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Summary of Ethnological Objects in the National Museum of Natural History Associated with the Penobscot Culture

Charles W. Smythe

Priya Helweg

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SUMMARY OF ETHNOLOGICAL OBJECTS

IN THE

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

ASSOCIATED WITH THE PENOBSCOT CULTURE

Prepared by
Charles W. Smythe and Priya Helweg

Repatriation Office  MRC-138
National Museum of Natural History
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C.  20560

January 17, 1997
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 1

II. Inventory of the Penobscot Collections .................................................................................... 3

III. Accession Listings and Summaries: Penobscot Collections .................................................. 5

IV. Glossary ....................................................................................................................................... 11
SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

This report is a summary of ethnological objects held by the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, that are associated with Penobscot cultural group. There are 23 catalog items in our collection that are identified as Penobscot in origin according to Museum records.

The purpose of this summary is to provide the Penobscot governmental and traditional leadership with basic information on the number and type of ethnographic objects identified as Penobscot in the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH)'s collections. The report was prepared in accordance with the National Museum of the American Indian Act (NMAIA), as amended, and the general guidelines of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). In compiling this report, we have included all ethnological objects in our collections that are identified as Penobscot. We have not attempted to identify which, if any, of these objects may be considered as funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony under NAGPRA procedures.

This ethnographic summary will enable members of the Penobscot tribe to begin their review of the NMNH's collections and identify those objects that may be of concern to them. As a next step, the tribe should indicate to the Museum any objects its representatives feel qualify for repatriation and make a request to begin consultations or to repatriate specific objects. The Museum will then work cooperatively with the tribe to assemble detailed information about these objects and to discuss their proper disposition, in accordance with the provisions of the law. The consultation process is open-ended and may involve collaborative research to verify and cross-reference Museum records, associated information, and the items themselves; discussions about arrangements for returns; concerns for the future care of objects that may remain in the Museum; and any other pertinent issues.

The names for culture groups used by the Museum are broad classifications that in some cases encompass large geographical areas and many tribal communities. This report includes all objects that are identified as Penobscot in Museum records. The determination of the more specific cultural affiliation of these objects will require the participation of all appropriate tribal groups. The Museum will fulfill its mandated responsibilities to properly notify and consult with all tribal groups that may be potentially affiliated with the objects in these collections.

This report is divided into four sections. Following this Introduction, Section II (Inventory Listing) provides a summary list of objects identified with the Penobscot culture group; the objects are listed in alphabetical order. Section III (Accession Listing and Summaries) provides historical information on the collections with which the objects are associated. This section appears in two parts; both are organized chronologically by accession number beginning with the earliest collection. The first part of Section III is a list associating specific objects with their accession. The second part provides brief profiles of each accession based on the accession records. Section IV (Glossary) explains various terms used in this report.

Ethnographic summary reports are developed from two types of Museum records: the original accession documents and the Museum's computerized collections data base. Sometimes other records,
such as catalog ledger books and catalog cards, are consulted. The Smithsonian began acquiring archeological and ethnological items shortly after its founding in 1846, and the Museum's record-keeping systems date from the 1860s. Accession documents may include correspondence with donors and collectors, bills of landing, invoices, internal memoranda regarding acquisition, and original catalogs from donors and collectors used in museum cataloging. Hand-written ledger books were the first catalogs of objects held in the Museum. These were replaced by catalog cards, and these cards were replaced in turn by a new, type-written set in the 1930s. More recently, the Museum has changed to a computer-based catalog system (INQUIRE).

Using this information, we developed the object lists and a concise summary or historical profile of each associated accession (a collection of objects that was received by the Museum from one donor at one time). The accession summary describes the scope of the particular collection, the kinds of objects included, references to geographic locations, means and period of acquisition, background and expertise of collectors and donors, and provenience (culture of origin and collection site), where these can be easily determined. This information is provided to assist the tribe in evaluating the list of objects, and it conforms to the general guidelines identified in NAGPRA.

Please note that the cultural identifications of the objects in this report are derived from NMNH records that have not been systematically evaluated for accuracy and reliability. While in some cases the Museum's cultural identifications can be considered dependable, there are other instances in which the cultural designations are uncertain and additional research will be required to accurately identify the affiliated cultural group. While research has been conducted on numerous objects, for many others the provenience information lacks detail or its source is unknown. Also, errors have entered the Museum's database as catalog records were updated and transposed. Because there are data gaps, uncertainties, and inaccuracies in some of the Museum's records, the cultural identifications of the objects in this report should be considered preliminary and provisional pending further, object-level research. Repatriation and curatorial staff will be available to research information in Museum records and other sources, and will collaborate with tribes in this activity, for requested items.

