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Abstract

Following a program of vaccination for several First Nations peoples, representatives of these Five Nations tribes met with officials at Fort George, Upper Canada in 1807 to present formal thanks to Edward Jenner. These elders also wished to send to Jenner a belt of wampum and a string of wampum as a gift, in return for his gift of vaccination. Information regarding the possible configuration of that belt, and the ultimate disposition of these two examples of wampum, provide insights into examples of these Native American items that may still survive in European collections.

Wampum: An Introduction

White shell beads, of random sizes, were valuable objects among many if not all the North American tribes for centuries before the development of the relatively standardized size and form called wampum. Small, tubular marine shell beads of relatively uniform size and shape emerged as a native-made commodity during the years between 1590 and 1604, the middle years of the period of Dutch trade. Beads of wampum were, much later, specifically identified as “belt” or “true” wampum to distinguish them from the wide variety and different shapes of native-made shell beads.

Wampum beads could be produced only using introduced metal drills (*muxes*), allowing huge numbers to be fashioned, all smaller than any previously known tubular shell bead forms.

The name "wampum" derives from the Algonquian *wampumpeag*: white shell beads. The white examples were cut from the columella of the whelk, each of which yielded several beads. The term also became applied to the dark or purple examples made from the dark spot on the quahog clam shell. These dark beads generally were valued at double that of white beads (Becker 1980). Individual wampum beads were called *porcelain* by the French, reflecting their similarity to the new type of ceramic material (bone china) that by 1600 was becoming commonly available in Europe. Although many forms of porcelain were fired in France, attempts to produce ceramic parallels to wampum beads were extremely rare. Porcelain as well as glass beads of wampum-shape were not used in wampum diplomacy, but often appear in ornamental or decorative contexts.

Soon after 1600 wampum became an important commodity throughout the Northeast. Early colonial governments established values for the white and also the dark beads, incorporating them into the economy at "fixed" rates (Becker 1980). This monetization in several of the colonies, in a way similar to that of colonial produced dried fish or barrels of tobacco that also were used as a form of currency, valued beads at two to four beads to the penny depending on color and currency fluctuations (Becker 1980). The convenient and relatively standardized size of beads allowed them to serve as small change among the colonists. Large business transactions, either in trade or at treaties, often employed fathom lengths of strung wampum, each with a set value based on color. A fathom (ca. 6 feet) of wampum consisted of three ells according to Beauchamp (1898: 4). The "ell" generally varied from 25 to 54 English inches, placing Beauchamp's figure at the low end of the generally accepted range.

The tubular shape of wampum beads, ca. 3mm in diameter and 8 or 9mm in length, enabled them to be "woven" into flat panels or bands. Bands that served decorative or ornamental functions commonly included beads of glass and/or

brass, and sometimes ceramic. These panels were affixed directly to clothing without a cloth or leather backing.

Soon after 1600 true wampum began to serve as a diplomatic interface between colonists and natives (cf. Ceci 1982, but see Becker 2012a). Wampum, and possibly white shell beads of all sizes, was generally believed to represent good faith, honesty, and commitment. Diplomatic wampum bands and strings did not incorporate imported materials. Wampum bands, generally referred to as belts in English and *colliers* in French, were "two sided" or "reversible." Diplomatic belts were not known to have been worn during the period of wampum diplomacy (ca 1620-1810, see Becker 2002, 2012b), but when photography first recorded examples of surviving wampum bands they often were displayed draped around a man's neck or over a shoulder like a sash.

We estimate that as many as 300 examples of woven wampum bands survive to this day, including those examples that have been recovered from archaeological excavations. Of the many surviving woven bands, most represent examples of diplomatic wampum, reflecting the vast quantities used in treaties. About 30 "ecclesiastical bands" (cf. Becker 2006a) and 13 "ornamental" cuffs are known (Becker 2007), as well as perhaps twenty bias-woven ornamental bands from the Penobscot region (Becker 2004, 2005, 2012c). Perhaps an equal number of "strings" also survive. Efforts to create a catalogue began in 1971. The work of Jonathan Lainey (2004) has greatly advanced this project, as well as helped to clarify the functions of specific bands (cf. Becker and Lainey 2004). The recently proposed idea that wampum had ritual purposes has been refuted by a recent major study (Becker and Lainey 2013).

