

## Chapter 1 Indian Ways

### 1. Maya Glyphs at Piedras Negras

*The first Native Americans to settle in one place and become full-time farmers were the Mesoamericans. As sedentary people, they soon produced monumental architecture, a complex calendar system, and written histories. Because of this, we can still catch glimpses of the details of their lives. Some time in the year 711 or shortly thereafter, for example, a scribe/sculptor of the Chol Maya<sup>1</sup> carved into a great flat stone (or stela, as archaeologists call it) a story that had come to be important to his people. On July 7, 674, a noble girl-child was born in a place called Man (pronounced "Mahn"), in the vicinity of her people's highest-ranking line of chiefs, known as the Turtle lineage, whose seat was at today's Piedras Negras, in Guatemala. She would later be called Lady Katun Ahau. When she was 12 years old, she was "adorned," married to the heir apparent of Piedras Negras, Yo' Acnal, who later became high chief, or king. When she was 33, she gave birth to a daughter, Lady Kin Ahau (Sun Queen), who was part of the powerful Turtle lineage. When Lady Katun Ahau had been queen for 24 years, she participated in a ceremony called "grasping the staff," celebrating rulership. The current katun, or set of twenty 365-day years, ended 99 days later, in December of 711 in the Western calendar. As the scribe told the story of Lady Katun Ahau, he emphasized how worthy of homage was the young princess, Lady Kin Ahau, who was clearly poised to have an important role in the future.*

<sup>1</sup> It should be understood that scholars often cannot be 100 percent certain as to which culture produced the structures unearthed by archaeologists. We take educated guesses based on who lived in the region at contact, what evidence there is of migration, etc. Most people think the Chol produced the ruins at Piedras Negras, but sometimes there is no general consensus. The greatest site in North America, for example, is Teotihuacan, in Mexico, and we do not even know what language the people there spoke.

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*We can read this history today because Maya scholars in the second half of the twentieth century dramatically succeeded in breaking the code embedded in the glyphs that cover the ancient ruins scattered throughout Mexico and Guatemala. It had long been thought that the glyphs made mystical, individualized references to the spiritual world, that is, that a particular sculptor represented the divinities he worshipped with pictures he and others in his world felt were fitting. Finally one scholar realized that certain glyphs commonly appeared as appendages (prefixes or affixes) and apparently had meanings like “in this place of —” or “it happened on —” or “became king of —.” The texts, then, were actual histories – tales of the real world, of kings and queens and wars. Later, other scholars who had a grasp of at least one Mayan language began to take seriously the idea that many of the main glyphs were phonetic, that certain images represented certain syllables. A colonial friar named Diego de Landa had asserted this in the sixteenth century and, using his examples to begin with and then employing their knowledge of the languages, scholars began to make rapid progress. There now exists a nearly complete Maya syllabary.*

*As you look at this example of a translated text, try to participate in the scholarly sleuthing. After you see how numbers are represented, can you easily pick out other glyphs that contain numbers? See if you can identify symbols that are found in different glyphs – “lady,” “she was born,” “kin” (sun), “katun,” etc.*

