**Belonging and Belongings:
Ethnographic Collecting and Indigenous Agency
at the Six Nations of the Grand River**

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Cultural Mediations

**Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario**

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ISBN: 978-0-494-94551-3

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ISBN: 978-0-494-94551-3

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is about objects collected from the Six Nations of the Grand River in the late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, and the contexts surrounding their collection. I argue that for Onkwehonwe community members, collaborating in Western practices of collecting could serve as a strategy for preserving connections to their history for themselves and for future generations. I also suggest that this strategy was a means by which the community asserted a sense of their own place within modernity.

I draw on the writing of Susan Stanford Friedman, Marshall Berman and others to define modernity as a relational phenomenon, enmeshed with colonialism. Drawing upon the critical literature on early twentieth-century ethnographic work developed by anthropologists and scholars of cultural studies, I then discuss relationships formed between the Six Nations community and anthropologists during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in order to highlight how collecting emerged as a point of shared interest for both groups. Next, I explore this topic through four case studies, each built around a specific object or set of objects collected from the Six Nations of the Grand River: a lacrosse stick, a wooden ladle, a beaded picture frame and two pairs of cornhusk dolls. Together, the case studies illustrate how collecting has been one way for the Six Nations community to maintain a sense of cohesiveness despite varying geographic backgrounds, splintered political and religious affiliations, and other disconnections resulting from colonialism.

Although a historical study, my approach is interdisciplinary. I draw on methodological techniques from microhistory and material history, and theoretical

literature about objects and materiality from the field of anthropology supports my use of objects as entry points into ways of knowing the past, or as heuristics. Third, the concept of agency emerges in my case studies in two different ways. The first relates to how collecting was a way for Six Nations Onkwehonwe to preserve connections to their history, and to assert their presence, on their own terms, within modernity. The second relates to the agency of objects, or their ability to have an impact upon people or contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The unwavering faith and good humor of my thesis advisor, Ruth B. Phillips, has been crucial to the formation and completion of this dissertation. Heidi Bohaker gently encouraged me to pursue a research topic close to my heart and offered continual support. Many discussions with Brian McKillop inspired me along the way and I am grateful for his willingness to read this manuscript in its earlier, less comprehensible, incarnations. Similarly, my thesis would not be what it is without Frances Slaney's keen editorial and theoretical suggestions.

My interest in museum collections grew into a passion in 2007 during my first research trip with the Great Lakes Research Alliance for the Study of Aboriginal Arts and Cultures (GRASAC). Hours spent in museum storage spaces with too many people to name individually taught me about the value of collaborative research and looking closely at objects. My participation in the 2009 Smithsonian Summer Institute in Museum Anthropology (SIMA) helped to shape my project in its earlier stages, particularly the section on cornhusk dolls. The 2010 Otsego Institute in Native American Art History pushed me to reflect on the relationships between value and knowledge production. At the Woodland Cultural Centre, Judy Harris graciously taught me about material from Six Nations, while Paula Whitlow and Janis Monture made it possible for me to spend valuable time with the objects and archives. Judy Hall allowed an earnest graduate student the time and freedom needed to work closely with material at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, as did archivists Benoit Theriault and Jonathan Wise.

I am grateful to acknowledge financial support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and The Grand River Post Secondary Education Office. As well, Carleton University's Institute for Comparative Studies in Literature, Art and Culture generously funded my participation in several conferences throughout my doctoral studies. The completion of this thesis, however, is largely the result of moral support from friends, colleagues, and family. I owe thanks to Alan Corbiere, Anne DeStecher, Heather Igloliorte, Crystal Migwans, Polly Nordstrand, Glora Bell, and Stephanie Pyne for conversations that gave me the confidence to see this project through. Shangeetha Jeyamanohar's editorial assistance and pointed questions enabled me to clarify key sections of my dissertation. As well, Steve Rifkin's close reading of later drafts was eminently helpful. Finally, thank you to those who have reminded me of the bigger picture throughout this journey.

PREFACE

Written history represents a self-conscious effort to establish the meaning of experience for the present and is subtly and unpredictably coloured by the milieu in which the historian lives. The concerns and preconceptions of his own world constantly interject themselves into the complex dialogue between the living and the dead.

- Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History*, 1976.

Searching the internal database of the National Museum of the American Indian for items catalogued as from “Six Nations” will result in a list of about 553 objects.¹

Objects from Six Nations can also be found at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Quebec, and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Ontario. In addition to the substantial collections of Six Nations material in museums across North America and beyond, the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford, Ontario, associated with the Six Nations of the Grand River, holds its own material from the community. These institutions may have other items from Six Nations, as well, labelled as “Iroquois,” or “Northeastern North American,” or misattributed to another place entirely.

If you are fortunate enough to visit a museum storage facility that has a shelf labeled “Six Nations of the Grand River,” here is what you might see: leggings of blue, red, or black woolen broadcloth decorated along the bottom edges and sides with curvilinear designs in small white seed beads, with the occasional use of coloured beads. Red woolen finger-woven sashes with white bead inlay of zigzags and diamond shapes. Headdresses with feathers attached to velvet caps or bands,

¹ This estimate was accurate as of 2010.

some of which might be decorated with colourful beadwork. Beaded bags, pincushions, picture frames, birds, and other ‘whimsies’ made for the Victorian souvenir trade.² Cornhusk dolls, often in male/female pairs, dressed in the style of traditional Longhouse clothing. Hats made of braided straw or cornhusk. Carved items such as cradleboards, wooden paddles, spoons, bowls, clubs, snowsnakes, lacrosse sticks, small round pebble-like balls from a peach stone game. Woven baskets of various shapes and sizes.

And then there are the items that you may not see, especially if you are in a North American museum. *Gah-goh-sah*, or medicine masks, wampum belts, cornhusk masks, turtle rattles, gourd rattles, carved miniatures, for example. These, and other items, are often placed in special storage areas, accessible only to the museum staff who care for them, or to members of the Onkwehonwe community who have special permission to view them.

Throughout my years as a doctoral student, I had several opportunities to visit museum storerooms and view collections. As a research assistant with the Great Lakes Research Alliance for the Study of Aboriginal Arts and Cultures (GRASAC), I was part of a team that looked closely at Northeastern Woodlands items in the British Museum, Pitt Rivers Museum, Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Toronto’s Royal Ontario Museum, the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, and the Woodland Cultural Centre. As a participant in the Smithsonian’s Inaugural Summer Institute in Museum Anthropology, in 2009, I viewed the large collection of Onkwehonwe material at the

² See Beverly Gordon, "The Niagara Falls Whimsey: The Object as Symbol of Cultural Interface," (PhD Diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1984).

National Museum of Natural History. A Visiting Student Fellowship at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian granted me access to view and work closely with beaded leggings and other material collected from the Six Nations of the Grand River. At the Otsego Institute for Native American Art History, I saw Onkwehonwe material in the Thaw Collection, including a number of finely beaded bags and delicate cornhusk dolls.

Viewing shelf after shelf of materials collected from Six Nations, I sensed that the professional collectors who visited the community must have approached their fieldwork with intensity and enthusiasm. I wanted to know more about how the objects that they collected came to arrive in their current surroundings. I began to imagine the circumstances and the stories lying behind the objects' travels from the Six Nations community to the museum shelves. What ways of thinking, what processes of interpretation, what attributions of meaning were used to justify these objects' *belonging here*, on a shelf labeled "Six Nations of the Grand River"?

This dissertation began from these questions. Taking several objects found on the shelves of museum collections as starting points, it seeks to explore what museum collections can tell about the myriad forces -- political, economic, and ideological -- guiding the creation and collecting of material culture at the Six Nations of the Grand River in the late-nineteenth century to mid-twentieth century. In attempting to re-situate selected objects within the historical contexts from which they emerged, I have identified ways in which the biographies of objects collected from Six Nations reveal complex negotiations with constructions of authenticity, social dynamics of the Six Nations community, and modernity. At the centre of the

whirling, dynamic cloud within which the stories all find themselves, is the question of belonging.

In the following quotation, Onkwehonwe (Onondaga) faithkeeper Oren Lyons expresses how questions of identity emerge from Aboriginal engagements with modernity:

It is a fact that a small group of people in the northeast have survived an onslaught for some 490 years. They continue their original manner of government. They also drive cars, have televisions, and ride on planes. We make the bridges that you cross over and build the buildings you live in. So, what are we?³

This question, which points to the ways in which the lived experience of Aboriginal people tends to defy strict binary definitions of traditional/modern, or traditionalist/assimilated, also emerges in relation to Aboriginal material culture.

Consider Deborah Doxdator's observation:

We as Native people often find ourselves talking about ancient traditions and the importance of protecting them, yet I've always wondered what really is 'traditional' and in need of 'regeneration' and 'preservation' in the first place. Ribbon shirts, fancy baskets and trade silver are often deemed to be aspects of traditional Rotiononhsyonni culture, yet all of these are expressions which have come to being as a result of contact with Europeans.⁴

Such questions as, "So what are we?" and "What about us is really traditional?" whether asked about a people or the cultural objects they have made, share a common problem of belonging. They allude to a question of how people and things come to belong. Oren Lyon's own answer to his question offers a perspective that opens up

³ Oren Lyons, comments at a conference on Indian Self-Rule, Institute of the American West, Sun Valley, Idaho, 1983. Quoted in "Traditionalism and the Reassertion of Indianness," in *Indian Self-Rule: First-Hand Accounts of Indian-White Relations from Roosevelt to Regan*, ed. Kenneth R. Philip (Salt Lake City: Howe Brothers, 1986), 245.

⁴ Deborah Doxdator, "Basket, Bead and Quill, and the Making of 'Traditional' Art," in *Basket, Bead and Quill* (Thunder Bay Art Gallery, 1996), 12.

the possibility for inclusion: “Are we traditionalists or are we assimilated? If you can get away from your categories and definitions, you will perceive us as a living and continuing society.”⁵

The question of belonging came up during my interview with Onondaga photo-based artist Jeff Thomas. Thomas has drawn upon archival material and photographs in his artistic work, exploring constructions of Indianness and his own relationship to the Six Nations community. While talking about how museum collections could be useful for Indigenous people today, the subject of interpretation came up. Thomas emphasized the importance of how we see objects, asking, “where does it depart from . . . the gaze to looking at it in a critical way?” He explained how working with collections can involve “extracting what you need from those objects or that collection.” And then, you can “apply it to your life.”⁶

My desire to study how objects collected from Six Nations have connected people to each other and to the past is, in part, motivated by absences that exist in historical knowledge about ethnographic collecting, and collecting in general. Yet, it is also a reflection of questions growing from my own life. I am a member of the Six Nations Upper Cayuga band, but I was not raised with a connection to the Six Nations community, nor do I have strong ties to the community today. For most of my childhood I knew nothing of my Onkwehonwne heritage. My father, whose father was from Six Nations, only told my brother and me of this heritage when we were teenagers. We never met our grandfather.

⁵ Lyons, 1983.

⁶ Jeff Thomas, interview with the author, September 2011.

I have come to understand my father's decision to hide this from us as arising from a sense of shame: he was concerned about how others might treat us if they found out about our background. This was confusing, but has been productive in leading me to study Onkwehonwe history and, more generally, dynamics of colonialism and knowledge production. Though I have come to accept the fractures in my own personal history, and my father's, as in part a legacy of colonization, the feeling of having an absence of knowledge about my Aboriginal ancestry has been and remains a sensitive issue for me.

Since my identity fits uncomfortably within existing categories of Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal, the question of whether or not I belong as a member of the Six Nations of the Grand River community has emerged numerous times while completing this dissertation. I have wondered, for example, how it is that some people find a sense of belonging and not others do not. Upon reflection, I realized a form of this question was central in my study of Onkwehonwe material culture: How and why did some things, and not others, come to be collected, classified, and understood as belonging to the people at Six Nations, while others were not? And who, or what, has shaped these choices?

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about objects collected from the Six Nations of the Grand River in the late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, and the contexts surrounding their collection. I argue that for Onkwehonwe community members, collaborating in Western practices of collecting could serve as a strategy for preserving connections to their history for themselves and for future generations.¹ I also suggest that this strategy was a means by which the community asserted a sense of their own place within modernity. I explore this topic through four case studies, each built around a specific object or set of objects collected from the Six Nations of the Grand River: a lacrosse stick, a wooden ladle, a beaded picture frame and two pairs of cornhusk dolls. I will describe and explore how material culture was a nexus around which various competing notions about the nature and vitality of Onkwehonwe culture and its future directions were expressed, illustrated and produced. The case studies, I argue, reveal how the Six Nations community maintained a sense of cohesiveness through the preservation of cultural knowledge despite varying geographic backgrounds and splintered political and religious affiliations. Collecting was one way in which this knowledge was preserved.

These objects were chosen because their presence in collections speaks to the community's agency in processes of collecting. They attest to the complexity in Onkwehonwe history. They trouble boundaries between settlers and Onkwehonwe, and between communities living at Six Nations. The histories also illustrate the agency of objects themselves in generating connections to Onkwehonwe history, and

¹ *Haudenosaunee* or *Iroquois* are terms also used to describe this community. See "A Note on Terminology," Appendix 1.

between Onkwehonwe people over time. In this sense, I frame my argument as a historical intervention in the present. In other words, I see the construction of historical narratives through the interpretation of objects as part of an ongoing project of re-activating material culture so that it can continue to generate meanings significant for people who are heirs to traditions that are both “Onkwehonwe” and “non-Onkwehonwe.”

FRAMEWORK

Three main tenets frame my approach. First, my decision to build case studies is informed by methodological techniques from microhistory and the related field of material history. Second, I draw on theoretical literature about objects and materiality from the field of anthropology to support my use of objects as sources. Third, within this literature, I focus on theories that deal with questions of agency – of both people and objects, and the relationship between the two.

Microhistory and Material History

My dissertation employs a micro-historical approach: I focus on single objects – a lacrosse stick, a wooden ladle, a beaded picture frame, and two pairs of cornhusk dolls – and on individuals living in one Onkwehonwe community in a specific geopolitical location.² As Jill Lepore has argued, the popularity of microhistory has grown in reaction to social science-based histories that privilege quantitative research

² Jill Lepore, “Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography,” *The Journal of American History* 88, 1 (Jun., 2001), 131.

and the way in which this methodology tends to generalize its subject matter.³ In contrast, microhistory sheds light on the past by focusing on the details of individual experiences and relationships. Microhistory has been particularly useful to scholars who study the history of minority and/or marginalized groups within a society because the focus on the individual allows the historian to capture a sense of lived experience that is normally hidden from outsiders. In particular, it illuminates the effects of oppressive systems on various groups, and how they have exercised agency to navigate or breach such barriers.⁴

In keeping within the limitation of microhistory, I do not aim to build a complete picture of this community's past. Rather, I use the details that are knowable and relevant to offer "an allegory for broader issues affecting the culture as a whole."⁵ My method of using objects as a way of understanding the human agents who collected, exchanged and repositioned them, however, is also grounded in material history. Like visual studies, the anthropology of art and critical museology, material history has grown from disciplinary exchanges and a growing scholarly interest in material culture.⁶ Though its roots extend into nineteenth century ethnographic

³ For a discussion about the limits of quantitative approaches to history, see Roderick Floud, "Quantitative History and People's History: Two Methods in Conflict?" *History Workshop*, No. 17 (Spring, 1984), 113-124; Gilbert Shapiro and John Markoff, "The Incidence of the Terror: Some Lessons for Quantitative History," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Winter, 1975): 193-218.

⁴ Sigurdur Gylfi Magnusson, "What is Microhistory?" <http://hnn.us/articles/23720.html> [accessed 01 Feb 2013]

⁵ Lepore, 133.

⁶ A.B. McKillop, "Disciplinary Tribes and Territories: Alliances and Skirmishes between Anthropology and History," in *Historicizing Canadian Anthropology*, eds. Julia Harrison and Regna Darnell (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006): 27. Examples of this wider scholarly engagement with material culture include Christopher Tilley, *Handbook of Material Culture* (London: SAGE Publications, 2006); Howard Morphy and Marcus Banks, *Rethinking Visual Anthropology* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1997); Ruth B. Phillips, "The Value of Disciplinary Difference: Reflections on Art

studies and classifications of technologies, such as those undertaken by the ethnologists of the Bureau of American Ethnology, material culture studies came into its own through the disciplines of British anthropology and archaeology during the “cultural turn” of the 1980s and 1990s.⁷ This new formulation of material culture studies refers, as Dan Hicks writes, not to a unidisciplinary approach, but to “a set of research practices” that interrogate the material world to answer questions about people, cultures and change over time.⁸ The term “material history” can refer both to a history of specific objects or types of objects, leading to a historiography that “relates to material change,” as well as to the practice of using material culture to investigate the historical questions about person, place or community.⁹ In my thesis, I engage with material history in both ways. I am interested in the histories of object types, and I also use material culture as a source for entering into historical events and contexts related to the Six Nations community and its engagement with the practice of collecting.

History and Anthropology at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century,” in *Anthropologies of Art*, ed. Manet Ubsteiwan (New Haven: Yale UP, 2004).

⁷ Curtis M. Hinsley, *The Smithsonian and the American Indian: Making a Moral Anthropology in Victorian America* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian University Press, 1981); Dan Hicks, “The Material Cultural Turn: Effect and Event,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, ed. Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 25-6.

⁸ Hicks, 47.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

Objects: Biography, Hybridity, and Exchange

My use of material culture is informed by other studies that have found objects to be useful starting points for histories that complicate dominant narratives about colonization. Scholars interested in the histories of those who tended to be omitted from written records, including Indigenous cultures and communities, have found objects to be useful starting points for their inquiries.¹⁰ This is because objects may reveal details about a community or context that may not be present in written records, such as the blurry nature of boundaries between cultures and processes of material and ideological exchange.¹¹ Such elements, as anthropologist Nicholas Thomas states, “ought to be part of a cross-cultural history” because they remind us that “there has been no single dialogue, or no single experience or exchange, that can be told from one ‘side’ or the other.”¹²

My model for the building of case studies is Laurel Thatcher Ulrich’s *The Age of Homespun Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth*. Although

¹⁰ Such studies have used material culture to explore such dynamics as cultural exchange, hybridity, resistance against assimilation. A sampling of examples include Kate Corbin Duncan, “Bead Embroidery of the Athapaskans: Style, Design Evolution and Transfer” (PhD Diss., University of Washington, 1982); Beverly Gordon, “The Niagara Falls Whimsey: The Object as Symbol of Cultural Interface” (PhD Diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1984); Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998); Nicholas Thomas, *Possessions: Indigenous Art/Colonial Culture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999); Megan A. Smetzer, “Assimilation or resistance? The production and consumption of Tlingit beadwork” (PhD Diss., University of British Columbia, 2007); Scott Stevens, “Cultural Mediations: Or How to Listen to Lewis and Clark’s Indian Artifacts,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 31:3 (2007), 181-202.

¹¹ For example, in art historian Ruth Phillips’ study of Native North American souvenir art, contextualizing items made for sale to tourists within “the matrix of economic, historical, social, and artistic factors,” enabled her to account for the “dialogic and transformative nature of the processes of production and consumption that worked to give the products their characteristic shapes.” Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998), xi.

¹² Thomas, *Possessions*, 15.

she does not focus entirely on Indigenous peoples, Ulrich exemplifies how material culture can function as a point of entry into a discussion of the broad gendered and racialized social dynamics of specific historical periods. She employs objects from early colonial America as vehicles for describing this period.¹³ As the “objects themselves . . . emerge as the strongest ‘personalities’ in the book,” their materials, construction techniques, and stylistic elements become points of entry into historical narratives revolving around the theme of intercultural exchange and colonialism.¹⁴ Ulrich demonstrates how “history gives us more than big pictures. Sometimes the most useful insights come from pondering the harnesses and treadles that move the interlocking threads of daily life.”¹⁵ Together, the tensions and connections between narratives generated by objects display “a world cross-snarled and twined,” a multivocal perspective on the American colonial past which complicates more straightforward narratives.¹⁶

My own approach to objects engages heavily with post-colonial critiques of Western ethnographic research that have emerged from Indigenous studies. In particular, my object-centered method of historical analysis describes instances where narrow ways of defining Onkwehonwe culture imposed by early twentieth-century anthropologists have resulted, for Six Nations community members, in a “struggle . . . to emerge from the heavy burden of anthropological definitions that have made

¹³ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001).

¹⁴ Janet Hoskins, “Agency, Biography and Objects,” in *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. Chris Tilley (London: SAGE Publications, 2006), 80.

¹⁵ Ulrich, 8.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Indian communities at times mere laboratories for political and social experiments.”¹⁷

Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith's foundational work on how Western research draws upon an array of values and systems that obfuscate indigenous ways of knowing is integral to such an approach. As Smith explains, “[s]ome knowledges are actively in competition with each other and some are can only be formed in association with others.” As a historian, a decolonizing approach to an archive or collection requires a sensitivity to how “rules of classification, rules of framing and rules of practice” submerge some knowledges in order for others to be recognized. This is the first step toward locating Indigenous knowledge within material organized within Western systems of knowledge.¹⁸

I also draw on Philip J. Deloria's analysis of how such research has intervened in historical representations of Indigenous engagements with modernity. He argues for a re-framing of the “familiar categories” of modern and primitive which have resulted in the presentation of such participation as “anomalous”:

Taken together, it seems to me, the cumulative experiences of such anomalous Indians point to new kinds of questions concerning the turn of the twentieth century – perhaps toward a reimagining of modernity itself. They suggest a secret history of the unexpected, of the complex lineaments of personal and cultural identity that can never be captured by dichotomies built around crude notions of difference and assimilation, white and Indian, primitive and advanced.¹⁹

Following Deloria, I understand my case studies as aligned with his aim of locating “secret histories of unexpectedness” which “can change our sense of the past and lead

¹⁷ Vine Deloria Jr., *Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact* (Colorado: Fulcrum, 1997), 51.

¹⁸ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (New York: Zed Books, 1999), 43.

¹⁹ Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 14.

us quietly, but directly, into the present moment.”²⁰ By looking closely at each item, and exploring in detail the contexts of their collection, I seek to identify the unexpected element of agency in the Six Nations community’s participation in collecting. In doing so, I locate histories of Onkwehonwe resilience both through collecting, and in collections.

Related to Indigenous scholars’ critiques, there has been a growing awareness of the intellectual and social implications of the interpretative strategies that have been brought to bear upon material culture in anthropology, ethnohistory, and museum studies.²¹ This awareness has led scholars to pay attention to how “[m]useum documentation systems . . . are not second order mechanisms which merely express transparently what is known about artifacts’ indigenous significance and the history of their passage to museums: they are, rather, themselves constitutive.”²² At the same time, a lack of documentation has also proven to be problematic. Without documentation to show “the fragile webs of interconnectedness” linking pieces in a collection to each other and to Indigenous knowledges, curators have relied upon empirical descriptions to sort items according to function, technical characteristics, and “abstract typologies derived from

²⁰ Ibid., 14.

²¹ As Michael Ames has noted, this has brought several issues to the foreground: “[n]ot only are definitions of truth and beauty subject to debate, as one might expect, but so are other thorny issues, such as what constitutes public taste and who has the right to determine it, what kind of knowledge is deemed to be useful – indeed, even what constitutes proper knowledge, and who has the right to control its production and dissemination . . . [l]ying behind the rhetoric of these debates and controversies are larger questions about what kind of society we want to live in, how much social and cultural diversity we can tolerate, and how we wish to represent ourselves and others” Ames, *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992), 152.

²² Michael O’Hanlon, *Hunting the Gatherers; Ethnographic Collectors, Agents and Agency in Melanesia, 1870s-1930* (New York: Berghman Books 2000), 27.

nineteenth-century discourses of natural history, history, and art history.”²³ In focusing on empirical details, however, such descriptions can be distorting because they “reinforce outdated notions of otherness by denying to objects made or used by Aboriginal people a diachronic and historical positioning.”²⁴ This has particularly strong implications for non-Western artifacts because, as James Clifford explains, “[t]hey have been diversely recontextualized, used as 'cultural' or 'human' evidence in the exhibit halls (or basements) of certain museums, made to stand for 'artistic' beauty and creativity in others.” More simply, they have been made to “belong nowhere.”²⁵ As a result, there has grown an interest in placing ethnographic material within its “social contexts of production and reception” to assign significance outside of a “given value in systems of meaning whose primary function is to confirm the knowledge and taste of a possessive Western subjectivity.”²⁶

Theorists of hybridity have discussed objects produced in contexts of intercultural exchange, with characteristics both Aboriginal and Euro-North American. For example, in his examination of the myriad cases of cultural mixing that resulted from colonization in fifteenth-century Latin America, Serge Gruzinski uses the general term “mestizo phenomena” to describe moments in colonial history when symbols or elements of one culture are incorporated into another’s worldview.

²³ Ruth B. Phillips, “How Museums Marginalize: Naming and Domains of Inclusion and Exclusion,” *Museum Pieces: Toward the Indigenization of Canadian Museums* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2011), 98-99.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ James Clifford, “Objects and Selves – an Afterword,” in *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, ed. G. Stocking (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 244.

²⁶ Ibid.

Yet, in addition to the ambiguity associated with terms available for describing this phenomenon, he notes underlying problematic assumptions which inform many terms used to describe cultural exchanges, such as “mélange” or “hybridity”:

In principle, a mélange is a mixture of pure elements such as primary colours, that is to say homogenous bodies free from all ‘contamination.’ Perceived as a shift from homogenous to heterogeneous, from the singular to the plural, from order to disorder, the idea of mélange therefore carries connotations and assumptions that should be avoided like the plague. The same is true of the term ‘hybridity.’²⁷

Henare, Holbraad and Wastell explain the productive potential of the concept of the hybrid is limited because “it still refers recursively back to those concepts it seeks to replace.”²⁸ While limiting for some descriptions, in other contexts, the idea of hybridity is useful for describing certain historical moments when objects with stylistic characteristics of two (or more) distinct groups were created. For instance, I draw on this hybridity in my discussion of Alexander General’s lacrosse stick.

Yet, overall, I have found anthropological theorizations of objects that focus on their biographies, or “social lives,” as having the greatest potential to reveal for my case studies “complex social interactions and systems of value, meaning and exchange.”²⁹ The focus on modern processes of commodification introduced in the 1980s by Igor Kopytoff and Arjun Appadurai is fundamental to contemporary material culture studies, because it demonstrates the relationship between changing

²⁷ Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization* trans. Deke Dusinberre (New York: Routledge, 2002), 19.

²⁸ Amiria Henare, Martin Holbraad and Sari Wastell, eds., “Introduction,” in *Thinking Through Things: Theorising Artefacts Ethnographically* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 20.

²⁹ Anita Herle, “Objects, Agency and Museums: Continuing Dialogues between the Torres Strait and Cambridge,” in *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*, eds. Laura Peers and Alison K. Brown (New York: Routledge, 2003), 194.

modes of exchange and meaning.³⁰ More recent work in this area which proposes a dialogic relationship between objects, institutions, and people, has a particular resonance with my case studies. For example, in their recent book, *Knowing Things: Exploring the Collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum 1884-1945*, Chris Gosden and Frances Larson explore the instability of meaning construction in one particular museum as emerging from ever-changing relations among objects, people, and historically specific social dynamics.³¹ An assumption of a changeable sense of meaning underlies their exploration of how objects in the Pitt Rivers Museum “have been made to ‘work’ differently for people in the past.”³²

Agency

Agency features strongly in my case studies, in two different ways. The first relates to how collecting was a way for Six Nations Onkwehonwe to preserve connections to their history, and to assert their presence, on their own terms, within modernity. In this context, agency was demonstrated not only by ethnographers who visited from outside the community. As my case studies show, Onkwehonwe living at Six Nations

³⁰ Igor Kopytoff, "the Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process" in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64-94; Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1986), 3-63.

³¹ Ruth B. Phillips, "Disappearing Acts: Traditions of Exposure, Traditions of Enclosure, and Iroquois Masks," in *Questions of Tradition*, ed. Mark Salber Phillips and Gordon Schochet (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 56-87; Chris Gosden and Frances Larson, *Knowing Things: Exploring the Collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum 1884-1945* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007).

³² The authors explain, "As we shall see in the chapters that follow, a single jade blade from Polynesia can lead us to an investigation of interdisciplinary negotiations within Oxford University in the 1880s; a plain marble armlet from western Africa takes us from stories of boys kidnapped for money along the Niger to the meeting rooms of the London Ethnological Society in the 1860s... objects, each leading in tantalizing directions: we could have chosen from many thousands of others, only some of which make an appearance in the chapters that follow" (6).

engaged in collecting for their own reasons. “Agency,” in this sense, refers to choices or strategies through which community members found modes of “autoethnographic” expression within the colonial practice of ethnographic collecting.³³ It involves conscious choices made by Indigenous people within the paradigm of ethnographic collecting in order to shape its outcome. This dynamic has been explored recently in the context of Northwest Coast art, Northeastern Woodlands communities in the nineteenth century, and other Indigenous communities in North America.³⁴ These transactions were generally not documented in any systematic way and were often “overwritten by museum documentary culture.”³⁵

In exploring the relationships between objects and the contexts in which they are located, I have found it necessary to account for the generative potential of material culture, or its agency. My understanding of agency in objects is informed by the work of anthropologists Amiria Henare, Martin Holbraad and Sari Wastell. Taking objects as starting points, they propose that objects “that present themselves be allowed to serve as a heuristic with which a particular field of phenomena can be

³³ Phillips draws on Marie Louise Pratt: “[Pratt’s] term ‘autoethnographic’ elaborates the notion of agency implied in Oritz’s definition of transculturation as a ‘transitive’ process. Autoethnographic expressions are those in which ‘colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer’s own terms,’ involving ‘partial collaboration with and appropriation of the idioms of the conqueror.’” Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998): 17.

³⁴ Aaron Glass, “From Cultural Salvage to Brokerage: The Mythologization of Mungo Martin and the Emergence of Northwest Coast Art,” *Museum Anthropology* 29(1) (2006): 20–43; Michelle A. Hamilton, *Collections and Objections: Aboriginal Material Culture in Southern Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010); Margaret M. Bruchac, *Consorting With Savages: Indigenous Informants and American Anthropologists*. Book manuscript in progress (2012) for University of Arizona Press and First Peoples Publishing Initiative.

³⁵ O’Hanlon, 4.

identified, which *only then* engender theory.”³⁶ This method is reflective of an ontological turn in anthropology, which has sought to “move beyond the development of ever more nuanced filters through which to pass phenomena, through to engagements with things as conduits for concept production.”³⁷ It stands in contrast to interpretations that rely upon a specific theory to interpret the meaning of an object, which the authors define as an analytic approach. Or, as they state, “[a]nalytics parse, heuristics merely locate.”³⁸ In their approach, engaging with objects as sources is not a matter of finding the appropriate theory or theories to explain phenomena, but rather, involves “articulating a method by which the material may itself enunciate meanings.”³⁹

While this approach developed by Henare, Holbraad and Wastell was intended for the discipline of anthropology, I seek to employ their proposed method historically. Just as objects treated as heuristics can generate meaning, when objects are treated as historical events, they can produce new narratives. These narratives develop through seeking to explain how the objects came to be as they are and move onto their present locations, rather than treating them as sources to fit into already-existing interpretations of the past.

Henare, Holbraad and Wastell explain that several authors who have theorized objects, people and ways of knowing in reflexive ways inspired their method,

³⁶ Amiria Henare, M. Holbraad and S. Wastell, eds. *Thinking Through Things: Theorising Artefacts Ethnographically* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

described as “thinking through things.”⁴⁰ Of the influences that they cite, Alfred Gell’s work on the agency of art objects is most relevant to aspects of my dissertation. Gell’s anthropological theory of art aims to provide a framework for understanding how artworks act upon others, in both Western and non-Western cultures.⁴¹ Rather than focusing on how art is evaluated according to culturally specific criteria of aesthetic taste, Gell was concerned about how objects “are produced and circulated in the external physical and social world.”⁴² Given the relational focus of his theory, Gell defined an art object as “whatever is inserted into the ‘slot’ provided for art objects in the system of terms and relations.” With meaning generated through relations, “the nature of the art object is a function of the social-relational matrix in which it is embedded. It has no ‘intrinsic’ nature, independent of the relational context.”⁴³

In this sense, Gell defines an art-object in terms other than culturally-produced classifications of “art.” Rather, his definition is based upon the context in which an object is embedded. The relational situation that leads an object to function in an “art-like way” is, in Gell’s theory, specific: “the material ‘index’ (the visible, physical, ‘thing’) permits a particular cognitive operation as *the abduction of agency*.”⁴⁴ In a set of social relations, when an index is “itself seen as the outcome,

⁴⁰ The authors list Bruno Latour, Alfred Gell, Marilyn Strathern, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Roy Wagner. Henare et. al, 7.

⁴¹ Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 1.

⁴² Ibid., 3.

⁴³ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 13.

and/or the instrument of, social agency,” it is an art-object. An art object, then, is determined by its function in a set of relations, rather than through pre-determined labels or cultural categorizations. At the same time, it can be constitutive of social relations. With its characterization of agency as potentially flowing to and from both objects and humans, Gell’s theorization offers a way to understand how objects can be responsible for generating a spectrum of effects, including connections between people.

Gell developed several terms to explain the agency of art-objects. He uses the term *Index* to describe an art-object itself. It is employed in the Peircean sense, to describe a “natural sign,” or “an entity from which the observer can make a *causal reference* of some kind, or an inference about the intentions or capabilities of another person.”⁴⁵ These inferences are not arrived at by induction or deduction, but rather, by abduction. *Abduction* is therefore another key term in Gell’s theorization, one which describes the fallible process of inferring a process or rule by which an index acquired its meaning, based on the index itself.⁴⁶

Accordingly, it is possible for anything functioning as an art-object to encourage an abduction in a number of directions. First, it can lead toward an “origin.” This origin is termed by Gell to be the *Artist*, or it can refer more broadly to a “moment and agent of its manufacture,” or a moment of exchange which led it to

⁴⁵ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁶ Gell refers to J. Holland *et. al.*, who explain, “Abduction is a variety of nondemonstrative inference, based on the logical fallacy of affirming the antecedent from the consequent (‘if *p* then *q*; but *q*; therefore *p*’). Given true premises, it yields conclusions that are not necessarily true. Nevertheless, abduction is an indispensable inference principle, because it is the basic mechanism that makes it possible to constrain the indefinitely large number of explanations compatible with any event (Boyer 1994: 147, citing J. Holland *et. al.* 1986: 89)” Gell, 14.

acquire a certain value or significance.⁴⁷ But abduction can also point toward a ‘destination,’ or, *Recipient*. This is the person, group, or situation for which its agency is intended.⁴⁸ Finally, abduction can lead toward a *Prototype*, which is an object type or entity represented in the index, usually, but not always, visually.⁴⁹

Gell uses the terms *Agent* and *Patient* to describe the two parties of a relationship in which the agency of an art-object emerges.⁵⁰ Any of the terms described above – *Index* (the thing), *Artist*, *Recipient*, or *Prototype* – can function as agents or patients, depending on the particularities of a situation. Gell calls this situation the *Art Nexus*. In his posthumously published book *Art and Agency*, he offers detailed descriptions and examples of various permutations and combinations of these roles that can emerge around an art-object. He goes on to discuss primary and secondary agents and patients and levels of agency produced within their increasingly complex networks. Many of the examples Gell uses to explain his theorization of agency focus on objects that, in certain contexts, are understood to exhibit a supernatural power: “idolatry, sorcery, ritual, and personhood.”⁵¹

Of these more specific forms of relations, Gell’s discussion of captivation is most relevant to the situations examined in this dissertation. Captivation is the effect of “barely comprehensible virtuosity” upon a viewer, or patient.⁵² Intricate patterns

⁴⁷ Ibid., 24.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 26-7.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 22.

⁵¹ Nicholas Thomas, “Foreword,” in *Art and Agency* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), x.

⁵² Ibid., viii.

or other instances of technical virtuosity “enmesh patients in relations and intentionalities sought or prescribed by agents.”⁵³ A viewer experiences a “blockage in cognition” from an inability to follow how an artist has executed his or her work. This is important for my discussion of collecting, as it is this sort of agency, I argue, which led to the collection of some items, such as the two pairs of cornhusk dolls acquired through Chief John A. Gibson. I understand this sort of awe to be similar to what literary critic Stephen Greenblatt has called “wonder.” This is an “aesthetic understanding,” wrapped up in “the power of the displayed object to stop the viewer in his or her tracks... to evoke exalted attention.”⁵⁴ Related to captivation is the agency of decorative patterns. As each of the four objects discussed in my case studies bear some sort of decorative element, Gell’s discussion of the agency of decorative patterns, which he has called the “technology of enchantment,” is relevant to my discussion of collecting.⁵⁵ Decorative patterns are those that do not appear to refer back to a prototype. In fact, at first glance, they appear to serve no function at all. However, Gell frames decoration, with its intricate play of colour, form, and repetition, as “animating” the index and thus serving a social function of encouraging attachment in patients.⁵⁶

In each of my case studies, I draw on formal analyses to position the items within a larger tradition of Onkwehonwe art, showing how they assert a presence of a

⁵³ Ibid., x.

⁵⁴ Stephen Greenblatt “Resonance and Wonder,” *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Laving (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 42.

⁵⁵ Gell, 74.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 75-77.

tradition, or complicate dominant ideas of a stylistic tradition. Gell's theorization of the agency of style supports this approach. As Gell states, "[a]rtworks do not do their cognitive work in isolation; they function because they co-operate synergistically with one another, and the basis of their synergistic action is style."⁵⁷ Gell is cautious of this mode of classification, and cautions against assuming a clear relationship between culture and style. Yet, he concedes that where formal analysis of many objects has been undertaken, it may be possible to isolate elements which distinguish one group's artifacts from another's.⁵⁸ At the same time, an object's agency can manifest as a resistance to classification systems or presumed cultural categories, revealing how "objects and contexts not only define each other, but may change and disrupt each other.

Gell's theorization of agency and objects has provoked a number of criticisms. First, it has been said to ignore the mediating function of "the knowledge and presuppositions that people bring to bear when acting in relation to objects."⁵⁹ As I read Gell, a viewer's subjectivity is accounted for through the potential for a number of particular abductions which might be activated. However, as I use Gell to primarily address a specific kind of agency – that generated by objects – I feel the way in which I use him does not over-extend the capabilities of his theorization.

Second, Gell's theorization of agency, which is grounded in a phenomenological perspective, has been criticized for dismissing semiotic, or

⁵⁷ Ibid., 163.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 163.

⁵⁹ Howard Morphy, "Art as a Mode of Action: Some Problems with Gell's *Art and Agency*," *Journal of Material Culture* 14(1), 20.

“linguistic models” of meaning and style.⁶⁰ The same criticism can be mounted against the “thinking through things” method developed by Henare, Holbraad and Wastell, or any approach to evidence which wishes to explore the potential of interpretation unbounded by the specificities of already-existing classification systems, or epistemologies. I agree: at root, the theoretical work informing my approach largely rejects the productivity of any heavy-handed application of a single theory. Rather, it supports a re-positioning of evidence in relation to already-existing theoretical frameworks. As Henare, Holbraad and Wastell state:

[t]he question then becomes not just how human phenomena may be illuminated (through structuralism! no, semiotics!, no, phenomenology!, no, Marx showed me the way!, etc.) but rather how the phenomena in question may themselves offer illumination.⁶¹

This approach, in many ways, resonates with the often cited, and often criticized, definition of a historian’s job: to let the sources “speak for themselves.”

Yet, even when objects are left to speak for themselves, what we hear depends upon how well we listen, but also how well we understand the language it speaks. In this sense, meaning is produced through a conversation, of sorts. German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer’s writing on hermeneutics addresses how reading a text is “itself a conversation” in which “the text also speaks, just as another person speaks.”⁶² Although I will not undertake to explain the nuances of his philosophical hermeneutics, Gadamer’s interpretation of Heidegger’s writing on this topic is useful

⁶⁰ Nicholas Thomas, “Foreword,” xi.

⁶¹ Henare et. al., 8.

⁶² Richard E. Palmer, *Gadamer in Conversation: Reflections and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 11.

for reflecting upon how objects can speak to some people, and not others. Gadamer draws upon Heidegger in his discussion of interpretation, explaining how even when we feel we are focusing “on the things themselves” and setting aside biases, how we understand is likely being coloured by “imperceptible habits of thought” and “projection of meaning.”⁶³ As Gadamer reminds us, we are “historical beings:” the sum total of our lived experience and context of a given point in time “determines in advance both what seems to us worth inquiring about and what will appear as an object of investigation, and we more or less forget half of what is really there.”⁶⁴

This historically and culturally informed subjective standpoint, whether it is in relation to a person, text, or object, would be what Gadamer calls a “situation.” Our situation determines our “range of vision,” or, the “horizon” which marks the limit of our capacity to understand, from where we are.⁶⁵ Whereas one can focus on the limits of a horizon, at the same time, it is a visual metaphor for an individual’s attunement with certain phenomena. In a conversation, this may lead one to hear a message to which others would be deaf. This is how I understand how the objects in my case studies have had agency in some contexts, with some people, but not with others.

That objects can act as agents in relationships between people of a certain cultural group is supported by recent studies that explore Indigenous knowledge through material culture and artistic traditions. For instance, in her study of

⁶³ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd ed. (London: Continuum, 1989): 266-7.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 300.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 301.

Onkwehonwe art as knowledge, Tuscarora artist, photographer and scholar Jolene Rickard explains how art has been “a strategy to maintain the ongoing construction of reality from a decidedly Indigenous, Iroquoian, and Tuscarora perspective.”⁶⁶ In her study of efflorescence in Onkwehonwe art, Christina Barbara Johannsen found that despite geographic distance between communities, the Onkwehonwe display a shared identity “not on a real level but on the imaginary level” through “their symbols [which] continue to link them to their ancestors and to the perception of their past while giving meaning to their present-day interactions with others.”⁶⁷ Finally, Laura Peers and Alison Brown’s ongoing project that reunites Blackfoot shirts in the Pitt Rivers Museum with their ancestors in Alberta demonstrates the powerful generative potential of such reconnections.⁶⁸ Gell’s theorization frames the above mentioned power of art in Onkwehonwe communities as an example of a broader capability of art objects, which includes their potential to affect people and social relations.

Finally, to supplement my conceptualization of the ability of art objects to function as agents, I draw on the work of Susan Stewart. Stewart’s theorization of collecting and personal attachments to objects, such as mementos, souvenirs and miniatures, grows largely out of psychoanalytic and literary theory. Her approach articulates nuances of abduction’s effects on social relations by describing how objects can generate vital connections to our own pasts. For instance, Stewart

⁶⁶ Jolene Rickard, “Indigenous and Iroquoian Art as Knowledge: In the Shadow of the Eagle” (PhD Diss., SUNY Buffalo, 1996), vi.

⁶⁷ Christina Barbara Johannsen, “Efflorescence and Identity in Iroquois Arts” (PhD Diss., Department of Anthropology, Brown University 1984), 163.

⁶⁸ Brown, Alison K.. Laura L. Peers, and Heather Richardson, *Kaahsinnooniksi Ao'toksisawooyawa: Our Ancestors Have Come to Visit: Reconnections with Historic Blackfoot Shirts* (Oxford: Pitt Rivers Museum, 2010).

explains that the power of a souvenir is found in its openness – the narrative which gives it power “is not a narrative of the object; it is a narrative of the possessor.”⁶⁹

Elaborating on this point, she writes,

First, the object is metonymic to the scene of its original appropriation in the sense that it is a sample . . . Second, the souvenir must remain impoverished and partial so that it can be supplemented by a narrative discourse, a narrative discourse which articulates the play of desire.⁷⁰

Stewart’s description is one way of “thinking through things” which resonates with dynamics that unfold in my case studies on the wooden ladle and beadwork. The flexibility and fallibility of abduction leaves open the possibility for the formation of a relationship to between an object and a transactional origin. As well, a recipient can be affected by an object that seems to reconstitute the presence of a person they have known, or place they have been. This is an agency similar to the “distributed personhood” an object can carry in Gell’s theorization, only it is broader, in that the “artist” could be a place, a gift-giver, or a maker. This type of relational agency emerges especially in my discussion of Elliott Moses’ ladle and Chief John A. Gibson’s cornhusk dolls.

Although Gell was not a historian, I find his theorization of agency to be invaluable for discussing how the items in my case studies have acted upon collectors in the past. In particular, the relational focus of Gell’s work, as well as the openness of the concept of abduction, enable a single item to generate multiple, even contradictory meanings, simultaneously and over time. Yet, I feel it is important to

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (London: Duke University Press, 1993), 136.

include in this relational space the potential for an object's value to emerge from historical, social or cultural contexts. Here I am reminded of art historian Stephen Greenblatt's description of resonance – what Greenblatt describes as “the power of the displayed object to . . . evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged.”⁷¹ Greenblatt's idea of resonance could be described, in Gell's terms, as the result of an art-object's abduction to a context of origin.

Belongings and Belonging

The methodology used in my thesis draws on the material mentioned above in a number of ways. First, objects are my primary historical sources: they are points of departure into the history of collecting and Indigenous agency within collecting at Six Nations. As sources, objects serve as heuristics: rather than parsing objects according to established classifications of geographic region, style or in terms of binaries such as modern/traditional, I use their incongruences with standard classification systems to question or trouble such categories.

Secondly, I approach the objects I look at as belongings. An object that is a belonging exists comfortably in the context within which it finds itself. This context may include other objects, people, or both. I understand this quality to differentiate belongings from possessions. Unlike a possession, which is held or possessed by its owner, regardless of the appropriateness of this ownership, a belonging shares with its owner and context a sense of mutual resonance – it belongs. My notion of belongings and belonging thus adds a further dimension to Gell's theory of agency. As a relational phenomenon, a sense of belonging is one way objects and people can affect

⁷¹ Greenblatt, 53.

each other. An object takes on the character of a belonging in a context where its agency activates a sense of resonance. This resonance may emerge from the relationships among between the *Index* (object), the *Artist* and *Patients*, or between *Index* and *Prototype*. In this sense, an object *belongs* in a context where its agency is recognized or respected, while it is *possessed* in a context where its agency is ignored or resisted.

This differentiation between belongings and possessions relates to ongoing discussions about ethnographic museum collections. When archival and accession records offer a window into the context surrounding the collecting of an object, researchers may gain a better sense of the degree to which a community intended for an object to belong in a museum collection. It follows that an object that reached a museum collection through Indigenous agency may carry a degree of belongingness with both its source community and with the museum. It may be shown that a community intended for an object to act as a kind of historical and cultural ambassador.

At the same time, it is essential to acknowledge how the present-day context surrounding an object in a museum collection also affects its belongingness. This context is never static. Museum practices such as object preservation, modes of exhibiting collections, and relationships with communities, as well as broader political and economic dynamics, generate new sets of relations that can alter the sense of an object's belonging. Because relations are always in flux, learning about why and how objects were collected will not provide a definitive answer to questions around what belongs in a museum today, and what does not. However, such details

can lead toward more nuanced understandings of the social and cultural dynamics that shaped ethnographic collecting, and can assist in identifying the generative potential that may be located in those collections today.

Outline of Case Studies

In the first part of my dissertation, I draw on the writing of Susan Stanford Friedman, Marshall Berman and others to define modernity as a relational phenomenon, enmeshed with colonialism. I then introduce readers to a general history of the Six Nations of the Grand River. Drawing upon the critical literature on early twentieth-century ethnographic work developed by anthropologists and scholars of cultural studies, I then discuss relationships formed between the Six Nations community and anthropologists during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in order to highlight how collecting emerged as a point of shared interest for both groups.

In chapters 2-5, I present four case studies, each built around a single object, or set of objects, collected from Six Nations. In the first case study I discuss an ornately carved lacrosse stick collected by Frank Speck from the grandson of its maker, a Six Nations Chief named Alexander General. I contextualize this stick within the development of lacrosse in Canada, as it shifted from a distinctly Onkwehonwe activity to a game identified as uniquely Canadian. The stick, made sometime before 1845, bears iconography which, I argue, suggests that its creation and subsequent transfer from the hands of General to Speck was a form of intervention intended to sustain the memory of Six Nations' alliance with the Crown and, following from this, Onkwehonwe sovereignty.

The second case study is built around a carved spoon in a collection made by Elliott Moses, a notable Delaware man from Six Nations. Written directly on the spoon is a message which tells not only about the history of the spoon, but also about the collector's desire to influence the way in which it would be remembered in the future, fixing upon it a narrative that preserved a memory of two non Onkwéhonwe groups, the Delaware and Mississauga of New Credit, as presences among the Six Nations of the Grand River.

In the third case study, I describe pieces of beadwork collected – and not collected – from Six Nations. I look at a beaded picture frame collected by the Jamieson sisters of the Six Nations, which resembles the sort of beadwork that the early-twentieth century ethnologist Frederick Wilkerson Waugh chose not to collect during his fieldwork. This case study raises the problem of how aesthetic choices were taken as indices of modernity and tradition at Six Nations, and shows how artists and collectors within the community found space to intervene so that they would be remembered on their own terms.

Two pairs of cornhusk dolls acquired for the Victoria Memorial Museum in 1912 by Chief John A. Gibson form the basis of the fourth case study. The differences in the styles of clothing worn by the two pairs and the descriptions provided by Gibson suggest that the dolls embody differences within the community in the early-twentieth century. Given ethnologists' focus on collecting material that fit with their ideas of the 'traditional,' it is uncertain whether they would have collected these dolls without Gibson's intervention. He, however, was a hereditary chief and he felt they belonged in a museum collection. He used his authority to influence the collecting

process and he was able to ensure their preservation. Gibson's purpose contains an irony, in that his reasons for collecting material are almost opposite to those of the anthropologists. I argue that while Gibson wanted to collect items reflective of his community's resilience throughout changes brought about through colonization and modernity, in keeping with the salvage paradigm, they sought to amass material vestiges of what they believed was a dying culture.

