

The Mocotaugan in Modern Times

BY THE MIDDLE OF THE 1500s, THE NORTH AMERICAN FUR TRADE WAS WELL UNDER WAY.

Around 1850, the United States Western Frontier was just beginning to open; but the Woodlands fur trade was essentially over. However, the Woodlands Natives were in the midst of experiencing an even greater shock of acculturation than they had experienced with the coming of the Iron Age. Even prior to the 1800s, as Daniel Richter notes in *Facing East from Indian Country*, “Apart from food and shelter, virtually every aspect of Indian material life depended on economic ties with Europe.” Especially in the Eastern Woodlands, the Natives had been dispossessed of their land and forced to accept a new people’s authority, customs and laws. By 1850, the Native population, especially in the Eastern Woodlands, had decreased significantly, and the quality of their pre-contact way of life had vastly diminished. In place of the first hundreds of explorers, trappers and traders came wave after wave of settlers. By 1850, in what had been New France to the North and English colonies to the south, the estimated Native population was down to perhaps only tens of thousands, while the non-Natives numbered about twenty-six million and were well settled as far west as Minnesota.

It was more than sheer numbers of settlers that so profoundly affected the Woodlands People at this time. The latest Europeans brought with them one of the greatest engines for change that the world has ever known — the Industrial Age. Machinery replaced muscle; mass production replaced craftsmanship. For power, there came dams, waterwheels, windmills; coal, and soon, oil. For transportation, there came roads, bridges, canals, and horse-drawn wagons. By the decade of the 1850s steam engines were being used to fell the virgin forest for lumber, and railroads were pushing ever westward in both Canada and the United

States. As early as 1859, paddlewheel steamships began navigating rivers deep into the Canadian Woodlands.

As part of this collapse of the First People's ancient culture, the mocotaugan was no longer the man of the Woodlands' essential tool for survival. Many of the "one thousand and one indispensable objects" he had once made with his mocotaugan — ax handles, bowls, snowshoes, and so much more, even dolls — were now available to him, ready-made and cheap, at the ubiquitous general store.

Still, the ancient single-handed drawknife trait strongly persisted. Despite the great variety of ready-made specialized cutting tools — such as jackknives, spoke shaves, chisels and gouges in great variety and available almost everywhere in the vast Woodlands — native men did not abandon their mocotaugan. As late as 1912, Frank Speck reported in his close study of one Eastern Woodlands tribe that had been influenced especially early, aggressively and continuously by the material culture of Europe, "The crooked knife is of prime importance. Two to half a dozen are owned by every Penobscot man."

*Frank Speck, 1912:
"Two to half a dozen
[crooked knives] are
owned by every
Penobscot man."*

Assuring the Memory of the Mocotaugan

The first explorers into the Woodlands collected some artifacts of the Native North Americans, and the earliest trappers, traders, missionaries and adventurers collected some, too. Mostly, these men traded some European object for an artifact they viewed as decorative, novel, or exotic; sometimes these men received the artifacts as gifts. When these men returned to their home countries, they often displayed the artifacts simply as souvenirs in specially built curio cabinets. One of the first serious collectors was Thomas Jefferson. He displayed in his home at Monticello many natural and man-made objects that he had instructed Lewis and Clark to gather on their historic journey to the Pacific Ocean in 1804-1806.

Then, about 1850, there began an extraordinary accumulation of Native artifacts, and their preservation. Collectors by the many hundreds, if not more, swarmed into Native territories to buy up artifacts of all kinds. Thus started the wholesale collection of indigenous

material objects in every accessible area of North America. The first territory to feel the brunt was the Eastern Woodlands, because it was closest to the most concentrated numbers of buyers and sellers living in the new big cities.

The great accumulation continued for decades, reaching a peak in the late eighteenthundreds and ending about 1911, when one collector's field agent wrote, "good relics are scarce is put[t]ing it mildly." As *Collecting Native America*, edited by Barbara Hail and Shepherd Krech III, points out, collecting by the biggest and most notable collectors served

"Their passion for collecting artifacts was intense.

