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Sample

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Table of Contents

Carl Benn, "Portraits of Mohawk Chief John Norton, 1804-15: Origins and Opportunities in Material Culture Studies"	page 7
William Engelbrecht, Kathleen Allen, Bill Fox, Jim Herbstritt, Joshua Kwoka, Wayne Lenig, and Martha Sempowski "Stone Discs in Iroquoia"	page 41
Michael Jason Galban, "The Oldest Surviving Quilled Bag in America"	page 77
John Maier, " <i>Sahana</i> : Morgan's Spirit of the League"	page 105
Obituaries	
"Arthur Einhorn" by Thomas Abler	page 149
"Roy Wright" by Kathryn Merriam	page 151

PORTRAITS OF MOHAWK CHIEF JOHN NORTON, 1804–15: ORIGINS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN MATERIAL CULTURE STUDIES

Carl Benn
Professor, Ryerson University
Department of History

∞ I. ∞

Several artists produced portraits of Mohawk alliance and war chief John Norton, or Teyonnihokarawen. Dating to his two visits to the United Kingdom in the early 1800s, five of these artworks are known to have survived. In this survey, we will consider both their origins and their documentary value for exploring indigenous personal dress. As well, we will attend to some of the challenges of using such sources and reasons for integrating material culture within broader scholarship as we seek to refine our understanding of the native world of the past.

Born in 1770, John Norton was the son of a Cherokee father and a Scottish mother. In the 1790s, the Mohawks adopted him, with Joseph Brant, or Thayendanegea, making him his nephew because he thought the younger man would be able to serve Haudenosaunee, or Iroquois, interests effectively in their relations with both the white world and the other aboriginal populations of the lower Great Lakes.¹ Norton's ethnicity was

representative of a common characteristic of native life at the time – its diversity – as people of varied First Nations, European, African, and mixed origins were integrated into, or were born within, indigenous communities. Norton was one of several famous Haudenosaunee leaders whose parentage lay outside of the Five Nations Confederacy (or Six Nations from the early 1720s). Another, for instance, was Hendrick, or Teyoninhokarawa, the well-known early-eighteenth-century leader, after whom Norton was named, and who was thought by Mohawks in Teyoninhokarawa's day to have been an adopted Mahican, although it is possible he had different origins.² A second was Tanaghrisson, born a Catawba, who became a Seneca, lived mainly as a Mingo, and who we often remember today as the "Half-King" who participated in the skirmish at Jumonville Glen alongside George Washington in 1754.³ A third example was Mohawk adoptee, Louis Cook, or Atiatoharongwen, the son of a black man and an Abenaki woman who, like Norton, fought in the War of 1812, but as an ally of the Americans rather than of the British.⁴

Between the late 1770s and early 1820s, Teyoninhokarawa lived mainly along the Grand River north of Lake Erie on land the British had bought from the Mississaugas in the 1780s for Haudenosaunee refugees from the American Revolution. He then left his home in 1823 and traveled through American and Mexican territory before passing away in 1827 at or near the Dwight Mission to the Cherokees in the Arkansas Territory. In opposition to the overbearing behavior of Canadian officials, he defended Haudenosaunee interests and independence among the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas, Tuscaroras, and others (such as Nanticokes) who lived with them along the Grand. One of his principal, but unrealized, objectives was to have the Crown confirm Iroquois ownership of the Grand River Tract in fee simple rather than within either the restrictions of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 or assertions by colonial officials that the Six Nations only had

been granted occupancy rights, but not title, to the land. Teyoninhokarawen also promoted the expansion of Euro-American agricultural practices among natives, not only for their comfort, as settlers degraded the viability of traditional subsistence patterns by changing the environment around them, but to prevent newcomers from exploiting the imperatives generated by poverty to oppress and manipulate indigenous communities. Although he participated in, and respected, aboriginal expressions of faith, writing positively, for instance, about the Seneca prophet Handsome Lake, or Ganeodiyo, he was a Christian, and promoted that religion, especially its Anglican version, as Brant did and as was practiced among many Mohawks in Upper Canada (now part of southern Ontario). One of his accomplishments was translating the Gospel of Saint John into Mohawk, which the British and Foreign Bible Society (and others) published for indigenous use, with the first edition dating to 1805.