This last case study is particularly revealing of the intersecting but different motivations of the partners in the early twentieth-century project of ethnographic collecting. For Chief John Arthur Gibson, an Anglican turned Longhouse traditionalist and hereditary chief, collecting material culture from his community on behalf of the Victoria Museum and acting as an informant to anthropologists were strategies for ensuring that his traditional culture would be seen and remembered as a vital aspect of life at the Grand River in the early twentieth century. For ethnologists such as Frederick Waugh, Edward Sapir and Alexander Goldenweiser, all of who had some contact with Gibson, collecting was coloured by the salvage paradigm, as they sought to amass vestiges of what they presumed to be a dying culture. The irony is that despite the dissonance, their contradictory intentions led them to collude with each other and ultimately produce both a body of ethnographic literature about Six Nations and substantial museum collections from the community. Later collectors from Six Nations such as Elliott Moses and the Jamieson sisters were taking active roles in preserving memories of their Onkwehonwe past, as well as exerting authority over their history by choosing items to collect and writing histories about material

culture, and, in the case of Elliott Moses, this writing was sometimes done literally - directly onto the items themselves.

Despite their differences, the Onkwehonwe individuals who will emerge as key characters in my studies – Chief John A. Gibson, Catherine Silver, the Jamieson sisters, Chief Alexander General and Elliott Moses, all shared an interest in material culture informed by the belief that collecting objects was important. This belief provided common ground with anthropologists and others, such as tourists, who also valued Onkwehonwe material culture, albeit for reasons that may not have been shared with the cultural insiders.

The objects in my case studies are points of departure that lead into histories which can only be partially known, for several reasons. First, in many cases, details needed to build a complete biography of an object and the contexts through which it has moved cannot be known. The absence of names of makers, dates collected, and other information is part of the legacy of ethnographic collecting during the period I am studying, and it is also part of the legacy of collections made by people who are fallible and do not always remember to write down everything they should.

Secondly, not only am I interested in what the objects themselves can suggest about collecting and history at the Six Nations of the Grand River, but I am also interested in who saved them and why. This latter interest takes me away from the objects themselves and toward the history of anthropology in Canada, the activities of collectors, and how collecting emerged as a strategy for dealing with changes and anxieties tied to modernity.

CHAPTER 1

MODERNITY AND COLLECTING AT SIX NATIONS

Early anthropologists were “cultural vampires” who sucked a community’s knowledge and material culture for their own benefit but did little or nothing at all for the people they were using. Such anthropological collections carry a taint as far as I am concerned.

- Anonymous, Six Nations of the Grand River, personal interview

How do you define yourself as an indigenous person without that link [to community]? And in that light, how do you utilize the sources that are around to begin addressing those questions? Like museum collections, you know. And where does it depart from just kind of, the gaze to looking at it in a critical way? And extracting what you need from those objects or that collection. And then apply it to your life.

- Onondaga Artist Jeff Thomas, personal interview

The two passages above were taken from interviews with Onkwehonwne who have an interest in museum collections. The first quotation is from a museum educator at Brantford’s Woodland Cultural Centre, an institution that serves the community at the Six Nations of the Grand River. The second quote is from an Onondaga artist, also a member of the Six Nations community, who uses ethnographic photographs and other material in his photo-based work. I open with these two passages because they express two perspectives on the contemporary meanings of museum collections made a century ago and suggest both the barriers to their use and the potential values they hold for contemporary Onkwehonwe. The museum educator’s comment expresses the widely held view that anthropologists exploited communities, and because of this, an irreversible “taint” clings to items collected under such conditions. The second speaks to a potential that resides in collections regardless of how they were collected.

In collections, some contemporary individuals may thus find the means of reactivation -- possibilities of use, or of inspiration -- that can connect them to their culture and history.

Together, the passages express a tension that has arisen from historical projects of collecting, affecting their meanings and usefulness today. In this chapter I look in more detail at the conditions under which collections were made as a key aspect of historical context that will enable me to make my general argument about the nature of indigenous agency in their formation. I want to look in particular at the many factors that may have influenced an individual's or a family's decision to sell items to collectors or to collect items on their own, including economic circumstances that may have induced some to sell material. That ethnologists knew they could benefit from the economic need of communities is undeniable. Consider the following passage taken from a letter ethnologist Frederick Waugh wrote to the director of the Ethnology Division, Edward Sapir, in 1913, about his visit to Tuscarora: "I have had unusually good luck during the last few days in getting good stuff almost thrown at me. It is, as you will understand, a good time of the year to buy, as they have little upon which to raise cash at present."¹ If community reactions to collectors must be viewed in the context of colonialism, understanding the myriad motivations for Aboriginal peoples' participation in collecting is essential for building a clearer

¹ Frederick Waugh to Edward Sapir, 28 June 1913, p.2. Edward Sapir Collector's File, Canadian Ethnology Service, CMC.

understanding of the contributions they made to the development of ethnology in Canada during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²

Dynamics associated with modernity produced circumstances that made collecting a site for intervention at Six Nations. I will turn first to the complex issue of modernity. I will then summarize key events and changes at Six Nations during the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. In the last section of this chapter I will outline the fieldwork undertaken by anthropologists at Six Nations during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and contextualize it within the broader history of modernist North American anthropology during these years. As these contextualizing discussions will suggest, despite the tainted aura that continues to surround ethnographic collections because of the conditions under which they were assembled, there was also in this process an opportunity for Onkwehonwe to intervene in the production of their history.

Theorizations of Modernity

The definition of “modernity” has been widely debated by scholars in humanities and social sciences disciplines. Early-twentieth century sociologist Max Weber identified the development of capitalism, an organized system with a monetary economy, hired labour and mechanized modes of production, as “the most fateful force in modern life.”³ Around the same time, Georg Simmel characterized modern

² Michelle A. Hamilton, *Collections and Objections: Aboriginal Material Culture in Southern Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 108.

³ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* [1904-1905] (New York: Scribner's, 1958), 17.

life as demanding increasing specialization and precision, with a focus in standardization. Amidst the “overwhelming social forces, of historical heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life,” which make up this modern experience, the individual is compelled to struggle “to preserve the autonomy and individuality.”⁴

Marshall Berman’s description focuses on the de-stabilizing effect of modern life, or how the fragmentation of belief systems and ways of life can produce a sense that “all that is solid melts into air.”⁵ Berman explains how “all sorts of cultural and political movements” developed as a response to this destabilization, which saw:

modern men and women asserting their dignity in the present – even a wretched and oppressive present – and their right to control their future; striving to make a place for themselves in the modern world, a place where they can feel at home.⁶

Anthony Giddens provides a definition widely used by historians. Modernity, he writes, refers to “modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards,” when new types of social order emerged, such as the nation-state and widespread commodification wage labour and its products.⁷ Sociologist Krishan Kumar links modernization to industrialization, including the increasing use of scientific thought and technological developments toward practical ends. He states, “[t]o modernize is to industrialize. It might be possible to give some other meaning to modernity, but to do so would be perverse and

⁴ Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life (1903)” in *19th Century Visual Culture Reader*, eds. Vanessa R. Schwartz, Jeannene M. Przyblyski (New York: Routledge, 2004), 51.

⁵ Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 13.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁷ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 1, 6.

misleading. Historically, the rise of modern society is intrinsically connected to the rise of industrial society.⁸

While outlining general characteristics of modernity, such definitions largely evade the issue of colonialism. In her writing, Susan Stanford Friedman frames colonialism as one manifestation of modernity. For Friedman, modernity describes not a specific point in time, but rather, any series of events and circumstances producing “a major rupture from what came before.”⁹ Modernity, then, is more a relational phenomenon emerging at different times and in different places, and less a single period in European history. From this perspective, colonialism is itself an aspect of modernity.¹⁰ Its impact upon Indigenous peoples does violence to belief systems and cultural organization: it fragments and disorients. At the same time, the ruptures produce spaces for exchange and innovation. In recognizing “the inflow and outflow of cultural forms” as a characteristic of modernity, Friedman “refuses victimology and assumes agency on all sides in the zones of encounter—not autonomy, or the freedom to act unimpeded by others, but rather agency, the drive to

⁸ Krishan Kumar, *The Rise of Modern Society: Aspects of the Social and Political Development of the West* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 3.

⁹ Susan Friedman, “Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies,” in *Modernism/Modernity* 13 (3) (2006), 426. Friedman states, “I suggest that modernity involves a powerful vortex of historical conditions that coalesce to produce sharp ruptures from the past that range widely across various sectors of a given society. The velocity, acceleration, and dynamism of shattering change across a wide spectrum of societal institutions are key components of modernity as I see it—change that interweaves the cultural, economic, political, religious, familial, sexual, aesthetic, technological, and so forth, and can move in both utopic and dystopic directions. Across the vast reaches of civilizational history, eruptions of different modernities often occur in the context of empires and conquest.” Friedman, 433.

¹⁰ Drawing on the work of Walter Minolgo, Friedman states, “colonialism is constitutive of Western modernity, essential to its formation from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries.” Friedman, 427.

name one's collective and individual identity and to negotiate the conditions of history, no matter how harsh.”¹¹

Approaching modernity as enmeshed relationally and dynamically with colonialism resonates with the idea of the “middle ground,” proposed by ethnohistorian Richard White. He used this term to describe the space where the intermingling of Algonquian and European worlds “created new systems of meaning and of exchange” for both groups.¹² Mary Louise Pratt’s notion of “contact zones” is another concept that supports this way of understanding modernity and colonialism. Pratt explains contact zones as “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.”¹³ A relational definition of modernity, as proposed by Friedman and supported by such concepts as the “middle ground” and “contact zones,” is useful for exploring how collecting emerged as a strategy for intervening in the production of historical memory at Six Nations. Recognizing the agency people have held in the midst of modernities, including instances of colonialism, avoids framing Indigenous peoples’ interventions in modernity as “anomalous.”¹⁴ Furthermore, the relational quality of Friedman’s definition makes space for a “reimagining of the contours of modernity itself” through tracing what Philip J. Deloria has called a “secret history of

¹¹ Ibid., 428.

¹² Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), x.

¹³ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 4.

¹⁴ I draw here on Philip J. Deloria’s discussion of expectation and anomaly in Indigenous history. See *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 4-7.

unexpectedness.”¹⁵ This history is composed of “complex lineaments of personal and cultural identity that can never be captured by dichotomies built around crude notions of difference and assimilation, white and Indian, primitive and advanced.”¹⁶

During the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, while the Onkwehonwe at Six Nations were experiencing social changes caused by colonial encounters and assimilation policies, the surrounding settler society was negotiating its own modernity. Searching for stability in an increasingly secularized and industrialized way of life, Western society found comfort in longing for a return to a pre-civilized way of life.¹⁷ In Canada, as in other parts of the British empire, the notion of primitive society, formulated by founding intellectuals of the new discipline of anthropology such as Edward Tylor during the 1860s and 1870s, was a construct advanced by a Victorian Canadian society anxious about its own transition towards, and place within modernity.¹⁸ Primitivism as a cultural and aesthetic movement is related, as T. J. Jackson Lears has argued, to the antimodernist impulses of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Antimodernism developed in reaction to

¹⁵ Ibid., 14.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ For example, see Jamake Highwater, *The Primal Mind: Vision and Reality in Indian America* (New Jersey: Republica, 1981); John Zerzan, *Future Primitive and Other Essays* (New York: Autonomedia, 1994).

¹⁸ Brian William Gobbett, "Giants and pygmies in the morning of time [microform]: developmentalism and degeneration in English-Canadian anthropology, ca. 1850-1940" (PhD diss., University of Alberta, 2003), 8. Adam Kuper notes, "[i]n the second half of the nineteenth century, Europeans believed themselves to be witnessing a revolutionary transition in the type of their society. Marx defined a capitalist society emerging from a feudal society; Weber was to write about rationalization, the bureaucratization, the disenchantment of the old world; Tönnies about the move from community to association; Durkheim about the change from mechanical to organic forms of solidarity. Each conceived of the new world in contrast to 'traditional society'; and behind this 'traditional society' they discerned a primitive or primeval society." Adam Kuper, *The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformations of an Illusion* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 4.

experiences of modernization as “many beneficiaries of modern culture began to feel they were its secret victims” and sought ways of connecting with an idealized past as a form of dissent against capitalism and secularization.¹⁹ In order to understand themselves as modern, members of settler society could measure their own modernity. This alternative was constructed through what Marianna Torgovnick has described as a “primitivist discourse, a discourse fundamental to the Western sense of self and Other.”²⁰ The construction of the primitive also required a process of temporal distancing that has been theorized by anthropologist Johannes Fabian. The new anthropological discourse denied subjects what Fabian has called “coevalness,” or a “placing of the Other in a time different from that of the observer . . . backwards in time.”²¹ This discourse coloured how late nineteenth-century intellectuals enclosed reality in what Miles Orvell described as “manageable forms.” Such forms included “theatrical space, an enclosed exposition or recreational space . . . the space of the picture frame,” and the space of a collection.²²

¹⁹ T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place for Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), i-xviii. Also see Ian McKay, *The Quest for the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 4.

²⁰ Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 8.

²¹ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other*; Tony Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory* (London: Routledge, 2004), 1.

²² Orvell continues: “If the world outside the frame was beyond control, the world inside of it could at least offer the illusion of mastery and comprehension. And on a more elementary level aesthetic level, the replica, with its pleasure of matching real thing with facsimilie, simply fascinated the age.” Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 35-36.

Six Nations in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

This anthropological development was preceded and to some degree anticipated by Lewis Henry Morgan's foundational work of ethnographic description of Onkwehonwe societies and cultures. When Morgan reached the Six Nations of the Grand River reservation in October 1850, he hoped to find items to add to the collection of Onkwehonwe material he had been commissioned to make on behalf of the State of New York. He had just been to Tonawanda, a Seneca settlement closer to the Onkwehonwe homelands in western New York State.

Morgan's visit to the Grand River in 1850 was part of his larger research on Onkwehonwe material culture. His was the first scientific study of the Onkwehonwe.²³ Whereas Morgan met mostly with Onkwehonwe belonging to the Seneca Nation while at Tonawanda, at the Grand River he encountered people belonging to the other nations of the Confederacy: Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk and Tuscarora.²⁴ The Confederacy was formed by the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk under the guidance of the Great Peacemaker, or Deganawidah to end discord among the neighbouring communities. The sixth nation, the Tuscarora, joined in the 1700s. While scholars are in disagreement over the date of the Confederacy's formation, general consensus among scholars places its

²³ In 1851, Lewis Henry Morgan produced the first ethnographic study of the Onkwehonwe, *The League of the Ho-dé-no-sau-nee, or Iroquois* [1851] (Massachusetts: JG Press, 1995).

²⁴ See "Introduction," in *Concerning the League: The Iroquois League Tradition as Dictated in Onondaga* by John Arthur Gibson, ed. and trans. Hanni Woodbury in collaboration with Reg Henry and Harry Webster (Winnipeg: Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics, 1992), xi.

formation in the seventeenth century.²⁵ By visiting a number of Onkwehonwe communities and through his focus on material culture, Morgan would be able to establish the continuity of shared cultural traditions despite geographic distance. The alliance among nations in the Confederacy that had been maintained throughout wars with the French and Huron in the mid-seventeenth century continued during the Revolutionary War, surviving despite individual nations' decisions to align themselves with different parties at different times.²⁶ Although the establishment of the United States-Canada border divided the Six Nations the community, the Grand River was still connected to Onkwehonwe communities remaining in New York in many ways. This cross-border community was strengthened through the adoption by many of the Code of Handsome Lake, a set of teachings given by a prophet, Gaihiwio, in 1799 and 1800.²⁷ Though some of the practices associated with the Longhouse tradition predated Handsome Lake, the codification of ceremonies helped to strengthen and revitalize the traditions.²⁸ The Jay Treaty of 1794, which allowed Onkwehonwe to pass freely between the United States and British North America,

²⁵ Historians who work with oral traditions have found evidence that challenges this estimate, pushing the date back to 1142 from post-contact estimates of 1536, and even the pre-contact date of 1451, to when a solar eclipse, a phenomena associated with the creation of the Confederacy, occurred. The 1451 eclipse theory was originally put forward by Paul A. W. Wallace in "The Return of Hiawatha," *Quarterly Journal of the New York State Historical Association*, 29.4 (1948), 400. The date of 1536 was suggested by Dean Snow in "Dating the Emergence of the League of the Iroquois: A Reconsideration of the Documentary Evidence," in *A Beautiful and Fruitful Place: Selected Rensselaerswijck Seminar Papers*, ed. Nancy Anne McClure Zeller (Rensselaerswijck: New Netherlands Publishing, 1991), 139-143.

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²⁶ Helen Hornbeck Tanner, *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987).

²⁷ Anthony F.C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Random House, 1969), 239-262.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

made travel between reservations and Longhouses for ceremonies and celebrations easier.²⁹

Although the Six Nations communities living along the Grand River had only been consolidated as a reservation for three years before Lewis Henry Morgan's visit, they had been living in the area since 1784.³⁰ The British Crown had awarded land in Upper Canada to Mohawk leader Thayendanegea, or Joseph Brant, and his Loyalist followers. As stated in the Haldimand Proclamation, the document which created this land transfer, the tract ran "six miles deep from each side of the river beginning at Lake Erie and extending in that proportion to the head of said river," and was for "them and their posterity are to enjoy forever" as compensation for lands lost during the Revolutionary Wars.³¹ In addition to the Onkwehonwe, a group of Delaware allies also moved to the Grand River area around the time of the American

²⁹ Helen Hornbeck Tanner, *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 56.

³⁰ The community at the Six Nations of the Grand River are composed primarily of people belonging to the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca and Tuscarora Nations. Though they all belong to the Iroquoian language family, each nation has its own dialect. The Nations' homelands span the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York, where Five of the Six Nations formed a confederacy before the Tuscarora joined around 1717 to 1723. Fenton cites the date of 1722 or 1723, while Tanner cites 1717. See William N. Fenton, "Northern Iroquoian Culture Patterns," 296; Helen Hornbeck Tanner, *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 2. Also see William N. Fenton, "Northern Iroquoian Culture Patterns," in *Handbook of North American Indians*: "Northeast," Volume 15, ed. Bruce Trigger (Washington: Smithsonian, 1978), 296.

³¹ "Haldimand's Proclamation of October 25, 1784." In Charles M. Johnston, ed., *The Valley Of The Six Nations: a collection of documents on the Indian lands of the Grand River*. The Champlain Society For The Government of Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 50-51. This land was acquired through cessions from the Mississaugas: "British agents . . . negotiated with the Mississaugas at the western end of Lake Ontario to secure lands as well as another huge tract to the British. . . The purchase cost the British £ 1 180 worth of trade goods. From this enormous tract of over one million hectares, the British carved out a tract to run nearly ten kilometres deep on each side of the Grand River from its mouth to its source, and awarded it to the Six Nations and others who followed Joseph Brant." Robert J. Surtees, "Land Cessions, 1763-1830," in *Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nations*, eds. Edward S. Rogers and Donald B. Smith (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994), 103-4. Also see "Land Cessions 1783-1873," in *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History*, ed. Helen Hornbeck Tanner (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 155.

Revolution.³² Other groups, such as the Tutelo, Nanticoke, Cherokee and Creek families, had been accepted into Onkwehonwe communities before their northward emigration and settled with them in the new Ontario lands.³³ In addition, a group of Mississaugas, the original owners of the Grand River lands, remained settled at New Credit, adjoining the Six Nations territories, and was officially part of the Grand River reserve.³⁴

Once regarded as important military allies, after 1814, however, as Douglas Leighton has argued, Aboriginal peoples were increasingly understood by the government of Great Britain's colonies as obstacles to widespread settlement.³⁵ The wartime alliances secured in the Royal Proclamation of 1763 had, by the 1830s, been displaced by policies created under the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs with "the settled purpose" of ameliorating the condition of Aboriginal communities "by encouraging in every possible manner the progress of religious knowledge and education generally amongst the Indian Tribes."³⁶

The period leading up to the consolidation of Six Nations into a single

³² "Indian Villages c.1830: Upper Canada," in *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History*, ed. Helen Hornbeck Tanner (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 126.

³³ Sally M. Weaver, "Six Nations of the Grand River, Ontario," in *Handbook of North American Indians: Northeast*, Volume 15, ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Washington: Smithsonian, 1978): 525. The Cayugas adopted the Siouan Tutelo nation in 1753. In 1942, Frank Speck found seven families at the Grand River who acknowledged Siouan ancestors. See Frank Speck, *The Tutelo Spirit Adoption Ceremony, Reclothing the Living in the Name of the Dead* (Philadelphia: Publications of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1942), 3.

³⁴ Annemarie Anrod Shimony, *Conservatism Among the Iroquois at the Six Nations Reserve*. Yale Publications in Anthropology, Number 65 (New Haven: Yale University, 1961), 11, fn. 1.

³⁵ Douglas Leighton, "The Development of Federal Indian Policy in Canada, 1840-1890" (PhD diss., University of Western Ontario, 1975), 23.

³⁶ John Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999), 11.

reservation in 1847 was dominated by concerns and difficulties around land ownership. In the early nineteenth century, Onkwehonwe could profit financially by leasing and selling pieces of their land to settlers who were increasingly making the area their home. This ended when, in response to Aboriginal people and advocates who voiced concern over the increasing loss of reservation lands, the government imposed a pre-emption right that shifted ownership out of the community's hands.³⁷ While providing a substantial base for the band to fund salaries of teachers, a superintendent and other administrative positions, the land sales had also led to a growing fragmentation of the Six Nations community.³⁸ Although the government's decision to move the community into one unified area was controversial, the land still owned by the Six Nations of the Grand River which lay outside the boundaries of the consolidated reservation was surrendered to the Crown.³⁹ Some of this land was subsequently sold, with over 22 000 hectares set aside to create the reservation. At the request of several chiefs, the reservation was situated between two towns, Brantford and Caledonia. Surveying and moving onto this area brought with it the difficulties of clearing the land of trees and rocks for agriculture and evicting non-Onkwehonwe squatters, some of whom needed to be reimbursed for the cultivation

³⁷ Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northeastern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 2006), 10.

³⁸ "From the sale of their lands along the river between 1830 and 1853, they created a band fund of over \$800 000." Sally M. Weaver, "The Iroquois: The Consolidation of the Grand River Reserve in the Mid-Nineteenth Century, 1847-1875," in *Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nations*, eds. Rogers, Edward S. and Donald B. Smith (Toronto: The Dundurn Group, 1994), 182.

³⁹ For a more detailed discussion of this process, including how Onkwehonwe land titles were abolished through the government's enactment of a preemption right, see Taylor, 10, 331-341.

they had already done on the land.⁴⁰ The allotment of forty-hectare plots to families resulted in a settlement pattern reflecting relationships between the nations: the Cayuga, Seneca and Onondaga, groups who had lived together down-river before the consolidation and were more traditional in cultural practices settled in the northeastern section of the reserve, known as “down below,” while the more Christian Mohawk, Tuscarora, and Oneida settled in the central and western sections, which came to be known as “up above.”⁴¹

In 1850, Morgan noticed that some of the land on the reserve was prepared for agricultural use, and remarked in his notebook on the community’s “fair condition of progress.”⁴² Agricultural practices were taught to pupils at the Mohawk Institute, a residential school established at Six Nations in 1831.⁴³ While in part the result of what historian John Milloy has called “social engineering” aimed at encouraging “self-sufficiency on the basis of a modern economy,” the community’s success in agricultural endeavours also afforded them some agency in the management of their community.⁴⁴ Agricultural work was supported by the Six Nations Agricultural

⁴⁰ Ibid., 182-3.

⁴¹ In 1850, Lewis Henry Morgan noted that “[t]he Mohawks are at the upper end of the reserve, and are mostly Christianized. Next are the Onondagas, and next and last the Cayugas. These two nations are almost entirely pagan and adhere to their dances, and ancient customs.” Lewis Henry Morgan, “1850 Grand River Field Notes,” in *Lewis H. Morgan on Iroquois Material Culture*, ed. Elisabeth Tooker (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994), 141; Weaver, “The Iroquois,” 185.

⁴² Lewis Henry Morgan, “1850 Grand River Field Notes,” 141.

⁴³ Charles M. Johnston, “The Six Nations in the Grand River Valley, 1784-1847, in *Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nations*, eds. Rogers, Edward S. and Donald B. Smith (Toronto: The Dundurn Group, 1994): 177-78.

⁴⁴ Milloy discusses how this became a “cooperative effort combining Protestant mission societies, the Indian Department and band councils” to promote the creation of reserves “complete with houses, barns, churches, and schools, and provided with training in agriculture and all the arts and crafts of

Society, formed in 1868 by Mohawk farmers. It held an annual fair where participants could showcase their goods and compete for prizes awarded for superior crops and farming practices.⁴⁵ As well, community members fostered relationships with merchants in Brantford which resulted in the advance of credit to some families despite governmental regulations against such arrangements. This is perhaps no surprise, given that the Six Nations community had used band funds to cultivate the land upon which the reservation was consolidated. Finally, there was the illegal, but financially fruitful, cutting and selling of timber from reserve lands.⁴⁶ Though they would experience financial loss connected to the bankruptcy of the New England Company in 1861, during the mid-nineteenth century the Six Nations of the Grand River was considered to be the wealthiest Aboriginal community in Canada.⁴⁷ With this relative affluence, the population would grow to about 2900 by 1870.⁴⁸

The visible signs of assimilation did not detract from Morgan's aim of locating suitable specimens for his collection. The items he collected, such as wampum beads, a burden strap, knee rattles, and spears, were those that showed something unique about Onkwehonwe culture, through "a language, which is silent,

settler life." John Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999), 11.

⁴⁵ Weaver, "The Iroquois," 220.

⁴⁶ The Indian Protection Act of 1850 "prohibited non-Indians from holding Indians responsible for debts if they lived on reserves" and "[t]he government prohibited the commercial sale of timber from the reserve unless it had been licensed by the superintendent, but on the family's land it could be used for building houses, sheds, fences, and barns." Weaver, "The Iroquois," 187-88.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁴⁸ Tanner, 178.

but yet more eloquent than the written page.”⁴⁹ Yet, he also found details that evidenced different ways of living at the Grand River, some more traditional than others. For instance, some of the people with whom he did business, such as Peter Fish Carrier and Catherine Brant, were Christian, while others, such as John Jacobs, were “pagan” in “customs and habits.”⁵⁰ This variation in life styles and material culture would continue in the decades to follow. Consider the following passages from the 1884 Indian Affairs annual report. In it, the Six Nations Agricultural Society’s sixteenth annual exhibition receives high praise from Visiting Superintendent J.P. Gilkison for its showing of animal husbandry and farming successes. Gilkinson’s report is supported by quotations from newspaper editorials:

No intelligent man could have attended this agricultural exhibition by the Six Nations Indians without being convinced of the great progress made during the past few years in the moral, intellectual and physical condition of these tribes of the aboriginal inhabitants of Canada, whatever may be said to the contrary by superficial observers and commentators on Indian morality, progress and civilization." While another editor remarked: "The exhibition serves fully to demonstrate, in a marked degree, the rapid and continued onward progress of our red neighbours."⁵¹

However, the report’s section on Schools also contains the voices of frustrated government officials who lamented disruptions caused by Longhouse celebrations and traditional ways of making a livelihood. Its author, R. Ashton, explains that “School No. 6” had been closed for the past six months because “the inhabitants of this section form the greater body of those of the Six Nations who

⁴⁹ Lewis Henry Morgan, “1850 Grand River Field Notes,” 138-9.

⁵⁰ Lewis Henry Morgan, *The League of the Ho-dé-no-sau-nee, or Iroquois* [1851], 326-7. Quoted in Elisabeth Tooker, *Lewis H. Morgan on Iroquois Material Culture*, ed. Elisabeth Tooker (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1994), xiii; Lewis Henry Morgan, “1850 Grand River Field Notes,” 141.

⁵¹ Dominion of Canada, *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31st December, 1884* (Ottawa: Maclean, Roger & Co., 1885), 2.

adhere to their primitive faith and customs, and present the most strenuous opposition to all attempts to introduce education amongst them.” This opposition was met with Board members’ attempts to “induce them to send their children to school, and many promised to meet the Board and discuss the subject.” Yet, this meeting did not happen in the end, because “on the day appointed for the meeting, the chiefs called their people together to celebrate the ‘bear dance,’ consequently none attended the school meeting.”⁵²

Six Nations at the Turn of the Century

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the authority of traditional governments and the capacity for self-determination by Aboriginal groups were increasingly whittled away. This occurred, in large part, from the development of the Canadian Indian Department and its policies, most importantly the Indian Acts of 1876 and 1880, and the 1884 Indian Advancement Act. As historian John Milloy explains, it was through this legislation that the government “could... and did, in the ensuing years, determine who was and who was not an Indian, control the election of band councils, manage reserve resources, developmental initiatives, and band funds, and even impose individual landholding through a ticket-of-location system.” It would also regulate “Aboriginal traditions, ritual life, social and political organization, or economic practices [that] could be proscribed as obstacles to Christianity and civilization.”⁵³

⁵² Ibid., 19.

⁵³ Ibid., 21.

While government policies aimed at modifying the social structure and practices of people at Six Nations, contact and exchanges with the surrounding settler community were also changing how they lived. Yet such influences did not mean that previous ways of life disappeared. In her study of sovereignty and identity at Six Nations, Lucille Catapano explains that, at the turn of the century,

[r]eserve life. . . was not totally separate from the majority culture, rather it reflected Natives' hesitant foray into modern society – sometimes embracing progressive ideology – but concomitant with a comforting reverence and quiet yearning for the trappings of “traditional” Iroquoian culture.⁵⁴

It was around this time, in 1898, that Canadian archaeologist David Boyle visited Six Nations. Boyle had visited the Grand River several times before, although this was the year in which Boyle undertook his most substantial fieldwork. His first visit was in 1886, when Chief John Buck showed him wampum belonging to the community. During his visit in 1892 he was adopted into the community, and in 1896 he met the famous poet E. Pauline Johnson.⁵⁵ In the time between Morgan's and Boyle's visits, several other ethnologists had been there to collect material, such as Horatio Hale in 1871, J.N.B. Hewitt in 1888, and Harriett Maxwell Converse in 1892. Though each ethnologist had his or her own particular reasons for studying the Onkwehonwe, all would likely have noticed how government policies encouraging assimilation were impacting the community at Six Nations.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Catapano, 33.

⁵⁵ Hamilton, 108-110.

⁵⁶ Lucille Catapano, “The Rising of the Onkwehònwe: Sovereignty, Identity and Representation on the Six Nations Reserve” (PhD Diss., Stony Brook University, 2007), 44.

Thus, when Boyle visited Six Nations in 1898, he was not primarily concerned with exploring the shared cultural practices of Iroquois communities scattered throughout Canada and the United States, as Morgan had. Instead, Boyle's focus was on "Iroquois Pagans and Paganism on the Grand River Reserve."⁵⁷ Specifically, he was there to "determine the extent to which ancient Iroquois rites had been changed by Christian influences."⁵⁸ The main body of Boyle's report covered Onkwehonwe tradition and Christian influence through a variety of topics: ceremonies, dances and societies associated with the Longhouse community, as well as myths, naming practices, death customs, housing, objects, and clothing worn by the Onkwehonwe. The methodical way in which he writes on this subject in his lengthy report reflects both his diligence as a researcher, and, more broadly, the professionalization of anthropology.⁵⁹

Professionalization of Anthropology in Canada

Twentieth-century critiques directed at ethnographic collecting of this period, such as Boyle's, have heavily criticized the salvage paradigm which guided this project.

⁵⁷ David Boyle, "Archaeological Report 1898," *Appendix to the Report of the Minister of Education, Ontario*, (Toronto: Warwick Bros. & Rutter, 1898), 3.

⁵⁸ Girard Killan, *David Boyle: From Artisan to Archaeologist* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 184.

⁵⁹ For a more detailed discussion of David Boyle's work as it relates to the professionalization of anthropology, see Pym Buitenhuis, "David Boyle, Dilettante or Museum Anthropologist? a Study of Victorian Museums and Historical Collections in Anthropology" (M.A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1989).

Salvage anthropology, as historian Andrew Nurse has explained, sought to document aspects of cultures understood to be disappearing.⁶⁰ From the vantage point of salvage anthropology, objects which showed Euro-North American influence were viewed as inauthentic and therefore less desirable for ethnographic collections. The salvage paradigm confirmed “its own unquestioned assumption that authentic aboriginal cultures were cultures of the past, not the present.”⁶¹ This way of understanding Aboriginal cultures left no room for acknowledging change, innovation and vitality. The legacy of this outlook and its impact on collections cannot not be discounted. At the same time, the broader context around collecting requires that we see it as a more nuanced process.⁶² This ethnographic collecting happened during a period of governmental assimilation policies, designed to slowly eradicate Aboriginal cultural practices and languages. Within this context, the preservationist impulse of ethnographic collecting can be seen as a rare institutional recognition of the historical value of Aboriginal cultures by outsiders. In this light, collectors’ efforts to save objects and document cultural practices may have seemed to be critical work for both the traditionalist Onkwehonwe community at the Grand River, and the ethnologists who visited them.

It is also important to understand in more detail the development of anthropology in Canada during this period. At the turn of the twentieth century,

⁶⁰ Andrew Nurse, “Marius Barbeau and the Methodology of Salvage Ethnography in Canada, 1911-51,” in *Historicizing Canadian Anthropology*, eds. Julia Harrison and Regna Darnell (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 52.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁶² See William Sturtevant, “Does Anthropology Need Museums?” *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington* 82 (1969): 619-50.

ethnology was developing beyond its nineteenth-century role as a pastime for hobbyists and dilettantes, into a professional discipline.⁶³ This paralleled shifts in the intellectual climate of Victorian Canada. As a predominantly Christian nation. Canada was experiencing increasing secularization during this period, and a new faith in social science was replacing a faith in the sacred.⁶⁴ Historian Brian McKillop has characterized this period of as one of continual “interplay between critical inquiry and moral affirmation,” as society sought a balance between individual freedoms and the social good.⁶⁵ German Idealism, filtered through British philosophy, reached the shores of North America and supported the idea that reason could transcend faith without challenging it.⁶⁶ With the introduction of Darwinian thought, evolutionary theory would become the interpretative model of choice for many in the natural sciences and the related disciplines of social science and ethnology. This shift would challenge the unity of faith and science offered through natural theology, which sought to identify the presence of divinity through natural phenomena and patterns identified through the inductive Baconian method.

Evolutionary theory was also applied to cultures. As Adam Kuper has explored, this framework was employed to make sense of Europe’s rapid social development from a feudal to a capitalist society. It ranked societies on a hierarchical

⁶³ Hamilton, 17, 21.

⁶⁴ Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985). Also see Carl Berger, *Science, God, and Nature in Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983).

⁶⁵ A.B. McKillop, *A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era* [1979] (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), viii, 231.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 212.

scale of development, with societies lacking characteristics tied to this newer way of life, such as property ownership, as primitive. While the revolutionary model of development was scientifically sound for making sense of the natural world, when applied to social structures, those qualities defined as more progressive than others reflected traits of the society who had produced the interpretative framework. This is why scholars such as Kuper have argued that the idea of primitive society, which came into its most solid formation in the 1860s and 1870s, was a construction produced by a society anxious about its own transition towards modernity.⁶⁷ Crucially, for this thesis, however, nineteenth century intellectuals assumed that development over time, in both nature and society, was perceptible in “things themselves – rocks, fossils, bodies, tools, pottery.”⁶⁸

Regna Darnell has traced anthropology’s development in Canada from what she has called “an incipient Canadian school” of the 1880s into a formal discipline through the careers of key researchers: Horatio Hale, Alexander Francis Chamberlain, Franz Boas, and Edward Sapir.⁶⁹ Darnell cites the appointment in 1910 of Boas’ student Edward Sapir to the position as director of the Anthropological Survey of the Geological Survey of Canada as a key turning point in the professionalization of the

⁶⁷ “In the second half of the nineteenth century, Europeans believed themselves to be witnessing a revolutionary transition in the type of their society. Marx defined a capitalist society emerging from a feudal society; Weber was to write about rationalization, the bureaucratization, the disenchantment of the old world; Tönnies about the move from community to association; Durkheim about the change from mechanical to organic forms of solidarity. Each conceived of the new world in contrast to ‘traditional society’; and behind this ‘traditional society’ they discerned a primitive or primeval society.” Kuper, 4.

⁶⁸ Bennett, 5.

⁶⁹ Douglas Cole, “The Origins of Canadian Anthropology, 1850-1910,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 8 (1973), 33.

discipline.⁷⁰ In place of a broad application of evolutionary theory, Sapir brought with him to the position at the Victoria Museum a Boasian emphasis on empirical research as a way of understanding cultures and cultural change.⁷¹ In an article published shortly after the Geological Survey was established, Sapir outlined the work to be undertaken by the Canadian Division of Anthropology. Reflecting the structuralist framework through which anthropology approached its subject, Sapir identified several “cultural problems” that “await[ed] investigation,” including a search for “the most simplest and most fundamental forms of aboriginal American culture.”⁷² Related to this was the Division’s aim to determine “what elements of material culture are truly characteristic of any particular culture area and what on the other hand are due to secondary influence.”⁷³

Sapir also expresses the urgency underlying salvage ethnography in this period:

Now or never is the time in which to collect from the natives what is still available for study. In some cases a tribe has already practically given up its aboriginal culture and what can be obtained is merely that which older men still remember and care to impart. With the increasing material prosperity and industrial development of Canada the demoralization or civilization of the Indians will be going on at an ever increasing rate . . . What is lost now will never be recovered again.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Regna Darnell, “The Uniqueness of Canadian Anthropology: Issues and Problems,” *Proceedings of the Second Congress, Canadian Ethnology Society Volume Two*. Canadian Ethnology Service Paper No.28 (Gatineau: National Museum of Canada, 1975), 404.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 402.

⁷² Edward Sapir, “An Anthropological Survey of Canada,” *Science*, New Series, Vol. 4 No. 884 (December 8, 1911): 792.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 793.

Given that Sapir and other ethnologists saw governmental assimilation policies as contributing to the rapid loss of Aboriginal cultures, during this period, ethnologists and the Canadian government periodically found themselves in disagreement over how to best to relate to Canada's First Nations populations. A sharp divide between governmental policies to assimilate Aboriginal peoples and anthropological desires to preserve Aboriginal cultures emerged in the form of disagreements over saving materials and preserving cultural traditions. As Hamilton has illustrated through her reading of correspondence between the Canadian Institute's appeals to the Department of Indian Affairs for funding, "[t]he DIA was more interested in assimilating Aboriginal peoples than helping them to remember and preserve past traditions and material culture. In fact, the Indian Act made the following of many Aboriginal traditions illegal."⁷⁵

Federal policies aimed at Aboriginal assimilation did not stop ethnologists from visiting Aboriginal communities, including Six Nations. While the objects I discuss in my dissertation have led me to focus mainly on fieldwork undertaken by David Boyle, Frederick Waugh and Edward Sapir, they are only three of several ethnologists who visited the community during this period: Horatio Hale in 1871, Erminnie Smith around 1880, David Boyle between 1886 and 1898 J.N.B. Hewitt in 1888, William M. Beauchamp in 1889, Harriet Maxwell Converse in 1892 and 1899, Mark Raymond Harrington in 1907 and 1908, Arthur C. Parker around 1900, Edward Sapir in 1911, Alexander A. Goldenweiser in 1912, and Frederick W. Waugh between 1911 and 1918 (Table 1). The relationships between ethnologists and

⁷⁵ Ibid., 65.

communities formed through collecting were characterized by reciprocity.

Ethnologists would sometimes send supplies for craftspeople, and would occasionally act as political advocates on behalf of communities.⁷⁶ Yet, normally the ethnologists had final authority over deciding what would be collected. For example, when Edward Sapir, the Director of the Victoria Museum explained to ethnologist Frederick Waugh how to discern which items to collect for the museum, he stated that that “the aboriginal element should always be carefully peeled out.”⁷⁷ As will be described in the third case study in this dissertation, it was left to Waugh to determine what was, precisely, representative of this Aboriginal element.

This act of searching for examples of “aboriginal elements” had at its core the assumption that such traits would be obvious to collectors. Yet, choices as to what to collect and what to leave behind were both shaped by, and were constitutive of, the very categories which collectors sought to fill. In the same letter in which Sapir reminded Waugh that “[t]he aboriginal element should always be peeled out,” he also stated that “It seems important to me to keep very clearly distinct that part of [Native] ... culture which may with some degree of certainty be called aboriginal, and that part which has grown up only secondarily through contact with whites.”⁷⁸ Such a

⁷⁶ For example, correspondence in William Stiles’ papers describes how the ethnologist provided Louise Kennedy with supplies, and money for supplies, to make dolls and clothing. Letters to Stiles from Kennedy, Box OC 279 Folder 3, NMAI Archives, Washington, D.C.; Frank Speck’s advocacy work is described by Siomonn Pulla in “From Advocacy to Ethnology: Frank Speck and the Development of Early Anthropological Projects in Canada, 1911-1920” (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 2000) and Siomonn Pulla, “Anthropological advocacy? Frank Speck and the mapping of Aboriginal territoriality in eastern Canada, 1900-1950” (PhD diss., Carleton University, 2006). Also see Luke Eric Lassiter, “Collaborative Ethnography and Public Anthropology,” *Current Anthropology* 46.1 (February 2005), 83-97.

⁷⁷ Edward Sapir to F.W. Waugh, 3 October 1911, Edward Sapir Collector’s File, box 430, file 62, Canadian Ethnology Service, CMC. Quoted in Nurse, “Marius Barbeau,” 54.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

distinction implied a clear temporal separation; ethnologists would place their objects of study in a certain point in the past, while asserting their own place within modernity.⁷⁹

Communities, Collaborations and Collections

Existing scholarship on the history of anthropology in Canada has explored how the actual on-the-ground collaborations between ethnographers and communities were obscured as anthropology grew into a more professionalized discipline.⁸⁰ This shift is understood to have taken place around the time that Sapir was appointed as Director of the Victoria Memorial Museum.⁸¹ Despite his grounding in the more relativist Boasian methodology, the formalized approach he institutionalized brought with it an understanding of collecting which muted the recognition of Aboriginal peoples' contributions.⁸²

⁷⁹ Fabian has stated that anthropology is "a discipline that at once constitutes and demotes its objects through their temporal relegation." Matti Bunzl, "Foreword," in Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: how Anthropology Makes its Object*, Reprint (1983; New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), x.

⁸⁰ As Darnell has noted, "[a] history of anthropology which draws a distinct boundary between community and anthropologist obfuscates the existence of Aboriginal people who worked, to some degree, doing similar things as anthropologists among their own communities." Darnell, "Uniqueness of Canadian Anthropology," 404.

⁸¹ Regna Darnell, "The Sapir Years at the National Museum, Ottawa," in *The History of Canadian Anthropology Proceedings* No.3 Canadian Ethnology Society (Hamilton: McMaster University, 1976), 119.

⁸² Darnell suggests that "The production of such a division [can be] traced back to the professionalization of the discipline of anthropology in Canada, at the centre of which sits the appointment of the Boasian-trained Edward Sapir to the position of direction at the Geological Survey of Canada in 1910." Regna Darnell, "The Uniqueness of Canadian Anthropology," 404; Douglas Cole noted that "Sapir's appointment virtually eliminated amateur anthropology in Canada, thereby all native Canadian anthropologists by implication." Cole, 43.

Rather than accepting the elimination of Aboriginal peoples' contributions to ethnology, the case studies in this dissertation seek to question it, bringing to light the interactive nature of early twentieth-century field collecting. A history of anthropology which draws a distinct boundary between 'community' and 'anthropologist' obfuscates the existence and contributions of Aboriginal people who engaged, to varying degrees, in practices similar to those of the anthropologists within their own communities. Doing so not only makes it difficult to recognize moments of resonance between the agendas of communities and collectors, but also instances of resistance and intervention, or challenges to the discipline.⁸³ Yet, as recent studies such as Michelle Hamilton's demonstrate, there is much to say about the contributions of Aboriginal people who worked in concert with ethnologists in conducting early fieldwork. Her discussions of Boyle's visits to Six Nations reveal the elements of reciprocity found within relationships he formed with such individuals as John Ojijatekha Brant-Sero, Chief John Buck, Jacob Hess, and E. Pauline Johnson, all of whom assisted him in collecting material and accessing traditional knowledge from their community.⁸⁴

As suggested by Hamilton, some individuals who lived in both Onkwehonwe and Euro-American worlds understood the selling of sensitive material to ethnologists or collectors as a form of cultural stewardship. She frames their decisions as accepting an option of preservation, with Aboriginal peoples' agreement reflecting

⁸³ "...before anthropology's time of crisis, and indeed, even during they years of its professionalization in the mid-nineteenth century, auto-anthropology, or anthropology written by the discipline's ostensible 'subjects,' mounted a series of challenges to anthropology." Scott Michaelsen, *The Limits of Multiculturalism: Interrogating the Origins of American Anthropology* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1999), 1.

⁸⁴ Hamilton, 108-111.

how “traditions concerning the care and custody of objects changed.”⁸⁵ This may have been one factor supporting collaborations between ethnographers and communities, which Lassiter argues, is a tradition extending back to Morgan’s work with the Seneca Ely Parker. This relationship is also an early example of how collaboration can kindle in anthropologists a desire to engage in activism on behalf of their communities of study.⁸⁶ The case studies in this dissertation build on Hamilton’s and Lassiter’s studies by extending the investigation forward in time, showing how alliances between ethnologists and community members were formed and maintained into the mid-twentieth century.

Some of the most useful evidence for the collegial relations between Six Nations community members and anthropologists is provided by the obituaries that anthropologists A.A. Goldenweiser and William Fenton wrote to celebrate individuals with whom they had worked. In exploring how anthropological discourse has informed Indigenous representations of Onkwehonwe traditionalism, Theresa L. McCarthy surveyed the biographies recorded in these obituaries, which she describes as a distinct genre. She found that the anthropologists tend to “acknowledge Iroquois intellectuals and their invaluable gifts of knowledge.” She notes too that “[m]any obituaries clarify how at times, and in the context of particular relationships, “the rivers did [in fact] flow both ways,” and that “[g]iven the value Haudenosaunee

⁸⁵ Ibid., 135.

⁸⁶ Lassiter, 85-6.

people place on practices involving the passing of loved ones and condolence of the bereaved, this form of acknowledgment is immensely meaningful.”⁸⁷

Onkwehonwe living at Six Nations also found value in material culture and collecting. A 1942 publication on the Six Nations Agricultural Society reflects the ways in which objects had taken on important meanings for the Six Nations community. In this article, entitled “Indian Arts and Crafts,” the author, Nora E. Jamieson, describes several items commonly made by people at Six Nations and Aboriginal peoples of North America in general, such as baskets, straw hats and pottery. She then offers readers an interpretation of what they show about the people who made them:

These are only a few of the Indian’s old and modern handicrafts, but it gives us sufficient proof, that in his character were interwoven industry, patience, economy, endurance, originality and skill. In fact, he is nothing short of a genius.⁸⁸

Explaining in greater detail the purpose of the year’s annual Indian Fair at Ohsweken, she writes, “this year is unique in that it links the new with the old, the present with the past in the line of its exhibits depicting modern Indian handicraft and the relics of the remote past and planning for the revival of some of the lost arts.”⁸⁹ Yet, she cautions readers against associating this artistic revival with a desire to return to a primitive past, explaining, “[w]e modernists pride ourselves in being industrious and

⁸⁷ Theresa L. McCarthy, “Iroquoian and Iroquoianist: Anthropologists and the Haudenosaunee at Grand River,” *Histories of Anthropology Annual* 4,1 (October 2008), 166.

⁸⁸ Nora E. Jamieson, “Indian Arts and Crafts,” in *Six Nations Indians: Yesterday and Today, 1867-1942* (Ohsweken: Six Nations Agricultural Society, 1942), 11.

⁸⁹ Jamieson, 17.

economical, but were it possible to travel backward to the place where the Indian began, we would truly ‘curl up and die’.”⁹⁰

Jamieson’s comments suggests that she understood the handiwork made by members in her community as evidencing their belonging both within an Onkwehonwe artistic tradition and a tradition of modernity. They demonstrate industriousness and a focus on the economic aspects of life, both of which are associated with modernity. And though her division between “modern Indian handicraft” and “the relics of the remote past” resonate with the dichotomies that permeate modernity, her description of the fair’s focus, to “link the past with the present,” suggests that she understood in the material culture of her community both evidence of cultural continuity and of belonging within a modern society.

During the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, both Onkwehonwe and settlers grappled with “an inner dichotomy,” characterized by engaging in a modern world while remembering what it was like “materially and spiritually, in worlds that [were] not modern at all.”⁹¹ This memory would become more difficult to sustain as modernization, with its increasing industrialization, development of mass communications, capitalist growth, and intercultural contacts, would replace communities’ previous ways of life with an increasingly fragmentary sense of the world around them.⁹² Displacement of religious beliefs and traditions with science

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

and reason brought “cultural strain, moral confusion, and anomie.”⁹³ In this “paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity” that characterizes modern life, collecting became a nexus where both the Six Nations and settler communities would find potential to order an increasingly unfamiliar world.⁹⁴

Collections made by anthropologists may, as sated by the contemporary Onkwehonwe museum professional I quoted in the epigraph for this chapter, “carry a taint.” This taint is composed of the residual mis-interpretations imposed on objects within the salvage paradigm that drove much collecting in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Six Nations community is acutely sensitive to the legacy of collecting and its implications for Onkwehonwne knowledge. A paper entitled “Hodinohsoni/ Rotinonhsyonni Intellectual Rights and Responsibilities,” published by the Six Nations Polytechnic Indigenous Knowledge Centre, summarizes ways in which traditional knowledge should be treated and shared. Its author, Rick Hill, explains the negative impact of less careful sharing practices of the past:

Our ancestors shared many ideas, values, beliefs, and traditions with the newcomers, and often, that exchange was well intended. However, the newcomers (missionaries, teachers, military officers, government agents, and scholars) did not comprehend the true significance of this knowledge and often wrote about the knowledge in incomplete terms. Numerous stories told to scholars, writers, artists and strangers that were later published in books without the storytellers' permission. This resulted in incorrect information and improper use of the knowledge.⁹⁵

⁹³ Lears, xvii.

