

INDIANS

When the Indians ~~were~~ travelling on their trading trips and war expeditions as night came on they built wigwams which they covered with bark stripped from trees, others felled big trees and placed them around their encampment as a barricade, except on the riverside where their canoes were drawn up, so if need be, they could embark quickly. Trees were felled by burning and chopping with a stone axe.

Deer and bear were scarce up in the Kawartha Lakes district, then Huron Indian territory. Four or five hundred savages would spread themselves through the woods and by shouting and other noises frightened the animals, and drove them along a narrow point where other Indians lay in wait with bow and arrows. The deer and bears which took to the water were killed by savages in canoes. Fat of deer was kept for winter use, some meat was carried home for feasts. Winter clothes were made from skins.

In early 1600's the Indian canoes were described as frail looking craft of birch bark, eight or nine yars long with a breadth in the middle of a yard and a half. In winter when the rivers froze over progress was more rapid, as the Indians made wooden sledges which they used to carry their heavy loads of meat and fur.

The Hurons lived in fortified villages in areas from three to twenty-five acres and had ppulations from 200 to at least 6,000. These villages were called Palisades and inside Pallisades were longhouses, constructed like arcades or garden arbors. In length the houses varied from 30 to 200 feet. Two platforms on which parents and children slept. Of privacy there was absolutely none. Sanitation was little better and villages were moved to other sites when it became impossible to live in them longer.

The Hurons dressed chiefly in ~~smoke~~-cured skins. The staple food was corn, served without salt. The squaws pounded the corn into flour in large wooden mortars. Huron women once married were drudges. They gathered firewood, sowed, tilled and harvested the crops, smoked the fish, made clothing and prepared food in clay pots they shaped. Children were never disciplined. Houses were built by men. They also made weapons, pipes and canoes. Most of their time was spent in idle leisure, in hunting or fishing or in fur trapping and trading. Men were gamblers, they played hockey. The Hurons were continually at war with their kindred nation, the Iroquios. The Hurons were anxious to pick up the French tongue, The Hurons had no belief in a Supreme Being, they had a countless number of little gods or spirits which inhabited the trees, lakes, streams, birds and beasts.

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Each Indian community had their own medicine man. By charms and magic, howling and beating of drums they claimed the power to frighten away demons and destroy enemies.

(This Indian History was taken from J.N. Cranston's Book - Eteinne Brule , Immortal Scoundrel).

Many flint and arrowheads were found in this district, as history points to an Indian camp at Hackett's Lake, two miles north of Laskay.