July 2011 Issue

Feathers In The Wind

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The Quilt of Belonging - Carrier

Copied from: http://www.invitationproject.ca/listing.php?Listing=1030

Hilda George, from Takla Landing, learned how to sew and bead as a child. The beading is done in a pattern made more beautiful because of its simplicity. An heirloom Carrier bag provided the floral motif, which was reproduced at the top of the V-shaped formation. A single flower boldly peeks out from behind folds of felt that are framed with fur.

The Carrier speak the *Dakelh* language (of the Athapaskan language family) and call themselves *Dakelh-ne*, meaning "people who go upon the water," since canoes were their main mode of transportation. They earned the name "carrier" from English traders (and *porteurs* from the French) because of a specific custom among the easternmost bands. Upon the death and cremation of her husband, a Carrier woman would, as a sign of respect, carry his ashes and bones for a period of mourning. Under pressure from the white man, Cremation was abandoned in favour of burial in the 1830s.

The traditional territory of the Carrier Nation is located in the mountainous interior of northern British Columbia, between the Rocky Mountains and Coastal Range, around the Upper Fraser and Skeena Rivers and their many tributaries. Their neighbours are the Gitxsan, Chilcotin and Sekani, with whom they developed a thriving trade network, before contact with white people. Today, there are 18 Carrier bands living in this area.

The Carrier depended, in large part, on the annual salmon runs. When abundant, the salmon harvest would provide enough to be dried and stored in preparation for the long winters. The Carrier had many methods of fishing that included weirs, large scaffolds erected over rough waters, conical traps, large rakes, three-pronged spears, and lures and hooks. When the fish supply was inadequate, the Carrier relied on small game hunting and some large game animals, such as moose and caribou. Their diet was often supplemented with local vegetation, such as berries, bulbs, and wild turnips.

Social mores and religious instruction were taught to the younger generations through the art of storytelling, or *Gidete*. The collective knowledge of the people includes traditional ways, social organization and land divisions (*keyoh*), and is passed down through the elders and hereditary chiefs. The Carrier people have always valued their land, and *keyoh* holders were responsible for taking care of their section. *Keyoh* holders were chosen as children by the leaders of the community. They were trained in their responsibilities to maintain the land and its resources, thereby ensuring the well-being of their clan. The Carrier Sekani Tribal Council believes this is a viable system that is still workable within the context of our times.

Coureur des Bois

From
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coureur_des_bois

A coureur des bois (French pronunciation: [kuʁœʁ de bwa], *runner of the woods*) was a French woodsman, who travelled to the interior of Canada to engage in the fur trade with the natives without permission from the French authorities. The Coureurs de Bois was an adventurer, expert canoeist, and skilled businessmen. The *coureurs de bois*, mostly of French descent, operated during the late 17th century and early 18th century in eastern North America, particularly in New France. Later, a limited number of permits were issued to *coureurs des bois* who became known as voyageurs.

One of the reasons the Native peoples were essential to the fur trade was because they brought furs from the interior regions to the French trading posts of Quebec, Trois Rivières, and Montreal. The French could also obtain furs by going into the interior region themselves. During times of hostilities, it was safer to have the Native allies bring fur to the French, but high profits could be made by those who were willing to venture into the interior rivers and lakes and bring back beaver pelts themselves. During peaceful times, more and more young men of New France were attracted to the high profits and adventure in the fur trade. These men were entrepreneurs, working for themselves rather than representing a company. These energetic and daring adventurers became expert canoeists and shrewd businessmen. They were known as coureurs de bois or "runners of the woods"

During the 17th century, the fur trade was very lucrative for New France. Competition was fierce, and many colonists risked the journey west and north through hostile territory from the settlements around Montreal to the *pays d'en haut*, or "upper country" (the area around the Great Lakes) to trade with Native trappers. These *coureurs des bois* were not looked upon favourably by Montreal authorities or royal officials. They disapproved of settlers leaving the developing agricultural areas to seek their fortune trading. The French authorities would rather have let the transportation of furs be handled by the natives than have independent unregulated colonial traders, who were bringing in so many furs that the market was oversupplied. The unregulated traffic in furs also undermined Montreal's role as the focal point for the fur trade — where traders would exchange beaver pelts for trade goods such as clothing, muskets and copper pots. Some illicit traders also caused problems by trading alcohol for furs.

Some *coureurs des bois* became famous, including Étienne Brûlé-Valiquette, Louis Jolliet, Médard des Groseilliers, Pierre-Esprit Radisson, Jean Nicolet, Guillaume Couture, Jean-Baptiste Chalifoux and Jacques de Noyon.

Educational Funding

If you are looking for funding as an aboriginal student, the following website should be the place where you start your search.

