10 reasons to love a turtle Latest Edition

10 reasons to love a turtle

Turtles are fascinating creatures that have captivated humans for centuries. Their gentle demeanor, unique physical features, and vital role in ecosystems make them beloved animals around the world. Whether you're an animal lover, a conservation enthusiast, or simply curious about these slow-moving reptiles, there's plenty to adore about turtles. In this article, we'll explore ten compelling reasons to love a turtle, highlighting their charm, importance, and the ways they enrich our lives.

1. Turtles Are Ancient Creatures with a Rich History

Timeless Survivors

Turtles have been around for over 200 million years, making them one of the oldest reptile groups still existing today. Their resilience through mass extinctions and climate changes showcases their incredible adaptability.

Living Fossils

Because they have remained relatively unchanged for millions of years, turtles are often referred to as "living fossils," offering us a glimpse into Earth's distant past.

2. They Exhibit Unique Adaptive Traits

Hard Shell for Protection

One of the most recognizable features of turtles is their shell, which provides exceptional defense against predators and environmental threats.

Ability to Retract

Many turtles can pull their head and limbs inside their shell, offering an added layer of safety and showcasing their remarkable adaptability.

3. Turtles Have a Calm and Gentle Disposition

Serene Nature

Turtles are known for their slow, deliberate movements and calm demeanor, making them soothing to watch and easy to care for as pets.

Non-Aggressive Behavior

Unlike many other reptiles, most turtles are non-aggressive, fostering a peaceful presence in any environment.

4. They Play a Critical Role in Ecosystems

Maintaining Healthy Habitats

Turtles contribute to the balance of ecosystems by controlling insect populations, dispersing seeds, and cleaning up aquatic environments through their feeding habits.

Indicators of Environmental Health

Because turtles are sensitive to pollution and habitat changes, their health often reflects the overall condition of their ecosystems, making them important bioindicators.

5. Turtles Are Low-Maintenance Pets

Minimal Space Requirements

Turtles don't need large enclosures, making them suitable for smaller living spaces like apartments or offices.

Simple Care Needs

With proper diet, clean water, and appropriate habitat setup, caring for a turtle can be straightforward and rewarding.

6. Their Unique Physical Characteristics Are Fascinating

Distinctive Shell Patterns

Each turtle species has a unique shell pattern, akin to a fingerprint, that makes them visually intriguing.

Expressive Faces

Despite their limited facial expressions, many turtles exhibit personality through their eyes and head movements, endearing them to owners and observers alike.

7. Turtles Are Symbolic in Cultures and Mythology

Symbols of Longevity and Wisdom

In various cultures, turtles represent stability, longevity, and wisdom, inspiring admiration and respect.

Mythological Significance

From Native American legends to Asian folklore, turtles often embody creation, perseverance, and protection.

8. They Encourage Connection with Nature

Educational Opportunities

Observing and caring for turtles can foster a deeper appreciation for wildlife and conservation efforts.

Stress Reduction

Watching turtles glide gracefully or bask in the sun can be incredibly calming and meditative, promoting mental well-being.

9. Turtles Are Environmental Stewards

Vital for Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems

Sea turtles help maintain healthy ocean environments by controlling jellyfish populations and facilitating nutrient cycling.

Conservation Champions

Many species of turtles are endangered, inspiring efforts to protect their habitats and promote biodiversity.

10. They Make Unique and Memorable Pets

Conversation Starters

Having a turtle as a pet often sparks curiosity and conversations among friends and visitors.

Long Lifespan

Turtles can live for decades, forming long-term bonds with their owners and becoming cherished companions.

Conclusion

Turtles are much more than slow-moving reptiles; they are ancient, resilient, and vital creatures that enrich our planet and our lives. From their unique physical traits to their cultural symbolism, there are countless reasons to love these gentle animals. Whether as pets, ecological ambassadors, or symbols of wisdom, turtles deserve our admiration and protection. Embracing their charm and recognizing their importance can inspire us to appreciate and preserve these remarkable creatures for generations to come.

10 Reasons to Love a Turtle

Turtles have long captured the imagination and admiration of humans around the world. These ancient creatures, with their unique shells and gentle demeanor, embody resilience, wisdom, and tranquility. In this article, we explore 10 reasons to love a turtle?a detailed guide that highlights the many qualities that make turtles such cherished beings in both the animal kingdom and our hearts. Whether you're a dedicated reptile enthusiast or simply appreciate nature?s marvels, understanding what makes turtles special can deepen your appreciation for these remarkable creatures.

