increased village size, and more intricately designed, shell-tempered pottery.

Wisconsin was a crossroads for a variety of American Indian groups, and features the largest concentration of effigy mounds in the world, some of the first North Americans to work with metal, and the premier Aztalan site.

Aztalan is one of the largest and most significant archaeological sites in Wisconsin, though archaeologists actually know little about this mysterious community. Located halfway between Milwaukee and Madison, Aztalan was a settled community of about 350 Late Woodland and Middle Mississippian peoples dating roughly to 1050 to 1250 CE. This site is noted for its large, earthen pyramid mounds, distinctive house forms, and enormous stockades. Aztalan is related to the huge Mississippian site of Cahokia in Illinois near St. Louis, which gave rise to a number of smaller communities across the upper Midwest including Aztalan.

MPM excavations at the Aztalan site uncovered thousands of interesting items including several styles of pottery, a variety of projectile points, stockade posts and "Aztalan brick." This is a straw and clay mixture that, when burned, hardened like modern-day brick and was used in the construction of buildings and the stockade.

Wisconsin's earliest inhabitants used materials in their environment to produce essential, everyday items. Common activities included: finding and preparing food; maintaining a dwelling; making pottery, tools, and clothing; defending the community; raising families; and playing games of skill, dexterity, and chance. Like people everywhere, they also found time for talking, storytelling, and passing on knowledge and traditions.

American Indians in Wisconsin and other places throughout the continent came together for things like ceremony, warfare, alliances, marriage, and trade. One of the greatest trade networks in Wisconsin's archaeological past is called the Middle Woodland Hopewell exchange network (300 BCE-400 CE). This network connected American Indian groups from distant locations with those in Wisconsin, resulting in unique items like conch shell from the Gulf Coast, obsidian (volcanic glass) from Wyoming, and mica from the Appalachians being found in Wisconsin archaeological sites. Wisconsin copper was also traded to groups far outside the area.

Effigy mounds are human-made earthen mounds in the shapes of lines, ovals, or animals such as panthers, turtles, birds, and bears. Built by Late Woodland peoples around 700-1200 CE, effigy mounds rarely reach more than four feet tall but can extend hundreds of feet in length. Some of them have human remains and burial items, but many do not. The reason for the shapes is unknown, but the mounds almost certainly had ritual significance and might have been territorial boundaries. Of the roughly 15,000 effigy mounds once extant in Wisconsin, only about 4,000 remain.

One of the earliest uses of metal in North America is evidenced in Wisconsin's Old Copper Culture, which dates to the Archaic period. Copper was mined from areas around Lake Superior and made into objects such as spear points, awls, fishhooks, and jewelry. Some of these copper items were used in burials. The Museum has one of the largest collections of Native copper in the region.

This exhibit also features a model archaeological dig unit and an extensive array of Wisconsin projectile points. Projectile points, commonly called arrowheads, are tools of finely chipped, pointed stone that were attached to the ends of spears and arrows. One of the oldest and most common archaeological artifact types, they are used for hunting animals as well as fishing and in defense against other people.

Archaeological evidence of early European presence can be determined by items like knives, gunflints, silver objects, and trade beads. Remains of brick, wood, and nails may indicate that a structure was present and dishes, jars, pipes, tools, and toys show activities of early European settled life.



## EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS

### Hebior Mammoth

*Location: Ground floor atrium, opposite the Dome Theater entrance*

The Hebior Mammoth is the most complete mammoth ever found in North America, with 85% of the bones recovered. Excavated in Kenosha County in the mid-1990s on the farm of John Hebior, the mammoth, found with stone tools and butchering marks, has been radiocarbon dated to about 14,500 years ago. The Hebior Mammoth is one of the earliest pieces of evidence of human occupation in North America, predating the Clovis culture by more than a thousand years.

### Pow-Wow

*Location: Second floor, center, elevator lobby*

Modern Pow-Wow grand entry scene with 37 life-sized figures dressed in colorful dance attire. These figures move on an expansive turntable around singers at a drum and pass through specially lit areas accompanied by the sounds of traditional American Indian music. The scene features various aspects of contemporary American Indian life, both reservation and urban.

The Pow-Wow figures are based on life-casts of Indian people from Wisconsin's six federally recognized tribes: Chippewa (Ojibwe), Ho-Chunk (Winnebago), Menominee, Potawatomi, Stockbridge-Munsee, and Oneida.

The local American Indian community dedicated hundreds of hours to the fabrication of the drum and Pow-Wow regalia featured in the exhibit. Other segments present the history of American Indian and non-Indian relations. Subjects such as The First Americans, Outnumbered and Out-armed, and Federal Policies and Indian Strategies are explored here in detail.

