

Who May Use Study Storage?

Anyone who is interested in Native American culture including:

Teachers planning a curriculum or students working on a paper may schedule time to study objects or themes.

Adults who are illustrating a book or preparing an exhibit.

Artists who seek inspiration or answers to specific questions about process.

Museum professionals who wish to see the system, and select objects for loans.

Native Americans who want to visit cultural heirlooms or research traditional artisan techniques. They come to enjoy their heritage and share that pride with their friends.

School classes in small groups together with a teacher, may plan a visit by special arrangement with one of the curators.

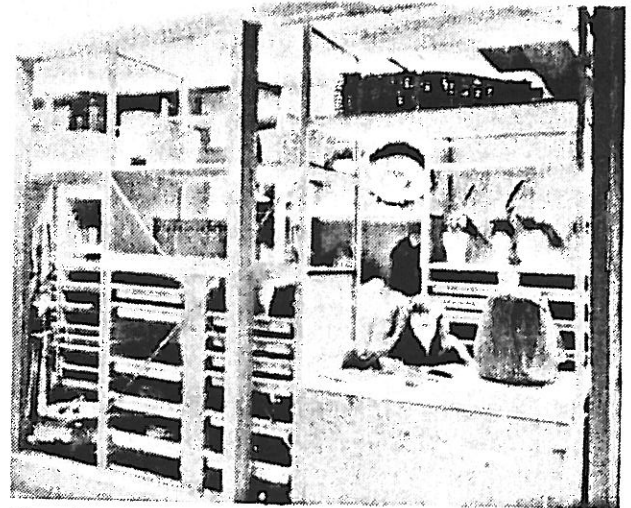
Designed by Felice López

Why Visit Study Storage?

It is our hope that from the moment you enter the space you will be effected by the quiet, ordered environment and by the presence of the objects themselves. The objects in Study Storage have power and immediacy. When you feel an object's weight and texture or examine its details, you may experience an intimate connection between you and the object. For some visitors, the experience goes still deeper. They are able to reach out and imagine a moment in somebody else's life.

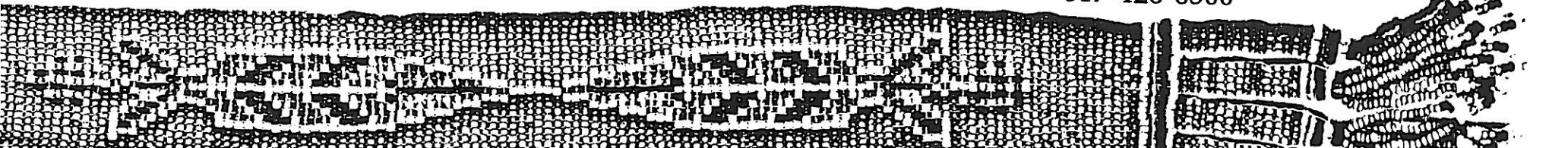
A trained staff member is available to answer questions, and direct visitors to additional resources. This staff availability is the other element that makes Study Storage so special. In Study Storage, there is an immediate response, and if desired, the potential for further dialogue. Staff serve as the facilitators of individualized, personalized learning.

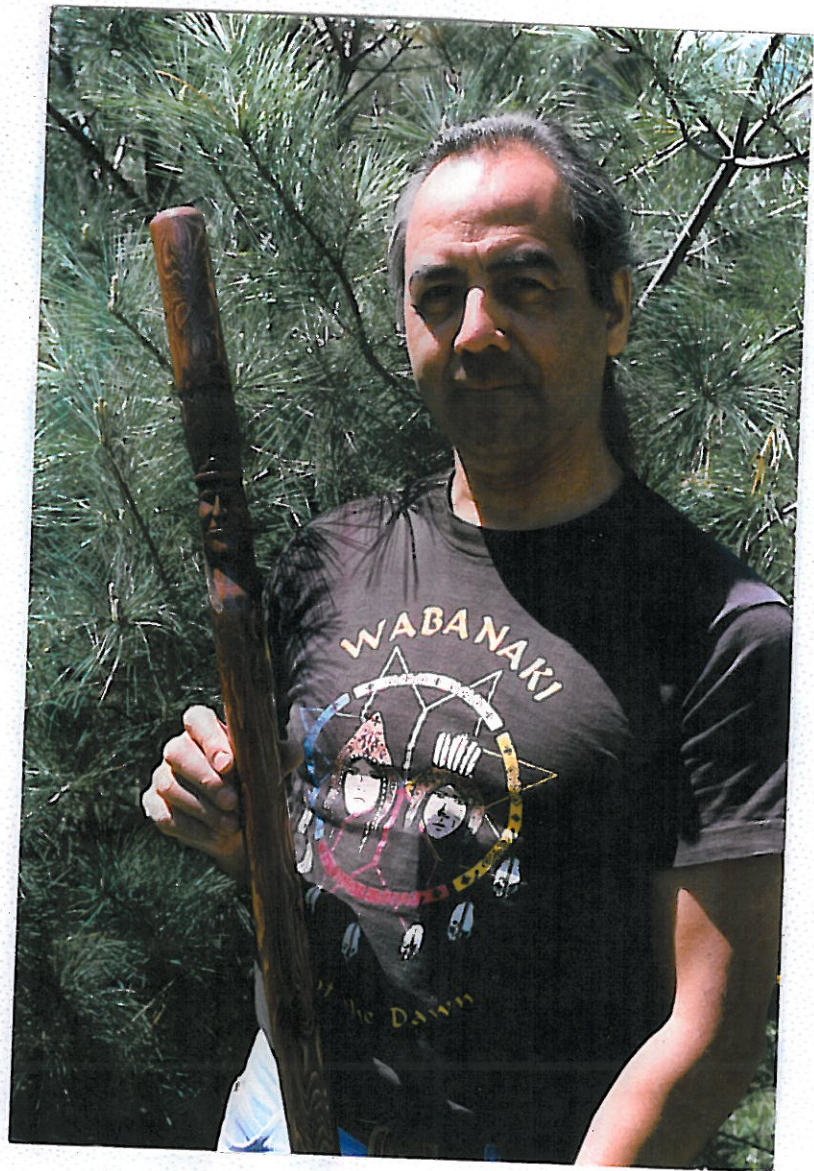
Northeastern Native American Study Storage