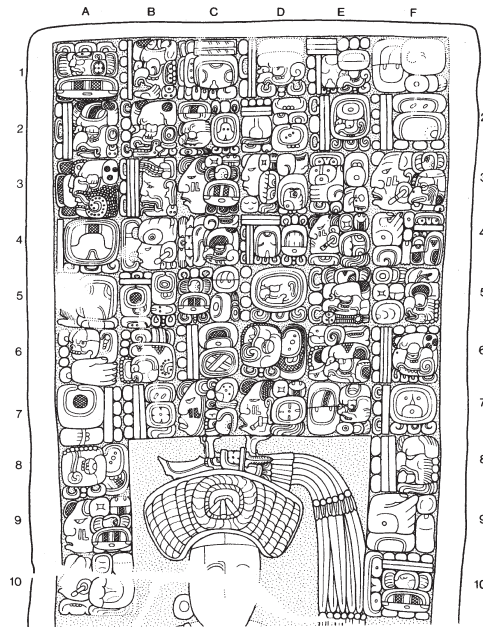


Figure 1.1.1 Maya Glyphs at Piedras Negras

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A1	<i>tzic yaxkin</i> the count [date] is in yaxkin	C1	<i>mi, luhum uinicibi</i> 0 kins, 10 uinals	E1	<i>bolubum, uaxac</i> <i>uinicibi, ux tuni</i> 14 kins, 8 uinals, 3 tuns
B1	<i>bolon pib</i> 9 baktuns	D1	<i>lahcham tuni</i> 12 tuns	F1	<i>ual ut</i> it came to pass
A2	<i>lahcham katun</i> 12 katuns	C2	<i>ual ut hun chibin</i> it came to pass on 1 cib	E2	<i>buluch imix</i> on 11 imix
B2	<i>cha tun</i> 2 tuns	D2	<i>chanlahum uniu</i> <i>nauah</i> 14 kankin, she was adorned	F2	<i>chanluhum yaxkin</i> 14 yaxkin
A3	<i>mi uinic</i> 0 uinals	C3	<i>na kutun ahau</i> Lady Kutun Ahau	E3	<i>u ch'amua lom</i> she grasped the staff
B3	<i>buluch kin</i> 11 kins	D3	<i>nana man ahau</i> <i>yichnal</i> matron of <i>Man</i> with	F3	<i>na katun ahau</i> Lady Katun Ahau
A4	<i>ho chibin</i> 5 cib	D4	<i>lubum, buluch</i> <i>uinicibi hun tuni</i> 10 kins, 11 uinals, 1 tun	E4	<i>nana man ahau</i> matron from <i>Man</i>
B4	<i>nah</i> Seventh Lord of the Night	C4	<i>makina yo' acnal</i> Great Sun Yo' Acnal	F4	<i>homi u ho tun</i> it ended, the fifth tun
A5	<i>ch'a hun</i> tied on the head- band	D4	<i>lubum, buluch</i> <i>uinicibi hun tuni</i> 10 kins, 11 uinals, 1 tun	E5	<i>hun katun lati</i> 1 katun after
B5	<i>uac kal buliy</i> 27 days after [the moon] arrived	C5	<i>hun katun, ual ut</i> 1 katun, it came to pass	F5	<i>ti ahuale yo'</i> his kingship, Yo'
A6	<i>cha tzuc u</i> two moons are worn out	D5	<i>chan chamal</i> on 4 cimi	E6	<i>acnal</i> acnal
B6	<i>ux sac uitz ku</i> Three White Mountain God <sup>2</sup>	C6	<i>chanlahum icat</i> 14 uo	F6	<i>bolonluhum, chan</i> <i>uinicibi</i> 19 kins, 4 uinals
A7	<i>uinic bolon</i> 29 days	D6	<i>sibi</i> she was born	E7	<i>ual ut</i> it came to pass
B7	<i>chanluhum yaxkin</i> 14 yaxkin	C7	<i>na hun tan ac</i> she, cherished one of the Turtle	F7	<i>uac ahau</i> on 7 ahau
A8	<i>sibi</i> she was born	D7	<i>na kin ahau</i> Lady Kin Ahau	F8	<i>uxluhum muan</i> 13 muan
A9	<i>na katun ahau</i> Lady Katun Ahau			F9	<i>homi</i> it ended
A10	<i>nana man ahau</i> matron (noble- woman) from <i>Man</i>			F10	<i>u chanluhum katun</i> its fourteenth katun

Source: Linda Schele's translation of Stela 3, Piedras Negras, Guatemala, in Michael D. Coe, *Breaking the Maya Code* (Thames & Hudson, 1992), pp. 266–7, courtesy of Linda Schele.

Study: Linda Schele and David Freidel, *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya* (William Morrow, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> This is the name of the lunation.

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Further exploration: Students who wish to launch themselves into the study of the Maya glyphs should begin with Michael D. Coe and Mark Van Stone, *Reading the Maya Glyphs* (Thames & Hudson, 2001). A classic article that became a touchstone in the development of the field and demonstrates how scholars developed the syllabary is David Stuart, “Ten Phonetic Syllables,” *Research Reports on Ancient Maya Writing* 14 (1987).

### 2. Ancient Nahuatl Prayers from the Florentine Codex

*The Nahuas inhabited central Mexico from the tenth century onward. They came down in waves from today's Arizona and New Mexico and made lives for themselves among people who had been farmers for at least two millennia. One of the last groups to arrive, the Mexica (pronounced “Me-SHEE-ka”), had risen to great power by the time the Spanish came, ruling over at least a quarter of a million people. We know them now as the Aztecs. Their priests and healers led the people in memorized prayers that were recited on the appropriate occasions. Here we have an excerpt of a prayer offered to the rain god, Tlaloc, in a time of drought, followed by a prayer of thanksgiving traditionally offered by a midwife after a woman had successfully given birth. Most likely these words were sung or chanted.*

*Surprisingly, perhaps, we have the texts of the prayers today thanks to the efforts of Christian missionaries. In the 1560s, 40 years after the Spanish conquest, a Franciscan friar named Bernardino de Sahagún orchestrated a huge project in which Nahuatl-speaking assistants interviewed Indian elders on many aspects of their former lives. He called the resulting multivolume work The General History of the Things of New Spain. Because the work was eventually taken to Florence, Italy, it is known today as the Florentine Codex.*

