

INNU. See MONTAGNAIS; NASKAPI

## INUIT

The Inuit have been known among non-Indians as *Eskimo* (*Esquimaux* in French), a name based on an Algonquian word and commonly translated as "eaters of raw meat," although it may refer to the making of snowshoes. *Inuit*, pronounced IN-yoo-it, meaning the "people," is now the accepted term, especially among Canadian bands. *Inuk* is the singular form; *Innuuk* is a plural form referring to two Inuk. (In contemporary usage, *Inuit* is also used in reference to an individual.) Variations in Alaska are *Inupiat* (or *Inupiaq*) and *Yupik* (or *Yupik*).

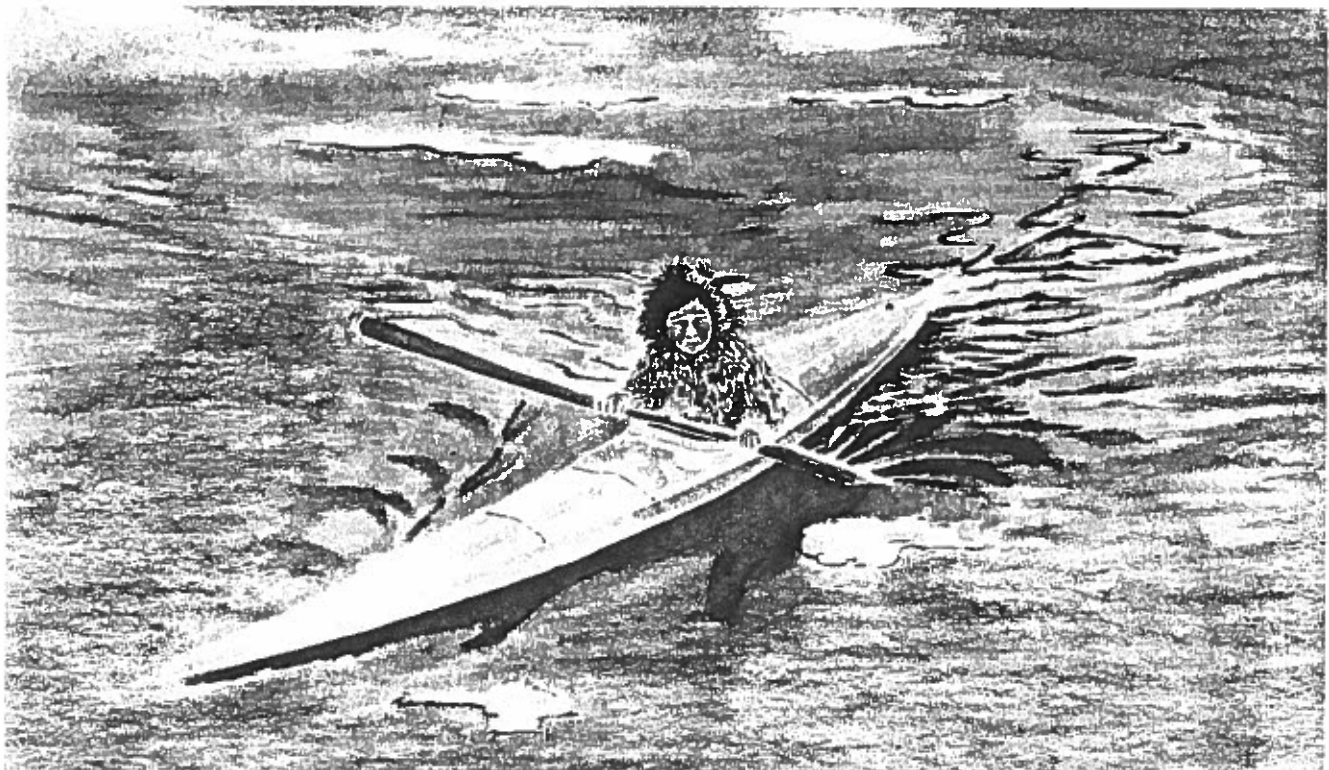
The Inuit language family is called Eskimaleut, or Eskaleut, with dialects of many different bands closely related. The similarity with dialects of the ALEUT people indicate an ancestral link between the two peoples.

