



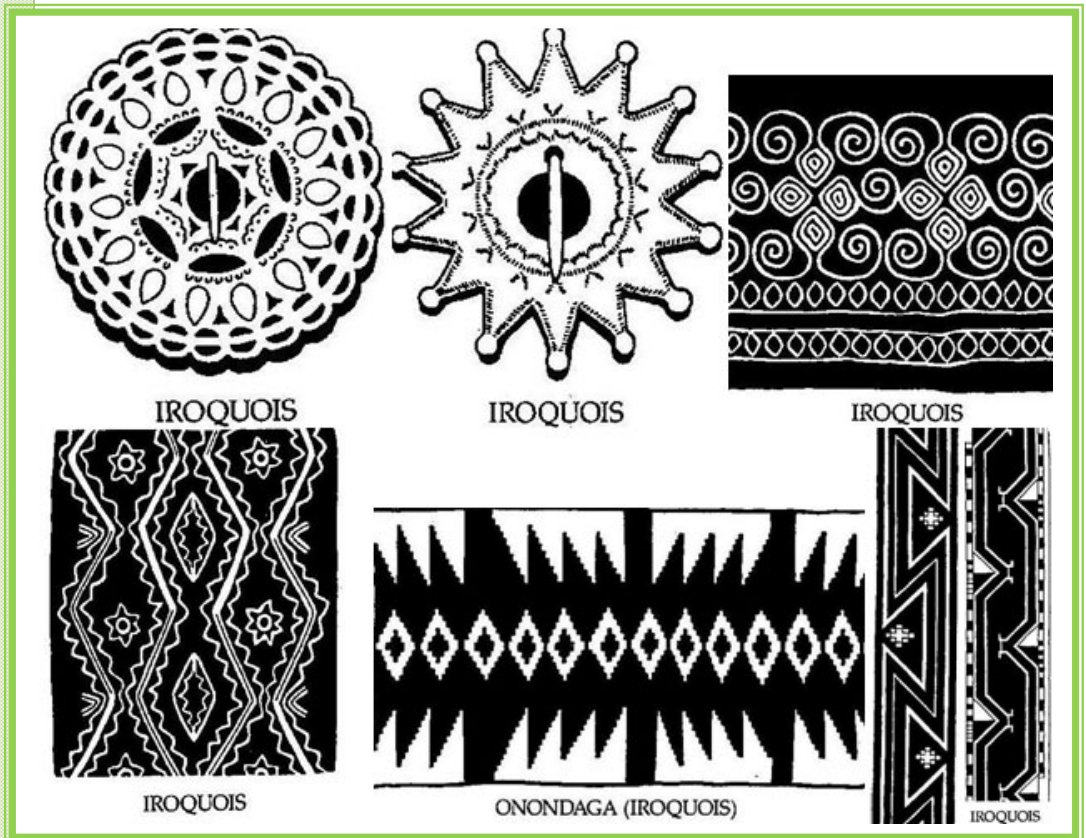
In This Issue:

- *Native Motifs Iroquois*
- *The Quilt of Belonging – Wendat*
- *This Month In History*
- *A Prayer for Genealogists*
- *Aboriginal Studies*
- *Native Coins*
- *The Bear*
- *The Indian Act*
- *Four Sacred Medicines*
- *Aboriginal Definitions Part II*
- *Moontime (Women Ovulation) Teachings*

Native Motifs Iroquois

This is the first in a series that will feature aboriginal motifs specific to North America. Where possible we have identified which tribe is associated with each motif. We would be pleased to hear from any readers who can give us more information on the origins and inspiration for each design. We hope the images will inspire creations by artists and crafts people.

Those pictured here are Iroquois and originate in the Eastern Woodlands.





The Quilt of Belonging - Wendat



Husband and wife team, Jean-Marie and H el ene Gros-Louis combined their talents to make the Wendat block. Using traditional beading techniques learned as a child, H el ene brought the Wendat tree-of-life (resembling a Canadian balsam) to artistic life with vivid shades of red, orange and green. This form of decorative motif was found on clothing throughout the 19th century and is experiencing a resurgence in popularity. H el ene's work includes tufted moose hair, a complex practice unique to the Wendat. The design is set on a background made of tanned deer hide contributed by Jean-Marie, whose skills in hunting and trapping came to him through his ancestors.

Known also as Hurons, a name given to them by French traders, the Wendat originated from the Lake Simcoe/Georgian Bay region of Ontario. The Wendat were actually a group of four nations organized politically into a confederacy or league. Their name means "islanders" or "peninsula dwellers." The Wendat, whose Huron language is now extinct, speak Iroquoian.