The word *pow-wow* is thought to derive from the Algonquian word *pauwau* ("he uses divination; he practices magic or sorcery"), or Narragansett *powwáw* ("sorcerer, shaman"), and possibly from Proto-Algonquian *pawe-wa* ("one who dreams").

Pow-wows are the Native American people's way of meeting together, to join in dancing, singing, visiting, and renewing old friendships. They are typically a time to renew Native American culture and preserve the rich heritage of American Indians.

### The First Americans

*Location: Second floor, center west, to the right of the Crow Bison Hunt diorama*

Humans migrated from Asia into Beringia—a region of land now covered by seas between present day Siberia and Alaska. They probably moved through Beringia and into North America in three phases of migration during low sea levels over thousands of years between ca. 70,000 BCE and ca. 8000 BCE.

The history of American Indians before European contact is broadly divided into three major periods: the Paleo-Indian period (15,000-7000 BCE), the Archaic period (8000-1000 BCE), and the Woodland period (1000-1600 BCE). The limited evidence available about the Paleo-Indian period suggests that the first Indians were nomadic, hunting and



defending themselves with stone tools, clubs, and spears, which were at times tipped with well-crafted, fluted stone points.

During the Archaic period, basketry, bone tools, and finer stone tools appeared. Archaic peoples also began to develop more specialized knowledge of their local environments and the animals and plants that lived there. Though they did not generally travel far beyond these familiar environments, American Indians during this period did begin to establish trade and migration routes that brought the native peoples in contact with other bands and tribes.

## Bison Hunt Diorama

*Location: Second floor, center, opposite the Pow-Wow*

The “Bison Hunt on Horseback” diorama portrays an event that was a regular part of life of the American Plains Indians, and was common from the late-1700s until the late-1800s, when commercial hunting had nearly exterminated the bison. These animals are often referred to as “buffalo,” which are actually not found in the American West. Instead, they are indigenous to South Asia (water buffalo) and Africa (Cape buffalo), while bison are found in North America and parts of Europe. Unlike buffalo, bison have short, sharp horns, beards, and a hump between the shoulders.

This exhibit was created in 1966, and was the largest open diorama in the world at the time. Today, it is still recognized for its unique and effective depiction of authentic emotion expressed by the warriors, their horses, and the bison alike.

At the beginning of the European invasion of North America, there may have been as many as 75 million buffalo on the Great Plains. For thousands of years, the bison had been the walking supermarket of the Plains Indian people, providing them with food, clothing, tools, toys, and shelter. For most of the year, bison provided the Plains Indians with most of their food, with durable hides for making tipi covers and blankets, and bones for making a wide variety of tools – at least 87 types, according to one study. For the Plains Indians, hunting was not a choice, but a way of life, and a strategy for survival.

Despite its massive size, the bison is amazingly fast: over short distances it can reach speeds of 30 mph. They also have tremendous endurance and can run at slower speeds for extended periods of time. In hunting bison over the past 12,000 years or so, Indian people gained a great deal of knowledge about the animal, its habits, and its environment. Indians hunted bison in many different ways, ranging from communal hunts in which many different groups would come together to harvest a hundred animals at a single time.

One of the ways Indian people hunted buffalo was to drive them over a cliff at a site known as a “bison jump,” a small-scale model of which is featured at the front edge of the diorama. Scattered across the Northern Plains are thousands of these bison jump sites. Many of them were used only once, while others were used repeatedly.

Bison jumps were communal kill sites in that many groups of Indian people had to come together and work cooperatively to make the site work. This communal hunting brought together people who did not normally live together as one group. During most of the year, they lived in small bands of 50-70 people. For the bison jump, several hundred people might collaborate.



For the Indian hunters, what made one bison better than another was the amount of fat that the animal had. Thus, hunters were able to pick out the fattest animals in the herd by looking at their curves and the sheen of their coats. They also knew which animals would be fat at any given time of year. Maximizing fat meant that Indian hunters harvested cows for much of the year. Only in the summer would bulls be a preferred target.

## A Tribute to Survival

*Location: Second floor center*

This exhibit, which opened in 1993, was meant to be an introduction to the North American exhibits on the second floor. The exhibit's centerpiece, titled "Indian Country," features a modern pow-wow grand entry scene with 37 life-sized figures dressed in colorful dance attire. These figures move on an enormous turntable around singers at a drum, and pass through areas of theatrical lighting, accompanied by the sounds of American Indian music and the voice of a master of ceremonies.