Norton believed the United States represented a profound threat to the well-being of native peoples, and therefore fought within the aboriginal army at the battle of the Wabash in 1791 during the war for the Ohio country. With the coming of the War of 1812, he sought to enhance Anglo-First Nations alliances in order to protect native communities from the hostile republic, and hoped that good relations with the Crown would generate favorable treatment from the King's officials in return, which would see the Iroquois receive unconditional control over the Grand River Tract and lead indigenous people in the United States to move to Canada, where, in concentrated numbers, they could defend their interests effectively. Between 1812 and 1814, Teyoninhokarawen led war parties from the Grand and elsewhere against the Americans and their indigenous allies, and saw more action than virtually anyone else, being present at the fall of Detroit, the capture of Fort Niagara, the battles of Queenston Heights, Fort George, Stoney Creek, Chippawa, and

Lundy's Lane, the blockades of Forts George and Erie, and a large number of skirmishes and frontline patrols.

Today we know him best for his thousand-page manuscript, published as *The Journal of Major John Norton*, that, among other subjects, discusses the war in the Ohio country in the 1780s and 1790s, describes a journey he made to the Cherokees in the American south in 1809–10, recounts his wartime adventures, and narrates Haudenosaunee history in detail (based on published European sources, native oral tradition, and recent memory, and which may incorporate drafts of a now-lost history that Joseph Brant had hoped to publish).

∞ II. ∞

One of the ways we can expand appreciation of indigenous self-representation in the past, and then use it as a means to analyze underlying cultural values, is through studying illustrations of native people done from life or created by artists who based their efforts on observations they had made beforehand. Of Norton's known surviving portraits, the last in chronological terms, is

Major John Norton by Thomas Phillips of the Royal Academy, a fashionable artist who painted such people as Lord Byron, Sir John Franklin, and William Blake (Fig. 1). During his travels to Great Britain in 1815–16, Teyoninhokarawen visited Hugh Percy, the second Duke of Northumberland, and a veteran of the American Revolution who had known Joseph Brant



Figure 1. *Major John Norton*, by Thomas Phillips, RA, 1815. Courtesy of the Northumberland Estates.

Stone Disks in Iroquoia

By William Engelbrecht, Kathleen Allen, Bill Fox,
Jim Herbstritt, Joshua Kwoka, Wayne Lenig, and
Martha Sempowski

Abstract

Iroquoian speakers played the hoop and pole game, but there are no historic descriptions of Iroquoians playing chunky, a variant of hoop and pole in which a rolled stone disk is used instead of a hoop. Also, no distinctively shaped Canadian-style chunky stones have been found on Iroquoian sites. This has led to the belief that chunky was not played by Iroquoians. However, a symmetrical stone disk that rolled well across a carpeted surface was recovered from the Faton site, a mid-sixteenth century Erie village. Other researchers provided examples of symmetrical stone disks from Neutral Erie, Seneca, Cayuga, Mohawk, and Susquehannock sites. These specimens generally resemble the Bradley variant of chunky stones from the Midwest. We argue that these Iroquoian stone disks were used to play chunky. In addition to describing the physical characteristics of the specimens, we discuss possible symbolism and functions of the game among Iroquoians and likely reasons for its disappearance.

Chunky, and “Hoop and Pole”

Chunky is a game that involves rolling a stone disk known as a chunky stone or discoidal along a flat surface. The name comes from the Choctaw, *chungke* (Adair 1775:401). It is a variant of

the hoop and pole game which was played throughout North America (Culin 1907:420-422). Both games could be played by two players or by teams. The Iroquois called hoop and pole the game of javelins (Morgan 1851:298-301; Williamson and Cooper 2017:58) (Figure 1).