During their earlier history, the Wendat had a monopoly on corn and tobacco, which they traded for furs with other Aboriginal nations. The Wendat used trees, such as the Canadian balsam, to build dugout canoes and massive longhouses averaging 40 to 50 feet in length by 30 feet high. The Canadian balsam symbolized the people's strength. It stood as a powerful reminder of their connection to nature and their ancestral homeland, *Wendake*, on Georgian Bay in Ontario. In 1649, severely diminished by disease and war, the original members of the Huron Confederacy, had dispersed. Many became refugees and joined other First Nations groups. One group eventually settled in Quebec near Lorette, establishing a community called Wendake.

Centuries later in 1999, hundreds of Wendat descendants returned to their homeland in Central Ontario. They gathered to inter the remains of 500 ancestors, removed from a sacred burial ground and held at the Royal Ontario Museum for decades. The occasion was marked by a traditional celebration called the Feast of the Dead.

Today, Wendat descendants are located in the Lake Simcoe/Georgian Bay region of Ontario, in eastern and central Qu ebec, as well as Oklahoma and Kansas. Those living amongst other First Nations still recall their ancestral heritage. There are approximately 2,750 Wendat, many of whom work in the tourist, cultural, services and manufacturing sectors (making snowshoes, moccasins and canoes, among other products).

Sponsors: Martintown Goodtimers

The photo and text are from: <http://www.invitationproject.ca/region.php>

non-natives alike.

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This Month In History

April 1, 1999

The new territory of Nunavut is officially established

April 2, 1885

The Frog Lake Massacre of the NorthWest Rebellion

April 4, 1887

Chief Big Bear is released from jail where he was imprisoned for his role in the NorthWest Rebellion

April 9, 1999

First Nations chiefs in northern Ontario begin an eleven day fast to draw attention to inadequate health care services in their communities

April 11, 1876

Canada passes the Indian Act, designed to assimilate Indian people

April 14, 1885

Battle at Fort Pitt during the NorthWest Rebellion

April 16, 1786

Mohawk clan mother Molly Brant dies

April 28, 1760

The Battle of Sainte-Foy

April 30, 1850

Conveyance of Land to Hudson's Bay Company by Indian Tribes

"A Prayer for Genealogists"

Lord, help me dig into the past,
And sift the sands of time;
That I might find the roots that made
This family tree of mine.

Lord, help me trace the ancient roads,
On which my fathers trod;
And led them through so many lands,
To find our present sod.

Lord, help me find an ancient book
Or dusty manuscript,
That's safely hidden now away
In some forgotten crypt.

Lord, let it bridge the gaps that haunts
My soul when I can't find,
The missing link between some name
That ends the same as mine.
~ Curtis Woods ~

from:

<http://www.pennyparker2.com/aprayer.html>

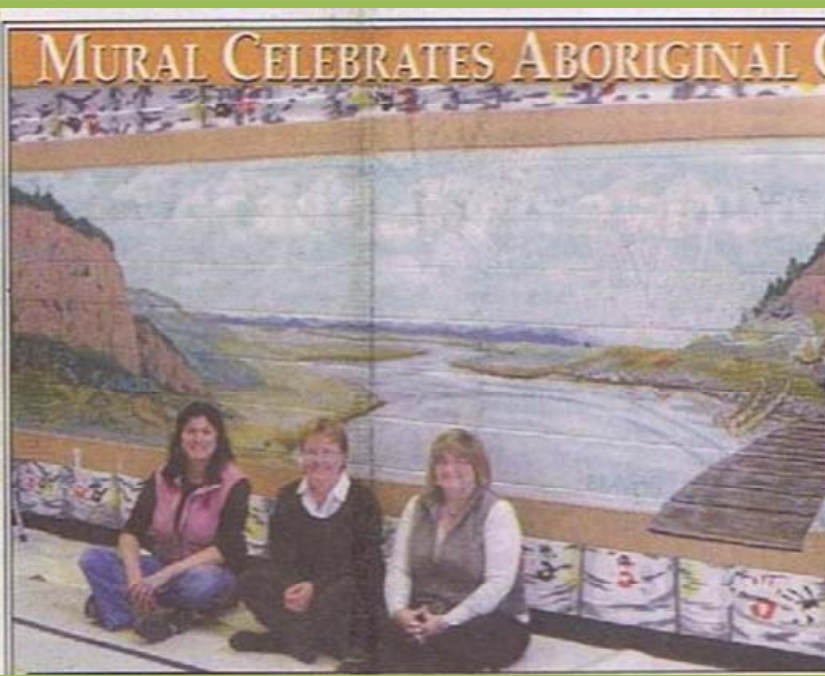


Native Studies

Pamela Vanderburg was kind enough to provide this information.