Steve Rosenthal

Native American Program
The Children's Museum
Boston, MA 02210
617-426-6500





9. b. 2 Stan Neptune / Root
Clubs



**Sacred items. Do not handle or
view. Please respect another
person's culture.**

Indians and Museums: A Plea for Cooperation



Ownership and display of Indian ceremonial objects and skeletal remains have long been a source of conflict between Native Americans and history museums. From time to time the controversy erupts in public demonstrations marked by press coverage and televised encounters between tribal leaders and museum directors. Feeling their religious rights have been violated by the loss to museums of their religious and ceremonial artifacts, the Indians demand the return of these objects to the original tribal owners. Reluctant to give up integral parts of their collections, the museums respond by arguing that the objects would not have survived over the years without their protective custody.

These issues are particularly pertinent now because of a bill called the American Indian Religious Freedom Act which President Carter signed into law last August. As the basis for formulating a new federal policy regarding Indian rights, the law is of great concern to both Native Americans and the museum community.

This spring a group of directors of Native American museums gathered in Denver to hold an organizational meeting of the American Indian Museums Association (AIMA) and to discuss the implications of the new law, how it will be interpreted and enforced, and other issues related to sacred artifacts and religious sites. At our request, Richard Hill, who attended the meeting and is both a Native American and a museum administrator, has written the piece that follows to help HISTORY NEWS readers understand the issues involved.

By Richard Hill

Operating on the premise that museums hold their possessions in trust for mankind and its future welfare, North American Indians are now suggesting that the nation's museums and cultural institutions can have a positive impact on the future welfare of tribal societies. The basis of that welfare is the recognition and respect of the spiritual life of the native people; our emotional and intellectual well being depends on our fulfillment of religious duties. The culture, religion, and lifestyle of the Native Americans are now at a crucial point of survival, and we realize that museums can now contribute to the preservation and promotion of native ceremonies, chiefs' councils, medicine societies, and our general well-being.

We believe museums have held sacred objects in trust to this time, and now those objects are desperately needed in our Indian communities. Therefore, our request to museums often takes the form of the return of sacred objects that are needed to complete ceremonial duties. In cooperation with traditional chiefs, elders, and religious leaders' councils, certain objects should be returned to the tribes for continued use in ceremonies, just as President Carter returned a royal crown to a European country because it was a symbol of its sovereignty.

Both the Indian religious elders and museum professionals have a lot of work to do to resolve some basic questions. Three major concerns are:

1. What Indian materials are sacred/religious?
2. Who are the recognized religious elders of the various tribes?
3. Where are sacred materials located?

The American Indian Museums Association (AIMA) was founded earlier this year to address these and other concerns. The association will provide tribal lists of sacred objects, local contact people, and basic guidelines for the handling of sacred objects. Input from tribal religious elders will be essential if these objectives are to be accomplished. Additionally, the AIMA will undertake a national survey of museums to determine the location of sacred objects and provide technical assistance in situations involving the return or use of these objects. Eight regional coordinators have been selected to prepare policy and perform services for the association.

The formation of the association is very timely

(continued on next page)

in that the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Public Law 95-341, was signed into law Aug. 11, 1978, by President Carter to guarantee Indians the right to believe, to express, and to practice their native traditional religion. Among other things, the act guarantees access to religious sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through traditional ceremonies. Museums, private collectors, and foreign countries all possess religious objects of American Indians, and the new law will aid in settling ownership disputes over sacred objects illegally or forcibly taken from a tribe or individual.

As a basis for a cooperative approach, non-Indian museum professionals must acknowledge several points:

1. The Indian concepts of religion are culturally very different from their own.
 2. The Indian concepts of sacredness and religious duty are still very much alive.
 3. The method by which many objects were acquired has resulted in cultural genocide.
 4. The American Indian Religious Freedom Act will have a direct impact on museums.
- In addition, Native Americans must understand the museums' concerns for preservation, exhibition, education, research, and deaccession.

