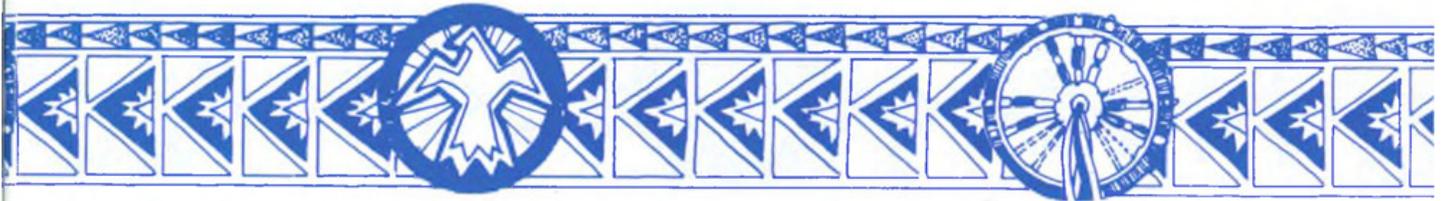


# Meskwaki Bead Belt Made by Chi Ki Ka, 1905



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 1905

# “Mesquakie” Essay from *The Goldfinch*, February 1992



## MESQUAKIE

The name “Mesquakie” which means “red earth people” comes from the color of the red soil of their homeland. At one point in their migration, the Mesquakie lived in the forests of what is now Wisconsin and Michigan. Seasons determined how they lived. During the summer months (May to September), the Mesquakie lived in villages located along major rivers in the center of tribal lands. Their homes consisted of poles covered with slabs of elm bark. Several families lived in each town house. Mesquakie women tended gardens near their summer homes. They also gathered food (wild berries, nuts, and roots) and collected bark and cattails for weaving baskets and mats.

Young Mesquakie boys learned to hunt small game with bows and arrows while the men hunted deer and elk and protected the villages from enemies.

Once the Mesquakie encountered European-Americans, they gathered pelts for trading. The Mesquakie bartered for cloth, glass beads, iron and copper cooking utensils, blankets, and guns. Winter also provided time for tribal elders to tell stories around campfires and for playing games.