We invite tribal members to examine objects of interest to the Penobscot tribe, as well as the associated collections records and any other archival or documentary information at the Museum, such as that in the National Anthropological Archives. We also hope that tribal members will be willing to provide more information about these objects based on their own research and knowledge. We will be available to advise and assist in this research process during consultations.
SECTION II. INVENTORY LISTING OF THE PENOBSCOT COLLECTIONS

This section of the report provides a complete list of the catalog entries associated with the Penobscot culture in the possession of the Museum. There are 23 catalog items identified as Penobscot in the National Museum of Natural History collection. As the preparation of ethnographic summaries for other cultural groups continues, it is possible that additional Penobscot material will be found. If so, it will be reported to the tribe at that time.

The following listing is an inventory of Penobscot ethnographic objects at the NMNH organized in alphabetical order by index term. Index terms are brief expressions used to identify objects by general type or category. They are a reference tool only and they may or may not accurately describe the actual object. For better and specific identification, the more descriptive object name field is also listed. Many of the object names were assigned in the past and some may be incorrect, archaic, or inappropriate by today's standards.

Accession numbers, catalog numbers, cultural identifications and the location where the object was collected are also provided if they are known. Each object acquired by the Museum is given a unique identifying number, or catalog number, at the time it is entered into the Museum's collection and by which it can be tracked in the records. Within the Department of Anthropology, the collections are separated into three divisions: human remains, archeology, and ethnology. Ethnological objects have the letter "E" as part of their catalog number (i.e., E00659). Thus, the catalog numbers for each object given below are preceded by the letter "E."

The Museum’s record-keeping system does not always provide an accurate count of objects associated with a particular catalog number. A catalog number may sometimes refer to more than one object, or a single object may have more than one record in the computer if parts of it are stored separately. For these reasons, the true number of objects may differ slightly from the number of catalog items in this inventory listing, which is derived from the computerized INQUIRE data base.
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SECTION III.  ACCESSION LISTINGS AND SUMMARIES:
PENOBSCOT COLLECTIONS

The following accession information is presented chronologically in order of accession number beginning with the earliest acquisitions by the Museum. A list of accessions is provided in the first part of this section. The list identifies the accession and Penobscot objects that were acquired in the particular accession. Following this list, historical summaries of each accession are presented. The accession summaries provide background information for the objects listed in the preceding inventory listing (Section II). The information is drawn principally from archival documents in the Museum's accession records; occasionally it is supplemented with information from ledger books and catalog cards. Where available, biographical information about donors and collectors is given. Catalog numbers within each accession are given for all the objects in the accession; catalog numbers for specific objects identified by tribe have been provided in Section II.

Each collection was assigned an accession number at the time it was acquired by the Museum. Hence, the order of the accession numbers is in the chronological order of the acquisitions by the Museum starting with the earliest collections. Sometimes objects in the collections are not associated with an original accession number because they were acquired before accession numbering began or for some other reason. These items may have been assigned an 8-digit transaction number equivalent to an accession number, containing the letter "A" (i.e., 83A00030). Objects may also have been assigned accession number 00000000 when they were not associated with a particular accession according to the available information. In this report, information for objects with these two types of accession numbers is drawn only from ledger books and/or catalog cards.
PENOBSCOT ACCESSION LISTING
(Organized chronologically by Accession Number)

ACCESSION: 00048318
ACCESSION DATE: 02/06/1908
DONOR: HEYE, GEORGE G.
COLLECTOR:

E248740  BROOCH
E248741  BROOCH

ACCESSION: 00062711
ACCESSION DATE: 08/13/1918
DONOR: BUSHNELL, DAVID I. JR.
COLLECTOR:

E303686  WAMPUM NECKLACE
E303687  WAMPUM WRISTLET

ACCESSION: 00253208
ACCESSION DATE: 03/26/1964
DONOR: WHITING, JULIA
COLLECTOR: WHITING, JULIA

E402196  BOX
E402197  CANOE MODEL
E402198  CANOE MODEL
E402199  COVERED TRINKET BASKET
E402200  SEWING BASKET COVER
E402201  SEWING BASKET & COVER
E402202  SEWING BASKET & COVER
E402203  SEWING BASKET & COVER
E402204  SEWING BASKET
E402205  BASKETRY POUCH & COVER
E402206  CARRYING BASKET
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TOTAL PENOBSCOT ETHNOLOGY CATALOG ITEMS: 23
PENOBSCOT ACCESSION SUMMARIES
(Organized chronologically by Accession Number)

Accession: 48318
Received: 1908/02/06
Donor: Heye, George G.
Collector(s):

This is a collection of ethnological objects, primarily from the Iroquois of New York and Ontario, Canada but including items from the Hupa, Delaware and Passamaquaddy. Two brooches are identified as Penobscot. The items were acquired in an exchange with the donor for items in the Museum collections. The file contains correspondence and memoranda pertaining to the exchange. A list provided by the donor provides identifications for the items, and includes the name of the Indian Reservation where, presumably, each item was collected. No specific collector is named and the source of the provenance data is not indicated.