⁹⁴ Berman, 15.

⁹⁵ Rick Hill, “Hodinohsoni/Rotinonhsyonni Intellectual Rights and Responsibilities,” Ohsweken: Six Nations Polytechnic Indigenous Knowledge Centre, last modified 21 December 2009, <http://www.snpolytechnic.com/WEBSITE-IKC%20doc%20Hodinohsoni%20Intellectual%20Rights%20and%20Resp.pdf>

Yet, knowledge can be recovered. In his study of Onkwehonwe creation stories, Kevin J. White used the term “gatherer” to describe Euro-North American ethnologists. White chose this term because it foregrounds “the primary purpose and craft they employed and are remembered for.”⁹⁶ White’s study draws attention to how ethnologists who transcribed Onkweohnwe creation stories overlaid their understandings “on top of the Indigenous wisdom and intellect.”⁹⁷ His close readings of various creation stories collected over time demonstrate how there is the possibility of “returning the wisdom and intellect” in ethnographic material to the communities from which they were gathered.⁹⁸ They also shows how “Haudenosaunee voices,” “knowledge, wisdom and worldview,” can be recovered from the “condensed and filtered formats of academic literature.

While the residual effects of ethnographic collecting upon collections must be acknowledged, I feel it is important to also recognize the agency of Onkwehonwe to choose which objects to sell, or to participate in this ethnographic project on their own terms. Despite the taint they may carry, collections also contain Onkwehonwe knowledge which the Six Nations community wanted saved. In spite of their differing motivations for collecting, anthropologists and Onkwehonwe shared a sense that objects mattered. For anthropologists of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth

⁹⁶ Kevin J White, “Hodenosaunee Worldviews through Iroquoian Cosmologies: The Published Narratives in Historical Context” (PhD Diss., SUNY Buffalo Department of American Studies, 2007), 2.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 22.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 34.

centuries, “knowledge itself was thought of as embodied in objects.”⁹⁹ Onkwehonwe have expressed a similar view.¹⁰⁰ At the same time, differences between both groups cannot be discounted. It is essential to balance this idea of indigenous agency in collecting processes with poverty and desperation, both of which also informed choices to collude with ethnologists’ collecting projects. Keeping these factors in mind, the case studies in this dissertation demonstrate how collecting could, in some cases, offer an opportunity for Onkwehonwe to make themselves “at home in a constantly changing world.”¹⁰¹ In this “paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity” that is modernity, collecting became a nexus where both the Six Nations and settler communities would connect through a desire to re-order a world ruptured by industrialization and colonial/settler encounters.

⁹⁹ Stocking explains, “As a discipline organized around the principle of change in time, and devoted primarily to groups that had left no written records, anthropology had a strong internal intellectual push toward the collection and study of objects permanently embodying moments of past cultural or racial development. With an evolutionist framework, human physical remains, archaeological finds, and contemporary material culture were the most ready means of graphically illustrating the development of mankind...” George W. Stocking, *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 114.

¹⁰⁰ For example, Christina Barbara Johannsen’s thesis on efflorescence in Onkwehonwe art explored the role of the artist in sustaining a shared Onkwehonwe identity between communities in constant contact with Euro-North Americans, and separated geographically. Interviews with over 560 Iroquoian artists and craftspeople from several Iroquoian reserves were used to show how Onkwehonwe displays a shared identity “not on a real level but on the imaginary level” and how, among the Onkwehonwe, “their symbols continue to link them to their ancestors and to the perception of their past while giving meaning to their present-day interactions with others.” Christina Barbara Johannsen, “Efflorescence and Identity in Iroquois Arts (PhD Diss., Department of Anthropology, Brown University 1984), 163.

¹⁰¹ Berman., 6. He also states that modernism is “any attempt by modern men and women to become subjects as well as objects of modernization, to get a grip on the modern world and make themselves home in it.” Berman, 5.

CHAPTER 2

ALEXANDER GENERAL'S LACROSSE STICK

On the shelves of the University of Pennsylvania's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology sits a lacrosse stick similar, in many ways, to other lacrosse sticks in museum collections (Fig. 2.1).¹ The shape of the upper portion of the rounded stick is curved and, as the game's name in English and French suggests, it resembles a shepherd's crook, or bishop's *crozier*.² The particular rounded curve of this stick is common to lacrosse sticks made in the early to mid-nineteenth century, before the game was taken up and altered by settlers who also introduced changes to the shape of the sticks.³ It is made of hickory, a wood often used in the manufacture of lacrosse sticks because of its lightness and durability, and its smoothness makes it shine.⁴ Its netting is made of the commonly used native tanned leather thong, patched in places with commercial leather.⁵

While it resembles other lacrosse sticks in many ways, certain decorative elements displaying a high level of artistic virtuosity draw viewers in and make it stand out among other lacrosse sticks in collections. The technique of chip carving, found more commonly on cradleboards, has been used to create lines of crosses,

¹ Lacrosse Stick (53-1-17), Frank Speck Collection, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

² Frances Eyman, "Lacrosse and the Cayuga Thunder Rite," *Expedition* (Summer 1964), 14-15.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Frederick Wilkerson Waugh, Notebook (1912), "No. 4 - Medicines - Six Nations 1912," Box 200R Folder 21, F.W. Waugh Collector's File, Canadian Ethnology Service, CMC.

⁵ Eyman, 16; 53-1-17 catalogue card, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

zigzags, and small triangles that encircle the stick where a player would hold it. Below this section, near the end, two hands joined in a handshake are carved in the round. The stick's end has been carved in the form of a hand holding a ball. Below this, a small band contains two animal motifs, staggered between two crowns. The stick's other end, to which the netting is attached, has been carved into the shape of a dog's head. A dark stain applied to these carved elements heightens their contrast with the smoothness of the stick and drawing one's attention to the artists' skill and careful attention to detail.

The name of the man who made the stick is presently unknown. But it is clear from the museum's accession record that Isaac General, a man from Six Nations, owned and used it for some time before his death in 1845.⁶ After his passing, the stick was acquired by his grandson, Alexander T. General. As a Chief, General was known as Deskaheh and respected for his knowledge of Cayuga traditions and ceremonies.⁷ It was likely his knowledge in these areas that made him a valuable collaborator for American ethnologist Frank Speck, who collected the stick for the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Viewers may be captivated by the virtuosity of the carving or struck by a resonance with the shapes of other lacrosse sticks, or by its distinctive motifs.⁸ Yet, even without this recognition, the stick asks recipients to broaden their understanding

⁶ Ibid., 16.

⁷ Eyman, 15.; Elisabeth Tooker, "The 'Speck Iroquois Collection' in the University Museum," *Expedition* (Vol. 29 no.1, Spring 1987), 50.

⁸ "[T]he power of the displayed object to . . . evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged." "Resonance and Wonder," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Laving (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 91), 53.

of lacrosse beyond its role as a Canadian sport, and look more deeply into its relationship to its place within the Longhouse community, and the significance of the Crown to Onkwehonwe history. The motifs carved onto the stick are indices of iconographic prototypes significant to Onkwehonwe history and cultural practices. They also express the importance of ties between the Six Nations and the British Crown – an alliance upon which claims of Onkwehonwe sovereignty were, and are, built.

Before describing the motifs carved on the stick in greater detail, I will attempt to place this stick within a nexus from which it emerged. I discuss representations of lacrosse by settlers and in Canada during the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries, highlighting how lacrosse served a site of intercultural exchange. Next, I review ethnographic literature on lacrosse to contextualize this game within Onkwehonwe traditional cultural practices. These discussions provide a context for a more detailed discussion about Alexander T. General, Frank Speck and the collecting of the lacrosse stick. Next, I draw on existing interpretations of this stick to supplement my reading of its decorative motifs. I argue that the carved motifs represent an egalitarian relationship between the Onkwehonwe and British, with the Six Nations positioned as sovereign allies rather than subjects of the Crown, a position that was challenged by the Canadian government formed through Confederation. This stick, in conveying both the maintenance of a link between lacrosse and the Longhouse tradition and a message about the relationships between Six Nations and the Crown in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, exerts an agency. It invites contemporary viewers to remember the alliance made between the Crown and

Six Nations, and to re-connect lacrosse to more the traditional purpose of linking groups together. Given the significance of the stick's symbolism, it expresses the notion that General, a Cayuga traditionalist, found collecting to be a point of intervention in the preservation of his community's historical memory.

Settlers and Lacrosse

In anthropologist Frances Eyman's analysis of the three lacrosse sticks made at the Grand River between the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, she attributes the stick owned by Alexander T. General's grandfather to the oldest form of the game, or as follows: "the 'old game,' played prior to 1860."⁹ Eyman differentiates this type of game from others through the following way: "[i]n this stage of lacrosse, the Cayuga played only with Indian teams, no Official Handbook of lacrosse was yet known, and guards had not yet appeared on Cayuga ball-sticks."¹⁰ While Eyman identified this as an early form of lacrosse, settlers' accounts from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries reveal the game had a longstanding presence within Onkwehonwe communities.

Colonial officials and explorers would become acquainted with lacrosse through viewing games played among Onkwehonwe communities. During the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, lacrosse was often played during treaty negotiations, which could take place over several days. If journal entries are any indication, Euro-North American officers were not so much interested in the cultural origins of

⁹ Eyman, 16.

¹⁰ Ibid.

lacrosse, but rather, were primarily intrigued by the community's enthusiasm for the game. Consider this passage from the Journal of Joseph Bloomfield, written while he was serving with the American army stationed near Albany around 1776:

Two grand matches were made up between the Oneydas & Tuscaroras at Ball, or what the Scott's call Golf. Nearly 100 Dollars worth of their Ornaments were staked each time, which were gained by the Tuscaroras . . . At these Matches the Ornaments staked are generally collected from the Women who generously give some of their wampum, silver, Bead Bracelets, others their Earrings, nose-Jewels, & Pins. Others give necklaces, belts &c. & all kinds of Indian-Ornaments.¹¹

Bloomfield also commented on the size and diversity of the audience of such games: "[t]he Genl. –Officers of the Army; & all the Indians, Men & Women, attended the matches at Ball to day."¹²

The first known sketch of a lacrosse stick was made in 1790 by Italian explorer Count Paolo Andreani (1763-1823). The small drawing of a stick in his diary accompanies the following description of a game he witnessed while visiting an Oneida community in what is now upstate New York:

During the months of the harvest this [Oneida] nation does not go out [to hunt], except in the case of some extraordinary need; and during this time the men amuse themselves almost every day at a game which consists of making a ball jump. Every player is equipped with a kind of racket, about 4 feet, 6 inches long, which in the lower end curves considerably; thus resembling the string of a bow, it serves to throw the ball. One who gets to catch it with this instrument and, making it jump in this manner, prevents others from touching it until he can make a determinate number of rounds of a large field, he is the winner. This game requires agility at running and dexterity; and we attended one such game that lasted 2½ hours, during which a great sum of money was bet by both sides. The other amusements consist of running – at times on foot to a certain goal, at times on horseback.¹³

¹¹ Mark. E. Lender and James Kirby Martin, eds., *Citizen Soldier: The Revolutionary War Journal of Joseph Bloomfield* (Newark N.J.: New Jersey Historical Society, 1982), 91-2.

¹² *Ibid.*, 92.

In his two-volume work on the life of Joseph Brant, published in 1865, William Stone describes a lacrosse match played at a council meeting held at the Grand River in 1794. This meeting was between Brant's Mohawk community now living in this location, and Chief Shagoyewatha's (Red Jacket's) pro-American Seneca living at Buffalo Creek.¹⁴ From Stone's description, readers get a sense of the cultural lens through which he viewed the game, as he mistakenly assumes that the "the Six Nations had adopted from the whites the popular game of ball, or cricket." He continues, remarking on its popularity among the Onkwehonwe:

[i]ndeed, so much attached were they to this manly exercise, that the game had become national throughout the Confederacy; and it was no uncommon thing for one nation to challenge another to play a match – upon a much larger scale, beyond doubt, than was ever practiced among the pale-faces.¹⁵

As suggested by the passages above, settlers were fascinated by the athleticism that players displayed on the field. But the crowds also caught their attention. Stone describes another lacrosse game observed by his friend Samuel Woodruff, played between the same two groups three years later in 1797, to settle the score.¹⁶ This description captures more detail about how the game was set up on the field, and also gives a better sense of the immensity of the event:

¹³ Thomas Vennum, *Lacrosse Legends of the First Americans* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 44. Vennum cites, "translation courtesy Cesare Marino, courtesy of Laboratorio di Ricerca e di Documentazione Antropologica, Bergamo, Italy."

¹⁴ Thomas Vennum, *American Indian Lacrosse: Little Brother of War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 53-68.

¹⁵ William Leete Stone, *Life of Joseph Brant: (Thayendanegea) including the border wars of the American revolution, and sketches of the Indian campaigns of Generals Harmar, St. Clair, and Wayne, and other matters connected with the Indian relations of the United States and Great Britain, from the peace of 1783 to the Indian peace of 1795, Volume 2* (Albany: J. Munsell, 1865), 445.

¹⁶ Although I found little information on Woodruff, Stone notes that Woodruff was "a friend of the author, a highly respectable and intelligent octogenarian." Stone, xxiii.

The place selected for the trial of strength, agility, and skill, was a broad and beautiful green, of perhaps one hundred acres, perfectly level, and smooth as a carpet, without tree or shrub, or stone to encumber it. On one side of the green the Senecas had collected in sort of irregular encampment – men, women, and children – to the number of more than a thousand. On the other side the Mohawks were actively assembling in yet greater numbers. The stakes deposited by each party were laid upon the ground in heaps, consisting of rifles, hatchets, swords, belts, knives, blankets, wampum, watches, beads, broaches, furs, and a variety of other articles of Indian utility and taste – amounting, in the whole, according to the estimate of Captain Brant, to upward of a thousand dollars a side. By the side of the stakes were seated a group of the aged Chiefs – “grave and revered seignors,” whose beards had been silvered by the frosts of many winters, and whose visages gave evidence of the toils of war and chase.¹⁷

As amusing as matches were for audiences, they could also have a serious tone: for example, it was reported that, when the game took a violent turn, Shagoyewatha suggested the Seneca go to war with the Mohawk.¹⁸

The nature of lacrosse play would shift as groups were re-defined and relationships altered by colonization. Donald Fisher has argued that as the wars of the late-eighteenth century and the colonial dynamics of the early-nineteenth century dispersed Onkwehonwe communities onto smaller reservations throughout what is now upstate New York and Southern Ontario, the ball game was no longer necessary for settling territorial disagreements.¹⁹ The introduction and acceptance of Christianity also shaped the ways in which communities would play lacrosse. Since missionaries among the Mohawk of Caughnawagha in the early-eighteenth century disapproved of the community using lacrosse to honour the Creator, the spiritual motivations for playing lacrosse were largely replaced by an understanding of the

¹⁷ William Leete Stone, *Life of Joseph Brant*, 445.

¹⁸ Thomas S. Abler, “SHAKÓYE:WA:THA” (Sagoyewatha, Otetiani, Red Jacket),” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*. http://www.biographi.ca/EN/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=3126 [accessed 01 August 2012].

¹⁹ Donald M. Fisher, *Lacrosse: A History of the Game*, 20-21.

game as a sport.²⁰ There is evidence, however, that other Onkwehonwe communities continued to play lacrosse ceremonially. For example, in his 1898 Report for Ontario's Minister of Education, archaeologist David Boyle remarked that while visiting Six Nations, "a dance was given and a game of lacrosse played for the recovery of a young man of the Upper Cayugas, who was ill with lung trouble."²¹

Lacrosse was introduced to settlers in Montreal by the Onkwehonwe of Caughnawagha in the mid-nineteenth century. As urban centres grew in population, more people were interested in playing and watching the game, and it soon gained a following in nearby areas such as Cornwall and Ottawa.²² The publication of a rulebook in 1860, written by George Beers, standardized the size of the playing field, number of players, and other elements of the game. Guidelines for the game emphasized British sporting values of punctuality, gentlemanliness, and mental strategy or "scientific play," making it amenable to a modern, urban society.²³ Furthermore, as Vennum notes, as Onkwehonwe teams began to play against teams of settlers, playing techniques also changed.²⁴ Eight years later, Beers would publish *Lacrosse: The National Game of Canada* (1869), the rulebook that would become the standard for the National Lacrosse Association, formed in 1867. To mark the

²⁰ North American Indian Travelling College, *Tewaarathon (Lacrosse) Akwesasne's Story of Our National Game* (Cornwall: North American Indian Travelling College, 1978), 35.

²¹ Boyle, 85.

²² Hugh MacLennan, "Introduction," *Images of Sport in Early Canada*, ed. Nancy J. Dunbar (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976), 11; G.W. Beers, *Lacrosse: The National Game of Canada* (Montreal: Dawson Brothers, 1869), viii-xii.

²³ Fisher, 26, 210; Poulter, 215-16, 231.

²⁴ Vennum recounts a report about a Dominion Day match played between the Brampton Excelsiors and the Six Nations Reserve in 1874, which "suggests that the Indians had not yet developed an adequate defense against Canadian dodging skills," *Little Brother of War*, 132.

adoption of lacrosse as Canada's national game, a championship match was played on the first Dominion Day, in the summer of 1867, between The Montreal Lacrosse Club and the Caughnawaga team.²⁵ Just under a decade later, Beers traveled with a team of twenty-seven Canadian players, thirteen of whom were Onkwehonwe, to play a game of lacrosse for Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle.²⁶

With the popularity of lacrosse growing among settler communities, it is no surprise that Onkwehonwe craftsmen skilled in producing lacrosse sticks seized the opportunity to supply a demand and benefit economically. Though Onkwehonwe craftsmen remained the main source for lacrosse sticks throughout this period, they were met with competition from Anglo-Canadians who attempted to commercialize lacrosse stick production and sale in the 1880s.²⁷ Yet, the trade of carving or making items for sale would continue to be a viable source of income for Onkwehonwe men well into the first decade of the twentieth century.²⁸ Taken from the 1901 *Annual Report* of the Department of Indian Affairs, the following passage contextualizes lacrosse sticks within the broader category of items made for the marketplace:

In the older provinces and more particularly in Nova Scotia and Quebec such of the Indians as live within or have ready access to the centres of civilization earn a by no means inconsiderable amount by the sale of certain manufactures,

²⁵ Nancy J. Dunbar, *Images of Sport in Early Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976): 17.

²⁶ Barbara K. Adamski, "Lacrosse," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/lacrosse> [accessed 21 August 2012]

²⁷ Fisher, 256.

²⁸ According to Waugh, "[a] growing idea of specialization in men's employments is recognizable. A man, for instance, who through physical inability was an indifferent hunter, might employ himself in the making of such articles as bows and arrows, wooden utensils, or in silversmithing and other handicrafts. The idea that these occupations were derogatory seems to have gradually disappeared." Waugh, *Iroquois Foods and Food Preparation*, Memoir 86, No 12. Anthropological Series, (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1916), 10.

some of which peculiar to themselves. These cover a large variety of articles, and include all sorts of Indian wares, such as bead-work, mats, mittens, moccasins, snow-shoes, lacrosse sticks, also baskets, axe and pick handles, chums, barrels, tubs, casks, oars, skiffs and canoes.²⁹

The manufacture of such items for sale would continue to provide economic support for Aboriginal communities into the 1930s.³⁰

In the early nineteenth century, lacrosse was a traditional game belonging to the Onkwehonwe. Although government policies of this period aimed to rid the community of many culturally distinct practices, the growing nation of Canada claimed lacrosse as their national sport.³¹ This paradoxical moment of intercultural exchange reflects what Nicholas Thomas has described as “[t]he ambivalence of settlers toward natives” which “was sharpened by an emerging preoccupation with national identity.” This relationship to Natives, Thomas notes, “was conspicuous in British dominions such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand from the 1890s, if not somewhat earlier.”³²

²⁹ Dominion of Canada, *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30th June, 1901* (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1902), xxv-xxvi.

³⁰ In another *Annual Report*, “Many Indians throughout the Dominion in past years have made a comfortable living from the sale of native wares, such as baskets and moccasins, also lacrosse sticks, hockey sticks, axe handles, etc., and other articles in the making of which they are adept. The market for all these things at the present time is particularly bad, thus adding another group of formerly self-supporting Indians to the department's relief list.” Dominion of Canada, *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31, 1931* (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1932): 8.

³¹ Dunbar, 17.

³² Thomas continues, “The discovery that national (and other) identities were ‘inventions’ has become a hallmark of recent scholarship, but long ago artists and writers in those countries just mentioned presumed that the nation lacked an identity, and that it was their task to invent one. In doing so, producers of culture – such as designers in various media as well as painters and poets – frequently turned to what was locally distinctive, either in the natural environment or in indigenous culture.” Furthermore, he points out how this history is shared by colonized peoples: “While indigenous peoples’ claims to the land are being denied or forgotten, elements of their elements of their culture are being prominently displayed and affirmed.” Nicholas Thomas, *Possessions*, 12.

Though the significance of lacrosse would shift with colonization, bringing with it the appropriation of an Onkwehonwe game as a symbol of a burgeoning Canadian national identity, and with this, the potential to make sticks for commercial markets, the Onkwehonwe maintained strong ties to the game. In a recent description of Six Nations, one scholar noted: “[t]he Six Nations reserve is almost certainly the world’s main nurturing ground for lacrosse players, an ancient Aboriginal game that at one time was Canada’s national sport.”³³

Lacrosse In Ethnographic Notes

The game of lacrosse as described by ethnologists differed in several ways from the game described by other settlers and colonial officials. Ethnographic and auto-ethnographic written records indicate that lacrosse was played by the Onkwehonwe over the centuries for a number of reasons: to honour the Creator, as part of a funeral ceremony, to maintain the vitality of a community’s hunters and warriors, to honour or memorialize a famous player, and to resolve disputes between nations.³⁴ It was also played as an amusement at various gatherings and events such as the 1883 Grand Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition, held at Caughnawaga.³⁵

While the Onondaga term for the game is *dehuntshigwa’es*, or, “they hit a rounded object,” the term “lacrosse” was derived from the French “jouer à la crosse,” used first, before contact with North America, to describe any game played with a

³³ Anthony J. Hall, *The Bowl With One Spoon, Volume II. Earth Into Property: Colonization, Decolonization, and Capitalism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), 520.

³⁴ See Vennum, *American Indian Lacrosse*, 35.

³⁵ “A lacrosse match between the Caughnawaga and the Cornwall Indian teams was won by the former in three straight games, and Mr. Walbank has kindly guaranteed championship flags to the winners.” *The Montreal Daily Witness*, 29th September, 1883.

curved stick and ball. This term eventually came to be used to describe games played in Aboriginal communities with similar equipment.³⁶ As lacrosse is only one of several ball games played Indigenous people across the Americas, it has a deep history that links the Onkwehonwe to other Aboriginal cultures. This connection, which extends to pre-colombian cultures of Mesoamerica, has led anthropologist Susan D. Gillespie to assert that ball-games are a “manifestation of an ideology that is at least pan-New World.”³⁷

Early newcomers’ discussions of lacrosse focus on its resemblance to those from ages past: for example, eighteenth-century French Jesuit missionary Father Joseph François Lafitau noted similarities between the rules of lacrosse and those of a game called “the *epicyrus*” as described by second century Greek scholar and rhetorician Julius Pollux of Naucratus. Lafitau concluded from both its similarities to past games and ones played in South and North America in the eighteenth century that “it is not possible that the ancients did not know it.”³⁸

Over a century later, in his *Third Regents Report for the State of New York*, Lewis Henry Morgan described the ball game as “of the highest antiquity, universal among the Red races, and played with a zeal and enthusiasm which would scarcely be credited.”³⁹ Morgan would have written this report at least a few years after

³⁶ Vennum, *American Indian Lacrosse*, 71-2. Lacrosse was known by the Mohawk as *tewaarathon* and by the Anishinaabe as *baggawaty*.

³⁷ Susan D. Gillespie, “Ballgames and Boundaries,” in *The Mesoamerican Ballgame*, ed. Vernon L. Scarborough and David R. Wilcox (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991): 317.

³⁸ Father Joseph Francois Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians Compared With the Customs of Primitive Times* (1724). ed. trans. William N. Fenton and Elizabeth L. Moore (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1974), 199.

³⁹ Lewis Henry Morgan, “Third Regents Report for the State of New York” (1849) in Elisabeth Tooker, *Lewis H. Morgan on Iroquois Material Culture* (Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1994),

Alexander T. General's stick was made, and one year before Morgan visited the Six Nations of the Grand River. Morgan's observation reflects the longstanding presence of lacrosse within Onkwehonwe communities during this period, as well as the strong impression lacrosse had upon outsiders.

In the late nineteenth century, two other studies of lacrosse were published. Like many ethnographic studies produced within the framework of the salvage paradigm, they highlight changes to the game resulting from colonization and intercultural exchange. J.N.B. Hewitt, who studied Onkwehonwe communities extensively, published a short note on lacrosse four decades later in 1892. He described the game's current form as "modern," and "an adaptation of the ancient, perhaps proethnic, mode of playing the game by the Iroquois and northern tribes generally."⁴⁰ W.M. Beauchamp's 1896 article entitled "Iroquois Games" touched upon lacrosse, explaining that "[a]mong ball games that of lacrosse may be the oldest remaining and the most widely spread," and "was played for the sick."⁴¹ Echoing Lafitau and Morgan, Beauchamp found that, like the other traditional games described in his article, lacrosse was tied to pre-contact Onkwehonwe culture. Yet, reflecting the prevailing assumption that Onkwehonwe culture was slowly fading, he noted that the game played at the end of the nineteenth century, had only "the flavor of antiquity."⁴²

81/191.

⁴⁰ J.N.B. Hewitt, "Iroquois Game of La Crosse," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 5 No. 2 (April 1892), 189.

⁴¹ W.M. Beauchamp, "Iroquois Games," *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 9 No. 35 (October-December 1896), 272.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 277.

Early twentieth century ethnographer Frederick Wilkerson Waugh also studied lacrosse. The material he collected about lacrosse contrasts with popular representations circulating in the early twentieth century that depicted the game as a part of an emerging Canadian national identity. The details about lacrosse and lacrosse sticks collected by Waugh reflect his own interests and collecting agenda, which centered on Onkwehonwe technologies and material culture. Waugh understood the two to be related: in a letter written in January of 1912 to Edward Sapir, he explained that “[i]n the matter of purchasing specimens, I am obtaining those chiefly which are illustrative of technological processes.” A month later, he wrote again, explaining that “[t]he idea of ‘technology,’ which I have sometimes made use of in our correspondence, seems to have widened out somewhat into that of “material culture,” which would, of course, be a more inclusive term.”⁴³

As part of this larger project of documenting technologies of the Onkwehonwe, Waugh recorded details related to the manufacture of lacrosse sticks. This included sketches and detailed directions for making lacrosse sticks, as well as relevant vocabulary in languages spoken at Six Nations.⁴⁴ For example, Chief John A. Gibson explained how strings were measured: “dju’’deeya’ da’ “ means “one wing” and refers to the “amount of string measured off by extending both arms.”

⁴³ Frederick Waugh to Edward Sapir, January 12, 1912; February 10th, 1912 Box 637 F.1, Waugh, F.W. (1912), Edward Sapir Collector’s File, Canadian Ethnology Service, CMC.

⁴⁴ F.W. Waugh, Notebook “Iroquois 1912,” p.11. Box 200, Folder 3 Waugh, F.W. (1912), Ethnology Archives, CMC., CMC; Lacrosse Sticks, B200, f10, p.5; B200R, f21; “Chief John Gibson - Lacrosse Strings, Salt & water for several days until water is clean not bloody. Put in warm water & ashes to get hair loose, then warm water salt & a little ashes until hair is loose. (10 days to tan) then scrape stretch, & dry, trim up, dampen a little to cut strings, regulating width with thumb, 10 hds enough for a man’s stick”; Folder 29 Waugh, F.W. (1912) Notebook, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

According to Gibson, “10 wings enough for man’s stick do up in a small bundle & soak.”⁴⁵ John Jamieson Jr. and another unnamed individual described which types of wood were most useful for making: “[b]itter hickory, also slippery elm is used for lacrosse sticks. The first is best as it is light; and tough although it takes a mark easily (best for lacrosse sticks: hickory, Bitter hickory, American elm, Slippery elm, Willow - pretty good and very light).”⁴⁶

Waugh’s interest in manufacture led him to document how lacrosse sticks were made, and purchase tools for making lacrosse sticks, including an oak frame used to bend them.⁴⁷ An Oneida man named Gus Yellow provided Waugh with a considerable amount of material on lacrosse sticks as part of his more general discussion of carved items. He explained to Waugh the process of steaming and shaping lacrosse sticks, accompanied by a diagram showing the tools used to bend the sticks.⁴⁸ As well, Waugh captured photographs of Gus Yellow engaged in steaming and bending a lacrosse stick (Fig. 2.2).⁴⁹ In addition to sharing his expertise in lacrosse stick making with Waugh, Gus offered other details related to wooden items made in his community. He explained how to differentiate between wooden paddles

⁴⁵ Notebook, Folder 29 Waugh, F.W. (1912), Ethnology Service, CMC.

⁴⁶ “No. 4 - Medicines - Six Nations 1912,” p.21, Box 200R; J. Jamieson Jr. June 26/12, Notebook “Iroquois 1912,” p. 12, Box 200, Folder 3 Waugh, F.W. (1912), Ethnology Archives, CMC.

⁴⁷ It was “obtained from Mrs. Betsy Skye and used by her late husband, Jas. Skye, Onondaga. This is made of oak and is for three kinds of sticks: Men’s, youth’s and boy’s.” Waugh Specimen list Jan-Feb 1912, p.3] CMC; CMC III-I-404; Waugh Specimen List Jan-Feb 1912, p.3 Accession Records, CMC.

⁴⁸ CMC Digital Collection E200-6.1.003. Waugh drew a diagram depicting the method of bending and shaping lacrosse sticks (1912). Digitized page from Waugh’s notebook. E200-6.1.003, E2006-00360, CMC.

⁴⁹ 18811, 18840, 18841, Photograph Collection, CMC.

made for longhouse ceremonies and those for stirring corn soup, sand hared directions for making carved paddles and medicine masks.⁵⁰

Waugh mentions lacrosse in several of his notebooks devoted to topics other than manufacturing processes, such as medicines games, and stories.⁵¹ Beyond exemplifying how Waugh's collection documents the skilled craftsmanship practiced among individuals at Six Nations, together, the notes and objects within Waugh's collection contain details that suggest the permeable boundaries between games, everyday life, medicine, and ceremony. For instance, a recipe for a decoction made with few-seeded sedge, for lacrosse players, is mentioned in Waugh's notes on traditional Onkwehonwe foods and uses of plants:

To clean stomach out, ready for running, playing lacrosse. Muscles will be strong. Vomit with this. 6 qts water, 2 plants of grass-like one & one of dock. Boil a little. Drink 1/2 right away. Take a little more the 2nd time, leaving enough to wash whole body outside.⁵²

Another Six Nations' chief with whom Waugh spoke, David Jack, explained that a lacrosse player could wash himself and his lacrosse sticks with a type of decoction made from the pitcher plant to increase his abilities. In his words, "[b]ugs and worms drop straight into the cups formed by the [pitcher plant's] leaves and for this reason it is considered that the ball in lacrosse, for instance, will drop into player's stick and into goal." Chief Jack also stated that the catching ability of this plant, whose

⁵⁰ For example, Waugh recorded that Gus Yellow stated "Paddles for longhouse ceremonies are plain with clan animals painted in red paint. Do not use these carved paddles" Waugh Fieldnotes, p.5, Box 200, Folder 6, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

⁵¹ See F.W. Waugh, B200, f3, f6, f10, p.5, B200R f21, f22 p.22, f29, B201R, f7 p.8, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

⁵² F.W. Waugh, "Notebook, 1916," Ethnology Archives, CMC.

traditional name is uwà da'see, meaning "whirlwind, or everything being drawn into its leaves," also made it a love medicine.⁵³

The notes about lacrosse medicine Waugh recorded in his notebooks speak to the relations between Onkwehonwe material culture and traditional knowledge. He also collected items that demonstrate these connections. A small lacrosse stick was listed along with several other miniature items in a notebook containing details about medicine articles and amulets.⁵⁴ Miniatures were made by followers of the Longhouse tradition to address a person's sickness, or a dream. The type of miniature object made would depend upon a number of factors, including the particularities of an individual's ailment.⁵⁵

That such relations between lacrosse and other aspects of Longhouse traditions were maintained throughout the century is supported by fieldwork undertaken by Anne-Marie Anrod Shimony at Six Nations between 1953 and 1958. She found that items made by some Longhouse members as "protective charms" included "Husk Faces, snow snakes, corn pounders, lacrosse sticks, ears of corn, sticks like those for the tug-of-war game, canoes, paddles, knives, and ladders."⁵⁶ Furthermore, Shimony noted that lacrosse was one of the games played as a

⁵³ Waugh notebook, Collector's Files, Ethnology Service, CMC EA B218R f15-5). This medicine illustrates how the Onkwehonwe have what Shimony describes as an "animistic and animistic" worldview. As she explains, "it is the spirit force of each item, each plant, or each supernatural which is the active medical component... Thus, if one takes an herbal medicine, for example, sweet flag, to relieve a sore throat, it is not only the herb itself which relieves the soreness, but also the spirit force of all sweet flags..." Shimony, *Conservatism*, 263.

⁵⁴ F.W. Waugh, "No. 4 - Medicines - Six Nations 1912," Box 200R Folder 21, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

⁵⁵ For Waugh's description of how miniatures were used among the Longhouse followers at Six Nations, see B201 f13, p.25, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

⁵⁶ Shimony, *Conservatism*, 183.

ceremonial game when such an activity was needed to cure an individual in the community.⁵⁷ She explained the role of the person for whom the game is played: “the patient throws the first snow snake; he throws up the ball in the football and lacrosse games; he shakes first in the Bowl Game; he ducks under the tug-of-war stick in the tug-of-war game... All these actions are part of the medicine itself and essential for its efficacy.”⁵⁸

In Waugh’s collection, the significance of lacrosse to traditionalist ceremonies comes through in the form of a story told by the Cayuga Chief David Jack. Entitled “Power received from Thunderer,” the story tells of two young boys who were befriended by another boy on their way to play a game of lacrosse. Their new friend was a human manifestation of the Thunderer spirit who, in granting them strength and power, helped them to win the game.⁵⁹ The role of lacrosse in mid-twentieth century Longhouse ceremonies is apparent in Elisabeth Tooker’s description of the Midwinter Ceremony.⁶⁰ Tooker noted that “at Sour Springs, the Thunder ceremony also included the playing of a lacrosse game between the performance of the tobacco invocation and the War Dance.”⁶¹ Frank Speck, who acquired the carved lacrosse stick from Alexander T. General, noted that lacrosse was part of the Thunder rite. This is a single-day ceremony performed in midsummer to honour the Seven Thunderers who

⁵⁷ Ibid., 179.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 179-80.

⁵⁹ F.W. Waugh, Notebook B201, f24., Ethnology Archives, CMC.

⁶⁰ Elisabeth Tooker, *The Iroquois Ceremonial of Midwinter* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1970): 26-27, 30-31.

⁶¹ Tooker, *Iroquois Ceremonial*, 34.

cleanse the earth and offer protection from underground beings such as serpents.⁶²

Speck documented the details of this ceremony during one of his visits to Six Nations. He visited the community as early as 1924, and returned in the winters of 1932-36 and at other points between 1938 and 1947, before his death in 1950. Speck focused much of his research on the Midwinter rites practiced in the Cayuga Longhouse. This research would grow into a book on the subject, published in 1949. Alexander General, the chief from whom Speck acquired the lacrosse stick, is listed as a co-author of this book, and his contributions to ethnographic works such as Speck's would lead him to be considered a key Aboriginal intellectual by those in the field.⁶³ He also contributed to Speck's collecting project.

The Speck Collection

Speck completed his doctoral studies at the University of Pennsylvania and in 1912 and was appointed the first professor of its newly created Anthropology Department.⁶⁴ He became Chair of this department in 1925 and remained there until his death in 1950.⁶⁵ In addition to the Six Nations of the Grand River, Speck worked with "Iroquois-speaking Cherokee in the South" and the Delaware, some of whom

⁶² Speck, *Midwinter Rites*, 117-118; Shimony, *Conservativism*, 162-5; Tooker, *Iroquois Ceremonial*, 34.

⁶³ Shimony, for example, pays tribute to General in "Alexander General, 'Deskahe,' Cayuga-Oneida, 1889-1965," in *American Indian Intellectuals of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Margot Liberty (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 177-98.

⁶⁴ Tooker, "The 'Speck Iroquois Collection,'" 49; J.J. Ahern, "Biographical Note," *Guide to the Frank Gouldsmith Speck, 1881-1950, Papers, 1925-1937* (University of Pennsylvania Archives and Record Centre, September 2008), 1-2.

⁶⁵ William Fenton, "Frank G. Speck's Anthropology," in *The Life and Times of Frank G. Speck, 1881-1950*, ed. R. Blankenship (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1990), 20.

settled on the land granted to the Six Nations along the banks of the Grand River. Earlier in his career, he studied the material culture of the Huron-Wendat of Lorette and conducted some fieldwork with the Oka Onkwehonwe community.⁶⁶ The lacrosse stick acquired by Speck from General is part of the “Speck Iroquois Collection.” It reached the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology through Samuel W. Fernberger, a psychologist who had worked with Speck on interpreting items he collected from Aboriginal communities.⁶⁷ He purchased this and other items from Speck for the museum. Speck’s Six Nations collection, which includes other ritual items such as medicine masks, illustrate his interest in Longhouse ceremonies and cultural changes over time.⁶⁸

Although the details around how Speck acquired this stick are uncertain, other descriptions of Speck’s relationships with the communities he studied contrast with Vennum’s rather dismissive description of the collector as “some inquisitive anthropologist who had wandered onto the reservation.”⁶⁹ Speck’s work among Aboriginal groups in Eastern Canada, which focused on territoriality, has been said to demonstrate how Speck acted as an advocate for those communities in the early-twentieth century when they were struggling to maintain political control over their land in the face of increasingly paternalistic government policies.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Tooker, “The ‘Speck Iroquois Collection,’” 49-50.

⁶⁷ See, for example, Fernberger, Samuel W, and Frank G Speck. “Two Sioux Shields and Their Psychological Interpretations.” *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 33 (1938), 168-178.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁶⁹ Vennum, *American Indian Lacrosse*, x.

⁷⁰ Siomonn Pulla, “Anthropological advocacy? Frank Speck and the mapping of Aboriginal territoriality in eastern Canada, 1900-1950” (PhD. diss., Carleton University, 2006), 1.

Alexander T. General

Details about Alexander General's life, including his engagement in political matters at Six Nations, support the possibility that selling this stick to Frank Speck was an intervention in the historical memory of Six Nations. While Speck was certainly eager to collect items displaying the kind of exceptional artistic virtuosity found in the carved elements on this stick, General, for his part, may have wanted to share items which represented his community's political history, as sovereign allies with Britain.

In a biographical essay, anthropologist Annemarie Anrod Shimony draws on information she gathered while working closely with General in the 1950s to describe his upbringing, chieftainship and other roles within the Six Nations community. Born in 1889 to an Oneida mother and Cayuga father, General, like many children at Six Nations at the turn of the century, accompanied his parents during the summer while they worked on a settler's family farm in the nearby town of Grimsby Beach, Ontario, and attended school at Six Nations in the winter. After the tragic and sudden death of his father when he was about ten years old, General's mother could make ends meet only by renting out their farm and taking on work where she could find it among the surrounding settler community, bringing her son with her. General inherited his mother's farm upon her passing, and gained respect and status in his community for his agricultural success during the first part of the twentieth century.⁷¹

⁷¹ Shimony, "Alexander General, 'Deskahe,' Cayuga-Oneida, 1889-1965," in *American Indian Intellectuals of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Margot Liberty (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 178-80.

Though his formal schooling was disrupted by the family's numerous moves to find work, General consistently attended the Longhouse.⁷² When he grew up, General broke with the matrilineal tradition of his community – a choice that was not uncommon – and become a noted member of the Upper Cayuga Longhouse.⁷³ He would eventually come to be “the major Sour Springs speaker and ritualist,” elevated to the role of Chief upon his brother Levi's passing in 1925.⁷⁴ It was because of his role as a hereditary chief and his reputation for being knowledgeable of Cayuga rituals that General became acquainted with several mainly which between 1932 and 1959, Shimony noted that General “remembered Speck with affection.”⁷⁵ He also expressed feelings of goodwill toward others who visited Six Nations in search of information about Onkwehonwe culture, writing, “many people have come to me for information in regard to the religion of the Longhouse. Many friends I have got among the anthropologists and ethnologists to take notes on what I have learned in my study as to the ceremonials.” The friends with whom General worked included not only Shimony and Speck, but also “W.M. Fenton, C.M. Barbeau, J.A. Noon, M. Rioux, J. Witthoft, F. Lounsbury, M.C.H. Randle, F. Voget, E. Dodge, M. Meyers, G. Kurath, [and] S. Weaver.”⁷⁶

⁷² Ibid., 180.

⁷³ Ibid., 178. Such instances of affiliation with the father's longhouse were not uncommon. As Shimony noted in her study of conservatism at Six Nations, “if the father was a stronger individual the offspring might learn his father's language and identify with his father's group.” *Conservatism*, 44.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 181, 189.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Reflecting on elements that shaped General's character and conduct, Shimony stated that while his role as chief and ritualist certainly influenced his desire to openness towards anthropologists, he was "most importantly . . . a political activist. More than anything else, he believed in the sovereignty of his people."⁷⁷ He was an active member of the Indian Defense League, an organization that grew out of difficulties encountered by the Onkwehonwe community when crossing the border between the United States and Canada in the 1920s.⁷⁸ In 1930 he visited England to explain that Canada did not have authority over the Onkwehonwe and to convince the monarchy of his community's sovereignty.⁷⁹ This trip was unsuccessful, as Great Britain "insisted . . . that the matter of Iroquois governance was legally under Canadian jurisdiction."⁸⁰

As a chief, General was in a position to maintain the traditions of his community and remind outsiders of their historical alliance with Britain, the basis upon which claims of sovereignty were made. Shimony described the General's commitment to such endeavors:

[he] would be a living example of his own convictions, and he would participate in every imaginable Iroquoian activity. The people would see him, the anthropologists would see him, the Canadian Government would see him, and he would explain to them all how his people had been robbed of their birthright. To this end he helped organize and run the Indian Defense League and the Mohawk Workers. To this end he instructed the ethnologists, to this end he talked to the community, wrote to the news-media, and testified in courts. He was a chief driven by a noble purpose, and he molded a life of

⁷⁷ Ibid., 194.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 188-9; Also see Barbara Graymont, *Fighting Tuscarora: The Autobiography of Chief Clinton Rickard* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1973).

⁷⁹ Ibid., 189.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

service to his aims. As far as the anthropologists were concerned he was both kind and sophisticated, for though he helped them, he also hoped they would help him, not by any active measures . . . but by writing Iroquois history and culture from his point of view.⁸¹

In his interpretation of the carved stick upon which this chapter focuses, Vennum asserts that “[t]his lacrosse stick had some ritual significance, enough to have remained a carefully preserved family heirloom.”⁸² The stick’s “ritual significance,” perceived in its carved motifs, although ambiguous, may have made it particularly interesting to Speck, given his interest in the ceremonial aspects of Longhouse traditions. General’s decision to give or sell the carved lacrosse stick to Speck must not therefore have been made lightly. Given his commitment to his convictions, it is logical to assume that his decision was part of his larger goal of instruction and cultural preservation. A closer look at the stick supports this interpretation: it is a material representation of General’s inter-related goals of maintaining a memory of Onkwehonwe traditions and the continued recognition of Onkwehonwe alliance with the Crown, the foundation upon which his claims for Onkwehonwe political sovereignty were, and are, built. Though the technical virtuosity embodied in the stick would have made it an appealing item to Speck and continues to captivate viewers, the symbolism of the motifs would have conveyed specific and highly important messages. Because of this significance, General’s decision to place it in his hands was more than just ‘brokering’ or ‘collaborating.’ It was an act of intervention. Although we may not be able to interpret the precise meaning of the motifs on the stick, enough can be known to suggest that its

⁸¹ Ibid., 194.

⁸² Vennum, *American Indian Lacrosse*, x.

preservation in a museum collection inserts into this public institution an artifact that speaks directly to nineteenth-century political dynamics of the Six Nations.

The Symbolism of General's Lacrosse Stick

When Speck acquired the decoratively carved stick from Alexander T. General at Six Nations, he also purchased two others. Together, they formed a series that illustrated changes in the manufacture techniques of lacrosse sticks.⁸³ Yet, the carved elements on the earliest stick have led it to attract more scholarly attention than the other two. I will discuss how other scholars have approached this stick and offer further interpretations of my own.

In a 1985 article about the relationship between lacrosse and political organization among Aboriginal groups in North America, Marshall Joseph Becker includes images of the lacrosse stick Speck collected from General, as well as descriptions of some of its carved motifs.⁸⁴ Thomas Vennum's book on lacrosse opens with a description of his personal encounter with this stick, which he uses as an entry point for discussing the game's relationship to war. Vennum, who had viewed hundreds of sticks, found this one to be both "one of the oldest surviving" sticks, and "by far the most extraordinary piece of sports equipment" he had ever seen.⁸⁵ Its placement at the beginning of his book suggests that Vennum found this stick to be of particular importance to the history of the game of lacrosse and its relation to the

⁸³ Vennum employs the three lacrosse sticks collected from General to discuss the evolution of their manufacture. Vennum, *Lacrosse Legends*, 45-48.

⁸⁴ Marshall Joseph Becker, "Lacrosse: Political Organization in North American as Reflected in Athletic Competition," *Expedition* 27, 2 (1985), 53-6.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, x.

broader history of the Onkwehonwe. It appears to have fascinated Vennum on an aesthetic or material level as well. Vennum described how the museum presented the stick to him: it was “laid out in its protective plastic covering like some corpse in a body bag, with a museum identification tag tied to its protruding handle as though it were a cadaver’s toe.”⁸⁶ It may be that Vennum’s training as an ethnomusicologist sensitized him to the dissonance between seeing objects made to be in motion treated as specimens. Regardless, his critical judgment of standard museum practice compellingly expresses the emotional reaction the stick generated. His personification of the stick is particularly striking and suggests his sense of its agency and enforced confinement in the museum.

The decorative elements on this stick have caught the eyes of other scholars, over the past half century, whose familiarity with more standard versions have also led them to recognize its unique qualities. In an article published in the University Museum’s own journal in 1964, Frances Eyman described the stick as an example of both the changing shapes of lacrosse sticks over time, and as a demonstration of artistic virtuosity.⁸⁷ She noted, “Our specimen with its carved decoration and drilled string-hole is the most refined of all the old ones. Its outline, net-form, and other functional details are like those of other ancient Iroquois crosses. Its decoration is exceptional.”⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Vennum, *American Indian Lacrosse*, xii.

⁸⁷ Eyman, 16.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Decorated with both chip and relief carving techniques, the stick reflects the artistic tradition of carving shared by Onkwehonwe and settlers in the nineteenth century. Chip-carving and relief carving are a very old decorative techniques found in British and northern European folk art traditions. Both also share characteristics with carving traditions of ancient Egypt, Rome, Greece, and Scandanavia.⁸⁹ Further research into the use of such decorative elements as crowns and clasped hands in colonial carving would also be useful for exploring the extent to which iconography used on this stick was part of a carving tradition shared by the Onkwehonwe and settlers.⁹⁰

Vennum, asserts that “[i]f correctly read, the meanings encoded in the decorations concerned warfare, not friendly competition.”⁹¹ Extrapolating from this, he continues, “the object itself, although shaped like a lacrosse stick, was not intended to be played with; rather, it was meant to symbolize certain beliefs relating to the game to battle.”⁹² As such, Vennum interpreted this stick as “an icon of war.”⁹³ Read with this in mind, the iconography of the hand holding a ball carved on the handle appears to suggest “that this curved piece of wood is as much a weapon of combat as a tool for play” (Fig. 2.3).⁹⁴ He also likens the ball in hand to the carved animal heads

⁸⁹ Paul N. Hasluck, *Manual of Traditional Wood Carving* [1911] (New York: Dover, 1977), 131-152.

⁹⁰ Thank you to Prof. Laura Peers for this suggestion. For a description of iconography used in colonial wood carving, see Erwin O. Christensen, *Early American Wood Carving* (New York: Dover, 1952).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, xiii.