Wampum to Europe

Over the 200-plus years (ca. 1600-1810+) during which wampum was basic to diplomacy within a specific region of the American Northeast (Becker 2010, 2012a, 2012b; Beauchamp 1901) a small number made their way to Europe, for a variety of reasons and by a variety of routes. Some of these belts, such as the four examples believed to have been sent to the Queen of England in 1710, were clearly diplomatic in intent. Each belt in

any of these *prestations* (a formal presentation along with a request, for which a formal answer was expected) was accompanied by a speech, the content of which had significant diplomatic meaning, as in an entreaty. An elaborate example of these bands was the last known "Native-made" ecclesiastical belt, sent to Pope Gregory XVI in 1831. Ecclesiastical belts were a subset of diplomatic belts used between Catholic communities. In this case the belt was sent requesting recognition of a missionary community (Becker 2001, 2006). The gifts sent in return by the Pope were extensive. Ecclesiastical belts had been sent to various Catholic communities in Europe at least since the 1650s. Significant numbers are known to have been received in Europe, but most of these have been lost or remain unknown (Sanfaçon Ms. A).

Many of the ecclesiastical wampum bands are among the largest known. By far more commonly presented pieces of woven wampum were the less impressive small bands that were basic to diplomacy (Becker 2008). In addition to the impressive "VATICAN 1831" band noted above, at least one small wampum band that reached the Vatican Museums is still preserved there (Becker 2004, cf. 2005). It arrived through a different route than was used for the large band sent in 1831. Many other bands of wampum, of all sizes, were collected in North America during the 1800s in conjunction with the creation and expansion of many European national museums. For example, the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford has an impressive collection of wampum bands. Records of others sent to Europe, including pieces sent to Italy, are often vague and the locations of these items remain unknown. One such record is the subject of this study.

Background Data

Edward Anthony Jenner (17 May 1749-26 January 1823), whose scientific observations led to his development of an effective vaccination process that inoculated against smallpox, was far from the discoverer of the concept. An inoculation process was used in Turkey and to the east long before 1700. In 1721 Lady Mary Wortley Montague, wife of the British Ambassador to Istanbul, brought the idea to Britain. The use of variations on the process slowly spread and by the 1770s at least five English and

German investigators had come to focus on vaccines that could be derived from cowpox.

About 1763 the fourteen year old Jenner was apprenticed to a surgeon for a term of seven years. He had just completed that service when interest in vaccination was gathering considerable attention in England. By 1770 there was great interest in perfecting a serum and method of delivery. Note that Jenner was not awarded the M.D., at St. Andrews, until 1792; 22 years after completing his apprenticeship (Baron 1838). Shortly before receiving his degree Jenner had carefully begun to explain how his inoculation process worked, and began testing the effects. Perhaps the most well-known test was performed on a boy of eight on 14 May 1796, but Jenner had already tested his work earlier and continued to gather data from "experimental" examples, resulting in his most famous paper (1798, reprinted 1978).

The belief that Benjamin Waterhouse, a Professor of Medicine at Harvard, had persuaded Thomas Jefferson to introduce vaccination on his estates, may be a fiction. However, we do know that by the 1760s vaccination was becoming common among the gentry in England's American colonies. Jefferson traveled to Philadelphia in 1766 to be inoculated, but it was decades before most of the members of his family had been inoculated. When the procedure became readily available, Jefferson had his slaves treated and subsequently tried to introduce the procedure among Native tribes. The complex history of the spread of this medical procedure within the thirteen lower colonies that became the United States of America differs from that of the spread of Jenner's ideas in what became British North America; those colonies that confederated in 1867.

Numerous honors and awards led Jenner to focus on spreading the news of his effective inoculation techniques. Supposedly he made several attempts to encourage the use of his methods among various Native American groups in Upper Canada. Hopkins (2002: 270) believes that Jenner sent a copy of his famous book to the "Abenakis" (the various "Eastern Indians" who had expanded or shifted their ranges to the west) on 11 August 1807. Members of several Eastern groups, such as

the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy, were encamped in areas along with peoples from some of the Five Nations Iroquois who had relocated to the north after The War of the American Revolution. Through the efforts of Colonel Francis Gore (Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada) and the co-operation of William Claus (Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs) Jenner's gift volume seems to have reached the area of the Grand River Reserve. Hopkins (2002: 271) quotes the inscription in this volume as follows: "For Chief of the Five Nations, From Dr. Jenner, London, 11th August, 1807."

