

# When CULTURES

# collide

The Story of the  
Esopus Natives and  
Their Encounter with  
European Colonialism  
in Ulster County



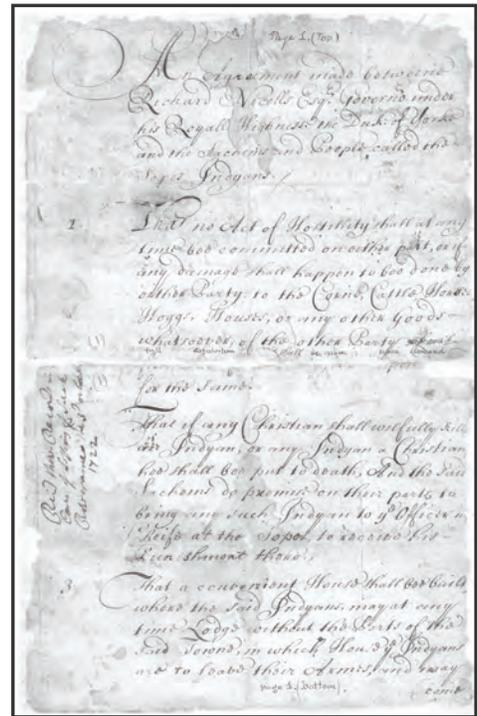
A Curriculum  
by Susan Stessin-Cohn  
and Luciano Valdivia

Nina Postupack  
ULSTER COUNTY CLERK

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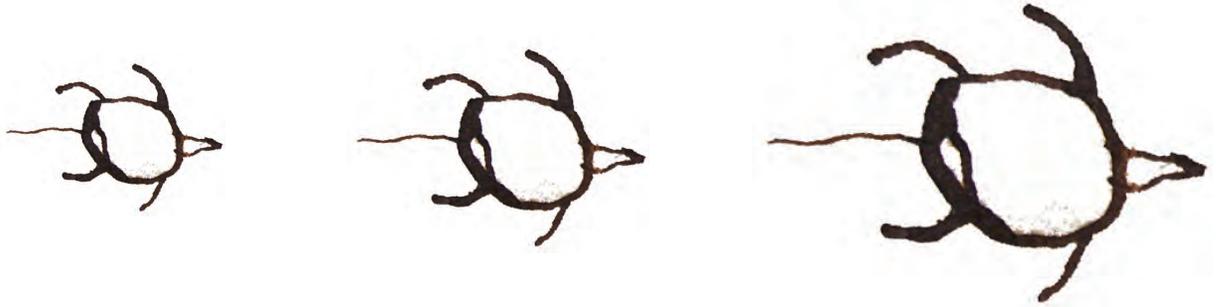
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- **Image of the Wampum Belt, courtesy of the Ulster County Clerk's Office**
- **Representation of the stockade built by The Friend's of Historic Kingston, photo courtesy of Luciano Valdivia**
- **Nicolls Treaty, courtesy of the Ulster County Clerk's Office**

*While walking down John Street in Kingston, New York, it can be difficult to imagine a landscape without the brick and limestone buildings protruding from the ground. It remains, however, that there was a time when the paved streets of the Uptown District were grassy plateaus and dirt paths. Beneath the store-fronts and apartment buildings we know all too well, there is an historical record that waits to be unearthed. Such was the case with the Persen House located just past the old Mohican Market where John Street meets Green Street. In the basement of this colonial stone house, an archeological study brought to light a treasure trove of historical artifacts. The building itself provides us with better understanding of colonial life, and early European settlers, while the artifacts found in the soil below connect us with the original Esopus inhabitants. Scorched into the walls of the cellar, the destruction brought about by the second Esopus War acts as the physical marker of the period when these two cultures collided.*

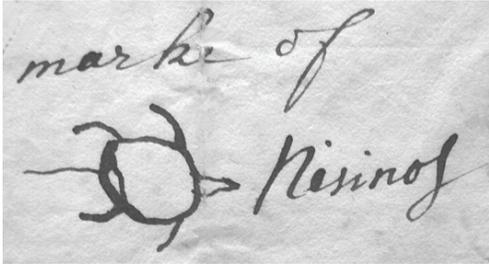
*With starkly different habits, rituals, and cultures, these two societies were set on a collision course from the moment of the first contact between the Esopus natives and Hendrik Hudson in 1609. The Thomas Chambers land deed, of 1652, marks the beginning of a 200-year period of European land appropriation. Often shrouded in the surreptitious language of legalism, the terms of these agreements were often a source of further conflict between these disparate peoples. Gradually losing their customary methods of tool creation, the Esopus became increasingly dependant upon European goods. Along with their land, the Esopus lost their material culture, and to a certain extent, their traditional way of life. In return for these fertile tracts of land, the Esopus received diseases such as small pox, along with addictions to European firearms, steel, and liquor, which proved disastrous for native society. The story of the Esopus people, as is the case with countless native societies in the Americas, is a tale of enslavement, addiction, disease, and dislocation. After suffering seven ‘trails of tears,’ the descendents of the Esopus natives have been living in cultural enclaves in Canada and in the reservations of Oklahoma, far away from their original homelands in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware.*