⁹² *Ibid.*, xii-xiii.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, xiii.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

on ball-headed clubs that are made to appear to be holding the ball end of the club in their mouths:

[i]n the days of Indian warfare, when such ball clubs were used to dispatch an enemy, the symbolism associated with the club had it that the bird's claws (or the animal's mouth) *released* the ball, which flew through the air, struck the enemy's head, and killed him.⁹⁵

Like Vennum's, Eyman's interpretation also draws attention to the resemblance between this motif and ball-headed clubs, explaining that it was a "favourite motif for the ball-headed war club of ancient times, and this design may refer to the ritualized warfare acted out in the game."⁹⁶ Yet, she suggests that it may represent a personification of the stick, adding to its power to catch, like a hand.⁹⁷

At the top of the lacrosse stick, near the netting, the end has been carved into the shape of a dog's head (Fig. 2.4). The dog's ears hang down on either side of its head, and its long snout resembles that of a hound. Its mouth has been drilled to allow for the netting to be attached there, and it appears to grasp in its mouth the leather thong to which the stick's netting is secured. Eyman notes that "[t]he animal head probably had symbolic and magical meaning – the stick in pursuit of the ball like a coursing hound."⁹⁸ Yet, other possibilities emerge from considering the significance of dogs in Onkwehonwe stories and traditions. As with the ball-in-hand motif, it is difficult to conclusively determine the precise meaning the maker wanted

⁹⁵ Ibid. In his 1985 article on lacrosse, Marshall Joseph Becker also notes that on this particular stick, "[t]he ball-in-hand motif at the butt end. . . is reminiscent of ritual ball-headed war clubs also made by the Five Nations people." see Becker, "Lacrosse: Political Organization," 54.

⁹⁶ Eyman, "Lacrosse and the Cayuga Thunder Rite," 16.

⁹⁷ Ibid. Eyman explains, "[t]he ball may not be touched with the hand, but only with the crosse; possibly the crosse is here represented holding the ball as securely as though in the hand."

⁹⁸ Ibid.

to express through the carved dog. While its precise meaning is uncertain, the longstanding use of dogs in Onkwehonwe art speaks to how this carved element represents one of the “foundation metaphors and symbols” in Onkwehonwe art which have unified the community throughout geographic displacements and community fragmentation.⁹⁹

For instance, J.N.B. Hewitt recorded an Onkwehonwe story entitled “The Woman and the Dog.” In this short story, a large dog who sits beside a woman as she works on her embroidery. When she gets up to stir the boiling kettle, the dog unravels her work “continually, as fast as she embroiders the dog unravels, or if she could finish her work, or if she ever does the end of the world will come that instant.”¹⁰⁰ Barbara A. Mann’s interpretation of the story, relates the dog to Sky Woman, who falls from the Sky World and lands on the turtle’s back in the Onkwehonwe creation story. Mann reads the dog as “the White Dog of the midwinter ceremony” which bears “the thanks of humanity that continuously create reality while the Grandmother of Existence beads on, steady as rain, inexorable as night.”¹⁰¹

In another story recorded by J. Curtin and J.N.B. Hewitt, attributed to the Seneca, a dog disguises himself as the son of his owner, a hunter, and plays lacrosse

⁹⁹ In her thesis, Johannsen argues that Onkwehonwe artists have sustained this symbolic system: “Each community has been strongly affected by the dominant culture around them and each has reacted in their own distinctive ways. They are also separated by great distances, and ancient rivalries continue to foster disunity. All said, there is nevertheless a unity to which they all subscribe. They are all Iroquois, “People of the Longhouse”... The reality they experience in their daily lives can foster disunity, but it is countered by their genius for living at an imaginary level particularly expressed through their arts” Christina Barbara Johannsen, “Efflorescence and Identity in Iroquois Arts” (PhD. diss., Brown University, 1984), 123.

¹⁰⁰ Hewitt quoted in Thomas McElwain, “Seneca Concepts of Time.” *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 7.2 (1987), 275.

¹⁰¹ Barbara A. Mann, “The Lynx in Time: Haudenosaunee Women's Traditions and History,” *American Indian Quarterly* Vol. 21, No. 3 (Summer, 1997), 424.

against a malevolent chief. Upon winning two games, the dog-man cuts the head off of the chief, freeing the community from his harsh ways. The community praised the dog's family, and the hunter became the new chief.¹⁰² Vennum suggests that this story illustrates Onkwehonwe "beliefs about the supernatural powers (*orenda*) of dogs."¹⁰³ This *orenda*, Vennum explains, can be attributed to the fact that dogs exist in a "liminal category" in traditional Onkwehonwe culture, or, as Vennum states, "they exist in a borderline area between common, everyday life and the sacred, religious, or spiritual realm."¹⁰⁴

This liminal quality held by dogs may also explain their use in a mid-Winter rite, known as the White Dog Ceremony. The White Dog Ceremony, also known as the White Dog sacrifice, was practiced by the Onkwehonwe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and, according to one anthropological source, was largely, but not entirely, discontinued by the mid twentieth century.¹⁰⁵ In fact, Frank Speck stated that the last sacrifice took place in the winter of 1931-32 among the Onondaga at the Six Nations of the Grand River.¹⁰⁶ The ceremony, which was one of several events which marked the New Year, involved strangling a pure white dog that was then burned along with other items used in the rite, such as tobacco and coloured

¹⁰² J. Curtin and J.N.B. Hewitt, "Seneca Fiction, Legends and Myths," in *Twenty-eighth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1911* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911), 234-36. Quoted in Vennum, *American Indian Lacrosse*, 312-14.

¹⁰³ Vennum, *Lacrosse Legends*, 33. Vennum also finds this story illustrates the relationship between lacrosse and gambling in Onkwehonwe culture (see pp. 36-41).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁰⁵ Harold Blau, "The Iroquois White Dog Sacrifice: Its Evolution and Symbolism," *Ethnohistory* Vol.11, No.2 (Spring 1964), 97. In Blau's article, he describes how this ceremony was practiced at the Onondaga Longhouse at the Onondaga Reservation in central New York.

¹⁰⁶ Speck, *Midwinter Rites*, 145-6.

ribbons.¹⁰⁷ In William Fenton's description of the ceremony as it was performed at the Six Nations of the Grand River, he explains that the White Dog "is a dream token from all the people to the Creator and it becomes his guardian."¹⁰⁸

According to Blau, early written records left by Jesuit missionaries suggest that "dog sacrifice was common among the tribes of the Eastern Woodlands and Great Lakes areas and beyond," and that "such sacrifices occurred for a variety of reasons and were part of an established cultural pattern."¹⁰⁹ He found within the literature two recurring concepts related to the dog used as a sacrifice: first, that "the dog plays the part of scapegoat and purifier of the people by virtue of its ability to carry away the sins of the people."¹¹⁰ Writing in 1851, shortly after the maker of the carved lacrosse stick at Six Nations passed away, Lewis Henry Morgan refuted the idea that the burning of the white dog was to carry away sins, because "[i]n the religious system of the Iroquois, there is no recognition of the doctrine of atonement for sin, or of the absolution or forgiveness of sin."¹¹¹ He concluded, rather, that the ceremony was meant "to send up the spirit of the dog as a messenger to the Great Spirit, to announce their continued fidelity to his service, and also to convey to him

¹⁰⁷ Blau, 97; Lewis Henry Morgan, *The League of the Ho-de-no-sau-nee or Iroquois* [1851] (Mass: JG Press, 1995), 199.

¹⁰⁸ William Fenton, *Outline of Seneca Ceremonies at Coldspring Longhouse*, Yale University Publications in Anthropology, No.9 (New Haven: Yale University, 1936), 12. Op Cit. Harold Blau, "The Iroquois White Dog Sacrifice: Its Evolution and Symbolism," *Ethnohistory* Vol.11, No.2 (Spring 1964), 103.

¹⁰⁹ Blau, 104.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 109-110.

¹¹¹ Morgan, *League*, 207.

their united thanks for the blessings of the year.”¹¹² The dog, Morgan explains, was chosen because its fidelity as a hunter’s companion “was emblematical of their fidelity.”¹¹³ Taken together, the stories and ceremony described above speak to a significance that dogs hold in Onkwehonwe culture, as a guardian of humanity and messenger. If the stick was made for ceremonial games, perhaps the dog symbolized the importance of the message reaching the Creator.

Alternatively, the carved dog may represent protection, keeping safe the agreement or bond signified by the other imagery found on the lacrosse stick. This interpretation is grounded in meanings attributed to dog motifs found on wampum belts. One of the most well-known belts of this sort is the Two Dog Wampum treaty belt of Kahnehstake, made sometime between 1775 and 1780. This belt was made in reference to the community’s agreement with the Sulpician Order of Priests to allow them to build their mission, while retaining the Lake of Two Mountains area as Mohawk land. Although interpretations of the belt vary, most agree that the two dogs are guarding the agreement signified by the men holding hands on either side of the men holding hands. As York and Pindera describe, the belt

depicted men on either side of a cross – a symbol of the Mohawk’s adherence to the faith of the Sulpician priests. A long white band was meant to symbolize the limits of their territory. At each end of the belt was a figure of a dog, who was to stand guard over the land, barking warnings to the Mohawks if anyone disturbed them in their lands.¹¹⁴

Another interpretation, by historian Georges Sioui, states:

¹¹² Ibid., 207-8.

¹¹³ Ibid., 208.

¹¹⁴ Geoffrey York and Loreen Pindera, *People of the pines: the warriors and the legacy of Oka* (USA: Little Brown, 1991), 86-7.

The wampum belt, confirming the original land concession at Kanesatake, shows the representatives of the Nations hand-in-hand as a sign of friendship. At the centre is a cross, signifying that the First Nations peoples would always be loyal to the Catholic Church; and at each end of the belt is a dog, representing the common will to protect and watch over the land.¹¹⁵

Despite the differences between interpretations, both see the dogs as protecting the agreement contained within the space between them. Another belt, known as the “Akwasasne Wolf Belt,” also bears two outward facing canine figures, between which are two human figures holding hands.¹¹⁶ Just as the dog secures the lacrosse stick’s netting to the stick, so too it may strengthen the ties between groups represented by other carved motifs on the stick: crowns, and two animals.

I will now describe four smaller carved motifs and offer an interpretation of their significance on the stick. The motifs decorate a band running around the stick, placed under the hand grasping the ball (Fig. 2.5). There are two crowns, separated by two animal motifs that appear to be a deer and a beaver. The carved crown or animal motifs are not mentioned in Eyman’s, Becker’s, and Vennum’s discussion of the stick’s iconography. Yet, these motifs are most interesting in the context of exploring how the stick illustrates aspects of Onkwehonwe relationships with settlers and the new Canadian nation developing around the same time as the maker formed

¹¹⁵ Georges Emery Sioui, “Comments on the Excerpt from Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance,” Aboriginal Perspectives NFB Website – History and Origins, <http://www3.nfb.ca/enclasse/doclens/visau/index.php?mode=theme&language=english&theme=30663&film=51406&excerpt=612188&submode=about&expmode=3> [accessed 14 August 2012]

¹¹⁶ Several interpretations of this belt and its origins exist, although agreement that it indeed came from Akwasasne resulted in its return to this community from the New York State Museum in 2005. One interpretation suggests that its iconography represents the Covenant Chain. See Darren Bonaparte, “‘As Long As Water Runs, Skies Do Shine, And Night Brings Rest’: The Covenant Chain of Peace and Friendship Returns to Akwasasne,” Wampum Chronicles <http://www.wampumchronicles.com/wolfbelt.html> [accessed 14 August 2012].

and carved the stick. As American ethnologists, Speck, Eyman and Vennum may not have been as attuned to significance of the longstanding historical relationship between the Onkwehonwe and the British, of which Canadian anthropologists would have been aware. Before discussing the crown motifs in greater detail, I will discuss the animals in relation to the kinship structure at Six Nations.

Both the deer and beaver are clans found among the Six Nations of the Grand River.¹¹⁷ Clans of the Six Nations were of particular interest to mid-nineteenth and early-twentieth century ethnologists such as Lewis Henry Morgan and A.A. Goldenweiser, who were studying kinship systems.¹¹⁸ In a recent Mohawk publication, the clan system is described as “the fundamental building block” of the country, with its significance likened to the bones in a body: “[l]ike the human body, the bones are what gives the body structure and the ability to function, so the clan serves the same purpose in the societies of the Rotinonhsón:ni people.”¹¹⁹ Shimony identified clans as one of eight units of social organization at Six Nations.¹²⁰ Although an individual’s membership in a particular clan is passed down through the mother, a number of other factors, such as the adoption of members into the Six Nations community, the immigration of groups into the community from the United

¹¹⁷ Shimony, *Conservatism*, 52.

¹¹⁸ Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1877); A.A. Goldenweiser, “The Clan and Matrilineal Family of the Iroquois League,” *American Anthropologist* (Vol. 15) (1913), 696-697.

¹¹⁹ Tom Porter, *Clanology: Clan System of the Iroquois* (Cornwall: Native North American Travelling College, 1993), 7.

¹²⁰ The eight units of organization Shimony lists are: the nuclear family, the extended family, the father’s kindred, the lineage, the clan, the moiety, the tribe, and the league. Shimony, *Conservatism*, 20-1.

States, or the depletion of a clan, have also shaped the distribution of clanship titles. Clans have had a number of functions and obligations over time, such as electing sachems and chiefs, maintaining a common burial place and adopting newcomers, some of which had shifted by the mid-twentieth century. Clans are still, however, considered significant to members of Onkwehonwe communities, particularly those who are members of the Longhouse.¹²¹

In the Longhouse, clans are split into two groups, called moieties. Like clans, moieties are named after animals. They are considered to be of equal value, and to act as complementary groups: each has its own door and side in a Longhouse, and while there is variation between Longhouses, in general, they perform reciprocal duties for each other during ceremonies.¹²² Onkwehonwe communities vary in how clans are organized into moieties. According to a source from Akwesasne, a Mohawk community near Cornwall, Ontario, the Deer, Bear, Snipe, and Eel clans are united as one moiety, with the Wolf, Beaver, Turtle, and Hawk clans forming another moiety.¹²³ In the mid-twentieth century at the Six Nations' Sour Springs Longhouse, that the Deer, Ball, Bear, Turtle, Beaver, Eel and Hawk clans formed the Turtle moiety, with the Heron, Wolf and Snipe clans forming the Wolf moiety.¹²⁴ Thus, if the deer and beaver on the lacrosse stick represent clans from Six Nations, it is likely they refer to clans from the same moiety. It is possible that, together, the carvings on

¹²¹ Shimony, *Conservatism*, 27-8.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 46-47.

¹²³ Porter, *Clanology*, 4-5.

¹²⁴ Shimony, *Conservatism*, 56-7.

the stick commemorate complementary relationship between the Crown, and the clan motifs that separate them.

Each of the carved crown motifs is composed of two lobe shapes which together form a heart that sits upon a horizontal base. Between the two lobes, at the top, is a square shape in the centre of which are four lines that extend from the centre out to each corner. The shape of the square placed between the two lobed forms is suggestive of the footed cross, or cross pattée, and bears a strong resemblance to the Imperial State crown, designed in 1838.¹²⁵ It is also similar to the crown motif found on both a silver gorget given to Joseph Brant by King George III when Brant visited England in 1776 and another gorget that belonged to Brant, which Lewis Henry Morgan purchased from his daughter, Catherine John, in 1850.¹²⁶

Given its placement among the clan animals, the crown itself appears to be on the same level as the clans. It might represent the British, or the Crown, joined in friendship or wartime alliance to the beaver and deer clans. Given that lacrosse was played at events such as treaty negotiations, the motifs may also commemorate the solidification of a particular agreement made during a meeting.

Aboriginal peoples in what would come to be known as Canada, and specifically in the community forming the Six Nations of the Grand River, had significant relationships with the British Crown throughout the decades leading up to the mid-1800s, when Alexander General's grandfather owned this stick. The role of

¹²⁵ See Alisdair MacRae, "The Beaded Crown Headdress: a Sum of European and Aboriginal Methods," ARTH 5201 term paper [unpublished] (Carleton University, 8 February 2011), Fig 4.4, 29.

¹²⁶ Rick Hill and Roxanne Sky, *Hodenosaunee Art Lesson #5* (Ohsweken: Six Nations Polytechnic, 2010), 8. This gorget is in the Joseph Brant Museum collection (2003.5.1); Tooker, *Lewis H. Morgan*, 76.

the Onkwehonwe in the American Revolutionary War and the longstanding relationship between some members of the Six Nations and Great Britain has been the subject of numerous historical studies.¹²⁷ Alliances and friendship formed between the English and Onkwehonwe communities during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries would come to be known metaphorically as the Covenant Chain.¹²⁸ Jennings explains that this Chain “came into existence in 1677 through two treaties negotiated at Albany, New York.”¹²⁹ This symbol, which was “a sacred trust, ever to be remembered,” would be evoked during treaty negotiations throughout this period.¹³⁰ In his study of Onkwehonwe history during the eighteenth century, Richter highlights the continued presence of this metaphor in Onkwehonwe oral tradition,

¹²⁷ Some key texts include Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1972), Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from its beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), Daniel R. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), William N. Fenton, *The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998); Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 2006).

¹²⁸ According to Fenton: “The first authenticated Dutch treaty with the Iroquois was the Mohawk-Dutch nonaggression pact of 1642. The English consummated a similar pact soon after they took over New Netherland in 1664. Livingston’s Indian records (Livingston 1956) commenced two years later; the official New York Indian Records (1678-1751) followed (Wraxall 1915). The perennial problem of border clashes on the southern frontier as settlers encroached on the warpath to the Catawba country brought Virginia, Maryland, and New York together in the so-called first English treaty with the Five Nations (1677). The governors of the three colonies put their hands in the ‘covenant chain,’ or the ‘chain of peace and friendship,’ a symbol of alliance that dominated treaty negotiations for the next century” Fenton, *The Great Law*, 7.

¹²⁹ Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from its beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), xvii. Francis offers more detail about each treaty: “The first treaty, between the Iroquois Five Nations and the colonies of Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay, terminated New England’s Second Puritan Conquest, commonly called King Phillip’s War . . . The second treaty. . . was negotiated between the Iroquois and the Delawares, on the one hand, and an envoy representing Maryland and Virginia, on the other hand, to make peace between those colonies and the Susquehannocks and Iroquois.”

¹³⁰ Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1972), 50; Jennings, xvi.

which included “a rehearsal of several distinct phases of alliance with the English, symbolized in their increasing strength by a rope, an iron chain, and a silver golden chain.”¹³¹

Despite its numerous renewals, the Chain weakened throughout the eighteenth century when negotiations and shifting power relations led to a “period of entanglement” resulting in increasing Onkwéhonwe dependence upon the British.¹³² The imperial government began to manage matters related to Aboriginal peoples in British North America in 1755, and in 1763, King George III issued the Royal Proclamation which outlined details related to the new policies.¹³³ Some people today view this document as “a Magna Carta for Canadian Indians,” as it “formally recognized what we now know as Aboriginal rights” and “established the procedures, followed for over two centuries after 1763, for Amerindian land surrenders.”¹³⁴

As we have seen, after the Treaty of Paris ended the American Revolutionary war in 1783, those Onkwéhonwe who had supported the British under the direction of Thayendanegea (Joseph Brant) settled on a tract of land along the Grand River in

¹³¹ See Daniel R. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

¹³² Gail D. MacLeitch, *Imperial Entanglements: Iroquois Change and Persistence on the Frontiers of Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 2. According to MacLeitch, “[d]uring the eighteenth century, the Iroquois Indians and the British Empire converged and collaborated, and in the process one side enriched themselves at the expense of the other.”; Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from Its beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984).

¹³³ Robert J. Surtees, “Land Cessions, 1763-1830,” in *Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nations*, eds. Edward S. Rogers and Donald B. Smith (Toronto: Ontario Historical Studies Series, 1994), 92-3.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 93. Surtees also notes that “[a] second interpretation concedes the proclamation’s short-term, but not long-term, importance... [a] measure designed merely to deal with the circumstances peculiar to the day.”

Southern Ontario, awarded on behalf of the Crown in recognition and compensation for their assistance by Sir Frederick Haldimand, governor of Quebec.¹³⁵ Another example of the Onkwehonwe relationship with the Crown, this treaty gave the Onkwehonwe land which the British had acquired through cessions from the Mississaugas, for “them and their posterity are to enjoy forever.”¹³⁶

A connection, both literal and symbolic, between the Crown and Six Nations can be traced through efforts made by Joseph Brant throughout the first few decades of the nineteenth century to introduce British culture to those who now lived along the banks of the Grand River. In addition to lending support to the British during the American Revolutionary War, he supported the construction of the Mohawk Chapel, which was erected in 1785, encouraged English missionaries to visit, and assisted in the production of a new edition of the Mohawk Prayer Book.¹³⁷ Yet, even those who did not follow in Brant’s footsteps and adopt Christianity would maintain a sense of connection to the Crown. This type of relationship is illustrated most clearly in Bread and Cheese Day, celebrated on Queen Victoria’s birthday. On this day, representatives of the British Crown distributed bread and cheese to the community as a gesture of thanks for their military support. This celebration included speakers who

¹³⁵ Elisabeth Tooker, “The Five (Later Six) Nations Confederacy, 1550-1784,” in *Aboriginal Ontario: Historical Perspectives on the First Nations*, eds. Edward S. Rogers and Donald B. Smith (Toronto: Ontario Historical Studies Series, 1994), 91.

¹³⁶ “Haldimand’s Proclamation of October 25, 1784,” in *The Valley Of The Six Nations: a collection of documents on the Indian lands of the Grand River*, ed. Charles M. Johnston (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 50–51.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 174-176. Brant was not without his opponents. As Johnston states, “Conservatives who feared a dangerous erosion of traditional Iroquoian values if Brant continued to have his way were strengthened by the teachings of Handsome Lake. At the turn of the century this legendary Seneca prophet inspired a well-received campaign to restore the Iroquois’ time-honoured rites and in the process fashion what would later be called the religion of the Longhouse.”

“recalled the prominent role the Six Nations had played in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812” and “usually ended with reaffirmations of loyalty to the queen of England.”¹³⁸ Though the Crown ended the celebrations in the late 1800s, the Confederacy chiefs continued the tradition until 1924. Today, it is the largest annual celebration at Six Nations, involving a parade and other amusements. In addition to a day of celebration, it is also “a reminder of the relationships of Crown alliance that Canada had gradually abandoned and of the forced imposition of a largely unwanted Elected Band Council.”¹³⁹

Apart from these specific connections to Joseph Brant’s diplomatic activities, crown imagery in Onkwehonwe material culture can also be discussed in terms of syncretism.¹⁴⁰ Alisdair MacRae’s study of a Mohawk beaded crown headdress bearing Orange Lodge imagery highlights the inventive nature of Aboriginal artistry, as well as the inseparability of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal histories.¹⁴¹ While the symbols refer to the Orange Order, a Protestant group with roots in the late eighteenth-century Ireland, they are rendered in the very distinctive style of late-nineteenth century Mohawk raised beadwork. He argues that the crown is a material manifestation of how some Onkwehonwe, despite their histories of fragmentation and

¹³⁸ Weaver, “The Iroquois,” 220.

¹³⁹ Laura DeVries, *Conflict in Caledonia: Aboriginal Land Rights and the Rule of Law* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 53.

¹⁴⁰ Christina Bates, “A Magnificent Syncretion: A Beaded Orange Lodge Crown,” Costume Society of America Conference, Philadelphia, 24-27 May, 2005. For a more detailed discussion about the Orange Order and its presence in Ontario, see Alisdair MacRae, “The Beaded Crown Headdress.”

¹⁴¹ MacRae, “The Beaded Crown Headdress.”

displacement, found in the Orange Order, a “narrow window through which they could gather and assert their identity.”¹⁴²

MacRae frames the crown “as a syncretic object of European and Aboriginal origins.”¹⁴³ It is, he argues, “a Mohawk invention, for Mohawk purposes, made to establish an identity for Mohawk members of a Mohawk Orange Lodge.” Adopting the motif of the crown into the beadwork upon a headdress was a way to demonstrate fluency in the settlers’ symbolic language. Finding their voice within this system of motifs and meaning was a form of intervention, through which the Onkwehonwe could “resist its utter and complete domination, and survive it.”¹⁴⁴

Other studies of the Crown motif support this reading. According to Leach, although the Crown is linked “metonymically to Royalty in contemporary British culture,” it can also represent a nation’s or community’s autonomy.¹⁴⁵ Examining the use of the crown motif in an emblem representing Poland’s official opposition, Leach shows how the crown may “be a symbol of political principles” in a place without a monarchy, symbolizing “a strong ideology of political sovereignty.”¹⁴⁶

This reading seems to be affirmed by another motif on the stick: the handshake. Two hands clasped in the form of a handshake that is carved near the

¹⁴² Ibid., 7.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 2.

¹⁴⁵ Edmund Leach, *Culture & Communication: The Logic by which Symbols are Connected: an Introduction to the Use of Structuralist Analysis in Social Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976): 14; Zdzisław Mach, *Symbols, Conflict, and Identity: Essays in Political Anthropology* (New York: SUNY Press, 1993), 31.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

bottom of the lacrosse stick (Fig. 2.6). Eyman interpreted this motif as “probably symboliz[ing] the friendly nature of ball-play conflict, in contrast to the game’s underlying allegorical warfare.”¹⁴⁷ Staying true to the theme of his book, Vennum found that, like the ball in hand, “the friendly handshake... too, points toward warfare.”¹⁴⁸ He suggests it represented “a very old rite called the Clasp Hands Dance, a type of war dance engaged in by warriors to strengthen themselves and serve as protective ‘medicine’ before going on the warpath.”¹⁴⁹

Fenton’s description of the Covenant Chain, the first English treaty with the Five Nations (1677), alludes to the joining of hands as a symbol of alliance: “[t]he governors of the three colonies put their hands in the ‘covenant chain,’ or the ‘chain of peace and friendship,’ a symbol of alliance that dominated treaty negotiations for the next century.”¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, Fenton has identified “stick figures, holding hands” as one of eleven symbols that recur on wampum belts, which are part of what he identified as an “arbitrary symbolic symbol” used to express meaning on the belts.¹⁵¹ One such belt is the Washington Covenant Belt, “commissioned by Congress and conveyed in 1775 or 1789, depending on which of two events it is associated with.”¹⁵² On the belt, there is “a chain of men wearing hats and clasping

¹⁴⁷ Eyman, 16.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., xiv.

¹⁵⁰ Fenton, *The Great Law*, 7.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 234-5.

¹⁵² Ibid., 237. Fenton describes the belt as follows: “It is 15 rows deep and measures 6 feet by 3.5 inches by 5.25 inches. It contains 10,000 beads of a consistent sort, mostly white with purple figures.”

hands, seven on the left and eight on the right, hold firm by the interior pair to the Longhouse.¹⁵³ The clan animals and crowns carved in the context of the challenges to the alliance between the Crown and the Six Nations which grew with nineteenth-century developments of the Department of Indian Affairs and subsequent assimilation efforts. In this way, the clasped hands on the lacrosse stick Alexander General had inherited from Isaac General suggest an agreement, or the affirmation of an alliance.

Conclusion

Isaac General was likely unaware that the stick he once owned and then gave to his grandson Alexander T. General would, in the centuries that followed, gain so much attention from anthropologists and historians. Yet, given the detail the careful detailing the unknown maker gave to the carvings that decorate the stick, it is difficult to imagine that he didn't intend that something important be remembered. My research into the use of crown motifs on carved items, as well as more detailed investigation into the clan animals carved on the stick, has, I argue, produced a more nuanced interpretation of an item that will undoubtedly continue to capture the attention of scholars, as it has for many years. My reading also suggests that, just as colonists engaged in appropriations to "legitimize their existence," under the conditions of colonialism and the subsequent appropriations of Onkwehonwe traditions for the creation of a distinct Canadian identity, the stick's maker carved a space for the commemoration that linked his community's understanding of lacrosse to its historical relationship with the Crown. The images speak to an alliance of equals

¹⁵³ Ibid.

— crowns and clans exist on the same plane, with handshakes made. Carved onto a stick made for a game that was played both as a way to heal and to solidify relationships, the motifs inscribe both the deeper meanings of the game, and a diplomatic relationship of equality, both of which were on the wane in the period of its manufacture.

The passing of the lacrosse stick from Isaac General, to Alexander T. General, and then to Frank Speck, reflects a number of cultural exchanges. Its iconography draws on both Euro-North American and Onkwehonwe cultures. The stick represents the type of exchanges and new middle grounds that developed as the Six Nations community negotiated its place within the relational, ruptured space created by modernity.¹⁵⁴ Not only does the virtuosity displayed by the artist render this stick captivating, the stick's movement from General's family to the museum provides an unexpected history around how community members could intervene in ethnographic collecting projects to preserve items that speak to important diplomatic relationships in their community's history.

¹⁵⁴ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), x; Susan Friedman, "Periodizing Modernism: Postcolonial Modernities and the Space/Time Borders of Modernist Studies," in *Modernism/Modernity* 13,3 (2006), 426;

CHAPTER 3

ELLIOTT MOSES' LADLE

Within a collection at the Woodland Cultural Centre, in Brantford, Ontario, there is a wooden ladle (Fig. 3.1). Just under thirty centimeters long, its smooth handle extends at an angle of around forty-five degrees out from its wide, shallow, circular bowl. The handle is a simple design that widens slightly just above its juncture with the bowl, gently tapering toward the end that is carved into a stylized hook shape through which a hole has been drilled. The form of this wooden ladle connects it to an Onkwehonwe artistic tradition: carved wooden ladles, or spoons as they are sometimes termed, are fairly common items in collections made from Onkwehonwe communities, and archaeologists have encountered wooden ladles dating back as early as A.D. 1600.¹ It is one of several types of traditional wood carvings made by Northeastern Woodlands Aboriginal communities, which Coit Prisch lists as: “carved wooden masks, combs, smoking pipes, figurines” and “effigy carvings of human, animal or bird which, typically, ornamented the handles of their wooden ladles.”²

Yet, reading the catalogue entry for this ladle, a visitor cannot help but wonder about the particular context from which it emerged and was subsequently collected. Curiosity is further piqued by a short inscription penned on the bowl, in Elliott Moses' handwriting, in green ink: “Ladle or spoon made by the late Abe Spensor of New Credit Reserve. (A Butter Ladle).”

¹ Coit Prisch, *Aspects of Change in Seneca Iroquois Ladles A.D. 1600-1900*, Research Records No. 15 1982 (New York: Rochester Museum and Science Center, 1982), 4.

² *Ibid.*, 5.

This wooden ladle is a point of entry for a larger discussion about its collector, Elliott Moses, and his engagements with collecting and the historical memory of his community, The Delaware who settled at Six Nations.³ The message written on the ladle, suggests that for Moses, the narratives attached to objects were as important as the objects themselves. In addition to the inscription on the ladle, Moses' focus on objects and narratives is apparent in his historical writing. Together, Moses' writing and collections suggest that through not only pre-contact traditions, but also through Christianity, the communities of the Delaware, Mississauga, and Onkwehonwe have a shared history. The knowledge Moses preserved through collecting complicates more standard histories of his community, and of the Grand River. Through In this sense, collecting was a way for Moses to preserve what Philip Deloria has called "histories of unexpectedness."⁴

At the same time, objects collected by Moses, such as this ladle, have an agency of their own. In the case of the ladle, its physical resemblance to other ladles points to its inclusion in a corpus of a much larger tradition of Onkwehonwe ladles and carving. I was also drawn in by a sense of intimacy to the past evoked by Moses' handwritten message written on the ladle's bowl. It suggested a biographical narrative almost within reach, and its message led me to the question: Why was an item from a Mississauga community in a collection I had assumed would be filled with items from Moses' own Delaware community that settled at Six Nations?

³ The Delaware, also known as the Lenape, are an Algonquian group originally from the areas of the New England States, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and southeastern New York. Clinton A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History* (New Jersey: Rutgers, 1975), 33.

⁴ Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 14.

Wooden Ladles in Northeastern North America

The tradition of making wooden ladles and bowls is shared among communities in Northeastern North America.⁵ The ubiquity of spoons and bowls in Eastern Woodland communities, which appear to have been owned by individuals, rather than collectively, is likely tied to their shared “reliance on vegetable and meat soups.”⁶ They are continuities with an earlier form of eating utensil made of shell, and have been found from protohistoric Seneca sites dating from 1575-1635.⁷ Changes in the form of ladles over time reflect increasing functionality, but also the continuity of an artistic tradition that continued at Six Nations into at least the late twentieth century.⁸ The recognition of the wooden ladle as a distinctly Onkwéhonwe item is reinforced by a series of Jesse Cornplanter’s drawings, now in the papers of Frank Speck (Fig. 3.2). In addition to drawing a wooden ladle and bowl, he also drew the Three Sisters (corn, beans, and squash), a wooden stirring paddle, a bow and quiver, and cornhusk dolls (Fig. 5.3).⁹

⁵ Prisch, 3. In Prisch’s study of these spoons in museum collections, she explains that “...the wooden eating ladle appears to be common to all the historic tribes of the Eastern Woodlands of North America, and among native-made artifacts, it probably has had one of the longest histories of continuous use.”

⁶ Prisch notes that “The well-documented dependence of the historic Iroquois upon what they termed their ‘life supporters,’ corn, beans and squash, is a central theme around which many ceremonial activities coalesce.” 2-4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

⁸ Prisch, 1-4. Prisch’s study was based on mostly Seneca ladles in the Rochester Museum & Science Centre’s Wray-Cameron Collection.

⁹ “Cornplanter, Jesse J Drawings,” Frank Speck Papers, Ms Coll 126, APS.

The abstract pointed shape on the back of the ladle made by Abe Sponsor is in the place where other ladles often have carved forms resembling animals or people, known as effigy carvings. Prisch's study of ladles suggests that artists chose such motifs because they illustrated important concepts in Onkwehonwe worldview, as well as changes in society growing from political events and colonization.¹⁰ The particular hooked shape on the ladle made by Abe Sponsor, similar to several others made by northern and eastern Algonquians in the nineteenth century found in museums, has been said to reflect intercultural exchanges with European settlers. Butter making tools were often among the items brought to North America by newcomers. In addition to wooden paddles for stirring butter, the tools included cream skimmers with "back hooks to keep them from slipping into the milk."¹¹ Therefore, both the inscription on the ladle made by Abe Sponsor, and the hook shape on ladle, point to the practice of butter making. They suggest exchanges between settlers and Eastern Woodland Aboriginal communities that involved both object manufacture techniques and food-making practices.¹²

In addition to their significance as expressions of worldviews, spoons such as the one made by Abe Sponsor were one of several types of Onkwehonwe items that were also made for sale. Their manufacture played a role of economic importance for the Mississauga in the early nineteenth century. As historian Donald B. Smith notes,

¹⁰ Ibid., 1.

¹¹ "Among the eastern and northern Algonquians, although the sample is small and probably biased, there appears to be considerably less effigy carving than among the Iroquois...Of the 23 ladles in the [nineteenth century] northern Algonquian sample, 3 have effigies." Prisch, 68.

¹² Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).

after the war of 1812 the community lost several of its leaders and could not support itself through traditional practices of hunting and fishing due to increased white settlements in their area. As a result, “[t]o survive the women had to make baskets, brooms, wooden bowls, and ladles and sell them to the whites.”¹³ Carvers at Six Nations also found work through making wooden ladles. Ethnologist Frederick Waugh noted this was a vocation important to men in the early twentieth century:

A growing idea of specialization in men's employments is recognizable. A man, for instance, who through physical inability was an indifferent hunter, might employ himself in the making of such articles as bows and arrows, wooden utensils, or in silversmithing and other handicrafts. The idea that these occupations were derogatory seems to have gradually disappeared.¹⁴

Ladles in Ethnographic Writing

Elliott Moses may have noticed a resemblance between the ladle made by Abe Spensor and those made by people in his own Delaware community, who made such items into the early twentieth century.¹⁵ During his visit to Canadian Delaware communities in 1907, the ethnologist Mark Harrington noted similarities between the carved wooden items made by the Delaware and the surrounding Onkwehonwe communities:

[a]mong domestic utensils of Indian style the wooden spoon or ladle is perhaps the most abundant. Like the Iroquois spoon, it consists of an almost circular bowl attached to a comparatively short handle sloping upward and outward from one edge. Unlike the spoon of the Iroquois, the decoration of the

¹³ Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 38.

¹⁴ Waugh, *Iroquois Foods and Food Preparation*, Memoir 86, No 12 (Anthropological Series, 1916), 10.

¹⁵ Mark Raymond Harrington, “Vestiges of Material Culture Among the Canadian Delawares,” *American Anthropologist* 10,3 (1908), 3.

Lenape type is confined to geometric designs carved upon the handle, life forms being wanting.¹⁶

The style of ladle Harrington describes as Delaware, or Lenape type shares characteristics with the one Elliott Moses collected. In particular, the geometric design on the handle is a trait that, Harrington notes, differentiates this community's ladles from other Onkwehonwe communities.

Harrington's interest in wooden ladles came about at a time when collectors were beginning to take more of an interest in these items. The small number of wooden ladles in museum collections from before the nineteenth century reflects a lack of interest probably related to the abundance of wooden tools used by European settlers. As Prisch explains, "woodenware was standard among European households ... European settlers did not see the native-made ladles as a novelty, and thus did not collect them in any significant numbers until the nineteenth century."¹⁷

However, Lewis Henry Morgan did notice the carved ladles he saw among the Onkwehonwe in the mid-nineteenth century. He describes the variation in carved motifs decorating handles:

Their wooden implements were often elaborately carved. Those upon which the most labour was expended were the ladles, *Ah-do-quä'-să*, of various sizes, used for eating hommony [sic] and soup. They were their substitute for the spoon, and hence every Indian family was supplied by a number. The end of the handle was usually surmounted with the figure of an animal, as a squirrel, a hawk, or a beaver, some of them with a human figure in a sitting position, others with a group of such figures in various attitudes, as those of wrestling or embracing. These figures are carved with considerable skill and correctness of proportion.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid., 409.

¹⁷ Prisch, 1.

¹⁸ Lewis Henry Morgan, "Book Third: Incident to the League," *The League of the Iroquois* [1851] (Mass.: JG Press, 1995), 43.

Later ethnographic writing in which wooden ladles are mentioned focused on their use within communities and made of manufacture processes. For example, in describing his visit with an Onondaga friend, William Beauchamp wrote that he had “surprised him at his meal. His spoon was as large as a wooden butter ladle, and his bean soup disappeared with corresponding rapidity.”¹⁹ In a 1911 entry in one of his notebooks, Frederick Waugh wrote: “Wooden ladles and bowls . . . are made with modern tools, of course. One I saw at Chief William Henry’s was made of basswood. This was intended for butter. The ladle for working the butter was also of basswood.” This entry indicates that Waugh purchased a small ladle from Chief William Henry. He explains, “[t]he small ladle I bought is for eating and has been used for this. Mrs. P.J. Atkins says that in Longhouse celebrations they use the wooden ladles for eating and drinking (note the retention of old custom).”²⁰

Elliott Moses: Historian and Collector

Elliott Moses was involved in a number of activities at Six Nations and in the surrounding community. After completing an associated degree course in Guelph, at the Ontario College of Agriculture in 1917, he worked for fifteen years with the Indian Affairs office. Moses had served as Director of the Ontario Plowman's Association for 39 years, and travelled with the Ontario Champion Plowmen to Britain in 1949. The father of seven children, he owned a farm of 450 acres, and

¹⁹ William M. Beauchamp, “Onondaga Notes,” *Journal of American Folklore* 8(30)(1895), 216.

²⁰ F.W. Waugh, “Woodworking,” Aug 1911, B218, f19, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

served in the First World War. A brief biography of Elliot Moses that appeared in the *Canadian Plowman Abroad* expresses his engagement in a variety of activities both on and off the reserve:

Mr. Moses is a member of the Delaware Tribe of the Six Nations and has been a farmer all his life. He attended the Six Nations day school and the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph. He owns a 450-acre farm near Brantford. His wife is the former Ethel Styres and they have seven children ranging in ages from 15 to 30. Last year, the youngest child, John Styres Moses, a violinist, won a prize at the Toronto Music Festival. During World War I, Mr. Moses served with the Canadian Army. He is an enthusiastic sports fan and is particularly fond of baseball, hockey, lacrosse and the Indian game of snow snake. He is a member of the Anglican church and of the Masonic Order.²¹

Elliott Moses' family had a history of political involvement. His father, Nelson, was remembered as a "strong promoter" of the Dehorner movement.²² This group, Moses explained, was concerned with education at Six Nations, advocating for "a better and more modern system of education which was then under the supervision of the New England Company," who, Moses states, "were not especially concerned about higher education of the children beyond a very limited and somewhat incomplete public School standing."²³ They were best known, however, for their controversial efforts to install an elected form of leadership in their community, and do away with the hereditary system.²⁴ Perhaps there is a link between his ancestors'

²¹ Canadian Plowmen Abroad, biographical note on Elliott Moses (undated), 1-2. Folder 1-2 "Canadian Plowmen Abroad," Elliott Moses Papers MG30 C 169 Vol 1, LAC.

²² Elliott Moses, "*The Six Nations Dehorners Association Finally Called the Six Nations Rights Association*" (Elliott Moses, 1973), 1. Elliott Moses Papers MG30 C 169 Vol 1, LAC.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Moses explained, "There always was a noticeable division between the Chiefs who were of the long houses and those of the Christian element were convinced that the hereditary system was out of date and not suitable for an Advancing people and freely discussed the matters with members of the Warriors Association and the bitterness which so after prevailed under such circumstance did not exist. However, the Long house element were more determined to retain the hereditary system mainly

ideological position and Elliott Moses' own critique of the relationship between Aboriginals and settlers in Canada, which Morgan describes as "based on a liberalism that believed in equal treatment to produce equal results."²⁵ This liberalism may have informed choices in collecting, for Moses created several scrapbooks and a collection of objects which illustrate the history of the Delaware and Six Nations of the Grand River's engagement with modernity.

An interest in his community's history would lead Moses to connect with the broader community of historians in his area. As a member of the Brant Historical Society for forty-five years, Moses developed a reputation as an engaging lecturer. He was described as being "much in demand as a speaker on local history and especially that of the Six Nations Reserve and the Delaware Tribe."²⁶ In 1941, Moses was the Brantford Historical Society's vice-president, and from 1943 to 1953, he was the society's president.²⁷ Historian Cecilia Morgan has argued that this organization "represented a space where Natives and non-Natives claimed an overlapping and at times shared history, one tied to the reserve, to the nation, and to imperial and

because of its historical background and for no other purpose." Elliott Moses, "*The Six Nations Dehorners*," 4.

²⁵ Cecilia Morgan, "History and the Six Nations: The Dynamics of Commemoration, Colonial Space, and Colonial Knowledge," in *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada*, eds. James Opp and John C. Walsh (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 67. Morgan also suggests that other influences on his thinking, including the "civil rights discourse of the post-Second World War decades," and his own mixed white and Delaware background. She also suggests that "his thoughts on equality for Native peoples may also have been affected by an earlier eugenic discourse and knowledge of recent history, when eugenics in both Europe and Canada had been used to define who was and who was not a first-class citizen." Morgan, 68.

²⁶ "Elliott Moses Fonds biographical note," Canadian Archival Information Network http://www.archivescanada.ca/english/search/ItemDisplay.asp?sessionKey=999999999_142&l=1&lv1=1&v=0&coll=1&itm=261198&rt=1&bill=1 [accessed 13 September 2012]

²⁷ Morgan, "History and the Six Nations," 63.

transnational settings.” Morgan explicates the different approaches or meanings of history to both non-Natives and Natives:

For non-Native historians, the nearby Six Nations reserve could be claimed as an intrinsically interesting space, an exotic attraction that brought educated outsiders to the area. It also served to remind themselves and others of Brantford’s lengthy history, both national and imperial: it could not be dismissed as merely another small Ontario city with a history and landscape fundamentally interchangeable with that of other, similar communities. For the Six Nations, however, local history was a narrative that was intimately and inextricably tied to that of multiple nations and empires, one that intermingled with that of their non-Native neighbours but that also spoke to other territories and other conceptions of nationhood.²⁸

Such historical work, Morgan has argued, was part of a larger effort by community members at Six Nations, including performers, who “strove to establish Native peoples’ central place within narratives of the modern Canadian nation while simultaneously insisting on the significance of Native cultural practices and traditions.”²⁹ Furthermore, as Morgan explained, “[h]is deployment of history, both to counter and to participate in colonial knowledge of Native people, had its antecedents in the work of Native historians and activists such as Peter Jones and George Copway, men who, like Moses, moved across a number of boundaries and inhabited multiple places in nineteenth-century colonial society.”³⁰ By saving objects with biographies that called into question the solidity of boundaries between communities and religious beliefs, Moses intervened in the future’s memory of his community’s past.

²⁸ Ibid., 65.

²⁹ Ibid., 65-6.

³⁰ Ibid., 69.

Elliott Moses and Collecting: Mementos of the Time

A well-worn stenographer's notebook owned by Elliott Moses shows his devotion to preserving his community's memory. Written on its cover, probably by the person responsible for collecting Moses' papers for donation to the Public Archives of Canada, is the following: "This is the last of Elliott's writing. He was working on this before he passed away."³¹ Inside is an unfinished, hand-written history of the Delaware at Six Nations by Elliott Moses. It highlights his interest in connections between the Six Nations and Delaware communities.

Moses explains how both communities "share in the classification, as United Empire Loyalists" because they sided with the British Crown during the Revolutionary Wars. Afterward, around 1784, about 250 Delaware applied to live at the Grand River.³² Although the Six Nations were historic enemies of the Delaware, they granted this community permission to stay there temporarily. Moses remarked upon the friendly welcome they received: when the Delaware moved to the Grand River area, the Lower Cayuga tribe, beside whom they had settled in 1783 or 1784, expressed concern over the safety of the Delaware and offered to protect them "as a hen spreads her wings over her brood of chickens."³³ Despite their earlier agreement, the Delaware remained at the Grand River permanently. Moses repeated an anecdote

³¹ Ibid.

³² Elliott Moses, "Story of Delaware Reserve," Folder 1-4 "Delaware Story" (undated), 1. Elliott Moses Papers MG30 C 169 Vol 1, LAC.

³³ Ibid.

told to him by a relative, who stated “[i]t is commented, rather dryly, by some Six Nations that, ‘When the Delawares came here they asked only to stay all night. It’s been quite a long night.’”³⁴ Though they would stay at the Grand River, the community would undergo significant changes. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Delaware at Six Nations converted as a community to the Anglican Church, leaving behind customs and traditions influenced by Neolin, a prophet who had preached to them in 1762 to 1763.³⁵ The size of their community would decrease over time, shrinking to about ninety people by the mid-1950s.³⁶

Objects are important within Moses’ historical account of his community. They are described as treasured possessions that offer entry points into a personal and community history.³⁷ Consider Moses’ description of the Delaware’s conversion to Christianity:

My grandfather Cornelius Moses was about thirty years old when the tribe embraced Christianity. My great, great Uncle Capt. John Cornelius was the door Keeper in the old Longhouse and sat on a stool placed just inside the door. It is said that when the tribe left the Longhouse he carried the stool to

³⁴ Elliott Moses, “Peace, The Indian Pattern (by the late J.M. Moses)” (undated), Folder 1-1: “Articles by E. Moses, 1957-1975,” Elliott Moses Papers MG30 C 169 Vol 1, LAC.

³⁵ Neolin’s teachings were described by anthropologist Anthony F.C. Wallace as “a syncretism of native and white elements:” he advocated both a rejection of items acquired through trade with whites, such as alcohol, firearms, and Euro-North American clothing, while at the same time encouraged followers to cease traditions such as medicine songs, war rites and polygyny. Anthony F.C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Random House, 1969), 117-120.

³⁶ Al Chandler, “Delaware Mask Returned After a Century,” *Globe and Mail* (Tuesday January 31, 1956).

³⁷ For example, consider Newcomb’s description of the Delaware practice of making a hole at the head of a coffin, to make it easier for the deceased’s soul to exit: “No evidence could be found which would indicate that this trait had been borrowed from other Indian cultures, nor was it derived from white culture, except that wooden coffins were used in place of bark receptacles. Later research substantiated the conclusion that this trait was of Delaware origin.” William W. Newcomb, Jr, *The Culture and Acculturation of the Delaware Indians*, Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan Anthropological Papers, No. 10 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1956), 12.

the little school house and Church placed it inside the door and continued to be the door keeper of the church as long as he was physically able.³⁸

Moved from the Longhouse, the stool of Moses' grandfather, Cornelius, thus kept a continuing place for him in the new Anglican surroundings. Though the spiritual affiliation changed, his role, and place on the stool, stayed the same. The stool stayed in the family: Elliott Moses noted, "I still have the stool as a valued family possession."³⁹ In another variation of this narrative he tells readers, "[o]ur family are the proud possessors of the Old stool, Also his Tomohawk, and Chief Peace Gun he carried in the War of 1812."⁴⁰

Moses also explained how Reverend Adam Elliott and Chief G.H.M. Johnson took a "Medicine Man Mask" from the community's Longhouse, "as a memento of the time when the tribe through his efforts embraced Christianity." Referring to himself, he writes,

Approximately twenty years ago the writer began an intense search for this old Mask and eventually found it in possession of the head office of the Anglican Women's Auxiliary of the Diocese of Huron located in the City of London Ont., having been given to them by the wife of Rev. Racey who received it from the Wife of Rev. Elliott... it was decided to return it to the Delaware tribe to be preserved by them as a memorial of the time and place where they in a body first embraced Christianity. Nathaniel Montour a Delaware wood carver, a veteran of the First World War, has made a duplicate of this mask to keep with his personal collections of carving.⁴¹

The final few pages discuss the growth of both Anglicanism and Methodism, and how Christianity brought Delaware religious leaders into contact with the

³⁸ Moses, "Story of the Delaware Line," 10-11.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Elliott Moses, "Story of Delaware Reserve," xvi. Folder 1-4 Delaware Story, Elliott Moses Papers MG30 C 169 Vol 1, LAC.

⁴¹ Moses, "Story of the Delaware Line," 11-12.