Native Americans often request the return of sacred objects on a religious basis. It is deceptive to compare Western religious standards to Indian concepts of sacredness. In most native languages there is no word that translates specifically to "religion" because spiritual thoughts, values, and duties are totally integrated into the social, political, cultural, and artistic aspects of daily life. This unity of thought—the combination of individual and community life in expressing thanks to the Creator—is the Indian "religion." In American society there has been a clear separation between church and state that is nearly impossible in traditional Indian society.

Indians believe they are responsible for the spiritual balance in North America. Native religions originated with the creation of the earth and exist to protect the earth and to maintain the delicate balance between nature and human beings. Religious elders are responsible for religious ceremonies that produce harmony. Such ceremonies require dedication and sacred objects that help carry the messages of hope and thanksgiving to the Creator.

All such objects, no matter how they may appear to others, are of very high religious value and, therefore, represent the essence of traditional culture. Most of these objects are communally owned and used for the benefit of the entire community. No individual or group of individuals has the right to remove, sell, or trade these sacred objects for any reason.

Indians believe that the historical disruption of their religion through the loss of these sacred items has caused a serious imbalance in the spiritual world.

The foundations of the tribal society are traditional identity and spiritual beliefs which are manifested by the creations of human hands—some for daily use, some for special rituals, some for their journey into the next world. Most non-Indians, who often use precious metals and jewels in their own religious objects, have come to see religious objects in a certain way and find it hard to accept a feather, a stone, or a carving as a sacred object.

Federal Law Mandates Religious Freedom

The new American Indian Religious Freedom Act is designed to amend past federal interference with the right of native peoples to practice their traditional religions. The essence of the law lies in the statement contained in Section 1, "That henceforth it shall be the policy of the United States to protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise the traditional religions of the American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiians, including but not limited to access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites."

Section 2 of the law directs the various federal departments and agencies responsible for administering relevant laws "to evaluate their policies and procedures in consultation with native traditional religious leaders in order to determine appropriate changes necessary to protect and preserve Native American religious cultural rights and practices."

The law also requires President Carter to report to Congress next month the results of this evaluation, any changes that have been made in administrative policies or procedures, and recommendations for further legislative action.

The Native American Rights Fund (NARF), established in 1971 with headquarters in Boulder, Colo., and branch offices in Washington, D.C., and Portland, Maine, is a national law firm specializing in the protection of Indian rights and resources. Last fall the NARF declared its intention to work toward "the full implementation of the word and spirit of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act" by conducting a parallel review of federal policies and procedures. The NARF report is scheduled to be completed by July 30.

Parks and Forests or private land, thereby becoming inaccessible to religious leaders.

The Ghost Dance of the Plains people came to a devastating halt at Wounded Knee, S.D., in December of 1890 when the Hotchkiss guns of the U.S. Army killed 300 of the 350 men, women, and children present. A young man at the time, Black Elk, a Lokota Medicine Man, later recounted his memory of the scene.

And so it was all over. I did not know then how much was ended. When I look back now from the high hill of my old age, I can still see the butchered women and children lying heaped and scattered all along the crooked gulch as plain as when I saw them with eyes still young, and I can see that something else died there in the bloody mud and was buried in the blizzard. A people's dream died there. It was a beautiful dream.

The U.S. Army awarded medals of honor to the 500 soldiers who ended the dream. The clothing, drums, rattles, and other symbols of the Ghost Dance remain in many museums today.

The Sun Dance is one of the most sacred and oldest ceremonies of Plains Indians. Non-Indians mistook the prayer and sacrifice as a savage superstition. For over 50 years, missionaries and the federal government tried to suppress the Sun Dance, and in 1921 the Office of Indian Affairs issued a policy statement to area agents: "The Sun Dance, and all other similar dances and so-called religious ceremonies, are considered 'Indian offenses under existing regulations, and corrective penalties are provided.'" One such penalty was to round up all religious materials in an attempt to keep the Sun Dance from happening. These materials have found their way into this nation's cultural institutions. The belief in the Sun Dance continues.

The potlatch of the Northwest Coast Indians was similarly banned, and masks, clothing, drums, and gifts were confiscated. In the early 1900s, Yakima Indians were assigned various Christian religions by the federal government.

The possession of these ceremonial articles by museums is seen as a symbol of religious persecution to the Native American people. Therefore, Indians feel they must approach museums directly.

Museum professionals should realize their responsibility to the survival of culture as well as to the education of the public. Both are equally important. Thus, cultural institutions are in a unique position to assist the Indian communities to revive and retain their traditions.

Indians believe the first step is to remove sacred or questionable items from exhibit. By using modern technology, photographs, illustrations, and reproductions in combination with



COURTESY OF RICHARD HILL

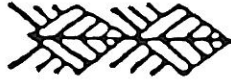
Tuscarora chiefs hold the sacred wampum belt regarded as the document that gives them title to their reservation. Articles such as this are often a source of conflict when they are held by museums, and Indians seek their return for religious and ceremonial purposes.

Native American interpretation, institutions can now educate the public better than ever before.