One writer described their collecting method as 'the vacuum cleaner approach.'"

mixed purposes — "scientific, historical, educational, entertaining, monumental or commemorative." One of the grander purposes, for example, was that of Canada's David Ross McCord. Moira McCaffrey, in the *Collecting* book, wrote that McCord's goal "was to build a collection that would stand unrivalled on the continent as a testimony to the skill and industry of the original Masters of the

Forest and the Prairie." Somewhat similarly, as Hail reports in the same book, Clara Endicott Sears sought to express the beauty and spirituality of Indian culture, primarily for the education of the public. The Reverend Sheldon Jackson, however, collected and sold artifacts to fund his mission of converting and aiding Indians, and building churches for them. Ernest Thompson Seton collected artifacts to encourage Boy Scouts' interest in outdoor life. George Gustave Heye, when working as a young man in Arizona, *Collecting* contributor Sarah Lee Caldwell reports, one day bought a used deerskin shirt, and at once, he says, "I wanted a rattle and moccasins. And then the collecting bug seized me and I was lost." George Heye ended up collecting an estimated one million or more objects.

Most of the major collectors were wealthy and cultivated. They were self-taught anthropologists, usually hiring some of the best professionals to gain knowledge and field agents to further add to their collections, but often visiting Native territories themselves to both learn and buy more. Their passion for collecting artifacts was intense. One writer described their collecting method as "the vacuum cleaner approach." For example, one observer said that Heye, when he visited reservations, would "be fretful and hard to live

An Egregious Error?

Lewis Henry Morgan was one of the first collectors to apply some of the new European science of ethnography to record the native culture of the North American aborigine. Born in 1818 and living in upstate New York's Woodlands, he was a lawyer who became acknowledged as "The Father of American Anthropology." He studied Native culture closely and was a strong advocate of Native rights. The Senecas adopted him and called him *Tayadaowuhkuh* or "one lying across," for his dedication to bridging the gap between the Indians and the white man.

One of his major contributions was in the area of material culture. About 1850, with a funding of \$375 from the State of New York, he meticulously assembled and annotated more than five hundred objects that reflected practically every aspect of the daily life of the Iroquois. He carefully sorted the objects into categories. Under the category "Tools" he listed sub-categories: tools for cooking, tools for hunting, tools for play, tools for shelter, tools for war, tools for work, etc.

But *nowhere* among these many dozens of tools did he list the single most important tool of all, the tool that was used to make many, probably most, of the other tools — the mocotaugan.

Some people might conclude that if Morgan didn't mention it, the Iroquois didn't use it. Yet there seems to be substantial evidence that the Iroquois *did* use mocotaugans. The location of the tribes in what is now upper New York State along the Great Lakes gave them ready access to the metal-bladed knife for almost two hundred years before 1850. Morgan himself wrote of "the minute delicacy and beauty of [Iroquois] carvings," and such carvings were almost certainly achieved only with the mocotaugan. In William Fenton's well-regarded book *The False Faces of the Iroquois*, an old early 20th century photograph shows, as the caption states, "Tom Harris, Seneca of Onondaga Longhouse Six Nations ... smoothing the inside [of a mask] with a crooked knife."

The authors here believe, but are willing to stand corrected, that Morgan did, in fact, make an egregious error.



with until he'd bought every last dirty dishcloth and discarded shirt.”

Large-scale collectors at first kept their acquisitions in their palatial homes, or in some other restricted buildings, for private viewing only. Eventually, however, most of the great collections were donated or sold to one or another of the new public museums of natural history that were springing up in profusion throughout North America from about 1840 to 1890. At the federal government level were the United States' Smithsonian Institution, founded in 1847, and Canada's predecessor of today's Canadian Museum of Civilization, organized about 1870. Then came other public museums, funded by states and provinces, universities, and communities ranging from major metropolises to small towns. Those five decades were indeed “The Museum Age,” and all in all, an invaluable material record of Native American culture has been preserved for posterity.

But, within the vast corpus of these many museum collections, to what degree is the mocotaugan represented?

