September 2011 Issue

Feathers In The Wind

In This Issue:

The Quilt of Belonging – Dakota

Copied from: http://www.invitationproject.ca/listing.php?Listing=1305

Wendy Whitecloud, a law professor at the University of Manitoba, produced the Dakota block from a design her good friend, Rainey Gaywish, created. Rainey, who also supplied the beads and materials for the piece, based the design on an historic Eastern Dakota (Sioux) pipe-bag pattern from the mid-1800s. It begins with a foundation in black and white beading that shows the duality of life for Dakota people; past and present, male and female. The *mandala* represents the circle of all life, the four directions of the universe, and the Dakota people's belief that all animate or inanimate forms are their relatives. The stylized flowers, a traditional pattern that would have been created in quillwork before the availability of beads, are based on typical eastern Prairies flora.

The Dakota--at one time also known as the Santee Sioux--are, along with the Lakota and Nakota, a branch of the Sioux Nation. *Dakota* is a Sioux dialect and the names Dakota, Lakota and Nakota mean "those who consider themselves kindred." Collectively, they were the *Oyate*, "the people." Oral histories retained by some of the elders provide a better understanding of the complexities of *Oyate* tribal and family relationships. Kinship is an important value in Dakota culture and the way by which Dakota understand their place of belonging as members of the *Oyate*.

The immediate family is *Tiwahe*, the extended family is referred to as *Tiospaye*, and the band, a group of inter-connected extended families, is called *Ospaye*. The Dakota Sioux were pushed onto the plain, into the area now known as Minnesota, from the woodlands east of the Missouri River. They adapted to a nomadic plains lifestyle that depended largely on the buffalo for everything from tipi covers to clothing, from tools and utensils made of bone to water bags made from buffalo bladder or stomach. The women would decorate their family's clothing with a variety of different objects, including Buffalo teeth, which made wonderful tinkling sounds when attached to fringes. Porcupine quills were dyed and used to create beautiful and symbolic designs.

Quillwork was considered an art form requiring years of practice before one could be considered an expert. When European beads began to circulate amongst the people, they quickly mastered the art of beadwork and simple designs grew ever more complex. The designs are rich in meaning and often record family or personal histories. As white settlers began to push further westward, the Dakota moved into the Dakota Territory.

They originally crossed into Manitoba, Canada from the United States during the 1860s when their traditional way of life became threatened. In 1875 they were granted two reserve areas at Oak River and Birdtail Creek. Later, in 1886, a reserve area was surveyed at Turtle Mountain, but remained unconfirmed until 1913. Today, Dakota descendents live mostly on reserves in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Many of the bands belong to the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council.

The Mi'kmaq Concordat

This was copied from http://hrsbstaff.ednet.ns.ca/engramr/1_concordat.pdf
This link was sent to us by our friend Paul Allaire

Mi'kmaq Spirituality and the Concordat of 1610

Concordat: a type of treaty which regulates church affairs, signed between the Pope and a government.

For the Mi'kmaq people, government, politics, economy and spirituality are all united. Therefore, the Grand Council has responsibility for the spiritual well-being of the Mi'kmaq people. Many of these spiritual responsibilities are connected with the practice of Roman Catholicism among the Mi'kmaq, including, for example, the celebrations at Chapel Island on the Feast of St. Ann each July. In fact, since 1610, when Grand Chief Membertou was baptized at Port Royal by Father Jessé Fléché, the Mi'kmaq Nation has had a special relationship with the Church. This relationship was spelled out in a concordat, or treaty, between the Grand Council and the Pope, in which the Mi'kmaq agreed to protect priests and French Catholic settlers and the Church granted certain religious authority to the Mi'kmaq Nation. Because an agreement of this kind is signed only by a national government, the Concordat affirmed Mi'kmaq sovereignty, and Roman Catholicism became the Mi'kmaq state religion.

The Concordat was recorded on a great wampum belt. On it, the Church is represented by crossed keys (the symbol of the Holy See), a church, and a line from the Gospels written in Mi'kmaq hieroglyphics. (These hieroglyphics, a form of picture writing, were developed by a priest from a system already in use by the Mi'kmaq. He used them to teach catechism and other religious subjects. This has remained their principal use up until the present, although at times they were used for non-religious writing.) The Grand Council is represented by crossed lances, an armed captain, a pipe and arrow, and seven hills (symbolizing the seven districts of Mi'kmaq territory). In the centre of the belt there is a picture of a chief and a priest holding a cross together; the chief has a Bible in his hand.