- Turtles Are Ancient Survivors

A Living Link to the Past

Turtles have existed for over 200 million years, predating many modern species and even dinosaurs. Their evolutionary resilience is a testament to their adaptability and toughness.

- Historical Significance: Fossil evidence shows that turtles have survived mass extinctions and climate shifts.
- Evolutionary Adaptability: Their ability to adapt to terrestrial, freshwater, and marine environments demonstrates remarkable flexibility.

Why it matters: Loving a turtle means appreciating a creature that has persisted through countless Earth's transformations, embodying a sense of timelessness and endurance.

- They Have Unique and Fascinating Shells

Nature?s Masterpiece of Design

A turtle?s shell is not just a protective covering but also an incredible example of biological architecture.

Features of a Turtle?s Shell:

- Dorsal Carapace: The upper shell, fused with the ribs and spine, providing structural strength.
- Plastron: The lower shell that offers additional protection.
- Patterns and Colors: Each shell has unique markings, much like a fingerprint.

Love point: The shell symbolizes resilience and protection, inspiring admiration for nature?s engineering genius.

- Turtles Are Gentle and Calm Creatures

Embodying Tranquility

Turtles are often associated with patience and calmness?traits that can inspire humans to slow down and appreciate the moment.

- Behavior: They tend to move slowly, explore cautiously, and exhibit non-aggressive behavior.
- Interactions: Many turtles are approachable, making them wonderful companions and educational animals.

Why love them: Their serene nature reminds us to embrace patience, mindfulness, and composure in our busy lives.

- They Play a Vital Role in Ecosystems

Guardians of Balance

Turtles contribute significantly to the health of their ecosystems through their behaviors and dietary habits.

Ecological Contributions:

- Seed Dispersal: Many freshwater turtles consume fruits and disperse seeds, aiding plant growth.
- Maintaining Water Quality: Some species help control aquatic vegetation, preventing overgrowth.
- Food Chain Role: Turtles are prey for many predators, maintaining balance in food webs.

Loving a turtle means recognizing their importance in sustaining healthy environments and appreciating their ecological contributions.

- They Are Symbols of Longevity and Wisdom

Cultural Significance

Across many cultures, turtles symbolize longevity, wisdom, and stability.

Cultural Examples:

- Chinese Culture: The turtle is one of the Four Sacred Animals, representing longevity and wisdom.
- Native American Traditions: Turtles symbolize earth and creation myths, embodying patience and endurance.
- Hindu Beliefs: The world is sometimes depicted as resting on the back of a turtle.

Why it?s compelling: Loving turtles connects us to these deep cultural meanings and the universal values of patience, endurance, and wisdom.

- Turtles Have Fascinating Reproductive Behaviors

An Intriguing Lifecycle

Turtle reproduction involves remarkable behaviors that showcase their resilience and instinct.

Reproductive Highlights:

- Nesting: Female turtles often travel long distances to lay eggs on beaches or safe grounds.
- Temperature-Dependent Sex Determination: The incubation temperature influences the sex of hatchlings.
- Strong Maternal Instincts: Some species guard their nests fiercely.

Why love this: Their reproductive strategies reflect a deep instinct for survival and dedication to passing on their lineage, adding to their allure.

- They Are Low-Maintenance Pets

Ideal for Beginner Reptile Owners

Turtles can make engaging and relatively low-maintenance pets, suitable for various lifestyles.

Pet Care Essentials:

- Habitat: Proper tanks with water and basking areas.
- Diet: A balanced diet of vegetables, proteins, and commercial turtle food.
- Lifespan: Many turtles live for decades, offering long-term companionship.

Love factor: Their gentle nature and manageable care routines make turtles excellent pets that can foster responsibility and patience.

- Turtles Are Resilient and Adaptable to Different Environments

Masters of Survival

From deserts to oceans, turtles thrive in diverse habitats, showcasing their adaptability.

Examples:

- Desert Turtles: Such as the desert tortoise, adapted to arid conditions.
- Sea Turtles: Capable of long migrations across oceans.
- Freshwater Turtles: Like sliders and painted turtles, thriving in lakes and ponds.