The "Indian Country" Pow-Wow figures are based on life casts of Wisconsin Indian people representing the state's tribes: Chippewa (Ojibwe), Winnebago (Ho-chunk), Menominee, Potawatomi, Oneida, and Stockbridge-Munsee. The local American Indian community dedicated hundreds of hours to the fabrication of the pow-wow outfits and drum used in the exhibit.

Other exhibit cases flanking "Indian Country" present the history of American Indian and non-Indian relations. Subjects such as "The First Americans," "Outnumbered and Outarmed," and "Federal Policies and Indian Strategies" are explored in detail.



## Tlingit Tribe Totem Pole

*Location: Second floor, opposite the down escalator*

This is an authentic 19-foot totem pole from the Tlingit tribe, and carved from red cedar on Prince of Wales Island, Alaska. It was collected by the Museum in 1903. Many of the figures you see carved here are effectively family crests, much like traditional European coats of arms. The top figure represents the Raven Clan, and the next level the Bear Clan. Two slaves are represented in the bottom figures. Tooling marks from the adz used to carve the pole are visible across its surface.

Made of wood, totem poles decay easily in the temperate rain forest environment of the Northwest Coast, so no examples of poles carved before 1800 exist. However, eighteenth-century accounts of European explorers along the coast indicate that poles certainly existed at that time.

Totem poles of all types share a common graphic style in which symbolic animals and spirits are represented. The meanings of the designs on totem poles are as varied as the cultures which produce them. A totem is any animal, plant, or other object, natural or supernatural, which provides deeply symbolic meaning for a person or social group. A totem is revered and respected, but not necessarily worshipped.

Totem poles may recount familiar legends, clan lineages, or notable events. Some poles are erected to celebrate cultural beliefs, but others are intended mostly as artistic presentations. Certain types of totem pole are part of mortuary structures with carved

supporting poles, or recessed backs in which grave boxes (holding the remains of prominent tribal members) were placed. Poles are also carved to illustrate stories, commemorate historic persons, or to represent shamanic powers.

## Northwest Coast Kwakiutl Plank House

*Location: Second floor, east wing, just past the down escalator*

The Kwakiutl Indians traditionally lived in what is now British Columbia, Canada along the shores of the waterways between Vancouver Island and the mainland. Pronounced “kwah-kee-oo-tl,” the name means “those who speak Kwakwala.”

The large plank houses constructed by the Kwakiutl people were made of red cedar and commonly sheltered the members of a lineage group. Red cedar was considered a sacred living being, even after having been cut from the trees. Each house had a name and identity. Houses sometimes had mural paintings on the front, displaying important figures in the lineage that owned the house. Some houses had posts — totem poles — displaying lineage crests inside and/or outside the house. Figures often used in Kwakiutl iconography include the raven, eagle or thunderbird, wolf, crane, beaver, and whale. Red and black were the traditional colors, symbolizing death and rebirth.

The houses provided separate living spaces for the various nuclear families making up the lineage household. The occupants gathered in the central area around the fire for meals, domestic chores, and social activities. During winter, ceremonies were held in the plank houses with masked dancers, dramatic rituals, and feasting.

Traditionally, the Kwakiutl subsisted mainly by fishing and had a technology based on woodworking. Their society was stratified by rank, which was determined primarily by the inheritance of names and privileges; the latter could include the right to sing certain songs, use certain crests, and wear particular ceremonial masks, many of which are exhibited here.

The potlatch, a ceremonial distribution of property and gifts unique to Northwest Coast peoples, was elaborately developed by the southern Kwakiutl. Their potlatches were often combined with performances by dancing societies, each society having a series of dances that dramatized ancestral interactions with supernatural beings. Those beings were portrayed as giving gifts of ceremonial prerogatives such as songs, dances, and names, which became hereditary property.

The Kwakiutl contributed extensively to the early development of anthropology, as the subjects of ethnographic studies by pioneering scholar Franz Boas. In more than 5,000 pages written over almost half a century, Boas described and analyzed nearly every aspect of Kwakiutl culture and its relationships to other Northwest Coast Indians with whom they shared general features of technology, economy, art, myth, and religion.

Samuel A. Barrett, a student of Boas’s, became the Museum’s first Curator of Anthropology in 1909 and served as the director of the Museum from 1921-1939. Barrett collected almost all of the Museum’s Kwakiutl materials on exhibit here.

## Hopi Village

*Location: Second floor, east wing, end of the North American gallery*

The Hopi Indians have lived in northwestern Arizona for thousands of years. The name *Hopi* is translated as “peaceful person.” These Southwest American Indians inhabit an area called the Black Mesa, a plateau which rises 1,000 feet above the surrounding grasslands, and refer to this place as the center of the universe. They are entirely surrounded by the much larger Navajo reservation.