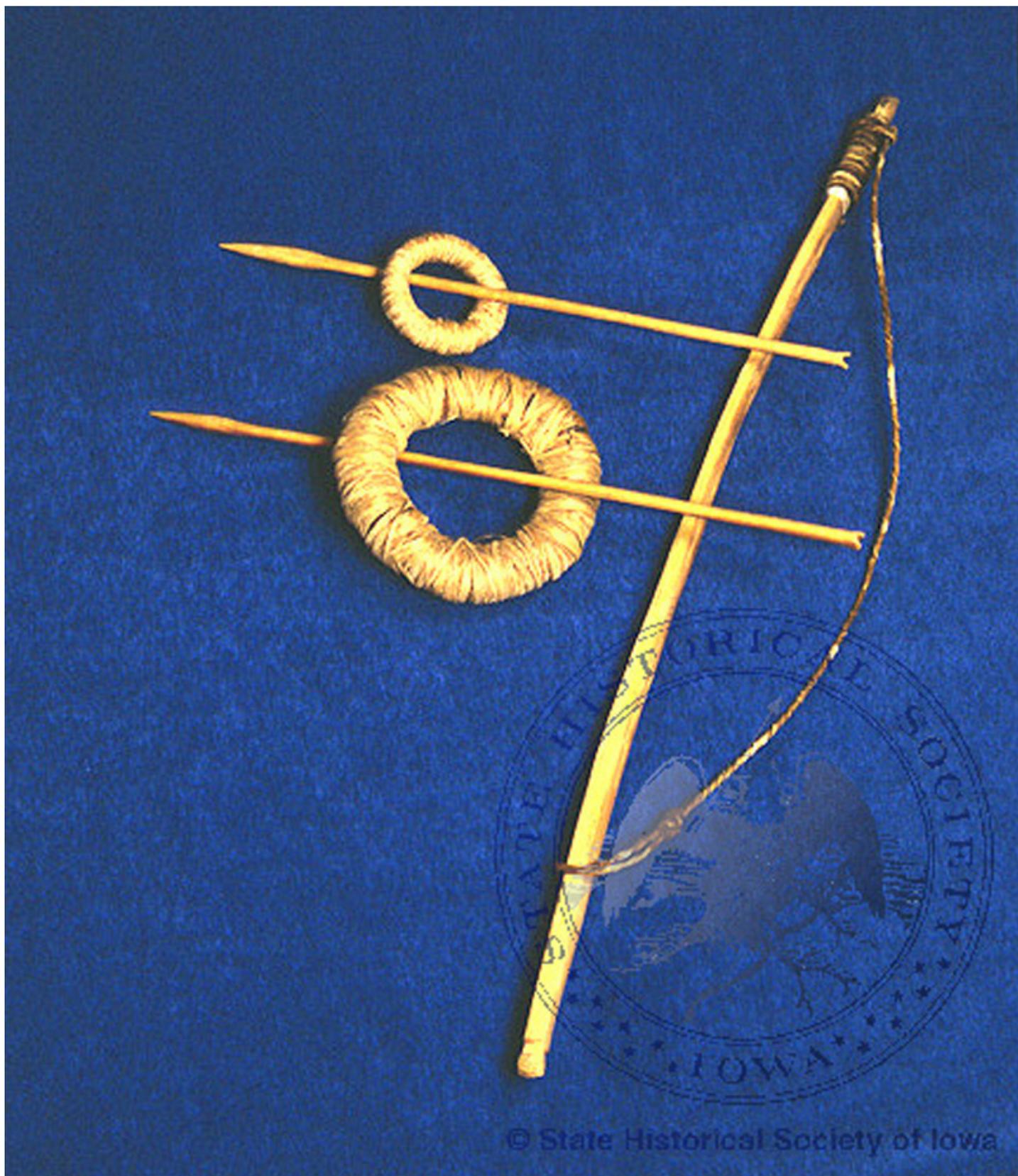
As European-American settlers moved west, the Mesquakie were forced to move



SHSI. Ward Collection—Iowa City

Kwi-ya-ma, a Mesquakie born in 1833 to reservation land in Kansas. A few households stayed behind, setting up camps along Iowa rivers. In 1850, Mesquakies living on the Kansas reservation combined their money and sold many of their ponies to purchase land in Iowa, now known as the Mesquakie Indian Settlement near Tama. A “settlement” differs from a reservation because the Indians—not the government—own and control the land. ☀

# Meskwaki Boy's Bow and Arrows, Date Unknown



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, Greiner, Chuck, Date Unknown

# Meskwaki Woman and Child by a Wickiup in Tama, Iowa, Date Unknown



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, Date Unknown

# Meskwaki Beadwork Hair String, 1905



Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Iowa, Chi Ni Ha, 1905

# Meskwaki Clothing, 1925



Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Iowa, Wallace, Josephine, 1925

# Meskwaki Doll, 1925



Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Iowa, 1925

# "A Mesquakie Folk Tale" in *The Goldfinch*, September 1991

## A MESQUAKIE FOLK TALE

**The original inhabitants of Iowa lived in peace with the environment. The Sauk and Mesquakie Indians teach children about plants and animals through the stories they tell.**

Most Mesquakies (mes-KWAHK-ees) believe that the Earth is very special. "I was taught that everything is sacred—the animals, the birds, the trees, even rocks," said Albert Cloud, a Mesquakie Indian. "I was taught not to fear the weather but to welcome it. When it would rain or snow or when the winds would blow, I was taught to go out and welcome the weather."

Mesquakie children learn about the environment from stories and songs that are handed down **orally** (spoken aloud) by their elders. Through these folk tales, children learn what one important aspect of being a Mesquakie is all about—living in peace with the Earth.

Read the following folk tale about a Deer, lying dead in a forest, and four animals—an Eagle, a Panther, a Tarantula, and an unknown creature—gathered around the body. One day the eagle, panther, tarantula, and mystery animal find the dead deer. What is the lesson of the story?