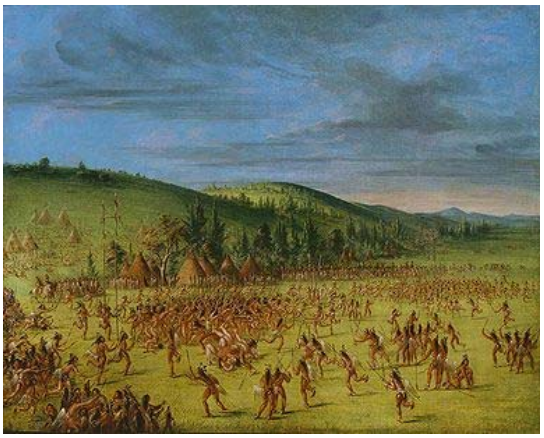
http://www.ammsa.com/community-access/scholarships/

Lacrosse

From
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_lacrosse

Lacrosse has its origins in a tribal game played by all eastern Woodlands Native Americans and by some Plains Indians tribes in what is now Canada. The game has been modernized extensively by European immigrants.

Modern lacrosse descends from and resembles games played by various Native American communities. These include games called dehuntshigwa'es in Onondaga ("men hit a rounded object"), *da-nah-wah'uwsdi* in Eastern Cherokee ("little war"), *Tewaarathon* in Mohawk language ("little brother of war"), *baaga`adowe* in Ojibwe ("bump hips") and *kabocha-toli* in Choctaw language ("stick-ball").



Traditional lacrosse games were sometimes major events that could last several days. As many as 100 to 1,000 men from opposing villages or tribes would participate. The games were played in open plains located between the two villages, and the goals could range from 500 yards (460 m) to several miles apart.

Rules for these games were decided on the day before. Generally there was no out-of-bounds, and the ball could not be touched with the hands. The goals would be selected as large rocks or trees; in later years golden posts were used. Playing time was often from sun up until sun down.

The game began with the ball being hit against the refs head and the two sides rushing to capture it. Because of the large number of players involved, these games generally tended to involve a huge mob of players swarming the ball and slowly moving across the field. Passing the ball was thought of as a trick, and it was seen as cowardly to dodge an opponent.

The medicine men acted as coaches, and the women of the tribe were usually limited to serving refreshments to the players. (There was also a women's version of lacrosse called amtahcha, which used much shorter sticks with larger heads.)

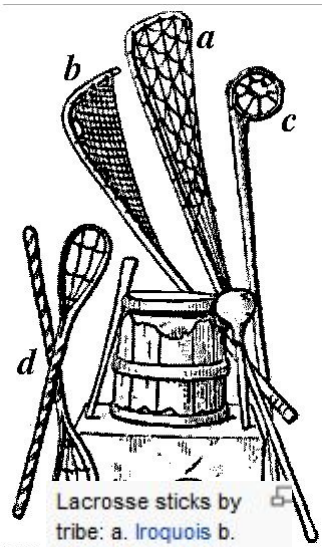
Lacrosse traditionally had many different purposes. Some games were played to settle inter-tribal disputes. This function was essential to keeping the Six Nations of the Iroquois together. Lacrosse was also played to toughen young warriors for combat, for recreation, as part of festivals, and for the bets involved. Finally, lacrosse was played for religious reasons: "for the pleasure of the Creator" and to collectively pray for something.

Pre-game rituals were very similar to rituals associated with war. Players would decorate their bodies with paint and charcoal. Players also decorated their sticks or stick racks with objects representing qualities desired in the game. Strict taboos were held on what players could eat before a game, and the medicine man performed rituals to prepare players and their sticks. The night before a game, players wore ceremonial costumes and held a special dance. Sacrifices were held, and sacred expressions were yelled to intimidate opponents.

On the day of the game, teams walked to the field and were slowed by constant rituals. One ceremony was "going to water," in which players dunked their sticks in water and the shaman gave a spiritual and strategic pep talk. Sometimes players would receive ceremonial scratches on their arms or torso.

Before the game, every player was required to place a wager. Items such as handkerchiefs, knives, trinkets, horses, and even wives and children would be at stake. The bets would be displayed on a rack near the spectators, and items would be awarded proportionally to the winner of each quarter.

When the game was over another ceremonial dance took place, along with a large feast for the hungry players.



Lacrosse sticks by tribe: a. Iroquois b. Passamaquoddy c. Chippewa d. Cherokee.

Equipment

Some early lacrosse balls were made out of wood. Others were made of deerskin stuffed with hair. They were typically three inches in diameter. The first lacrosse sticks were essentially giant wooden spoons with no netting. A more advanced type had one end bent into a 4 to 5-inch (130 mm) diameter circle, which was filled with netting. This netting was made of wattup or deer sinew. The most recent Native American sticks use a U-shape instead of a circle.