Why it?s impressive: Their ability to survive in varying environments reflects their robustness and versatility, inspiring admiration and love.

- They Inspire Artistic and Cultural Expressions

Creatures of Inspiration

Turtles have been featured in art, literature, and folklore for centuries, symbolizing various virtues.

Artistic Significance:

- Artworks: Depictions in sculptures, paintings, and jewelry.
- Mythology: Stories emphasizing wisdom, longevity, and protection.
- Modern Media: Turtles appear in movies, books, and cartoons, endearing them to new generations.

Love for turtles can also be a love for the cultural and artistic representations that celebrate their significance.

- They Encourage Conservation and Environmental Awareness

Symbols of Preservation

Many turtle species face threats from habitat destruction, pollution, and poaching. Loving turtles often translates into advocating for their protection.

Conservation Efforts:

- Protected Areas: Establishing marine and terrestrial reserves.
- Rehabilitation Programs: Rescuing injured or endangered turtles.
- Community Outreach: Educating the public on the importance of turtle conservation.

Why love a turtle: Supporting turtles fosters a broader appreciation for biodiversity and environmental stewardship, inspiring positive action for our planet.

Conclusion

10 reasons to love a turtle encompass their incredible longevity, unique shells, gentle nature, ecological importance, cultural symbolism, reproductive resilience, low-maintenance companionship, adaptability, artistic inspiration, and role in conservation. These gentle creatures remind us of patience, resilience, and the importance of protecting our natural world. Whether observing a turtle in the wild, caring for one as a pet, or simply appreciating their presence in stories and art, embracing a love for turtles connects us to nature's enduring wisdom and beauty.

By understanding and valuing these remarkable animals, we not only enrich our lives but also foster a deeper commitment to preserving their habitats and ensuring their survival for generations to come.

QuestionAnswer What makes turtles some of the most fascinating creatures to love? Turtles are fascinating due to their ancient origins, unique shells, and calm demeanor, making them intriguing and beloved animals. How do turtles contribute to their ecosystems? Turtles help maintain healthy ecosystems by controlling insect populations, aiding in nutrient cycling, and supporting plant growth through seed dispersal. Why are turtles considered symbols of patience and wisdom? Their slow movements and deliberate behavior symbolize patience, endurance, and wisdom across many cultures. What are some unique physical features of turtles that make them special? Turtles have a distinctive shell that provides protection, webbed feet or flippers for swimming, and a beak-like mouth suited for their diet. How do turtles demonstrate resilience and adaptability? Turtles have survived millions of years, adapting to diverse environments from oceans to deserts, showcasing their resilience. In what ways can loving turtles inspire environmental conservation? Loving turtles highlights the importance of protecting endangered species and their habitats, fostering a broader commitment to conservation efforts. What are some interesting facts about turtle behavior? Turtles often travel long distances to nesting sites, can live for decades, and exhibit unique behaviors like basking and digging nests. Why do many people find turtles to be adorable pets? Their slow movements, curious nature, and unique shells make turtles endearing and low-maintenance pets for animal lovers.

Related keywords: turtles, pet care, slow and steady, aquatic animals, shell protection, marine life, reptile enthusiasts, conservation, animal behavior, backyard pond

Turtle island the story of north america s first

turtle island the story of north america s first

North America is a continent rich in history, culture, and myth. Among the many stories that shape its identity, the legend of Turtle Island stands out as a foundational narrative for numerous

Indigenous communities across the continent. This story not only explains the origins of the land but also embodies the spiritual beliefs, values, and worldview of many Native American and First Nations peoples. Understanding Turtle Island's story offers insight into the cultural heritage of North America and emphasizes the importance of respecting Indigenous traditions and histories.

In this article, we will explore the origins of Turtle Island, its significance in Indigenous cosmology, and how this ancient story continues to influence contemporary cultural identity across North America.

The Origins of Turtle Island: A Mythical Creation Story

The Legend of the Creation of Turtle Island

The story of Turtle Island is a creation myth shared by many Indigenous nations, particularly among the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy), Anishinaabe, Ojibwe, and other tribes. While variations exist, the core narrative often revolves around a divine or mythic figure, animals, and a great flood that led to the formation of the landmass known today as North America.