We also believe the remains of the native people should be returned for reburial as a gesture of respect. Archaeological work can continue, but when human remains are uncovered, they should be returned to the earth. Our burial ceremonies have changed to discourage future archaeologists from uncovering the remains of our relatives in search of museum pieces.

The American Indian Museums Association, in conjunction with the Native American Rights Fund, will work to assist the implementation of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act and to assist museums in developing policies regarding sacred Indian material. Together museums and Indians can enter into a new phase of museum ethics that will allow the preservation of Native American traditional beliefs and ceremonies.

Editor's Note: Richard Hill is a member of the Beaver Clan of the Tuscarora Nation, part of the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy. Formerly a research assistant at the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, Hill is now secretary/treasurer of the Native American Center for the Living Arts in Niagra Falls, N.Y., and was recently chosen to represent the Northeast as one of the eight regional coordinators for the American Indian Museums Association. He is also a watercolor painter and teaches a course on Indian art in the American Studies Department at the State University of Buffalo.



POLICY STATEMENT ON MEDICINE MASKS

The Grand Council of the Hodenosaunee, the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy, issues the following policy statement regarding all medicine masks of the Hodenosaunee:

MEDICINE SOCIETIES

Within the Hodenosaunee there are various medicine societies that have the sacred duty to maintain the use and strength of special medicines, both for individual and community welfare. A medicine society is comprised of Hodenosaunee who have partaken of the medicine and are thereby bound to the protection and perpetuation of the special medicines. Such medicines are essential to the spiritual and emotional well-being of the Hodenosaunee communities. The medicine societies are a united group of individuals who must uphold and preserve the rituals that guard and protect the people, and the future generations.

Among these medicine societies are those that utilize the wooden masks or corn husk masks that represent the shared power of the original medicine beings. Although there are variations of their images, all the masks have power and an intended purpose, that is solely for the members of the respective medicine societies. Interference with the sacred duties of the societies of their masks is a violation of the religious freedom of the Hodenosaunee and does great harm to the welfare of the Hodenosaunee communities.

STATUS OF THE MASKS

All wooden and corn husk masks of the Hodenosaunee are sacred regardless of size or age. By their very nature masks are empowered the moment they are made. The image of the mask is sacred and is only to be used for its intended purpose. Masks do not have to be put through any ceremony or have tobacco attached to them, in order to become useful or powerful. Masks should not be made unless they are to be used by members of the medicine society, according to established tradition.

SALE OF MASKS

There are no masks that can be made for commercial purposes. Individuals who make masks for sale or sell masks to non-Indians violate the intended use of the masks, and such individuals must cease these activities as they do great harm to the Hodenosaunee. The commercialization of medicine masks is an exploitation of Hodenosaunee culture.

AUTHORITY OVER THE MEDICINE MASKS

Each Hodenosaunee reservation has a medicine mask society that has authority over the use of masks for individual and community needs. Each society is charged with the protection of their sacred masks and to assure their proper use. The Grand Council of Chiefs has authority over all medicine societies and shall appoint individual leaders or medicine societies as necessary.

However, no individual can speak or make decisions for



medicine societies or the displacement of medicine masks. No institution has the authority over medicine masks, as they are the sole responsibility of the medicine societies and the Grand Council of Chiefs.

EXHIBITION OF MEDICINE MASKS

The public exhibition of all medicine masks is forbidden. Medicine masks are not intended for everyone to see and such exhibition does not recognize the sacred duties and special functions of the masks.

The exhibition of masks by museums does not serve to enlighten the public regarding the culture of the Hodenosaunee, as such an exhibition violates the intended purpose of the mask and contributes to the desecration of the sacred image.

In addition, information regarding medicine societies is not meant for general distribution. The non-Indian public does not have a right to examine, interpret nor present the beliefs, functions and duties of the secret medicine societies of the Hodenosaunee. The sovereign responsibility of the Hodenosaunee over their spiritual duties must be respected by the removal of all medicine masks from exhibition and from access to non-Indians.

Reproductions, castings, photographs or illustrations of medicine masks should not be used in exhibitions, as the image of the medicine masks is sacred and is not to be used in these fashions. To subject the image of the medicine masks to ridicule or misrepresentation is a violation of the sacred functions of the masks.

The Council of Chiefs find that there is no proper way to explain, interpret, or present the significance of the medicine masks and therefore, ask that no attempt to be made by museums to do other than to explain the wishes of the Hodenosaunee in this matter.

RETURN OF MEDICINE MASKS

All Hodenosaunee medicine masks currently possessed by non-Indians, including Museums, Art Galleries, Historical Societies, Universities, Commercial Enterprises, Foreign Governments and Individuals should be returned to the Grand Council of Chiefs of the Hodenosaunee, who will assure their proper use and protection for the future generations.

There is no legal, moral or ethical way in which a medicine mask can be obtained or possessed by a non-Indian individual or an institution, in that in order for medicine masks to be removed from the society it would require the sanction of the Grand Council of Chiefs. This sanction has never been given.

We ask all people to cooperate in the restoration of masks and other sacred objects to the proper caretakers among the Hodenosaunee. It is only through these actions that the traditional culture will remain strong and peace be restored to our communities.

