

Iroquois and their "legend" the world on the turtle's back essay



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Iroquois and their " legend" The World on the Turtle's Back Iroquois tell their legend in The World on the Turtle's Back of how the earth was created and how balance in the world resides. Iroquois are one of many Native American tribes in which still live in the United States today; in fact, there are more than 50, 000 Iroquois living in the United States today. The term Iroquois refers to six separate Native American groups: the Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, Mohawk, and Tuscarora.

The Great Binding Law is a law in which both the United States Constitution and the founding charter of the United Nations are based on ideas found in the Iroquois constitution. More than 25 written versions of the story exist. For 175-200 years, Iroquois dominated other Native American groups and remained free of both British and French rule. "[Native American] stories remind the people of who and what they are, why they are in this particular place, and how they should continue to live here. " The stories are what they believe in and their way of life.

The stories also explain their origin and what they tell others. The World on the Turtle's Back is a story by Iroquois that is based on myths and beliefs of Iroquois about how the earth is formed. Iroquois believed that above a vast ocean in which birds and sea creatures lived; there was a Sky-World in which gods who were like people; like Iroquois lived. A man and his wife, who was expecting a child, became hungry and searched for food. " They came upon a Great Tree; a sacred tree that stood at the center of the universe. The tree's roots supposedly had different kinds of leaves, fruits and flowers, but it was the bark that the woman craved; in which pregnant women crave strange food, as a food or medicine. The tree was not to be tempered with by

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any Sky-World beings. Giving in to his wife's will, the man dug up the tree to gather some bark from the Great Tree's roots. The man then broke a hole in the thin surface of their world discovering an empty space he had never expected to find. The man could not get any of the roots so his wife gave it a try.

She bent over and upon looking into the hole she fell in. No one knows exactly what happened, but some say she slipped and some say her husband; fed up with all her demands, pushed her in. The birds of the sea saw her falling and quickly decided to help her by forming a platform from their bodies side by side. The great sea turtle came up to the surface of the ocean and the birds set the woman on its back. She asked a muskrat to go to the bottom of the ocean and bring up some soil.

Thus the muskrat retrieving a tiny crumb of earth the woman planted the roots she had clutched between her fingers when she fell from the Sky-World. Thus the plants grew into Earth. In time the woman gave birth to a girl. When the girl grew into womanhood, a mysterious man came and laid two arrows across her body. "The girl found out she was to bear a child only to find out that she was to bear twins. The twins; however, were born arguing and quarreling in which there was the right-handed twin-God and the left-handed twin-Satan. The man was believed to be he had something to do with the gods above. In the womb of their mother, the twins argued about how they would be conceived and in the end the left-handed twin came out her armpit in which this killed her. The twins represent balance in the world; one above the world-Heaven and one below the world-Hell, good and evil;

light and dark. In conclusion, The World on the Turtle's Back explains the origin of the world; how earth and balance was formed.