Common Elements of the Legend:

- The Great Flood: Many versions begin with a time of chaos, where the world was submerged in water, and life was confined to the sky or beneath the surface.

- The Sky Woman or Sky Father: A central figure, often a woman or divine being, who falls from the sky or is cast down, bringing with her the seeds of life.

- Animals as Creators: Animals such as turtles, bears, beavers, or muskrat play vital roles in shaping the land.

- The Formation of Land: Through a series of actions by animals?most notably the turtle?the land begins to emerge above the water.

The Role of the Turtle:

In many stories, the turtle is central to the creation process. For example, in some versions, the animals dive into the water to bring up dirt or mud, which eventually accumulates on the turtle?s back. Over time, this dirt grows into the landmass known as Turtle Island.

The Significance of Turtle Island in Indigenous Cultures

The Symbolism of the Turtle

The turtle holds profound symbolic meaning across numerous Indigenous cultures:

- Longevity and Wisdom: Turtles are often seen as symbols of endurance, patience, and wisdom due to their long lifespan and deliberate movements.

- The Earth and Stability: The turtle's shell represents the Earth?s stability and protection. Its slow, steady pace reflects a harmonious relationship with nature.

- Creation and Renewal: The story of Turtle Island underscores themes of rebirth, renewal, and the interconnectedness of all life.

Spiritual and Cultural Significance

For many Indigenous nations:

- Turtle Island is not merely a landmass but a sacred entity embodying the spiritual connection between humans, animals, and the natural world.
- The story reinforces respect for nature and the importance of living in harmony with the environment.
- It serves as a foundation for cultural identity, oral traditions, ceremonies, and teachings about sustainability and community.

The Variations of the Turtle Island Story Across Nations

Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Version

The Haudenosaunee legend recounts that after the Great Flood, Sky Woman fell from the sky world and landed on the back of a giant turtle. The animals, particularly the muskrat, volunteered to bring up dirt from the depths of the water. The muskrat succeeded, and the dirt was placed on the turtle?s back, gradually growing into the land. This story emphasizes cooperation, sacrifice, and respect for the natural world.

Ojibwe and Anishinaabe Version

In Ojibwe stories, the Earth is born from the dreams and visions of Sky Woman. She falls into the water, and animals, recognizing the importance of creating land for life to flourish, work together to bring earth from the depths. The turtle?s back becomes the foundation of the world, symbolizing the Earth?s endurance and resilience.

Other Indigenous Narratives

Different tribes have their unique versions, but they all highlight the central role of the turtle as a creator and sustainer of life. Some stories portray the turtle as a wise elder guiding humans, while others see it as a symbol of the Earth?s enduring strength.

The Cultural Legacy of Turtle Island Today

Indigenous Sovereignty and Recognition

The term "Turtle Island" has gained prominence in contemporary discussions about Indigenous rights and sovereignty. Many Indigenous groups refer to North America as Turtle Island to affirm their ancestral connection to the land and to challenge colonial narratives that dismiss Indigenous sovereignty.

Key points include:

- Recognizing the land as a sacred entity with deep spiritual roots.
- Supporting Indigenous-led land reclamation and environmental preservation efforts.
- Promoting the use of Indigenous names and stories in cultural education.

Educational and Environmental Movements

The story of Turtle Island is often incorporated into educational programs to teach about Indigenous history, ecology, and cultural values. It also inspires environmental activism, emphasizing the need to protect the land, water, and all living beings.

Initiatives inspired by Turtle Island stories include:

- Indigenous-led conservation projects.
- Cultural revitalization programs.
- Educational campaigns about the significance of respecting Mother Earth.

Art and Cultural Expression

Artists, storytellers, and performers continue to celebrate and preserve the story of Turtle Island through various mediums:

- Art: Paintings, sculptures, and carvings depict the turtle and related symbols.
- Storytelling: Oral tradition remains vital in passing down the legend.
- Festivals and Ceremonies: Cultural events honor the creation story and reinforce community bonds.

Conclusion: Embracing the Legacy of Turtle Island

The story of Turtle Island is more than a myth; it is a profound symbol of the interconnectedness of life, the resilience of Indigenous cultures, and the sacredness of the land. As North America continues to evolve, acknowledging and respecting the stories of Turtle Island is essential for fostering understanding, reconciliation, and environmental stewardship.