The Inuit and Aleut generally are considered a separate group from other Native Americans. They typically are shorter and broader than Indians, with rounder faces and lighter skin. They look much more like Asians than

Indians do. Based on archaeological evidence, it is thought that their ancestors arrived in North America from Siberia from about 2500 to 1000 B.C., whereas most ancestors of the Indians are thought to have arrived much earlier by foot over the Bering Strait land bridge (see PREHISTORIC INDIANS).

There still are Inuit in Siberia; they are now citizens of Russia. There also are Inuit as far east as Greenland, now citizens of Denmark. This book primarily discusses Inuit located in what now is U.S. and Canadian territory, including Alaska, the Northwest Territories, Quebec, and Labrador.

These Inuit can be subdivided as follows: (1) the Alaskan Inuit (including North Alaskan Inuit, West Alaskan Inuit, South Alaskan Inuit, and Saint Lawrence Island Inuit, plus the Mackenzie Inuit in Canada and the Siberian Inuit in Russia); (2) the Central Inuit (including Iglulik Inuit, Netsilik Inuit, Copper Inuit, Caribou Inuit, Baffinland Inuit, Southampton Inuit, and



An Inuit man navigating Arctic waters in a kayak

Labrador Inuit); and (3) the Greenland Inuit (including the East Greenland Inuit, West Greenland Inuit, and Polar Inuit). These general groups can be further divided into various bands and villages, much too numerous to list here.

Inuit peoples had lifeways and language in common (with varying dialects). But there were differences among the various groups too. For example, not all Inuit lived in igloos as is popularly believed.

The homeland of all the Inuit, as well as the Aleut, is classified as the Arctic Culture Area (see ARCTIC PEOPLES). The Arctic is a frozen landscape. So far north that trees are unable to grow there, it consists of plains called tundra, where only mosses, lichens, scrub brushes, and a few kinds of flowering plants can live. Winters are long and cold, with only a few hours of daylight each day. Summers are short. The ground never completely thaws, a condition called permafrost. Although there is less precipitation in the cold Arctic climate than there is farther south, the snow that does fall is whipped up by frigid winds into intense blizzards and huge drifts.

Most Inuit peoples lived along the sea—the Arctic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, or Hudson Bay. Some of these northern waters freeze over in winter, then break up into ice floes during the short summer thaw.

## Food

The Inuit adapted remarkably well to the harsh Arctic environment. To survive where there was so little edible vegetation, they had to become highly skilled and resourceful hunters and fishermen. They migrated often in quest of whatever game was available. Sea mammals provided a reliable source of food as well as a source of materials for clothing, bags, tools, and weapons, plus oil for lighting and cooking. The Inuit called them *puiji*, meaning “those who show their noses,” because sea mammals surface to breathe, unlike fish.

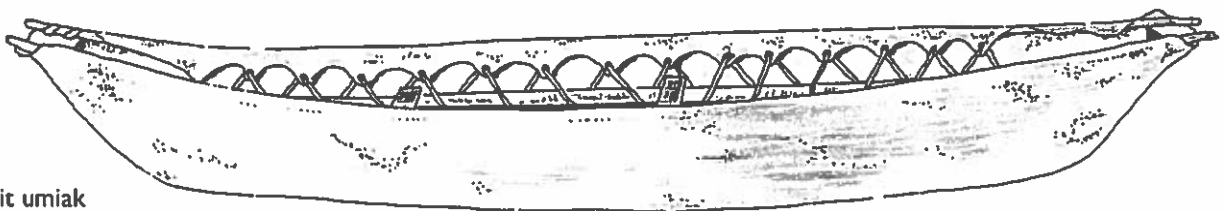
Of all the sea mammals, the seal was the most important to Inuit economy. In the summer, the Central Inuit hunted them with harpoons from their kayaks—light and maneuverable boats made by stretching seal or wal-