*Arranged chronologically, this curriculum begins with discussion of the earliest ancestors of the Lenape Nation, who arrived here 13,000 years ago – called Paleo-Indians. The first six activities, marked by the image of a projectile point in the top right corner of the page, use these artifacts as the primary documents from which the activities have been created. Activity Three, Archaeology Field School, includes a CD-ROM documenting several archaeological excavations in Ulster County. In addition, the CD-ROM contains several slides with images of local Native pottery, beads and projectile points. The following eight activities use written documents, as indicated by the image of a drawn turtle, as the basis for the lesson. Using primary documents, free of a historian’s interpretation, it becomes the work of the student to assess these documents from the past and provide their own view regarding their significance. In essence, the student becomes the historian, identifying the trends and meaning behind the collection of documents herein.*

*-Susan Stessin-Cohn and Luciano Valdivia*



*Excavation of the Persen House, Fall 2000  
-photo taken by Dr. Joseph Diamond*



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# New York State Learning Standards for Social Studies

<b>Standards</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<b>Standard 1: The History of the US and NY</b> <b>Key Idea 1</b> ➤ PI - Know the roots of American culture and the ways different people played a role in creating it.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Key Idea 2</b> ➤ PI – Gather and organize information about the traditions transmitted by various groups living in their neighborhood and community. ➤ PI – Recognize how traditions and practices were passed from one generation to the next ➤ PI - Distinguish between near and distant past.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Key Idea 3</b> ➤ PI - Gather and organize information about the important accomplishments of individuals and groups, including Native America Indians, living in their neighborhoods and communities.		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Key Idea 4</b> ➤ PI - Consider different interpretations of key events and/or issues in history and understand the differences in these accounts. ➤ PI – Explore different experiences, beliefs, motives, and traditions of people living in their neighborhoods, communities and State. ➤ PI – View historic events through the eyes of those who were there.				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Standard 2: World History</b> <b>Key Idea 1</b> ➤ PI – Explore narrative accounts of important events from world history to learn about different accounts of the past to begin to understand how interpretations and perspectives develop. ➤ PI - Study about different world cultures and civilizations focusing on their accomplishments, contributions, values, beliefs, and traditions.							✓		✓	✓		✓		
<b>Key Idea 3</b> ➤ PI - Interpret and analyze documents and artifacts related to significant developments and events in world history. ➤ PI - Understand how the terms social, political, economic, and cultural can be used to describe human activities or practices.	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

# New York State Learning Standards for Social Studies

Standards	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<p><b>Key Idea 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PI– Consider different interpretations of key events and developments in world history and understand the differences in these accounts.</li> <li>PI - explore the lifestyles, beliefs, traditions, rules and laws, and social/cultural needs and wants of people during different periods in history and in different parts of the world.</li> <li>PI – View historic events through the eyes of those of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.</li> </ul>		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
<p><b>Standard 3: Geography</b></p> <p><b>Key Idea 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PI – Study about how people live, work, and utilize natural resources.</li> <li>PI - Locate places within the community.</li> </ul>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p><b>Key Idea 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PI - Ask geographic questions about where places are located; why they are located where they are; what is important about their locations; and how their locations are related to the location of other people and places (Adapted from National Geography Standards, 1994.</li> </ul>				✓					✓		✓		✓	
<p><b>Standard 4: Economics</b></p> <p><b>Key Idea 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PI – Know some ways individuals and groups attempt to satisfy their basic needs and wants by utilizing scarce resources.</li> </ul>		✓			✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		
<p><b>Standard 5 – Civics, Citizenship, and Government</b></p> <p><b>Key Idea 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PI – Know the meaning of key terms and concepts related to government, including democracy, power, citizenship, nation-state, and justice.</li> </ul>									✓					✓
<p><b>Key Idea 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PI - Show a willingness to consider other points of view before drawing conclusions or making judgments.</li> <li>PI - Suggest alternative solutions or courses of action to hypothetical or historic problems.</li> </ul>	✓								✓				✓	✓

## *Where the written record fails us. . . . .*

archeological evidence can fill in the gaps. Through material culture, we can gain an understanding of a particular society's daily lifestyle, including diet, belief systems, and general culture. When attempting to establish an understanding of the way a group or society functioned and lived, if there is no formal written history to base our interpretation upon, we can only gather an appropriate picture from artifacts left behind.

In essence, "artifacts" are products of human activity, such as projectile points, pottery, utensils, and ornaments. A tree branch, however, is not, unless of course it has been altered by the human presence; carved, sanded, sharpened etc. Likewise, a rock is not an artifact in itself, however becomes one after being chipped, carved, or smoothed.

Also useful in creating the framework for our understanding of cultures past, existing outside the written record, is "cultural debris." Essentially the "byproducts" of human interaction with the world around them, these discarded items, such as chipped stone flakes (debitage) and food residue, provide us with indicators of how "artifacts" were made, as well as the foods consumed by the society in question.

Features, or footprints so to speak, are indicators below the ground's surface which show the manmade structures where human activity took place, such as sub-floor pits where corn and other plant material would have been stored, post holes, burials, and cooking hearths.

In conjunction, "artifacts," "cultural debris," and "features," provide archeologists with the necessary groundwork to make intelligible conclusions concerning a particular group or society. The manner in which a people lived their daily lives, and more broadly, the themes by which their existence can be expanded upon, can also be brought to light through these three types of material remains.