They were quarreling over the division of the Deer. One wanted this part, another wanted that, and they had not yet come to an agreement when the man appeared in their midst.

They suddenly fell into silence. Presently the man put questions to them. "Tarantula, did you kill it?"

"No."

"Eagle, did you kill it?"

"No."

"Panther, did you kill it?"

"No."

"And [to the mystery creature] did you kill it?"

"No."

He found on further questioning that they had found the Deer already dead, but he did not learn who had found it first. Then he upbraided them for quarreling. At the same time, he began to cut up the Deer in four equal shares.

The way he did it was to split the Deer in half from the head to the tail, then each half was cut in two again. He gave a part to each of the four, and they went their several ways feeling kindly toward one another and to the man who had settled their dispute.

# “Corn Shelling with the Mesquakies” in *The Goldfinch*, 1993 (pg.1)

by Susanna Ashton

Corn-on-the-cob isn't for everyone. Some people like to eat canned corn that has been scraped off the cob by machines. But how did people get corn kernels off the cob before machines, or even metal tools, were used? That's where the clam shells come in.

Many different Indian tribes have grown corn for thousands of years. Every tribe has its own way of preparing corn. Many tribes, like the Mesquakie Indians of Iowa, use clam shells taken from nearby rivers as the perfect tools for this job. A clam shell is easy to hold and just the right shape for scraping kernels off quickly and easily.

## Shelling Corn With Shells

Corn shelling isn't just another boring chore for the Mesquakie. Corn shelling is an important part of their culture. Today many traditional people often gather to do it. It used to be mostly women, but when Mesquakie get together these days to shell corn it's usually a family activity with everyone involved.

## Corn Shelling with the Mesquakies



A Mesquakie woman tends to her corn in early 20th century Iowa. Today some Mesquakie Indians still shell corn in the traditional way.

# “Corn Shelling with the Mesquakies” in *The Goldfinch*, 1993 (pg.2)

Juanita Pudhill, shelled corn in 1976 with an Iowa Mesquakie family, and described it:

During August, green corn is gathered, husked, and boiled in large iron kettles over the open fire. The kernels are removed from the cob and laid out on large sheets of plastic to dry in the sun. It is then stored for winter use. It was the uncle’s job to keep the fire and pots going. The corn was put in to boil at a certain time in the afternoon to make sure that things would be ready when the children were home from school. The harvest ceremony is for all members of the family to take part in. We all gathered in the front room, most of us sitting on the floor with a large old tablecloth draped over our legs. Everyone chose a mussel shell which would fit well into the palm of his or her hand. I, being, right-handed, chose the shell to fit in that hand. The shell lies between the thumb and forefinger, with the sharp edge down. You press the sharp edge down in between the rows of kernels and pry them out. The kernel must not be cut in removing it from the ear. The next day, the corn was laid out to dry and after drying, it would be put into containers ready for winter use.

A game is played to see how many kernels can be removed without breaking them apart. On this particular evening the grandmother won every time. Everyone laughed and was happy for her. The TV was on in the background and the younger ones were watching it. But my friend and I sat side-by-side and filled our tablecloths with kernels of the beautiful red, purple, and white corn.

Some Indian families like to use metal spoons or knives to shell the corn, because they think it is easier than using or finding clam shells. But other families believe that using shells is not just a way of practicing tradition, but is a way to respect the corn. Corn is considered sacred and every single kernel is considered to be alive, just like a human being. Scraping with shells, instead of knives is “gentler” on the kernels and does not cut them open as it pulls them off the cob. So using shells to shell corn isn’t a corny idea at all!



## Ask Yourself

- ① How do some Mesquakie Indians shell corn?
- ② Why do some Mesquakies believe that shelling corn is an important tradition?
- ③ What are some of the traditions in your family that have to do with food?

# Meskwakie Pictograph, ca. 1830



# “The People of Iowa” Essay from *The Goldfinch*, September 1985



Joan Liffing-Zug

## *The People of Iowa*

These Mesquakie Indian boys await their turn to dance at the annual pow wow. Each year the Mesquakie invite all Iowans to attend the celebration at the settlement near Tama.