Signed:

GRAND COUNCIL OF CHIEFS



HANDLING OF SACRED ARTICLES AND SACRED SITES

Oren Lyons

9.6.5

Onondaga Chief's Council

Six Nations Confederacy

The issues being discussed at this particular time are relevant, more than relevant, critical to certain people and nations and are far more than discussions of artifacts held in museums. In some cases we are talking about the guts, the blood and bone, and marrow of the existence of traditional people.

Specifically today we will be talking about what we call Wampum. If you talk to most people about wampum they say, Oh yeah, that is money isn't it, everybody exchanges wampum. The other thing that I will be talking about are the masks; you can call them false faces or whatever. Almost every museum has one collection or another, and I will be speaking specifically within the reference of the Six Nations. All the Nations have similar circumstances and similar artifacts. It will be pointed out by myself, they are not artifacts, but living working objects that are needed right now, today, within the councils or within the medicine societies that exist. And I think we are going to be discussing the ethics of people who have control over these objects. We will be discussing, to some extent the perspective of the people from whence they came, the people who are injured, the people who are actually suffering because of the lack of these particular objects. It is important to note (I was glad to hear it mentioned already here) that in most cases the older the object, the more sacred it is, the more power that it has, the more carefully people take care of these things.

If you are going to begin definitions, then you have to be very careful, because I have noted that there were several possibilities where museums, which are holding these articles, can find ways to keep them. I think that you do not allow loop-holes, that you are going to have to be specific in some cases, but naturally we are speaking of Advisory Boards who are going to be seeing that sacred objects, held within museums, are held in the proper way. Well, there is no proper way to hold a sacred object in a museum. There is no proper way, and I think we are going to have to be discussing this and I think that the onus lies on the people who hold those objects. It is not up to the Indian people to justify or to have to rationalize the continued holding of these objects. It is not up to us.

Within this very edifice, right here, I saw on exhibit a false face mask, and on the side was the name of a person who said, these masks had been prepared for exhibition. I can tell you, there is no ceremony that prepares a mask for exhibition and a person does not have the authority to exhibit or to prepare for exhibit material that regards this society. The society itself would have to gather, and it would have to agree, which will never happen. They will never agree that these masks be prepared for exhibition. And this is the hard

fact that museums will have to face. They will never agree; there is no proper way. I belong to that society; I am a traditional person; I sit in there, I know. I know there is no way that they can be allowed to be on exhibit.

There are a lot of questions; there are a lot of things that have occurred in the manner of acquisitions. How were they acquired? Someone made them, or someone gave them; well, these are okay because they are new, or these are okay because they are small; well, these are alright because some Indian said it was okay. Well, it is not, and there is no easy way around it. The husk faces are powerful; these masks are powerful, they have worked. We have had discussions, long discussions at the Six Nations Council how to approach this, and we ourselves have said that our people (and I am glad to hear it mentioned again) sold it. Someone was dry, perhaps he takes his father's mask and he goes down and hawks it for say \$5.00 or \$10.00, or even less, and it winds up in a museum. But, it is not right; it is not right. I have been in several museums; there are 40 or more masks hanging in the back of this place here, some look like they have never been used, but they are no less effective.

We have to deal with another society that has different perspectives; we have to deal with a society that lives in contracts and understands contracting and everything is a contract. In our society it is almost the opposite. There are no contracts; there are understandings, understandings from long associations, there are organizations and there are societies. Every Nation that is sitting here knows where on their lands there are societies functioning. Now we have many within our own Nation, within the Six Nations. The society has developed for a particular purpose, and particular people are invited, and those who are not invited, never ask, they are not inquisitive as to who is there and what goes on within our own societies. These societies can be termed secret, and their province, and what they do belongs to them, and eventually, if you qualify, or if they think you should, they will come and ask you. Other than that, the Indians do not ask; they are quite satisfied that the societies are functioning because they know they are functioning on behalf of all of us. It is not necessary that we know precisely, that we know who is there and what goes on. But we face a society that wants to know everything, that wants to sit in on the societies, that wants to be a part of it, when even our own people do not understand the secret nature of these activities.

We believe it is a reality; we do not think or take anthropological perspectives or views of these societies. These are realities and we have learned them from our own perspective. It is not to say that we do not function very well within any other society, but there has to be an ethic and an understanding on the part of our white brothers, who maintain and hold these precious objects. The onus is on them, not on us. We cannot rationalize these types of acquisitions and holdings. We were asked in relation to the masks, "Can we reproduce them?" The answer was, can you reproduce one of yourselves? These are individual entities, there is only one of a kind, just as there is only one of you. How would you reproduce them; "Well, we have this hot wax method". Then we said, you would put hot wax on the face?

What would you say, how would you explain that to those masks, "someone is going to put hot wax on you"? Would you allow that to be done to your face? How do you explain that to someone who does not even believe in the other side of creation. This is what we are dealing with, we are dealing with separate realities.

It is very difficult, but there is no way that we will compromise our position on these holdings; there is no way. You ask us what shall we do with the masks, we say, return them, return them. "Well, we have 65, can we keep five?" You do what you want; we cannot be responsible for your actions and we are not going to give you a license to keep five. If you think five is important to you, it is your decision; we say the masks belong home. "What are you going to do with them?" Well, that is none of your business and it never was. That is one area of discussion and that is one I can attest personally to.