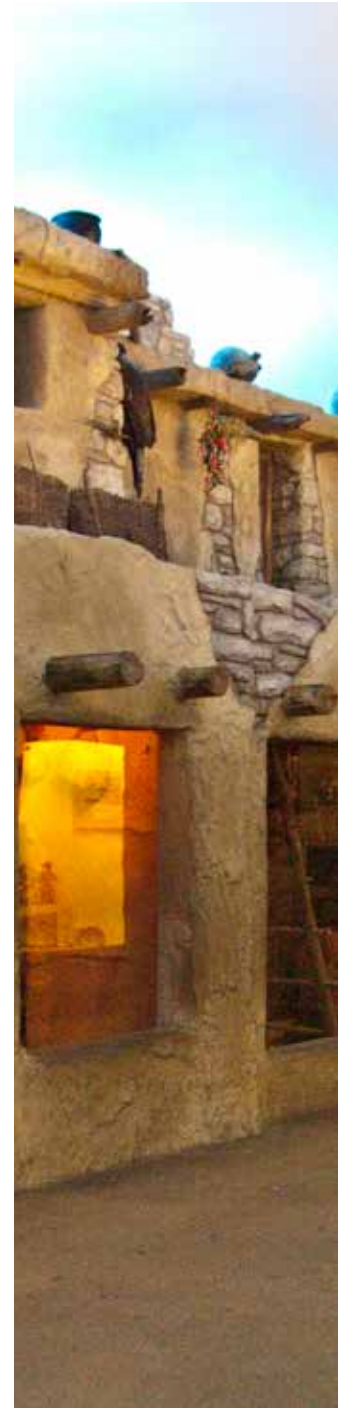
Hopi lived in *pueblos*, adobe houses made of dried clay and stone. They had flat roofs and multiple levels which were accessible by ladder. The bottom level was an underground chamber called a *Kiva*, reserved primarily for religious ceremonies. A replica *Kiva* may be seen on the right as you enter the right-hand structure. The upper levels contained apartments where an entire extended family could live.

Farming and agriculture were the cornerstone of traditional Hopi life. With over 20 different varieties of corn, including yellow and blue, it was the most common crop. The Hopi also grew squash, not only for eating, but for making instruments and utensils. They cultivated cotton and tobacco, pumpkins and beans, and sunflowers for dyes and oils. The Hopi were skilled artisans and had a special flair for making pottery and intricately woven rugs. In fact, Hopi pottery is one of the most recognizable of all of the pottery-making tribes, with its vivid colors and distinct designs.

The Hopi are a matrilineal society. Households are built upon a core line of women whose husbands regularly reside with them. Women exercise a good deal of domestic authority, since they own the houses, land, and the basic crops that support and feed their families. They also hold the most important ritual and judicial offices within the settlement.

The Hopi language is highly complex. It descends from the Aztec language and is unrelated to other pueblo languages. It is known for its unique ways of expressing concepts of time and space. The language is still spoken by about 5,000 people today.

Note the Golden Eagle on the rooftop of the structure to the left. Young Golden Eagles were captured, housed on the roofs of the pueblos, and kept until maturity when they could be used in the Home Dance ceremony. This ceremony celebrates the return of the *Kachina* spirits to their home in the mountains. Every feather from the eagle has a specific purpose in religious ceremonies of the Pueblo People.



## Native American Games

*Location: Second floor, east wing, between the southwest and southeast environment dioramas*

This exhibit is divided into four topics: lacrosse and other stick games, games of skill, games of chance, and traditional European games adapted by Native Americans. Most of the two dozen games displayed here can be found, with some variation, among tribes in the United States and Canada. All tribes played games of skill and chance, racing and relay games, throwing and catching games, games that imitated hunting, and those played alone or in a group.

Common Native American games included lacrosse, double-ball and shinny, all similar to today's field hockey. Games of chance were divided into dice games — such as staves and peach stones — and guessing games like the grass game and hidden ball. Games of skill included chunky, in which players would throw a spear closest to the spot where they predicted a stone disk would stop rolling, and a game very similar to American football in which a ball is advanced down a field across a goal line. Another is an Inuit game which involves rotating two sealskin balls suspended on caribou sinew strings in opposite directions, which was effective in training boys to hunt small animals with a bola.

For many Native Americans, games were a form of entertainment, but they also served important social, ceremonial, and political purposes. Games often taught skills and values necessary for adult life, such as patience, sportsmanship, dexterity, hand-eye coordination, endurance, and critical thinking. Games also strengthened social relationships by creating a communal atmosphere for socialization, a way to resolve conflicts without going to war, and an opportunity for political allies to stay in contact.