The Mesquakie have lived in Iowa for about 350 years. Here they hunted, fished, and planted gardens. In late summer they celebrated the corn harvest.

When white settlers came, many Mesquakie were forced to move to Kansas reservations. Some stayed behind, hiding in the forests along the Iowa River. The Kansas Mesquakie longed to return home. Finally the tribe bought 3,000

acres along the river near Tama. They have lived there ever since.

Some Mesquakie adopted white ways of living. But they did not forget the old ways. Many still build the traditional wickiups by bending branches into a dome and covering it with mats or bark. Most practice their old religion. They teach their children the ancient stories in the Mesquakie language.

The Mesquakie are a private people. They cherish their traditions and their land. Every August at the pow wow, they share their special heritage with other Iowans.

# “Mesquakie Powwow Keeps Tradition Alive” Essay from *The Goldfinch*, 1998 (pg.1)

## Mesquakie POWWOW



Keeps Traditions Alive

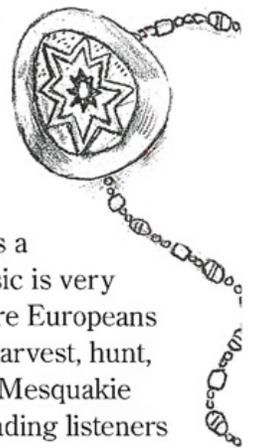
**T**he sun begins to set. Drumbeats start. Drummers sing an ancient honor song. Native American dancers follow flags into the dance circle. First elders, then honored guests, then men, women, and kids in brightly colored outfits dance past the crowd in the bleachers. Everyone keeps time with their hands and their feet. Some men wear huge

10 The Goldfinch

headdresses. Women wear shawls and carry fans made from feathers. Girls jingle as they dance, shaking the silver beads on their dresses. Boys stomp by, twisting low and then jumping high in rhythm to the ancient song. Welcome to the Mesquakie Powwow's Grand Entry!

The Mesquakie Powwow, held near Tama, is more than just a party. Although everyone is welcome to attend, the powwow has special meaning for Native American peoples. Indians from all over the United States come to the powwow to dance with the Mesquakie. Mesquakies use the annual gathering as a time to honor their history through dancing, singing, and feasting. They also see it as a time to look forward and envision a better future. During the powwow, Indian kids learn to take pride in their past, but they also learn to become the leaders of tomorrow.

The Mesquakie celebrate their heritage in many ways. Many Mesquakies believe that drum music is sacred, so listening, singing, and dancing to the drum is a powerful experience. Powwow music is very old. The songs—many written before Europeans arrived in Iowa—celebrate a good harvest, hunt, or victory. Drummers proudly sing Mesquakie words to traditional melodies, reminding listeners



# “Mesquakie Powwow Keeps Tradition Alive” Essay from *The Goldfinch*, 1998 (pg.2)

of a time before everyone spoke English. Older people teach kids how to sing along so the Mesquakie language is not forgotten.

Another important part of the Mesquakie Powwow is great Indian food and crafts. Hungry dancers and guests fill up their plates with Indian Tacos, frybread, and other treats. Native American artists sell jewelry, clothing, and other stuff.

The dancing, though, is what brings people together. Powwow dancers spend a lot of time creating their outfits by hand. Each outfit has a special meaning and expresses the spirit of the dance itself. The grass dancers, for example, wear shaggy suits with long bright fringe—when they dance, they sound like the wind in prairie grass. The fancy dancers, with their graceful shawls, look like butterflies. Good dancers know the basic steps, but have their own style. The best win prizes. There are special dance contests just for kids.