Accession: 62711
Received: 1918/08/13
Donor: Bushnell, David I., Jr.
Collector(s):

This is a collection of a necklace and wristlet of wampum identified as Penobscot. The items were acquired from the donor in exchange for two paintings by George Catlin from the Museum collection. A letter dated January 31, 1918, recommends the exchange and describes the objects acquired to be "about 125 years old, from Oldtown, Maine." No other documentation accompanies the accession.

David I. Bushnell, Jr., (1875-1941) was assistant in archaeology at the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, from 1901-1904. He traveled and studied in Europe from 1904-1907, where he took notes on a number of American Indian collections in the Museums and also joined in several archeological explorations there. On his return he was enlisted as a contributor to the Handbook of American Indians being prepared under the editorship of Dr. F.W. Hodge, and he continued to contribute extensively in the anthropological work of the Smithsonian until his death. The material he gathered on village sites and burial customs of Indians east and west of the Mississippi River resulted in the publication of four bulletins by the Smithsonian. He was involved in making archeological investigations along the Cape Fear River, photographing aerial views of the Cahokia mounds, surveying shell and sand mounds on the Pinellas Peninsula in Florida, and conducting various archeological explorations along the James and Rappahannock valleys. He was also involved in collecting paintings and sketches of Indian subjects by early artists, particularly the De Batz sketches illustrating Indian costumes and habitations on the lower Mississippi. His numerous publications include Archaeological Investigations in Ste. Genevieve County, Missouri, 1914 (1914); The Five Monacan Towns in Virginia, 1607 (1930); and studies of the Algonquian, Siouan and Caddoan tribes west of the Mississippi. According to William
Sturtevant, Curator at the NMNH, he was a long-time unpaid "collaborator" of the Bureau of American Ethnology, living in Charlottesville, VA. His mother donated all or part of his collection to the Peabody Museum at Harvard upon his death. He died on June 4, 1941. For a profile of his life by J.R. Swanton and an extensive bibliography of his work compiled by Mr. Bushnell himself, see: American Anthropologist 44: 104-110 (1942).

Accession: 253208
Received: 1964/03/26
Donor: Whiting, Julia
Collector(s): Whiting, Julia

This is a collection of fifteen Penobscot Indian baskets and canoe models, a Zuni pottery jar and six archeological items from Egypt. A list prepared at the Museum provides identifications for the items. A memo dated 2/7/64 provides general information (presumably obtained orally from the donor) about items in the collection. The history of collection card states: "The items were acquired by Miss Whiting and her aunt directly from the people in question, in past years."

Accession: 368048
Received: 1987/02/04
Donor: Jopling, Carol
Collector(s): Jopling, Carol

This is a collection of ethnographic objects from North America, Mexico, Panama, Guatemala and West Africa. A thimble case and a needle case are identified as Penobscot. The objects were collected between 1963 and 1984 except for a painted African cloth purchased in 1967/68 in Toronto and two birch bark boxes acquired by the donor's grandparents, Mr. & Mrs. William Neil King. A list provided by the collector describes and identifies each object. The collection was cataloged by Susan Crawford.

Carol F. Jopling did field work in Yalalag, Oaxaca, in 1969, studying the art of the Zapotec people. She received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in 1973, after completing her dissertation entitled "Women Weavers of Yalalag: Their Art and its Process." She taught courses in primitive and pre-Columbian art at the Catholic University of America and American University from 1965-1967, at the New School of Social Research in 1968, and at North Adams State College in 1971. She edited an anthology of articles on primitive art, entitled Art and Aesthetics in Primitive Societies: a Critical Anthology (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1971); and later, she aided in the translation of The Art and Peoples of Black Africa by Jacqueline Delange (New York: Dutton, 1974). Ms. Jopling was also employed as a librarian for the Bureau of American Ethnology and the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama. After she retired she went to live in Spain. Her papers are in the National Anthropological Archives of the Smithsonian Institution. Other publications are: Puerto Rican Houses in Sociohistorical Perspective (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988).
This is a collection of 111 dolls: 3 Greenland Eskimo, 4 Alaskan Eskimo and 104 from various North American Indian tribes. Two dolls are identified as Penobscot. The dolls were collected between 1935 and 1973. The accession file contains extensive correspondence and documentation pertaining to the collection. All identifications are by the donor unless otherwise noted.

