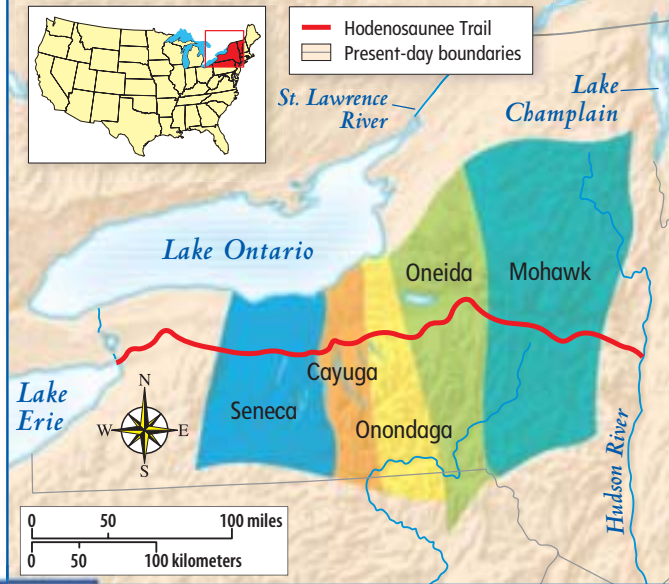


The Iroquois Confederacy, 1500



Map Skill Place Which group of Iroquois lived farthest east? **5.1.1**

The Northeast Woodlands **5.1.2**

Most of the peoples of the northern woodlands spoke languages in one of two language families. The larger group spoke a language called Algonkian. The Algonkian-speaking peoples included the Wampanoag (wahm puh NOH ahg) in Massachusetts and the Pequot (PEE kwaht) in Connecticut. The smaller group, the Iroquois, spoke languages in the Iroquoian language family. By the 1700s, however, the Iroquois had become a major power.

◀ Maple trees cover the northeast woodlands.

The Iroquois

In the 1500s the Iroquois lived mostly in what is now upstate New York. Historians call this group Iroquois because they spoke languages in the Iroquoian language family. However, the Iroquois call themselves Haudenosaunee (how den NO sahnee). In Iroquoian this means “people of the **longhouse**.” Longhouses are long buildings made of poles covered with sheets of bark.

The homelands of the Iroquois were connected by well-used trails. One central route, the Haudenosaunee Trail, connected all of the main Iroquois villages.

The Iroquois made fine beadwork, called **wampum**. Wampum is polished beads made from shells strung or woven together. Wampum was used in ceremonies or as gifts.

The Clan Mother

Iroquois women decided how the land would be used, and who would use it. They were the leaders of their **clans**. A clan is a group of families who share the same ancestor.

Almost all Iroquois property was controlled by clans. Women were the owners of the land and the longhouses. When a man married, he moved into his wife’s longhouse and lived with her family. Children took their clan name from their mother. The head of each clan was called a clan mother. No important decision could be made without the approval of the clan mother. Although the leaders of each village were men, it was the clan mothers who chose them.

REVIEW Why was the clan mother important to the Iroquois? *Summarize*

Native American Languages 5.1

In 1500, Native Americans spoke about 250 languages. They were divided into the ten language families shown on the map. Some groups, especially those of the Great Plains, developed a sign language to communicate with other groups.



Nations in Three Language Families		
Iroquoian	Muskogean	Siouan
Mohawk	Alabama	Catawba
Oneida	Koasati	Mandan
Onondaga	Muskogee	Chiwere
Seneca	Mikasuki	Dakota
Cayuga	Choctaw	Dhegiha
Huron	Chickasaw	Winnebago
Wyandot	Creek	Crow
Tuscarora		Hidatsa
Cherokee		Biloxi
Susquehannock		Ofo
		Tutelo

Think About Languages

1. In what part of the present-day United States were the Mikasuki located?
2. Which language family had many nations living within a fairly small area?
3. What traits do you think the groups in the language families shared?