The travel time from London to Upper Canada at that time was nearly a month. The book sent by Jenner in 1807, and perhaps actual means of vaccinating the First Nations recipients of that book, certainly took at least a month or two to reach them. We do know that a number of Five Nations elders, almost certainly from the Grand River Reserve, assembled at Fort George on 8 November 1807 to send thanks to Jenner (Hopkins 2002). Arthur Einhorn evaluates the actions of Colonel Gore in these proceedings as less than friendly to the First Nations (Pers. Com. 2004). Thus Einhorn perceives Gore's efforts on behalf of the Jenner smallpox vaccination program to have been a formal execution of duty rather than any effort to aid the Native population.

Present at the November 8 gathering were Lt. Col. Proctor, who later became well known for his exploits during the War of 1812, William Claus, and several other officers and interpreters. At Fort George the Five Nations elders were presented with a copy of Jenner's work, probably his 1798 volume but perhaps a study printed in 1807. Presumably they all had been inoculated.

At this gathering William Claus, speaking to an assembled gathering of First Nations representatives,said that his efforts to introduce inoculation during May of that year might have prevented the death of Oughquaghga John (Claus, in Baron 1838, II: 102; Claus 1812: 247-249). William Claus was the son of Daniel Claus and Ann Johnson; Ann was a daughter of Sir William Johnson.[1] When and where and how the actual inoculations took place is not stated. The formal reply from these native representatives acknowledged the gift from Jenner:

Brother! Our Father has delivered to us the book you sent to instruct us how to use the discovery which the Great Spirit made to you, whereby the small-pox, that fatal enemy of our tribes, may be driven from the earth. We have deposited your book in the hands of the man of skill whom our great Father employs to attend us when [we are] sick or wounded. [a medical officer?] We shall not fail to teach our children to speak the name of Jenner; and to thank the Great Spirit for bestowing upon him so much wisdom and so much benevolence. We send with this [message] a belt and string of Wampum, in token of our acceptance of your precious gift; and we beseech the Great Spirit to take care of you in this world and in the land of spirits.

In, Baron 1838, II: 103-104

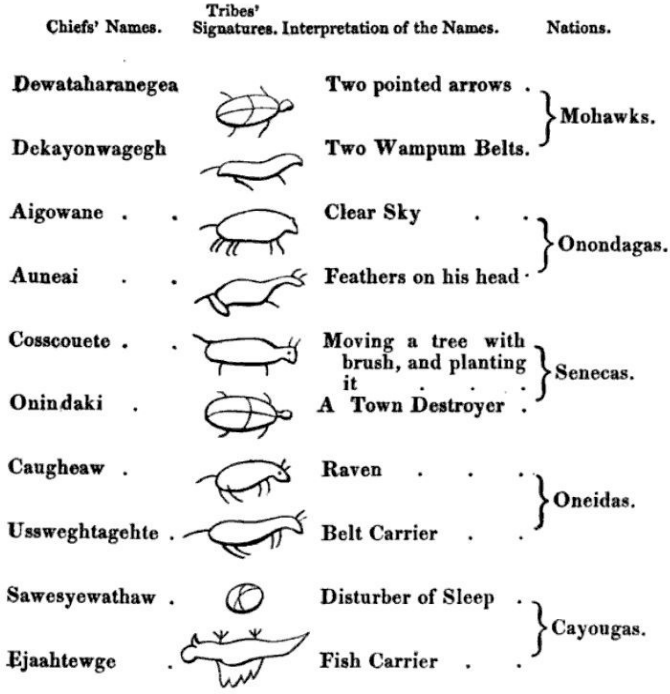

Figure 1. Signatures representing the Five Nations Iroquois who sent thanks with wampum to Dr. Jenner in 1807.

John Baron's 1827 version of the biography of his friend, issued prior to Jenner's death, makes no mention of the wampum. However, this tale is narrated in the 1838 edition, where Baron also reproduced the names and marks of the ten elders who signed the document, two from each of the original Five Nations. Their native names are provided along with the translations of those names (*see Figure 1).* The first two listed are the Mohawks Dewataharanegea (Two Pointed Arrow) and Dekayonwagegh (Two Wampum Belts). These are followed by Aigowane (Clear Sky) and Auneai (Feathers on his head), both of the Onondaga. The last name of these ten elders is Ejaahtewge (Fish Carrier) of the Cayuga (Baron 1838: 104).