A recent survey by this book's authors of museums with important holdings of Native American artifacts indicates that the mocotaugan is hardly conspicuous by its presence. For example, the American Museum of Natural History, with its many thousands of North American Indian artifacts, lists only twenty-nine such knives. The Peabody Museum at Harvard has only six. The National Museum of Man in Canada, among its many tens of thousands of Indian artifacts, lists fifty-four such knives. The Smithsonian, with its many hundreds of thousands of indigenous North American artifacts, lists one hundred ninety-eight, but visual inspection shows fewer than that can be correctly classified as mocotaugans. Furthermore, of the true mocotaugans, very few — hardly half a dozen — could be considered to have any merit at all as art. (At the time of the survey, records of the massive Heye collection, now part of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, was in transit from New York City to its new site outside Washington, and its records were unavailable.)

Rightly or wrongly, for better or worse, it is the private collectors of today who are the principal preservationists of the mocotaugan as an art form. The authors are aware of three

large private collections that comprise a corpus of some of the best known embellished mocotaugans. And even there, the numbers of knives in their collections range from perhaps as few as twenty to no more than one hundred. Surely other great examples remain in private hands, and new examples will continue to surface, but the pursuit of assembling collections still remains small and clearly in the private domain.

“Rightly or wrongly, for better or worse, it is the private collectors of today who are the principal preservationists of the mocotaugan as an art form.”

However, although mocotaugans of all kinds are proportionately poorly represented in public museums, and the embellished knives in the hands of private collectors are relatively few in number, the knife — as artifact and as art — still has enough presence to give us confidence that the memory of both forms will never disappear.

The Knife’s Presence in the New Millennium

Today, in the early years of the 21st century, it is likely that at least a few thousand Natives, non-Natives and Métis are still using the mocotaugan in their daily lives. This is likely most true in the northern reaches of the Woodlands, where Natives still depend on hunting and trapping for their livelihood. While most mocotaugans are likely general-purpose, the use of the knife perhaps persists most *prominently* in the making of two artifacts that carry particularly significant historic and aesthetic content — the wood splint basket and the birch bark canoe.

Eastern Woodlands Natives made their first splint baskets about two hundred and fifty years ago. Adapting the fabrication introduced by European settlers, and using their steel-bladed mocotaugans, Natives initially made strictly utilitarian baskets specifically for sale to the settlers. Only within the past few generations did the Natives begin to make baskets for the sake of art and posterity. Today, the demand is far more for the delicately detailed narrow splint and sweet grass baskets than for the workaday baskets made simply and quickly with wide splints. Richard Silliboy, a Maine Micmac elder, estimates that within the state’s four tribes today there are now about one hundred and ten artists, of whom ninety or so are



Abaznoda Basket.
Late twentieth century 6 3/4" h x 4" dia.
Passamaquoddy. Dyed ash splints and
sweet grass. Artist unknown. Originally
collected in 1987, Trading Post,
Perry, Maine.

making baskets. This basket making is part of a broad, organized tribal economic development effort throughout the Eastern Woodlands. For example, the tribes of Maine have joined to form the Indian Basketmakers Alliance. The purpose of the Alliance is “to help elders introduce the younger generation to the ancient art of basket making, and to find markets for their work.” The Alliance is supported by the state’s Arts Commission, Humanities Council, Office of Tourism and Rural Development Council, and by the federal Department of Agriculture’s Forestry Program and National Endowment for the Arts. Similar government-supported economic development through basket-making art is taking place within many Native communities, from the Maritimes on the east into Quebec and Iroquois country to the north and west.

Throughout the world today, the birch bark canoe stands as one of the most compelling icons of Native North American culture. And of the dozen or more distinctive tribal styles of Woodlands birch bark canoes, the Wabanaki is widely acknowledged to be the finest, in both its handling and its aesthetic. There is a special and strong symbiosis between this iconic canoe and the modest mocotaugan. The knife was, and still is, essential to the making of a proper canoe. Both knife and canoe have their origins in the same period of the Stone Age and the same area of Eastern Siberia. Both were a unique product of a temperate zone environment containing thick forests and numerous waterways; and both were absolutely essential for survival in that environment. Both were involved in the Woodlands’ first industry — the wholesale manufacture of fleets of freighter canoes for the fur trade. Both can be exceptional examples of how a fundamentally utilitarian object can be changed into a remarkable work of art.