## The Iroquois

*Location: Second floor, east wing, opposite the Broadleaf Forest diorama*

The Iroquois people have inhabited the areas of Ontario and upstate New York for well over 4,000 years. The Oneida tribe of Wisconsin has been part of the Iroquois Confederacy since a group of Oneida moved to Wisconsin from New York State in the mid-nineteenth century.

Technically speaking, “Iroquois” refers to a language rather than a particular tribe. In fact, the Iroquois consisted of five tribes prior to European colonization. Their society serves as an outstanding example of political and military organization, complex lifestyle, and an elevated role of women. In Iroquois society, women held a special role. Believed to be linked to the earth's power to create life, women determined how the food would be distributed — a considerable power in a farming society.

Women were also responsible for selecting the sachems for the Confederacy. Iroquois society was matrilineal; when a marriage transpired, the family moved into the longhouse of the mother, and family lineage was traced from her.

The longhouse was the center of Iroquois life. Archaeologists have unearthed longhouse remains that extend more than the length of a football field.

The Iroquois society proved to be the most persistent military threat the European settlers would face. Although conquest and treaty forced them to cede much of their land, their legacy lingers.

## Menominee Ricing diorama

*Location: Second floor, east wing, just past the Broadleaf Forest diorama*

This scene depicts an extended Menominee family harvesting and processing rice on an autumn day in northern Wisconsin.

Harvested in the early autumn, wild rice was an immensely important commodity to Wisconsin Native Americans, particularly the Ojibwe and Menominee, who lived in the areas where it grew abundantly. The Menominee even took their name from the Indian word for wild rice, “monamin,” and were often referred to as the Wild Rice People by Europeans. Botanically, wild rice differs from common rice, and is actually a cereal grass that grows in shallow lakes and streams, ripening in late summer. While the range of wild rice stretches from Manitoba to Florida, the most prolific stands are located in the upper Great Lakes of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

According to Menominee oral traditions, wild rice was a gift to humans from one of the Underneath Beings. When the rice was mature, the Menominee offered tobacco to this spirit to ensure a good harvest. The chief threw tobacco into the fire as an offering to the Thunderbirds so they would not interfere with the weather.

Entire communities would move to the lakeshore in time for the fall wild rice harvest. Working in family groups, a man poled two women out to the family’s section of the lake in a canoe, where the women armed with two sticks would bend the rice stalks over the canoe and knock off kernels until the canoe was full. On shore, the rice was sun-dried or parched over low fires and then pounded and winnowed.

Wild rice was a valuable item for barter during the fur trade era. Carrying only limited supplies, traders, explorers, and missionaries depended on Indians for food. The virtual imperishability of wild rice helped to stave off famine and made it an invaluable source of food during the long winters.

As a staple of Indian subsistence, wild rice also provoked inter-tribal warfare, as various communities fought to protect territory containing prolific stands of rice. The Sioux of northeastern Minnesota and the Great Lakes Ojibwe bands battled for more than a century over access to the rich wild rice territories of northern Wisconsin. One such battle occurred at Mole Lake, in Forest County, between the Sokaogon band of Ojibwe and the Sioux in 1806; according to oral tradition, nearly 500 warriors were killed as the Ojibwe defeated the Sioux.



## Wisconsin Archaeology

*Location: second floor, east wing, Woodland alcove across the corridor from the Menominee Ricing diorama*

The Milwaukee Public Museum's exhibit *Wisconsin Archaeology: Pieces of the Puzzle*, answers commonly asked questions visitors have about the American Indians who lived in Wisconsin long ago.

Wisconsin Archaeology is displayed in two cases. The first includes more than 40 artifacts from MPM collections, including some from Aztalan, the state's most significant archaeological site. The second case is devoted to Wisconsin projectile points, including ways to classify and identify them. More than 50 common projectile points are on display.

Archaeologists learn about the behavior of past peoples by studying the things they left behind. Preserved animal bones, nuts, and seeds indicate what kinds of food they ate. Pottery and stone or copper tools indicate how American Indians hunted, cooked, made clothing, and constructed dwellings. Immovable objects, called features, include mounds, house foundations, and middens (garbage dumps). These features help recreate the living spaces and the landscapes of the past.

Mammoth butcher sites indicate that humans inhabited Wisconsin at least 14,000 years ago. These early inhabitants did not settle down in one place, but moved continually throughout the region living in short-term settlements.

## VOCABULARY

**Archaic period (8500-500 BCE):** is defined by an increase in plant subsistence, absence of pottery and burial in natural hills. The Old Copper Culture dates to this time period.