This ancient legend reminds us that the land we inhabit is not merely a place to live but a sacred gift bestowed upon us by ancestors and spirits. Embracing the story of Turtle Island encourages us to live in harmony with nature, honor Indigenous traditions, and recognize the deep spiritual roots that shape the continent's identity.

Keywords for SEO Optimization:

- Turtle Island
- North America creation myth
- Indigenous stories of Turtle Island
- Significance of Turtle in Native American culture
- Turtle Island legend
- Indigenous sovereignty North America
- Native American mythology
- Cultural heritage of Turtle Island
- Indigenous environmental activism
- Turtle symbolism in Indigenous cultures

Turtle Island: The Story of North America?s First

Turtle Island is a name that resonates deeply within Indigenous cultures across North America, embodying a rich tapestry of myth, history, and cultural identity. As a term rooted in the oral traditions of many Native American and First Nations peoples, Turtle Island signifies the original homeland of these nations?an enduring symbol of creation, resilience, and connection to the land.

This article explores the multifaceted story of Turtle Island, from its mythological origins to its contemporary significance, highlighting the cultural narratives, historical context, and ongoing importance of this sacred concept.

Origins and Mythology of Turtle Island

The Creation Stories

The story of Turtle Island is primarily derived from Indigenous creation myths that vary among tribes but often share core themes. Most notably among the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy), the legend recounts how the Earth was formed on the back of a giant turtle. According to these stories, in the beginning, the Earth was submerged under water, and the Creator sought to create land for humans and other creatures. A Sky Woman fell from the heavens, and with the help of animals, she established the landmass we now know as Turtle Island.

In many narratives, the turtle represents patience, longevity, and the earth?s resilience. The stories emphasize the importance of harmony with nature and the interconnectedness of all living beings. These myths serve as moral and spiritual guides, underlining values such as respect for the land, community, and the natural world.

Features of the Mythology of Turtle Island:

- Emphasis on balance and harmony with nature
- Symbolism of the turtle as the earth carrier
- Variations among tribes, but shared themes of creation and unity

Pros:

- Provides a spiritual explanation for the origins of the land
- Reinforces cultural identity and moral values
- Connects communities to their ancestral stories

Cons:

- Variations can lead to misunderstandings across different groups
- Mythological stories may be misunderstood or misrepresented in mainstream narratives

Historical Context and Cultural Significance

Indigenous Peoples and Turtle Island

Long before European contact, North America was inhabited by diverse Indigenous nations, each with its own languages, customs, and spiritual beliefs. For many of these nations, Turtle Island is more than a myth; it is a living, breathing entity and a term that signifies their ancestral homeland.

The concept of Turtle Island has historically served as a unifying symbol among various tribes, emphasizing their shared origins and mutual respect for the land. It also functions as a reminder of the sovereignty and enduring presence of Indigenous peoples despite centuries of colonization, displacement, and cultural suppression.

Historical Significance:

- Represents Indigenous sovereignty and connection to ancestral lands
- Acts as a symbol of resistance against colonization
- Celebrates cultural continuity and resilience

Features of Cultural Significance:

- Used in storytelling, ceremonies, and education
- Symbolizes the earth?s fertility and life-giving properties
- Serves as a rallying point for land rights and sovereignty movements

Pros:

- Reinforces Indigenous identity and unity
- Inspires activism and cultural preservation
- Provides a historical narrative that challenges colonial perspectives

Cons:

- Misappropriation or commercialization by non-Indigenous groups
- Political disputes over land sovereignty often complex and contentious

Colonial Encounters and the Impact on Turtle Island

European Contact and Its Consequences

The arrival of European explorers in the 15th and 16th centuries marked a turning point for Turtle Island. Colonization brought profound upheavals?disease, displacement, cultural suppression, and territorial conflicts. Indigenous nations faced massacres, forced removals, and treaties often broken or ignored by colonial powers.

Despite these hardships, the story of Turtle Island persisted as a symbol of resilience and resistance. Indigenous communities continued to uphold their stories, languages, and spiritual practices, asserting their connection to the land amid colonization's destructive forces.