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*Uncan mitoa in tlatolli: in uel iniollocopa quitoaia in iquac quitlatlauhtiaia in tlaloc ...*

*Auh iz nelle axcan ca ie tlaihiuuitoc in tonacaiutl, ca ie ma uilantoc in teteu inueltiuh: in tonacaiutl ca ie teuhpachiuhtoc, ca ie tocatzaoalquimi-liuhtoc ca ie tlaihiouia, ca ie tlaciaui ...*

Here are told the words which they uttered from their hearts when they prayed to Tlaloc:

Behold now, bodily life<sup>3</sup> lies suffering, the elder sister of the gods lies outstretched. Our bodily life lies covered with dust, wrapped in cobwebs. There is fatigue, exhaustion.

<sup>3</sup> The word *tonacaiutl* is difficult to translate. It literally means “that which is intrinsically tied to our fleshly being.”

Behold the common folk, who are the tail and the wings.<sup>4</sup> They are disappearing. Their eyelids are swelling, their mouths drying out. They become bony, twisted, stretched. Thin are the commoners' lips and blanched are their throats. With pallid eyes live the babies, the children, those who totter, those who crawl, those who spend their time turning dirt and potsherds in their hands, those who live with their eyes bent to the ground, those who lie on the boards, who fill the cradles. All the people face torment, affliction. They witness that which makes humans suffer.

Already there are none who are passed over; all the little creatures are suffering. The troupial bird, the roseate spoonbill drag their wings. They are upended, tumbled headfirst. They open and close their beaks [from thirst]. And the animals, the four-footed ones of the lord of the near, of the nigh, just wander here and there. They can scarcely rise; to no purpose do they lick the ground. They are crazed for water. Already there is death, all are perishing. The common folk and the animals are dying.

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*Uncan mitoa: in quenin ticitl quitlatlauhtiaia, in piltzintli in ooallacat . . .*

*Auh in otlalticpac quiz piltzintli: niman tzatzi in ticitl, tlacaoatza, qui-toznequi: ca ouel iaot in cioatzintli, ca onoquichtic, ca otlama, ca ocacic in piltzintli . . .*

Here is told how the midwife exhorted the baby who had been born:

When the baby had arrived on earth, then the midwife shouted; she gave war cries, which meant that the woman had fought a good battle, had become a brave warrior, had taken a captive, had captured a baby.

Then the midwife spoke to it . . . You have suffered exhaustion, you have suffered fatigue, my youngest one, my precious noble child, precious necklace, precious feather, precious one. You have arrived. Rest, find repose. Here are gathered your beloved grandfathers, your beloved grandmothers, who await you. Here into their hands you have arrived. Do not sigh! Do not be sad! Why have you come, why have you been brought here? Truly you will endure the sufferings of torment and fatigue, for our lord has ordered, has disposed that there will be pain, affliction, misery [in our lives on earth]. There will be work, labor for morning and evening sustenance. [But] there is sweat, weariness and labor so that there will be eating, drinking, and the wearing of raiment. Truly you will endure . . .

Source: Charles Dibble and Arthur J. O. Anderson, eds., *General History of the Things of New Spain*, Book 6: *Rhetoric and Moral Philosophy* (University of Utah Press, 1969), pp. 35–6, 167–8. (I have amended their translations slightly.)

<sup>4</sup> This metaphor is used to express the crucial importance of the commoners to all of society.

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Study: Inga Clendinnen, *Aztecs: An Interpretation* (Cambridge University Press, 1991); James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford University Press, 1992).

Further exploration: Students wishing to delve into the study of the Nahuatl language, in which we have more surviving indigenous texts than in any other Native American tongue, should begin with James Lockhart, *Nahuatl as Written* (Stanford University Press, 2001). For translated versions of other Nahuatl texts beyond the Florentine Codex, begin with Matthew Restall, Lisa Sousa, and Kevin Terraciano, eds., *Mesoamerican Voices: Native-Language Writings from Colonial Mexico, Oaxaca, Yucatan, and Guatemala* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

### 3. Pueblo Bonito of Chaco Canyon

*The complex of corn, beans, and squash that sustained Mesoamerican civilization eventually spread outward through long-distance trade. Along with it traveled hallmarks of their culture: for example, towering pyramids or large mounds and nearby ceremonial ball courts. Archaeologists have found such sites as far south as San Salvador, in Central America, and as far north as Cahokia, near St. Louis. Other peoples, however, although they gradually adopted corn and thus became sedentary, did not adopt other elements of Mesoamerican civilization. They proceeded along their own unique paths.*