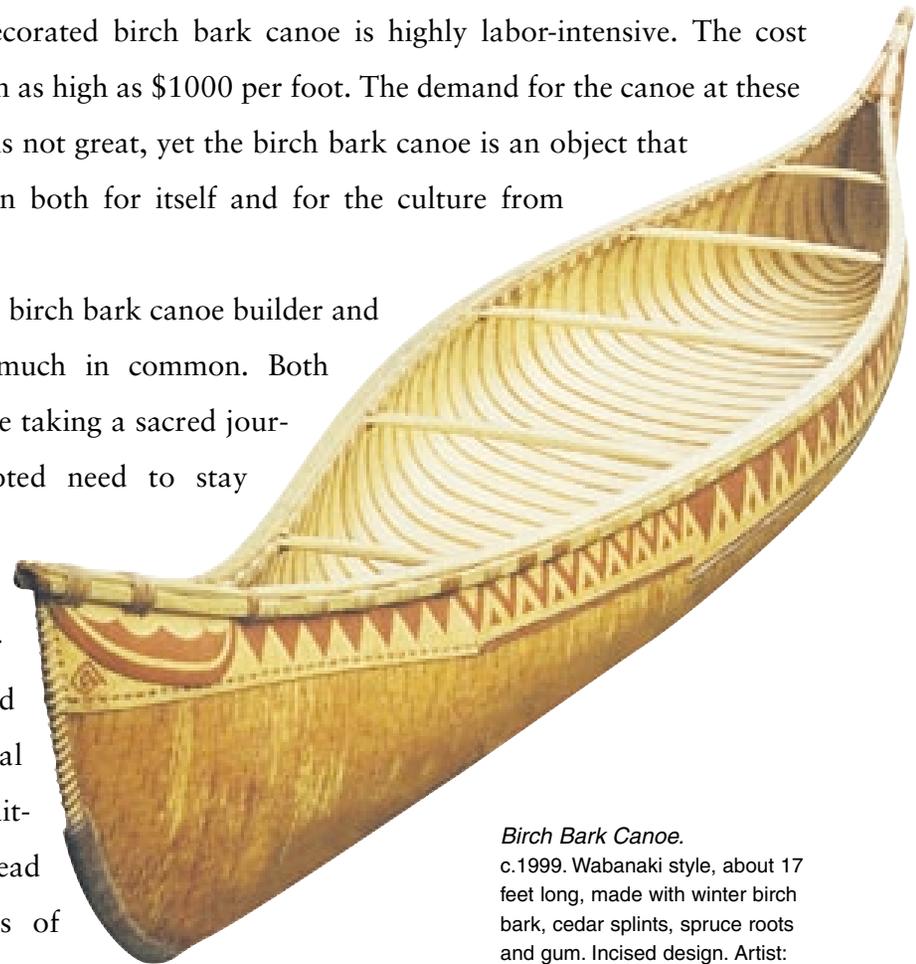
Aaron York, an Abanaki full-time canoe builder, estimates that there are perhaps only twenty to thirty other such builders today throughout Canada and the United States. He

*“There is a special
and strong symbiosis
between the iconic
canoe and the modest
mocotaugan.”*

estimates that the average output is about three or four canoes a year, that there are only three or four full-time builders, of whom only a few are Natives, and that among the whole group only three or so can build birch bark canoes of museum quality.

Making an authentic birch bark canoe today is enormously time-consuming, and thus expensive. A builder needs to spend a week or more in the forest searching for one birch tree big, straight and healthy enough to yield a bark sheet of the size and quality needed to build one first-class canoe. In addition, even using some power and other modern tools along with the traditional ax, mocotaugan and awl, the building of an authentic and beautifully decorated birch bark canoe is highly labor-intensive. The cost today of such a canoe can run as high as \$1000 per foot. The demand for the canoe at these prices, as one might expect, is not great, yet the birch bark canoe is an object that elicits widespread admiration both for itself and for the culture from which it came.