This past year was the first time that Grade 10 Native Studies was offered in our school. ENSS is located in Brighton, Ontario. With a class of 18 students Native Elders made a regular appearance. Within the curriculum, students had the opportunity to learn about the culture and heritage of the Aboriginal First People in and around the Great Lakes Region. Students were shocked to hear first hand accounts of Residential Schools and the treatment of aboriginal people in Canada. Many students in our own area do not know the tribe or band they are part of. True native heritage has been so successfully suppressed that much of the youth know little of their ancestry.

With the introduction of this new Grade 10 Open Level course, any student can choose this elective. Healing circles, animal totems, the creation stories were very popular. Use of the Talking Stick, complete with Eagle, Turkey, Hawk and Goose feathers were supplied by the students themselves. This is a very interactive course that was so successful, that it is going to run again next year.



This photo by Tammy Wilson appeared on the front page of the Bancroft Times on April 2, 2009. The mural is on the walls of the gymnasium at Our Lady of Mercy School in Bancroft, Ontario. It is the work of local artist Laurie Calder, who is the lady on the left. The funding for the painting was part of a \$13,300 Aboriginal Studies grant through the Ministry of Education.

We would be happy to feature other stories and photos relating to Aboriginal Studies programs in your area. Send them to omfrcinfo@gmail.com. We hope you will encourage any students you know to participate in these programs. Too much heritage has already been lost, let's preserve what is left.



1910 \$2.50 Indian Head Type Gold Eagle

The Bear

The bear is considered one of the greatest animals, the holiest, the healer. The Bear represents knowledge of medicines as well as maintaining peace and order on Earth.

Paul Allaire shared these teachings of John Sutherland, Constance Lake First Nation





Four Sacred Medicines

We have four sacred medicines.

Tobacco in the East Direction

It is said that we were the last to leave the Creator's side.

The Creator gifted us with tobacco so that we may always acknowledge our spiritual connection.

In this way, tobacco always comes first in prayer, in consultation, in sacrifice.

Tobacco is a gift of peace..

Sweetgrass in the South Direction

From the South, the sacred plant is the sage.

The sage plant is sacred to the woman.

When the sage burns it is a means of cleansing the mind and the body to receive the spirit.

Sage in the West Direction

During times of great emotional distress.

Cedar is used to cleanse and purify, to calm the mind.

Cedar is the protector medicine, the healing medicine.

Cedar in The North Direction

Sweetgrass represents the braid of Mother Earth, kindness, sharing, and honesty.

When you put them together you are braiding.

It's like braiding your life; you're putting your virtues and values into your life.

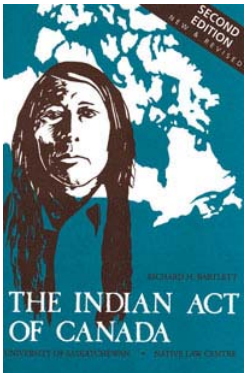
A blade of grass isn't strong.

When we bring blades of grass together we have something very strong, a rope that cannot be broken.

That's what happens when we work together.

We have a strong community.

Paul Allaire shared these teachings of John Sutherland, Constance Lake First Nation



The Indian Act

For those of you with a burning desire to read the Indian Act, a printable PDF file is available at:

<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/PDF/Statute/I/I-5.pdf>

Aboriginal Definitions, Part II

Aboriginal Definitions, Part II

Helen Friel provided us with this link:

<http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/plcy-pltq/eead-eeed/dg-gd/aaa-bg-dr-eng.htm>

This website is by Canada's Public Service Commission and we have copied the information. Please note that these are the federal government's definitions and the OMFRC does not accept that the government should be determining who is, and who is not, aboriginal.

This is the conclusion of the list started in our March newsletter.

D. Treaty definitions

Historic treaties: In Canada, Aboriginal peoples and various pre-Confederation and post-Confederation governments have concluded 68 major treaties. These treaties cover most of Ontario, the Prairie Provinces and parts of Vancouver Island, the Northwest Territories and Atlantic Canada. Indian treaties in Canada are constitutionally recognized agreements between the Crown and Aboriginal peoples. Most of these agreements describe exchanges where Aboriginal groups agree to share some of their interests in their ancestral lands in return for various kinds of payments and promises from Crown officials.

Land claims: In 1973, the federal government recognized two broad classes of claims — comprehensive and specific. Comprehensive claims are based on the assessment that there may be continuing Aboriginal rights to lands and natural resources. These kinds of claims come up in those parts of Canada where the Aboriginal title has not previously been dealt with by treaty and other legal means. The claims are called "comprehensive" because of their wide scope. They include such things as land titles, fishing and trapping rights and financial compensation. Specific claims deal with specific grievances that First Nations may have regarding the fulfilment of treaties. Specific claims also cover grievances relating to the administration of First Nations lands and assets under the Indian Act.