**Aztalan:** a Native American archaeological site in southeastern Wisconsin where an ancient Middle Mississippian village thrived between 1000 and 1300 CE.

**Culture:** the ideas, skills, arts, tools, clothing, food, music, language, and general ways of life of a certain people at a certain time.

**Eastern Woodland tribes:** aboriginal peoples of North America whose traditional territories were east of the Mississippi River and south of the subarctic boreal forests.

**Effigy mound:** a raised pile of earth built in the shape of a stylized animal, symbol, human, or other figure and generally containing one or more human burials. Effigy mounds were primarily built during the Late Woodland Period, 350-1300 CE.

**Great Plains tribes:** any Native American peoples inhabiting the Great Plains of the United States and Canada. This region comprises the vast grassland between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains and from present-day provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in Canada through Texas.

**Migration:** the movement of a population of either people or animals from one region to another.

**Mississippian period (1000-1650 CE):** recognized by corn agriculture, increased village size, and more intricately designed, shell-tempered pottery.

**Natives:** people born in or belonging in a natural way in a certain place or country.

**Paleo-Indian period (12,000-6500 BCE):** the earliest period of human occupation in Wisconsin. It is determined archaeologically by the occurrence of simple stone tools, human-made cut marks on mammoth bones, and Clovis and Folsom projectile points.

**Plank house:** a gabled house constructed by indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest, typically using cedar planks.

**Pow-wow:** a large gathering of a tribe of North American Indians to celebrate the language, dress, religion, art, music, and social traditions of their culture; a council or conference of or with North American Indians.

**Potlatch:** a competitive ceremonial activity among certain North American Indians, especially the Kwakiutl of the northwest coast, involving a lavish distribution of gifts – most made by slaves from neighboring groups – and the destruction of property to emphasize the wealth and status of the chief or clan.

**Projectile point:** sharp, pointed tools of finely chipped stone that were attached to the ends of spears and arrows; commonly called arrowheads.

**Reservation:** an area of land reserved for a tribe or tribes under treaty or other agreement with the United States, executive order, or federal statute or administrative action as permanent tribal homelands.

**Southwest tribes:** Native Americans who have inhabited the southwest region of the United States in the present-day states of New Mexico, southern Colorado, Arizona, and northern Mexico. The Apache, Hopi, Navajo, Pueblo, and Zuni were the predominant tribes.



**Totem pole:** a post, usually wooden, carved and painted with a series of family or clan crests, or with figures representing mythic beings, as among certain Native American peoples of the northwest coast of North America.

**Tribe:** A group of people or families united by sharing a common ancestor or customs and traditions.

**Woodland period (500 BCE-1300 CE):** delineated by more settled communities, the first use of pottery, and construction of earthen mounds.

## RESOURCES

### Books

*Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* by Helen Hornbeck Tanner (Great Lakes Indian history through maps and early writings for high school and above.)

*Atlas of the North American Indian* by Carl Waldman, Checkmark Books, New York, NY, 2000. (For middle school and above. Excellent history and subject coverage in brief.)

*American Indians Today: Answers to Your Questions*, third edition, United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs MS 2620-MIB, Washington, D.C. 20240-0001, 1991.

*Beyond the Vision: Essays on American Indian Culture* by William K. Powers, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1987.

*The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* by Alfred Crosby, Jr. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1972.

*Digging and Discovery: Wisconsin Archaeology* by Diane Young Holliday and Bobbi Malone (both student book and teacher guide developed for middle school)

*Encyclopedia of Native American Tribes* by Carl Waldman (brief, accurate descriptions of almost all tribes in the United States and Canada).

*Folktales of Native Americans Philadelphia* by David Borgenicht, Running Press, 1993. (This is a storybook and coloring book.)

*History of Indian-White Relations* by Wilcomb E. Washburn. Published in Handbook of North American Indians, vol. 4. Smithsonian Institution Press Washington, DC 1988.

*The Indians in American Society: From the Revolutionary War to the Present* by F. Paul Prucha, S.J., University of California Press, Berkeley, 1984.

*Indian Nations of Wisconsin* by Patty Loew (easy to read detailed descriptions but for a high school and adult audience.)

*Native Americans in the Twentieth Century* by James S. Olson and Raymond Wilson, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1984.

*Native People of Wisconsin* by Patty Loew (both student book and teacher guide developed for middle school.)

*North American Indian Lives* by Lurie, Nancy Oestreich, Milwaukee Public Museum, 1985.

*Wisconsin Indians* by Nancy Oestreich Lurie (history of Federal Indian policies and affairs in Wisconsin for high school level.)