*In the San Juan River basin, for example, and especially at Chaco Canyon, in the northwestern corner of today's New Mexico, people experimented with agriculture in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, adopting it for a few generations and then, when times grew tougher, breaking into smaller nomadic groups once again and abandoning the settled communities. They built impressive stone and wood villages organized around kivas, large communal ceremonial chambers. The largest of these sites is now called Pueblo Bonito. Archaeologists have pieced together which parts were built when, and have proven that the people were well aware of their history. A small original construction became the ceremonial heart of the large village built around it several generations later; there the people concentrated their rich burials, reliquaries, and precious goods, which included some products brought from faraway Mexico. As many as 1,000 people may have lived there at the town's height.*

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Figure 1.3.1 Artist's reconstruction of Pueblo Bonito looking north, by Kenneth J. Conant

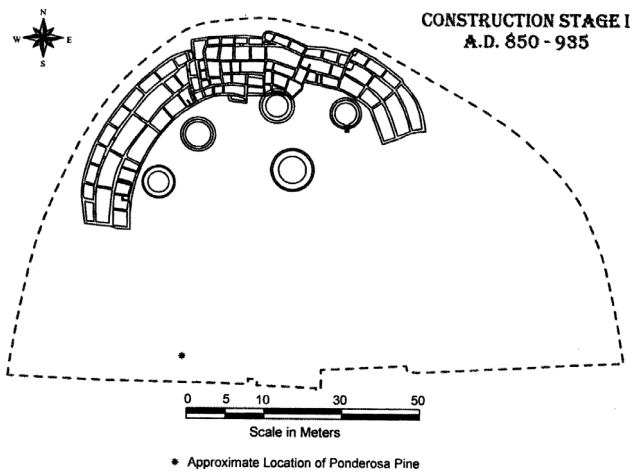


Figure 1.3.2 Pueblo Bonito floor plan: construction stage 1 (850-935)

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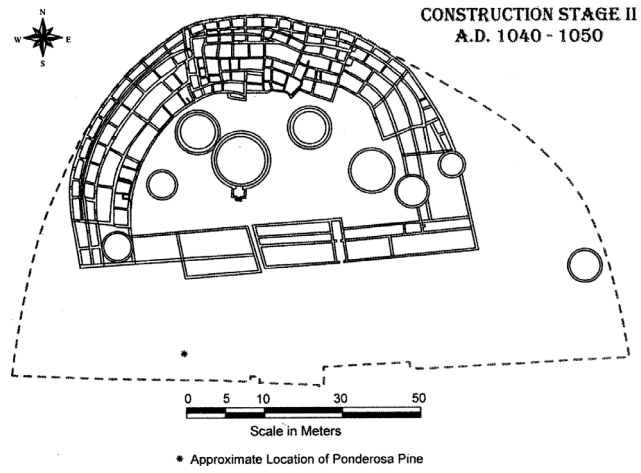


Figure 1.3.3 Construction stage 2 (1040-1050)

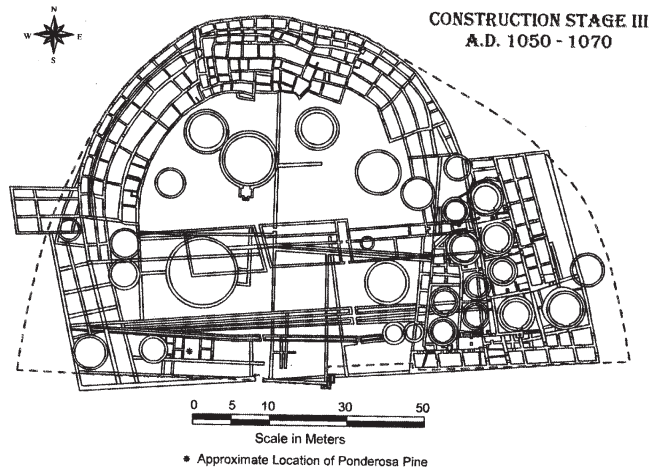


Figure 1.3.4 Construction stage 3 (1050-1070)