rus hides over driftwood frames. Or crawling on their bellies over ice floes, hunters snuck up on the seals and harpooned or netted them. In the winter, when the Arctic Ocean freezes over, hunters had another way of capturing the creatures. The hunter's dog, a husky, would help him find one of the seals' breathing holes in the ice. Then the hunter would place a feather on the tiny patch of exposed water and wait until a seal returned. When the feather moved, the hunter would strike with a harpoon. To pull the heavy animal up onto the ice, the hunter would usually have to enlarge the hole. Some Inuit had a system of netting seals through the holes in the ice.

Inuit also hunted walrus and sea lions who swam around the ice floes during the summer or lay on top of them to bask in the sun. The tusks of the walrus provided ivory for tools, ornaments, and ceremonial objects. In the winter, these mammals left the ice-covered Arctic Ocean to head south for warmer waters, where they could still surface to breathe.

Some Inuit also pursued whales. Along the Arctic coast, they used their kayaks to frighten small species of whales close to or onto the shore. Along the Alaskan coast, hunters went after larger whales in another kind of boat, called an umiak, similar to a kayak but open and much bigger, up to 40 feet long. Like the MAKAH whalers, the Alaskan Inuit used harpoons attached to inflated buoys to wear down the animals before closing in with spears for the kill.

Most Inuit also depended on land mammals, especially the caribou, for meat and materials. When these animals made their summer migration to the coast to graze on the tundra and to escape the inland swarms of black flies and mosquitoes, hunters used a variety of techniques to get close enough to kill them with either bows and arrows or spears. Hunters snuck up on individual animals on foot or in kayaks; they hid in snow pits near where the caribou were known to travel; or they drove herds into corrals or into the water. The Central Inuit band known as the Caribou Inuit were an inland people who did not hunt sea mammals but followed the caribou herds on their migrations.



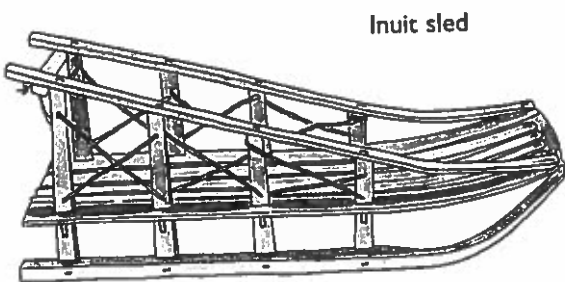
Inuit umiak

Other game for Inuit hunters in different parts of the Arctic included polar bears, musk oxen, mountain sheep, wolves, wolverines, and smaller mammals as well, such as foxes, hares, marmots, squirrels, and wildfowl. In addition to spears and bows and arrows, the Inuit used bolas, weighted ropes thrown at animals to entangle them. They also used blinds to hide from game, as well as a variety of snares and traps. Still another method of hunting wolves and other meat-eating animals was to conceal dried and folded whalebones in pieces of fat; when the bait was swallowed, the fat would melt, and the bones would straighten to full size and slowly kill the animal.

Similarly, the Inuit had many ingenious techniques for fishing. They fished from kayaks; they fished through holes in the ice; and they fished in shallow waters where they built enclosures, called weirs, out of stones. They used hooks and lines, lures, harpoons, and leisters. (The Inuit-style leister is a spear with three bone prongs—one for penetrating and two for grasping the catch.)