*The Woodland Indians of the Western Great Lakes* by Robert and Pat Ritzenthaler (Subjects include food, life cycle, social organization, material culture, religion and ceremonial life, games, and music. Published by the MPM. High school audience.)

### Websites

American Indian FAQ for Kids: [www.native-languages.org/kidfaq.htm#7](http://www.native-languages.org/kidfaq.htm#7) (Basic questions asked and answered regarding American Indians).

Indian Country: [www.mpm.edu/wirp/](http://www.mpm.edu/wirp/) (Wisconsin Indian History, tribes and subjects produced by the Milwaukee Public Museum)

Native Tech: [www.nativetech.org/](http://www.nativetech.org/) (Ever evolving website on Native American technology, materials and terms.)

Wisconsin Act 31: [www.education.wisc.edu/soe/about/resource-service-units/student-diversity-programs/american-indian-curriculum-services/why-act31](http://www.education.wisc.edu/soe/about/resource-service-units/student-diversity-programs/american-indian-curriculum-services/why-act31)

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

**Goal:** To provide opportunities for exploring the Museum’s North American Indian galleries, and developing a better understanding of Native American history and culture through discussion, oral presentation, and close observation of exhibit content.

### Grades 1-4: *Take Our Word for It*

**Subject area:** Language arts and social studies

**Objective:** Students make connections between their lives and the lives of Native Americans by creating a glossary of words used in the English language that have Native American origins.

**Pre-visit activity:** With the teacher’s guidance, students brainstorm as a group and create a list of common words in English that they think derived from Native American languages. (Examples are canoe, hammock, moccasin, raccoon, and squash, among others.) The teacher finalizes the list aiming for a glossary of approximately 15-20 words, and provides the students with copies of the list for the field trip.

**Onsite activity:** Touring the Museum’s Native American galleries on the second floor, students work in teams of two to find instances of as many of the words in their glossary as they can, and check them off. In another column (or on the reverse side of their glossary sheet), students write down Native American words found in English that did not make their original list.

**Post-visit activity:** Back in the classroom, students work in small teams to compare their glossaries of Native American words borrowed into English that they found in the galleries. This will include words from the original glossary, and those they may have found that were not included. Working as a class, they then add the words that they discovered at the Museum, and compose a thorough list of Native American vocabulary found in common usage in English.

**Discussion topic:** Why did we adopt so many Native American words into English, and why do we continue to use them?

#### Teacher resources:

*O Brave New Words: Native American Loanwords in Current English*, by Charles L. Cutler.

Oxford Dictionaries: “More than Just Moccasins—American Indian Words in English” [blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2011/11/american-indian-words-in-english/](http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2011/11/american-indian-words-in-english/)

## Grades 5-8: Compare and Contrast

**Subject areas:** Social Studies, Wisconsin history and archaeology

**Objective:** Students gain a deeper understanding of Native American cultures by comparing and contrasting their life-ways with those of the ancient Mississippian people of Wisconsin.

**Pre-visit activity:** In a classroom discussion, ask the students to estimate how long ago they think people first inhabited Wisconsin. (Answer: approximately 14,500 years ago.) Ask them if they think Native Americans life-ways have changed over time, and discuss what they imagine are some of the differences—and similarities—between the lives of Wisconsin’s indigenous people hundreds of years ago and their own.

**Onsite activity:** Students explore the indigenous Mississippian culture of Wisconsin as represented in the exhibit, “Wisconsin Archaeology: Pieces of the Puzzle.”

**FOCUS EXHIBIT:** *Wisconsin Archaeology: Pieces of the Puzzle*

(Second floor east, across the corridor from the Menominee rice-gathering exhibit)

Culture: Mississippian (1000-1650 CE)

The Mississippian culture is recognized by corn agriculture, increased village size and permanent settlements, and more intricately designed, shell-tempered pottery. The climate was temperate, and Mississippians lived in large, year-round villages where they farmed extensively, and built large platform mounds. Mississippian pottery became more decorative and durable due to shell-tempering—the practice of strengthening pottery with ground shells.

They were hunters, gatherers, fishers, and farmers, and their diet was similar to that of Woodland Indians (deer, small mammals, fish, clams, waterfowl, seeds, fruits, nuts, and berries). The development of agriculture as a main subsistence strategy and the introduction of corn and beans and non-food plants like tobacco identify the Mississippian period. This culture also added farming tools to those introduced by Woodland Indians. Projectile points were smaller and more refined as Mississippians were hunting smaller game.