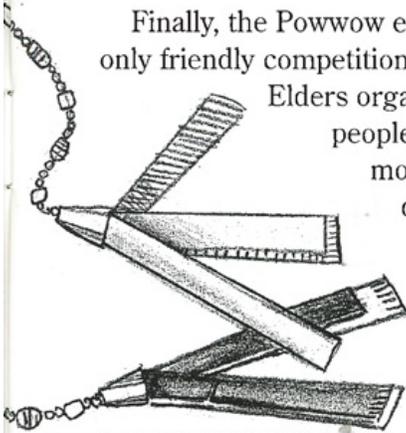
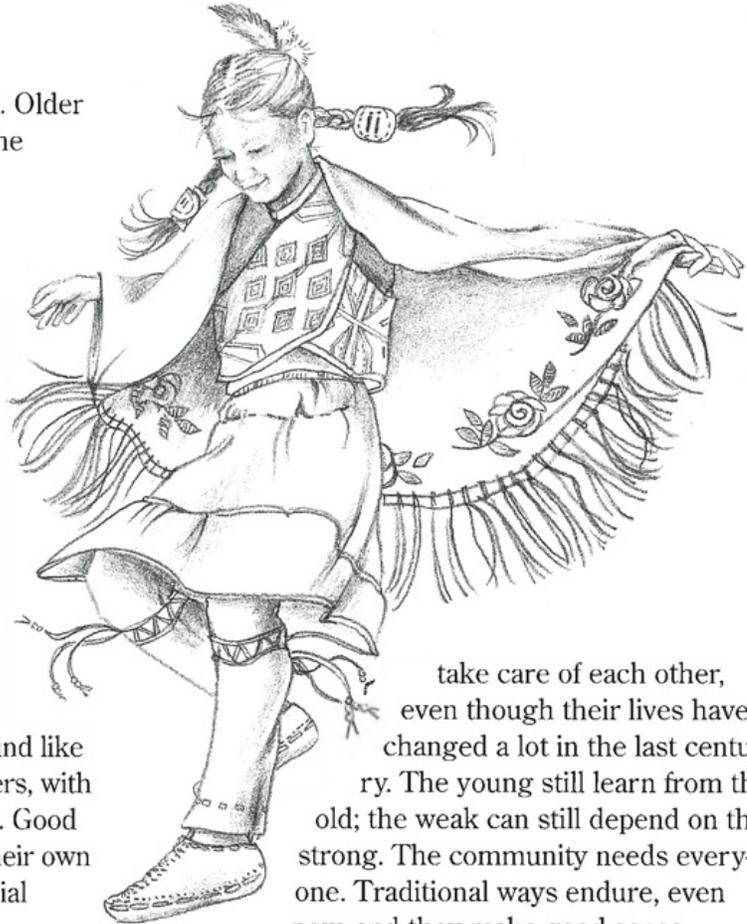
Finally, the Powwow emphasizes not only friendly competition, but also generosity.

Elders organize giveaways so that people who need help can get money or food from the dancers. Kids learn that the Mesquakie still

take care of each other, even though their lives have changed a lot in the last century. The young still learn from the old; the weak can still depend on the strong. The community needs everyone. Traditional ways endure, even now, and they make good sense.

Mesquakie kids love the powwow. They make friends, sing songs, and celebrate their people’s history. Best of all, they learn how to dance old dances in new ways, preparing them to lead their people into the 21st century.

—by Bridgett Williams-Searle



Art by Mary Moye-Rowley



# “Mesquakie Powwow Keeps Tradition Alive” Essay from *The Goldfinch*, 1998 (pg.3)



**Document:** “Mesquakie Powwow Keeps Tradition Alive,” *Iowa Festivals - The Goldfinch*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 10-11, 1998. Courtesy of University of Iowa Library and Archives  
**Images:** 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# “Mesquakie Powwow Keeps Tradition Alive” Essay from *The Goldfinch*, 1998 (pg.4)



**Document:** “Mesquakie Powwow Keeps Tradition Alive,” *Iowa Festivals - The Goldfinch*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 10-11, 1998. Courtesy of University of Iowa Library and Archives

**Images:** 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# “Mesquakie Powwow Keeps Tradition Alive” Essay from *The Goldfinch*, 1998 (pg.5)



**Document:** “Mesquakie Powwow Keeps Tradition Alive,” *Iowa Festivals - The Goldfinch*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 10-11, 1998. Courtesy of University of Iowa Library and Archives  
**Images:** 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# Meskwaki Natural Resources Pottery Workshop, September 30, 2017