The modern Woodlands birch bark canoe builder and splint basket maker have much in common. Both builder and maker seem to be taking a sacred journey, expressing a deep-rooted need to stay connected to the land and to help perpetuate their unique cultural identity. Both builder and maker have a profound intimacy with the natural world, an “environmental literacy” with which they can read and understand the secrets of earths and waters, and a profound



Birch Bark Canoe.
c.1999. Wabanaki style, about 17 feet long, made with winter birch bark, cedar splints, spruce roots and gum. Incised design. Artist: Steve Cayard, Wellington, Maine.

adherence to the traditional Native principle of “Seven Generations” — adhering to the past through parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, and contributing to the future through children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The Mocotaugan as a Tool Today

Different people looking at the state of the mocotaugan today are most likely to reach one of two decidedly opposite conclusions about its future. One conclusion is that this knife will become even less used, and less known than it is today. The other conclusion is that this knife will grow in importance as a distinctive antiquity that can tell us much about an important Native American culture.

On the darker side, it may be that the interest of the general public in the mocotaugan at the beginning of the 21st century is marginal. Museum exhibits of Native American artifacts include very few of the knives, even none at all. A small number of books on American Indian history and art may sometimes mention the knife in passing, even citing it as “important,” but giving no reason why. A magazine put out by the Fur Trade Museum has published one or two articles about the knife in the last thirty-five or forty years, but better-known popular magazines show no interest in writing about it. There are a few Internet web sites on the subject, but the audience there seems to number no more than a few hundred people with a nostalgic interest in the object. In contrast, there are tens of thousands of enthusiasts collecting the “Art Knife” and being served by numerous clubs, web sites and magazines. One active “Art Knife” category is “Vintage knives that are historic examples of the cultures from around the world.” But the historic embellished mocotaugan, though an obvious example of a vintage and artful knife, is nowhere even mentioned.

Indian art magazines tend to pass over the mocotaugan in favor of more spectacular (though culturally less important) works of Native art. Professional journals, too, pay little attention to the knife. According to a literature search at Harvard’s Tozzer Library of Anthropology, the only scholarly articles providing an historic overview of the mocotaugan were those written by Otis Tufts Mason, in “The Man’s Knife Among the North

American Indians” in *United States National Museum Annual Report for 1897*, and by Clark Wissler, in “The Story of the Crooked Knife” in AMNH’s 1923 edition of *Natural History* magazine. The only other scholarly work since those two classics were written was one that discussed the metallurgy of early blades, published in the *Journal Canadien d’Archaeologie* in 1986.

On the far more positive side, the Native American culture is experiencing a remarkable renaissance. The population of Native Americans in both the United States and Canada is much larger than it has been for a century or more. That population is becoming more assertive, more confident. One of their most important priorities is to reinvigorate their ancient traditions, and one way they are seeking to achieve that priority is to restore the values and skills of traditional craftsmanship.

“The Native American culture is experiencing a remarkable renaissance.”

At the same time that the First People are taking charge of their lives, the governments of both Canada and the United States are greatly expanding their efforts to assure the success of this renaissance. Just one symbol of that government support is the creation of the Smithsonian’s massive new National Museum of the American Indian. Both governments — and states and provinces as well — are providing direct, proactive support for the furtherance of Native arts and crafts.

With Native crafts activity of this scope, and despite the continuous change in tool technology, it is likely that the mocotaugan as a working tool will for the foreseeable future play at least some small role in contributing to the survival of the indigenous Woodlands culture.

Embellished Mocotaugans of Modern Times

These three knives carved in the mid-20th or early 21st century show all the characteristics of the typical high quality embellished mocotaugans of earlier times.

Of the two known carvers, one is a Native; the other a non-Native. Both these men live close to the land: the Native moved from Vermont to the denser Woodlands north of Quebec; the non-Native lives in an eco-village of his own making in Nova Scotia. Both carve their knife handles fully in the traditional form and spirit of Woodlands small-scale sculpture. At the same time, both readily take advantage of new technology: The non-Native uses an electric motor to shape the blade and a propane torch to temper it; the Native uses an electric wood burner to enhance his images.

There are other men (and perhaps some women) who today keep alive the traditions of embellishing the distinctive Woodlands knife in a distinctive fashion. May their numbers increase.