## Transportation

For transportation, in addition to the kayak and umiak, the Inuit had a kind of sled called a komatik. To make their sleds, Inuit craftsmen lashed together wooden frames with strips of rawhide and attached either slats of wood or a large piece of rawhide to form a raised platform. They shaped the runners out of wood or bone and covered them with a coating of ice to reduce friction. Sometimes they also put hide on the runners with a coating of frozen mud and moss. Teams of huskies pulled the sleds. Hunters traveling on ice floes sometimes pulled their own sleds, with upside-down kayaks on top. Then when they reached the water between the drift ice, they could turn the sleds over and use the kayaks without detaching them. Some Inuit utilized snowshoes, as did the Subarctic peoples to their south. Others used crampons, spikes attached to their boots, for walking on the ice, as well as test staffs, resembling ski poles, to judge the thickness and strength of the ice. The

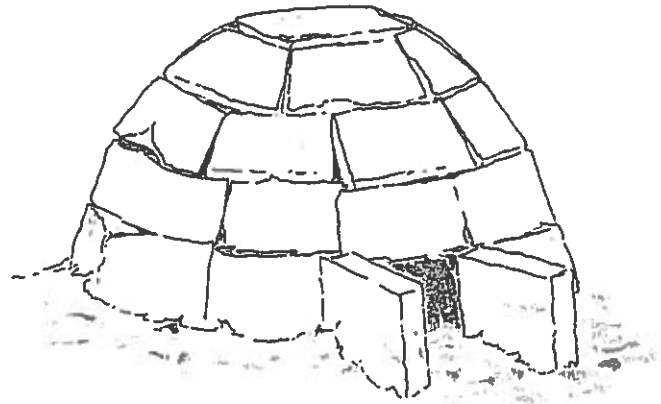


Inuit sled

Inuit and other Native North Americans did not have skis, however.

## Houses

The Inuit lived in all kinds of dwellings—igloos, hide tents, and huts. The igloo, or snow house, is the most recognizable. Nevertheless, this type of house was used only by the Central Inuit and only in the winter.



Inuit igloo (unfinished, showing positioning of blocks of ice)

To build an igloo, an Inuit man looked for an area of snow of the same consistency—preferably a layer that fell in a single storm, then hardened into ice all at once. He then drew a circle nine to 15 feet wide that served as the floor plan. Then he cut the large blocks of ice—about 24 inches long, 20 inches wide, and four inches thick—from within the circle and started the first row of blocks along the circle's outline. Every row he added spiraled upward and leaned inward slightly, so that each one was smaller than the one before it. When he added the single top block, he had a nearly perfect dome. In the meantime, his wife covered the outer walls with soft snow. A hole in the dome provided ventilation and a block of clear ice served as a window. Igloos normally had a second, smaller domed porch for storage and a covered passageway as an entrance. Sometimes a third, sizable dome was joined to the two so that an Inuit family could have a separate bedroom and living room. A platform of ice covered with furs served as a bed. The igloos were warm—sometimes even too warm—when oil was burned in stone lamps for lighting and cooking.

In the summer, the Central Inuit used tents made from driftwood poles and caribou-hide coverings. But Inuit in Alaska and Greenland had more permanent houses made from either stones and sod or logs and sod,

depending on what materials were available. These were sometimes built in a dome shape, like igloos, but more often they were rectangular. Whale ribs were also used in construction. And the intestines of sea mammals were stretched over the windows. The Native name for these dwellings is *karmak*.

## Clothing

Inuit clothing was as ingenious as other aspects of Inuit life. It offered protection from the cold but was comfortable to wear even for arduous tasks. The basic clothes, in a variety of materials and styles, were parkas, pants, mittens, stockings, and boots. The favored materials were seal and caribou skin. Sealskin was water-resistant, so it was good for summer when the rains came and when hunters went to sea. Caribou skin was better suited for winter since it was warmer and lighter in weight. Other animal skins were used as well in different parts of the Arctic: hides of dog, bird, squirrel, marmot, fox, wolf, wolverine, and polar bear. Sea mammal intestines were sometimes sewn together in place of hides. The fitted tunics known as parkas (anorak among eastern groups) were tailored to fit the contours of the body and fit snugly at the waist, neck, and wrists to keep cold air out. They were worn with the fur facing the body. Many of the winter parkas had two layers for added insulation—the sleeveless inner one with the fur facing in, and the outer one with the fur facing out. The parkas had hoods. As many as four layers of caribou fur were used on their feet. Their mukluks (boots) and their mittens were insulated with down and moss.