Mississaugas of the New Credit Reserve. He mentions that a log building, originally a schoolhouse, was used for worship in the area and how, fifteen years earlier, renovations had been needed to expand it. He notes how “[t]he logs in the back of the church has the names of the late Nelles Montour and that of my own father, the late Nelson Moses, carved on it, these names have been left exposed just as a matter of interest the carving said by Nelles Montour and my father to have been done when the first building was a school house.” He ends by noting that both the Anglican and Methodist churches “have made a splendid contribution to the religious life of the Delaware people.”⁴²

When it reached Moses, either from the maker or another collector, the spoon became another item Moses understood as a memento. This type of item is described by Susan Stewart as tied to an “exterior site” and “individual experience.”⁴³ Mementos can be many things, including “[s]crapbooks, memory quilts, photo albums, and baby books.” Such items, Stewart explains, are “intimately mapped against the life history of an individual.” In addition to the wooden ladle, Elliott Moses’ descriptions of other items in his collection reflect how he valued objects because of their connection to specific events in his community’s history.⁴⁴

In addition to his notebooks of historical writing, Elliott Moses created scrapbooks filled with articles about the Delaware and Six Nations communities in

⁴² Ibid., 13-14.

⁴³ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (London: Duke University Press, 1993), 139.

⁴⁴ Susan Stewart explains the agency of mementos as follows: “...while the personal memento is of little material worth . . . it is often of great worth to its possessor. Because of its connection to biography and its place in constituting the notion of the individual life, the memento becomes emblematic of the worth of that life and of the self’s capacity to generate worthiness.” Ibid.

the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many articles focus on the monarchy and political issues controversial at the Grand River, such as enfranchisement and land ownership. Other articles discuss collecting and cultural preservation.

One article, clipped by Moses from the March 17th 1937 *Globe and Mail*, focuses on a Six Nations woman named Bernice Loft, and her collection of items made by people in her community over the years. Moses' "famous collection" is mentioned in the article as another example of this collecting trend. Like Moses, Loft collected items described by the journalist as "Indian relics that are almost priceless," a description which points to their circulation within incommensurate regimes of value. For some people at Six Nations they were both personal or cultural mementos, while to outsiders interested in amassing such items for aesthetic or other forms of appreciation they were commodities to add to a collection.⁴⁵ In this sense, they were, as the article stated, almost, but not quite, priceless. As Susan Stewart notes, upon entering the world of collecting, "history" is replaced "with *classification*." This establishes a basis upon which to replace an item's singularity with a value based upon its equivalency with other items with which it is classified.⁴⁶

The article offered this explanation for why Aboriginal people might want to save objects: "It is all part of the picture of modern Indian culture," the journalist wrote,

⁴⁵ For a more detailed discussion about regimes of value and material culture, see Fr R. Myers, ed., *The Empire of Things: Regimes of Value and Material Culture* (School of American Research Advanced Seminar Series. New Mexico: School of American Research Press, 2001).

⁴⁶ Stewart, 151; Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64-94.

...just as the ancient exhibits of white men's arts are cherished and studied today by the leaders in white men's life. But the Indian's is being blended into the modern scheme of things that they hope is leading them to equal status with white men in a country that was originally theirs and of which they are inordinately proud.⁴⁷

The title, "Ancient Indian Culture Still Highly Cherished by Present-Day Race," evidences the primitivist lens through which such collecting practices were understood by outsiders. There is a tone of unexpectedness over contemporary Onkwehonwe engagements in the Western act of artifact preservation.

Of all the items collected by Elliott Moses, the one to receive the most interest in newspapers was the Delaware medicine mask that had been estranged from that community for nearly a century. As we saw, Moses' search, which lasted around two decades, led him in the mid 1950s to the Women's Auxiliary of the Diocese of Huron of the Anglican Church in London, Ontario, the holders of the mask since 1931. One can get a sense of Moses' relationship to objects and history his account of his discovery, after twenty years of tracking, of the Delaware mask in a storeroom at the Woman's Auxiliary Office:

In about half an hour I found it, in a box of old clothes . . . It was buried there under the clothes. It had lost some of its hair but none of its historic value. It was the real and authentic, the very mask that the Delawares had used up until the day they left the Longhouse for the Christian Church. There was no doubt about it. There is none now.⁴⁸

His retrieval of the mask was not only for his community, but also for his uncle Jess, who wished to locate this mask before his death. According to Moses, his uncle

⁴⁷ Ken W. McTaggart, "Ancient Indian Culture Still Highly Cherished by Present-Day Race," *Globe and Mail*, March 17 1937. In "Scrapbook 1936-1941," Elliott Moses Collection MG30 C 169 Vol 2, LAC.

⁴⁸ Chandler, "Delaware Mask Returned."

“spent much of his spare time in collecting and preserving Delaware relics” and told Moses about this missing mask. Moses noted his uncle “valued his splendid collection of relics very much and advised that on his death he intended to devise and bequeath the collection to me on condition that I would see that it was preserved and passed on to other members of the Moses family in like manner.”⁴⁹

If Moses understood the objects he collected in the same way that he described objects in his unfinished history of the Delaware, then we might say that the objects he saved are not just a collection of objects: the inscriptions he provided for some of them suggests to contemporary viewers that he saved objects because they were mementos, or tangible links to particular people, situations, or stories.

The Wooden Ladle from New Credit

Little is known of Abe Spensor, the man whose name Moses inscribed on the wooden ladle. Further conversations with people at Six Nations, or additional research into the genealogy of the Spensor family at New Credit, could uncover additional details that would help to situate the ladle more clearly within its context of origin. Yet, even without this information, the ladle still acts as an index to the community from which it came. Its presence in a collection made by the Delaware Elliott Moses adds another layer to its cultural history. As a whole, the collection, made up of items from the Delaware, New Credit, and Six Nations communities, speaks to the cultural heterogeneity of the community in the Grand River area. It may have been the sort of

⁴⁹ Moses explained, “It was most fortunate that the return was made while my Uncle Jess was still living as he was extremely pleased and happy to have it added to his historic collection of Relics and Artifacts.” “Story of Delaware Reserve,” xiii. Notebook Folder 1-4 “Delaware Story,” Elliott Moses Papers MG30 C 169 Vol 1, LAC.

item excluded from collections made by ethnologists focused on finding material from a single tribe or linguistic group. While out of place in relation to more standard modes of classifying ethnographic material, the presence of an item from New Credit, in a collection made by a Delaware man and held in an institution under the management of the Six Nations of the Grand River, appears to fit organically as a representation of the history of this region.⁵⁰

The note written on the ladle does not explicitly state which Onkwehonwe or Anishinaabe community its previous owner, Abe Spensor, belonged to. Rather, we are only told that he was from New Credit, a reserve close to Six Nations. Could this reflect the collector's tendency to think about communities in geographic, rather than the ethnic terms which was often privileged by ethnological classification systems? Or perhaps the collector assumed that future generations would infer that Spensor was Mississauga, as this was the largest First Nations community to settle at New Credit.

The term "Mississauga" was first used by the French in reference to an Anishinaabe, specifically, Chippewa, group who lived near the "many river mouths" of the Mississagi River on the northern part of Lake Huron.⁵¹ The meaning of this

⁵⁰ This is not to suggest there cannot be consequences of such choices: as Bowker and Star explain in their study of classification systems, "[w]e have a moral and ethical agenda in our querying of these systems. Each standard and each category valorizes some point of view and silences another. This is not an inherently bad thing – indeed it is inescapable. But it *is* an ethical choice, and as such it is dangerous – not bad, but dangerous." Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star, *Sorting Things Out: Classification and its Consequences* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 5-6.

⁵¹ E.S. Rogers, "Southeastern Ojibwa," in *The Northeast*, ed. Bruce G. Trigger, vol. 15 of *Handbook of North American Indians*, gen. ed. William Sturtevant (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 769. Donald B. Smith, "Who are the Mississauga?" *Ontario History* 67 (1975), 216. In his book *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987) Smith goes into greater detail surrounding the confusion of naming. He notes, "Only a tiny fraction of these Indians [to which the French and English referred as "Mississauga"] could have been members of the actual Mississauga band, but once recorded in the Europeans' documents, the name became the dominant one." 20.

name has varied over time, and was later generalized by the French and English to refer to Algonkians who settled on the northern shore of Lake Ontario. Smith found that “by the early twentieth century total confusion reigned” over the names used to refer to the Mississauga and other Ontario Anishinaabe communities. The confusion was simplified when, during this period, the Department of Indian Affairs listed those at New Credit as simply the “Mississauga.”⁵²

By the time the New Credit reservation was established, the Mississauga had already had a history of relations with the Onkwehonwe. Though peace had been established in 1701, there would be a few more skirmishes with the Onkwehonwe as the Anishinaabe moved into their territory, finding for themselves by the 1720s a home in what is now Southern Ontario.⁵³ Document-based evidence contains little information on the Mississauga again until the 1740s, when it was reported that they had sided with the English, rather than the French, during King George’s war in 1746.⁵⁴ Later that decade, struggles against the French resulted in the Mississaugas who lived north of Detroit surrendering Lake St. Clair in June of 1748. To avoid further attacks from the French, the Mississauga traveled eastward and settled on the

⁵² Smith notes that the Department of Indian Affairs “presented the ‘Anishinaabag,’ or Ojibwa, as if they constituted three totally different tribes: the Chippewa, Mississauga, and Ojibwa.” Bands at “Beausoleil Island, Cape Croker, Christian Island, Georgina and Snake Islands, Rama, Sarnia, Saugeen, the Thames, and Walpole Island” were referred to as “Chippewa.” In addition to those at New Credit, “Mississauga” was a name given also so to those who settled at Alderville (Alnwick), Mud Lake, Rice Lake, and Scugog. “Their northern relatives on Lake Huron and Superior, dealt with only when the Robinson Treaty was signed in 1850, alone appeared as “Ojibbewas.” Smith, “Who are the Mississauga?” 222.

⁵³ Ibid., 217.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 218.

eastern shores of Lake Erie, near the Seneca, who, despite past tensions, were now neighbours whose friendship seemed valuable in the face of French antagonism.

When the Mississauga settled on the western end of Lake Ontario, they came to be known as the Mississauga of the Credit River.⁵⁵ The Crown negotiated with the Mississaugas to obtain land for Loyalist Americans and Onkwehonwe who had lent their assistance to the British during the Revolutionary Wars.⁵⁶ Historian Donald Smith has argued that the Mississaugas were open to this agreement both because they were eager to continue to receive trade goods, and because they understood the agreement more as a rent of the use of the land, not a purchase.⁵⁷ The first purchase took place in 1781, overseen by Guy Johnson at Fort Niagara, and the next in 1783 at the eastern end of Lake Ontario.⁵⁸ Additional agreements were made, including one through which the Crown acquired land from the River Credit Mississaugas in 1797. It was with this arrangement that “the Mississaugas surrendered 3,450 acres of land located near Burlington Bay on Lake Ontario.”⁵⁹ The negotiations continued, with William Claus, then the deputy superintendent of Indian affairs, meeting with the

⁵⁵ The name of the Credit River, and resultingly, the name of the community who settled there, reflected the trading practices for which the area was known. Credit or Mahzenahagaseebie, referred to “the river where credit is given; it was a meeting-place for the Indians and the traders, and the latter advanced to the former goods a year ahead, trusting to their honesty for the next season's furs; hence the name.” A.F. Chamberlain, “Notes on the History, Customs, and Beliefs of the Mississauga Indians,” *The Journal of Folklore* Vol. 1, No. 2 (July-Sept 1888), 154.

⁵⁶ Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 23.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 25.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*. Smith writes, “In return for ‘three hundred suits of Clothing’ the Crown gained a corridor of land approximately six kilometers (four miles) wide on the west bank of the Niagara River.”

⁵⁹ Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Development Canada “Fact Sheet - The Brant tract and the Toronto Purchase specific claims,” 15 September 2010. <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100016064/1100100016065> [accessed 12 Dec 2012].

Mississauga in 1805 to negotiate the sale of land at the head of Lake Ontario, which would come to be known as the Mississauga Tract. Because they chose to sell land without consulting Joseph Brant, the relationship between the Mississauga and Onkwehonwe weakened, despite their history of trade and wartime alliances.⁶⁰

A Methodist church was built at the Credit River Reserve in 1824.⁶¹

Methodist Minister Peter Jones and Egerton Ryerson were the main missionaries among the community, which grew to about 50 houses by 1837. The Mississaugas lived at the Credit Mission village until about 1845. Unable to secure title to their lands, and effected by changes in the landscape from increasing numbers of settlers, the community on the Credit River made plans to relocate.⁶² In 1847, with their lands surveyed and soon to be sold by the government, the Mississauga Chief and Methodist Reverend Peter Jones searched for a new place for the community. On the invitation of the Six Nations council, around 266 Mississaugas relocated onto 2400 hectares of land on the southeastern corner of the Six Nations reserve, becoming neighbours to the Delaware.⁶³ This area was then renamed “New Credit

⁶⁰ The Mississauga had a trade relationship with the Onkwehonwe, wherein they would sell goods to the Onkwehonwe who would then re-sell them to the British. Furthermore, the two groups had allied themselves for a raid against the Cherokee in 1721, and would renew their alliance in 1751. Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 29, 121.

⁶¹ Today, this area is the home of the Mississauga Golf and Country Club. A government plaque explaining the history of the Credit Reserve remains in the area to mark its history. Angela Files, *The New Credit Cemeteries*, Publication no. 122 (Brantford: Brant County Branch Ontario Genealogical Society, 1988), 2.

⁶² Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 205-212.

⁶³ Elliott Moses recounts this history as well: “To complete the religious side of Christian activities of the Delawares it is interesting to note that the Methodists took an interest in the Mississaugas of New Credit who had purchased about 5000 acres from the Six Nations located in the south East corner of the reserve. This small tribe are of Algonquin stock who’s people in early days were better enemies of the Six Nations. In spite of this History records the Old hereditary Council of the Six Nations

Reservation.”⁶⁴ The Methodist Church had owned several of the lots upon which the Mississaugas settled, and they established a mission in this area in 1848.⁶⁵ According to A.F. Chamberlain, “[i]n 1850, all the Missisaguas [sic], with individual exceptions, were reckoned as converted.”⁶⁶

Though both the Delaware and New Credit communities were, by the late nineteenth century, predominantly Christian, many of their Onkwehonwe neighbours followed the Longhouse tradition. While there were certainly conflicts because of this, the religious or ideological division did not appear to create any deep antagonism that prevented groups from living side by side. Nor did it signify the erasure of all pre-Christian cultural practices among the converted. As asserted by the presence of the wooden ladle in Elliott Moses’ collection, some traditional cultural practices, including making carved items in styles centuries old, continued to be practiced and appreciated after they adopted Christianity.

An essay, written in the mid-1940s by a relative of Elliott Moses, Jesse Moses Jr., offers a perspective on relations between traditionalists and Christians at Six Nations. It is entitled “The Longhouse Man,” with a subtitle that tells readers about the author’s take on this topic: “A Six Nations Indian of Canada Speaks his Mind.”

approved a sale and thereby made them their next door neighbours.” Elliott Moses, “Story of Delaware Reserve,” vxiii.

⁶⁴ Weaver, “The Iroquois,” 183; Files, 1, 4; Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 212. Smith notes that the Six Nations had “indirectly” heard about the Mississaugas’s situation and “remembered that when their fathers had come from the Mohawk River the Mississaugas had kindly given them land.”

⁶⁵ Files, 1.

⁶⁶ Chamberlain, 151.

Before describing the size of the reserve, the author lays out the tension to be explored in the body of his work:

The Indians of the Six Nations Reserve, which is near Brantford, Canada, are credited with being the most civilized and cultured of the natives of the continent. Yet there are of its approximate population of five thousand two-hundred, one thousand who maintain the 'ancient faith' of their ancestors.⁶⁷

The author then explains that while the Delawares, Mississauga of New Credit, and Tuscarora have all been Christianized, the other Five Nations have largely adhered to their Longhouse tradition. He then poses the question: "After three hundred and fifty years of contact with Christianity, what influences have blocked its progress?"⁶⁸

Moses Jr., himself a Christian, proposes the following answer: "The difficulty of the Christian Churches to further convert the Indians is due to two main reasons. The most difficult being that religion and politics on the Reserve are inseparably tangled."⁶⁹ He explains how a "snarl of politics and religion" has generated a sense that religious affiliation is to be linked with certain political positions on such topics as enfranchisement, education, and electoral systems for choosing chiefs.⁷⁰ The second reason, Moses Jr. explained, was that similarities between Christianity and the Longhouse faith made it difficult to convince people to convert: "There is enough in common in Christianity and the 'old belief' for those Indians maintaining either to live side by side in peace. The writer has never in forty years heard either contend

⁶⁷ Jesse Moses Jr., "The Longhouse Man," (undated), 1. III(61a) – Moses, Jesse Jr., General Iroquois, (6 Nations), Frank Speck Papers, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia (APS).

⁶⁸ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 5.

that his religion was superior.”⁷¹ And linked to the second reason, a strong respect for difference was a barrier to conversion: as Moses states, “[i]n any view and in spite of much knowledge of larger affairs, the ‘long-house’ man is a good neighbor and staunch friend, a sincere believer and supporter of his belief, a firm support in the life of the reserve.”⁷²

Conclusion

Elliott Moses might be thought of as one of a number of people from Six Nations who had distinct reasons for collecting. This group would include the collectors discussed in this thesis: Chief John A. Gibson, Alexander General, and the Jamieson sisters, but there were others, too, who were more well known in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Dr. Oronhyatekha, or Peter Martin, from the Grand River, is described by Hamilton as “perhaps the best-known Aboriginal collector in Ontario.”⁷³ His large collection included human remains, the presence of which has been argued to reflect Dr. Oronhyatekha’s desire to preserve material evidence that “supported Aboriginal claims of their ancient presence in North America.”⁷⁴ The Mississauga Reverend Peter Jones was another Aboriginal man from Southern Ontario who found meaning in collecting.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Ibid., 8.

⁷² Ibid., 8.

⁷³ Hamilton, 99.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 101.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 99.

This widespread interest is perhaps unsurprising given that collecting was something of a cultural vogue in Victorian society. A form of “leisure learning” valued for its contribution to the creation of a “well-rounded” individual, collecting was one activity, along with presenting and discussing papers at meetings, that men and women belonging to early historical and scientific societies may have pursued to enrich their understandings of Canada’s past.⁷⁶ Their aims were guided by assumptions of what the authentic past they sought to understand looked like. This led them to avoid collecting items that appeared to evidence Euro-North American contact or Christianity. And, of course, it led to frustration, as this aim would have been particularly difficult to reach in the Southern Ontario, where the Aboriginal communities had been in contact with settlers for a few centuries before.⁷⁷

Though Moses embraced many aspects of modern life, participating in Euro-North American institutions and traditions, including collecting, he recognized that the changes he saw his community undergoing, manifested in his own life, would come with a price. In his “Story of the Delaware Reserve,” he wrote:

The way of life has been subjected to many changes during my life time. Old Indian customs have changed or now cease to exist. And the whole outlook on life has broadened to such an extent that if our people of the past hundred years could return they would not recognize us as their own flesh and blood. All these changes are the result of what may be broadly termed as white-man’s civilization and is the old story of Native races throughout the world.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 7-8.

⁷⁸ Elliott Moses, “Story of Delaware Reserve,” 15.

Perhaps Moses understood his collecting as a way of preserving a past way of life he remembered, but felt, was, in Berman's phrase, "melting into air."⁷⁹ As Stewart explains, "[t]he double function of the souvenir is to authenticate a past or otherwise remote experience and, at the same time, to discredit the present. The present is either too impersonal, too looming, or too alienating compared to the intimate and direct experience of contact which has as its referent. This referent is authenticity."⁸⁰ She highlights the productive potential of restoring the past narratives to which souvenirs are attached, in the context of a present understood to need the restoration of such narratives. She describes this use of the souvenir as grounded in "a response to an unsatisfactory set of present conditions."⁸¹

In her study of Six Nations' conceptualizations of history and place, Morgan noted that it is important to consider how "complicated identifications with both colonial powers and indigenous agency, ones in which were mingled strength and loss, pride and mourning, might structure these narratives."⁸² Moses appears to have considered how such dynamics shaped popular histories of his community. Perhaps he detected that that the histories of his own community, the Delaware, and Abe Spensor's, the Mississauga, were too complex in their inter-mingling of Longhouse, settler and Christian elements to fit comfortably into existing narratives. In collecting the wooden butter ladle, with its aesthetic characteristics of both Onkwehonwe

⁷⁹ Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 13.

⁸⁰ Stewart, 139.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 150.

⁸² Morgan, "History and the Six Nations," 76.

spoons and a European butter making tool, and its link to a Christian community living at the Grand River, he found an object that embodied, or objectified, this complexity. Through an inscription he wrote on its bowl, he preserved its connection to a maker and a place, and asserted that it mattered.

CHAPTER 4

ESTHER HENRY'S AND CATHERINE SLIVER'S BEADWORK

In another collection at the Woodland Cultural Centre, on a shelf near the place where Elliott Moses' wooden ladle lies, is a beaded picture frame. It is decorated with five-petaled flowers and small trefoils in clear and blue beads, similar to the light blue of forget-me-nots. Vines run vertically on both sides, adding a colourful and fresh contrast to the faded beige cotton base upon which they are sewn. The looped fringe along the bottom is decorated with tubular beads called *sprengperlen*, which were manufactured in Bohemia, in factories that closed in 1917.¹ In the space at the top sit two owls, leaning into each other like old friends. Along the bottom, a message is beaded: the date "1893," stitched along the bottom is the phrase "Remember Me" (Fig. 4.1).

Beaded photograph frames were most commonly made between 1870 and the 1930s.² The applique and raised beadwork styles, the colourful choices in beads, the floral and animal motifs, the messages and dates – these are all characteristics of the beadwork of souvenir arts, created for the Victorian tourist trade. The date beaded on the frame made by Mrs. Henry – 1893 – places it within a particular stylistic period of beadwork which art historian Beverly Gordon has called "Baroque." Beadwork made

¹ Dolores Elliott, "Iroquois Beadwork: A Haudenosaunee Tradition and Art (2002)," in *Preserving Tradition and Understanding the Past: Papers from the Conference on Iroquois Research, 2001-2005*, ed. Christine Sternberg Patrick (New York State Museum Record, Volume 1 (Albany: University of the State of New York, The State Education Department, 2010), 43.

² Ibid., 132. In Beverly Gordon's study, she examined 24 frames in total, three of which were attributed to the period when Mrs. Esther Henry's was made, 1881-1900. Beverly Gordon, "The Niagara Falls Whimsey: The Object as Symbol of Cultural Interface," (PhD Diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1984).

in this period, which she identifies as beginning after 1890, “became increasingly ornate, with high beadwork, large beads and elaborate finishing details.”³ Its fringe, made up of loops of both seed and bugle beads, is a characteristic found on many Onkwehonwne beaded frames of this period.⁴ The controlled and precise manner of beading and use of paper patterns underneath motifs are characteristic of the beadwork made for sale at Niagara Falls and other tourist sites. The more flatter beadwork and use of bugle beads to form the centres of motifs, and the inclusion of text in the design are traits associated with the Mohawk style.⁵ The interior border of multiple rows of beads are traits consistent among pieces Gordon characterized as belonging to the “Niagara Falls” style, a category she also uses to classify items from Six Nations of the Grand River.⁶

The motifs on the picture frame thus place it firmly within the corpus of Onkwehonwe beadwork made for the souvenir trade. The trilobe motifs are more commonly found on items than owls, although both appear on beadwork in museum collections.⁷ The phrase, “Remember Me,” is one of several sentimental phrases

³ Gordon, 74.

⁴ Ibid., 81.

⁵ Ibid., 108.

⁶ Gordon, 80-85, 105. From Gordon’s analysis it is clear that bugle beads placed inside motifs occurred most often on items dated between 1850 and 1880.

⁷ The trilobe motif was found on 96 of the 650 pieces Gordon examined. She found owls on only five items in her sample, two of which she attributes to the period of 1881-1900, with three undated. Owls appeared less than other types of birds, but more than other animals type such as cats, rabbits, chickens, and foxes. The owls’ feet wrap around a branch, a trait Gordon found to be present with “almost all types of birds” and calls a “crossed branch strand. Gordon, 99-101.

commonly found on Onkwehonwe beadwork made for the tourist trade. Such messages appealed to consumers who often purchased them as gifts.⁸

Unlike most of this beadwork in museum collections, the collectors preserved details about the maker along with the item itself. Accompanying the picture frame is a tag made of brown cardboard, with a piece of twine strung through a hole on its left side. On it is the following message: “Made by Mrs. Esther Henry (Deceased) Six N. Reserve.” The tag resembles others found in the collection, accompanying items that had been entered into craft competitions at the Six Nations Agricultural Society’s Annual Fair, although I did not find a prize list that clearly stated Mrs. Henry’s frame was indeed entered into a competition.

The message beaded on the bottom of the frame, “Remember Me,” fits within Gordon’s category of “memento inscriptions” often found on beaded souvenir art.⁹ It would speak for the photograph put in the frame, generating a closeness with the viewer. It could also, however, refer back to the maker, Mrs. Esther Henry, displaying a form of distributed personhood. The decorative elements, such as the intricate owl and floral motifs, and the rhythmic lines of beaded patterns captivate viewers. Yet, as I will argue, in comparison to Isaac General’s lacrosse stick and Elliott Moses’ ladle, as an item in a museum collection, the beaded frame intervenes in the corpus of items shaping the definition of Onkwehonwe material culture. Its presence in a collection of Six Nations’ items ensures that beaded souvenir art would be remembered in the community’s history, demonstrating how “objects and contexts

⁸ Dolores Elliott, “Iroquois Beadwork:,” 39; Twenty percent of the pieces Gordon examined were decorated with words or short phrases. Gordon, 111-112.

⁹ Gordon, 111-112.

not only define each other, but may change and disrupt each other.’’¹⁰ After briefly discussing this beadwork tradition in broad terms, I will explore the agency of both Six Nations beadworkers and the beadwork itself. First, I will first discuss the treatment of this type of beadwork by ethnographers, addressing this topic through an exchange between Catherine Silver, a beadworker from Six Nations and the ethnographer, Frederick Wilkerson Waugh. Next, I will discuss the Jamieson sisters, who collected Mrs. Henry’s frame, and contextualize their interest in beadwork within their interest in the Six Nations Agricultural Society annual exhibitions and, more broadly, cultural preservation within the community. Together, the two contexts in which this type of beadwork has found itself demonstrate the variation in its value during the late-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries.

Studies of Beaded Souvenir Art

Much of the writing on Onkwehonwe beadwork has been shaped by the earliest ethnographic literature on the subject. In the history of collecting and Onkwehonwe beadwork, Lewis Henry Morgan stands out as a key figure. Morgan visited the Grand River Reservation in 1850, one year before his book, *League of the Hau-de-no-sau-nee* was published. The *League*, which is considered to be the first ethnography about this community, is useful for getting a sense of how ideas of cultural evolution shaped nineteenth-century thinking about the Onkwehonwe. Morgan’s *Regent’s Reports for the University of the State of New York*, edited and re-published in 1994 by Elizabeth Tooker, deal more directly with Onkwehonwe material culture.

¹⁰ Nicholas Thomas, *Possessions: Indigenous Art/Colonial Culture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 18.

Approximately 500 objects were sent to the state by Morgan, collected during his visits to Onkwehonwe communities on both sides of what is now the border between Canada and the United States.¹¹ Tooker has noted that, rather than collect on the basis of ethnographic curiosity, aesthetic merit, or historical significance, “[h]e sought to save from oblivion the memorials of Iroquois artistic and inventive genius not by merely choosing a few fine pieces, but by obtaining examples of all the various types of Iroquois manufactures.”¹²

To Morgan, material culture could shed light on an individual’s, or a culture’s, mental state.¹³ As such, it was an index of a culture’s place on the path of progress so steadfastly believed in by those who studied cultural development in the nineteenth century. And this path, he feared, was one upon which the Onkwehonwe were quickly progressing. He noted in his 1849 Regent’s report that “So rapid, indeed, is the progress of change, with the ancient lords of the soil, that what is to be done” – collecting the vestiges of their previous stage – “must be done quickly.”¹⁴

Several other anthropologists who visited Onkwehonwe communities published articles and bulletins on their material culture, fieldwork, and museum collections. Rich in description, these articles generally share an interest in locating the origins of certain elements of Onkwehonwe art, and exhibit a preoccupation with

¹¹ Elizabeth Tooker, *Lewis H. Morgan on Iroquois Material Culture* (Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1994), 78.

¹² *Ibid.*, xiv.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

separating elements deemed to be authentically Onkwehonwe from those which illustrate Euro-North American influences.¹⁵

Arthur Caswell Parker, for example, the great-nephew of Morgan's friend and informant, Ely S. Parker, produced a study of tree symbolism in Onkwehonwe art. In it, Parker suggests that the use of motifs resembling trees in early twentieth century art was a material reminder of its once symbolic significance, even though he felt it had been forgotten by many who used the motif in their decorative arts.¹⁶ This focus was less apparent in the work of Morgan, but is perhaps not surprising given that ethnologists of the early twentieth century – such as Frederick Waugh – were concerned with locating evidence of what life was like for their subjects before, or shortly after, contact.

In his book, *The Iroquois: a Study in Cultural Evolution* (1945), anthropologist Frank Speck sought to “capture some of the spirit of Iroquois culture and epitomize it within the proportions of a handbook.” Speck acknowledges the Six Nations' strength as a community, but at the same time he expresses the idea that contact with Euro-North Americans had led their culture to degenerate.¹⁷ He notes that “thresholds of acculturation” can be distinguished chronologically through noting

¹⁵ For example, see Mark Raymond Harrington, “Iroquois Silverwork,” *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*. Vol. I, Part VI. (New York: Order of the Trustees, September, 1908); Frank G. Speck, “The Double-Curve Motive in Northeastern Algonkian Art” *Memoir 42 No. 1 Anthropological Series*, Canada Department of Mines, Geological Survey (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1914); W.M. Beauchamp, “Iroquois Women,” *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 13, No. 49 (Apr-Jun 1900), 81-91.

¹⁶ Arthur C Parker, “Certain Iroquois Tree Myths and Symbols,” *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 1912), 614.

¹⁷ Frank Speck, *The Iroquois: a Study in Cultural Evolution* (1945), Bulletin 23, Second Edition (Michigan: Cranbrook Institute of Science, 1965), 14.

changes in the materials chosen by Onkwehonwe artists, such as the use of trade cloth instead of tanned animal hides, or glass beads instead of dyed porcupine quills. Using Morgan's lists of material culture for comparison, Speck concludes there is a "tenacious quality" to Hodenosaunee art, because, "after the lapse of almost a century most of them could be duplicated among the same Indians."¹⁸ Speck distances himself from other ethnologists who "have lamented the encroachments of European decorative figures upon the imaginary 'pure' art horizon of pre-contact times," and defends the art of what he calls the "transition era" as demonstrating "expansion rather than degeneration under the impetus of new supply material, sewing mediums, and designs to imitate."¹⁹ However, credit for Onkwehonwe artistic expansion is given to exchanges resulting from settler encroachments: as Speck explains, the "efflorescences" of Onkwehonwe art were "prompted by an appreciation of the art devices of colonial French and English artists."²⁰

Despite the disinterest shown by Frederick Waugh and other ethnologists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, there is now a significant amount of literature on Onkwehonwe beadwork items made for the Victorian tourist trade, known as souvenir art. These beaded items made in abundance by members of Onkwehonwe communities on both sides of the Canadian-American border included beaded purses, glengarry caps, birds, picture frames, miniature canoes and other small items. The older term, "whimsies," while capturing the both the Victorian taste for

¹⁸ Ibid, 49-50.

¹⁹ Ibid, 53-4.

²⁰ Ibid, 54.

novelty and the array of creative liberties artists could take in the creation of these wondrous pieces, is considered by some, today, to trivialize their “artistic and cultural value.”²¹

Until the last few decades, such items were largely disregarded as valid objects of study for art historians and anthropologists, as they seemed to embody the sort of cultural hybridity that rendered them inauthentic, uncomfortable fits in either categories of Native or Euro-North American Art.²² Like others that would come after him, the bead, for Lewis Henry Morgan, was a material index of assimilation and, the other side of development, loss: “[t]hey have laid aside their deerskin apparel,” Morgan continues, “and substituted materials, in fact, of our own manufacture . . . the deerskin has been laid aside for the broadcloth, the bearskin blanket for the woolen, and the porcupine quill for the bead.”²³ Seeking evidence of a pre-contact Onkwehonwe culture, ideas of cultural purity and social evolution shaped Morgan’s classification of such hybrid items, which in his 1849 Regent’s Report, he lauds as evidence of “Indian ingenuity,” while mourning the loss of “those articles which they have displaced, and those inventions which they have hurried into forgetfulness.”²⁴ In this sense, Morgan’s work is an example of how anthropologists

²¹ Ruth B. Phillips, “Genre, Gender, and Home Craft: Victoriana and Aboriginal Art,” in *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1998), 197-261; Elliott, “Iroquois Beadwork,” 37.

²² Ruth B. Phillips, “From ‘Naturalized Invention’ to the Invention of a Tradition: The Victorian Reception of Onkwehonwe Beadwork,” paper presentation, *Connections: The Inaugural Conference of the Canadian Women Artists History Initiative*, (Concordia University, October 2008), 3; Elliott, “Iroquois Beadwork,” 37-38.

²³ *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁴ Lewis Henry Morgan, “Report to the Regents of the University, Upon the Articles Furnished the Indian Collection: By L.H. Morgan. December 31, 1849,” in *Lewis H. Morgan on Iroquois Material Culture*, ed. Elizabeth Tooker (Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1994), 177 (67).

used material culture, especially beadwork, as a major diagnostic of a culture's progress on the path towards modernization.²⁵

In the 1980s and onward, Northeastern North American souvenir arts would find wider appeal among art historians and students of cultural studies. As the Six Nations of the Grand River is only one of the several Onkwehonwe communities where women made beaded items in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, studies of stylistic elements have tended to examine Onkwehonwe beadwork as a single tradition, with limited attention paid to identifying regional styles, or styles specific to particular communities. The limited emphasis on identifying regional styles could also be a result of the widespread dearth of contextual information accompanying souvenir art which has found its way into collections. This has proven to be a particularly interesting problem for classifying beadwork made by women at Six Nations, given the intricate relations between communities in this area.²⁶

The presence of so many pieces of beadwork evidences the existence of this widespread tradition, as well as a shared visual vocabulary. In this sense, this beadwork tradition has been said to reflect the continued existence of a distinct and shared Onkwehonwe identity, as well as the community's "genius for living at an imaginary level particularly expressed through their arts."²⁷ In particular, First

²⁵ Adam Kuper, *The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformations of an Illusion* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 42-75.

²⁶ June Bedford, "The June Bedford Collection," *Mohawk, Micmac, Maliseet . . . and Other Indian Souvenir Art from Victorian Canada* [exhibition catalogue] (London: Canada House Cultural Centre Gallery, 1985), 9.

²⁷ Christina Barbara Johannsen, "Efflorescence and Identity in Iroquois Arts" (PhD Diss., Brown University, 1984), 123.

Nations scholars who have written about Onkwehonwe beadwork appear to emphasize the ways in which this artistic tradition evidences cultural continuity, in spite of, or in addition to, cultural exchange. For instance, consider Deborah Doxdator's observation:

What is really astonishing is not that Native artistic forms and cultural expressions have changed, but that they have stayed so rooted in the same things. What is it about these long-standing cultural forms such as baskets, beads and quill, among others, that keep us so anchored to them? And this in spite of the negative associations with poverty and 'inferiority' that non-Native society has often tried to impart to them as part of past attempts to discredit the value and sophistication of Native culture and thought. Why it is that the processes surrounding the activities of 'basket, bead and quill' are, and probably always will be, so strongly embedded in our identities?²⁸

It is with this interpretative tension in mind, a tension rooted in the incongruity between an insider and outsider perspective on Onkwehonwe beadwork, that I will explore the history of collecting beadwork through a selection of examples.

Despite the lack of contextual information accompanying much Onkwehonwe beadwork, art historians have developed classification systems through close visual analysis of the large number of beaded items in museum collections. On the assumption that regional styles of beadwork probably existed, but were not accurately documented in accession records, art historians have approached museum collections of beadwork with a connoisseur's discerning eye. They have sought to identify key traits linked to specific communities and period-specific characteristics, and to understand how it is that certain styles developed in certain regions at a given point in time.

²⁸ Deborah Doxdator, "Basket, Bead and Quill, and the Making of 'Traditional' Art," in *Basket, Bead and Quill* (Thunder Bay Art Gallery, 1996), 14.

Literature about Onkwehonwe material culture and history has been produced from studies of museum collections intended for broader audiences interested in the history of Indian arts and crafts and the technical aspects of artistic production. Two examples are William C. Orchard's *Beads and Beadwork of the American Indians: A Study Based on Specimens in the Museum of the American Indian* (1929), and Carrie Lyford's *Iroquois Crafts* (1945). Orchard's book discusses beadwork and the history of beads made and used by Indigenous peoples of North and South America, while Lyford's focuses on Onkwehonwe material culture. Both, however, express the idea that settler contact, and the material and aesthetic exchanges that it has brought, have had a "revolutionary" effect on Aboriginal peoples' artistic traditions, resulting in some cases, such as the use of hides for clothing, in their decline.²⁹

While both Orchard and Lyford frame cultural change as cultural decline, their books are examples of publications produced by studying museum collections that may have been valued by Onkwehonwe artists, and may still be today.³⁰ Both contain photographs of Aboriginal art in museums, and detailed descriptions of how some items are made. They thus serve not only scholars, but also artists, keeping – in Lyford's case – with a desire to preserve traditional crafts. She praises the United States' Works Progress Administration (WPA), which encouraged artistic production on the Tonawanda and Cattaraugus Reservations between 1935 and 1941, for its

²⁹ Carrie A. Lyford, *Iroquois Crafts*, ed. Willard W. Beatty (United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Division of Education, 1945), 43; William C. Orchard, *Beads and Beadwork of the American Indians: A Study Based on Specimens in the Museum of the American Indian*, Heye Foundation [1929] (New York: Museum of the American Indian Heye Foundation, 1975), 167.

³⁰ Lyford's *Iroquois Crafts* is one of the publications available through the website for Irocrafts, a craft and craft supply store at the Six Nations of the Grand River. See "Irocrafts: Catalogues and Reprints" <http://www.irocrafts.com/CatalogueR/Reprints1.html> (accessed 03 March 2013).

contribution to the continuity of Onkwehonwe traditional arts: “[w]ith the help of old craft workers on the reservation who knew some of the old techniques,” she states, it encouraged “authentic copies” of “Iroquois implements, household articles, ceremonial objects and wearing apparel . . . [which] have served to acquaint the present generation with the crafts of the earlier Iroquois.”³¹

Beverly Gordon’s comprehensive examination of 650 whimsies in 26 different museum and private collections enabled her to develop a set of criteria for estimating the period when certain types of beadwork were made, through identifying the time periods when certain types of beads and materials began to appear on pieces made for sale at Niagara Falls.³² For example, she found that silk binding replaced by cotton by the 1870s, commercial rickrack or braid is found on items made after 1875, and that bugle beads appear as early as 1860.³³ Taking into account the complex “middle ground” which existed between Euro-North Americans and Onkwehonwe, her interpretation of stylistic patterns on items in museum collections contributed to understandings of Onkwehonwe beadwork. Through her sensitivity to myriad dynamics present during the Victorian era, she placed “the object at the centre of a culture contact or cultural interface situation.” As Gordon explains, through this approach, “[t]he object is the locus, in effect, with vectors going in two directions at once; in one direction to the people or culture that made it, and in the other direction to the people or culture that purchased it.” This allowed the beadwork to be

³¹ Ibid, 43-44. For a description of the positive impact of the WPA project on the Tonawanda and Cattaraugus Reservations, see Carol Cornelius, *Iroquois Corn in a Culture Based Curriculum: Framework for Respectfully Teaching about Cultures* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 164-166.

³² Gordon, 14.

³³ Ibid., 80-85.

“examined not only in terms of itself, but in terms of its contextual meanings to its producers, its purchasers, and its site.”³⁴

Harding’s (1994) study of 127 Onkwehonwe beaded bags in museum collections privileged economic need as the main motivator for stylistic developments in beadwork motifs. Conceptualizing her project as an extension of Gordon’s earlier work, she undertook a detailed analysis of stylistic features found on bags, isolating 94 variables which she then used to identify four periods in the Victorian beadwork tradition, ranging from pre-1800 to the 1880s.³⁵ She argues that Onkwehonwe artists “began selling beaded whimsies and bags for economic reasons, and most probably changed their designs to a more obviously floral style for economic reasons as well.”³⁶ Yet, Harding felt that “the value that plants had in Iroquois ceremonial life meant that when the whimsies decreased, floral motifs derived from Euro-American sources continued to be used by the Iroquois for their own consumption.”³⁷

Collectors of Onkwehonwe beadwork have used their collections as the basis for formulating classification systems. One of the largest collections of whimsies is the Bedford Collection. This collection was made by June Bedford, whose visits to British antique shops and flea markets and contacts with art dealers enabled her to collect over four hundred pieces of souvenir art made by Aboriginal peoples of Northeastern North America. This collection is currently housed at Toronto’s Royal Ontario Museum. Many bear the colourful beadwork characteristic of the

³⁴ Ibid., 5-6.

³⁵ Deborah G. Harding, “Bagging the Tourist Market: A descriptive and statistical study of nineteenth century Iroquois beaded bags” (M.A. thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1994).

³⁶ Ibid., 95-6.

³⁷ Ibid., 97.

Onkwehonwe Victorian style.³⁸ In looking closely and organizing her large body of material for an exhibition in 1985, Bedford identified several “unifying factors” in her collection, which “include technical aspects of the materials and decoration, the pervasive religious influence, and the problems that both Europeans and Indians have in actually seeing each others’ visual symbols.”³⁹

Gerry Biron is another noteworthy beadwork collector. A writer and visual artist as well, Biron collected beadwork made by people belonging to Aboriginal groups of Northeastern North America, forming the basis for his exhibitions, published material, and paintings, all of which draw on previous scholarship to explore and celebrate the historical and cultural significance of beadwork to the communities from which it came. His large collection of photographs from the era includes images of Onkwehonwe beadworkers selling their goods around Niagara Falls and Onkwehonwe people wearing beaded items. Reflecting his interest in the ways in which Victorian women valued Onkwehonwe beadwork, he has also collected numerous photographs made during the second half of the nineteenth century, of Euro-North American women, girls, and occasionally men, posing for portraits with their cherished beaded bags or glengarry caps.⁴⁰ Gerry Biron has identified two main styles – the Parker style, growing from the beadwork of Seneca artist Caroline Parker, and the Niagara Style, which was made primarily for the tourist

³⁸ Griselda Bear, “The Exhibition,” *Mohawk, Micmac, Maliseet . . . and Other Indian Souvenir Art from Victorian Canada* [exhibition catalogue] (London: Canada House Cultural Centre Gallery, 1985), 4. Many items in this collection are also decorated with quillwork and moosehair embroidery.

³⁹ Bedford, 5.

⁴⁰ Gerry Biron, *Made of Thunder, Made of Glass: American Indian Beadwork of the Northeast* (Saxtons River: Gerry Biron, 2006); Gerry Biron, “A Cherished Curiosity: The Niagara Floral Style Beaded Bag in the Victorian Era,” *American Indian Art Magazine*, Vol 35(4) (October 2010), 42-52.

trade in that area. He has also identified stylistic elements he argues was predominant during certain decades of the nineteenth century.⁴¹

Beadwork enthusiast and scholar Dolores Elliott, who boasts a collection of several thousand pieces of Onkwehonwe beadwork, has identified sixty “forms or types of beadwork,” and has also developed a set of traits for classifying beadwork into three styles: “Niagara,” “Mohawk,” and “Thomas-Hill.”⁴² She traces the Niagara Tradition back to Lewis Henry Morgan’s collection and the beadwork of Caroline Parker, with the Mohawk Tradition associated with the Kahnawake, Kanesatake, and Akwesasne communities. The Thomas-Hill tradition grows from the beadwork of self-taught Cayuga artist Sam Thomas and his mother Lorna Thomas, who have studied museum collections to learn and develop their craft, which they teach to others.⁴³ Perhaps reflecting the limits of a classification study based mainly upon a personal collection, Elliott asserted in 2002 that “it is also likely that there were beadworkers on the Grand River Reserve in Canada . . . [b]ut as of now, no beadworkers from the Grand River Reserve have been identified.”⁴⁴

Others interested in Onkwehonwe beadwork have focused less on constructing a classification system to make sense of this tradition, and have instead sought to understand its relationship to Onkwehonwe and settler culture, and its value to makers and collectors. Contextualizing items within their historical and social contexts of

⁴¹ For example, Biron states that in the 1840s there was a shift from geometric patterns to floral motifs in Onkwehonwe beadwork, and that bilateral symmetry is found in many designs made in the 1850s. Gerry Biron, *Made of Thunder*.

⁴² Dolores Elliott, “Iroquois Beadwork,” 39, 36.

⁴³ Elliott also identified a third style, which she calls the Thomas-Hill Tradition. See *Ibid.*, 46.

⁴⁴ Dolores Elliott, “Iroquois Beadwork,” 41, 45.

production and use has been a strategy used to explore this relationship. Questions surrounding value, production and reception of Onkwehonwe beadwork have been explored in greater detail by Ruth B. Phillips' study, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900*. In this book, Phillips engaged in a careful analysis of several types of souvenir arts and the historical contexts of their production and consumption, to show how "they are particularly illuminating of transcultural aesthetic process articulated through the asymmetrical power relations of colonial regimes."⁴⁵ Approaching the topic with a wider lens than employed by earlier scholars, Phillips stressed the need to contextualize items within "the matrix of economic, historical, social, and artistic factors," and to recognize their multivocality in order to understand the "dialogic and transformative nature of the processes of production and consumption that worked to give the products their characteristic shapes."⁴⁶ As well, Elizabeth Hutchinson's *The Indian Craze: Primitivism, Modernism, and Transculturation in American Art, 1890-1915*, demonstrates the complex histories of Aboriginal material and visual culture, whose meanings in the early twentieth century were largely dependent on the context in which they were found. Building on earlier works in art history, and influenced by cultural studies and postcolonial theory, Hutchinson approaches her evidence as transcultural, the result of exchanges between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and often existing as bridges, which connect the two groups through

⁴⁵ Phillips, *Trading Identities*, 3.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, xi.

their expression of shared aesthetic or social values.⁴⁷ Although her subject matter extends beyond beadwork, her approach to material culture reflects a larger turn in the field of Aboriginal art history and cultural studies.

Beadwork and Ethnographers

Collections are shaped by both what collectors choose to save and to reject, and also how the items collected are classified. These dimensions of collecting are particularly visible in the history of Onkwehonwe beadwork, which has been valued in various ways by different people over time. Beadwork made for the souvenir trade during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as the frame made by Mrs. Henry, offers an entry point into exploring the ways in which ethnographic ideas of authentic Onkwehonwe material culture and cultural purity shaped museum collections. In light of museum ethnologists' tendency to avoid collecting this material, the decision of the Jamieson sisters to collect a large selection of beadwork made for the souvenir trade appears to disrupt this narrative as they felt such items did belong in a collection representative of Onkwehonwe material culture from Six Nations.

Conflicting understandings over authenticity and beadwork at Six Nations in the early-twentieth century can be traced by investigating the context surrounding items collected, such as Mrs. Henry's picture frame, yet they also reveal themselves through the contexts surrounding items not collected.

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Hutchinson, *The Indian Craze: Primitivism, Modernism, and Transculturation in American Art, 1890–1915* (Durham: Duke UP, 2009), 5; Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).

As a commodity, Onkwehonwe beadwork made for the tourist market circulated in many spheres, its values and meanings shaped by the context in which it was situated. This contingent nature of its value relates to Kopytoff's notion of singularization, and how, "[i]n the homogenized world of commodities, an eventful biography of a thing becomes the story of the various singularizations of it, of classifications and reclassifications in an uncertain world of categories whose importance shifts with every minor change in context." Which beadwork was sought, and which was rejected, by Waugh; which pieces were collected by the Jamieson sisters, and how the reception of beadwork in the wider community of collectors has changed over time may perhaps not so surprising when we consider, as Kopytoff states, "[a]s with persons, the drama here lies in the uncertainties of valuation and of identity."⁴⁸ As questions about beadwork at Six Nations are explored further, this additional scholarship may shift its value in new directions.

As Fred Myers has proposed, art moves through and is continually contextualized and re-contextualized within multiple "regimes of value," each with its own distinct structures of value. Such regimes may include "local identities, globalization, and the peculiar nature of art objects as 'commodities'." Myers argues that any seemingly objective valuation of art cannot be disentangled from "its appropriation or circulation," and therefore discussions of an art market must take

⁴⁸ Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64-94, 90.

into account these spheres of value production.⁴⁹ Although Myers' assessment of the value of art is more relevant to fine art markets, his emphasis on how multiple factors shape value is also useful for explaining how the kind of beadwork made for the souvenir trade could be valued by the Jamieson sisters and others at Six Nations and dismissed by ethnographers such as Frederick Wilkerson Waugh.