Key Impacts:

- Loss of land and resources
- Suppression of Indigenous cultures and languages
- Forced assimilation policies, such as residential schools

Features of Colonial Impact:

- Displacement from traditional territories
- Erosion of cultural practices, including storytelling traditions
- Legal and political struggles for land rights

Pros:

- The history underscores the importance of sovereignty and justice
- Catalyzed Indigenous activism and awareness
- Led to modern land claims and reconciliation efforts

Cons:

- Long-lasting trauma and cultural loss
- Ongoing disputes over land and sovereignty

Modern Perspectives and Movements

The Reclamation of Turtle Island in Contemporary Culture

Today, Turtle Island remains a powerful symbol within Indigenous communities and beyond. It

figures prominently in cultural revitalization, political activism, and educational initiatives aimed at affirming Indigenous sovereignty and honoring ancestral traditions.

Many Indigenous nations actively promote stories of Turtle Island to foster pride and educate both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples about the profound cultural significance of the land. Environmental movements also invoke the imagery of Turtle Island to emphasize the importance of ecological stewardship and respect for the natural world.

Contemporary Movements:

- Land reclamation and sovereignty activism
- Cultural revitalization programs, including language preservation
- Environmental advocacy rooted in Indigenous traditions

Features of Modern Perspectives:

- Use of Turtle Island as a symbol of resilience and resistance
- Incorporation into art, literature, and media
- Educational efforts to share Indigenous stories widely

Pros:

- Empowers Indigenous communities
- Raises awareness about land rights and environmental issues
- Fosters intercultural understanding and respect

Cons:

- Political tensions around land disputes remain unresolved
- Cultural appropriation or misrepresentation can dilute the significance

Conclusion: The Enduring Legacy of Turtle Island

The story of Turtle Island is a profound narrative woven into the fabric of North American history and culture. It encompasses mythological origins that offer spiritual insights, historical realities of colonization and resistance, and contemporary movements striving for recognition, justice, and cultural preservation. As a symbol, Turtle Island embodies the resilience of Indigenous peoples, their

deep spiritual connection to the land, and their ongoing efforts to reclaim and honor their ancestral homeland.

Understanding Turtle Island requires more than knowledge of myths or history; it demands respect for the cultural narratives that sustain Indigenous identities and acknowledgment of their sovereignty. As North America continues to evolve, so too does the story of Turtle Island?an enduring testament to creation, resilience, and the unbreakable bond between people and the land they call home.

QuestionAnswer What is the significance of Turtle Island in Indigenous North American cultures? Turtle Island is considered a sacred and foundational symbol in many Indigenous North American cultures, representing the birthplace of the world and the origin of humanity according to various creation stories. How does the story of Turtle Island differ among Indigenous tribes? While many tribes share the concept of Turtle Island as the origin of the world, their specific creation stories and symbolism vary, reflecting diverse cultural beliefs, languages, and traditions across Indigenous nations. What role does Turtle Island play in modern discussions about Indigenous rights? Turtle Island serves as a powerful symbol of Indigenous sovereignty and connection to land, often used in activism and discussions advocating for land rights, recognition, and respect for Indigenous sovereignty in North America. Are there any popular stories or myths associated with Turtle Island? Yes, many Indigenous stories describe Turtle Island as a floating landmass supported by animals or created by divine beings, emphasizing themes of harmony, balance, and respect for nature. How has the story of Turtle Island influenced environmental conservation efforts? The story fosters a deep spiritual and cultural connection to the land and nature, inspiring Indigenous-led conservation initiatives and promoting environmental stewardship rooted in traditional beliefs. In what ways is Turtle Island recognized in contemporary popular culture? Turtle Island appears in art, literature, and media as a symbol of Indigenous identity, resilience, and the importance of respecting Native histories and traditions. What is the significance of the turtle in the story of Turtle Island? The turtle often symbolizes endurance, stability, and nurturing qualities, serving as a central figure in creation stories where it supports or carries the Earth on its back. How can learning about Turtle Island enhance our understanding of North American history? Studying Turtle Island stories offers insight into Indigenous worldviews, cultural heritage, and history, fostering greater respect and acknowledgment of Native peoples' contributions and perspectives.

Related keywords: Turtle Island, North American indigenous, creation myth, Native American legends, sacred geography, indigenous spirituality, First Nations stories, native mythology, cultural heritage, ancestral stories

Read the full article online: turtle island the story of north america s first