Aaron York, an Abanaki, carves in the finest traditions of Native Woodlands culture. Interpreting his tribe's sacred symbol of the sturgeon, which represents strength and renewal, he has captured the powerful spirit of his people's manitou. His hand-forged blade, brass ferrule and small brass beadwork show a superb craftsman's attention to materials, details, and finishing. This is an exceptional example of a mocotaugan, comparable to the early great ones.

Mocotaugan by Aaron York, 2003
Maple, brass wire and ferrule, hand forged steel
1/2" blade, overall 10 3/4" long
In the form of a fully carved Eastern Sturgeon,
wood-burnt decoration
Canada, 2003. Private Collection



David Cameron sought a vision for this knife and came to see a horse for his creation. The horse has long symbolized power and freedom of movement to the Indian people. The carving's upright composition, bulbous form and smooth surface emphasize the horse's basic character. Cameron's selection of materials, and the repeatedly tempered blade, have created a durable tool, and his creativity has imparted it with meaning. By all measures, a fine mocotaugan.

Mocotaugan by David Cameron, 2003
Maple, brass wire, glass beads,
hand-forged steel blade, 9/16" wide,
overall 9" long. In the form of a fully
carved horse's head and upper torso
Canada, 2003. Private Collection



Artist unknown. From early in the Woodlands Iron Age to the present, the hand has been a favorite subject matter for the mocotaugan carver. What makes this knife exceptional is its use of various materials, namely pewter, bone, and Bakelite, to create a classic yet updated form.

The knife is perfectly balanced and has a blade exceptionally well forged and tempered. This knife is a user's dream and a viewer's pleasure.

Mocotaugan—Mid-20th century
Artist unknown
Rosewood, pewter, bone, Bakelite(?),
hand-forged stainless steel 5/8" wide
blade, overall, 8 3/4".
In the form of a fully carved,
partially closed hand
Lunenburg, Nova Scotia
Private Collection

A F T E R W O R D

by Ned Jalbert

I love the art of the mocotaugan. But I do not fool myself into elevating it to the status of great culture. It is not Michelangelo's "David."

The knife with its rich history and embellished handle is, at the end of the day, only a decorated everyday tool. It is finally a small-scale example of woodcarving in the traditions of Native and European folk art.

The mocotaugan is still "almost unknown," but it *is* important.

It is with little question "one of the most distinctive antiquities of 'the Man of the North.'" It stands as a perfect example of how the physical environment affects a people's lifeways. It stands as one of the clearest symbols of the dramatic process of Old World - New World cultural interchange, both of technology and of art.

Preparing the book has been a journey of discovery. I have gained new knowledge about the knife and have been able to integrate it with all the bits and pieces of my previous level of understanding. I felt compelled to flesh out and articulate some half-formed thoughts I had about the appreciation of the aesthetics of the embellished knife.

I have also gained a memorable experience in bookmaking. I had no idea that publishing a book of this kind required so much time and commitment, so much dependence on the work and talents of others. I also learned that new information, emerging theories and unanswerable questions will always leave the writer feeling that a book can never be complete.

This is a manuscript written as best we could. As far as we know, this essay is the first of its kind in reviewing in some depth both the art and the context of the mocotaugan. Yet I know the essay is only another stage in a long continuum. We are thankful to writers, such as Mason, Wissler, Speck, and Hanson who addressed our subject in some depth before us; and we are hopeful that we in turn have contributed to a better book by writers who will come after.

We trust that the essay makes some contribution beyond organizing historic facts and illustrating the art form of the mocotaugan. In our view, for example, there is merit in presenting the pictorial evidence of the evolution of the mocotaugan from the Stone Age to the 20th century, and merit in the method for classifying the various forms of embellishment. There is merit, too, we believe, in presenting the proposal to use the one word, mocotaugan, to describe the Woodlands Native's indigenous drawknife. We don't believe it will ever happen on a wide scale, custom being what it is, but perhaps there will be some kind of discussion among collectors and curators that will lead to their use of a common name for this uncommon artifact.

In all, the making of this book has been at times overwhelming but always exhilarating. Now I am relieved that the book is finished. It is time to move on; to begin reflecting on how we could have done better.