Mrs. Silver's Beadwork: "Not Suitable for Our Purpose"

In January of 1916, ethnologist Frederick Waugh wrote a letter to Catherine Silver, a woman at Six Nations, requesting beadwork. Waugh had met Mrs. Silver the previous summer, introduced to her by John Jamieson, a Cayuga man who had assisted Waugh in his fieldwork in the community. Jamieson thought that Mrs. Silver would be able to provide him with what he was looking for. Mrs. Silver was a "clan mother of the Tuscarora chieftainship titles" and her position within the Longhouse community meant that she knew how to create the traditional patterns of beadwork used to ornament outfits worn for Longhouse ceremonies.⁵⁰ In his letter to Mrs. Silver, Waugh recounted that when they first met, she had told him that she "knew about six different patterns for headdress bands" and "some designs for legging beadwork." In addition to her own knowledge of how to make beadwork, Waugh

⁴⁹ Fred R. Myers, ed., "Introduction," *The Empire of Things: Regimes of Value and Material Culture* (School of American Research Advanced Seminar Series. New Mexico: School of American Research Press, 2001), 4.

⁵⁰ Sally Weaver, "An Early History of the Dehorners, 1904-1910 (A Working Paper)," (1970). 1. Elliott Moses Papers MG30 C 169 Vol 2, LAC.

reminded her she had “mentioned a shoulder-bag and belt” that she might be willing to sell.⁵¹

Two months later, in March, Mrs. Silver sent Waugh the beadwork he requested. In her letter, she explained that she was shipping her beadwork: “first is the head dress, second is the [shoulder bag] and belt then the leggines of old custom in old times.”⁵² In the letter, Mrs. Silver mentioned that she had decided to include in the shipment additional items, described simply as “a few beadwork.”⁵³ In his response to Mrs. Silver, Waugh thanked her for the leggings, headdress, belt and bag. He also wrote that he was returning the other beadwork she had sent to him: “the neck ornament, the two pin-cushions, the two pockets and the picture frame.” He explained that he was returning them because they were “not suitable for our purpose.”⁵⁴ Mrs. Silver responded, accepting the returned items and the fifteen dollars Waugh had decided to pay for ones he was keeping – ten dollars less than what she had asked for. She also wrote, “if any time you want any thing at all to be

⁵¹ Waugh to Mrs. Silver, 13 Jan 1916. III-X-79M Box 415, f5, F.W.Waugh Collector's File, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

⁵² Mrs. Silver to Waugh, Ohsweken, 30 March 1916. III-X-79M Box 415, f5. F.W.Waugh Collector's File, Ethnology Archives, CMC. “I now will send you first is the head dress so cent [second] is the shoulder dres then the bag and belt then the leggines and legg of old custom \$25. in old times. And few bead work comes \$1.50.”

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Waugh to Mrs. Silver, Ottawa, 4 April 1916. III-X-79M Box 415, f5. F.W.Waugh Collector's File, Ethnology Archives, CMC. “I got your letter all right, about the beadwork. I can offer you for these sum of \$15. This is for the leggings (4.00), headdress (5.00), bag (3.00) and belt (3.00). I will send back the neck ornament, the two pin-cushions, the two pockets and the picture frame, as these are not suitable for out purpose.”

[sic] maid you can send won't you think it is best from yours truly, Mrs. Catherine Silver."⁵⁵

His selection of the headdress, leggings, belt and bag, and his *rejection* of the pin-cushion, pockets, and picture frame reflect early twentieth century methodologies of salvage anthropology which gave the anthropologist the authority to decide which items or materials were "authentic" to a given culture, and which ones were not. It seems that in the case of Mrs. Silver's beadwork, items displaying Victorian aesthetics, made for the tourist trade, were discerned by Waugh to be unsuitable for a museum collection. Although he does not specify, Waugh was likely in search of items decorated with the more linear style of beadwork often found on Longhouse clothing, worked in small white seed beads along the edges of leggings. His decision to return some of Mrs. Silver's beadwork sheds light on the parameters of the categories used by the ethnologist to discern which items to collect and what to leave behind. In this sense, the beadwork he did not collect is as interesting as that which he did.

For Waugh, beadwork suitable for collecting was that which resembled the sort understood to be reflective of non- or pre-modern Onkwehonwe culture. Yet, he acquired the leggings, headdress, belt and bag from Mrs. Silver by commissioning her to make them, and paying her in cash.⁵⁶ The nature of the exchange between Waugh

⁵⁵ Mrs. Silver to Waugh, 11 April 1916. F.W.Waugh Collector's File, Ethnology Archives, CMC. "dear Sir, I received your kind letter saying that you only take the head dress and legges and the bag Shoulder is all one you said \$15 dollars all right send it and if any time you want any thing at all to be maid you can send won't you think it is best from yours truly, Mrs. Catherine Silver."

⁵⁶ Mrs. Silver to Waugh, Ohsweken, 30 March 1916. III-X-79M Box 415, f5. F.W.Waugh Collector's File, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

and Mrs. Silver – beadwork purchased with money, the price determined through establishing a value of equivalency presumably grounded in comparisons with the values of other ethnographic objects, is modern in the sense that it operates according to the parameters of a capitalist economy. This way of collecting was not unique to Waugh and Mrs. Silver, however. For example, a 1934 letter to Speck, Chief General answered several questions about Onkwehonwe material culture, which included both questions about the ways in which certain items were used and explicit requests to purchase some items. The eighth question on his list, a list which included inquiries about the production and use of ceremonial items such as cornhusk and hickory rattles, read, “I need clothes for wrapping baby in cradle board. Can your wife make them & how much?” The short answer written down on the page was “four or five dollars, less for plainer.”⁵⁷

In another letter that appears to have accompanied the answers sent to Speck, Chief General explained,

I ask Jim’s wife for price to make [the cradle board clothing], she said she couldn’t say how much unless she knew what style you want, as some are just plain and some with fancy beadwork. The goods alone will cost some thing like one Dollar and fifty cents, to work on with bead work total cost would say about four or five dollars.⁵⁸

In relation to the price of other items being shipped to Speck – a small husk mask for \$4.50 and sun disk for \$1.00 – the beaded leggings were expensive. Speck would also have to pay for supplies, as Chief General related that “Rosy say if you prefer a

⁵⁷ “Questions: Answers Below.” [undated] (III(7B3a) Alexander, General J). Frank G. Speck Papers Ms Coll 126, APA.

⁵⁸ Chief General to Frank Speck, 7 May 1934, 2 (III(7B3a) Alexander, General J). Frank G. Speck Papers Ms Coll 126, APA.

bead work on cradle board clothes she said you could send her some of the fine beads, as here is not available.”⁵⁹

It is possible that ethnographers such as Waugh were aware of the paradox around collecting items for their real, or imagined, connection to a pre-modern way of life through monetary exchanges that clearly established an artist's or informant's place within modern society. In *Indians in Unexpected Places*, the author, Philip J. Deloria, notes that an ideology of modernity predicated upon the exclusion of First Nations' people generates a sense of “unexpectedness” around evidence of North American Aboriginal peoples' participation in early twentieth century modern life. Part of this unexpectedness, he explains, has been produced by the incommensurability of such evidence with Euro-North American assumptions about Aboriginal peoples' marginal participation in the forces of modernization, such as wage labour, urbanism, innovation and popular culture. In other words, this unexpectedness is produced by a refusal to acknowledge Aboriginal peoples' participation in aspects of life associated with modernity.⁶⁰ As the beadwork discussed in this chapter demonstrates, objects could similarly trouble categories of traditional and modern. As Ruth Phillips has stated, the salvage paradigm, which tended to define an object's “authenticity,” in part, through its lack of circulation within a mass market, “marginalize[d] not only the objects but the makers, making of

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 10-11.

them a ghostly presence in the modern world rather than acknowledging their vigorous interventions in it."⁶¹

By the time Waugh met Mrs. Silver in 1915, he had likely developed his sense of what sort of beadwork he wanted to collect through both his earlier fieldwork and by reading existing ethnographies, such as Lewis Henry Morgan's *League of the Hadenosaunee* and Arthur Parker's *Iroquois Uses of Maize and Other Food Plants*. Born in 1872, Frederick Wilkerson Waugh grew up in Langford, Ontario, near the Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve. His long-standing interest in the traditions of the Onkwehonwe led him to conduct ethnographic research in his spare time. According to one source, he eventually combined his ethnographic research with his work as the editor of the Toronto-based *Furniture Journal*. He began his fieldwork for the Victoria Memorial Museum in 1911, under the direction of Edward Sapir. He visited the Grand River Reserve almost every summer from 1911 to 1918, collecting objects, taking photographs and recording data related to Six Nations material culture, plant medicines and ceremonies.⁶² After being hired by the Museum as Preparator for Ethnology in 1913, Waugh would occasionally visit other Aboriginal communities in addition to the Six Nations, including the Anishinaabe of Northern Ontario, the Innu in Quebec, the Labrador Inuit and the Montagnais Indians of the lower St. Lawrence

⁶¹ Ruth Phillips, *Trading Identities*, x.

⁶² Martha Champion Randle, "The Waugh Collection of Iroquois Folktales," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol.97, No.5 (Oct. 3, 1953), 611.

River.⁶³ Waugh's affiliation with the Museum would continue until his unexplained disappearance during a fieldtrip to Kahnawake in 1924.

When Waugh was introduced to Mrs. Silver, he had been searching, rather unsuccessfully, for Onkwehonwe beadwork to add to the collection at the Victoria Museum. About three years earlier, in 1912, when ethnologist Frederick Waugh was beginning his fieldwork at Six Nations, he wrote to the Victoria Museum's director, Edward Sapir, describing his research thus far. He gave Sapir an essay entitled "On the Material Culture of the Iroquois," which outlined his general thoughts on the Iroquois gathered from his time at Six Nations and Oneidatown. It was organized by subject headings, one of which was "Art." In regards to Onkwehonwe art, he wrote:

Art among the Iroquois is not developed to any great extent, and is applied principally to articles of ceremonial, household, or industrial use. It seems to have suffered rather severely from modern influences. An intensive study of the subject seems to indicate that utility was uppermost in the economy of the Iroquois, though much artistic taste in form and decorative design is discernible.⁶⁴

Waugh's description of Iroquois art reflects the belief in a division between art and utilitarian material culture, though he seems to struggle with applying such a division to the Iroquois, acknowledging that artistic taste and design is apparent. He

⁶³ Ibid. Waugh could be considered an amateur ethnologist – his interest in Aboriginal people grew mostly from having grown up in Langford, a hamlet situated close to the Six Nations Reserve. However, he had notebooks full of shorthand notes taken from significant works in the area of North American Aboriginal history, such as the Jesuit Relations, and texts by Lafitau, LeJeune, and Lewis Henry Morgan.

⁶⁴ Frederick Waugh, "On the Material Culture of the Iroquois" (1912), 4. Edward Sapir Collector's File, Ethnology Archive, CMC.

continues: “Many of the older materials have either disappeared entirely or are used to a limited extent locally. All, in fact, have been more or less subjected to change.”⁶⁵

Waugh’s frustration might be reflective of the resistance he encountered – his inability to solicit from artists what Ruth Phillips has described as “collusion in the creation of one of the fictions of premodernity typical of the Museum Age – the reinvention object they both could only imagine.”⁶⁶ Although followers of the Longhouse tradition would continue to have a significant presence at Six Nations in 1912 - evidenced most clearly by a comment in that year’s Indian Affairs Annual Report that “the periodical Deist feasts or dances at the various long houses” had a detrimental effect on attendance at three schools in the area – Waugh would experience difficulty in obtaining the precise sorts of traditional beaded items he sought.⁶⁷ Waugh’s struggle to locate beadwork which fit his aesthetic understanding of traditional Onkwehonwe art is evident in correspondence between himself and Sapir. In the spring of 1912, while at Tuscarora, the largest township on the Six Nations reservation, he reported to Sapir the following:

...There is one deficiency, however, which I have found very marked, and that is with regard to what might be referred to as decorative art. I have only two specimens of ornamental beadwork so far, but they are excellent...The neglect of art or decorative work here seems to suggest that it might be well to see what is being done in that line elsewhere. I should be pleased to have your opinion on this matter when you can find the opportunity to consider it.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Phillips, *Trading Identities*, 59.

⁶⁷ Dominion of Canada. *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31, 1912* (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson), 341.

⁶⁸ Waugh to Sapir, Tuscarora, 13 June 1912, 2. “Waugh (1912)” Box 637 F3, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

Other examples of Waugh's frustration exist. That fall, while at Oneidatown, an Onkwehonwe community close to Six Nations, Waugh expressed frustration to Sapir in another letter, explaining, "[e]xamples of Iroquois work showing conventional or other kinds of artistic design are very hard to find. At Caughnawaga the work shown was mostly very limited in range and very cheap and "dinky" looking, the materials also being poor."⁶⁹ His explanation was grounded in an assumption of a clear and discernable difference between the modern and the traditional:

It is hard to explain this absence of art work, except that it is possibly because they have adopted modern ideas so readily that they have dropped most of the old industries where the traditional or characteristic art ideas came into play. They are not lacking in the aptitude for this, but they seem to have dropped the old in favor of the new.⁷⁰

From the brief description found in his correspondence, the sort of beaded items that Waugh did not want to collect – in particular, "the two pin-cushions, the two pockets and the picture frame" – were the sort of beadwork that came to be known by late-twentieth century scholars as tourist art, items "typically derided by ethnologists as adulterated expressions of cultures on the wane."⁷¹

These items, however "unsuitable" for the purposes of Waugh, were cherished by women who sought souvenirs while visiting such tourist destinations as Niagara Falls in the Victorian era. Ruth Phillips has found passages in ladies' journals from the period which demonstrate that Onkwehonwe beadwork gathered such a following that Euro-North American women sought to imitate the style through making this

⁶⁹ Waugh to Sapir, 17 October 1912, Oneidatown. "Waugh, F.W. (1912)" Box 637 f2, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Thomas, *Possessions*, 15.

type of beadwork themselves. As Phillips reminds readers, this is “the sincerest form of flattery”.⁷² Phillips notes the “egalitarian tone” of such expressions of admiration seems unexpected to readers “sensitized by several decades of postcolonial scholarship to the oppressive colonial policies and racism that marked relations between settler society and indigenous people during the nineteenth century.”⁷³

Amidst the ideological fragmentation of modernity, objects which reflected hegemonic classifications of cultures would have appealed more to ethnologists than those that troubled existing boundaries between modern and tradition, or between modern and primitive. Yet, for people at Six Nations, these items were not problematic. Beaded souvenir art was a valued and celebrated Onkwehonwe tradition. The dissonance between Mrs. Silver’s sense of what sorts of beadwork constituted ‘Onkwehonwe beadwork’ – or, the items she sent to Waugh and Waugh’s own discernment of which beadwork would be ‘suitable’ for the museum’s collection –illustrates historian Andrew Nurse’s assertion that “salvage methods [of collecting] constructed a canon of authenticity determined by anthropologists, often with little reference to the views of the people actually under study.”⁷⁴ This canon of authenticity was predicated upon a weeding out of items deemed inauthentic. For the Jamieson sisters at Six Nations, however, this beadwork belonged.

⁷² Phillips, “From ‘Naturalized Invention’,” 2-3.

⁷³ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁴ Andrew Nurse, “Marius Barbeau and the Methodology of Salvage Ethnography in Canada, 1911-51,” in *Historicizing Canadian Anthropology*, eds. Julia Harrison and Regna Darnell (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 63.

The Jamieson Sisters and Beadwork at Six Nations

The beaded picture frame made by Mrs. Henry, bearing the message “Remember Me,” is one of several in the Jamieson Collection. Julia Jamieson (1889-1975) was a school teacher who, upon retirement, continued to be active in promoting education at Six Nations. Her sister, Nora Jamieson was also a school teacher at Six Nations. The Jamieson sisters were part of a family active in education at Six Nations.⁷⁵ Their father, Augustus Jamieson, is described in Julia’s historical publication as a “driving force to bring about a better education for Six Nations” who “worked diligently toward the breaking down of . . . that policy to stunt Indians’ potential.”⁷⁶ In her dissertation on education at Six Nations, Alison Norman notes that “The Jamiesons were a family of teachers; five of the eight children taught school. Julia finished high school in Caledonia in 1908 and began teaching almost immediately without any teacher training.”⁷⁷ The dedication Julia L. Jamieson provided in her *Echoes of the Past* speaks to her views on education and its impact upon her relatives: the publication was dedicated to “[m]y nieces, and nephews and their families, who have benefitted by the good standard of Education.”⁷⁸

In addition to the over one hundred pieces of beadwork, including pincushions, pouches, and small decorative birds and canoes, this collection includes

⁷⁵ For a detailed discussion of Julia L. Jamieson and her family’s role in education at Six Nations, see Alison Norman, “Race, Gender and Colonialism: Public Life among the Six Nations of Grand River, 1899-1939” (PhD. Diss., University of Toronto, 2010), 74-5.

⁷⁶ Julia L. Jamieson, “Dedication,” in *Echoes of the Past: A history of Education from the time of the Six Nations Settlement on the Banks of the Grand River in 1784 to 1924* (Brantford: Woodland Cultural Centre Library, undated), 14.

⁷⁷ Norman, 75.

⁷⁸ Jamieson, “Dedication.” 78.

a number of other items made by people living at Six Nations in the early to mid-twentieth century, such as woven baskets and straw hats. There is also a large collection of prize lists from the community's annual Agricultural Fair, an event in which the sisters enthusiastically participated. An Ohsweken Fair Prize list from 1929, identified as belonging to Nora Jamieson by her name on the front, is peppered with penciled in "1st," "2nd," and "3rd," written beside specific categories, and at the top of page 35 is written "63 prizes 1929."⁷⁹ Similar notes are scattered throughout the 1930 list signed on the front by Nora Jamieson: "21 firsts" is written at the top of page 35.⁸⁰ Both prize lists also contain a list of prize winnings for a "Mary," who could be the sister of Nora and Julia, Mary Helen Jamieson.⁸¹

Collector June Bedford stated that Onkwehonwe beadwork was once "despised." Beaded bags sold for around five dollars "at the counter of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York in 1966."⁸² Given early twentieth century ethnologists' preoccupation with cultural purity, and with sorting out authentically Onkwehonwe artistry or craftsmanship from Euro-North American items, it is evident that Onkwehonwe beadwork, in particular, souvenir art, was something of a problem for those who sought to collect ethnographic material. In this way, such beadwork, and the collecting of it by the Jamieson sisters, is a clear act of intervention, as it established that beadwork belonged in the archive of Onkwehonwe art. It was an act of recognizing value in the beadwork beyond, or in addition to, the

⁷⁹ Six Nations Agricultural Society, "Ohsweken Fair Prize List – 1929," Jamieson Collection, Woodland Cultural Centre, Brantford (WCC).

⁸⁰ Six Nations Agricultural Society, "Ohsweken Fair Prize List – 1930," Jamieson Collection, WCC.

⁸¹ Norman, 75. Ft. nt. 142.

⁸² Bedford, 7.

market economy for which it was made.

At Six Nations in the early twentieth century, the Annual Agricultural Fair was a place where artists and craftspeople could exhibit their talents for others to see. In 1912, for twenty-five cents, or fifteen cents for children under twelve years old, one could enter the fairgrounds, take in such events as a Baseball Match or the Horses' "Trials of Speed," and wander through the buildings in which goods entered into the competitions were on view.⁸³ Even in 1912, the array of categories into which competitors could enter had changed little since the early years of the event, the first of which was held in 1867. In her own essay on the history of the Agricultural Society Fair, Julia Jamieson explained that "the exhibits at this first fair were mainly handicraft articles such as hand-made baskets, wooden articles, articles made from wheat straw, corn husks and hides, together with wild fruit preserves."⁸⁴ Around 1875, the event was moved from the ground surrounding Chief William Smith's home to the Council House at Ohsweken. This is also the first year for which Jamieson was able to locate a written record of the event. In her article, she reprinted the prize list from this Fair, in its eighth year. In the list, Horses, Cattle, Sheep, Pigs, Poultry, Grain, Roots, Vegetables and Fruit are listed as categories into which participants could enter goods. Another set of categories were for items that people made: Miscellaneous Articles, which included hand-made items such as a panel door, a fancy basket, dressed deer skin and a grain cradle. A category called Ladies'

⁸³ Six Nations Agricultural Society, "Programme," and "Rules and Regulations," *Prize List: The Six Nations' Agricultural Society 45th Annual Exhibition to be Held on the Grounds at Ohshweken October 2, 3 and 4 1912* (Brantford: Ward Press, 1912).

⁸⁴ Julia L. Jamieson, "The History of the Six Nations Agricultural Society," in *Six Nations Indians: Yesterday and Today, 1867-1942* (Ohsweken: Six Nations Agricultural Society, 1942), 13.

Department in 1875, included sub-categories for such items as a Loaf of white bread, butter, Pair of woolen stockings, Men's straw hat, machine sewing, patchwork quilt, and beadwork.⁸⁵

Suggesting a flourish of interest in hand-made items at Six Nations in the early-twentieth century, the 1912 Prize List reveals a greater number of sub-categories and additional space made for other items. On this prize list, the category that had been previously called the "Ladies' Department" was re-named "Ladies' Work." Its list of subcategories in this section had grown, expanding to 79 in total. This expansion of sub-categories encompassed a greater variety of styles in such items as quilts (in 1912 separate categories existed for patchwork, fancy, knitted, crazy [silk], crazy [print], and log cabin quilts), as well as both hand made and machine made clothing. Also, several sub-categories were created for entering kinds of handiwork: embroidery (on satin or silk, on velvet or felt, on a sofa pillow, on a panel), Berlin work (plain, raised), crochet (on linen, on cotton, on wool), applique work, ribbon work, crochet lace, knitted lace, and teneriffe lace.⁸⁶

The category "Miscellaneous Articles," had remained in 1912 for items such as tanned buckskin, woven items such as splint, bushel and fancy baskets, and carved items such as axe handles, walking sticks, Indian baby cradles, ladles, bowls and lacrosse sticks.⁸⁷ An additional category was present in the 1912 list that was not in the 1875 Fair's list: participants could enter such creations as oil and watercolour

⁸⁵ Ibid., 17-8; Six Nations Agricultural Society, "Ladies' Work," *Prize List: The Six Nations' Agricultural Society 45th Annual Exhibition to be Held on the Grounds at Ohshweken October 2, 3 and 4 1912* (Brantford: Ward Press, 1912).

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Six Nations Agricultural Society, "Miscellaneous Articles," 1912.

paintings, crayon and pencil drawings, penmanship, and map drawings into the “Fine Arts” category.⁸⁸

Beadworkers wanting to enter their wares into the 1912 Fair Competition would have had a few different categories to choose from. The only category explicitly for beadwork was called “Beadwork Collection” – entrants would likely have submitted a number of items, likely of the sort known today as “whimsies” in their own particular style. This category would have allowed entrants to demonstrate both their talents in both beadwork and their creativity, through both quality of beadwork, colour choices and type of items made. It is likely that items such as the beaded picture frame collected by the Jamieson sisters, and the sort of beadwork that Waugh did not want to collect, would have been welcome in this category. A separate category existed for Leggings, most of which are decorated with beadwork. Similarly, pincushions, for which there was a separate entry category may have been embellished with beadwork. Beadwork might also have decorated the vamps of buckskin moccasins, which had their own category as well.

Although we cannot be certain about the degree to which the picture frame made by Mrs. Henry resembles the one Waugh chose not to collect from Mrs. Silver, given the aesthetic conventions of beadwork from this period, it is reasonable to imagine they shared some characteristics. Onkwehonwe beadwork made in this manner has a distinctive look that has been described in studies mentioned above as well as by collectors/connoisseurs Gerry Biron and Delores Elliott.

⁸⁸ Six Nations Agricultural Society, “Fine Arts,” *Prize List: The Six Nations’ Agricultural Society 45th Annual Exhibition to be Held on the Grounds at Ohshweken October 2, 3 and 4 1912* (Brantford: Ward Press, 1912).

Conclusion

As Phillips has noted, broader reception of Onkwehonwe beadwork by collectors and connoisseurs at the beginning of the twentieth century turned from “celebration of progress to nostalgia for lost authenticity,” reflective of “a need to see the colonized or rural other as past, primitive and traditional in order to see oneself as progressive, contemporary, and even avant-garde” – viewed as “a fundamental feature of modernism.”⁸⁹ Yet, this beadwork seemed to fit comfortably within categories created by Six Nations members themselves, for their own Agricultural society’s Annual Fair. How would the Jamieson sisters have reacted to Waugh’s description of Mrs. Silver’s beadwork as “modern,” and thus “not suitable for our purposes”? While it is impossible to know, we can imagine that they may have in some ways found this to be a compliment.

In the 1942 publication on the Six Nations Agricultural Society, after describing several items made by people at Six Nations and Aboriginal peoples of North America in general, such as baskets, straw hats and pottery, Jamieson tells readers what the objects represent:

These are only a few of the Indian’s old and modern handicrafts, but it gives us sufficient proof, that in his character were interwoven industry, patience, economy, endurance, originality and skill. In fact, he is nothing short of a genius.⁹⁰

She then cautions readers to avoid associating such skills, evidenced in the handiwork of contemporary craftspeople, with a desire to remain at the far end of the path

⁸⁹ Phillips, “From ‘Naturalized Invention,’” 5.

⁹⁰ Six Nations Agricultural Society, *Six Nations Indians: Yesterday and Today, 1867-1942* (Ohsweken: Six Nations Agricultural Society, 1942), 11.

towards progress, stating, “We modernists pride ourselves in being industrious and economical, but were it possible to travel backward to the place where the Indian began, we would truly “curl up and die”.”⁹¹

“We modernists.” A clear statement of a place in modernity, for both the author and for those for whom she speaks. Who were the modernists? What did ‘modern’ mean to Jamieson? And to whom is Jamieson referring in her quoted statement that suggests the Indians would “curl up and die”? Jamieson’s statements undoubtedly reflect the discourse available at the time which she and others could use to describe their experience and position themselves within various dynamics of the period which included an ongoing engagement and negotiation with modernity, the notion of the ‘vanishing Indian’ supported by assimilationist policies of the Department of Indian Affairs, and continuity of traditionalist practices at Six Nations of the Grand River. Earlier iterations of these dynamics were present at the beginning of the twentieth century when many of the items in the museum collections – which Jamieson celebrates at the beginning of the essay – were gathered.

Treating negotiations between artists and collectors as part of the stories of objects in museum collections takes a significant step towards recovering unexpected histories of exchanges as points where understandings of authenticity and tradition could be negotiated. These mediations, which could involve artists, collectors and ethnologists, reveal the constructed nature of ideas such as “authenticity,” as well as their relationship to authority.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Reflecting on memory over a decade and a half ago, Deborah Doxdator offered the following observation on a tension between ways of knowing Aboriginal art, including beadwork:

Non-Native societies have persistently defined our cultures by our material culture, by 'basket, bead and quill', but I do not believe that this is the reason why they continue to hold such power for us. Rather, if such a thing is possible to conceive in an era of 'decolonization', where challenging the 'colonizer' still focuses most of the attention on the omnipotence of the 'colonizer', I think it may very well be quite the opposite. The power of 'basket, bead and quill' comes not from a past defined by non-Native societies but from their continued relevancy and potency as conceptual metaphors that still play an important role in the process of making cultural 'tradition'.⁹²

Her observation is useful for thinking about Mrs. Esther Henry's beaded picture frame – which asks viewers to “Remember Me.” Its presence in the Jamieson collection acts as reminder that beadwork made for the souvenir trade belongs in a collection of Six Nations' objects. In this sense, it intervenes in the standard corpus of Onkwehonwe museum collections, challenging outsiders to reconsider early-twentieth categorizations of this material as inauthentic to Onkwehonwe culture. Furthermore, the narrative around its preservation at Six Nations reveals an unexpected history of resilience in modernity. The Jamieson sisters found a way to be comfortable as both modernists and Onkwehonwe.

⁹² Doxdator, 18.

CHAPTER 5

CHIEF JOHN A. GIBSON'S CORNHUSK DOLLS

In April of 1912, two pairs of cornhusk dolls arrived at the Victoria Museum from the Six Nations of the Grand River. The dolls were part of a shipment of around fifty items, sent by the Onondaga Chief, John A. Gibson. Written beside nearly every item's English name is its name in Onondaga, one of the Onkwehonwe languages Chief Gibson spoke fluently. As well, beside some items are details that explain how they were intended to be used. For example, some of the wampum strings collected are described as a "Death notification of head chiefs of the nation" and a "Death notification for Warrior Chief" and clothing described as an "outfit for eagle dance."¹ The other items on the list, including a pair of leggings (*Ga iy's*), tools, a 'Hominy Sifter Basket,' a 'Horn Rattle for Eagle Dance' and several medicine masks, are items associated with Longhouse ceremonies. The dolls are listed between "Leggins for Woman, *Ga iy's*" and "Iroquois Cradle with Papoose." They are described as "Iroquois Costume doll Male & Female" and "Latest Iroquois Costume doll Male & Female" (Figs. 5.1 & 5.2).

In 1911, when the Victoria Museum's director Edward Sapir wrote to Chief John Gibson to specify which of the "less common styles of objects" he wanted for the museum, cornhusk dolls were included in his list, along with a "feathered hoop representing the sun, carried by leader of great feather dance of "Handsome Lake"

¹ "List of Iroquois specimens from Six Nations, April 15th, 1912, from Chief John A. Gibson." Gibson Accession file, CMC.

religion” and a “silversmith’s outfit of tools.”² While cornhusk dolls have been made by peoples throughout the Americas, and were also made by English settlers, those made by the Onkwehonwe are most widely known. Their popularity would have been an item desired by ethnologists who sought to collect objects reflective of what was understood as authentic Onkwehonwe culture.³ It is likely that Sapir wanted the undecorated type of cornhusk doll used in Longhouse ceremonies and medicines such as the type illustrated in Arthur Parker’s 1910 publication on Iroquois Maize.⁴ Rather, he received costumed dolls, which are the sort made for the tourist or doll collecting market. As discussed in previous chapters, museums encouraged collectors to avoid items that were visibly the product of intercultural aesthetic exchanges “in order to support the standard museum representations of Native Americans as other, as marginalized, and as premodern.”⁵ Such objects, which displayed both an engagement with processes of commoditization and Euro-North American aesthetics, blurred the boundary between primitive and civilized which the salvage paradigm sought to reinscribe.

From the path they traveled to reach the Victoria Museum, to the materials and methods used in their manufacture, to the representations implied in their description by the donor, the two pairs of cornhusk dolls offer several points of

² Sapir to Chief John Gibson, 7 November 1911, Gibson, John A (1911-1912) Box 623 F.9, Sapir Correspondence, CMC.

³ Mary Jane Lenz, *Small Spirits: Native American Dolls from the National Museum of the American Indian* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2004), 65.

⁴ Arthur Parker, *Iroquois Uses of Maize and Other Food Plants in Parker on the Iroquois* [1910] (New York: Syracuse UP, 1968), 83-4.

⁵ Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1998), 50.

departure into the history of collecting and community dynamics at Six Nations. The way in which they reached the museum demonstrates how some members of the Six Nations community negotiated within and around outsiders' ideas of what belonged in a museum to preserve items on their own terms. The description on the accession list demonstrates how Chief Gibson asserted a claim to authorship over their interpretation. The textual supplement encourages viewers to view the dolls – representations of Others – not as items made for sale, but rather, as representations of different groups, or periods of time, at Six Nations. If, as Johannes Fabian has argued, there is “no knowledge of the Other which is not also a temporal, historical, a political act,” the descriptors attached to both pairs of dolls suggests that their collection was a political act, an intervention in knowledge making.⁶

Cornhusk Dolls in Museum Collections

In his brief descriptions found on the shipment list, Chief John Gibson differentiated between the two pairs of dolls by describing one pair as in “Iroquois Costume” and the other in “Latest Iroquois Costume.” Through looking closely at the clothing worn by both pairs of dolls, and situating them in relation to community changes and divisions at Six Nations in the early twentieth century, their value as historical sources is visible. In addition to an item to be made for the market, dolls have been used in Indigenous communities “not only as a means of teaching their own children about tribal traditions but also as a way of presenting themselves to outside visitors.”⁷

⁶ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: how Anthropology Makes its Object* [1983] (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 2.

⁷ Lenz, 150.

Seeing the dolls as reflective of Six Nations' history, it is clearer how Chief Gibson's choice to collect them for the Victoria Museum was an intervention in the preservation of his community's history.

The word "costume," found in Gibson's description of the dolls' clothing may bring to contemporary readers' minds images of ironic or kitschy outfits worn in jest. However, the use of this word should not be taken as an indication that the outfits are somehow fantastical or entirely fanciful. As the *Oxford English Dictionary* states, it means "the mode or fashion of personal attire and dress (including the way of wearing the hair, style of clothing and personal adornment) belonging to a particular nation, class, or period."⁸ The term "costume" was used by others to describe clothing worn by cornhusk dolls: a note sent by Frank Speck to collector George Heye in 1948, in which he lists "1 pair Seneca (Allegheny, N.Y.) cornhusk costume dolls (obt. From Clara Red Eye) 3.00."⁹

At first glance, both pairs of dolls reflect general trends of dolls made for sale. Often made in male and female couples, the female dolls of the pairs are usually dressed in calico print tunics, some decorated with sequins stitched down the front, replicating trade silver.¹⁰ Male dolls often have a headdress, sometimes decorated with small feathers. Though dolls were most commonly donated in pairs, with one male and one female doll, sometimes a pair of dolls will also have a smaller child doll

⁸ "Costume," Oxford English Dictionary Online. Last modified 2013.

⁹ Speck to Heye, 30 August 1948, Speck and Hallowell Folder #1, Box OC 120, National Museum of American Indian Archives, National Museum of American Indian Archives (NMAI).

¹⁰ For examples of female dolls in printed tunics, see CMC III-I-521 - Made in Wyandotte, Oklahoma (Iroquois – Cayuga); CMC III-I-1188; Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History E421269 and E421271 - from Allegany, NY Made by Emma Turkey and Clara Red Eye.

on a miniature cradleboard.¹¹ Examples of a single cornhusk doll, larger than those found in pairs, are occasionally found wrapped in beaded cloth, secured on a cradleboard.¹²

After viewing cornhusk dolls in the collections of several museums, it is clear that, despite sharing traits, dolls also vary in how they were made. Though most dolls in museum collections have faces made of exposed husk, as the two pairs of dolls collected by Gibson illustrate, others were covered with cloth.¹³ Some dolls have detailed 'hands,' with each finger made by tying string around fine pieces to make fingers.¹⁴ Others, such as the two pairs collected by Chief Gibson, have arms made of braided cornhusk with tied off at the end. Human or animal hair occasionally covers the dolls' heads, but wool and cloth appears more commonly.¹⁵

From the sample I viewed of cornhusk dolls in several museum collections, the cornhusk dolls collected from other Onkwehonwe communities outside of Six Nations share elements in their clothing style and construction details with those collected from the Grand River. For example, cornhusk dolls made by Cayuga people

¹¹ Three Iroquois cornhusk dolls from New York, T808A, Thaw Collection, Fenimore Museum, Cooperstown, NY; E389991, E380992, E380993, collected by William Fenton, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C.

¹² Miniature cradleboard with dolls at the Canadian Museum of Civilization: CMC III-I-267 Collected by F.W. Waugh and made by Mrs. John A. Gibson, Six Nations; CMC III-I-382 collected by Chief John A. Gibson, Six Nations, received 15 April 1912; CMC III-I-833 Collected by F.W. Waugh and made by Mrs. David Williams, Oniedatown; Also see NMNH E177739; NMAI 029546 from Six Nations

¹³ Also see NMNH E054257B. CMC III-I-382 has a face with beads for eyes, like the two collected by Chief Gibson.

¹⁴ See Family of Iroquois cornhusk dolls, T808A, Thaw Collection, Fenimore Museum, Cooperstown, NY; NMNH E380927 and E380928, collected by JNB Hewitt.

¹⁵ Cornhusk dolls with human hair include T808A, Thaw Collection, Fenimore Museum, Cooperstown, NY; E380991 and E380992, NMNH.

collected from Wyandotte Oklahoma are dressed in leggings and tunics – clothing similar to those collected from Six Nations and other communities in the Great Lakes region. The similarities are visual and material evidence of a continuity in an artistic tradition retained through geographic displacements.¹⁶ The dolls resemble those drawn by the Seneca Jesse Cornplanter, from Cattaraugus Reserve, in 1937 (Fig. 5.3).¹⁷

Doll Collecting and Collectors

In the late-nineteenth century, dolls were popular collectors' items. Cornhusk dolls would have been prized by collectors such as Annie Fields Alden, who in 1898 wrote an article about her international doll collection for the *Ladies' Home Journal*. Explaining her interest in dolls, Fields explained, "I have found that these dolls reveal more about their countries than one might at first suppose. I had expected them to show differences of costume, and of colour, but they do much more than this – they show the aims, the spirit, the general trend of the thought of the countries they represent." She continues, suggesting, "One might say with a great deal of truth: 'Show me the dolls of a country and I will show you that country.'"¹⁸ Fields described her pair of cornhusk dolls as appearing to have "a look of unbending stoicism," suggesting her impression was informed by the longstanding "myth of the [noble] savage," which historian Olive Patricia Dickason has traced back to the

¹⁶ For instance, a female doll with printed tunic in the Canadian Museum of Civilization's collection (CMC III-I-521) is attributed to the Cayuga who were displaced to Wyandotte, Oklahoma.

¹⁷ Jesse Cornplanter, "Cornhusk Dolls," Jesse J Cornplanter Drawings, Frank G. Speck Papers Ms Coll 126, American Philosophical Society (APS).

¹⁸ Annie Fields Alden, "My Collection of Dolls," *Ladies Home Journal* (November 1898), 17.

earliest contact narratives.¹⁹ For Alden, the dolls acted as prototypes of the cultural groups they represented. Yet, the origin attributed to the dolls was imagined, built upon a primitivist, romanticized view of other cultures.²⁰ As Marianna Torgovnick has explained, this view was tied to modernism insofar as it functioned as an antithesis, and thus was a useful tool to assert the West as modern.²¹

Collectors' interests in dolls from around the world continued into the twentieth century. International dolls were understood as windows into other cultures and places, a view encouraged by doll suppliers. "Doll Talk," a bi-monthly doll collecting publication produced by Kimports, a main supplier of dolls, ran an article in 1936 entitled "It's Fascinating to Collect Foreign Dolls." The article chronicled the doll collecting adventures of a young Marilyn McKim, who started her collection in 1931 at the Paris Exposition. Her fascination with faraway cultures was satiated through collecting. McKim explained to readers, "It was a gay adventure going from booth to booth, bargaining with strange merchants for even stranger dolls."

Cornhusk dolls were made outside of Onkwehonwe communities, as a children's craft. As suggested by an article in an 1881 issue of the American children's magazine, *Saint Nicholas*, this activity carried an appeal grounded in an imagined connection to an imagined maker. While the article offers directions for making cornhusk doll, its introduction offers, as well, an idea of who was thought to make cornhusk dolls:

¹⁹ Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 1984), xi.

²⁰ Marianna Torgovonick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 10.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 10-12, 34.

You doubtless know how ingenious little Indian girls are, and what pretty bead-work they accomplish, and what wonderful baskets they make. Well, these black-eyed, dark-skinned little girls are, after all, much like their pale-faced sisters in tastes, and, like them, must have their dolls. Unlike them, however, they do not often buy them ready-made but, instead, they invent all sorts of devices for making them with their own deft fingers.²²

In 1898, *The American Girls Handy Book* also contained instructions for making cornhusk dolls. Entitled “Corn-Husk and Flower Dolls,” the article extols the value of making dolls from materials found in nature when visiting the country, because fine dolls made of “wax” or “china,” with “silky hair and dainty toilets,” are “more suited to the elegances of the parlour than to the wear and tear of out-door life.” A primitivist, anti-modernist perspective on Aboriginal peoples as being more connection to nature is invoked by a description of “[l]ittle Indian girls” to whom, it states, “store babies are unknown.” It continues, explaining that they “make the most complete and durable corn-husk dolls.” Then, it offers children a chance to enter into their world, with “the following directions [which] tell just how to construct them.”²³ Young makers are encouraged to dress their dolls, which “may be of almost any style of material, from the pretty robe of a civilized lady to the more scanty garments of its originator, the Indian.”²⁴ An image of a cornhusk dolls dressed “in full Indian costume” is illustrated, made of “soft cornhusk” and a headdress of “small chicken feathers.” Reminiscent of stereotypes of the noble savage, the author provides the

²² Anon, “How to Make Dolls of Corn Husks and Flower,” *St. Nicholas*, Vol. 8 No. 11 (September 1881), 828.

²³ Lina Beard and Adelia B. Beard, *The American Girls Handy Book* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1898; Ottawa: Algrove, 2001), 170.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 172.

following justification for the costume: “[t]he war-paint and tomahawk are not necessary here, as he is smoking a pipe of peace.”²⁵

Through the lens of twentieth century anthropology, dolls were indices of an Other culture. In a 1925 article published in *Daughters of the American Revolution* magazine, called “American Dolls in the National Museum,” the author, Katharine Calvert Goodwin, explained, “modern ethnologists have learned to regard them not merely as toys but as a source of first-hand records of the history, traits and culture of a race.” She tells readers that “[i]n the Bureau of Ethnology of the United States National Museum at Washington, [there] are hundreds of dolls from widely varying environments, each one telling some bit of the dramatic story of a lost people or the habits and life of the long ago.”²⁶ “Their value,” Goodwin wrote, “is steadily increasing with the march of time and with the general abandonment of the native arts and customs” because “the change in the life and the assimilation of these people is almost uncannily reflected in the series of strange little figures in the Museum.”

Two years later, in 1927, an article by Dr. Walter Hough, Head Curator of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution, entitled “The Story of Dolls Tells the Story of Mankind,” ran in the *New York Times*. The assessment of Aboriginal dolls presented by Dr. Hough resonated with Goodwin’s. He stated, “a collection of Indian dolls

²⁵ Ibid., 172-173.

²⁶ Katharine Calvert Goodwin, “American Dolls in the National Museum,” *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine* Vol. 59 no 12 (December 1925), 728.

reflects the decay of Indian customs and costumes.”²⁷ In describing Native North American dolls, Hough focused on their clothing as evidence of cultural change:

First we have buckskin-clad dolls; then comes the encroachment of calico and blanket stuff made up on Indian styles; then ribbons and gew-gaws appear. The man's shirt is slit down the front and becomes a coat. The brave longs for a vest and perhaps has his squaw bead a weighty specimen . . . The woman's dress, that wonderful creation that yields the palm for heroic yet graceful lines to no other garment of aboriginal designer's art, is replaced by the awful shapeless calico dress insisted upon by the uplifters of the Indians.²⁸

Like doll collectors, anthropologists in the early twentieth century felt that dolls were more than toys. As Hough noted, “The origin of dolls takes us far beneath the surface of these interesting companions of children into the very remote past and reveals the grim beliefs of savage man struggling upward through his hampering superstitions.”²⁹ Expressing dominant beliefs about the outcome of colonization at the time, Goodwin’s and Hough’s general reading of dolls as evidence of the widespread disappearance of Native North American culture is predicated upon a refusal to engage with the complexity of Onkwehonwe history. In turn, it reflects a denial of a unique history to the Onkwehonwe, something sociologist of culture Tony Bennett cites as characteristic of evolutionary historical narratives, which served to construct an unbridgeable distance between Europeans and the Indigenous Other. Such narratives, which Bennett explains as grounded in conjectural history that became popular in the latter part of the nineteenth century due to the influence of evolutionary theory, produced forms of knowledge in museums that “cast”

²⁷ Walter Hough, “The Story of Dolls Tells the Story of Mankind,” *New York Times* (March 6, 1927), 11.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Walter Hough, “Miscellaneous notes and MSS of Hough’s NYT article,” p.5. Manuscript & Pamphlet File - Box 14 - Dolls – Printed Articles - File 184. Division of Ethnology, National Anthropological Association Archives, Washington, D.C.

Indigenous people “in the role of the primitive,” and denied them “the historical depth required for an archaeological layering of the self.”³⁰ What if the creation and collection of the dolls was an intervention, asserting evidence of engagements with modernity in a traditional art form?

In her article entitled “Indian Arts and Crafts,” in the Six Nations Agricultural Society’s 1942 publication commemorating its seventy-fifth anniversary, Nora E. Jamieson, a member of the Six Nations community, would include dolls within her survey of materials made of cornhusk:

An interesting cornhusk toy is the doll. The doll is made entirely of cornhusks and clothed throughout, the sewing being so well done, that the stitches are inconspicuous. Its clothing consists of proper underclothing, usually of flannelette, a colourful print dress, bedecked with ribbons and broadcloth or velvet leggings of red or blue colour, with fancy beading. Its moccasins are of leather, also beaded. The headdress is usually a woven, beaded band with a single feather worn at the back. No features mark the visage of this doll for it is supposed to have an imaginative expression as occasions arise.³¹

While she perhaps needed to keep her description short, as it was part of a large article, her concise description carries a confidence that masks the diversity of doll styles that circulated a few decades before. It also implicitly asserts a criterion for an authentic style of doll: one that included no faces on dolls, and details such as a headdress with a single feather. Some of the features included in Jamieson’s description are found on the dolls Gibson collected, but others are not. This is true of many dolls in museums. If museum collections are any indication, doll makers took greater stylistic liberties in their creative pursuit than those shown in the dolls

³⁰ Tony Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory* (London: Routledge, 2004), 5.

³¹ N.E. Jamieson, “Indian Arts and Crafts,” in *Six Nations Indians: Yesterday and Today, 1867-1942* (Ohsweken: Six Nations Agricultural Society, 1942), 6-7.

discussed by Jamieson. At the end of her article is a small image of a pair of cornhusk dolls. Though they share with dolls described by Jamieson some elements of clothing, such as moccasins, leggings, and headdress, they also differ in many ways (Fig. 5.4).

The male doll holds a lacrosse stick, the headdress worn by the male doll has several feathers, rather than one, and they have drawn on faces. Their presence in the article contradicts the homogeneity suggested in Jamieson's description of the craft; yet, they also speak to the tradition's continuity. Underneath them is the following caption: "Modern Cornhusk Dolls with Marked Features."³² To Jamieson, their differences from earlier dolls, which made them modern, may have been interpreted not as representative of inauthenticity, but rather, as a representation of their belongingness within a modern sphere of exchange. As an author and active educator at Six Nations, Jamieson had a certain ability to produce and re-produce understandings about Onkwehonwe art, which Gibson demonstrated as well, through his work as a collector. Though differing in ideological standpoints on Onkwehonwe education and culture, both Jamieson and Chief Gibson found cornhusk dolls to be useful conduits for actively engaging with representations of a changing and complex Onkwehonwe culture.

Corn and Onkwehonwe Culture

Upon closer examination, the dolls collected by Chief Gibson offer "insight into the value system" of the makers as Cath Oberholtzer found with her study of Cree dolls.

³² Ibid., 11.

This begins with the cornhusks used to make the dolls.³³ Dolls are one of several types of items Onkwehonwe made of cornhusk. In fact, that is how they were classified in the 1942 article “Indian Arts and Crafts” written by Onkwehonwe educator Nora Jamieson. In the article, Jamieson celebrates the diversity of uses for corn in Onkwehonwe material culture, explaining that items made of cornhusk by the Onkwehonwe included “[f]ootgear, mats, masks, hats, pipes and toys” as well as “floats for fishnets and containers for seeds in tubular form.” Corncobs were burned for smoking skins and green corn was made into a pulp and used as a replacement for animal brains to dye and dress animal skins.³⁴

Although it has been noted that “[t]here is no plant more vitally interwoven into the history of the New World than maize or Indian corn,” it is especially deeply rooted in Onkwehonwe history and culture.³⁵ Along with beans and squash, corn is one of the Three Sisters, revered as key forms of subsistence, of life.³⁶ The significance of corn within Onkwehonwe creation stories, subsistence and, in general, culture, means that the very material from which the dolls are made connects them to a deep heritage.³⁷ Positioned at the nexus of various aspects of Onkwehonwe

³³ Cath Oberholtzer, “Cree Dolls: Miniature Ambassadors of the North,” *American Indian Art Magazine* (Winter 2009), 47.

³⁴ Jamieson, “Indian Arts and Crafts,” 6.

³⁵ Arthur Parker, *Iroquois Uses of Maize and Other Food Plants in Parker on the Iroquois* [1910] (New York: Syracuse UP, 1968), 13; “Corn continues to be an essential part of the Haudenosaunee ceremonies...” Carol Cornelius, *Iroquois Corn in a Culture-Based Curriculum: A Framework for Respectfully Teaching About Other Cultures* (New York: University of Albany Press, 1999), 191.

³⁶ The Three Sisters were called Diohe’ko, meaning “these sustain us.” Parker, 27.

³⁷ Kevin J White, “Haudenosaunee Worldviews through Iroquoian Cosmologies: The Published Narratives in Historical Context” (PhD. Diss. SUNY Buffalo Department of American Studies, 2007), 141, 166. “Although consistently mentioned as one of the three sisters, the establishment of these three

culture, Carol Cornelius has found corn to be a useful focus for teaching about Onkwehonwe knowledge and way of life. She has found that because of its centrality, corn “can be used to illustrate complex interrelationships within Haudenosaunee culture, as well as interactions between cultures, and allows these relationships to be integrated into instructional units.”³⁸

In his 1910 publication on the uses of maize on Onkwehonwe culture, Arthur Parker stated that “[n]early every explorer who left a detailed record of his voyages recorded in a minute way his impressions of Indian agriculture and particularly of their cultivation of corn.”³⁹ Produced from a decade of fieldwork among Onkwehonwe communities in New York State and Canada, Parker’s study also outlines several ceremonies and traditions associated with the planting, cultivation and harvesting of corn.⁴⁰ Technologies related to the cultivation and storage of corn were developed in Onkwehonwe communities, some of which, such as husking pins and braiding techniques, were adopted by Euro North-Americans.⁴¹ The importance of corn to Onkwehonwe subsistence made crop burning during Sullivan’s raid a

staples as part of the cosmology illustrates the connectivity and importance of the corn, specifically signaling the importance of corn to the Haudenosaunee worldview.” White, “Haudenosaunee Worldviews,” 199-200.