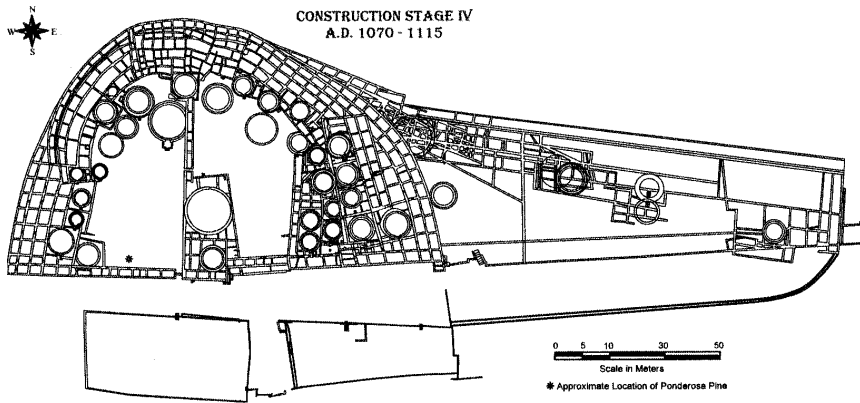


Figure 1.3.5 Construction stage 4 (1070–1115)

Source: John R. Stein, Dabney Ford, and Richard Friedman, “Reconstructing Pueblo Bonito,” in Jill E. Neitzel, ed., *Pueblo Bonito: Center of the Chacoan World* (Smithsonian Books, 2003), pp. 44–54.

Study: David E. Stuart, *Anasazi America* (University of New Mexico Press, 2000).

Further exploration: If students want to pursue archaeological remains as texts, one of the most compelling examples would be Cahokia. Unfortunately, there is a great deal of misinformation available from enthusiastic but uninformed writers. A highly scholarly but still readable synthesis of what is presently known is Timothy R. Pauketat, *Ancient Cahokia and the Mississippians* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

#### 4. Images of Secotan

*Eventually, corn, beans, and squash (“the three sisters”) made their way through the eastern woodlands of the future United States. When the Europeans first landed, they met people who had been part-time farmers for a few hundred years. The population relied to some extent on agriculture, but also continued to hunt, fish, and gather wild plants. In the 1580s, the artist John White traveled to the English colony of Roanoke, in today’s North Carolina, and painted the people of the village of Secotan. Fortunately for us, he brought his paintings back to London before the colony and all its inhabitants disappeared. In 1590 his watercolors were made into engravings and published by Theodor de Bry. (The engravings were used to illustrate a book written by Thomas Harriot, a selection from which appears in Chapter 3, as an example of the kind of preconceptions European visitors brought with them.) These images provide some of the most detailed*

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*information we have about pre-colonial Native American life in the region. Think about what we can and cannot learn from them. How did the engraver in Europe, who had never been to the New World, change the images that were given to him by the watercolor artist who had actually known the people?*

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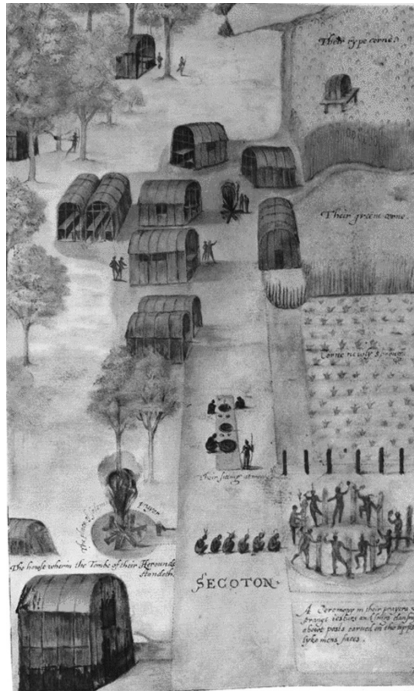


Figure 1.4.1 John White, *Indian Village of Secotan* (watercolor)

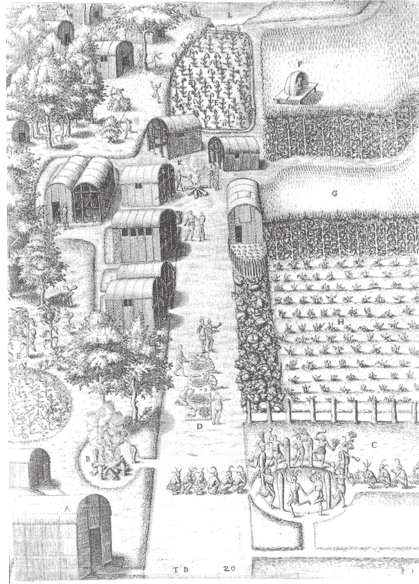


Figure 1.4.2 Theodor de Bry, *Indian Village of Secotan* (engraving)

