HUMAN GEOGRAPHY
An Historical Geography of NYS

Settlement Sequence
Native American Occupancy
European Arrival

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Human Geography of NYS

• PART I
We set the stage by looking at the state’s physical landscape: landforms, climate, soils and water.

• PART II
We add people to the physical landscape.
Focus on land use, settlement, transportation networks and economic development.
The cultural landscape is studied.

Major Topics in Part II

• Historical Geography – development over time focusing on location.
• Population Geography – trends and health issues.
• Rural NYS – open space, biozones, wildlife, forestry and agriculture.
• Urban NYS – original site factors, urban-economic development, NYC metro area

Native American Inhabitation

• Native Americans came to North America via a land bridge from Asia 20,000-30,000 yrs ago
• They arrived in NYS between 9,000 to 4,000 yrs ago after the glaciers receded and climate warmed.
• They were nomadic hunter-gatherers with some agriculture.
• No permanent settlements; moved when food sources diminished.

Native American Inhabitation

• Eastern Woodland Indians:
About 3,000 years ago the Woodland Stage began in NYS.
They cleared the forests to create farmland.
Their principal crops were corn, beans, squash, and tobacco.
They also hunted and fished, and along the Atlantic coast, engaged in whaling.

Generalized Time Line

• c.1000 AD
• Period of natural global warming.
• Iroquois expanded northward in the St. Lawrence Valley, extending maize production to its northern limit.
• Co-existed with the Algonquin.

• By the 1300s
• Plentiful food supplies, both in the forests and fields.
• The Iroquois advanced beyond hunting and gathering and had become agriculturalists.
• Villages grew in size (as many as 1500 people may have lived there) and became permanent.
During the 1400s
• Period of natural global cooling.
• Maize production was reduced.
• Large villages put a strain on the local environment and resources were reduced.
• Villages had to move often to not to deplete forest and game resources.

By the 1500s
• Cooling trend may have started the more frequent warfare among the Iroquois tribes.
• They competed for farmland and other strategic resources (water, game animals and forests).
• Iroquois culture evolved from sedentary agriculturalist to warrior.

In the 1500s
• Iroquois adapted to higher population densities and crowded living conditions.
• Rules of social order developed and village councils were formed.
• Different clans existed within the same village.

This was the time of the first European inroads in North America:
>1498: Cabot sailed off the coast of Long Island.
>1524: Verrazano entered NY harbor.
>1535: Cartier entered the St. Lawrence river valley.

Early 1600s
• This period saw the arrival of the Europeans.
  1603-15: Champlain explored the St. Lawrence River and entered Lake Champlain.
  1609: Hudson sailed inland up the North River.
  1624: First Dutch settlement
• At the time of the European arrival, there were two principal tribes of Native Americans: Iroquois and Algonquin.
• Confederacies were formed to reduce tribal warfare.
• Most famous and strongest was the Five Nations or Iroquois Confederacy (Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida and Mohawk; Tuscarora joined later.)
Iroquois Confederacy

- It was the strongest threat to European colonization but also a threat to other Indian nations.
- Between 15,000 and 75,000 people were scattered throughout the NYS area.
- They were sedentary agriculturalists engaged in hunting, fishing, crafts, and trading.
- 1624: The Dutch (West India Company) established fur trading posts along the Hudson River.

Champlain’s Routes of Exploration

In 1603 French explorer, Samuel de Champlain, entered North America through the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the St. Lawrence River.

He explored the upper great Lakes and followed the Richelieu River into the large lake that would later be named for him: Lake Champlain.

Voyage of Henry Hudson

- In 1609 Henry Hudson sailed into the mouth of the “Hudson” River, first called the North River by the Dutch, and anchored in the harbor.
- He later sailed upstream as far as Albany.

Known Settlement Sites

Studying Iroquois Culture

- Exercise 11 Iroquois Village – NYS Museum virtual display (REQUIRED)
- Electronic Handout: Web sites of New York-based Native American nations compiled by the NYS Library.

Indians and Trade

1600-1760

Alliances:
- French with Algonquin, Huron and other tribes.
- Dutch and English with Iroquois.

Iroquois Confederacy disrupted French and Indian trade and eventually dominated the area between New England, Virginia and the Great Lakes.
Historical Atlas of NYC

• Chapters 1, 2 and 3 on reserve in HC Library. Read about Dutch and British presence in New York.

Dutch Settlement

• The Dutch limited their settlement to areas along the North River (Hudson) including
  – the harbor perimeter,
  – western Long Island east to Jamaica,
  – tip of Manhattan island, and
  – the Hudson valley waterfront to Fort Orange (Albany).

• Why?

Dutch Settlement

• New Amsterdam on Manhattan was established in 1625 and became the seat of government.
• In 1626 the Dutch West India Co. introduced African slavery to New Amsterdam as an alternative to providing indentured servants for the colonists.
• By the 1630s Dutch farmsteads were established in western Long Island.

Mapping the Area: 1635

Detail of the map drawn by Willem Baeu, Nova Belgica et Anglia Nova, 1635

This map is said to be based on Adrian Block’s maps of 1614 when he explored Long Island Sound.

Mapping the Area: 1639

Manatvs gelegen op de Noot Riuver (ca. 1639), “Manhattan on the North River”, author unknown.

English Settlement

• The purpose of English colonization of North America was settlement.
• The Dutch outposts between the North River (Hudson) and South River (Delaware) were seen as an impediment to English control.
• In the early 1630s English settlers began to move into eastern Long Island having received land grants from the crown.
Conflict between Groups

- With the Dutch increasing their fur trade north of New Amsterdam and English settlers expanding their ownership of land on LI, there was conflict between the Dutch and the Indians and the English and the Dutch in and around LI.
- In 1650 the Treaty of Hartford was drafted (but not ratified) which set an international boundary on LI between the English and Dutch colonies roughly at today's Nassau-Suffolk line.

Conflict between Existing Groups

- In 1660 Charles II of England decided he did not want the Dutch colony in America.
- Between 1660 and 1664 negotiations attempted to remedy the situation.
- Finally in 1664 he sent the Royal Navy into New Amsterdam to demand surrender.
- The Dutch colony was renamed New York and given to the Duke of York along with all of Long Island.

Mapping the Area: 1674

Robert Ryder, *Long Island Sirvaide, 1674*

First English map of New York and Long Island based on an actual land survey.