These sticks were bent into shape after being softened through steaming, and lengths typically ranged from 2 to 5 feet (1.5 m). Lacrosse sticks often had elaborate carvings on them intended to help players in the game. Lacrosse sticks were so treasured that many players requested to be buried with their stickl beside them.

Some versions of lacrosse used unusual stick designs. In the St. Lawrence Valley a version was played in which the head took up two thirds of the stick. In the Southwest a double-stick version was played with sticks about two and a half feet long.

No protective equipment was worn in traditional lacrosse.

The first westerners to encounter lacrosse were French Jesuit missionaries in the St. Lawrence Valley. During the 1630s, they witnessed the game and condemned it. They were opposed to lacrosse because it was violent, betting was involved, and it was part of the religion they sought to eradicate. Despite Jesuit opposition, many other European colonists were intrigued by lacrosse. Betting on games became common, and around 1740 many French colonists were taking up the game. However, they could not match the skill of the Native Americans.

In 1763 the Ottawas used a lacrosse game to gain entrance to Fort Michilimackinac (now Mackinac). Chief Pontiac invited the fort's British troops to watch a lacrosse game in celebration of the king's birthday. The players gradually worked their way close to the gates, and then rushed into the fort and carried out a general massacre.

In 1805 during an expedition up the Mississippi River, Continental Army officer Lt. Zebulon Pike observed a group of young Sioux and Winnebago men playing this game, or one resembling it, near the east bank of the river, in what is now west-central Wisconsin. He named the region "Prairie La Crosse", which in turn inspired the name of both the Wisconsin county and its principal city in that region. Today, two statues in the city of La Crosse (one downtown, the other along southbound US Highway 53 entering the city from the north) commemorate the game observed by Pike.

In 1834 a team of Caughnawaga Indians demonstrated lacrosse in Montreal. Although response to the demonstrations was not overwhelming, interest in lacrosse steadily grew in Canada. As lacrosse grew, opposition to its violent aspects was a major obstacle. The game was banned in some areas when, in 1900, Choctaw Indians attached lead weights to their sticks to use them as skull-crackers.

Volunteers Needed

We are actively at work creating a new website that will feature all things aboriginal. History, culture, sports, important personalities, religion, current events, anything and everything aboriginal. If you would like to contribute articles or photos please send them to omfrcinfo@gmail.com with the subject 'Aboriginal Living'. You will be given full credit as the contributor. If all you have is an idea of what you would like to see on the website, send your ideas to the same email address. We want the website to be as comprehensive as possible so that it offers something for everyone. You can help make that happen.

New Bursary

This is part of an email from one of our members: Here's the link for the "NEW! Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training (PSET) Bursary" offered for enrolled students at St. Lawrence College, Kingston. Note: This is the 1st year for this Bursary:

http://www.stlawrencecollege.ca/index.aspx?iPageID=131&iMenuID=9&iCurrID=112

Aboriginal Travels - Columbia

Copied from http://www.invitationproject.ca/listing.php?Listing=9025

Colombia, the only South American nation with coastlines on both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, is a country of beautiful colonial architecture, carved stone figures and the finest emeralds in the world. It is also one of the world's largest coffee producers. Spanish is the official language, although some indigenous tribes still use their own languages. Some words that have entered the English language, such as canoe, tobacco and hammock, come from one of these indigenous groups, the Arawak.

Here is a terrific website sent to us by Paul Allaire. Biographies and aboriginal history. http://www.canadiana.ca/citm/themes/aboriginals_e.html

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.omfrc.org

www.aboriginalstatus.org

New Submissions!

We are always looking for new interesting submissions to add to upcoming issues of the OMFRC Newsletter. If you have something you would like to add to the newsletter please call or email us! We'd be happy to consider it for an upcoming issue.

Please be patient

If you contact us, please be patient. Lynn, our administrator, was injured in an ATV accident. She has a broken rib and a broken wrist as well as numerous bruises so she is moving a little slower! We are grateful that she is able to work despite her pain. The organization would be in sad shape without her.

Rubaboo

Rubaboo was a basic stew or porridge consumed by 'coureurs des bois' and 'voyageurs' (fur traders) and Métis people of North America, traditionally made of peas or corn (or both) with grease (bear or pork) and a thickening agent (bread or flour). Pemmican and maple sugar were also commonly added to the mixture.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rubaboo

A Member Writes:

Hello Lynn and Art!
...just a little note to say THANK YOU for my Status Card! Because of your work and heart, I can now stand with pride in my Métis heritage. And moreover, I can now begin my career as a Métis composer - furthering the presence of the Métis in the Canadian music industry. Please accept my gratitude for everything you've done.
ZoD

If it is, call 1-613-332-4789 and you can do it right over the phone in just a couple of minutes.