August 2011 Issue

Feathers In The Wind

In This Issue:

The Quilt of Belonging – Delaware (Lenni Lenape)

Copied from: http://www.invitationproject.ca/listing.php?Listing=1185

This block, created by Shirley Baker, Mary C. Whiteye, and Marilyn Tobias from the Delaware Nation, Moravian of the Thames band, depicts the three clans of the Lenni Lenape (Delaware): Wolf, Turtle and Turkey. At the top is a wampum belt, and in one corner, a clothing art pattern showing a thunderbird. Wampum belts were historically created as records of agreement between Nations, or to document special events. Part of a Delaware land belt has been reproduced in purple and white wampum beads at the bottom of the block, which is bordered with traditional ribbon-work. A wide variety of materials, including leather, deer hide, wampum beads, glass beads, birch bark, turkey feathers, fur and satin ribbons were used in the creation of this piece.

The Delawares were also known as the Lenni-Lenape, which means “Original People” in their Algonquian language. They first encountered Europeans in the early 1600s. The area the Delawares lived in can today be described as the entire State of New Jersey, the eastern part of New York State (including New York City), the northern parts of Delaware and Maryland, and the eastern part of Pennsylvania. The name Delaware comes from the “English title” Sir Thomas West (governor of the Jamestown colony) carried, which was “Lord De-la-Warr”. When he named the Pennsylvania River the “Delaware River,” the Lenni-Lenape, who lived on it, became known as Delawares.

The Lenape were known as the “Grandfather” tribe among Algonquian-speaking peoples. They were well-respected as peacemakers and often called upon to mediate conflicts between other tribal groups. Their preference for peace however, did not diminish their skills as warriors, when such action was deemed necessary.

The Lenni Lenape relied heavily on agriculture for their food sources. The women planted and maintained fields--which sometimes measured over 200 acres--of corn, squash, beans, sweet potatoes, and tobacco. Traditional fare often included corn soup, corn bread, fried pickerel, and roast venison. Some traditional “social dance songs”, sung to the resonant beat of a water drum, were named after specific crops. “Social dance songs” were often shared with neighbouring tribes, but songs of a ceremonial or religious nature were never permitted to be used by other groups. Traditional social gatherings include the *Delaware Grand Council of North America Gathering, Delaware Confederacy Gathering, Fall Gatherings, Elders gatherings*, and *Pow wows*.

In the 1600 and 1700s, land sales and wars with colonials forced most of the Lenni-Lenape to move west and north; consequently they now they live in Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Kansas, Idaho, and many other states, as well as in Ontario, Canada. Today, the Lenni Lenape (Delaware) number over 20,000 people. 1,500 members live in southern Ontario in three locations: Delaware Nation, Moravian of the Thames Band, Munsee Delaware and Six Nations.

Silverfox

Raymond Silverfox, age 43, died in RCMP custody in 2008. The Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP has released its final report on his death. Raymond Silverfox was a member of the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation in the Yukon.

Silverfox had been in jail for 13 hours for "public drunkenness" before to dying of acute pneumonia and sepsis. According to the report, RCMP officers openly mocked Silverfox during his incarceration. The Yukon RCMP has expressed shock and regret over his "insensitive and callous" treatment.

A coroner's inquest into Silverfox's death heard that he had vomited 26 times in his cell but officers and guards assumed he was simply drunk. Staff did not get medical attention for him until someone noticed he was not moving around 6:30 p.m. He was taken to hospital where he died a few hours later of acute pneumonia.

The inquest also heard testimony from RCMP officers and guards who mocked and laughed at Silverfox while he lay in a pool of his own vomit and feces for hours. When Silverfox asked for a mat, a constable told him to "sleep in your own shit".

"I am shocked, as are many members of the RCMP, and disappointed that Mr. Silverfox had to endure insensitive and callous treatment while in RCMP custody," Supt. Peter Clark, the head of the RCMP in the Yukon, wrote in a statement.

The inquest panel came up with four recommendations for the RCMP, including one calling for the creation of a community consultative group to address the issue of public intoxication.