30 September 2017. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# Meskwaki Members Show Settlement Students the Maple Syrup Process, March 2018 (Image 1)



March 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

## Meskwaki Members Show Settlement Students the Maple Syrup Process, March 2018 (Image 2)



March 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# Meskwaki Members Show Settlement Students the Maple Syrup Process, March 2018 (Image 3)



March 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# 104th Annual Meskwaki Powwow, August 2018 (Image 1)



104th Annual Meskwaki Powwow, August 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Media Services

# 104th Annual Meskwaki Powwow, August 2018 (Image 2)



104th Annual Meskwaki Powwow, August 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Media Services

# 104th Annual Meskwaki Powwow, August 2018 (Image 3)



104th Annual Meskwaki Powwow, August 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Media Services

# 104th Annual Meskwaki Powwow, August 2018 (Image 4)



104th Annual Meskwaki Powwow, August 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Media Services

# Round Basket Class with Meskwaki Natural Resources, October 2018 (Image 1)



October 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# Round Basket Class with Meskwaki Natural Resources, October 2018 (Image 2)



October 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# “Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds proclaims Monday as Indigenous Peoples Day” Newspaper Article, October 8, 2018 (pg.1)

## Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds proclaims Monday as Indigenous Peoples Day

[Linh Ta](#), Des Moines Register

Published 11:13 a.m. CT Oct. 8, 2018



(Photo: Kelsey Kremer/The Register)  
CONNECTTWEETLINKEDINCOMMENTEMAILMORE

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds is proclaiming Monday as the state's inaugural Indigenous Peoples Day — a trend that's growing nationwide in acknowledgement of Native Americans, according to a press release from the Iowa Department of Human Rights.

Typically, the second Monday of October has celebrated Columbus Day. However, critics say [Columbus Day holiday honors the mass genocide](#) and colonization of Native Americans, who lived in the Americas long before Christopher Columbus arrived in October 1492, while Italian-American organizations say the movement comes at the expense of a time to celebrate their ethnic heritage.

Reynolds will sign the proclamation for Indigenous Peoples Day at 3:35 p.m. at the Capitol.

"This day recognizes the land now known as the State of Iowa, named in recognition of the Iowa Tribe, as well as the language used to identify many of our lakes, rivers, cities, counties, schools, buildings and considerably more, and reflects the inherent imprint of Indigenous Peoples,"

Ta, Linh, “Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds proclaims Monday as Indigenous Peoples Day,” *The Des Moines Register*, 8 October 2018. Courtesy of The Des Moines Register

# **“Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds proclaims Monday as Indigenous Peoples Day” Newspaper Article, October 8, 2018 (pg.2)**

the release said. "This land has been home to Indigenous People since time immemorial, and without whom, the building of this state would not have been possible."

# “Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds proclaims Monday as Indigenous Peoples Day” Newspaper Article, October 8, 2018 (pg.3)