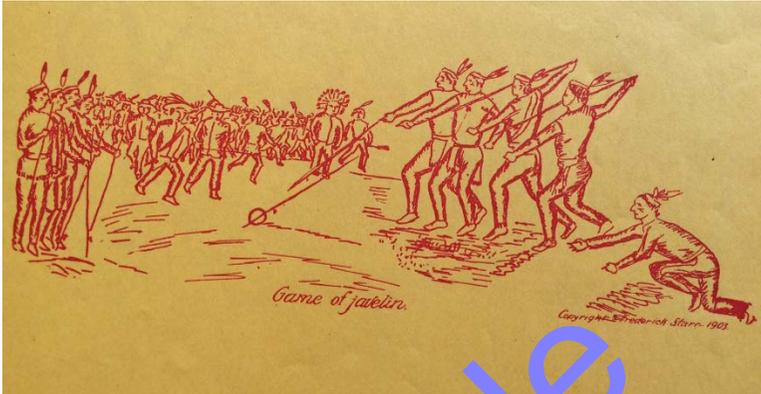


Figure 1. "Iroquois Game of Javelins," Jesse Cornplanter, 1903.

In this game a player rolls a hoop or disk and another player throws a pole or throws or shoots an arrow at the hoop or disk. Points are scored by how near to the target the pole or arrow lands. Culin (1907:420) states: "The game is remarkable for the wide diversity in the form of the implements employed, as well as in the method of play." Hoops could be made of "wood, bark, corn-husk, pottery, or stone" (Culin 1907:420-421; DeBoer 1993:83). Zych (2017:65) notes that some cultures gave different terms to contests using a stone disk versus a hoop. Culin (1907:461) cites an 1811 visitor to the Arikara who said that a version played with a ring (presumably stone) was a more violent game than one using a hoop. However, most accounts suggest that hoop and pole and chunky are essentially variations of the same game, differing only in whether it was a hoop or stone disk that was rolled. We therefore apply the symbolism attributed to the hoop in historic times to chunky stones.

Archaeologists have focused on the game of chunky rather than hoop and pole due to the preservation of chunky stones. The earliest stone disks appear in western Illinois and

eastern Missouri around A. D. 600 (Pauketat 2009a:44). These are less finely crafted than the biconcave (discoidal) specimens associated with Cahokia and related Mississippian ceremonial centers. When Mississippian centers disappear, chunky appears to be largely replaced by lacrosse in the Midwest (Pauketat 2009b:25). However, stone disks are occasionally found in later sites where they are typically biconvex in shape, the Bradley type (Perino 1971) (see Figure 2). Chunky continued to be played in the Southeast into the eighteenth century (Zych 2017:65) and by groups on the Plains into the nineteenth century (Catlin 1989:134).

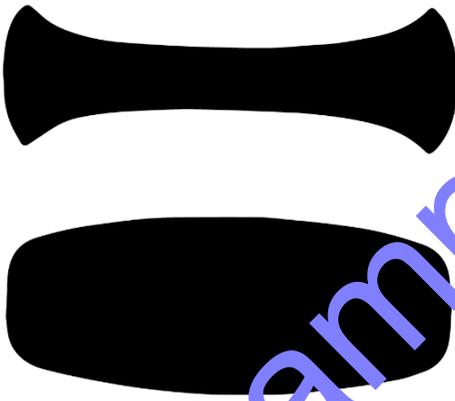


Figure 2. Profile of Cahokia variety (top) and Bradley variety (bottom) after Perino 1971:114).

It is assumed currently that the Iroquois did not play chunky (George 2004:12). “North of the core Mississippian world, no local varieties of chunky stones have been found” (Pauketat 2009b:24-25).

