



The Lenape

I. SYNOPSIS

John Kraft, the son of archaeologist Herbert Kraft, explains how archaeologists learn about the past by digging in the ground and carefully studying the objects they find. Scientists think that the ancestors of the Lenape Indians* migrated across a land bridge from Asia about 15,000 years ago. They gradually spread throughout North and South America, arriving in what we now call New Jersey about 12,000 years ago. Over the centuries, these ancestors of the Lenape began to cultivate crops and live in villages along riverbanks.

We accompany Kraft through the reconstructed Lenape Village, learning how the Lenape built their houses, which were called *wigwams*, and how the men hunted and fished while the women grew vegetables, cooked meals, and raised children. Kraft explains that the way of life of the Lenape changed drastically when European traders began to arrive seeking furs. The Indians exchanged furs for brass pots, iron tools and cloth. They also caught diseases such as smallpox and measles from the newcomers. As furs became harder to find, the Lenape sold their land and moved west. Today, most of their descendants live in Oklahoma, Wisconsin, and Ontario, Canada.

The legacy of the Lenape includes such foods as corn, squash, beans, and many place names.

NOTE: In this program we use the terms *Native Americans* and *Indians* interchangeably. Many descendants of the Lenape today refer to themselves as Indians.

II. KEY WORDS

Archaeologist - A person who studies the past by analyzing objects buried in the ground.

Land Bridge - A strip of land connecting another body of land.

Lenape - The local Indians' name for themselves, which has been translated as "the people."

Migration - The movement of people or animals from one place to another

Prehistoric - Before the time of written records

III. SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

A. LENAPE LIFE

1. Objective

Students will describe how we know about Lenape life long ago, how the Lenape came to the land that become New Jersey, how Lenape life changed after the arrival of Europeans, and how Lenape life differed from their lives today.

2. Before Viewing the Program

Prior to the class download and reproduce the question sheet on the Lenape. At the start of the class, ask the class who they think were the first New Jerseyans. After listening to the answers, indicate that they are about to view a video about the Lenape, who were the original inhabitants of New Jersey. Distribute the question sheet and go over the questions. Ask the students to keep these questions in mind while they view the video.

3. After Viewing the Program

Divide the class into work groups and ask them to answer the questions on the question sheet. Then, re-assemble the class and go over the questions.

B. ORIGINS

1. Objective

Students will interpret a Lenape creation myth and illustrate it with a drawing.

2. After Viewing the Program

Reproduce and distribute the adapted version of the "Lenape Creation Story" and the related Question Sheet. Explain that the Lenape had their own account of their origins and that this story came from a journal kept by a Dutch traveler through New Jersey more than three hundred years ago. Explain that such stories are called myths. Have the students read the creation myth, or read it aloud to them as they follow in their texts. Divide the class into work groups and ask them to answer the questions on the question sheet. Then, re-assemble the class and go over the questions.

As an extra activity, you might ask them to draw a single picture or a series of pictures to illustrate this account.

V. SUGGESTED READINGS

Dowd, Gregory Evans. *The Indians of New Jersey*. New Jersey History Series. Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1992.

Kraft, Herbert C. *The Lenape Indians of New Jersey*, with illustrations by John T. Kraft and Susan E. Finn. South Orange, N.J.: Seton Hall University Museum; Reprinted under the title *The Lenape or Delaware Indians* (1991).

Kraft, Herbert C. and John T. Kraft. *The Indians of Lenapehoking (The Lenape or Delaware Indians)*. South Orange: Seton Hall University Museum, 1985.

Grumet, Robert S. *The Lenapes*. (Indians of North America Series.) New York and Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 1989.

LENAPE LIFEWAYS (website)
<http://www.lenapelifeways.org/>