American Indian Heritage Month

November 2013

Land of the Great Water - Sustainer of Life

The oral tradition of the Anishinaabe, or Ojibwe people, of the Great Lakes region is that centuries ago their ancestors migrated from the Atlantic coast. One of the prophecies they followed on this migration was to find a place where "food grows on the water." Manoomin, (wild rice) is seen as a special gift from the Creator. It became a healthy staple of the Ojibwe diet, as well as being important culturally and spiritually to the Anishinaabe people.

This painting by Shirley M. Brauker, a member of the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, depicts three Native American women harvesting wild rice. The women wear customary calico clothes adorned with ribbons. The "Rice Spirit" watches from just beneath the water. Her hair is Manoomin.