Ethnohistoric accounts of Iroquois chunky are lacking. However, nineteenth and early twentieth century

scholars of the Iroquois suggested that some stone disks recovered from Iroquois sites were gaming stones. Beauchamp (1897:32, figure 62), Parker (1920:421, nos. 3 and 6) and Squier (1849:79, fig.24) illustrate stone disks that appear to be chunky stones. Squier (1849:79) compares the stone disk he illustrates to those in the Mississippi Valley.

There are two twentieth century references to the Iroquois playing a “rolling stone” game, but the game is not described. In 1926 Arthur Parker (1967:68) noted that the Seneca played a “rolling stone” game as did William Fenton (1933-

The Oldest Surviving Quilled Bag in America

Michael Jason Galban

Curator/Historian

Seneca Art & Culture Center - Ganondagan

Abstract

During the rare peaceful period of the second quarter of the 18th century in the northeast, an agreement was made between the Hodinöhsö:ni' and the British Crown which allowed for a trading post/fort to be constructed at the critical port of Oswego situated on the northern boundary of Hodinöhsö:ni' (Iroquois) territory. Everett Bancker was the man in charge of the fort, a well-known Indian trader familiar to the Hodinöhsö:ni'. During the construction period of the fort, it is probable that a small quilled bag was commissioned as a gift to his son, Gerardus Bancker; the bag was inscribed with his name and a date wrought in dyed porcupine quills. It is perhaps the oldest surviving quilled bag in an American museum.

Introduction

The bag in question, sits quietly in the storage facility of the Museum of the City of New York; and is perhaps the oldest surviving porcupine quilled bag remaining in an American museum. There are certainly other, older quill-embroidered bags in existence around the globe; but those were all spirited away

long ago and brought across the ocean as souvenirs of the owner's time spent in the wilds of N. America. European museums are full of these ancient objects (Phillips 1998: 3). It is for this reason that the "Bancker" bag sits unique.

This beautifully rendered bag was likely commissioned from a Native woman in the early 18th century by a very prominent Indian trader. It has a date and a name embroidered in porcupine quills on one side. This is an entirely unique detail for this object type. Although other Native objects from the northeast woodlands have letters and numbers worked into them, for this type of "netted panel bag" other examples with written wording is unknown. Commissioned art was not unknown from this period, especially around major trading centers. There were European traders who would specialize in acquiring object d'art from Native artisans and providing them to their eager consumers. (Hamell 1982: 10-11; Burch 1990: 266) This "Bancker" bag in and of itself bears a story worth telling because it represents the pinnacle of technical ability in porcupine quillwork, and because the family who it is attributed to has deep roots in the history of colonial/Native relations in the 18th c.

This paper will identify, analyze and categorize a specific type of porcupine quill-decorated bag called a "quill-netted panel bag" as a distinct and unique bag type among the various other quill decorated bags common to the northeast woodlands. It will focus on a specific extant bag, the so-called "Bancker" bag which stands out as unique among this bag type because of its personalized and dated message embroidered on the body of the bag. Connections between the historic bag and the Bancker family, a prominent colonial family with close ties to the Native people of New York will be made. As well as possible answers to its origins and manufacture. A brief mention of the history and cultural meanings of porcupine quillwork as practiced by Hodinöhsö:ni' and other indigenous artisans of the northeast woodlands will be included. This paper will also make a case for Hodinöhsö:ni' regional origins of this particular bag based on

comparative and documentary evidence as well as open the possibility for 18th century woodland object manufacture identifications based on regional cultural areas rather than specific tribal attributions. To build this case, proof of historic Hodinöhsö:ni' practices of "quillwork" must be established and then an analysis of the iconography of the "Bancker" bag from a comparative perspective will occur.