Critical to the Natives at the Reserve accepting vaccination, and thus being protected from further losses via smallpox, are elements of syncretism between traditional ideas of sympathetic magic (treat illness with a preventative form of the illness) that linked native beliefs with this "new" method of "treatment." While the process of vaccination may derive from a scientific set of observations, the acceptance of inoculation can also be seen as a belief in magical process. One need not know how the process works in order to recognize that it does work.

Jenner's reply to communications sent by Lieutenant-Colonel Gore and others is also reproduced by Baron (1838, II: 105). In it Jenner wished to "assure them of the great thankfulness with which I received the belt and string of Wampum, with which they condescended to honour me, and of the high estimation in which I shall for ever hold it" (Baron 1838, II: 105). There are several later narratives purporting to describe the presentation of this wampum (e.g. see Heagerty 1928, I: 49-52; Oldstone 1998: 40-41), but they fail to adhere to the basic facts as summarized above and offer no additional or clarifying details. These accounts also lack any understanding of how wampum was used in exchanges of this type—the presentation of a gift and the reciprocity shown on the part of the recipient. As noted elsewhere in detail (Becker and Lainey 2013), the presentation of wampum in diplomacy was coming to an end in the first decades of the 1800s. By the late twentieth century the significance of this exchange "between" Jenner and these Native peoples was no longer understood. Recent accounts of disease as related to Native relations at that time tend to

emphasize myths regarding attempts to exterminate these populations.

The Jenner Belt:

A notice that appeared in the *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal* for the year 1812 (Anon. 1812: 247) states that this wampum belt was in Dr. Jenner's possession at that time. Supposedly Jenner took such pride in his receipt of this wampum band that he wore it over his ritual apron at Masonic meetings.[2] His last attendance at Masonic meetings may have been as late as 1821. This same wampum band was noted by a lodge brother, Mr. H. J. Shrapnell, Esq., at a memorial service for Jenner held in 1825 (cf. Anon. 1823: 189). The belt and string of wampum, however, are not mentioned in the inventory of Jenner's estate, made only a few days after his death in 1823. A possibility that should be considered is that Jenner was interred wearing his Masonic apron as well as the wampum items he had received. None of Jenner's portraits, such as the James Northcote example, dated to 1803, or perhaps 1823, depict him wearing Masonic regalia or a wampum belt.

We have no record of size, color, or any possible designs on this belt. Einhorn has speculated that the blue and white checkered designs so commonly found on wampum belts, as well as on Masonic emblems, had been used on the belt sent to Jenner. This possible connection is not entirely farfetched. In 1766 Sir William Johnson formed a Freemason lodge at Johnson Hall and acted as Master. Joseph Brant, Sir William's brother-in-law and often said to have been raised in Johnson Hall, was admitted to Freemasonry in London on 26 April 1776. Whether any connection between Jenner and the Masonic Order was known to the native makers of the band sent to Jenner is an intriguing possibility.

Edward Jenner had been a Freemason and member of the Berkeley Lodge, known as the Royal Lodge of Faith and Friendship. At the memorial service held for Jenner in 1823 the master of the Lodge said that Jenner had been wearing the belt and string of wampum at the last Masonic meeting that he had attended. David Mullin, former Director of the Jenner Museum, believed this to be the last sighting of these items (Pers. Com. 12

Sept 2003). Mullin notes that he had heard that the belt and string were given "to the Royal Lodge and that for a time it formed part of their regalia." Whether the reference is to a willed transfer or as a gift while Jenner still lived is not specified. Mullin also noted that a belt of some sort that is featured on the logo of the Royal Lodge has been said to represent the belt presented in 1807. David Mullin's comment regarding the absence of any mention of these items over the past 190 years suggests that these items were not evident, or did not survive. On the other hand, I suggest that the presence of the belt and string simply may not have been documented.

Fig. 2 George Washington's Masonic apron, now preserved in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Image used courtesy of Cathy Giaimo, The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

Several Masons have indicated that the Masonic apron is displayed during a member's funeral. Whether it is buried with the deceased is less clear. In my more than fifty years of archaeology, including excavations of cemeteries as late in date as the early 1900s, I have never seen nor heard of Masonic emblems being recovered from a grave. In 2004, when this paper was read at the Iroquois Conference, Dean Snow said that he believed that Masons might be buried with their Masonic regalia. However, no Masons or speakers for Masonic orders know of

the burial of regalia. Thus I believe it unlikely that the string and belt sent to Jenner were buried with him. A report of wampum worn around the neck appears in a century old narration of Masonic activities (Fritz 1915: 244), but whether as a necklace or ornamental band is not specified.

