

TOPIC 1 – CORN CULTURE

Topic Overview

Topic 1 highlights the corn culture of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara People and includes primary sources that will help you understand the importance of corn as a food source and trading commodity.

Topic Objectives

- As a result of the study of Topic 1, you will be able to
 - Analyze and interpret primary documents.
 - Examine farming methods and tools used by the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara farmers.

ND Content Standards

- 8.1.2
- 8.6.1
- 8.6.2

Common Core Standards

- RH 2
- RH 7
- WHST 2
- WHST 9

Topic Activities

- Learning from Historical Documents



Learning from Historical Documents

To access a photo/document/map, refer to the topic reading assignment or use the SEARCH feature to enter its name or number.

This topic covers the emergence and continued growth of the corn culture to the People of the Northern Great Plains and the significance and importance of corn as a food source and trading commodity. Along with corn, the gardens included sunflowers, beans, squash, and tobacco. The seeds of each variety were planted so that the different varieties could take advantage of the qualities of the others. Care was taken to divide the garden into sections in order to keep the different varieties of corn from cross-pollinating one another.

Primitive gardening tools (**Image 0075-0386**) made and used by the women of the three tribes for centuries included a digging stick, a wooden rake, a hoe made with the scapula (shoulder blade) of a bison, and a rake made with a deer's antler. A typical garden was about three to five acres in size (an acre is about the size of a football field). Note the braid of dried corn in the image. This corn was prepared for winter storage.

In the chart below, choose two of the gardening tools shown in the photo. Write specific characteristics you notice about each tool. Answer the questions below.

Primitive Gardening Tool #1	Primitive Gardening Tool #2
<p>Characteristics Tool #1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••••	<p>Characteristics Tool #2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••••

Learning from Historical Documents (continued)

1. Although these tools were made and used by Indian women for centuries, when European American traders began to trade with the Mandans, Hidatsas, and Arikaras, they brought hoes and rakes made with iron. Why do you think many women kept the old tools rather than using the new tools traded to them?

2. Find photos of hand tools used for gardening today. Have they changed from the tools used in the photo? Explain your answer in detail.

3. From your reading on corn, do you think the People of the Northern Great Plains were good farmers/gardeners? Explain your answer.