Porcupine Stories and Porcupine Quillwork of Hodinöhsö:ni' origin

Porcupine "quillwork" is the name given to the various techniques in which colorfully dyed porcupine quills are used to decorate objects such as moccasins, leggings, bags, cases, headdresses, and belts. Porcupine quills are a type of hair which is needle-like and protects the animal from predators. They are gathered from the animal, cleaned, sorted for size and dyed in various plant and mineral dyes. Quills can be sewn directly to leather objects, wound around loose strings, punched into bark containers, and wrapped around leather or bark, rawhide, and wood. Quillwork as an art form is purely North American; mainly due to the simple fact that the quill-producing animal can only be found on this continent. (Turner 1996: 18, 71-72) African porcupines also have quills but they are too big and rigid to use in the same way. Native people also used caribou and moose hair to embroider objects because those follicles also have a pithy center which can be collapsed to create flat areas of color.

Culturally, porcupines are considered the "boss" of all the game animals by Hodinöhsö:ni'. According to their tradition, a hunter who shoots at a porcupine (or a wolf) once and does not kill it must not take another shot for fear of spoiling their hunting luck and causing their gun to be "sick". (Waugh 1912: 44; Alder 2002: 95) Connections between hunting luck, hunting charms, and the protective nature of quillwork decoration are obvious. The animal is also considered a survival food by Hodinöhsö:ni' hunters – the idea being that the porcupine is the only animal you

can dispatch without a weapon. They are a slow-moving creature that ambles along the forest floor like an old man and can be easily dispatched with a rock or a stick. The old tradition states that the animal “brother” makes the ultimate sacrifice for their human family.

Porcupines and porcupine quillwork also appears in Hodinöhsö:ni’ folklore – one story tells of an old woman who lives in the skyworld and applies quills to a pair of moccasins and at the end of the day she sets them aside unfinished – while she sleeps, her dog unravels her work. If ever a time comes when she finishes them, the world will come to an end. (Curtin 1923: 508)

A connection is also made between serpents and quillwork in the story of the great horned serpent (*Gashaistowanëh*) who appears to a Seneca maiden in human form wearing a hide jacket covered in shiny black quillwork. She is dazzled by his beauty and falls for his deception to her great peril. (Parker 1923: 218-222)

In Hodinöhsö:ni’ culture of the colonial period, quillwork and moose hair false-embroidery were most often produced by women. The art form evolved into a highly sophisticated and aesthetically beautiful tradition. It was even recognized as such by the Jesuits who knew of various artistic customs from their far-reaching missions which touched nearly every continent by the 17th century. Almost, every time this delicate embroidery is mentioned in the colonial period, women are referenced to as the producers. The Jesuit priest Louis Nicholas is taken by the complexity and beauty of the porcupine quillwork as well as its wide appeal even in Europe:

This same hair, which is so dangerous, is much used among the Westerners whose women make very fine works. First they dye it with various fruits and some herbs or roots, which give yellow, violet, black, reddish and red, so that there is no scarlet as beautiful and brilliant as the ones seen in the dyes of the women on very beautiful and rare works, such as precious

The Oldest Surviving Quilled Bag in America

headbands and snakes that go around the head and hang midway down the leg. A thousand fine designs are seen on these objects. The natives esteem these works highly, and to tell the truth they are considered very fine in France. A belt of this material and of this delicate work is worth as much as 100 louis d'or, and I dare to say that it is like those paintings that are priceless.

One sees a hundred other decorations, on whose and stockings, on breeches and on tobacco bags, on robes of wolf, beaver, or otter skin, on two or three kind of belts, jerkins and on other things. They are so rare and so precious that one could say that the work is much finer than the material used, which itself has no beauty except what is given by the dye, and by the forms and shapes that are given to it in designs that are not used in Europe. I can affirm that I have seen Greek-styled wreaths of this material that monarchs would not have scorned to put on their head, and various beautiful belts that they would have been pleased to wear.