... And on a More Personal Note:

One of the more important outcomes of this book is the experience of having worked side by side with my father. I have loved the precious time we spent together; the remarkable connection we shared. I have gained a profound new respect for his intelligence, insight and sensitivity; his skills in research and writing.

Few sons have been favored with a dad like mine.

LIST OF PORTFOLIO PLATES WITH ANNOTATIONS

1. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1820 — 1850
Maple, leather, 5/16" wide steel blade, shellac, glass, red, blue, and black trade cloth, 9 5/8" overall length
Fully carved beaver and "house" (possibly to represent a trading post)
Western Great Lakes Area(?)
Private collection
2. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1850 — 1870
Maple, sinew, reworked 3/8" wide iron blade, shellac, paint, 7 1/4" overall length
Fully carved reptile (alligator?)
Possibly Southeastern United States
Private collection
3. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1850 — 1870
Maple, copper wire, and lead ferrule, reworked 7/16" wide steel blade, paint, 10 1/2" overall length
Abstract fully carved owl
Eastern Woodlands Tribe(?)
Private Collection
4. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1830 — 1850
Maple, brass wire, reworked 5/8" wide steel trade blade, 9 3/4" overall length
Fully carved dog
Micmac/Maliseet
Collected in Ontario, Canada
Private Collection
5. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1840 — 1860
Pine, leather wrapping, reworked curved 1/2" wide steel blade, brass tacks, 7 3/4" overall length
Fully carved beaver, with chip-carved decoration
Eastern Great Lakes Tribe(?)
Collected in New York, NY
Private Collection
6. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1850
Close up of scroll on rear of handle
Maple, lead ferrule, reworked curved 1/2" wide iron blade, paper inserts, glass, 10 1/4" overall length
Chip-carved decoration
Penobscot
Collected in Nova Scotia
Private Collection
7. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1840
Cherry burl wood, leather, 3/8" wide iron blade, 7 3/4" overall length
Fully dimensional chip carving
Maritimes
Collected in Upstate New York
Private Collection
8. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1820 — 1840
Maple, hemp string, pewter ferrule, reworked 3/8" wide steel blade, 7 1/2" overall length
Profusely decorated chip carving with European symbolism
Menominee
Collected in New York
Private collection
9. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1860 — 1875
Mahogany? hemp string, reworked steel 1/2" wide blade, 9 1/2" overall length
Suits from cards, Mocotaugan and name "Malloy" carved in bas-relief
Penobscot/Passamaquoddy
Collected in Connecticut
Private Collection
10. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1830 — 1845
Maple, brass wire, imported curved-tip Mocotaugan 7/16" wide blade, "Wostenholm & Son," "IXC" "...on works" 9 1/4" overall length
Stacked hearts, top carved with card suits in bas-relief, chip carving, cross hatch decoration

- Collected in Ontario, Canada
Private Collection
11. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1850 — 1870
Maple, brass wire, reworked 1/2" wide curved file blade, 10 1/2" overall length
Stacked heart design with plain smooth handle
Penobscot
Collected in Old Town, Maine
Private collection
Exhibited: Worcester Art Museum "Native Heritage" 1999; Worcester, MA
Private Collection
12. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1830 — 1850
Maple, polychrome paint, steel wire, lead ferrule, iron nails, reworked 3/8" wide steel blade, 8 1/4" overall length
Polychrome incised carved heart design, with scored decoration
Eastern Woodlands Tribe
Collected in Santa Fe, NM
Private collection
13. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1860 — 1870
Tiger maple, paper (advertising ephemera), glass, copper wire, 5/16" wide steel blade, 9" overall length
Non-Native
Collected in Maine
Private Collection
14. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1867
Maple, steel wire, reworked 3/8" wide steel blade, 9 5/8" overall length
Dated "1867" with "shamrock" decoration, Initial "AJ," carved fish on rear
Non-Native
Collected in Halifax, Nova Scotia
Private Collection
15. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1840 — 1850
Maple, linen string, 3/8" wide steel trade blade, 11" overall length
Carved initials "GKC" (?) with carved "vine in vase" motif and logger's tools
Micmac/Maliseet? Non-Native?
Collected in Nova Scotia
Private Collection
16. Mocotaugan
Close up of rear of handle (Plate #15)
Showing detail of logger's tools, vine in vase, and heart decoration
17. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1840 — 1850
Maple, photographic tin type, paint, copper wire, reworked 9/16" wide steel trade blade, 12" overall length
Non-Native
Collected in Maine
Private Collection
18. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1840 — 1860
Maple, steel strapping wire, reworked 3/4" wide steel blade, shellac on surface, 11 5/8" overall length
Fully formed woman with stacked heart design on reverse side
Algonquin — possibly Delaware/Leni-Lenape
Collected in Mid-Atlantic States
Private Collection
19. Mocotaugan
Close up of rear of handle (Plate #18)
Showing face and torso of woman with chip-carved edge detail
20. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1850 — 1870
Maple burl, steel wire, reworked 1/2" wide steel file blade, 9 1/2" overall length
Fully carved hand holding a heart, fully carved "ball in box"
Penobscot
Collected in Maine
Private collection
21. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1850 — 1870
Maple, polychrome paint, copper ferrule, reworked 1/2" wide steel shaving blade, steel nails, 9" overall length
Fully carved sailor(?), steamship or train conductor(?)
Micmac/Maliseet
Collected in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia
Private collection
22. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1820 — 1840
Maple, paint, iron wire, reworked 1/2" wide