Major documents of record, either religious or political can forcibly be removed from the possession of one nation into the hands of another. We are going to be talking specifically about wampum, and in this particular area we are talking about the State of New York and the Six Nations. As the state of New York is a member of a larger union, the United States, the larger union is implicated by actions that the state may take in any and all endeavours, therefore, although the United States is not actively involved in any actions the state may take, they are ultimately responsible. Let's make a point about the implications of these acts. There are national implications to national treasures and the wampum of the Six Nations is a national treasure belonging to the people of the Longhouse. There is no other way to look at it; its theft or misappropriation has international ramifications. In 1948 the United Nations drew up a Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 26 of that document says, "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and for the strengthening of the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and to further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace." Article 3 says, "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that will be given their children." Not the state education department, not the national education department, but parents have the right. Under the subjects prevention and punishment of crime and genocide in Article 2 it continues, "Any of the following acts, committed with an attempt to destroy in whole or in part a national, racial, ethnical or religious group, is genocide." Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group -- that is genocide. Deliberately inflicting on the group, conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part -- that is genocide. Article 4 says, "Persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3 shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials, or private individuals."

President Carter made a statement on human rights on March 17, 1977; he said, "The search for peace and justice also means respect for human dignity." All the signatory nations of the

United Nations charter have pledged to observe and to respect basic human rights, thus no member of the United Nations can claim the mistreatment of its citizens is solely its own business. Equally, no member can avoid its responsibility to speak when torture and unwarranted privation occurs in any part of the world. The President of the United States said, "we in the United States accept this responsibility in the fullest and most constructive sense; our's is a commitment, not just a political posture. I know perhaps as well as anyone that our ideals in the area of human rights have not always been attained in the United States, but the American people have an abiding commitment to the full realization of these ideals and we are determined, therefore, to deal with our deficiencies quickly and openly. We have nothing to conceal. To demonstrate this commitment, I will seek congressional approval and sign the United Nations covenant on economic, social and cultural rights and the covenant on civil and political rights, and I will work closely with our own Congress in seeking to support the ratification not only of these two instruments by the United Nations Genocide Convention and the Treaty for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination as well."

I think it is important to know that these two covenants that he is talking about have been presented by every President of the United States since the beginning, but they have never been ratified by the Congress or by the Senate up to this time, so I think this information will put in perspective the Indian Religious Freedom Act that we were just talking about. It is progress; it is a tremendous boost for the Indian people.

When we are talking about wampum we are talking about nations, we are talking about national treasures, we are talking about one nation's cultural life and government. We have a constitution that recognized not only the sovereign right of individual humans, but also recognizes the equal and inherent rights of all life, and I believe that this particular aspect is common to all our nations. Also, the four-footed animals, those that swim, things that grow, are entities that fulfill a purpose and process in the great cycle of the universe, and their existence is evidence of their right to be here. The great powers of the four directions, and the heavens, and the earth, powers of the sun, moon and the stars work together maintaining a cycle that is absolute and ordained and we see ourselves as a part of this cycle, neither more nor less than any other part, with obligations and duties to perform. The most important duty being the celebration of life and creation by the ceremonies of thanksgiving, and appreciation for each and all elements of the universe. After this is done, then we sit down in council for the welfare of the people. With us, in order to perform all of these duties, we need the wampum. The wampum is missing. The wampum is the record, our laws, our cultural heritage, our symbol of unity with creation and the Great Creator. Our minds do not separate the government from the natural laws of spirituality; indeed, spirituality is our first law. Therefore, one is intertwined with the other for strength of the spirit. To illustrate that this continues, it was a year ago, in the spring, that we raised five new Chiefs at Onondaga, five Chiefs knowledgeable in the process and procedure which is as old as time. These chiefs are now going about and doing a good job.

They provide the spirit for our people but, unfortunately, in the process of raising these chiefs, we did not have the wampums that should have been there. Those wampum reside in a Museum. Those wampums belong to us.

Our nations, the red nations of the land, have had to face an attitude, by the immigrants who travelled here, that could be called the Genesis Complex. The perspective of that Genesis Complex was that humans were at the top of an ecological pyramid of living things, a structure over which the Creator or God had granted them dominion. If you take that perspective and carry it one step further, you get the right of Christian domination over other people and eventually the theory of Manifest Destiny. What we are talking about is subjugation or control of one nation, or race, by another which considers itself superior. We have to deal with it.

We lost the wampums about 1875 to 1898; I am sure you know those were hard times for Indians. In 1871 the United States government said they were no longer going to treat Indians as nations or have treaties. In 1876 Custer was out there looking for gold over in the back hills. He got ripped off, but his spirit returned. In 1887, the Allotment Act separated the Indians from almost two-thirds of their lands. Some of us were lucky, our lands were held in common. Six Nations is one, Navajo is another, I believe the Pueblos were another. Every other nation that had their lands allotted lost large sections of it. In 1890 the massacre of 250 defenseless men, women and children occurred at Wounded Knee, Pine Ridge, South Dakota. To illustrate how the United States felt about this massacre, 28 Medal of Honor, the highest award for valor in combat, were awarded to soldiers who participated in that event, more Medals of Honor than were awarded in the whole Korean conflict. If that does not illustrate the attitude of a people to another people, I do not know what does.