Self-government agreements: set out arrangements for Aboriginal groups to govern their internal affairs and assume greater responsibility and control over the decision-making that affects their communities. Self-government agreements address: the structure and accountability of Aboriginal governments, their law-making powers, financial arrangements and their responsibilities for providing programs and services to their members. Self-government enables Aboriginal governments to work in partnership with other governments and the private sector to promote economic development and improve social conditions.

Comprehensive claims settlements also include self-government arrangements.

(Continued On Next Page)



Aboriginal Definitions, Part II (Continued)

E. Demographic definitions

Off-reserve: A term used to describe people, services or objects that are not part of a reserve, but relate to First Nations.

Reserve: Tract of land, the legal title to which is held by the Crown, set apart for the use and benefit of an Indian Band.

Aboriginal communities: are located in urban, rural and remote locations across Canada. They include:



First Nations or Indian Bands, generally located on lands called reserves; Inuit communities located in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories (Inuvialuit), Northern Quebec (Nunavik) and Labrador Métis communities; and communities of Aboriginal peoples (including Métis, non-Status Indians, Inuit and First Nation individuals) in cities or towns which are not part of reserves or traditional territories (for example, the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg).

Moon-time (woman's ovulation) Teachings

Native people know that everything in Creation has spirit. The plants, the trees, the water, the wind, the rocks and the mountains have spirit. The sky world, including the moon and the other planets, have spirit. All of these are part of our First Family, the natural world.

The Moon is called Grandmother Moon and great respect is paid her.

GRANDMOTHER MOON: THE FEMALE ENERGY

It is said that Grandmother Moon watches over the waters of the Earth. We see this in her regulating of the tides. Grandmother Moon controls all female life. Much of the water life spawn according to the cycles of the moon. It is said that Grandmother Moon is especially close to women because she governs the woman's cleansing cycle, the natural cycle of menstruation known as the moon time. Just as Grandmother Moon watches over the waters of the Earth, it is said that women watch over the waters of the people. Water always comes before new life.

MOONTIME

It is said that the moon cycle is a gift to women. It is a time to cleanse herself mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

The moon time is considered a time of power, second only to the ability of the Great Spirit to give life. That is how strong that power is.

Women can ask Grandmother Moon for direction in life, for wisdom, and for help for her children and others. Grandmother Moon can give her healing and balancing energy to women. Some teachings say that when women are on their moon time, the Creator comes closer to them.

When women are on their moon time, their power is at its strongest and this is acknowledged in that they do not prepare foods or medicines, take part in ceremonies or use the pipes and other sacred items. It is a time for women to think about themselves, their families, their relatives or anyone they think needs help. It is a time of reflection.

TEACHINGS ON THE MOONTIME

In the past, when a young woman had her first moon time her aunts or grandmothers would take her to a small lodge where she would be close to the natural world. The young woman is sacred at that time. She is now able to give life. She would be given the teachings about her new life from her mother, grandmothers or aunts. She would be taught about her role as a woman in the community.

HONOURING GRANDMOTHERMOON

Some teachings say that when the moon is full, women can ask Grandmother Moon to give them new energy.

Around the full moon, women on their moon time become very intuitive. It is an opportunity for women to take time for themselves to help foster their intuition and to have strong dreams. When the moon is full, a woman can do a ceremony to honour and seek guidance from Grandmother Moon. The ceremony can be simple. A woman can sit on the ground and ask Grandmother Moon to replenish her body with new energy. She takes water with her which she asks the Moon to bless. That water then becomes her medicine.

Full moon ceremonies are held in many communities. The ceremony may differ from place to place. It is held either on the Full Moon or two days before or after the Full Moon, depending on the teachings given to the women in a particular community. Women gather in a circle, from the youngest to the oldest, representing the life journey from infancy to old age. They drum and sing. Tobacco is placed in the fire and the women ask for the cleansing of the earth, as the water, the lakes, rivers and oceans, constitute women's responsibility. In some communities, at the Full Moon ceremony, each woman brings a container of water. They pour this water into one bowl and this water is offered to Grandmother Moon and to the Earth. At the end of the ceremony, the water, now called moon water, can be used as a medicine during the month.

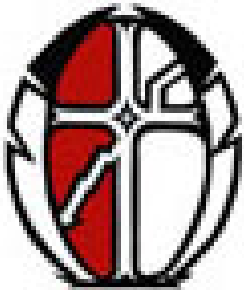
John Sutherland Constance Lake First Nation (This was sent to us by Paul Allaire. Thanks Paul!)



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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.omfrc.org
www.aboriginalstatus.org

New Submissions!

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