The Inuit decorated their clothing with designs and borders of different colored furs, leather fringes, embroidery, and ivory buttons. Some of them, mostly women, wore jewelry, such as ear pendants, nose rings, and labrets (lip-plugs or chin-plugs, placed in slits cut in the flesh, and made of ivory, shell, wood, or sandstone). Tattoos also were common.

## Recreation

The Inuit played a variety of games. A favorite outdoor sport was kickball, played with a soft leather ball stuffed with caribou hair. This was played much like modern-day soccer, but without goals. A player and his team simply tried to keep control of the ball longer than the other side. Men, women, and children played this game. The Inuit also enjoyed gymnastics in warm weather. A favorite indoor game was *nugluktag*, in which players tried to poke sticks through a twirling spool that dangled from above.

Another way to pass the cold and long winter days was by telling stories. To illustrate their tales, the storytellers used story knives—usually made of ivory with etched designs—to draw scenes in the snow.

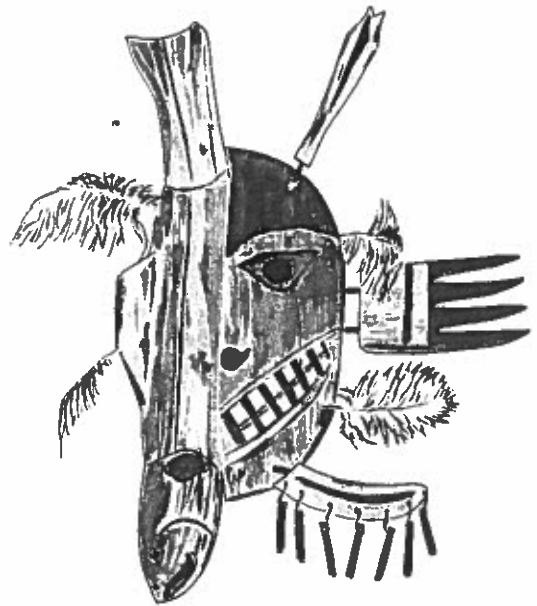
## Religion

The Inuit carved beautiful objects out of various materials—especially wood, bone, and ivory, with fur and feathers added—for their religious rituals. At ceremonial dances, men wore face masks while women wore tiny finger masks. The masks represented the spirits of animals and the forces in nature. The carving and the ceremonies themselves were directed by the *angagok*, or shamans.

One such ceremony, performed by Alaskan Inuit, was the Bladder Dance. This event lasted for days inside the large *kashim*, the men's ceremonial lodge. The Inuit thought that animals' souls resided in their bladders. They danced to music and performed rituals with inflated bladders of sea mammals, then returned them to the sea.

## Social Structure

The extended family was the most important unit of social and political organization for the Inuit. Villages were loosely knit without headmen and lasted only as long as the food supply. Yet to allow for friends and allies in the difficult Arctic environment, the Inuit had special kinds of partnerships with non-family members. The



Inuit mask representing the Soul of the Salmon

men had "sharing partners," with whom they shared their food catch. They also had "song partners," with whom they performed religious rituals. Their friendship was so great that "song partners" sometimes even shared their wives. Men and women had "name partners," people of the same name with whom they exchanged gifts.

The Inuit were a peaceful people, but they would fight vigorously if attacked by other Inuit bands, which was very rare, or by Indian tribes, which was more common. Some Inuit wore ivory armor that was stitched together with rawhide. Within Inuit bands, an act of murder created blood feuds that might last for generations despite their forgiving nature in other matters.