We are talking about wampum; we are talking about Indian nations trying to maintain themselves, and we are talking about an attitude of another people, another nation, toward them. We lost a great many artifacts and relics when huge piles were burned by missionaries intent on destroying a people, a nation, and that is genocide. They talked about it; they wrote about it. We are not making this up, here is a quote from a book written by Teddy Roosevelt in 1885, and this illustrates the attitude clearly. "During the past century, a good deal of sentimental nonsense has been talked about our taking of the Indian lands. I don't mean to say for a moment that gross wrong has not been done to the Indians, both by governments and individuals. Again and again where brutal and reckless frontiersmen are brought into contact with a set of treacherous, vengeful and fiendishly cruel savages, (the frontiersmen are "brutal and reckless" and the Indians are fiendish, vengeful and treacherous") a long series of outrages by both sides is sure to follow, but as regards taking land, at least from the western Indian, the simple truth is that the letter really had no ownership in it at all. That Indians should be treated in just such a way as we treat white settlers, give each his claim, if, as would generally happen, he declined this, why then let him share the fate of the thousands of white hunters and trappers who have lived on

the game that the settlement of the country is exterminating. And let him, like those whites, perish from the face of the earth which he conquers."

Now, at about the same time, the state of New York, not to be outdone nationally, became aroused by the Allotment Act and such work began on the Six Nations reserve in New York. The New York Legislature, in 1888, authorized the formation of a special committee to investigate the Indian problem in New York State. This action resulted in the Whipple report, named after J. S. Whipple, Committee Chairman. The conclusion of the committee was, that the Six Nations was subject to New York State, and indeed the Confederacy did not exist. Excerpts from the Committee's interviews show clearly the direction and intention of that committee. They went about New York State and they asked people who had respect within their communities what they thought about the Indian problem and what would be their solution. Here they are asking the Chancellor of Syracuse University (about 15 miles from where I live on the Onondaga Nation), "What do you say as to the power of the state in view of the existence of treaties to control this particular reservation?" He answered, "On the letter of the law, I do not think the state has a right. I think there has arisen a condition of things where the nation has ceased to be a nation, I think it is not a nation for justice, nor a nation for progress, for the making of roads, and educating each other. I don't think it punishes crime, nor restrains crime and, therefore, I think the nation has ceased to exist as a nation. I think that the Onondagas are very positive in their opposition to anything that looks towards a destruction of the traditions of the tribe, and the destruction of the perpetuity of the tribe. I think that they will oppose anything, the more thoughtful, at least, who are loyal to their Indian notions." This was in 1888, at the same time that they were saying that our nation was disintegrating, but this was not the answer that that group was looking for so the questioner asked, "The question, I was trying to get at, Chancellor, I think you did not quite understand me, I wanted to know if you could tell me if our national government has control of these Indians, in your judgement, or the state of New York." And the Chancellor answers, "Oh, I think the State of New York," That is the answer they wanted, and that is the answer they wrote down.

At another place in the same report, they are suspicious of the amount collected by the Treasurer for 70 years, aspersion is cast on the methods of recording the money and finally it says, "These rents, honestly collected, and accounted for, should have aggregated at least \$8,000 per year and should be received by some responsible person and paid to the individuals as their annuities are paid, in place of being left to be squandered and stolen by the politicians and office-seekers of the tribe."

They talked about marriage and the missionaries. Missionaries were heavily involved in our loss of the wampums, so it is important to understand their perspective because they have been busy on your reservations too. "Marriage ceremonies among them (again he is talking about the Seneca) in the past, have been the exception rather than the rule.. The morals of the women in too many cases are bad. The trouble here, as with all the other tribes in the State, is that marriage simply consists

of intercourse for a shorter or longer period of time, as inclination suggests, and then separation. The offspring of such union are legitimate and inherit from the parents and the custom is indirectly sanctioned by the State." Now, what they are talking about is the process of the lineage of the nation passing through the woman. In the Six Nations it is the woman who defines which human you are. If the woman is a wolf clan in the Seneca, the child is a wolf clan in the Seneca; it does not matter who the father is. This contrary to laws and rules in New York State and the United States, but the one thing that this does is that there are no bastards born in the Six Nations, because they have a name, because they have a clan and because they have a nation. Well, they didn't like that. They said the low standard of morality seems directly and principally traceable to the Indian custom of marriage. They said the excuse for such unions were the Indian customs. "The principal charge brought by the pagans against the missionaries is that they oppose these Indian marriages and try to get the Indians to abandon them and adopt the Christian method. That such reforms have been brought about among the Indians should be principally credited to the advice and efforts of the missionaries. The influence of the missionaries has been in the right direction, but there again they are almost powerless as long as Indians are allowed to marry and divorce at pleasure. If the laws are set right, the schools and missionaries will do the rest." What are they talking about?

