



Stenton Previsit Activity #3

skit/role play

Introduction:

James Logan played a big role in colonial government and negotiating treaties and land agreements with the Native Americans of the region. Several times he met with large groups of Native American leaders and their families at his home at Stenton. The following skit represents a ceremony that actually took place at Stenton during a 3 day visit to Stenton in 1736. The Iroquois leaders had traveled from Onondaga [ah nun DAH guh] in New York to attend an important treaty meeting in Philadelphia. There were over 100 Indians in the whole group, including men, women and children. Look back to page 8 to review what you know. Five different Iroquois nations, or individual peoples or tribes, were represented, including the Oneida [oh NI duh], the Tuscarora, [tusk uh ROAR uh], the Seneca [SEN ih kuh], the Onondaga and the Cayuga [ki YOO guh]. These five tribes made up the Iroquois Nation.

The Wood's Edge Ceremony was a very important Native American ceremony that was used in special meetings with Europeans. The ceremonies were filled with special symbols and greetings that were part of the Iroquois culture. They believed that the woods or forests they traveled through, as they went to meet with other people, could be filled with evil power that could ruin a meeting. In the ceremony they would ask that the evil, or "dust" from the journey be cleaned from everyone's eyes and throats. In a way, they were asking that everyone see and speak clearly – that there be good listening and careful talking. In order to set up good relations with the native people, it was important for the Pennsylvania colonists to learn this ceremony as well. One of these ceremonies took place at Stenton in 1736 when the five Iroquois nations came to visit.

Activity Suggestion:

Here is a skit about the Wood's Edge Ceremony that your class can read together and act out. You and your classmates can take on the roles of the people who attended the Wood's Edge Ceremony at Stenton in 1736. There are 10 speaking parts, but everyone else will also have a chance to participate as members of the different Iroquois nations. The way they talked sounds different from our conversation today. You may want to practice the skit by reading through it a few times. On your class visit to Stenton, you will have a chance to act out a short ceremony like this one.

~ CAST ~

1. James Logan, President of the Provincial Council
2. Thomas Penn, William Penn's son, representing the Penn family
3. Conrad Weiser, a German settler, serving as translator and go-between
4. Shickellamy, [shi KELL a mee] an Oneida representative, serving as translator and go-between
5. Provincial Council member





Chiefs of the Six Nations (the Iroquois confederation):

[Note: these names may be hard to pronounce. Try practicing them.]

6. The “Prince”, Onondaga Chief, “Tocanuntie” [toe cah NUN tee]
7. The Speaker, Seneca Chief, “Hanickhungo” [hah nick HOON go]
8. Cayuga Chief, “Saguchsanyunt” [suh gooch SAHN yunt]
9. Tuscarora Chief, “Sawuntga” [suh WOONT guh]
10. Oneida Chief

All remaining students can be divided into five different groups, and seated together by group. Using construction paper, design a sign for each Indian group at the ceremony: the Oneida, the Tuscarora, the Seneca, the Onondaga and the Cayuga. Have one member of each group hold the sign and sit at the front of the group.

~ SKIT ~

A “Wood’s Edge” Ceremony At Stenton

September 27, 1736



(3 strings of **wampum** are laid out on table. You may substitute pieces of string or beads)

PENN: (*Facing the Prince, and picking up and holding 1 string of wampum*) Brothers, you have travelled very far to visit us, through the dark woods and along dusty paths. First, let this wampum clear the dust from your eyes and put away any sadness.

[*Penn passes wampum to Conrad Weiser, who will repeat the message to the Prince, speaking in the Mohawk language. Because Mohawk is very difficult to pronounce, this script keeps the words in English. (You can pretend Mr. Weiser is speaking Mohawk.)*]

CONRAD WEISER: (*Facing the Prince, and picking up and holding 1 string of wampum*) Brothers, you have come a great way to visit us, through the dark woods and along dusty paths. Let this wampum clear the dust from your eyes and put away any sadness. (*Weiser passes the string to the Prince.*)

PENN: (*picking up 2nd string of wampum*) With this wampum we ask you, our great Brothers of Onondaga [ah nun DAH guh], to speak with truth.

[*Penn passes wampum to Conrad Weiser, who repeats message to the Prince.*]

Vocabulary

wampum: small tube-like beads made from seashells, strung in strings or woven into belts. Wampum was important in ceremonies, helping join groups together to work peacefully. It was exchanged at treaties and in trade, and used by Indians and colonists.





CONRAD WEISER: (*holding 2nd string of wampum*) With this wampum we ask you, our great Brothers of Onondaga, [ah nun DAH guh], to speak with truth. (Weiser passes the string to the Prince.)

JAMES LOGAN: (*Holding 3rd string of wampum*) With this string of wampum, we welcome you and promise to give your food and shelter. (*Logan passes wampum to Conrad Weiser, who repeats message to the Prince*)

CONRAD WEISER: (*Holding 3rd string of wampum*) With this string of wampum, we welcome you and promise to give you food and shelter.

The Prince: (*in loud voice, slowly, stretching out the two syllables*): “YO HEY!!!”

The Speaker: (*in loud voice, slowly, stretching out the two syllables*): “YO HEY!!!”

Oneida Chief: (*in loud voice, slowly, stretching out the two syllables*): “YO HEY!!!”

Cayuga Chief: (*in loud voice, slowly, stretching out the two syllables*): “YO HEY!!!”

Tuscarora Chief: (*in loud voice, slowly, stretching out the two syllables*): “YO HEY!!!”

All ONEIDA: “YO HEY!!”

All SENECA: “YO HEY!”

All TUSCARORA: “YO HEY!”

All ONONDAGA: “YO HEY!”

All CAYUGA: “YO HEY!”

SHICKELLAMY: Brother Penn, Our leaders have traveled a long way from our village Council fire. They thank you for the wampum, and will keep their eyes and hearts open.

PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEMBER: Brothers, We invite you to meet with us in two days at the Great Meeting House in Philadelphia.

WEISER: (*translating to the Speaker*): Brothers, We invite you to meet with us in two days at the Great Meeting House in Philadelphia.

JAMES LOGAN: Brothers of Onondaga, I invite you to stay at my home until we travel to the Great Meeting House.

WEISER: (*translating*) Brothers of Onondaga, I invite you to stay at my home until we travel to the Great Meeting House.



Yo! What’s all this about “Yo Hey?”

Does the greeting sound familiar? Actually, we use the slang word “yo” a little differently than the Iroquois did 270 years ago. Colonists who attended meetings where the call of “yo hey” was given describe it as a slow, singing sound that started on a high note and ended on a lower one. One listener compared it to the European or American “buzzab,” or “hooray,”— clearly a shout of approval.