Read more at http://hrsbstaff.ednet.ns.ca/engramr/1_concordat.pdf

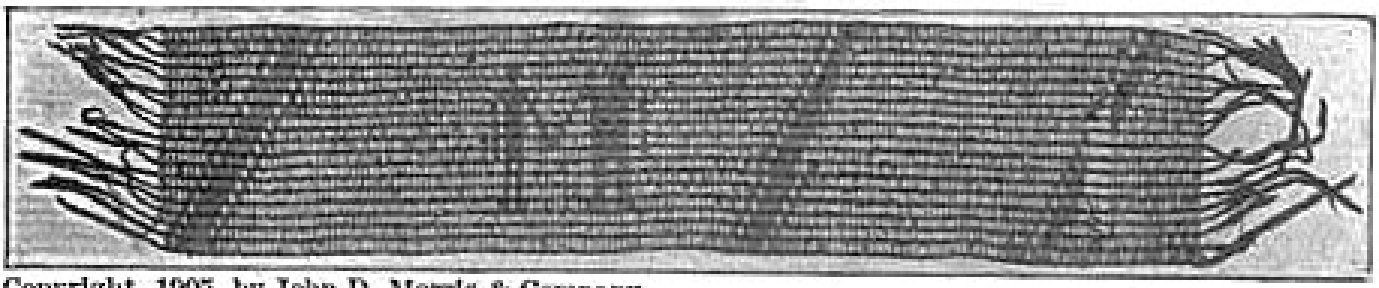
Design of the great wampum belt recording the Concordat.

Tercentenary certificate commemorating the Concordat. *Souvenir of the Micmac Tercentenary Celebration*

Wampum

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.



Copyright, 1905, by John D. Morris & Company

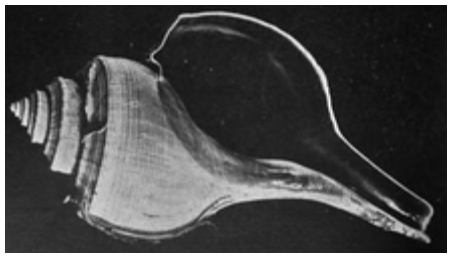
THE BELT OF WAMPUM DELIVERED BY THE INDIANS TO WILLIAM PENN AT THE "GREAT TREATY" UNDER THE ELM TREE AT SHACKAMAXON, IN 1682

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.

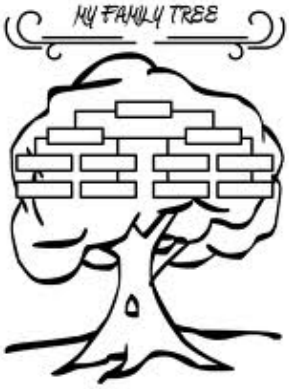
With stone tools, the process to make wampum was labor intensive. Only the coastal nations had sufficient access to the basic shells to make wampum. These factors increased its scarcity and consequent value among the European traders. Dutch colonists began to manufacture wampum and eventually the primary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

Quahog and whelk wampum made by Elizabeth James Perry (Aquinnah Wampanoag/Eastern Band Cherokee), c. 2009

Where are my roots?

To begin searching your family tree, start at the beginning. Ask your parents for information, like names of their parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, grandparents, great-grandparents, etc… who were they, what they did for a living, where were they from, when were they born, when and how did they die, their religion, their parish, where they were buried, is there a history attached to them. Do not forget the old photos and the identity of the people in the photos, and where and when the photos were taken. If your grand-parents are alive, have them talk about their past, their families, anything unusual or historical, old photos; and see where the information leads you. You can do research at your library, at your local history & genealogy center, and most of all use the web. There are numerous "Name" Associations ("SEGUIN" for example) that have family trees documented in book form, or on a CD. Your resources are endless. Share your information with others. . Research names in your family tree by entering them on the web, and see where it leads you. If the family was from a certain area, research that area.



Gather, photocopy, print, write down all your information, then categorize and organize it. Learn the glossary of terms and phrases related to ancestors. Start your pedigree charts; print them off the web. You can go back as far as the 1600's when settlers navigated the waters to North America. Start looking for possible native or metis in the family tree. There are websites like Quebec Culture, Metis Culture, New France Culture, Acadian Websites; the list is endless. Use Canadian Genealogy and Quebec Genealogy on the web. Play detective and have fun with it.

My family tree continues to be a work in progress. Thanks to my mother, Juliette, who has a wonderful memory, I was able to get plenty of information and documentation. She told me there was metis in the family tree and through research, I discovered she was right.

My spirituality has guided me to my purpose, my ancestral roots. For me genealogy has become a passion. With the help of my spiritual guides, Chief Red Cloud and Chief Black Bear, I have had good success.