The exhibit features content about Aztalan, the site of an ancient Mississippian culture settlement that flourished in what is now Jefferson County, WI during the 10th to 13th centuries. The inhabitants of Aztalan constructed massive earthwork mounds for religious and political purposes. They were part of a widespread culture with important settlements throughout the Mississippi River valley and its tributaries. Their trading network extended from the Great Lakes to the Gulf Coast (evidenced by Gulf Coast shells found at Mississippian sites) and into the southeast of the present-day United States.

**Procedure:**

Working in small teams of two or three, students explore the exhibit and complete the chart below to evaluate, to the best of their ability, how the culture represented in each exhibit met the following survival strategies. (Note: the answers are in red.)

SURVIVAL STRATEGY	MISSISSIPPIAN CULTURE	YOUR LIFE/CULTURE Student(s):
Shelter	Permanent shelters of logs and walls of thatched reeds and grasses; Aztala brick (wattle and daub)	
Food	Deer, small mammals, fish, wild plants; agriculture, cultivation of corn, beans, squash, and tobacco.	
Tools	Bow and arrow, spear points; farming implements	
Community	Large, permanent villages featuring platform mounds and public buildings.	

**Post-visit activity:** Students form small groups of four or five and discuss the survival strategies they observed in the Wisconsin Archaeology exhibit they explored at the Museum. Together, they complete the chart by identifying similarities between their lives and those of the Mississippian culture.

**Discussion topic:** Why were more artifacts left by later cultures (the Mississippian, for example), than earlier ones? Did later cultures produce more—and more durable—artifacts? Or has less time passed during which the objects could be lost? If later cultures made more objects, why? Do we make an unusual number of artifacts today? How durable are they and what do they relate about our lives?

**Teacher resources:**

Logan Museum of Anthropology, Beloit College: Woodland and Mississippian Cultures  
[www.beloit.edu/logan\\_online/exhibitions/virtual\\_exhibitions/north\\_america/woodland/culture.php](http://www.beloit.edu/logan_online/exhibitions/virtual_exhibitions/north_america/woodland/culture.php)

Ohio History Connection: Late Woodland Cultures  
[www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Late\\_Woodland\\_Cultures](http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Late_Woodland_Cultures)

Wisconsin Historical Society: Mississippian Culture and Aztalan  
[www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/tp-003/?action=more\\_essay](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/tp-003/?action=more_essay)

## Grades 9-12: Identity Crisis

**Subject area:** Social Studies

**Objective:** Students explore stereotypes and misconceptions of Native Americans so that they may form a better understanding of the status of native people in U.S. history, and develop an evolved sense of authentic native cultures.

**Pre-visit activity:** Students discuss the meaning of the word “stereotype,” and make a list of common stereotypical images, perceptions and names for Native Americans projected in popular culture and sports. (Examples: the bloodthirsty savage, the loyal sidekick, the Indian Princess, and team mascots like “redskin,” “chief,” and “brave.”)

**Onsite activity:** Touring the Museum’s Native American galleries, students, working in teams of two, list examples of traits and characteristics that distinguish the different cultures, reinforcing the understanding that indigenous cultures are diverse rather than uniform or monolithic. They should especially note anything that they find surprising or unexpected. Some exhibits to explore closely include the Pow-wow, The Myth of the Vanishing Indian, the Blackfoot Village, the Northwest Coast Kwakiutl Plank House, the Hopi Pueblo, Native American Games, and the Menominee Rice Gathering diorama.

**Post-visit activity:** In small groups, students discuss the stereotypes they listed in the pre-visit activity, then discuss what these reveal about the perceptions of Native Americans by non-native people. Why were these images formed, why were various stereotypical terms popularized, and why does their usage persist? Should sports teams named after stereotypical Native American images change their names?

**Discussion topic:** Has anyone ever been stereotyped based on race, gender, ethnicity, or other qualities? What is the impulse behind stereotyping and how can the exploration of diverse cultures discourage it?

**Teacher resources:**

*Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine*, December 1998: “Telling Their Own Stories: Native American Stereotypes in Art”  
[www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/telling-their-own-stories-native-american-stereotypes-art](http://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/telling-their-own-stories-native-american-stereotypes-art)

*The Washington Post*, September 15, 2016: “Sorry, Redskins fans: Native American mascots increase racial bias”  
[www.washingtonpost.com/news/speaking-of-science/wp/2016/09/15/sorry-redskins-fans-native-american-mascots-increase-your-racial-bias/?utm\\_term=.1c9278ded2ef](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/speaking-of-science/wp/2016/09/15/sorry-redskins-fans-native-american-mascots-increase-your-racial-bias/?utm_term=.1c9278ded2ef)