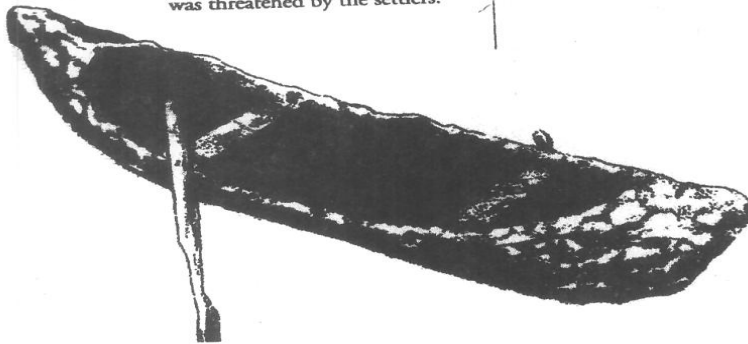


It is important to remember that the Columbian Exchange worked in two directions. Not only were the lives and cultures of Native Americans changed by their encounters with Europeans, but the lives of European settlers were also heavily influenced by Native American practices. Most settlers were farmers. Local Indians taught them to grow foods that thrived locally, such as corn, and to grind it into cornmeal. The Europeans also learned from their Indian neighbors to rely on the environment to provide them with food and housing. Europeans learned how to make the things they needed—food, clothes, and shelter—by hand, and to keep fires burning for warmth and baking.

The northern part of North America has a cold winter climate with heavy snows that make travel difficult. Local Indians had solved one problem of cold snowy winters by making snowshoes and toboggans that glide over the snow. The Indians who lived in the Great Lakes region traveled mainly on streams and lakes. Since they carried their canoes overland to the nearest waterway, they made them from lightweight birch bark—one man could carry a canoe by himself. Hollowed-out log canoes were heavier but lasted longer. The French, British, and Dutch who settled in northerly regions adopted these methods of transportation.

While Native Americans taught survival techniques to the Europeans, their own survival was threatened by the settlers.



White settlers cleared much larger areas of land for farming than the Indians. And as more settlers arrived, they took more Indian land. Each settler family wanted its own farm, so more and more land was cleared. Soon there was little unclaimed land near the coast, and few wild animals remained there.

Native American religion centered on a relationship with the land and with the spirits of deceased ancestors. When they began to lose this land and, along with it, the graves where their grandfathers were buried, native peoples felt lost and uncertain. The loss of their land also created great economic hardship. When European colonists seized their farming and hunting areas, it became increasingly difficult for native peoples to feed themselves and their families. Their time was spent fighting to defend the land they still held or moving away to the west.