Aboriginal Travels – Ecuador

Copied from http://www.invitationproject.ca/listing.php?Listing=9030

Ecuador, named for the Equator that runs through it, is a small country on the west coast of South America. Ecologists have called Ecuador a 'mega diversity hotspot' because it is one of the most species-rich nations on earth. It is home to 300 types of mammals, 20,000 varieties of plants (including more than 4,500 orchids), 17 kinds of monkeys and over 1500 genus of birds. The Galápagos Islands are located here, and one of Earth's greatest mountain systems, the Andes, extends through the country. Ecuador is the world's largest exporter of *guineos* (yellow bananas) and is also famous for its other varieties of bananas, including *orits* (miniature bananas,) *verde* or *patanos* (cooking bananas) and *magueños* (red bananas).

The population is mainly comprised of Mestizo and several indigenous groups, including the Quichua, Shuar and Achuar. The official language is Spanish, spoken informally with family and close friends, and more formally as a sign of respect to casual acquaintances. Numerous indigenous tongues are also spoken, the most common being *Quichua*, the

Aboriginal Travels – Ecuador

(Continued from Page 2)

language of the Incas. The *Quichua* tradition of *charqui* (dried meat) has given us the English word 'jerky'. Ecuadorians are family-oriented people who treat older members with respect and kindness. Traditionally, the children stay in their parents' home until they marry. As in other South American cultures, the system of *compadrazgo*, in which *compadres* (godparents) provide, to a certain point, advice and financial support to the child plays a significant role. Ecuadorians treasure their friendships, and at gatherings, greeting everyone with a handshake, or a kiss on the cheek, is a sign of respect.

Ecuador's culture is rich and complex, and the country also possesses wonderful colonial architecture. The indigenous people are renowned for their musical ability and colourful paintings on sheep hide, which depict life in the Andes Mountains and reflect their ancient traditions. Other national crafts include embroidery, weaving, jewelry, basketry, leather work, woodcarving, and ceramics.

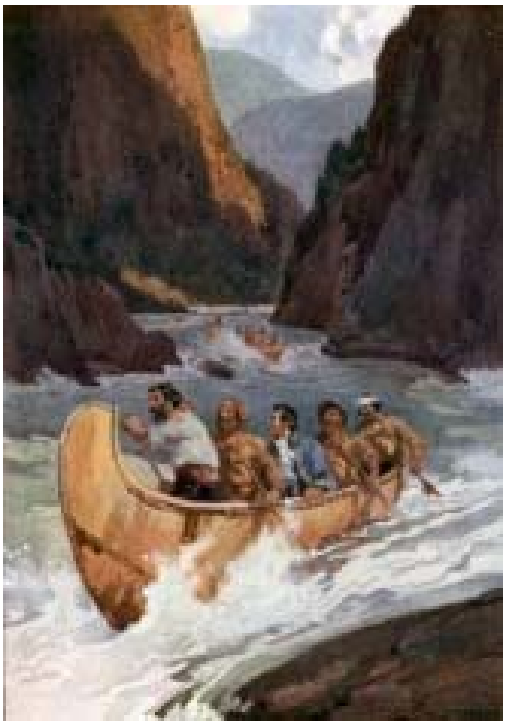
A Member Writes In:

Hi Lynn, My status card arrived in the mail today – it made my decade! I would like to thank you, and your research team, for the outstanding effort taken in helping me to identify my native heritage. I could not have done this without your organization and its dedicated group of volunteers.

Best regards,
Tim Berube

Voyageurs

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



By 1681, the French authorities realized that the coureur des bois had to be controlled so that the fur industry might remain profitable. They therefore legitimized and limited the numbers of *coureurs des bois* by establishing a system that used permits (*congés*). This legitimization created a "second-generation" coureur des bois: the voyageur, which literally means "traveller". This name change came as a result of a need for the legitimate fur traders to distance themselves from the unlicensed ones. Voyageurs held a permit or were allied with a Montreal merchant who had one.