In 1886, 40 church delegates met and adopted a series of resolutions which were chiefly prepared by Rev. Frank M. Kirk, missionary at that time to the Senecas. They recommended lands be held in severality (allotment of individual lands). They recommended the placing of Indians fully under the civil and criminal law of the state and, crowning all, to "secure for the Indians who desired it, citizenship." They are talking about nationality, that are talking about existence of a nation, they are intent on destroying it. They have not given up you know.

That leads us to one of the principal people involved in gaining these wampums for the State of New York and that was Rev. O'Shaun who was a missionary on my nation's land, on Onondaga many, many years ago. From 1875 onwards they actively began the acquisition of those wampums, because the wampum represented our political strength as a government, and it represented our spiritual strength to the missionaries. This is our perspective. In 1898, through a contract, these wampums were officially turned over to the State of New York and New York became the official wampum-keeper of the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy. Now I think that that is against the constitutional laws of New York State and also the United States. They cannot actively be a member of any other political organization; a wampum-keeper was a political as well as a spiritual position. Nevertheless, they did not rest till they had those wampums. A suit was begun to gain the return of those wampums and one of the judges said, well, if the wampums belong to anybody, they belong to the Onondagas. Shortly after that legislation was passed by the State of New York officially making them wampum-keepers of the Six Nations Confederacy. Now this is unique; there is no other event like this in the history of the country. There is obviously more here than just collecting artifacts.

Many means were used to acquire these wampums from the enactment of legislation to coercion. My grandmother herself remembers, as a child, a pile of money that was on the table. Coersion was being used against the woman, after the man died, to gain access to those wampums.

Indian law is simple, there are duties involved in being the wampum-keeper; first, you have to speak the language. Wampum-keepers are not absolute; they can be changed, they often are, but they chose to ignore the Indian laws governing those wampums, they did not even mention them. The State of New York said that they would keep those wampums, to protect them, yet when we inquired about one, they said they did not know where it went to; they have lost it; they don't know.

We almost had them given back to us in 1970 through legislation. The Bill got as far as a Finance Committee and it never came out, it never came out. A year or two later, there was another bill presented, they said, "Let's give them back five." They did not say what five, but they surrounded the return with conditions like they have to be kept in a fireproof box, we are not to handle them anymore, and if there are any signs of deterioration, they will be taken back. We were told we had to build a museum so they could be on display for the people of New York, to whom they belong. The Council is still undecided whether to take their return on those conditions.

There was another Bill presented this year; there was a bill every year that has failed to pass. The last time it failed was because one of the senators from New York State said, "You get those Mohawks out of the Adirondacks, we might give you your wampum back."

Of course it is political; it is highly political; it is highly unethical; it certainly is genocidal in its intent. That is what I submit to you right now. Another thing to consider is that when you work for a nation, or for a state against your own people, then you have to be considered in that light. The people know, they know precisely, the issues are simple. They say to us, there is a law, you know, we cannot give it back. Only we know how often laws are changed when they want to change them. So the question here is, what are we going to do next, and are you interested? What is your perspective, what is your attitude? We will both be answering questions you may have.

General discussion followed. It was pointed out that one of the biggest problems would be when the articles were returned to the tribal museums, a museum is still not a fit setting for the articles, even if it is in use. At the Historical Museum in Buffalo, sacred artifacts are lent to the Indian people when they perform their ceremonies. It is a compromise, but it is a beginning. It was also pointed out that if articles are returned to Indian Museums they are going to require special handling which might inhibit their traditional use. Therefore, we have a responsibility to develop policy on the use and handling of the sacred things within Indian museums.

Joyce,

In haste- to get this in mail to you- my notes from Oren's very brief speech- followed by a long question and answer period....

"Although I speak alone, I speak on behalf of the Council.

Our primary concern are the masks and the wampum. You people have custody.

These masks are dear to us; sacred beyond description.

You have our people.

Your science has interfered with our culture.

You've imposed that science upon us.

You now control our sacred objects.

You've tried to make us over into your image.

I'm asking you to have compassion for something we believe.

These beings are alive today.

Your law has cut us off from our own things.

It is not right- you have some of our grandfathers in your museum.

It's like family.

I simply can't describe how it feels. They are the very center of our culture and our people; not a relic, not a curiassity, not a work of art.

We're talking about one of our beings.

There's no reason whatsoever why you should have them.

It's a sacrilege to expose them.

Once a mask is made, it's an entity. There's none the same.

You're the scientists- we're not. We believe in grandfathers.

We cannot give anything. It just has to be up to you.

We need these to protect our children.

I feel the false faces are just as much alive as we are.

These masks are very sacred and their medicine is real. They can do a lot of damage.

It's not your concern whether you believe in the medicine masks.

That matters is that we do.

You can ~~begin~~ ^{begin} by respecting these sacred masks- all of them. If they don't have a medicine bundle, they need one.

These are entities- once they're created, they have to be taken care of.

It doesn't matter what you believe- we are asking you to respect our culture.

The letter is the wishes of our people. It is our duty to tell you this.

The rest is up to you. Bear in mind what it means to us."