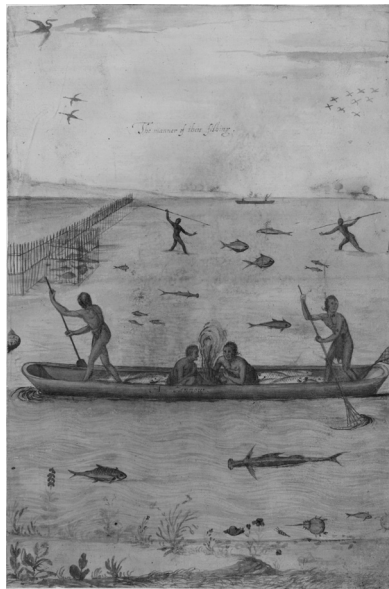


Figure 1.4.3 John White, *Indians Fishing* (watercolor)

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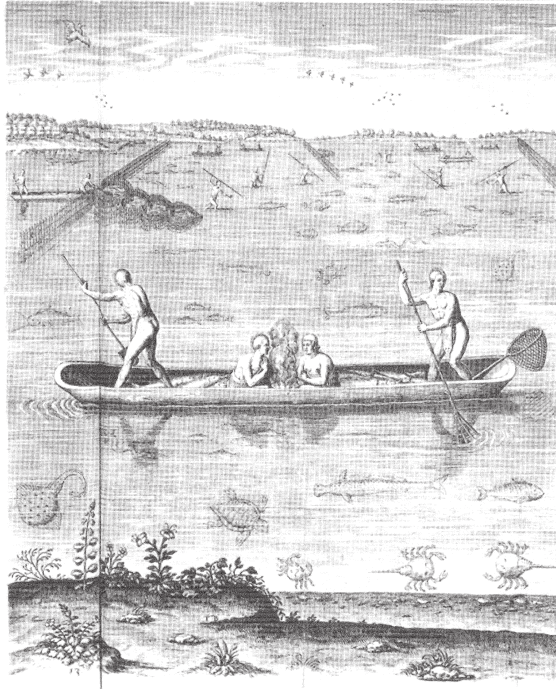


Figure 1.4.4 Theodor de Bry, *Indians Fishing* (engraving)

Sources: All of John White's paintings and Theodor de Bry's engravings are available on the Jamestown website: [www.virtualjamestown.org/images/white\\_debry](http://www.virtualjamestown.org/images/white_debry)

Study: There are many studies of the ways the eastern woodlands Indians lived in today's southeastern United States, among them Helen Rountree, *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia: Their Traditional Culture* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1989).

Further exploration: Students can see all of the images, not just these two sets, on the Jamestown website (see above). To put these images in the context of other documents of the era, see Peter C. Mancall, ed., *Envisioning America: English Plans for the Colonization of North America, 1580-1640* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 1995). For a beautiful, full-color facsimile of a sixteenth-century edition, see Thomas Hariot, "A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia": *The 1590 Theodor de Bry Latin Edition* (University of Virginia Press, 2007).

## 5. Two Versions of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Creation Story

*Because the indigenous peoples north of Mexico did not have an alphabetic tradition, scholars have long sought to record oral religious traditions and other stories in hopes of capturing ancient modes of thought. Documents of this nature, however, were produced by people who had lived all their lives with some degree of exposure to a colonial power.*

*In 1816, a man named John Norton wrote down one version of the Iroquois creation myth in English. Norton's father was Cherokee and his mother a Scottish servant, but he himself had been adopted by the Mohawk nation of the Iroquois and spoke their language. He worked closely with such renowned Indian leaders as Joseph Brant and was passionately committed to being a spokesman for Indian peoples facing the white world.*

*In the 1890s, a white man named John Hewitt interviewed a number of elders living on the Iroquois reservations in New York state and Canada, writing down their versions of the same story in their own languages, and then carefully translating them. Seth Newhouse, a respected man in the Mohawk community, told the story given here in 1896.*

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### The Journal of John Norton

The tradition of the Nottowegui or Five nations says that “in the beginning before the formation of the earth; the country above the sky was inhabited by Superior Beings, over whom the Great Spirit presided. His daughter having become pregnant by an illicit connection, he pulled up a great tree by the roots, and threw her through the Cavity thereby formed; but to prevent her utter destruction, he previously ordered the Great Turtle, to get from the bottom of the waters, some slime on its back, and to wait on the surface of the water to receive her on it. When she had fallen on the back of the Turtle, with the mud she found there, she began to form the earth, and by the time of her delivery had increased it to the extent of a little island. Her child was a daughter, and as she grew up the earth extended under their hands. When the young woman had arrived at the age of discretion, the Spirits who roved about, in human forms, made proposals of marriage for the young woman: the mother always rejected their offers, until a middle-aged man, of a dignified appearance, his bow in his hand, and his quiver on

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his back, paid his addresses. On being accepted, he entered the house, and seated himself on the birth [bunk] of his intended spouse; the mother was in a birth on the other side of the fire. She observed that her son-in-law did not lie down all night; but taking two arrows out of his quiver, he put them by the side of his bride: at the dawn of the day he took them up, and having replaced them in his quiver, he went out.

