WHERE DID WE COME FROM?
How The First Nations Helped Shape U.S. Governance

Prairie Rose Seminole
Certified National Trainer, Vote Run Lead
WHO ARE THEY?

Location
• The Haudenosaunee Confederacy is NOT a tribe/nation.
• It is a political and cultural UNION of several different nations/tribes.
• These nations are based in what is now the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec and the state of New York

The Nations of the Confederacy
• 5 Nations: The Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca peoples.

Also known as the Iroquois*
HAUDENOSAUNEE CULTURE

Matriarchal Society
• Village Leadership = Clan Mother.

Gender Division of Labor
• Men = Hunters, Warriors, Political Leaders.
• Women = Farmers, Village Leaders.

Naming of Individuals
• Clan Mothers name children.
• Names given when you do something good, bad, funny, etc.
• Haudenosaunee adopted European name based on what they liked.
THE CONFEDERATION: Politics in the New World

Major Players: Deganawida, sometimes known as the Great Peacemaker, and his disciple, Hiawatha.

The Primary Reasons for the Formation of the Confederacy:
• To eliminate incessant intertribal warfare.
• To create peace and give united strength.
• To create a powerful force of tribes.
• To safeguard existing Haudenosaunee territory & defend against invasion.
• To expand their territories.
• To establish a democratic government with representatives from each of the tribes to ensure fairness and equity.
HAUDENOSAUNEE GOVERNMENT

• Haudenosaunee political and diplomatic decisions are made on the local level, and are based on assessments of community consensus.

• **Unanimity** in public acts was essential to the Council. No Haudenosaunee treaty was binding unless it was ratified by 75% of the male voters and **75% of the mothers of the nation**.

• In revising Council laws and customs, a consent of **two-thirds of the mothers** was required.
THE GRAND COUNCIL: How Decisions Made?

Seneca and Mohawk reach consensus → Cayuga and Oneida reach consensus → Onondaga give a judgement → If all Nations agree a decision is made

*Process Starts Over Until There is Consensus*

Type of Decisions: Peace Treaties, Trade Agreements, War

Decisions were recorded on a wampum
IMPACT ON U.S. GOVERNMENT

Haudenosaunee
• Chambers: The Grand Council is divided into 3 chambers--Elder Brothers, Younger Brothers and Onondaga.

American
• Chambers: American government divided into 2 chambers--House of Representatives and Senate.

• Both groups had ingrained checks and balances in their governments.

• Both documents stress prosperity and liberty as goals for their people

• Both groups had a federation style government with a focus on local rather than centralized power.
NATIVE POPULATION DISTRIBUTION
## Pendulum of Federal Indian Policy

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ASSIMILATION TACTICS
American Indian Movement (AIM)

Founded in 1968 in the Stillwater Prison
• Inspired by the Black Panthers.

Urban Indians Were Brutalized by the Police on Franklin Avenue in South Minneapolis
• George Floyd was killed by the Police on Chicago and 38th Street in South Minneapolis.

The Uprising
• AIM made contact with traditional chiefs on reservations.
• Fused urban and rural activism.
EFFECTIVE ORGANIZING BY AIM

● **1968**: Voting Rights Act

● **1975**: Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act

● **1976**: Indian Health Care Improvement Act

● **1978**: American Indian Religious Freedom Act
WHAT DO YOU SEE?