8 October 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# Meskwaki Turkey Trot, November 22, 2018 (Image 1)



22 November 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# Meskwaki Turkey Trot, November 22, 2018 (Image 2)



22 November 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# Meskwaki Holiday Expo, December 7, 2018 (Image 1)



7 December 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

## Meskwaki Holiday Expo, December 7, 2018 (Image 2)



7 December 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

## Meskwaki Holiday Expo, December 7, 2018 (Image 3)



7 December 2018. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# Meskwaki Frybread, July 10, 2019 (Image 1)



10 July 2019. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

## Meskwaki Frybread, July 10, 2019 (Image 2)



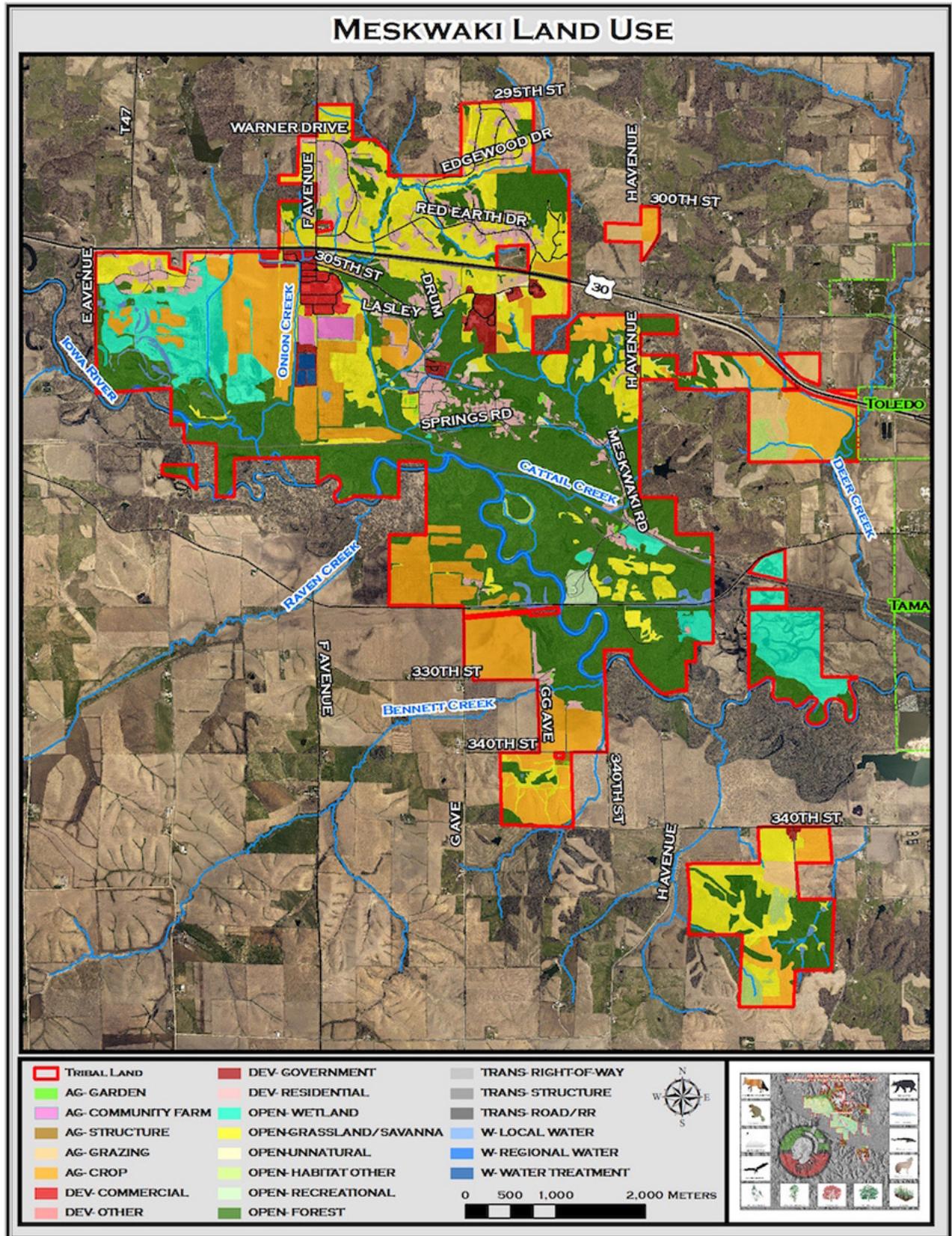
10 July 2019. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

## Meskwaki Frybread, July 10, 2019 (Image 3)



10 July 2019. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# Meskwaki Land Use Map, Date Unknown



“Meskwaki Land Use,” Date Unknown. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# Students at the Meskwaki Settlement School, Various Dates (Image 1)



Various Dates. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# Students at the Meskwaki Settlement School, Various Dates (Image 2)



Various Dates. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# Students at the Meskwaki Settlement School, Various Dates (Image 3)



Various Dates. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation

# Students at the Meskwaki Settlement School, Various Dates (Image 4)



Various Dates. Courtesy of Meskwaki Nation