“After some time, the old woman perceived her daughter to be pregnant, but could not discover where the father had gone, or who he was. At the time of delivery, the twins disputed which way they should go out of the womb; the wicked one said, let us go out of the side; but the other said, not so, lest we kill our mother; then the wicked one pretending to acquiesce, desired his brother to go out first: but as soon as he was delivered, the wicked one, in attempting to go out at her side, caused the death of his mother.

“The twin brothers were nurtured and raised by their Grandmother; the eldest was named Teharonghyawago, or the Holder of Heaven; the youngest was called Tawiskaron, or Flinty rock, from his body being entirely covered with such a substance. They grew up, and with their bows and arrows, amused themselves throughout the island, which increased in extent, and they were favoured with various animals of Chase [hunting]. Tawiskaron was the most fortunate hunter, and enjoyed the favour of his Grandmother. Teharonghyawago was not so successful in the Chase, and suffered from their unkindness . . .

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## Seth Newhouse's Relation

*Ratinakere` ne ēnekē` nene' iā' de'hatiiēntēri' nene' āio`shēntho` nok' onī`  
ne āiā`heie'. Ne onī` ne dji rotino`soto` ne ska'hwādjiratsho`, kano`  
sowanē`, nēñ tā'hno` ē`s kano`ses ne dji ratitero` . . .*

In the regions above there dwelt man-beings who knew not what it is to see one weep, nor what is it for one to die; sorrow and death were unknown to them. And the lodges belonging to them, to each of the ohwachiras [families] were large, and very long, because each ohwachira usually abode in a single lodge.

Within the circumference of the village there was one lodge which claimed two persons, a male man-being and a female-man-being. Moreover, these two man-beings were related to each other as brother and sister, and the two lived in holy seclusion . . .

Then, after a time, it came to pass that the female's parent perceived that, indeed, it seemed she was in delicate health; one would indeed think that she was about to give birth to a child. So then they questioned her, saying, “To

whom of the man-beings living within the borders of the village art thou about to bear a child?" But she, the girl child, did not answer a single word.

At last the day of her confinement came, and she gave birth to a child, and the child was a girl; but [the mother] persisted in refusing to tell who the father was.

In the time preceding the birth of the girl child the man-being at times heard his kinfolk in conversation say that his sister was about to give birth to a child. Now the man-being spent his time in meditating on this event, and after awhile he began to be ill. And moreover, when the moment of his death had arrived, his mother sat beside his bed, gazing at him in his illness. She knew not what it was; never before had she seen anyone ill.

*[The family experienced grief for the first time when the man-being died. They placed his preserved body in an alcove that they reached by climbing a ladder. His daughter – for it turned out that the baby was his – grew up. At first her weeping knew no bounds when she realized her father was dead, but she became reconciled to losing him when she found she could always climb the ladder, sit by his remains, and communicate with him, sometimes even laughing at the stories he told her. Eventually he told her it was time for her to marry. She embarked on a difficult journey, and finally married, at his direction, a man who was cruel to her, though he provided her family with venison. She endured her experiences with fortitude because her father's spirit regularly gave her advice and even told her ahead of time how her life would probably be. At last her husband grew ill and no one could cure him.]*

When they failed to cure his illness, his people questioned him, saying: "What should we do so that thou mayest recover from thy illness?" Then he answered them, saying: "I am thinking that, perhaps, I would recover from my illness if you would uproot the tree standing in my dooryard." . . . When they had uprooted the tree, he said to his spouse: "Do thou spread for me something there beside the place where stood the tree." Thereupon she did spread something for him there, and he then lay down on it. And so, when he lay there, he said to his spouse: "Here, sit thou beside me." She did sit beside his body as he lay there. He then said to her: "Do thou hang thy legs down into the abyss." For where they had uprooted the tree there came to be a deep hole, which extended through to the nether world, with earth all around it.

Truly it came to pass, that while he lay there his suffering was mitigated. . . . When he had, seemingly, recovered from his illness, he turned himself over . . . and looked into the hole. After a while he said to his spouse: "Do thou look thither into the hole to see what things are occurring there in yonder place." She bent forward her body and looked in. Whereupon he placed his fingers against the nape of her neck and pushed her, and she fell into the hole.

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... She kept falling in the darkness. After a while she passed through it. She looked about her in all directions and saw on all sides of her that everything was blue in color ... She knew nothing of the thing she saw, but in truth she now was looking on a great expanse of water, though she did not know it.