³⁸ Cornelius, 46.

³⁹ Parker, 15.

⁴⁰ Helen Hornbeck Tanner, ed., “Subsistence Patterns,” in *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 22.

⁴¹ Parker, Plate 4.

particularly damaging attack, which hit not only their food source, but also a cultural symbol of vitality.⁴²

An anecdote in the notes of anthropologist Merle Deardroff sheds light on the relationship between corn and women in the Longhouse tradition. When visiting Cold Spring Longhouse in 1947, Deardroff was told that a woman who knows how to sing to corn is called *yun-ton-we-sus*, and women who “were knowing in the etiquette of the corn ceremonials” were called “*gantowisas*.”⁴³ Deardroff was told about a gathering at Cold Spring, held in honour of corn:

[m]ust have been forty women in it. It is for the corn. We start sitting down and pray that the crops may be good; the best part, tho, is the dance at the end. It seems as tho we are starting on a long field trip. We say, Now we are going. As we go along we sing about the field, then about the corn-seed in the ground; then the shoots; then the stalks; the ears; and the ripe corn. Then we come back home.⁴⁴

This honouring of corn in all of its forms relates back to a traditional story:

Once there were a boy and a girl that got married; their parents told them, as they did in the old days, how to live together and that they must never separate. Then they baked them a cake and they were married. They had a baby. The man decided to go off hunting and take his family with him. They did, so. He built them a house in the woods and went out to hunt. He didn't come back. The woman waited and waited. She had nothing to eat and didn't know how to get home. She put the baby on her back and started to walk, not knowing where she was going. After awhile she heard something speaking to her. She couldn't see anybody; but soon she found it was a stalk of corn that was talking to her. It told her to take one of its ears and eat it. She did so and thanked the corn-stock. It said she could take some corn back with her

⁴² Parker, 18-19.

⁴³ Merle H. Deardroff, “Cold Spring Notes v.5 3/9/47,” Ms. Coll no.44 Series IIa, Wallace, Paul A.W. – Six Nations Journal [1936], American Philosophical Society (APS). More recently, Barbara Alice Mann has translated the Mohawk word *gantowisas* to mean “political woman, faithkeeping woman, mediating woman; leader, counselor, judge... mother, grandmother, and even Mother of the Nations, as well as the Corn Mother.” Mann, *Iroquoian Women*, 16.

⁴⁴ Merle H. Deardroff, “Cold Spring Notes v.5 3/9/47,” Ms. Coll no.44 Series IIa, Wallace, Paul A.W. – Six Nations Journal [1936], American Philosophical Society. #4.

provided she saw to it that the women always sang and danced to it. The women brought corn to the Indians and the women and corn have always been sisters.⁴⁵

Given the importance of corn in Onkwehonwe culture, evidenced in the ceremony and story described above, material used to make cornhusk dolls connects these items to Onkwehonwe tradition of honouring and respecting this plant. In many ways, then, the use of cornhusk in Onkwehonwe dollmaking produces an agency within the items. The dolls “continue to link [Onkwehonwe] to their ancestors and to the perception of their past while giving meaning to their present-day interactions with others.”⁴⁶

Ethnographic Interest in Dolls

When Edward Sapir asked Chief Gibson to collect cornhusk dolls, he likely wanted a type distinct from those made to meet consumer or collector demand. This type of cornhusk doll had a spirit, and was used in traditional medicine and ceremonies.⁴⁷ It is this sort of doll that most interested ethnographers in the early to mid-twentieth century. In 1912, Frederick Waugh collected one such doll. The intended use of this item was described to Waugh by its donor, David Jack:

If a person who has a powerful medicine, like that possessed by David Jack (the kind he has wrapped up in silk rags), does not give a feast once in a while he will become ill with consumption or some wasting disease. This will gradually kill off all his family and then his relatives. The only way to stop it is to prepare a small canoe and a corn-husk doll. The doll is placed in the canoe, also the medicine. The canoe is then pushed off into a river or stream,

⁴⁵ Deardroff, “Cold Spring Notes.”

⁴⁶ Christina Barbara Johannsen, “Efflorescence and Identity in Iroquois Arts” (PhD Diss., Brown University, 1984), 163.

⁴⁷ The idea that dolls can carry spirits is shared among Indigenous communities in North America and beyond. Lenz, 7.

the person saying: – Ona''dia''da a dia – Now we are off. The medicine thinks the doll is the person who owns it, especially as the doll will speak to it and tell it that they will go away off somewhere. The boat will eventually be upset, together with its contents, but the med[icine] will continue to follow the corn-husk doll.⁴⁸

Waugh was also told that cornhusk dolls could carry a power to protect those around it, making them desirable children's toys:

. . . they protect the child. A noise is often heard as though two people were talking when a child is playing with one of these. The doll is really alive. It protects the child from snakes and other dangerous creations. It also protects a house from thieves. It is placed in the house and told to stay there. When a thief came near he would hear a noise as though some one were moving inside. He would then be afraid to go in.⁴⁹

Reflecting the continuity of this agency, the protective function of cornhusk dolls was mentioned in an article by Six Nations educator Nora Jamieson decades later (1942). She wrote, “[t]raditionally, this doll is a keeper of the house. When one intends to vacate the home for a time, this doll is left standing at the window to guard the home and strangely enough, the house is never disrupted.”⁵⁰

Due to their animacy, dolls were to be treated with respect. A field notebook from 1915 contains the following story, which speaks to the consequences of mistreating cornhusk dolls:

A family near here. . . had two girls who were always making corn-husk dolls. They would not dress them up, but made so many that some got thrown out and others were kicked around the floor and stepped on. After a while one of the girls, who was just about grown up took sick. She dreamed she saw one of these dolls which came and called her mother. The doll said you didn't put any clothes on us and it's a long time now that we have had nothing to eat. The only way you can get saved is to put up a feast. You must kill a black pig

⁴⁸ F.W. Waugh, Notebook: “No.5 – Medicines – Six Nations” (1912), 32. Box 200R Folder 22, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

⁴⁹ F.W. Waugh, Notebook: “Games, Six Nations” (1912), 25. Ethnology Archives, CMC.

⁵⁰ Jamieson, “Indian Arts and Crafts,” 6-7.

& cook the whole body, also make corn bread and other things to eat. This was done and all the dolls brought together beside the food. A preacher then spoke, offered tobacco to the dolls & said 'It's time for you to go away.' They were placed in a carrying basket & taken to the bush. Tobacco was again offered here, the dolls being told to stay there & not bother the people. Then they were covered up and left.⁵¹

Traditional practices involving cornhusk dolls, reflecting their animacy, were documented in other Onkwehonwe communities. For example, when William Fenton was among the Onkwehonwe groups in New York State in the mid-twentieth century, he was told about why the Ohgiwe Society of the Longhouse used a cornhusk doll in their Dance for the Dead.⁵² A woman named Clara Redeye also recounted to Fenton a memory of exchanging cornhusk dolls at Friendship dances held in the Cayuga Longhouse (Coldspring) of Grand River, suggesting that dolls strengthened ties between Onkwehonwe people and communities.⁵³ Fenton was also told of how dolls were made in response to dreams.⁵⁴ Because of the spirit contained within them, it was important to treat these dolls "like people" and not to throw them out, but to "[t]ake a doll apart when there is no longer any use for it."⁵⁵ This practice of

⁵¹ F.W. Waugh notes, "D. Jack, Aug. 12/15," (1915), 44. Field Notebook No. 3 – 1915, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

⁵² William Fenton, "Husk Dolls" MS. Coll. No. 20, Series V. William Fenton Papers, APS.

⁵³ Upon exchange, "each girl would keep the doll during her lifetime, and they renewed the friendship periodically with a dance. When one died, the doll was put in her coffin, and at the funeral, the speaker tells that this is the end of the friendship. They give the survivor a memento of the deceased, and the survivor keeps the doll until she dies." William Fenton, "Clara Red Eye – Emma Turkey, Dolls 7/6/1938," MS. Coll. No. 20, Series V. "Husk Dolls" William Fenton Papers, APS.

⁵⁴ William Fenton, "Doll, dream object," "Husk Dolls" MS. Coll. No. 20, Series V. William Fenton Papers, APS.

⁵⁵ William Fenton, "Clara Red Eye – Emma Turkey, Dolls 7/6/1938," MS. Coll. No. 20, Series V. "Husk Dolls" William Fenton Papers, APS.

disassembling dolls after using them likely made it difficult for Sapir to collect such items for the Victoria Museum.

Cornhusk dolls made for medicine or ceremonial use do not have faces. There are several explanations for the absence of faces on cornhusk dolls. Curator Mary Jane Lenz has suggested that it was a mode of protection for children who played with them: “[i]f a child played too roughly or injured her doll in some way, it would not be able to identify the culprit and bring a punishment.”⁵⁶ Other explanations are grounded in Onkwehonwe stories. One, told by a Seneca woman, describes a doll who became “vain and naughty” once she saw her beautiful face in a pool of water:

That began to make the people very unhappy and so the Great Spirit decided that wasn't what she was to do. She didn't pay attention to his warning, so the last time the messenger came and told her that she was going to have her punishment. Her punishment would be that she'd have no face, she would not converse with the Senecas or the birds or the animals. She'd roam the earth forever, looking for something to do to gain her face back again. So that's why we don't put any faces on the husk dolls.⁵⁷

The other tells of a young unmarried man who saw a woman wandering in his dwelling one night. She was not there in the morning, and no one believed him. When he and several friends caught her with a trap they had set, she turned into a cornhusk doll with a face. They brought her to the Longhouse, where the eldest man took the doll and said, “[s]omeone of our people here on Earth has put this face on this doll. This is *not* to be! Our Creator is the *only* one who can put a face on these dolls!”⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Lenz, 66.

⁵⁷ Bill Brescia, ed. *Our Mother Corn* (Seattle: Daybreak Star Press, 1981), 53.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 54.

The first story is a cautionary tale against vanity. It tells of the negative effects on a community when one member develops a preoccupation with him or herself. The faceless doll is a material reminder of humility and the consequences of self-absorption. The latter story has a similar message: it places authority over creating people in the hands of the Creator and tells of the ways in which beings created by humans can lose control and cause mischief. They upset the balance and must be put back in their place. In telling the story of the cornhusk doll who enters the unmarried man's dwelling, there is an implicit acknowledgment that such humans can create such animate beings, which can then cause trouble. The stories reflect a statement told to William Fenton by an Onkwehonwe man in 1938: "[h]usk dolls made to nearly human invite wrath of [the Great Spirit] who alone could make [the] perfect man," and that "[t]o apply these features to husk dolls was to invite good or evil spirits to live in the doll, makers would omit such elements as '[f]acial features' and 'fingers.'⁵⁹ Fenton was also told by Onkwehonwe mother and daughter Emma Turkey and Clara Red Eye that "[t]he Indians in the Old Days did not paint faces on their dolls."⁶⁰

Anthropologists have continued to recognize dolls as valuable sources for learning about First Peoples.⁶¹ However, greater attention to the small details on dolls can lead to analyses which steer away from generalizations about cultural progress and towards specific insights about the communities where they were made and the

⁵⁹ William Fenton, "Husk Dolls."

⁶⁰ William Fenton, "Quaker Bridge, July 6 1938," 2. In "Husk Dolls" MS. Coll. No. 20, Series V. William Fenton Papers, APS.

⁶¹ See Mary Jane Lenz, *Small Spirits: Native American Dolls from the National Museum of the American Indian* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2004).

ways in which dolls were vehicles of self-representation. Cath Oberholtzer's detailed analysis of six late eighteenth-century Cree dolls frames them as "Miniature Ambassadors of the North."⁶² Her analysis, which interprets the use of trade materials as evidence of "the capabilities of Cree women to adapt new materials to older indigenous techniques," stands in contrast to Hough's assessment of their presence on Aboriginal dolls' clothing as representative of "the decay of Indian customs and costumes."⁶³ Through a detailed examination of their clothing, and by drawing upon a variety of secondary materials such as paintings and additional material culture from the period, Oberholtzer shows how they contain evidence of Cree techniques for clothing manufacture, choices for the incorporation of trade materials into traditional dress, and, most importantly, the value placed on certain items worn by the Cree in the 1800s.

Theoretical work on the body and dress as sites "of social and political action in industrial society" intertwined with "structure and agency in cultures" suggests that such links may exist.⁶⁴ For instance, Sherry Farrell Racette has used clothing as an entry point into dynamics found in the "middle ground" of Métis communities. Despite the fact that few articles of clothing and other objects in museum collections "can be positioned with any certainty within Métis and Half Breed communities," she

⁶² Oberholtzer, 36.

⁶³ Ibid., Hough, "The Story of Dolls," 11.

⁶⁴ Hildi Hendrickson, ed. *Clothing and Difference: Embodied Identities in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa* (Duke University Press, 1999), 3, 6. Also see Sherry Farrell Racette, "Sewing Ourselves Together: Clothing, Decorative Arts and The Expression of Metis and Half Breed Identity" (PhD. diss., University of Manitoba, 2004).

has used the items with clear provenance “as tent pegs to secure or tether ideas regarding style and visual identity to a person, time or location.”⁶⁵

Gibson and Sapir: Dolls for the Museum

The cornhusk dolls Chief Gibson sent Edward Sapir in 1912 did not resemble those made for medicine or ceremonies. Rather, they resemble the sort made for the tourist market, or for doll collectors. For this reason, they do not fit comfortably within what Andrew Nurse has called the “canon of authenticity” which shaped collecting practices of museum ethnologists in this period.⁶⁶ But the collector was not a museum ethnologist. The dolls were sent to the museum by a hereditary Chief who lived at the Six Nations of the Grand River. Understanding who Chief Gibson was, and his relationship to ethnographic collecting, helps to shed light on how they made it past the dominant collecting criteria of the period and onto the shelves of the Victoria Museum: his position as intermediary may have allowed him space to intervene and shape collecting within his community. From the anecdotes Waugh was told about cornhusk dolls, it is clear that community members still used cornhusk dolls in traditional practices. Gibson’s decision to send dolls made for sale or for collecting, rather than dolls used in a ceremony or made as dream articles, could be understood as an intervention in shaping the contents of the collection from his community.

⁶⁵ Racette, 124.

⁶⁶ Andrew Nurse, “Marius Barbeau and the Methodology of Salvage Ethnography in Canada, 1911-51,” in *Historicizing Canadian Anthropology*, eds. Julia Harrison and Regna Darnell (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 63.

Though not an ethnologist in the formal sense, by the time of his death, Gibson had become one of the most knowledgeable individuals of the traditional ways at Six Nations. He inherited membership in the Turtle Clan through his Seneca mother, though both she and his Onondaga father were not active in the Longhouse tradition, but were members of the Anglican Church. When he was twenty years old, Gibson studied with an Onondaga elder whose memory, it was said, “went back to the years before the dispersion of the Six Nations, in the aftermath of the American revolution.”⁶⁷ Gibson was fluent in both Onondaga and Cayuga, and could also speak Seneca, Oneida, and some Tuscarora.⁶⁸ The loss of his sight at the age of 31 seems not to have hindered his participation in cultural events and practices – in addition to learning many aspects of traditional Hodenosaunee culture, he continued to remain active in lacrosse at Six Nations through managing the United Six Nations Lacrosse Team, which came to be known as the “Gibson Team.”⁶⁹ By 1873, Chief Gibson would find himself living a life different from his Anglican parents: his clan mothers appointed him the respected “hereditary title of Skanyátaí.yo? (Handsome

⁶⁷ “Gibson, John Arthur.” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online, 1911-1920* (Volume XIV) University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2000.

⁶⁸ Hewitt, J.N.B., “The Requickenning Address of the Iroquois of the Iroquois Condolence Council,” in William N. Fenton, ed., *Journal of the Washington Academy of Science* (1944), 68; Hanni Woodbury, “Introduction,” in *Concerning the League: The Iroquois League Tradition as Dictated in Onondaga by John Arthur Gibson*, ed. and trans. Hanni Woodbury in collaboration with Reg Henry and Harry Webster, Memoir 9 (Winnipeg: Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics, 1992), xii.

⁶⁹ “Gibson, John Arthur.” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*.

Lake) on the Confederacy Council.”⁷⁰ He came to be known as a talented orator who was “able to sway the council with his speeches.”⁷¹

Throughout his life, Gibson would engage in several projects with anthropologists apart from collecting Onkwehonwe material culture. In 1912, he dictated the League Tradition to ethnologist Alexander A. Goldenweiser. This is the only source in an Onkwehonwe language, Onondaga, which includes rites of the Condolence Council, the ceremony used to mourn the death of a Confederacy chief and raise up a new one in his place.⁷² His role as intermediary extended outside of collecting and ethnology, acting occasionally as a “consultant by the Department of Indian Affairs, for which he also mediated disputes among the tribes at Six Nations and elsewhere.”⁷³ Gibson’s knowledge and work with ethnologists earned him praise from longtime scholar of Onkwehonwe history and traditions, William N. Fenton, who described him as “unquestionably the greatest mind of his generation among the Six Nations.”⁷⁴

Both Chief John Gibson, and his son Simeon, who would follow in his father’s footsteps, left deeply favourable impressions upon ethnologists. Obituaries for both Gibson and his son, Simeon (1889-1943), were written by ethnologists and

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Julia L. Jamieson, ed. “Chiefs - The Six Nations Council of the Iroquois Confederacy,” in *Echoes of the Past: A history of Education from the time of the Six Nations Settlement on the Banks of the Grand River in 1784 to 1924* (undated), Elliott Moses Fonds, MG30 Vol 2, LAC.

⁷² Woodbury, *Concerning the League*, ix.

⁷³ Gibson, John Arthur.” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*.

⁷⁴ William N. Fenton, “This Island, the World on the Turtle’s Back,” *Journal of American Folklore* 75 (1962), 286-7.

published in anthropological journals. And, as Theresa McCarthy stated, “[g]iven the value Haudenosaunee people place on practices involving the passing of loved ones and condolence of the bereaved, this form of acknowledgment is immensely meaningful.”⁷⁵ A. A. Goldenweiser’s obituary for Chief John Gibson, published in the *American Anthropologist*, is filled with praise, describing Gibson as a “well-nigh inexhaustible storehouse of information on practically every side of Iroquois culture” who “early acquired a good knowledge of the social structures, ceremonies, and mythology of his tribe and of its sister tribes in the League.”⁷⁶ His knowledge of Onkwehonwe culture impressed anthropologists and his willingness to share was understood as valuable for both academic study and for the continuation of Onkwehonwe culture. His passing, then, brought concern over the future of traditional Onkwehonwe knowledge: “[a]nother generation and there will be no custom; still another generation and there will be no memory.”⁷⁷

Correspondence between Edward Sapir and Gibson suggests that the relationship formed between the Victoria Museum’s director and the hereditary Six Nations Chief was of the sort found throughout Canada in the early twentieth century, wherein “[p]rofessional museum collectors made regular use of well-placed or knowledgeable Native people as independent agents to collect for museums.”⁷⁸ Sapir advised Gibson on such matters as documentation of materials collected. Reflecting

⁷⁵ Theresa L. McCarthy, “Iroquoian and Iroquoianist: Anthropologists and the Haudenosaunee at Grand River,” *Histories of Anthropology Annual* 4, 1 (October 2008), 166.

⁷⁶ A.A. Goldenweiser, “The Death of Chief Gibson,” *American Anthropologist*, 14 (1912), 693.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 692.

⁷⁸ Phillips, *Trading Identities*, 58.

the museum's concerns over provenance and classification, at one point, he suggested to Gibson: "... In future, kindly give the tribe from which each specimen was obtained, that is, the tribe of the man from whom bought. If it is not too much trouble, you might also give his name."⁷⁹

Relationships between Gibson and ethnologists had been cultivated for years, and with them, trust in his discernment of suitable museum materials had developed. Letters between Sapir and Gibson reveal that the museum director relied upon Gibson's judgment around both what sorts of objects were worth collecting, as well as the quality of items available.⁸⁰ Gibson also made collection decisions on his own. In November of 1911, Gibson sent Sapir twenty cornhusk masks. Sapir's response suggests he was unhappy with Gibson's rather liberal collecting practice:

I have received your box of 20 corn husk masks... However, as we can not go on indefinitely buying unlimited amounts of the same class of material, I think it would be a good idea not to send any more corn husk masks, wooden masks, turtle shell rattles, or silver brooches for the present, unless of course you happen to get hold of some old and particularly fine specimen."⁸¹

⁷⁹ Sapir's earlier instructions were, "When you send your specimens, kindly take care to have a label attached rather than pasted to each article. On this label you should put a number, or else the name, use, and material of the object. It would be a good idea also if you make up a numbered list of the things you are sending with a price estimate of the whole. To the price estimate please add your commission. This list and price estimate will be your bill receipt. On arrival of the goods, I shall certify to the fairness of the price and our treasurer will send you a cheque for the amount you ask. You may find the business a trifle slow, but you know about government red tape. At any rate everything is absolutely safe with us so you need have no fear as to anything." Sapir to Gibson, Sept. 30 1911. Box 623 F.9. John A. Gibson Collector's File, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

⁸⁰ Given that Gibson had immeasurably more knowledge about Onkwehonwe culture than Sapir, this is perhaps of no surprise. For instance, when Gibson wrote to Sapir in October of 1911 to let him know that there would be quality snowsnakes for purchase because it was the time of the community's Winter fair, Sapir responded, "As we already have quite a number of snow-snakes, I do not think it would be worth while for us to purchase more from each tribe, but if the sort of snow-snake you have in mind is of superior grade to those you have already sent us, kindly let us have one of them. Or do you mean that there are four different kinds of first class snow-snakes?" Sapir to Gibson, 13 October 1911. Box 623 F.9. John A. Gibson Collector's File, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

⁸¹ Sapir to Gibson, 7 November 1911. Box 623 F.9. John A. Gibson Collector's File, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

Gibson's choice to collect all twenty masks for the museum may have been a strategy to preserve items *he* thought important, irrespective of the criteria guiding the anthropologists. Or it could have been his way of using his position as a museum intermediary to economically support the makers within his community. In fact, Frederick Waugh warned Edward Sapir that Gibson may have been attempting to collect items not needed by the museum:

... With regard to the list sent me of specimens purchased from Chief Gibson. I asked to see what he had (this was before you had written to me about it). He showed me just a very few and gave me to understand that they were about all he had. Perhaps he didn't wish to take the trouble to show me; or, as I had some reason to think in the Winter, he was not anxious for me to know, and appeared quite willing for me to go ahead and purchase duplicates of what the museum already has.⁸²

The passages above exemplify how, in Ruth Phillips' view, archival documents generated through the collecting project of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century often "strikingly illustrate the difference between Native and non-Native object/value systems as articulated by Native people in the course of their negotiations with non-Native buyers." Although such differences usually resulted in Western value systems prevailing, as Ruth Phillips explains, "[t]he acts of articulation constitute a form of resistance that needs to be acknowledged, however, for they lead to the highly effective reassertion of Aboriginal concepts of cultural property and replication made in recent years."⁸³

⁸² Waugh to Sapir. 29 April 1912. Box 637 F.1. Sapir Correspondence, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

⁸³ Phillips, *Trading Identities*, 58.

Only seven months after sending the cornhusk dolls to the museum, Chief Gibson died. Present at his passing was A.A. Goldenweiser, an ethnologist who had developed a relationship with the Chief and his family that transcend the boundaries of professional or informant/anthropologist. He wrote about the Chief's passing in a letter to museum director Edward Sapir:

Gibson's death came with great suddenness. I had left him and Chief Sanford at a quarter to six, to come back after supper to take phonograph records. At 7pm. I was called across and he was already dead and cold. An apoplectic stroke did away in a few seconds with what had been a mighty personality, a powerful brain and great knowledge. I do not think I shall soon forget his face, as he lay on the familiar couch, now his death bed, while I was applying hot compresses to his heart and doing other useless things. Well he is gone any how, and he died in a way in which we all should wish to die.

Having worked with Gibson intimately, Goldenweiser's uncertainty about how to continue his work after losing the man who was a main source for ethnological material is summed up at the end of the letter when he states, "The question is: what next?"⁸⁴

Chief John Gibson's legacy remained most clear through his son, Simeon. Simeon gained experience as a collector by helping his father, who occasionally needed assistance due to his blindness in adult life. Waugh expressed to Sapir his satisfaction with Simeon's assistance: "I have found Simeon very useful in this way, as he knows nearly everybody and seems to be very well liked."⁸⁵ After his father's

⁸⁴ Goldenweiser to Sapir, 2 October 1912, 2. Box 623 F.17, Sapir Correspondence, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

⁸⁵ Waugh to Sapir, 9 April 1912, 1. Box 637 F.1, Sapir Correspondence, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

death, Simeon would continue to work with other ethnologists, in particular, J.N.B. Hewitt.⁸⁶

Perhaps some of Chief Gibson's ideas about the future of traditionalist Onkwehonwe culture resonated with elements of salvage ethnography. Like Goldenweiser, he too may have feared the loss of cultural knowledge with the passing on of himself and other elders. His fears may have been grounded in changes Gibson would have seen happening in his community around the time he was working with Gondenweiser and the Victoria Museum. Such changes were connected into tensions between factions in the community, divisions that are perhaps represented in the two pairs of dolls Gibson sent to the museum.

Chief Gibson's Dolls

The dolls collected by Chief Gibson have faces covered with cloth, and are embellished with facial features sewn on with thread and two small seed beads for eyes. The dolls' faces, covered in cloth and eyes made of beads, make them distinct from many others with heads made exposed husk, some with facial features drawn on, many left blank.⁸⁷ The hair on Gibson's dolls appears to be human or animal hair. While I have seen human or animal hair on several cornhusk dolls in museum collections, others have hair made of wool, cloth, or cornhusk silk. The use of human

⁸⁶ Correspondence between Hewitt and Simeon Gibson can be found in the J.N.B. Hewitt Collection, Box 2, "Correspondence, Six Nations, Grand River, C-G" Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History Archives, Washington D.C.

⁸⁷ Although there is another doll collected by Chief Gibson in 1912 (CMC III-I-382) with a cloth face with bead eyes.

hair on dolls is not unique to the Onkwehonwe. In fact, it was commonly used on dolls made in both Europe and America in the late 1800s.⁸⁸

As the literature on cornhusk dolls indicates, there is substantial variation among manufacture techniques and aesthetic choices made by dollmakers. Variations in the construction of dolls can reflect changes over time, such as the replacement of basswood bark, elm bark or spruce bark with “whiteman’s twine” to secure the husks. Differences may also speak to regional styles, or the maker’s own preferences.⁸⁹ In 1910, Arthur Parker described a number of clothing styles: he remarked that dolls he had seen were “sometimes dressed in husk clothing but more often cloth or skin [was] used. He also noticed that, in general, “[d]olls are dressed as warriors and women and are given all the accessories, bows, tomahawks, baby-boards or paddles, as the sex may require.”⁹⁰ The choice to either decorate a doll’s face, or leave it blank, was another way in which a maker added their personal style to their dolls.

I will now offer a closer reading of the dolls collected by Chief Gibson. After discussing the female dolls and male dolls separately, I will discuss in greater detail the dolls in “Latest Iroquois Costume,” relating stylistic elements to clothing worn in the early-twentieth century at Six Nations. Finally, I will explore how the two pairs of dolls illustrate a factionalism in the community during this period of negotiations with modernity.

⁸⁸ “History of dolls shows they’ve come a long way, baby” [website]
<http://www.thedqtimes.com/pages/castpages/other/Victorian%20Life/victorianlifdollorigin.htm>
 (accessed 03 March 2013).

⁸⁹ William Fenton, “Husk Dolls” MS. Coll. No. 20, Series V. William Fenton Papers, APS.

⁹⁰ Parker, 83.

Female Dolls' Clothing

The outfit worn by the female cornhusk doll described by Gibson as wearing "Iroquois Costume" is composed of a long dress with a full skirt over leggings, a lacey overcoat, with a black hat. Anita Rush's survey of fashion magazines revealed that "significant modifications in women's clothing . . . took place in the late nineteenth century."⁹¹ She traces, first, a shift from the full crinoline to the crinolette, and then to a bustle, resulting in "a more controlled line." In terms of headwear, she found that bonnets were replaced by larger hats. Overall, she found that "[t]he early 1900s saw the entrenchment of a larger hat [and] flowing contours of the skirt."⁹² Both of these elements are depicted in the clothing of the female doll in "Iroquois Costume."

This description not only shares traits with the female doll dressed in "Iroquois Costume," but it shares traits as well with two drawings of women from Six Nations published with a newspaper article in 1889.⁹³ One drawing, with the caption "An Indian Lady," depicts two females, one on a horse, the other standing to the left, holding the horses' reins. Both wear dark hats, blouses with high necklines and cinched waists, with full, long skirts (Fig. 5.5). Another drawing, with the caption "Mohawk Beauty," is of a woman wearing a wider-brimmed hat, blouse and full skirt, resting her hands upon what appears to be a butter churn (Fig. 5.6).

⁹¹ Anita Rush, "Changing Women's Fashion and Its Social Context, 1870-1905," *Material Culture Review* 14 (Spring 1982), 37.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 38.

⁹³ "Our Indian Allies: Visit to the Six Nation Reserve Near Brantford," July 16th 1889, "Scrapbook 1858-1888," Assembled by James Moses, Elliott Moses Collection, MG30 C 169 Volume 1, LAC.

Although the article itself does not discuss Onkwehonwe women at length, but rather focuses on grievances over land, government mismanagement of funds and minor conflicts between the New Credit and Six Nations, the images show women engaged in activities associated with the homestead and farming. The women, then, are emblems of the civilized life to be found at the Six Nations of the Grand River in the late-nineteenth century. The other drawings accompanying the article make a similar visual argument through housing: one image depicts a 'pagan house' and the other a church. Property and women show the extent to which the Six Nations are responsible citizens, supporting through visual rhetoric the author's sympathetic position in relation to Six Nations' claims for greater control over funds and participation in their own political management.

A shift in fashion styles in the late nineteenth century can be seen echoed in the differences in clothing between the two female cornhusk dolls. The female doll in "Latest Iroquois Costume" wears a loosely structured tunic over her leggings. In her review of women's magazines and other publications, Barbara E. Kelcey found that "[w]omen in Canada were offered a fashion alternative about this time when the Empire style was revived in 1891-2."⁹⁴ This style, according to Kelcey, "employed a high waist just under the bustline, and allowed for the use of a new foundation garment which was the forerunner of the modern brassiere. These 'short stays' did not compress the waist or abdomen."⁹⁵ The Dress Reform Movement advocated women's baggy trousers with a long tunic, which would eventually be known as the "bloomer"

⁹⁴ Barbara E. Kelcey, "Dress Reform in Nineteenth-Century Canada," In *Fashion: A Canadian Perspective*, ed. Alexandra Palmer (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 241.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

after the feminist Amelia Jenks Bloomer. This outfit, more comfortable than the layered petticoats and tight corsets characteristic of Victorian dress and a signifier of a woman's alliance with the feminist movement, gained a degree of popularity in the mid-nineteenth century in the United States.

However, Kelcey argues that Canadian women likely did not have the same enthusiasm for the bloomer as their southern neighbours, as they were at this point in time still influenced by women in the metropole, who were "both shocked and amused" by the outfit.⁹⁶ However, some Canadian women may have developed an appreciation for bloomers through reading American fashion periodicals.⁹⁷ Anita Rush found ample evidence of support for the Dress Reform movement in Canadian fashion magazines from the late-nineteenth century. She also argues that the shift away from tight corsets toward more mobile clothing was connected to "ideological and institutional forces," including increased concerns over women's health and more mobile lifestyles, including participation in sports and entry into the workforce.⁹⁸

Male Dolls' Clothing

The male doll dressed in what Gibson calls "Iroquois Costume" wears a long natural cotton tunic with collar and ruffled cravat with two silver sequins suggestive of Onkwehonwe silverwork, a blue ribbon around his neck, and leggings decorated with red ribbon and beads. A red sash with inlaid beads hangs across his body and around

⁹⁶ Ibid., 232.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 241.

⁹⁸ Rush, 44, 39-41.

his waist, and upon his head is a feather headdress. His feet are dressed in a pair of unbeaded moccasins. A detail on the sash worn by the male doll of the earlier period indicates its maker added elements to suggest the doll represented a Chief. The sash, made of thin red woolen yarn, daintily woven with inlaid white seed beads, is a miniature representation of a finger-woven sash. The sash is edged with thread which, at first glance, appears to be beige. Looking closely at parts of the thread that have been hidden from exposure to light reveals the thread to be a bright blue in places not bleached from exposure to light (Fig. 5.7). A note in one of Frederick Waugh's field notebooks states that "[s]ashes ordinarily worn by deputy chiefs are bordered with blue."⁹⁹ Extrapolating from this small piece of evidence, the male doll appears to represent a hereditary Chief.

In David Boyle's recounting of the Spring Sun Dance held at the Seneca Longhouse at Six Nations in 1898, he describes clothing worn by participants. His description of one male dancer's clothing resembles that worn by the male cornhusk doll in "Iroquois Costume": "a loose-fitting cap, surmounted by a plume, a white over-dress fastened around the waist with a red sash, trousers of dark serge, bound on the outside seams and round the lower edges with white, a string of bears' claws being tied below each knee, and he wore moccasins."¹⁰⁰

The male doll in "Latest Iroquois Costume" wears a navy suit made of navy woolen material, adorned with translucent white beads. The suit jacket lapels are a black velvet. He wears a hat of the navy material, with a small feather on its top.

⁹⁹ F.W. Waugh, Notebook "Iroquois 1911," E200-1.1, Ethnology Archives, CMC.

¹⁰⁰ David Boyle, "Archaeological Report 1898," *Appendix to the Report of the Minister of Education, Ontario* (Toronto: Warwick Bros. & Rutter, 1898), 122.

Like the other male doll, he wears a natural cotton tunic. Hidden by the suit jacket is a belt of blue and red wool. His cloth-covered face is of a slightly lighter coloured fabric than the other three dolls.

The suit as an article of clothing is laden with meaning. In his essay “The Suit and the Photograph,” John Berger examines how suits signify cultural and class positions of their wearers. The suit, created out of Europe as “ruling class costume of the last third of the nineteenth century” was made for sedentary purposes, and, in fact, inhibits physical movement.¹⁰¹ Its purpose is at tension with the working-class’s lifestyle and resulting habits, which accounts for why it appears to fit their bodies inappropriately. He states that since the peasant musicians wear the suits proudly, “with a kind of panache,” they show how this group had adopted the fashion standards of its ruling class.¹⁰² Through a semiotic reading, he attends to the nature of the ways in which suits worn by men in a 1913 group photograph do not properly fit their bodies, suggesting that the ill-fitting jackets and pants, when set against their “country faces,” are shown to deform them and make them appear “coarse, clumsy, and brute-like,” denying them an inherent dignity that is restored if one covers up their bodies in the photograph and looks only at their faces.¹⁰³ He then contrasts this photograph with one of four Protestant missionaries in suits from 1931. In the latter

¹⁰¹ John Berger, “The Suit and the Photograph,” in *About Looking* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980): 34.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 31.

photo, the suits fit the mens' bodies well, and "suits, experience, social formation and function coincide."¹⁰⁴

Of course, in the case of the cornhusk doll, one cannot make a judgment of the way in which the suit fits or its relation to the wearer's facial features to determine its overall suitability. However, on an item often valued for its relationship to pre-modern Onkwehonwe culture, like a cornhusk doll, to cultural outsiders it may appear to be an odd fit. Yet, the suit carries a message of how traditional people in the community may have taken up the suit as a marker of authority. At the same time, beaded embellishments on the suit jacket lapel and along both of the legs, as well as the woolen sash worn underneath the suit, connect the clothing to a more traditional Onkwehonwe aesthetic related to outfits worn to the Longhouse. This clothing combination is a clever blend of markers of authority and Onkwehonwe identity. While the cultural hegemony Berger observes in his photographic evidence may have shaped the clothing choices made by Onkwehonwe peoples in the early twentieth century, their choices to wear such items speak to their engagements with a broader community and a desire to be aesthetically intelligible to their non-Onkwehonwe neighbours. Like the other male cornhusk doll, he expresses power through clothing, but in the Euro-North American suit, rather than an Onkwehonwe sash or headdress.

Scholars and ethnologists who have visited and written about the Six Nations of the Grand River have sometimes included in their published works descriptions of clothing worn by people at the Six Nations of the Grand River. Like the dolls, their descriptions speak to the permeable quality of the boundary between "Onkwehonwe"

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 33.

and “Euro-North American” clothing. In describing clothing worn by women and men attending Longhouse ceremonies, historian Sally Weaver writes:

Men who sometimes donned a traditional style of Iroquois costume with leggings, shirt tied with a sash, and the unique Iroquois headdress often led dances and songs... While the clothing men usually wore to the celebrations was indistinguishable from that worn by Brant County farmers, the women often dressed up for the occasion, putting brightly coloured shawls over their shoulders, but wearing their normal full-length gingham or cotton skirts.¹⁰⁵

“Latest Iroquois Costume”

While Longhouse members attending celebrations would dress in clothing understood by outsiders as distinctively Onkwehonwe, descriptions of clothing worn by men and women at Six Nations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century suggest, as the dolls do, that people’s everyday dress was markedly similar to their neighbours in Brantford. For example, the clothing worn by the two dolls in “Latest Iroquois costume” resembles the attire worn by Onkwehonwe at social events in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. In her description of such gatherings, which included “[v]arious fund-raising activities – teas, suppers, strawberry socials, garden parties, and picnics,” historian Sally Weaver noted that “[p]eople dressed up for these occasions, the women wearing brightly coloured long gingham dresses and the men often donning jackets and dress shirts.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Weaver, “The Iroquois,” 215.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 218.

In 1890, the ethnologist David Boyle noted how similar the clothing worn by people at Six Nations was to the non-Onkwehonwe in surrounding communities:

As may be gathered from the illustrations in this report, both sexes clothe themselves mainly in European costume. This is especially true of the younger people, many of the old ones still clinging to portions of dress, which, if not absolutely primitive, mark the transition stage. Occasionally a man of advanced years may be seen in long leggings or in trousers, cut and decorated in imitation of them, and the use of moccasins is not at all uncommon, especially during mid-winter when the snow is dry. But the women are more conservative in this respect. A larger number of them not only wear leggings and moccasins, but in the matter of general dress continue to appear as did their great-grandmothers, without a special head-covering other than a handkerchief or small shawl, their gowns being ornamented with numerous silver brooches in rows or otherwise down the front (see pi. XVII. A) while the shoulders and sometimes the head, are covered with a large woolen shawl of some bright uniform color, or more frequently of an equally brilliant tartan. This is holiday attire; on every day occasions there is no display of jewelry: coarse straw hats are worn that in no way differ from those of the men, and the shawl is seldom absent. It is probable that the constant presence of the shawl is due to its usefulness when the carrying of burdens is concerned, and it is thus a substitute for the old-time deer or bear-skin mantle employed for such purposes. The daughters of prosperous farmers often dress themselves tastefully in strict accordance with the ruling fashions among their white friends and neighbors in Brantford and Caledonia.¹⁰⁷

Boyle's report describes clothing worn by members of the Six Nations community in 1898. The empirical elements of Boyle's description – men in “long leggings or in trousers cut in imitation of them,” and women in “leggings and moccasins” and “large woolen shawl[s] of some bright uniform colour” help to contextualize the clothing on the dolls collected by Gibson. They are wearing clothing similar to that sort documented slightly before the time they were collected.

Beyond the empirical elements located within his description, Boyle offers interpretations of the clothing which reflects a desire for the authentic and pure that

¹⁰⁷ Boyle, 179-180.

coloured much of the anthropological work during this period. He states that women who wore dresses or other items outside his understanding of traditional clothing were choosing to follow “the ruling fashions among their white friends and neighbors in Brantford and Caledonia.” This statement implies that they were mimicking something called a “white” clothing style. From his position as a cultural outsider who viewed Aboriginal cultures through the lens of salvage ethnology, even if he knew the longstanding historical relationships between the Six Nations community, it would have been difficult for Boyle to identify and make sense of the nuanced cultural exchanges expressed in clothing choices made by his subjects. The dissonance between, on the one hand, Boyle’s descriptions, and, on the other, the understanding Onkwehonwe dressed in the clothing would have had of themselves exemplifies way in which a clear division between “Onkwehonwe” and “White” distorted interpretations of a more nuanced and complex social situation.

Beaded clothing, moccasins, and in the case of the female dolls, leggings, are elements of dolls’ clothing that have been described by Ruth B. Phillips as modeled after dress worn by members of the Longhouse for ceremony.¹⁰⁸ And it is this connection between the clothing worn by some cornhusk dolls and clothing worn by members of the Longhouse to which Phillips referred when she stated that cornhusk dolls “contain important elements of autoethnographic expression” which “represent

¹⁰⁸ The Longhouse tradition describes a number of ceremonies and practices rooted in pre-contact Onkwehonwe culture, still practiced by some at the Six Nations of the Grand River. The Longhouse way was reinforced by the teachings of the Seneca Chief and spiritual prophet, Handsome Lake [1735-1835]. He revitalized and codified the elements of the Longhouse tradition, and preached temperance, a strict moral code, and self-determination. See Elisabeth Tooker, “The League of the Iroquois: Its History, Politics, and Ritual,” in *Handbook of North American Indians: Northeast*, Volume 15, ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1978), 418.

local traditions of ceremonial dress that were important signifiers of distinctive identities."¹⁰⁹

Six Nations and Factionalism

As Six Nations negotiated their own modernity, what had always been group of semi-autonomous nations became fragmented along other lines, such as religion and political views. Conversions to Christianity, the continued presence of the residential school known as the Mohawk Institute, and questions around enfranchisement and the electoral system, may have been signs, to Chief Gibson, that traditional ways were being lost. Making cornhusk dolls was one skill that was practiced less as time went on: in October 1924, after a corn-husking competition, Lady Principal Alice Rogers of the Mohawk Institute suggested that the girls make corn-husk dolls. However, she “found that that was a lost art.”¹¹⁰

But to interpret the shifts within the community as simply a loss of culture obfuscates tensions existing at the time, an emerging factionalism which, in fact, is suggested in the dolls Chief Gibson collected. At Six Nations in the early twentieth century, a fault line emerged over disagreements about the best form of governance for the community. The traditional system of hereditary chieftainship, which granted local authority to approximately fifty chiefs, was replaced when the federal

¹⁰⁹ Phillips, *Trading Identities*, 97.

¹¹⁰ “Children at the Mohawk Institute seemed to have learned much less about their culture, and in fact, were often denied the chance to do so.” Quoted by Alison Norman in “Race, Gender and Colonialism: Public Life among the Six Nations of Grand River, 1899-1939” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2010), 141; Rogers Quarterly Report, 31 December 1924, RG-10, Vol. 6200, File 466-1, Part 1, Six Nations Agency – The Mohawk Institute – General Administration – Accounts, 1921-1926, LAC. See also Gerald R. McMaster, “Tenuous Lines of Descent: Indian Arts and Crafts of the Reservation Period,” *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 9, no. 2 (1989).

government installed an elected band system in 1924. Although disagreement exists over how and why the government made this move, considerable evidence suggests that some individuals at Six Nations called into question the hereditary system in the 1890s. Anthropologist Anne-Marie Anrod Shimony has traced this unrest, which saw the dissatisfied parties advocate for greater say in the governance of their community through an elected band system.¹¹¹ In 1894, a group of Onkwehonwe men called the “Progressive Warriors,” many of whom had attended the Mohawk Institute, petitioned the government to establish an elected system of government at Six Nations.¹¹² In reference to the act of removing the “horns of office” from hereditary chiefs, this group was later known by their more popular name, the “Dehorners.” They petitioned the federal government again in 1907, after re-organizing as the Indian Rights Association.¹¹³ Support for the installment of an electoral system at Six Nations continued to grow in the early-twentieth century. After seeing the political structures of other countries while overseas during the First World War, in 1917 some Onkwehonwe soldiers “submitted their first petition from France” demanding an elected system of government for their community.¹¹⁴ Although Shimony estimates that their efforts were supported by only about a quarter of the community, she credits this group with convincing the federal government of the need

¹¹¹ Annemarie Anrod Shimony attributes this a “growth of an agrarian economy, and the acceptance of the Protestant ethic” in the 1880s. “The Viability of Factionalism Among the Iroquois,” *Proceedings of the Second Congress, Canadian Ethnology Society, Volume 2, National Museum of Man Mercury Series*, (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1975), 384.

¹¹² Shimony, “Southern Ontario,” 238-9.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 242-3.

¹¹⁴ John Moses, “The Return of the Native (Veteran): Six Nations Troops and Political Change at the Grand River Reserve, 1917-1924” (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 2008), 11-12.

to replace the hereditary chief at Six Nations with an electoral system, which came about in 1924.¹¹⁵ Factionalism over hereditary or elected governance remained in the community into the latter decades of the twentieth century, and the impact of the Dehomers on Six Nations continues to be a controversial aspect of the community's history today.¹¹⁶

Shimony found that by the late twentieth century, factionalism around the community's system of governance did not align with divisions around religious belief. On one side of this division were those affiliated with Christianity, and on the other, those who identified with and practiced the traditions of the Longhouse. Earlier chapters have touched upon some of the implications flowing from religious divisions at Six Nations, yet, it is important to acknowledge the legacy of these differences. In 1998, Cayuga elder Jake Thomas shared his experiences growing up at Six Nations "prior to the current wider acceptance of reclaiming traditional knowledge and identity." He remembered how children who were Christian

used to call . . . traditional Longhouse people "pagans." And whatever is going on in the Longhouse, they'd say, "That's a pagan practice. That's the work of the devil." I used to hear [that from] some relatives who are Christians in our family. . . . That's because they think that Native people, Longhouse people, traditional people, were uncivilized.¹¹⁷ These anecdotes

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Shimony's fieldwork in 1974 found that "Despite the legal loss of power in 1924, the [hereditary] chiefs have refused to relinquish their claim to govern . . . [t]hey have continued to hold monthly council meetings in the Onondaga Longhouse, and have recruited new chiefs to fill vacancies of those who have died (some 36 men currently hold titles). They have consistently denied support and legitimacy to the elected council and have continued to foster activities designed to reinstate the Confederacy." Shimony, "Viability of Factionalism," 384; John Moses, "The Return of the Native (Veteran): Six Nations Troops and Political Change at the Grand River Reserve, 1917-1924" (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 2008).

¹¹⁷ Proceedings of the Indigenous Knowledge Conference, McMaster University, May 2, 1998. Quoted in Theresa L. McCarthy, "Iroquoian and Iroquoianist: Anthropologists and the Haudenosaunee at Grand River," *Histories of Anthropology Annual* 4 (1) (October 2008), 157.

reflect how “[t]raditionalist individuals suffered from discriminatory attitudes, not just from outsiders or from mainstream institutions, but from members of their own community.”¹¹⁸

In a 2008 interview with a Six Nations community member, Theresa McCarthy was told by Sagowesatah, a proponent of a research initiative undertaken by the Onondaga Beaver clan, that:

Many people didn’t see the value of it [traditionalism] in your mom’s time and even when I was growing up, I think till probably I was around maybe twenty in the seventies. . . . And people started being radical again and you never seen that, like for us in 1924 it was the last time it was done as a collective where people really got into it. But you know in the late 1800s, early 1900s is when that sort of died because with the policy against us, everybody that stood up for that kind of stuff, that was bad, you just didn’t do that . . . you got black balled and there were so many people in the community who said, “that Longhouse stuff, that’s part of the past you don’t do that anymore” and that really did a number on anybody who was a traditionalist back then. But there was always the diehards, the people who kept the ceremonies going that, they always felt that it was relevant and they always hoped that there would be a day when it would come back and they could feel free to practice those ways again. . . .¹¹⁹

This divisiveness may have encouraged some Onkwehonwe to collaborate with ethnologists. McCarthy found that for traditionalists who felt alienated by Christians within their community, engaging with anthropologists and scholars was a strategy to “offset derogation.”¹²⁰ She argues this process started in the late nineteenth century as a way of defending their Confederacy Council.¹²¹ Viewing community members’ engagements with ethnologists as acts of intervention means that we might view a community’s interest in materials generated by anthropologists from fieldwork not so much as evidence of “ethnological feedback,” but more as a continuation of a process

¹¹⁸ McCarthy, 157.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 158.

¹²¹ Ibid., 159.

of using the institutions associated with ethnology to preserve material the community felt it was at risk of losing. Iroquoian scholar William Fenton himself noted this:

The effect that 'ethnological feed back' would come to exert on the retention of Iroquois ceremonial culture was scarcely anticipated by field workers a generation ago. Yet nothing is so gratifying as to have one's monograph become the standard reference of performing ritualists (p.88). In this process ethnology assumes a political dimension, that, were it foreseen in its full effects in engendering counter-revolution, might have lessened the cordiality and assistance that we visiting ethnographers have received from Canadian authorities.¹²²

Dolls and Modernity

The growing factionalism at Six Nations was one result of the Six Nations community's ongoing negotiation with modernity. Christianity, while encouraged among Aboriginal communities as part of a larger program of assimilation, was chosen by some as a viable alternative to the Longhouse. In this sense, the dolls collected by Gibson may reflect a community's engagement in dynamics of late modernity. According to Anthony Giddens, late modernity is

a 'moment' in the life of a culture, as in the life of an individual, when it becomes clear that, in fact, there are choices to be made; that it is not *necessary* to live as one's forefathers have done . . . Of course, it is perfectly possible nonetheless to make a 'choice' to continue in the 'old ways'; but this changes nothing. Once the *question* of choice has been raised, the *answer* to the question is hardly relevant; what is crucial is that the authority of tradition has been addressed, it no longer executes a divine or quasi-divine power over our lives.¹²³

¹²² William Fenton, "Review of Conservatism among the Iroquois at the Six Nations Reserve by Annemarie Anrod Shimony (1963)," in *William Fenton: Selected Writings*, ed. William A. Starna and Jack Campisi (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 282.