### Contacts with Non-Indians

Because of their locations in the remote northern wilderness, the Inuit had few early contacts with non-Natives. The Inuit of Greenland, however, were the first Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere to encounter Europeans. In this case, their contacts were with the Vikings, who first arrived on Greenland about A.D. 984 under the Norseman called Eric the Red. Inuit in Labrador also might have had contacts with Vikings who reached North America from 986 to 1010.

The English explorer Martin Frobisher, who sought the Northwest Passage—a supposed water route through North America to the Far East—is the next European on record to have had contacts with Inuit (both Greenland and Central Inuit) during his three trips from 1576 to 1578. Frobisher kidnapped an Inuk and took him back to England.

Other explorers from various European nations visited the Arctic regions from the east, still in search of the Northwest Passage, from the late 1500s into the 1800s. Europeans came in contact with Alaskan Inuit from the west starting in 1741 with Vitus Bering's exploration for Russia. The ensuing presence of the Russian fur traders in Alaska had a much greater impact on the Aleut, however. In the late 1700s, Samuel Hearne, exploring for the Hudson's Bay Company, reached the Central Inuit by land. Some of the Central tribes had no contacts with whites, however, until the expeditions of Vilhjalmur Stefansson and Diamond Jenness in the early 1900s. In the meantime, starting in 1721, the Danes settled Greenland and had extensive contacts with Greenland Inuit. And during the 1800s, there were many missionaries, especially Moravians, among the Labrador Inuit. After 1848, commercial whaling ships began working Alaskan and Arctic waters.

It was during the early 1800s that many Inuit began using white trade goods, such as guns, knives, kettles,

and cloth, which altered their traditional culture. Alcohol and European diseases also had a great impact on the Inuit as on other Native peoples.

In the late 1800s, two developments led to further rapid change among the Inuit. In 1867, the United States purchased Alaska from Russia and began developing it economically. About this same time, the Hudson's Bay Company of Canada established many posts in the Arctic for the development of the fur trade.

### Contemporary Inuit

Although the harsh Arctic conditions still determine much about Inuit lives, many of their customs have changed. Inuit now have rifles and shotguns instead of harpoons, spears, and bows and arrows; power-driven canvas canoes instead of kayaks; snowmobiles instead of dogsleds; frame houses instead of igloos, hide tents, and wood, stone, and sod huts; electricity, kerosene, or oil as fuel instead of animal fat; factory-made wool, cotton, and synthetic clothes instead of handmade sealskin and caribou ones; and so on.

Nonetheless, since the 1950s, there has been a renaissance in Inuit art, with traditional techniques, materials, and themes, as well as new ones. Inuit sculptures, drawings, and prints are valued the world over by art collectors.

Two other developments are helping to improve the quality of Inuit life in the modern world. In 1971, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act protected United States Inuit lands and granted the bands funds for economic growth. The numerous Inuit villages are now organized into six Native corporations, some of which are united with either Aleut or ATHAPASCANS. Hunting and fishing are still central to the Alaskan Inuit economy. Some groups also still practice whaling.

In Canada, on April 1, 1999, the Inuit were granted their own territory—Nunavut—carved out of the eastern and northern parts of the present Northwest Territories, an area about the size of France. The idea to split the Northwest Territories into two new territories had been introduced as a bill in Canada's House of Commons in 1965. The inhabitants of the Northwest Territories had voted in favor of the division in a 1982 plebiscite. Boundaries had been determined in a second plebiscite in 1992. The final agreement had been ratified by the Canadian Parliament in the Inuit and the Nunavut Act of June 1993. Nunavut is the first territory to enter the federation of Canada since Newfoundland in 1949. All Nunavut citizens—Inuit and non-Inuit alike—are subject to the Canadian Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and have the same rights. But the

population in the new territory is about 85 percent Inuit, giving them the greatest political power. Nunavut's capital is Iqaluit, the territory's largest community. *Nunavut* means "our land."