The fur trade was thus controlled by a small number of Montreal merchants. New France also began a policy of expansion in an attempt to dominate the trade. French influence extended west, north and south. Forts and trading posts were built with the help of explorers and traders. Treaties were negotiated with native groups, and fur trading became very profitable and organized. The system became complex, and the voyageurs, many of whom

had been independent traders, slowly became hired labourers.

For the most part, voyageurs were the crews hired to man the canoes that carried trade goods and supplies to "rendezvous posts" (example: Grand Portage) where goods and supplies were exchanged for furs. The canoes travelled along well-established routes. They then transported the furs back to Lachine near Montreal. Some voyageurs stayed in the back country over the winter and transported the trade goods from the rendezvous posts to farther-away French outposts. These men were known as the *hivernants* (winterers). They also helped negotiate trade in native villages. In the spring they would carry furs from these remote outposts back to the rendezvous posts. Voyageurs also served as guides for explorers (such as Pierre La Vérendrye). The majority of these canoe men were French Canadian and/or Métis. They were usually from Island of Montreal or seigneuries and parishes along or near the St. Lawrence River. Many were from France and many were members of Native Aboriginal tribes.

The voyageurs were highly valued employees of trading companies, such as the North West Company (NWC) and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). They were instrumental in retrieving furs from all over North-America but were especially important in the rugged Athabasca region of the North-West. The Athabasca was one of the most profitable fur-trade regions in the colonies because pelts from further North were of superior quality to those trapped in more southerly locations. Originally the HBC was content to stay close to their trading posts along the shores of Hudson Bay and have their native trading partners bring the pelts to them. However, once the NWC began sending their voyageurs into the Athabasca it became easier for the natives to simply trade with them than to make the long trek to Hudson Bay.[1] As a result, Colin Robertson sent a message to the HBC London Committee in 1810 suggesting that they begin hiring French Canadian voyageurs of their own.[2] As this quote shows, he firmly believed them to be one of the keys to success in the fur trade:

I would warmly recommend to your notice the Canadians; these people I believe, are the best voyageurs in the world; they are spirited, enterprising, & extremely fond of the Country; they are easily commanded; never will you have any difficulty in setting a place with them Men; however dismal the prospect is for subsistence, they follow their Master wherever he goes.

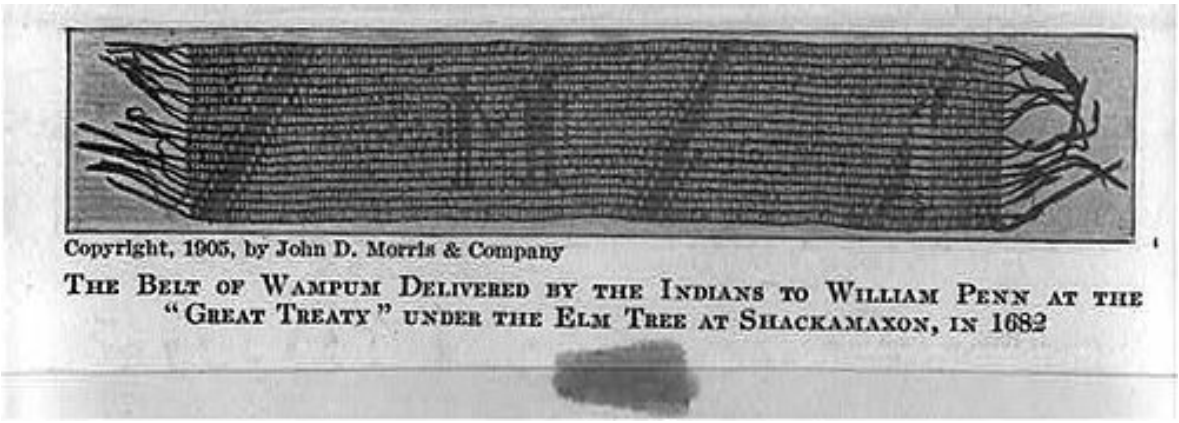
Despite this strong endorsement, it would be 1815 before the HBC took his advice and began hiring substantial numbers of French-Canadian voyageurs for trading expeditions to the Athabasca. Colin Robertson led the first of these HBC expedition to the Athabasca and claimed to have difficulty hiring voyageurs from the Montreal region because of NWC efforts to thwart him. The NWC realized how important the voyageurs were to their success and were unwilling to give them up easily. This competition for experienced labour between the HBC and the NWC created the largest demand for voyageurs in Montreal since before the merger of the XY Company and the NWC.