¹²³ Anthony Giddens, quoted in David Punter, *Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 61.

Giddens' definition of late modernity captures the freedom that comes with a loosening of ties to the past. While the authority of tradition may wane as more choices in lifestyle or belief become available, at the same time, even if we choose not to follow "old ways" as historical subjects, we may find a lingering affinity to things traditional. It is in this sense that the dolls carry agency. The dolls, dressed in different clothing but all made of cornhusk, embody the idea that regardless of what people in the Six Nations community were wearing, they were still Onkwehonwe. In other words, the cornhusk represents how their historical subjectivity exhibits a "quasi-divine power over their lives," in that it links them to each other, despite ideological factionalisms.

Furthermore, the agency of symbols with histories that embedded them deeply in a culture, such as the cornhusk doll, holds the possibility of reconnecting people amidst forces working to disconnect individuals from their pasts. In reproducing items made of cornhusk, a link to a longstanding Onkwehonwe tradition and belief system, described in this chapter, is activated. This connection is an example of what Christina Barbara Johannsen has called "efflorescence" in Onkwehonwe art. Through "foundation metaphors and symbols," such as cornhusk, Onkwehonwe share an identity and "continue to link to their ancestors and to the perception of their past while giving meaning to their present-day interactions with others."¹²⁴ Contemporary Onkwehonwe cornhusk doll makers' own descriptions of their craft resonate with this view: two doll makers from Akwesasne determined that "the art of cornhusk doll-making links us to our past, through the corn, as part of the Three Sisters, our life

¹²⁴ Johannsen, 163.

staples,” and is also “ a living art that evolves from tradition and changes with time.”¹²⁵

Conclusion

The dolls collected by Gibson, from the cornhusks from which they were made, to the clothing they wear and the path they took to reach the museum, reflect the dual nature of cornhusk dolls: they whisper stories of artistic tradition, self representation, and speak to the community’s very modern dynamic of negotiating change while maintaining cultural continuity in the early twentieth century. Furthermore, their story suggests how Onkwehonwe at Six Nations may have shared with ethnologists a desire to collect items that evidenced the traditional Onkwehonwe life and tradition they feared was disappearing.¹²⁶

However, as the stories told by the dolls show, despite this shared goal, Onkwehonwe community members’ ideas of what to save could differ from those of ethnographers. The two pairs of dolls collected by Chief Gibson certainly have characteristics that would have led early twentieth century ethnologists to suspect their authenticity as traditional Onkwehonwe items; yet they reached the stores of the museum anyway. As a result, they remain within reach, to resurrect an expression of modernity at Six Nations history that had manifested itself a century earlier in

¹²⁵ Donna Cole, "Cornhusk People," *Northeast Indian Quarterly* VII, 4 (Winter 1990), 62, 64.

¹²⁶ This desire to collect in ethnologists has come to be known as salvage ethnography, as has already been discussed. I would argue that the same desire within the Onkwehonwe community is different in that the impetus to collect grows from their own feelings of cultural change or loss of *their own culture*. In this sense their desire to collect might be better described as cultural preservation or heritage work.

uncomfortable change and shifting understandings of relationships to history and tradition.

CONCLUSION

In her study of political developments at the Six Nations of the Grand River throughout the twentieth century, Onkwehonwe scholar Andrea Lucille Catapano found that modernity “represents a sea change for Six Nations people.” Its increased focus on individuality, she argues, was the “absolute antithesis of Six Nations cultural, political and social norms.”¹ As a result, the sense of a unified Onkwehonwe community was ruptured, and increasingly difficult to maintain. This rupture, Catapano argues, manifests itself in the deterioration of intertribal relationships grounded in the clanship system, a falling off of participation in the Longhouse religion, and increased factionalism within the community.² The objects in my case studies were chosen because they point to such moments of rupture, through their shapes and materials, and their narratives of origin and collection. As heuristics, then, the objects are ways of knowing how both the Six Nations and settler communities negotiated changes brought about by their respective modernities. For the Onkwehonwe, such negotiations included maintaining a sense of cultural continuity.

Alexander General’s lacrosse stick invites viewers to remember the game’s connections to both the broader history of lacrosse as a ritualized contest with political and diplomatic meanings, and to a specific moment in Six Nations’ history. As a stick made to be used in the game of lacrosse, it offers, in Gell’s terminology,

¹ Andrea Lucille Catapano, “The Rising of the Ongwehònwe: Sovereignty, Identity and Representation on the Six Nations Reserve” (PhD Diss., Stony Brook University, 2007), 17.

² Ibid.

abductions toward both shared history of ball-games among not only the Onkwehonwe, but also among Indigenous communities across the Americas. But it also communicates a message of Six Nations' sovereignty. The unexpected history within the stick was encoded in the decorative motifs chosen by the artist, carried over time in the material features of the stick so that it could be re-activated when encountered by a viewer with a subjectivity attuned to the historical context of Six Nations in the mid-nineteenth century. Though my reading points to how this stick probably commemorates an alliance between the Crown and the Onkwehonwe, there is more to the story it tells. An individual with greater knowledge about specific events in Six Nations history would be able to provide a more detailed interpretation of the animal motifs included alongside the crowns.

The wooden ladle collected by Elliott Moses demonstrates how communities at Six Nations found ways to maintain distinct Aboriginal identities while seizing opportunities and new experiences associated with modernity. Connections between the Six Nations of the Grand River, the Delaware and the Mississauga of New Credit emerge when the ladle is contextualized within the life of both collector and maker. In this way, it invites people to learn about the complex history of communities in the Grand River region. As with other objects prized by Moses, the ladle's presence in his collection shows how Moses's lived experience as a Delaware man allowed him to perceive the ladle both as part of a Woodlands artistic tradition and as an item of personal worth coming from a community who, like his own, had converted to Christianity.³ The inscription Moses wrote on the ladle, furthermore, reflects his

³ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd ed. (London: Continuum, 1989), 301.

agency as a collector and historian, ensuring that the ladle would not become detached from its context of origin as it traveled through time.

Together, Mrs. Henry's and Catherine Silver's beadwork speak to the differences between insiders' and outsiders' valuations of Onkwehonwe beadwork styles in the early twentieth century, when both groups were negotiating changes in their communities brought about by modernity. Mrs. Henry's picture frame, as the words "Remember Me" beaded on it state, asks us to remember souvenir art as a celebrated tradition at Six Nations. As a piece in the Jamieson collection, it also speaks to the agency of the Jamieson sisters in their collection of items important to their lived experience as Onkwehonwe at Six Nations. In contrast, the beadwork made by Catherine Silver was not selected for preservation in a museum by the collector whose path it crossed. Waugh was an ethnologist, not a member of the Six Nations community. No longer in his collection, this beadwork is remembered now only through correspondence. This absence reminds us of the impact of a collector's subject position in shaping their collections. The historical situation of ethnologists—whose project of collecting was guided by the idea of the imminent loss of Aboriginal culture amid the changes brought about by modernity—prevented them from recognizing the connection of beadwork made for the souvenir trade to Onkwehonwe culture that insiders could see.

Chief John A. Gibson's two pairs of cornhusk dolls reflect an intervention in collecting which preserved representations of the community's diversity. His decision to place them in an ethnographic collection took them out of circulation among doll collectors and strategically placed them in the category of 'specimen,' a

context that encouraged them to be read as evidence of his community's authentic culture. The maker may have intended their differing costumes to represent factionalism between the Longhouse and Christians. Alternately, he may have intended their differences to represent changes within the community resulting from intercultural exchanges and government assimilation policies associated with modernization at Six Nations. Regardless, they show Six Nations to have been a community in flux. Yet, at the same time, as dolls made of cornhusk, both pairs share a connection to a tradition with deep roots in Longhouse traditions and medicine practices.

The case studies suggest that whether aiding ethnologists in their collecting projects or collecting on their own, in the early twentieth century Six Nations community members used the intense collecting culture of the period to actively intervene in the production of their historical memory. In Alfred Gell's terms, the collectors who saved these items identified material culture imbued with agency. The iconography on the lacrosse stick, the shape of the ladle, the style of the beaded frame, and the cornhusk of the cornhusk doll are all indices offering abductions toward distinct elements of Onkwehonwe culture. Their abductions also point toward makers or collectors, activating their expression of cultural resilience amidst governmental assimilation policies and ongoing negotiations with modernization. By embedding them within the "social-relational matrix" of the museum, collectors increased the chance that the four items would be recognized as conduits of Six

Nations' history and culture. This act of collecting also preserved their agency for reactivation in the future.⁴

My analyses and research support Theresa McCarthy's assertion that the Onkwehonwe were not "passive in relationship to scholars," but rather, often "assumed roles as co-producers and counter-narrators of anthropological works."⁵ They also complement historian Margaret Bruchac's broader examination of the agency of Indigenous communities within ethnographic work. For her, "foregrounding the Indigenous voices and agency at the heart of the museum enterprise" is a means to highlight the efforts of Native people who endeavored "to 'Indigenize' American ethnography as a reciprocal exchange of knowledge."⁶ Similar to my own approach in this dissertation, her aim is to establish a continuity with the earlier preservationist intentions of Indigenous collaborators, "to complete some conversations, initiated during the salvage era, that have not yet ended."⁷

The strategy of using objects to produce new ways to locate belonging within a history can also be understood in terms of Onkwehonwne conceptualizations of tradition. In Theresa McCarthy's explanation of the Onkwehonwne understanding of tradition, the Cayuga word *jihwihdago*, roughly translates as "'Longhouse way,'" and "[w]hen the action orientation of Cayuga is considered in light of the concept of

⁴ Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 7.

⁵ Theresa L. McCarthy, "Iroquoian and Iroquoianist: Anthropologists and the Haudenosaunee at Grand River," *Histories of Anthropology Annual* (October 2008), 4 (1), 137.

⁶ "Consorting with Savages: Indigenous Informants and American Anthropologists," Margaret M. Bruchac – Katrin H. Lamon Resident Scholar 2011-2012, School for Advanced Research on the human Experience, http://sarweb.org/index.php?resident_scholar_margaret_m_bruchac (accessed 23 Nov 2012).

⁷ Ibid.

tradition, *jihwihdago* or *jiniwadehoda* as approximate referents suggest orientations emphasizing the future, rather than solely the past.”⁸

Such strategies, Christina Kreps explains, are part of post-colonialism, which “can be seen as a continuing process of resistance and reconstruction.”⁹ Re-conceptualizations of museum collections as contact zones by such scholars as James Clifford support the idea that objects can connect people to their pasts and form a stronger sense of belonging in the present. When museum collections are understood not as antiquities preserved from a distant or dying culture – the underlying assumptions of salvage ethnography– but rather, re-imagined as contact zones, they become sites where cultures and communities can converge and establish ongoing relationships.¹⁰ Scholars who work to develop productive approaches to using museum collections with communities, such as Peers and Brown, find this leads to a recognition of items in collections as “sources of knowledge and catalysts for new relationships... offering the possibility for recovering a broad range of knowledge for use in the present and future.”¹¹ In this sense, museum collections can be tools of cultural resilience.

Contemporary Onkwehonwe artists’ engagements with museum collections and archives illustrate the generative potential of such materials. This was showcased

⁸ McCarthy, 150.

⁹ Christina Kreps, “Changing the rules of the road: Post-colonialism and the new ethics of museum anthropology,” in *The Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics*, ed. Janet Marstine (New York: Routledge, 2011), 71.

¹⁰ James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997).

¹¹ Laura Peers and Alison K. Brown, “Introduction,” in *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*, eds. Laura Peers and Alison K. Brown (New York: Routledge, 2003), 5.

most clearly in an exhibition entitled “Kwah I:ken Tsi Iroquois/Oh So Iroquois,” which opened at the Ottawa Art Gallery in 2007. As the curator, Ryan Rice, explained,

[t]oday, traditional Haudenosaunee art forms (pottery, basket making, quillwork, weaving, carving, regalia making, tattooing) and materials (bone, stone, shell, clay, quartz crystal, leather, wood, corn husk, fur) continue to play a vital role in preserving our culture, as well as conveying ideas of beauty, customs and mark making. Informed by distinctive ancient techniques, styles, and media, traditional art has more than a utilitarian significance inasmuch as it continues to impart cultural knowledge.¹²

By drawing on traditional art forms, the Onkwehonwe artists in this exhibition utilized their agency as artists to intervene in the preservation of their culture’s knowledge. Their interventions, however, rely upon another agency – the agency of traditional art forms and materials. In this sense, materials, such as wood, cornhusk, and beads are things-as-heuristics, or ways of knowing that “impart cultural knowledge” beyond any personal message the artist wishes to share through his or her own work.

This approach to museum collections is also found in the beadwork of Cayuga artist Samuel Thomas. Thomas draws inspiration from his community’s traditional beading styles to produce fascinating contemporary works that engage with global themes such as place and identity. For his recent project, *Power of Place/Strength of Being*, Thomas visited locations around the world known for their power, creating work while on-site, “inspired by the surroundings using glass beads and local materials such as papyrus, bark, Egyptian cottons, English wools and locally made

¹² Ryan Rice, ed. *Kwah I:ken Tsi Iroquois: Oh So Iroquois* (Ottawa: Ottawa Art Gallery, Aboriginal Curatorial Collective, 2008), 60.

beads of amber, ceramic, bone, gold, sterling silver, and turquoise.”¹³ An extensive study of Onkwehonwe beadwork in museum collections was part of Thomas’ creative process in making new beadwork art for this exhibition. Many are decorated with motifs and techniques found on beadwork made over the last century, yet thematically and materially they are undeniably cosmopolitan. Like Jeff Thomas, Samuel Thomas’s beadwork brings the past into the present in meaningful ways, embodying the idea that “[c]ulture is our legacy from the past, the way we live today, and what we will leave behind for our future generations; it is an irreplaceable foundation for existence and inspiration.”¹⁴ Similarly, Six Nations’ Onondaga photo-based artist Jeff Thomas approaches museum collections as sites where meaningful links across time can be forged by indigenous peoples. By bringing together material from archives and museum collections with contemporary photography, Thomas offers perspectives on contemporary Aboriginal identity that touch upon issues of urban life, history, and constructions of Indianness.¹⁵

When speaking about the messages in his art, Thomas shared with me a story:

... my grandfather showed me and my brother and our families how to husk and braid corn... [a]nd I realized that, many years afterwards, that what he was doing was showing me the premise of my work, which was the unification of the past, the present, and the future – in how, when you bind

¹³ Samuel Thomas, “Power of Place-Strength of Being,” in *Power of Place – Strength of Being* (Toronto: Ontario Arts Council): 5-6. Thomas visited Stonehenge UK, Delphi Greece, the Great Pyramids of Giza, Chichen Itza Mexico and several power places known to locals in sub-Saharan Africa.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁵ See Andrea Walsh, “Re-Placing History: Critiquing the Conlonial Gaze through Photographic Works by Jeffrey Thomas and Greg Staats,” in *Locating Memory: Photographic Acts*, eds. Annette Kuhn and Kirsten Emiko McAllister (London: Berghahn, 2006), 34-35.

them together, when you weave them together, how much stronger it becomes.¹⁶

This story resonates with the perspective on collecting that has emerged from my case studies. Amid the fragmentation of worldviews characteristic of modernity, braiding together the past, present, and future is a strategy, as Marshall Berman states, for asserting “dignity in the present.”¹⁷ In ensuring the preservation of objects from the past, for the future, collectors at Six Nations acted in the present, “even a wretched and oppressive present,” to assert the authority of their community’s historical memory.¹⁸

Fault lines cut through personal identity, emerging in the question of who can and cannot identify as Aboriginal, or Onkwehonwe. They cut through community identity, raising questions of authority: Whose voices can speak on behalf of the group and whose become silenced or ignored? Amid the landscape of late modernity, it can feel as though a step out of line can easily lead one to fall through the cracks, toward alienation. Yet, as was the case a century ago, Onkwehonwe find opportunities for connection and reconnection in many places, including museum collections. Through these collections and their re-activation in the present, unexpected histories of resilience can be found and shared, offering a way for Onkwehonwe, as Berman states, to “make a place for themselves in the modern world, a place where they can feel at home.”¹⁹

¹⁶ Jeff Thomas, personal interview.

¹⁷ Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 11.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

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Tables

Table 1. Ethnologists at the Six Nations of the Grand River, 1850 - 1940

Ethnologist	Dates at Grand River	Key Informants at the Six Nations of the Grand River	Collections Locations	Personal Papers
Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881)	October - November 1850	- Peter Fish Carrier (Cayuga) - Catherine John (daughter of Joseph Brant) - John Jacobs (Cayuga), - - Peter Smith (Mohawk)	- Rochester Museum and Science Centre, Rochester, New York - New York State Museum; - National Museum of Denmark (Raasloff Collection)	- University of Rochester Library - American Philosophical Association
Horatio Hale (1817-1896)	1871		Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History	National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution
Erminnie A. Smith (1836-1886)	1880?			National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution
J.N.B Hewitt (1859-1937)	1888, 1917?, 1928 and 1929, 1936		Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History	National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution
William M. Beauchamp (1840-1944)	1889/1900			New York State Library
David Boyle (1867-1911)	1886;1889; 1890-91; 1892; Jan-Feb 1898		Canadian Institute Museum - Royal Ontario Museum	Royal Ontario Museum Ethnology Department, Toronto, Ontario
Harriet Maxwell Converse (1836-1903)	1892 ; June 1899			- See Arthur C. Parker Papers, New York State Library; - Joseph Keppler Papers, Cornell University Library

Mark Raymond Harrington (1882-1971)	1905-1907			- Photograph Collection at Smithsonian Institute Archives - Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Harvard - National Museum of the American Indian Archives
Arthur Caswell Parker (1881-1955)	1900-1910?			New York State Library
Ethnologist	Dates at Grand River	Key Informants at the Six Nations of the Grand River	Collections Locations	Personal Papers
Joseph Keppler (1872-1956)	190?		National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI)	- Cornell University Library - National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) Archives
Edward Sapir (1884-1939)	1911	Chief John A. Gibson	Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC)	Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC)
Frederick Wilkerson Waugh (1872-?)	1911-1915, 1918		Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC)	Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC)
Sir Frances Knowles (1915-1974)	1912, 1915		- Pitt Rivers Museum University of Oxford - Canadian Museum of Civilization	- Pitt Rivers Museum Archives Collection - Canadian Museum of Civilization Photo Archives
Alexander A. Goldenweiser (1880-1940)	1912-1914		- Canadian Museum of Civilization	- Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC) - Reed College Library, Portland Oregon
Frank G. Speck (1885-1951)	1931; 1933-1936; 1944-45	Alexander J. General	University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology	- University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology - - American Philosophical Society
William N. Fenton (1908-2005)	summer 1940; 1941; Sept-Oct 1943; Oct-Nov 1945; April-June 1969		Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History	- American Philosophical Society - Pequot Museum MSS 295 William Fenton Research Collection

Note: Although this table is incomplete, it offers a general picture of ethnographic collecting at Six Nations from 1850 to the mid-twentieth century.

Appendices

Appendix 1. A Note on Terminology

As the various terms used to describe the Six Nations illustrates, word choices are a way to position oneself within the network of competing authorities over identity and history. I use the term “Onkwehonwe” to refer to people belonging to the Six Nations Confederacy. I include in this definition both those who have lived, or live, on reserves, as well as those have not lived at Six Nations but identify as belonging to this community. I use this term instead of “Iroquois,” as the latter was a name given to the Onkwehonwe community, a name whose origins are dubious.¹

The Kanyen’kehaka (Mohawk) term *Rotinohsyonni* (also spelled Hodenosaunee, or Haudenosaunee) has also been used to replace the word “Iroquois,” with some reserving *Onkwehonwe* to describe First Nations people in general.² As historian Kevin White has explained, “Haudenosaunee” means “People of the Longhouse,” or “People Building a Longhouse.”³ This could refer to those belonging to the Longhouse tradition, or to those who belong to the metaphorical Longhouse, which united the Five Nations in their homelands of the Finger Lakes region in what is now upstate New York.

¹ “Iroquois” may be derived from Anishinaabe/Algonquian words “irin” and “ako,” or real adders (enemies or snakes). The French then wrote this word as “Irinakhoiw.” Nicholas J. Santoro, *Atlas of the Indian Tribes of North America and the Clash of Cultures* (Bloomington: iUniverse, 2009), 165.

² Greg Hill, “Re-investing the Kahwenta: Rotinohsyonni Identities today,” (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University, 1998), 1; Kevin J White, “Haudenosaunee Worldviews through Iroquoian Cosmologies: The Published Narratives in Historical Context” (PhD. Diss. SUNY Buffalo Department of American Studies, 2007), 2.

³ White, 2.

As Catapano states, “‘Ongwehònwe’ is commonly translated by the people of Six Nations Reserve as the ‘real people,’ but it refers in a general sense to our people who live together as Indians.”⁴ Given the more open nature of this definition, I find it is more useful for describing the community discussed in this dissertation: it includes both those members of the Six Nations community who identify as members of the Longhouse tradition, those who do not, and others who have a variety of simple and complicated relationships to the community.

⁴ Andrea Lucille Catapano, “The Rising of the Ongwehònwe: Sovereignty, Identity and Representation on the Six Nations Reserve” (Ph.D. Diss, Stony Brook University, 2007), 1.

Appendix 2. Transcript from personal interview with Jeff Thomas, 12
September 2011, Ottawa Ontario

Interviewer: Stacey Loyer (SL)

Interviewee: Jeff Thomas (JT)

Interview Setting: This interview was conducted at the Second Cup on Bank St.
 and Somerset St. Ottawa, Ontario

(Start of Interview)

JT: Something I want to tell you beforehand, is that, there are a few [questions] in there that, um, that I could answer but I can't. So taking part in certain things like, um, ceremonies and things like that that would, that I could give insight into some of your questions...

SL: Yeah

JT: But I, but I can't really do that...

SL: Okay

JT: and that's, I guess I'm not the holder of that knowledge, I'm only a participant, so, it'd be kind of odd for me to speak about something like that.

SL: Yeah, that's fair. That's good to know.

JT: I just wanted to let you know because I think that uh, yeah that's uh, the information is there...

SL: It's just not... to be shared with...

JT: Yeah

SL: Okay

JT: There are [inaudible]

SL: Yeah, I think that's important too, just to even, in terms of looking at this material, like you know material that was collected and the questions that it raises.

JT: MmmHmm

SL: And how to, what to really do with that, information or who, has...

JT: ... the authority to...

SL: ... the right to... yeah

JT: ... yeah, cause... cause I remember that, um, yeah, there was that period of time when I was, when I was growing up, that, um, my elders talked about how uninterested the younger generation – my generation – was in our culture. And, that there was nobody around to pass it on to, like they would talk about so-and-so had passed away, and took all his knowledge or her knowledge with her. And, um, I think there was a sense that, a lot of times when Waugh and them were working, is that uh, they would have to leave that knowledge somewhere. So, they'll leave it in the custody of the museum, because, here were people who were interested in learning...

SL: Yeah...

JT: ...and, uh, people in their own community weren't, so, it must have created quite a dilemma for them, in terms of doing that, but, um, I think that's um, I think one of your questions was about the value of the museum or the role...

SL: ...of today, yeah...

JT: ... and, um, that's what I find. Whether it's with, um, with the uh, ethnography, whether it's paintings, or maps or photographs. It's um, how do we utilize that information today.

SL: Yeah, that's a big question.

JT: So yeah, I think we talked about this last time, but um, it's a question of do you *become* a practitioner of that or do you use it as a point of departure to deal with... issues, you know –

SL: ...when you were talking about that, um, the raven, uh, was it a...

JT: ...the bustle?

SL: ...the bustle.

JT: Yeah. And it provides, gives you a certain way of looking at the world, that is *based on* traditional knowledge, um, and how do you interpret that?

SL: Yeah... so, I don't know... basically the introductory questions were just to learn a little bit more about you. I already know quite a bit just from reading the website, and talking to you already, so, uh, did you grow up at Six Nations, or...

JT: No, I was, I was born and raised in Buffalo.

SL: Okay.

JT: Uh... and it was when I was sent to live with my grandmother, who also lived in Buffalo, that I started, uh, visiting the reserve, and a different part of the reserve. When my parents were together they would often go back to the reserve but they went to the Upper End. The Mohawk end of the reserve. And, uh, their whole relationship was very different, so, and when my parents split up and I lived with my grandmother, she went to visit people down below, in the traditional [inaudible]

SL: Okay

JT: So that's where, uh, my step grandfather lived, and um, so that was my introduction to traditional culture.

SL: And the "down there" is more Cayuga, right?

JT: Yeah. The three main Longhouses are down below – the Onondaga, Lower Cayuga and Seneca Longhouse. And then, the Upper Cayuga Longhouse is, in the Upper end.

SL: Oh, Okay – that's the "Upper" and "Lower" then.

JT: Yeah. So that's where my grandmother grew up, was on the Upper end. Around the Cayuga Longhouse up there. She actually, her father was a traditional chief. He

was a s[inaudible] chief. And they owned a store as well. They lived at this place called [?] which was just down the road from the Cayuga Longhouse.

SL: Neat. Cause my grandpa was Upper Cayuga, that's what I know...

JT: Oh yeah...

SL: So, I guess I'm interested to learn about that... area...

JT: Yeah.

SL: So, I don't know if any...um... I had a couple of questions about Longhouse... I don't know if that's information that you can talk about, or...

JT: Well you can just ask me and I'll say...

SL: Okay... Do you belong to a clan or do you attend Longhouse at all?

JT: Well I used to. It's one of the first dilemmas that I had to face, was that, when I was first married, I was in my twenties, and my wife and I were starting, we were going to the reserve, and going to ceremonies and that, even learning Cayuga in Buffalo. Pretty much taking part in building towards living on the reserve at some point. So, for the early part of my adult life, that was a significant part of it. But after I had my car accident in 1979 that's when things really began to change and I found that, what was interesting about that is, I had to figure out my role in terms of living by principles that the Longhouse teaches. And whether or not you practice it on the reserve, being part of that community, or whether you go out into the outside world, and apply those principles to something that is more relevant to me – and that is assimilation and urbanization. And so that's where I made a shift. So, now I'm pretty much on my own, just kind of living by my, what I learned, and applying it to my work. So all my work as a curator, as an artist, is all based on what I learned when I was a young boy.

SL: Bringing into your life today, where you are...

JT: Yeah. And I think that there's a distinction to be made, when you look at museums, and cultural dissemination, I always look at the [facets? @204sec] that emerge from the cultural base. What is the essential nature of that culture? And it's a code of behaviour. And that's what I've taken from all of that and that's what I apply to a certain part of my code of behaviour, how you respect yourself, where you come from, how you respect other people, and the integrity of what you do as your work. My brother went the other route. He stayed on the reserve, and, as I mentioned before, his kids all grew up on the reserve... they're fluent in Cayuga and that... so we're kind of like the opposite ends of the impact of what our elders taught us.

SL: So, we talked a little bit about museums and I know that in your work, you've worked with museum collections and photographs, so my next question is about museums... do you like museums, history... is this something that has always interested you? Or was it from being at the Longhouse, and moving back...

JT: Well, my elder was a teacher. I think she was a teacher in the 1930s on the reserve, so that she impressed upon me the importance of our own history.

-break -

JT: I was thinking about when I was reading the correspondence from some of the anthropologists and they all had to make presentations at the chief's council at Six Nations before they could actually work. And I was thinking about that process, and how difficult it was, because they also, like, Frances Knowles talks about what it was like, even with what they called the 'informant,' back then, getting access to um, to people in the community. And I was thinking about your phone call not being returned. Because what happens so often is that... I remember Knowles was talking in one description about how he went to somebody's house, where a meeting had been set up, and of course what he was doing, was taking samples of people's hair, and measuring their cranium, and all this kind of stuff...

SL: Oh yeah, I read that, even in Waugh's notes...

JT: Yeah... it must have been totally bizarre to those people, in that time, and those people, apparently sometimes the interviews were all set up and he would go to the house, and so-and-so's wife would answer the door and say, "He's not here now, come back at another time," and he'd come back again, and they weren't there. But, I think more than anything, it's... I found even with the pow wow dancers, is that I would write to them or whatever, and it was always a real 'coup' when somebody would write back. And, a lot of them didn't, you know, and you never heard from them again. I think it's just – that's just the way people are, you know. You really have to hound somebody to...

SL: To get them to talk to you... [laughs]

JT: Wear them down, you know. It's probably a human trait, but I found that with a lot of First Nations people, it's yeah, the usual kind of protocol. It doesn't always work, so...

SL: ... keep trying...

JT: Yeah.

SL: So, I guess we were talking a little bit about history and museums, and your relationship to that...

JT: Yeah. The interesting thing is the way that I got involved with museums was quite by um... when I was probably maybe 12 or 13 years old, and my elder Emily General was having... during a conversation with some people that were visiting, was talking about her father, who had been interviewed by an anthropologist from Ottawa, and she was wondering what ever happened to the information he had collected. And on her dining room wall was a photograph of her father. Anyways, the two words that stood out to me, as a young teenager, were “anthropologist” and “Ottawa,” and what do they mean? Where was Ottawa? Because even though I came to Canada a lot, I never went anywhere beyond the reserve. So I was unfamiliar with where Ottawa was, and what an anthropologist was. So, anyways, I made a kind of a solemn vow at the time that someday I’d find out that information and bring it back to her. But she emphasized the importance of not only knowing our own history but knowing the white man’s history as well. And, so, that was always part of my, what I wanted to learn about, was, real histories. It eventually ended up – that kind of set in motion, this idea of finding out that anthropologists work in museums, and that they, you know, they collected all this material from indigenous people. And so, just eventually, over a couple of decades, landed me in Ottawa...

SL: Okay.

JT: And, um, I mean there’s a lot of... stops along the way... essentially that’s what got me moving towards the museum. And so I started developing, in terms of my photography – that’s when I really started jumping into history because I wanted to find indigenous practitioners in the field of photography. But I couldn’t find any. So what it meant was is that I had to evaluate the role of the archive and the role of the images and try to figure out how I could make them a part of my own history. And that was to interpret the photographs. And so that’s how it started. In 1998 Gerald McMaster invited me to curate an exhibition based on what I found in the CMC archive. And that’s when I found... my elder’s father...

SL: ...okay!

JT: ... in the cold storage vault. In one of the drawers, with the glass plate negatives.

SL: ... the last name General...

JT: ... Jacob General...

SL: ...Jacob General... ok... I’ve seen Timothy General come up too but... it must be a relation...

JT: ...yeah... And, so it was at that moment -- and this relates to one of your questions – it was the first time during my research that I was looking through a collection that I actually saw names that I’d heard mentioned during conversations. And also people that were related to me. So... like Liza Thomas... was Lower Cayuga... so that’s where my grandfather’s from so more than likely she was...

SL: ...yep...

JT: ...ah... there was a direct link there. And then, Jacob General, was related to... I was related to him through marriage. And all of a sudden the archive had gone from looking at people from lost or other cultures or tribal groups to people who were actually a part of *my own* history. And that changed my perception of the archive at that point. But it started two years earlier, when I curated my first show for Library and Archives Canada, and I positioned the title of the exhibition as Aboriginal Portraits, looking at the breadth of the collection – geographically, historically, and time-wise, and positioning it as kind of like an old photo album. And so the idea was that Aboriginal people or Indigenous people would utilize the archive and add information to it, and then it becomes a much broader family photo album.

SL: right.

JT: Shifting from the academics and the people who kind of come in and pick images to illustrate a book or something. I wanted to generate some sort of interest in utilizing the archive as a source for recovering memories...

SL: okay.

JT: So that's how my work led up to what I do as a curator. And then of course I began to see cross over with my own photographic practice, and I found that aside from the personal connection, images that had no connection to me, in terms of family, I could build a connection to them through my own photographic work, about a conversation. So, I used to have these imaginary conversations with Edward Curtis, and Paul Kane, and all these different artists, and so the work that I'm producing now is based on the conversations – and producing conversations where they never took place before. So when I started working in photography and curating, there was nobody talking about links between past and present in terms of social impact. And so I found it was a wide open field for me at the time.

SL: A lot to be said...

JT: ...yeah. It also in part says why it's taken so much of my life, like over 30 years now, to make this point. There was a lot of territory to cover.

SL: This is just a little aside, but do you remember what it felt like, when you noticed your family members' names in the archive, or...

JT: ...yeah...

SL: ...how you reacted?

JT: It was almost like winning the lottery.

SL: [laughs]

JT: ...because so much of it is, you know, unknown, and people just didn't collect that type of information when they were photographing Indians. But the anthropologists were completely different – they had the role of the person, the name, and all that information that's always been missing from other historical collections. And I remember, just like, being totally amazed. These were names of people that I had only heard about. And I – as a young person you imagine what they look like. And to finally see some of them was pretty amazing. And when I found the photograph of Jacob General... and I had only seen... I saw him first on a small, three by five inch glass negative, and when I pulled it out – cause they had a light table in the cold storage area – I put it on the light table and I thought "That's the same guy I used to see, as a young kid, on the reserve." It just blew me away. So it was at that point that I added Frances Knowles to the exhibition. I had three anthropologists at that point. And so, yeah, it was quite a discovery. And it's still – you know, it's still amazing to experience.

SL: ...yeah.

JT: Because Knowles also became a part of my life and he still is a part that I am kind of holding back in terms of completing the story with Knowles, and that. And so, yeah, it's still there, and still creating a lot of energy in my life.

SL: It's something I always wondered about just with my own research and hoping to come across a family member, you know...

JT: ...yeah...

SL: ...a relative in the archives...

JT: ...yeah...

SL: I imagine it would feel like winning the lottery for sure.

JT: Yeah.

SL: So have you read any... I guess you're familiar with a lot of anthropological writing... one of my questions was if there were any particular books, or things that have been useful for you, in some way, and why they're...

JT: Well, my introduction to anthropology and specifically to ethnology was through my pow wow work. I wanted to... When I lived in Winnipeg, I was interested in looking at the root of the pow wow, it's history that would transcend it's commercial aspect. So, today it's primarily known as a tourist event, right? And it caters to competition and there's a lot of controversy about the pow wow... whether's its good

or bad or whatever. So I wanted to find the root cause, there was something that you would see at a pow wow that in my mind stood out and I wanted to understand what that was. So I started doing research at the Manitoba museum and that's when I started finding the works, like, [Art Whistler?] and a whole other bunch of anthropologists that were working during that period of time. And their work was focused on Western tribal groups and in particular on the diffusion of the ghost dance of the Omaha Society, and how it could be the precursor to the modern pow wow. And there was a book that was published – an anthology, a collection – of all the anthropologists that had written about Warrior Societies. And, “Plains Indian Warrior Societies” or something like that... who was the editor for that? I can send you the reference...⁵

SL: Sure.

JT: Because I actually have the book at home.

SL: Okay.

JT: From there, and looking at all the other anthropologists, I started looking into their individual works, and all that. And a real focus became the American Museum... it's in New York City... I can't remember the name...

SL: Natural History?

JT: Yeah. The American Museum of Natural History. And they had a publication series. And I think that's where that book came from.

SL: Okay.

JT: But that was the focus for me, it wasn't on Iroquois culture, but it was on...

SL: ...the pow wow...

JT: Yeah.

SL: Learning about what that was like, before, commercialization and other sort of... things... became foregrounded... I guess...

JT: Yeah. That was the basic idea. So that was how I got involved in it. And of course, I was also looking... then I went into archaeology, and looking at pre-contact civilizations in North America. And so it just kind of ballooned from there. And, I mean, the amount of references that I have is... like... it's a lot.

SL: [laughs]

⁵ Clark Wissler, ed. *Societies Of The Plains Indians*, Vol XI (New York: American Museum of Natural History Press, 1916).

JT: It wasn't done with the intent of retaining all of that information. See, the way that I approach my research and the literature is that, you take pieces of it, and you internalize it, and then it just becomes a part of your process, you know. It adds to the story you're trying to tell. So, for me it wasn't about the, necessarily, about the anthropologist or the particular publication, but it was about these little bits of information that I saw... they were like photographs. It was a collection of photographic – like what you've showed me, of the pages that you've photographed. Well, in my mind that's how I see that information.

SL: Okay, so, we can go on to the questions related to specific items, or things that I've found...

JT: Mmm Hmm...

SL: One of the ones was about corn husk dolls? I found some information in Waugh's notes about... so here's an example... a page here... he's writing about... a person has... powerful medicine...

JT: Yeah. You quoted this one in your...

SL: Yeah, that's right. So... I'm just wondering if you've heard anything about the use of cornhusk dolls like this... and do you think it's valid, or reflective of anything you've...

JT: Yeah. That was one of those areas I was thinking about that... But I think though, what I *can* say about that is that I'm not familiar with the cornhusk doll in that sense. It's not one of those areas that I'm not knowledgeable in.

SL: Yeah.

JT: But what I found that was interesting was that, in the Great Law, when in the story the Peacemaker was going through the different communities, there's a part in there where he talks about the keeper of the cornfields. And how important that person was in establishing the framework for the Confederacy. Because, they found... I'm trying to remember this now... they were talking about the role of corn in ensuring the survival of future generations.

SL: Okay.

JT: And that's what I thought was interesting when I read this one, is that I saw the link between that, and what was being said, in terms of protecting the children, protecting the house, and all that, and all of a sudden I thought "yeah...!" because that's... in order to use that passage, from the Great Law, in my work, corn husking...

SL: ...okay!

JT: Because my grandfather showed me and my brother and our families how to husk and braid corn...

SL: ...ah!

JT: And I realized that, many years afterwards, that what he was doing was showing me the premise of my work, which was the unification of the past, the present, and the future – in how, when you bind them together, when you weave them together, how much stronger it becomes. But it was all a story just within the simple act of braiding corn.

SL: Okay.

JT: And, so anyways, when I read this it all came back to mind, about how important these stories are, and how they empower people. So, when you think about protection, or kids going off to residential schools during that period of time, like how many survived, and different things, there's a whole landscape of things that comes into just that one story, that you can relate to it. So, in terms of the power of that, it's the ceremony, it's the ritual, but it's not within the context of how an anthropologist – like, I don't know if Knowles or Waugh would have seen all of that.

SL: Right.

JT: And made those connections.

SL: It's almost metaph—not metaphorical, but it's on the...

JT: No, it is...

SL: It's not straightforward...

JT: Exactly. And I think that's the important thing to understand about all of these aspects of the collection – is that there are stories that they collected – and that, you know, it's about how they evolve over time. It's the importance of it.

SL: Okay. I think I remember reading somewhere about a cornhusk doll being hung above a doorway as protection... I could find that if you're interested, but...

JT: Sometimes when I would to an old-timer's home I'd see things like that, when I was younger, you'd see things like that...

SL: ...oh yeah...

JT: In the house or whatever... and, "yeah okay"... there's a reason for it being there... it's not just for decoration. Kind of like the dream keepers...

SL: I think another one that I didn't have there... [shows paper] about cornhusk dolls is about they were... oh we already talked about that...

JT: I thought it was cool too, the thing about the boat, and just the symbolism that he was talking about there. And how you keep your mind strong and how you protect and things like that and how you – I mean a lot of people they talk about witchcraft and that type of thing and I grew up hearing those stories a lot when I was younger. And that was one of the things I found interesting about a lot of the things that were written about here, in that sense, is that how they keep people strong, in mind and body. And it's really what we place our faith in and what we believe in. There's a lot of things that, you know, that I believe in that I wouldn't try to explain to somebody because it just *is*. You know. It's what I learned, it is that way. And I can't qualify it, or whatever, or maybe articulate it that well. But, I live by it. That's just how it is.

SL: So, there's another section where Waugh took notes about making moccasins. And there's a little example here of how it was done [shows paper]. I also gave it to you before and. I don't know if this is the sort of thing that interests you, in your art at all... the basics of how to make things... if that would be of interest...

JT: I'll tell you of a way that it is for me now. I couldn't have told you this a couple of years ago. But, the last time we talked I was, I mentioned something about finding the fine details and somehow something's made, whether it's a buffalo robe, or Ghost Dance shirt, or something that I've photographed in the collection. I found myself thinking about how museums photograph objects in their collections and how will I photograph it differently? Which are questions that I've used for my work. But in this instance, it was looking at, like, a little loose thread, coming out of a shirt, or a piece of paint that was applied, or porcupine, or beads, or something like that. But what it did for me was, to remind me of the person who was actually making that piece of work. Which, to me, was just as important as the other information that comes with it. And so to keep in mind, looking at these things, that there was a human being that was actually making it. And so this type of information is something that I'm looking at including in my work now, in terms of reading it as an audio part of a presentation of... even with the dancer's outfits and that, and, looking at this type of information and then, bringing it into context by *reading* it, and how does it sound in relation to the image. Which is something I'll do at the NAASA conference. But that's the idea, that, well, what does it inspire? And what do you learn from this? And how does this sound in relationship to all these other things?

SL: Yeah. So this information is useful not just, say, for trying to make a pair of moccasins, but it adds, a relationship to an individual person. And that's connecting it to think about who made these things, and how they made them.

JT: Yeah. I mean that's part of the whole museum experience, right, in this way, is that it doesn't talk about the human beings, because, you know, it's a mannequin, or something like that, and so, people that are coming in who aren't familiar with Aboriginal culture – they just see the object. And, I know the human being that's behind it, because I have firsthand experience. But that's what – that's the idea behind all of this work, is to bring into focus the people who were part of this process. Even individuals who posed before photographs and the stereotype, the stoic Indian, well, why was that person looking kind of uncomfortable? There was a reason for it, right? And so, that's what I want to generate, that sort of conversation. So yes, there is a use for it. Even in the communities that want to go back and study this information, and see that's something that I was missing from my own family or whatever, it can go that way as well, and I think that's why people like that left this information...[looks at paper]... Simon Bumeberry... so...

SL: Here's some more... just a different type of information here... this is about a corn husking pin. So, it's a game... or not really a game but a... a way of telling the future... This is just a little note that was in one of Waugh's notebooks there... So maybe you've heard anything like that... or if you find anything useful in that type of information...

JT: No, I didn't hear anything like this when I was growing up. Once again, from my... it goes back to the same thing I've already said about what this information reveals, in that...

SL: MmmHm... [looking at paper] yeah, there's something else at the bottom there... about a drum... this was just another one about the cornhusk dolls that I think we already kind of talked about, but, it just says there was a protective element of them, which you mentioned already...

JT: Yeah, not so much the, the way you look at something and relate to it as being alive, is so much part of... sort of like when I did a recent work on Curtis's photographs of a man named Medicine Crow. And Curtis emphasized him in the photograph because he had a hawk right beside his head. And I photographed a living hawk and juxtaposed it with the two [photographs?]. And the idea was to say that Medicine Crow saw that as living. And people who were unfamiliar with that were like "that guy is wearing a dead bird on his head." Which is very different than how he saw that bird. I mean, I grew up hearing about snakes, and protection from them, yeah. And that's the thing too, if you went to my grandmother's house there were probably several things that she did around the house that I just saw and...

SL: ...and they didn't really...

JT: ...yeah it was just part of... life.

SL: So I also had some questions about photographs. I know you've seen quite a few. We've already talked about if you've ever recognized people, or names, in a

collection. And, we touched upon what it's like to look at those photos, and I don't know if there's anything else you wanted to add about, if there's been anything that's surprised you when you looked at the photos, or any questions that have come to mind? I guess there have been and those questions have really driven your art and your own use of photographs and exhibiting...

JT: Well, I think that, yeah, there's a lot of things that, uh, that come into play, and so many questions. That's how it all began for me, just from the questions: Were there any First Nations people that were actually, that used the camera way back when, and that. And looking through Waugh's material and finding the photograph of Atkins, you know, with his letterhead, and he had a photograph on there of himself. And I think for me what I regret is not being able to my elders with the photographs and show them and say that, or ask them questions about these people and build on that. I think that overall I've been looking at, how do these images come together? Because there's Curtis, and his work, and type and the way he used photography, to tell a story, there's another one that was used by the anthropologists. And what happens when those two come together? And what kind of landscape does it begin to illuminate? And to me that's the driving question for the exhibition that I haven't yet gotten to curate. Is when you bring together the works of all these different photographers into one space, and how do they all begin to interact with one another? This is what I still want to do. And so, I think for me, it's still in the research phase... I'm still acquiring information. Even finding, like, my mentor back in Buffalo, a photographer by the name of Milton Rogovin he just passed away last year. I think he was a hundred or something like that, I had always wondered why nobody, no photographers had photographed Indians people living in cities. When I met with Milton, he showed me his work, and he had actually photographed people in Buffalo. And one of them being my former sister in law's family. So there she was as a young girl, and her mother and her father who I know, and so it was a very interesting insight to gain. But the question is, in the images, is what happens when all this information comes together? What does it say, as a large body of work? And so, there's still surprises that are coming up in that. And I think that's what drives me – even finding out more about Edward Curtis and his brother who was also a photographer and kind of photographed the world in the opposite way that Curtis did. He was more a documentary-type street photographer, kind of thing that he did in Seattle. But there was all these things... you know...

SL: Yeah. So I guess just to kind of wrap up, we can talk about the usefulness of museum collections today. We've touched upon a lot of the questions here, but, if there are any, last things you wanted to talk about regarding how you understand the value of museum collections in general, or photographs and notes, for people in the Onkwehonwe community, for whatever, in cities, or on reserve...

JT: I see two audiences. The first audience was non-Aboriginal people. And challenging them to reconsider their stereotypes and negative perceptions and that, things that they had grown up with... what they didn't know, how little they know... and why is it that way... providing them information that does lead them in a better

informed direction. And then there's the Aboriginal community, in particular, urban – are people who, a lot like me, or less fortunate than me, in terms of I had a connection to the reserve and to elders that guided my life. What happens when you don't have any of that? And how do you begin to see yourself? How do you define yourself as an indigenous person without that link? And in that light, how to you utilize the sources that are around to begin addressing those questions? Like museum collections, you know. And where does it depart from just kind of, the gaze to looking at it in a critical way? And extracting what you need from those objects or that collection. And then apply it to your life. Where does it lead – does it lead you from the museum, to the community, or do you build one, there's different questions, you know. And the thing is, is that, as Indigenous people, we haven't become explorers of the urban world. We just kind of are here and deal with it the best way that people can, and not really looking at how can we utilize its sources to survive as a distinct people. And that's what I want to be able to generate in looking at collections. So, as I said before it's not just about going in and being able to write a history of a particular object or an anthropologist, but it also includes, and I think more importantly, is what does it inspire? And does it invite something that's been dormant in your own mind? Does it lead you in a new direction? Does it talk about developing a new type of ritual or new type of language? How are we going to deal with the issues that are coming up with the fact that more and more Aboriginal people are now living in cities? And so, yeah, that's how I look at all this information. I think the bottom line for me, is that I always feel the pressure of assimilation, you know, it's like, sometimes it would seem easier not having to deal with these kinds of questions? But the other side of that is what happens when we don't? And my father's a perfect example of having moved to the city with his parents at a young age, developed a, tried to fit in, into mainstream society, developed a problem with alcohol, and, just, by the time I needed his guidance he was so far distanced from traditional culture that, there was no link there to offer us. So it leaves a void in your life. And once again it's like, do you want to fall into that same fate? So that's really the inspiration for me, is that, and the question, the driving question, is "Well, how do you do this all within the, outside of the community? Like Six Nations. And I think that when you put yourself in that position, it does change the way that you look at museum collections, and archival collections. And try to find something within that information. Cause I believe that, I think the foundation of all of this, it's now a used – overused kind of saying, but it's looking seven generations into the future, right? A lot of people use that. But it holds true in the sense of, why was that information put there in the first place? Why did somebody allow themselves to be photographed? Why did Simon Bumbery provide all this information, why did Atkins become kind of a conduit to sending objects to Ottawa and that... Well, there was a reason for all of that. And then, you look at it in relation to residential schools and you think about, well, that was all about erasure. And, what happens when your identity is taken away? How do you recover, how do you move forward? And, how do all these different things come into play? So when you look at museum collections, those were all the things that those schools were trying to eliminate from the minds of those children...so... just to say that those collections are there for a reason.

SL: Yeah.

JT: And how do we begin to move forward. You know it's like the show that I curated for Emergence, for the CMC, and, I think that this is probably the best way to end, in terms of where I started from talking, is that when I had the show, at the museum, I stood – like I had – we had the opening that night – but I had them close off the museum and turn off the fire alarm system – and I burned tobacco for the show, and there was nobody else in there. So we didn't turn it into kind of a spectacle for anybody, right? And, when I was in there, I was thinking about all of the people that were in those photographs. I thought about bringing them into the world, in a good way. That I wasn't just putting them on display, because of how they looked. But I put them out there so that people in our own communities would see them and respond to them which did happen. And when we had the opening that night, I remember feeling afraid, because I felt like the next day I was going to die, because my journey had ended. I was there, and what I'd promised Emily when I was a young boy, was completed. And I suppose a part of me did, you know. But that's how I felt when I was in there looking around at all those photographs and thinking that some of these people are actually my relatives. And it's not important to identify all of the ones that potentially could be, it just... they were. And that's how – I think that for me that was the most important moment in my career. Whether it's my own work or working as a curator. And then in the end, the show was up for almost three years. People said that it was one of the most popular exhibitions. And then in the end, I was able to have the photographs sent to the Woodland Cultural Centre so in a sense, they went back home.

SL: Yeah. That's great.

JT: So anyways that how I see the role of the archive. It's in what we bring to it, it's in what we make of it. And it all has to be done in the right way.

SL: It's a good way to end. Thank you.

JT: Yeah. My pleasure.