Dr. Betty J. Meggers, Research Associate, Department of Anthropology, is an archaeologist specializing in South American and Meso-American archeology. She donated the collection to the Museum in December, 1986.
SECTION IV. GLOSSARY

Accession: a collection of objects received by a museum from a single donor at one time. The term also refers to the procedure whereby an object or collection of objects is officially added to the holdings of the museum. Each accession is given a unique identifying number known as an 'accession number.' An accession might contain one or many items and all objects received together in one collection will receive the same accession number regardless of origin.

Accession Date: the date that the Museum officially acquired the collection and entered it into its records (this is not the same as the date the object was collected).

Accession Records: a body of documents that records a collection’s acquisition by the Museum, comprising both the correspondence and inventory supplied by the collector/donor and the formal records created by the Museum to register receipt of the contribution.

Catalog: the Museum's system of records relating to individual objects, including a unique catalog number, an object name, an identification of cultural origin, and often a brief description of the object. Catalog information may have been provided by the donor or may have been assigned by Museum personnel. The reliability of catalog information varies widely. At the Smithsonian, these records comprise the ledger books, catalog cards and the INQUIRE database.

Catalog Card: The cards in the catalog file of the Anthropology Department of the National Museum of Natural History on which are recorded information pertinent to the description, collection history and provenience of each item cataloged in the Museum's collections. Each card in the file contains information on object(s) associated with a specific catalog number.

Catalog Number: a unique identification number assigned to each object or set of items by Museum staff. Usually the catalog number refers to a single object, but sometimes more than one object may be included under a single catalog number.

Collector: the person who originally acquired an object or a collection that was eventually deposited in the Museum.

Cultural Affiliation: as defined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 U.S.C. Section 3001), refers to a relationship of shared group identity which can be traced historically or prehistorically between a present day Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization and an identifiable earlier group.

Cultural Identification: the cultural or tribal group designated as the culture of origin in the NMNH’s collection records. This classification may be based on accession records or attributed later by Museum personnel.
Cultural Patrimony (Objects of): as defined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 U.S.C. Section 3001), this refers to objects having ongoing historical, traditional, or cultural importance central to the Native American Tribe and which must have been considered inalienable by the affiliated Native American group at the time the object as separated from the group.

Documented Objects: ethnographic objects for which there is reliable information about cultural identification.

Donor: a person or institution that contributed items to the Museum, regardless of whether the transfer was in the form of a gift, purchase, bequest or exchange.

Indian Tribe: as defined in the proposed regulations for the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 U.S.C. Section 3001), refers to any tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community of Native Americans including any Alaska Native village (as defined in, or established pursuant to, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act), which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Native Americans because of their status as "Indians." The Guidelines for Repatriation of the National Museum of Natural History also include state-recognized tribes in this definition.

INQUIRE: the computer data base listing all materials held in the collections of the Department of Anthropology of the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution.

Ledger Books: logs formerly maintained by the Anthropology Department of the National Museum of Natural History, in which are recorded the catalog number, description, provenience and other information regarding each item cataloged in the Museum's collections. The ledger books were discontinued in the 1930's and replaced by the catalog card files.

Museum: in this report means the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History.

Provenience: the place or culture of origin or the collection site of a specific object.

Repatriation: the return of Native American human remains or cultural items to culturally affiliated Native American Indian tribe(s) or Native Hawaiian organization(s).

Sacred Objects: as defined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 U.S.C. Section 3001), refers to specific ceremonial objects which are needed by traditional Native American religious leaders for the practice of traditional Native American religions by their present day adherents.

Summary, Ethnographic Report: Compilation of information about all objects in the Museum's ethnology collections that may be associated with specific cultural groups. The report does not attempt to identify which cultural items may be classified as unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects and objects of cultural patrimony. As defined in the proposed regulations for the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 U.S.C. Section 3001), the report provides readily available information about the number and type of objects in the collections, the cultural
identifications and provenience of the objects, and the circumstances of their acquisition by the Museum.

*Unassociated Funerary Objects*: as defined in the proposed regulations for the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 U.S.C. Section 3001), refers to objects that were placed with individual human remains as a part of a death rite or ceremony and which can be identified as 1) related to specific individuals or families or to known human remains, or 2) as having been removed from a specific burial site of an individual culturally affiliated with a particular tribe.