The voyageurs are legendary, especially in French Canada. They are folk heroes celebrated in folklore and music. The reality of their lives was that of toil. For example, they had to be able to carry two 90-pound bundles of fur over portages; more suffered from strangulated hernias than any other injury.

Voyageurs who only paddled between Montreal and Grand Portage were known as *mangeurs de lard* (pork eaters) because of their diet, much of which consisted of salt pork. This is considered to be a derogatory term. Those who overwintered and ate "off the land" (mainly fish, pemmican and rubaboo) were called *hommes du nord* (northern men) or *hivernants* (winterers). Voyageurs were expected to work 14 hours per day and paddle at a rate of 55 strokes per minute. Few could swim. Many drowned in rapids or in storms while crossing lakes. Portages and routes were often indicated by lob trees, or trees that had their branches cut off just below the top of the tree.

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

Wampum are traditional, sacred shell beads of Eastern Woodlands tribes. They include the white shell beads fashioned from the North Atlantic channeled whelk shell; and the white and purple beads made from the quahog, or Western North Atlantic hard-shelled clam. Woven belts of wampum have been created to commemorate treaties or historical events, and for exchange in personal social transactions, such as marriages.



The term initially referred to only the white beads, which are made of the inner spiral, or columella, of the Channeled whelk shell, *Busycotypus canaliculatus* or *Busycotypus carica*. *Sewant* or *suckauhock* beads are the black or purple shell beads made from the quahog or poquahock clamshell, Mercenaria mercenaria. Common terms for the dark and white beads, often confused, are *wampi* (white) and *saki* (dark).
The white beads are made from the inner spiral of the channeled whelk shell.
In the area of present New York Bay, the clams and whelks used for making wampum are found only along Long Island Sound and Narragansett Bay. The Lenape name for Long Island is *Sewanacky*, reflecting its connection to the dark wampum.

Typically wampum beads are tubular in shape, often a quarter of an inch long and an eighth inch wide. One 17th-century Seneca wampum belt featured beads almost 2.5 inches (65 mm) long Women artisans traditionally made wampum beads by rounding small pieces of the shells of whelks, then piercing them with a hole before stringing them.

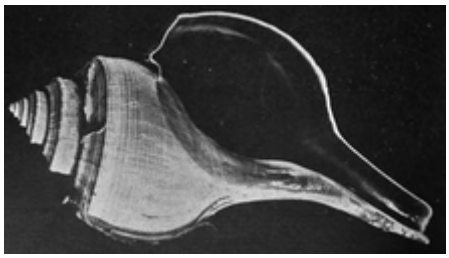
Wooden pump drills with quartz drill bits and steatite weights were used to drill the shells. The unfinished beads would be strung together and rolled on a grinding stone with water and sand, until they were smooth. The beads would be strung or woven on deer hide thongs, sinew, milkweed bast, or basswood fibers.

The term "wampum" may be derived from the Wampanoag word, *Wampumpeag*, which means white shell beads. Variations of the word include the Maliseet word, *Wapapiyik* meaning "white-strings [of beads]"; the Ojibwe word, *Waabaabiinyag,* or "white-strings [of beads]"; Proto-Algonquian **wa·p-a·py-aki*, "white-strings [of beads]."

In New York, wampum beads have been discovered that date from before 1510. The Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace, the founding constitution of the Iroquois Confederacy, was codified in a series of wampum belts, now held by the Onondaga Nation. The oral history of the Haudenosaunee says that Ayenwatha, a cannibal who was reformed by the Great Peacemaker, invented wampum to comfort himself. The Peacemaker uses wampum to record and relay messages. The League of the Iroquois was founded, according to some estimates, in 1142. Others place its origin as likely in the 15th or 16th centuries.