The Inuit are facing economic and cultural changes as a result of global warming. The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) report, released in 2004, is a comprehensive climate and regional assessment based on four

years of research, recording and observing the environmental changes in Arctic regions. This project was sponsored by the International Arctic Science Committee and the Arctic Circle, representing not only North American and European countries bordering the Arctic Circle but indigenous peoples as well. The Inuit are pressing to make the Canadian government aware and active in responding to this and other environmental issues.

## IOWAY

The Ioway, or Iowa (both pronounced I-oh-way), lived for most of recorded history in territory now part of the state bearing their name. The tribal name is derived from the SIOUX (DAKOTA, LAKOTA, NAKOTA) name for them, *ayuhwa*, meaning "sleepy ones," or possibly from *ai'yuwe*, meaning "squash"; the Ioway Native name is *Bah-kho-Je*, *Pahodja*, or *Paxoje*, meaning "dusty noses." According to tribal legend, the Ioway migrated to the prairies between the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers from the Great Lakes region, where they once were a united people with other Siouan-speaking tribes, the WINNEBAGO (HO-CHUNK), OTOE, and MISSOURIA. Supposedly, a group separated from the Winnebago and followed the buffalo to the mouth of the Iowa River, where it feeds the Mississippi. This group further divided, and the band that continued farther westward later became the Otoe and Missouri. The band that stayed closer to the Mississippi River became the Ioway.

It is not known for certain whether these locations and this sequence of events are historically accurate. But language similarities indicate that the four tribes share ancestry. Furthermore, the Ioway did retain some customs of the woodland tribes in the East, such as farming and living in villages. Sometimes the Ioway are referred to as PRAIRIE INDIANS because they lived in permanent wood-frame houses and hunted buffalo in the tall-grass prairies of the Mississippi and Missouri River valleys. When the Ioway began using horses and ranged farther, they became more like the western PLAINS INDIANS.

Because of pressure from other tribes and from non-Indian settlers, the Ioway moved their villages many times within the region now comprising the state of Iowa, as well as into territory now a part of other states. In 1700, they lived in what is now southwestern Minnesota, near the Red Pipestone Quarry where Indians collected catlinite to make pipes and other carvings. Some Ioway lived in Nebraska for a while before return-

ing to lands in Iowa. The Ioway had numerous early contacts with French explorers and traders along the Mississippi River. In the early 1800s, some bands established villages near the Platte River in Missouri, where Meriwether Lewis and William Clark encountered them during their survey of the American West.

### Marie Dorion

One Ioway woman, Marie Dorion (or Dorion Woman), became, like the Shoshone woman Sacajawea of the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804–06, a renowned guide, interpreter, and peacemaker with western tribes. She was 20 years old and living along the Red River in present-day Arkansas when she met and married Pierre Dorion, Jr., a French Canadian–Sioux trader, working between St. Louis and the MANDAN villages. While on a trip to St. Louis, Pierre Dorion was hired to join the expedition to the Pacific Northwest backed by John Jacob Astor and headed by Wilson Price Hunt. It was agreed that his wife and two sons could go along. The expedition set out from St. Louis in March 1811 and reached Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia in present-day Oregon in February 1812. The presence of Marie Dorion, who translated for Hunt, helped convince tribes of the Astorians' peaceful intentions. In December, Marie Dorion gave birth to a third boy, who died within eight days.

Because of the War of 1812, Astoria was sold to the North West Company out of Canada. The members of the Astor Expedition set out on the return trip in 1813. Another group including the Dorions departed for the Snake River country of what now is Idaho to find an earlier trapping party, collect pelts, then meet up with the Astorians returning to St. Louis. But all were killed in this group—most in attacks by local Indians—except Dorion Woman and her boys. In 1814, she managed to cross the