Discussion

Most probably the belt fashioned for Jenner was a very ordinary small white belt (cf. Becker 2008). The belt was probably so ordinary, and unrecognized for its Native American origins, that it was probably ignored at Jenner's death. The possibility that it may have gone to the British Museum, established in 1743 by the will of Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1743) is quite low. As the first national public museum in the world, The British Museum developed an incredible ethnographic collection. Yet items from British North America are surprisingly sparse.

Arthur Einhorn points out the "WC 1807" belt (Becker and Lainey 2004: 28, 35) includes the initials of William Claus as well as the date of the Jenner belt: 1807. Although the Jenner belt may have been commissioned by Claus, the "W▪C-Two People-1807" belt may have been commissioned by him for a very different presentation.

Obviously this example had been made for an important event, but it is very unlikely that it was fashioned for presentation to Jenner. When and where George Heye bought this 1807 belt is unknown, but it came to the Heye Foundation Museum of the American Indian early in their collecting and given the number 1/4004. Since passing to the National Museum of the American Indian that accession number has been transformed into NMAI 014004.000. The design elements are not uncommon, but their placement in three separate "zones" is unusual. At one end the background is white and dark beads are used to form the "W▪C". The central panel has a dark background and worked in white are two figures (at either end) holding a sagging "chain" (the covenant chain?) between them. This extends nearly to the lower margin. Above the "chain" is a relatively small "pipe" such as those smoked at treaties. The third panel is of white wampum on which is worked the date "1807."

The 1807 introduction of smallpox vaccination among the Five Nations in what now is Canada took place near the end of the use of wampum diplomacy in the Northeast. Wampum exchange continued in more remote areas and along the western frontier after 1810, but before another decade had passed, written documents had superseded wampum prestation in all the areas where it traditionally had been used (Becker 2012b).

The Governor General's records or the Canadian Archives may have other records of the events that took place at Fort George on 8 November 1807, possibly including a description of the Jenner belt. A specific description might enable us to determine if the Jenner example now survives at the British Museum or in another collection, or if it remains among the many belts that we can identify as being sent to European locations but for which we have no present record.

Conclusion

The belt and string of wampum presented to Edward Jenner in 1807 remain to be located and described. The simplicity of the presentation and complete lack of description of these pieces of wampum suggest that they were of the most ordinary size and without patterns. Although a blue and white checkered pattern might be suggested (see Note 2), I suspect that the belt was a small, pure white example perhaps three rows wide and 50 files long. The total number of beads may have been as few as 150. I suggest that the string of wampum contained only three to five beads, probably all white.

Notes

[1] This meeting, in November of the Year 1807, must have had some problematical moments. Claus recently had been accused by the Mohawk Joseph Brant of mishandling a disbursement of $38,000 said to belong to the Grand River people: the people represented by the ten elders. Joseph Brant (March 1743 – 24 November 1807) was also related to Sir William Johnson, through Joseph's sister Molly Brant. Joseph Brant, along with many of those Five Nations peoples who had allied with the British, had relocated to Canada after the American Revolution. These emigrants included most if not all of the Native people attending this meeting. Brant seems to have been suffering from cancer or perhaps some disorder of his internal organs. In the absence of other "treatments" he had taken up drinking as a form of self-medication. He died only 16 days after this November meeting, which he does not appear to have attended.

[2] The Freemason's Apron is the official badge of membership in this organization at least since 1717. It derives from a crafter's long leather apron, but softer materials were employed as early as the 1740s. By 1760 the surface was elaborately painted or embroidered. By 1784 the size had been much reduced. General Lafayette gave one of the smaller types to George Washington in August of 1784. It was reportedly ornamented with a "pavement" of a blue and white checked design said to be representative of King Solomon's Temple floor. Washington's apron is said to be at the Masonic Grand Lodge in Philadelphia. Blue and white checks are common patterns on depictions of wampum belts, and this association may suggest that the belt given to Jenner had a checked pattern. Metal tassels did not appear on Masonic aprons prior to the 1840s. Thus any claims that an apron may have belonged to Jenner would be negated if the example had metal ornaments.

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