Upon discovering the importance of wampum as a unit of exchange among tribes, Dutch colonists mass-produced wampum in workshops. John Campbell established such a factory in Passaic, New Jersey, which manufactured wampum into the early 20th century.

Wampum is used to mark exchanges for engagement, marriage, and betrothal agreements, as well as for ceremony and condolence ceremonies. In earlier centuries, Lenape girls would wear wampum to show their eligibility for marriage. After marriage had been arranged, a Lenape suitor would give his fiancé and her family gifts of wampum.



Perhaps because of its origin as a memory aid, loose beads were not considered to be high in value. Rather it is the belts in total that are wampum. Belts of wampum were not produced until after European contact. A typically large belt of six feet (2 m) in length might contain 6000 beads or more. More importantly, such a belt would be very sacred, as it contained so many memories. Wampum belts were used as a memory aid in Oral tradition, where the wampum was a token representing a memory. Belts were also sometimes used as badges of office or as ceremonial devices of indigenous culture, such as the Iroquois. They were traded widely to tribes in Canada, the Great Lakes region, and the mid-Atlantic.

When Europeans came to the Americas, they realized the importance of wampum to Native people. While the Native people did not use it as money, the New England colonies used it as a medium of exchange. Soon, they were trading with the native peoples of New England and New York using wampum. The New England colonies demonetized wampum in 1663. Meanwhile it continued as currency in New York at the rate of eight white or four black wampum equalling one stuiver until 1673. The colonial government issued a proclamation setting the rate at six white or three black to one penny. This proclamation also applied in New Jersey and Delaware. The black shells were considered worth more than the white shells, which led people to dye the latter, and diluted the value of the shells. The ultimate basis for their value was their redeemability for pelts from the Native Americans. As Native Americans became reluctant to exchange pelts for the shells, the shells lost value.

Their use as common currency was phased out in New York by the early 18th century. Shinnecock oral history ascribed the wampum market demise to a deadly red tide that decimated the whelk and quahog populations.

With stone tools, the process to make wampum was labor intensive. Only the coastal nations had sufficient access to the basic shells to make wampum. These factors increased its scarcity and consequent value among the European traders. Dutch colonists began to manufacture wampum and eventually the primary source of wampum was that manufactured by colonists, a market the Dutch glutted.

Writing about tribes in Virginia in 1705, Robert Beverley, Jr. of Virginia Colony describes *peak* as referring to the white shell bead, valued at 9 pence a yard, and *wampom peak* as denoting specifically the more expensive dark purple shell bead, at the rate of 18 pence per yard. He says that these polished shells with drilled holes are made from the cunk (conch), while another currency of lesser value, called *roenoke* was fashioned from the cockleshell.

If We Call a Spade a Spade, Why Not Call an Indian an Indian?

from Loyalist Trails newsletter July 3, 2011

Sir: I have been receiving and reading these newsletters [Loyalist Trails] for a few years now and one thing always bugs me; that is, the term First Nations when referring to the North American Indians. A very large percentage of us grew up being Indians, knowing we were Indians and continuing to be Indians, yet the non-native population calls us First Nations. There was no term like that in the past and I personally believe your news articles should use the names of the Indian Nations of the period for authenticity, just like the attire and weapons used in the re-created battles which take place periodically.

Fr. Douglas Whitlow BA, Six Nations of the Grand River

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We're on the Web!

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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.

Robert Timmons

"Artist, Grass-Roots Activist, Animal Rights Advocate, Bob is the *Artist for the Ocean* and through his powerful awareness- art exposes stories of worldwide marine animal decline and abuse, and critical issues of ocean health. He leads, organizes and documents street demonstrations, marches, and grass-roots protests, and through multi-media brings these events to a wider global audience. He is a fearless, vocal advocate for animals everywhere. Bob also combines the arts and sciences in his advocacy; as an environmental sciences graduate he integrates knowledge and passion in his writings, paintings, campaigns, and public outreach. Bob is a true ocean warrior."

Bob is a member of the OMFRC.
Visit his website at http://www.bobtimmons.org

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