Colette Hadley

Editor's Note: Colette is one of our most successful family researchers.

Francophone

As the OMFRC grew into a national, then an international membership, it became apparent that a website for Francophone individuals was needed. One of our members, Paul Gauthier, took on the tedious task of translating our website into French. Paul has now completed this work and the website will go online as soon as we work out the communications related issues. Merci Paul. Our biggest problem is that none of our staff speak French. If you are willing to answer phone calls and/or emails in French we would love to hear from you. omfrcinfo@gmail.com

Most Interesting News:

The damage wrought by the global economic crisis as a result of **collapsing credit systems**. If a credit crisis can do this to the world's economy in one year, think of what a 130-year credit crisis would feel like. That is precisely what First Nations people and communities have faced since the 1876 Indian Act."

This article is reprinted from the newsletter of Ripple Effects Ltd. The Aboriginal (First Nations, Métis & Inuit) Awareness Training Company. www.ripplefx.ca

Aboriginal Travels – Panama

Copied from
http://www.invitationproject.ca/listing.php?Listing=6040

Panama's arched shape reflects both its role as a bridge between two continents and a passageway between two oceans. Located on a narrow strip of land that connects North and Central America to South America, the country is bisected by the famous Panama Canal, which joins the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, earning it the title of 'crossroads of the world.' The canal, completed in 1914, stretches 80 km from Panama City on the Pacific coast to Colón on the Atlantic side; over 12,000 ocean-going vessels pass through it each year. An engineering marvel, the canal played not only a vital role in Panama's history, but was, and continues to be, one of the most significant waterways in the world. Construction of the canal brought more than 150,000 immigrants to Panama, changing the country's ethnic and cultural composition. Approximately 70 percent of the population is *mestizos* (mixed European and Native American descent) or *mulattoes* (European and African heritage). The official language of the country is Spanish, although English is widely spoken as well.

Panamanian culture stems mainly from European musical, artistic and literary traditions brought by the Spanish, but African and Native American influences have been added into the mix, which has resulted in cultural forms unique to Panama. The *tamborito* (traditional dance), is descended from Spanish customs but incorporates native rhythms, themes and steps. Rural culture, in which folk songs and handicrafts are preserved, contrasts with urban culture. National crafts include gold and silver jewelry, wood and soapstone carving, weaving, ceramics and multi-coloured pottery. The historic district of Panama City, well-known for its colonial architecture dating back to the 17th century, was designated a World Heritage site in 1997.

First Nations Films

Order films on DVD (prices range from $99 to $149)
http://www.firstnationsfilms.com

Life on the Reserve (real stories)
Venado (Deer) (survival)
Deception of Freedom (law)
The Medicine Wheel (spirituality)
Sacred Buffalo People (culture)
Medicine People (ceremonies)
Whose Land is This? (settlement)
The Pipe Makers (making the pipe)
Making Treaties (land settlement)
The Storytellers (truth and honour)
Role Models (inspiration)
The Storytellers (truth and honour)
Beat of the Drum (native music)
Kinja Iakaha (from Brazil)
Native Women: Politics (history)
Echoes of the Sisters (cancer)
Reclaiming Our Children (wellness)
Indianer (honouring First Nations)
The Residential Schools (other side)
Indianer (honouring First Nations)
Living in Two Worlds (old and new)
HIV - If There's a Will ..(native)
Sleep dancer (a dramatic journey)
Vanishing Links (returning)

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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.

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

It does not require many words to speak the truth.
Chief Joseph, Nez Percé

What's wrong with a hug?

At the end of a talking or healing circle it is customary to hug other members as a way of ending the event on a positive note. Some Elders are quite adamant about this exercise.

I have heard of two problems with hugging. First, some people go to these circles who have been the victims of sexual or physical abuse. They may be uncomfortable with such repeated physical contact and may avoid healing circles to avoid the physical contact.

Secondly, we are inviting more and more people from other cultures into our circles because the teachings are universal. Some Muslim women attend these gatherings. It is forbidden for a non-related man to touch, let alone hug, a Muslim woman.

Some Elders suggest eliminating hugging as a solution to these two problems. I think that is a serious error. Exceptions can be made in such cases rather than changing tradition to satisfy a few. I consider smudging a religious ceremony. I wouldn't dream of walking into a Catholic or Anglican church and expecting them to change to suit my preferences.

Smudging

For those who don't know, smudging is the act of cleansing/purification through the use of burning sweetgrass, usually in braided form, or sage, held in an abalone shell or a small clay pot.

With your hands, you wash the smoke over your head and body as you silently reflect upon yourself, your actions, and your place in the world. Most of Canada's First Nations practice some form of this spiritual and honored tradition.