Father Louis Nicholas, *The Codex Canadensis*, pp. 314

Although the rendering and design conception of the work was certainly a feminine custom, the acquisition of the materials required everyone in the community to participate regardless of gender. Moose hair had to be acquired from the northern regions and imported into Hodinohs'oni' hands. Men would hunt porcupines for their quills, and deer for their hides and sinews needed to fashion the base of these objects. But it remains important to note that it was the women who provided the creativity and skill to realize the beautiful quillwork patterns.

Quill-netted Panel Bags and Regional vs. Tribal Attributions

To discuss the details of this type of bag we must use a common language to describe the different construction elements and begin to identify certain elements as culturally affiliated.

I will refer to this type of bag as a “quill-netted panel bag” or in a more general term for tobacco bag which I will explain further in the paper as a “Petunk”. Quill-netted panel bags are characterized by thin cords of animal leather or natural fiber along the bottom edge of a rectangular two-piece flat bag. These bottom edge fringes are quill-wrapped in pairs and then in subsequent rows, the cords are quill-wrapped pairs of alternating fringe cords. This creates a “netted” lattice by which changing colors reveals the pattern. The designs then can be rendered along a diagonal grid framework. The wrapping technique is a simple friction-rendered wrapping but requires great spatial consistency as well as a very experienced ‘hand’ to execute the complicated tight patterns. The technique can be very tightly rendered or somewhat loose depending on the maker.



Figure 1. A side view of the Bancker bag showing the side seam and folds. Museum of the City of New York. 48.250.1AB. Image by the author and used with permission of the Museum.

The “Bancker” bag is in its current tri-folded state approximately 6” x 6”, but if the folds were to be opened the original bag was probably more like 14” tall. The opening which is hidden inside the folded bag, has a quill decorated top edge. This detail cannot be studied unless one carefully opens the folds slightly. It might be beneficial for it to have conservation attention so that the bag can eventually be opened. The body of

Gahano, Morgan's Spirit of the League

John Maier

*Distinguished Teaching Professor of English Emeritus
State University of New York College at Brockport*

As the title of his 1851 *League of the Ho-de'-no-Sau-Nee, Or, Iroquois* suggests Lewis Henry Morgan initially proposed a book explaining the remarkable Confederacy of the Six Nations which was established in the 15th century. When he was invited by Ely S. Parker, a Seneca, to attend a solemn Grand Council at the Seneca's Tonawanda Reserve, Morgan was introduced to the people not by Parker but by Parker's sister, Gahano. Little did Morgan suspect that she, not Parker, would become his principal informant for his first major book about the *League* itself and for the next three works that gave him international recognition as the "Father of American Anthropology." Known today for her textile artistry and under the name Caroline Parker Mountpleasant, Gahano provided key insights to Morgan for the thirty years after their first meeting in October, 1845, the years in which he produced *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* (1871), *Ancient Society, Or, Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization* (1877), *Houses and House-Life of the American Aborigines* (1881), and a little-recognized "Prefatory Note" to Lorimer Fison and A. W. Howitt's work on clans in Fiji, Tonga and especially Australia, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* (1880).¹ Once

her contributions to these works are revealed we can see that her influence on Morgan was anticipated in the very first visual image we have of her, in the opening of the second part of his *League of the Ho-De'-No-Sau-Nee*, the section devoted to “The Spirit of the League.”

“The Spirit of the League” turns a book about a political organization into a remarkably comprehensive ethnography of the Ho-De'-No-Sau-Nee, as Morgan spelled the name. Ironically the book itself was overlooked by European anthropologists, like Bronislaw Malinowski, who occasionally lamented that Morgan had not written such a book. In many ways, Morgan's insights were lost—and with them his source, Gahano, was forgotten. She deserves to be remembered.

Fortunately, we now have evidence of her influence on all of Morgan's works on the Ho-De'-No-Sau-Nee.