This is what she saw: on the surface of the water, floating about hither and thither, like veritable canoes, were all the kinds of ducks. Loon noticed her, and he suddenly shouted, "A female man-being is coming up from the depths." Then Bittern spoke, saying, "Indeed she is not coming up out of the depths. She is falling from above." Whereupon they held a council to decide what they should do to provide for her welfare. They finally decided to invite the Great Turtle to come.

*[The birds flew close together and caught the protagonist on their backs, setting her down gently on the Turtle. Then the water animals – the beaver, the otter and the muskrat – each in turn volunteered to dive down deep and bring up some mud, turning her new home into the earth. The female man-being fell asleep, and each time she woke she saw that more plants and grasses had grown.]*

Now, when the time had come for her to be delivered, she gave birth to a female man-being, a girl child. Then, of course, they two, mother and daughter, remained there together. It was quite astonishing how rapidly the girl child grew. ... When she had grown up, her mother had the habit of admonishing her child, saying "Thou wilt tell me what manner of person it is who will visit thee, who will say, 'I desire that thou and I should marry.' Do not give ear to this, but say, 'Not until I first ask my mother.'"

First one suitor, then another, came along, and she customarily replied, "Not until I first ask my mother," ... But after a while the maiden said, "One who has a deep fringe along his legs and arms paid a visit." The elder woman said, "That is the one, I think, that it will be proper for you to marry." ... Then it was that he paid court to her. But, I think, they did not lie together. When she lay down to sleep, he laid one of his arrows beside her body. Thereupon he departed. Then, at his return, he again took his arrow and departed, carrying it away with him. He never came back.

After a while the elder woman became aware that the maiden was growing in size, caused by the fact that she was pregnant.

When the day of her delivery had come, she brought forth twins, two male infants. During the time that she was in labor, the maiden heard the two talking within her body. One of them said: "This is the place through which we two shall emerge from here. It is a much shorter way." But the other said, "Not at all. Surely we would kill her by doing this thing. Let us go out that other way, the way that, having become human beings, we will use as an exit. We will turn around and in a downward direction we two



will go.” . . . At that time, then, he turned about, and at once he was born. So at that time his grandmother took him up and cared for him. Then she laid him aside. She gave her attention to her daughter, for another travail she did suffer. But that other one emerged in another place. He came out of her armpit. So that one, he killed his mother. His grandmother took him up and attended to his needs also. She completed this task and laid him alongside of the one who had first come. Then she devoted her attention to her child who was dead. Turning to the place where she had laid the two infants, she said, “Which of you two destroyed my child?” One of them answered, saying, “Truly, he it is, I believe.” This one was a marvelously strange person. His flesh was nothing but flint. Over the top of his head there was a sharp comb of flint. . . . He who was guilty did not swerve from his denial, so he finally won his point. Their grandmother seized the body of him whose flesh was truly that of a man-being and with all her might cast him far into the bushes. But the other, whose flesh was flint, was taken up and cared for by her. And it was amazing how much she loved him . . .

Sources: Carl Klinck and James J. Talman, eds., *The Journal of Major John Norton, 1816* (Champlain Society, 1970), pp. 88–9; J. N. B. Hewitt, “Iroquoian Cosmology,” *Twenty-First Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1899–1900* (US Government Printing Office, 1903), pp. 255–95.

Hewitt provided a painstaking transcription and word-by-word translation parallel to his colloquial translation. I have changed his colloquial translation only where his nineteenth-century English might obstruct a modern understanding and never in any way that might violate the word-by-word translation. I have also omitted his marks indicating which syllables to stress, as I have not included them in other language samples in this book.

Study: Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Long-House: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1992).

### Questions for consideration

- 1 What do these documents reveal about the types of changes that may begin to take place in people’s lives when they adopt agriculture and thus become sedentary?
- 2 Judging from the remnants of ancient indigenous lives recorded here, what issues would you say were of paramount importance to the people? Were they spiritual or political? Did they feel that their lives were richly rewarding or frighteningly precarious or both?
- 3 Were any ancient Native Americans interested in memorializing themselves as individuals? Were they interested in memorializing their lineage or their entire people? Could all of these desires be compatible?

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- 4 Which elements of the images of the Algonkian coastal village reveal the hands of European artists? Which elements are most helpful to you in envisioning Native American life?
- 5 How do the two versions of the Mohawk creation story differ? Which version seems to reveal the influence of European values? What do we gain by reading a version prepared for a white audience and what do we lose? Why is it dangerous to draw conclusions about any native people based on brief statements made by visitors?