Within days of his return home from the Tonawanda Reserve where he had been introduced to the young Seneca woman named Gahano, Morgan sent off a letter to his friend, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft. Schoolcraft, an elder statesman in the study of native North Americans, was so impressed with the new insight Morgan had come upon that he immediately slipped the letter into the manuscript he was completing for publication. The insight was so important that it formed the basis of Morgan's publications up to his death in 1881. Gahano was her clan name, and the new insight into the political importance of exogamous *matrilineal* clans in the League of the Ho-De'-No-Sau-Nee is described in the October 1845 letter to Schoolcraft.²

While other writers on the Iroquois, notably Joseph François Lafitau, Pierre de Charlevoix, Cadwallader Colden and John Bartman in the 18th century had commented on some elements of the clans among the Iroquois, none had quite seen the importance of descent through the mother, which empowered the women and checked the authority of men in the nations (such as the Seneca) and in the League itself, although the chiefs maintained authority in their own right.

The first person Morgan was introduced to in Tonawanda was Gahano. He might have expected that he would be greeted by Ely S. Parker, of the prominent Parker family, the one Seneca he had already met, in an Albany bookstore, and who would come to be the most famous Native American of his day. Parker played an important role in the ceremonies of the Grand Council. Gahano, about sixteen years old when Morgan met her, was a suitable replacement, since she and Parker were known for their proficiency in English. Their parents, William and Elizabeth Parker, though also prominent in the community, spoke little English. Morgan was impressed with a number of Gahano's qualities. In his notebook he wrote that "she has been converted and is now attending school at Brockport did not little increase the interest her beauty was calculated to awake."³ Morgan was a bachelor at that time. The first indication that Morgan had realized the Seneca's matrilineal clan system came only days after he met Gahano—in a letter that was published by someone else, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft.

Their laws of descent are quite intricate. They follow the female line, and all the children always follow the tribe of the mother, and the man never is allowed to marry in his own tribe, it follows that the father and son are never of the same tribe, and hence the son can never succeed the father, because the sachemship runs in the tribe of the father. It really is quite surprising to find such permanent original institutions among the Iroquois, and still more surprising that these institutions have never seen the light. If I can construct a table of descents with any approach to accuracy, I will send it down to the Historical Society. The idea at the foundation of their law of descent, is quite a comment upon human nature. The child must be the son of the mother, though he may not be of his mother's husband—quite and absolutely an original code.⁴

Five years after meeting Gahano Morgan included this image in the opening of *Book II of League of the Ho-De'-No Sau-Nee*, the section devoted to "The Spirit of the League."

Note the naturalistic symbolism on the skirt, *gä-ka-ah*, especially in the beadwork representing the Tree of Peace that was important to Creation and also to the League of the Six Nations itself.⁵ Other elements, like the vegetation within and without the sky-domes repeated in the hem of the garment, hold important significance in the worldview of her people.



GA-HAH, ND
A Seneca Indian Girl
In the Costume of the Iroquois

Figure 1. Portrait of Caroline Parker identified as Gahano opening the second part of Morgan's League of the Ho-De'-No Sau-Nee, or Iroquois (1851), 148.

Obituaries

Arthur Einhorn – 1934-2017

Sadly, a face seen for decades at the Conference on Iroquois Research will no longer be with us. Art Einhorn died on 22 December 2017, at age 83. My first memories of Art are from the Iroquois Conference at Raquette Lake in 1966, although he almost certainly had been at earlier meetings. I think both of us had attended the previous year's conference in Glens Falls since we both have conversed about Bill Fenton providing Sunday-morning bail for a participating ethnographer who had been taken into custody the night before as a result of a violent confrontation with an archaeologist in attendance.

The 1966 Iroquois conference was held at what had formerly been a Vanderbilt "cabin" which was being used as a conference center by Syracuse University. A group of Onondaga singers and dancers came on Friday night. They welcomed Art as he joined them as they performed the Eagle Dance for the attending ethnographers, linguists, archaeologists, and ethnohistorians.

Einhorn created a wide social network including members of local indigenous communities, activists both local and national, curators at museums with large Native American collections, academics he encountered at the Iroquois Conference, meetings of the American Society for Ethnohistory and the American Anthropological Association, as well as members of the broader political and cultural community in New York and the eastern United States.

Einhorn used his knowledge gained from local contacts as well as from artifacts in museum collections to pursue his strong interest in material culture. This manifested itself in two areas – ethnohistoric analysis of the appearance of Iroquois and others as depicted in early artistic depictions and also on wampum, including the appearance and construction of belts, strings, and ornaments as well as the symbolic and political significance from past through to the present.

Finally, I would call attention to Art Einhorn's legacy which is to be found in the Arthur and Shirley Einhorn Iroquois Collection in the St. Lawrence University Libraries (Special Collections). The collection takes up 9.25 linear feet. It documents the range of Art's interest in Iroquoian issues and it also documents the course of Iroquois studies over the past half century.

Thomas S. Abler

University of Waterloo

Roy Allen Wright, Tekástia'ks, 1941-2018

We will miss our fellow Iroquoianist, linguist and ethnohistorian Roy Wright. He was an eccentric, a genius, and a good friend. Wright was possibly the last of the mendicant scholars. Many in our community hosted Roy for a dinner, a night, a week or more, and were rewarded by his charming intellectual banter and broad knowledge of linguistics, history, and odd facts. His life was about talk, words and language itself.

For Wright, the only thing worth buying was books. He amassed a vast collection of volumes in history and linguistics, many rare and unique. He carried them from home to home, always hoping to find the perfect dwelling where he could keep all of them in one place. He was a collector of cultural ephemera such as labels and food boxes that he marked carefully with the date and location of acquisition. He collected friends, too, and kept data about them organized on index cards and in digital spreadsheets.

He was naturally social, happily talked to every sort of person, and could do so in dozens of languages. Wright was the ideal party guest because he made all those he met feel like they were fascinating people. He spontaneously dropped in to visit with friends. He lived in the moment. Sometimes troubles dogged him: his house burned, his car broke down, and his books stolen. Wright was upbeat and optimistic anyway, grappling with the problems with busy energy. He was idealistic and progressive, even espousing anarchy and communal living. Young people gravitated to him because he was open-minded and respected them and their ideas. While many say we should put people before things, Wright lived that motto, books excepted. That makes sense, though, because what are books but a person's words made permanent?

Wright grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts. He graduated from Harvard University in 1963 and returned there for graduate studies in linguistics. He taught at various colleges in New England and Canada. Fluent in eight languages, and conversational in two dozen more, Wright worked in all of the Iroquoian languages. He enjoyed collaborating on linguistic and historical projects and was a good travel companion whether it was to an archive, a Powwow, or an academic conference. He enjoyed the process of research and thinking through the issues, the spoken word, more than writing up his findings. He was close to the Mohawk communities at Kahnawake and Akwesasne. In recent years he was involved with the Beaconsville Historical Society. Wright gave a tour of Kahnawake for the society a few years ago that I attended and he made it come alive.

Wright was living in Montreal at the time of his death on May 18, 2018 at age seventy-seven. His collection of notes on ethnohistory and linguistics have been acquired by The Canadian Museum of History at Gatineau, Québec.

Kathryn Merriam
Norwich University

Inside this issue

Carl Benn

“Portraits of Mohawk Chief John Norton, 1804-15:
Origins and Opportunities in Material Culture
Studies”page 7

William Engelbrecht, Kathleen Allen, Bill Fox,
Jim Herbstritt, Joshua Kwoka, Wayne Lenig, and
Martha Sempowski,

“Stone Discs in Iroquoia”page 41

Michael Jason Galban,

“The Oldest Surviving Ojibwe Bag in America”
.....page 77

John Maier,

“Gahano, Morgan’s Spirit of the League”
.....page 105

Obituaries

Arthur Einhorn.....page 149

Roy Allen Wright.....page 151

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