- steel file blade with curved tip, 8 3/4"
overall length
Fully carved man with arms and hands in relief
Iroquois (?)
Collected in Washington, DC
Private collection
23. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1870 — 1880
Oak, leather wrapping, reworked 1/2" wide
steel file blade, remains of green paint. Bears
museum markings, "A7482"
Fully carved extended hand
Penobscot
Collected in Santa Fe, NM
Private collection
24. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1860 — 1870
Maple, polychrome stain, paint, mirror, lead,
converted 1/2" wide steel trade blade, 11 3/4"
overall length
Profusely colored, chip-carved and engraved
with mirror insert and lead inlays
Penobscot/Passamaquoddy (Non-Native?)
Collected in Pennsylvania
Private Collection
25. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1880
Walnut burl, pewter ferrule and inlays, reworked
imported 3/8" wide steel Mocotaugan blade,
8 3/4" overall length
Abstract sculptural representation of a bird
with engraved star and crosshatch pattern
Eastern Sioux or Great Lakes?
Private Collection
26. Mocotaugan
Close up of front of handle showing German
silver decoration
Circa: 1840 — 1850
Bird's eye maple, rocker engraved German silver,
steel wire, iron nails, reworked 1/2" wide iron
blade, 8 1/2" overall length
Iroquois?
Collected in Santa Fe, NM
Private Collection
27. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1860 — 1870
Close up of rear of handle (Plate #28)
Showing fully formed rum barrel with chip-
carved decoration
28. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1860 — 1870
Maple, polychrome paint, copper wire,
reworked 1/2" wide steel blade, 8 1/4"
overall length
Fully carved rum barrel, engraved steam sailing
vessel with bear in canoe in bas-relief, chip-
carved decoration
Micmac /Maliseet
Collected in Chicago, Illinois
Private Collection
29. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1860 — 1870
Close-up of front of handle (Plate #28)
Showing engraving of fully rigged steam sailboat
30. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1920 — 1940
Ash, steel wire, reworked 3/8" wide steel
blade, 9 1/2" overall length
Engraved with cod, stars, moose, "shamrock"
hearts and initialed "TI"
Penobscot
Collected in Old Town, Maine
Private Collection
31. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1830 — 1845
Maple, pewter ferrule and inlays, converted
3/8" wide steel knife blade, 10 1/8"
overall length
Etched with pine tree design and carved
stacked devices, initials "GWB"
Micmac
Collected in Cumberland County,
Nova Scotia, Canada
Exhibited: Worcester Art Museum "Native
Heritage" 1999, Worcester, MA
Exhibited: "Spirit of Nova Scotia, Traditional
Decorative Folk Art 1780-1930";
Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1985
Published *Spirit of Nova Scotia, Traditional
Decorative Folk Art 1780-1930*; 1985
Private Collection
32. Mocotaugan
Circa: 1860 — 1875
Maple, steel wire, shellac, steel nails, reworked
5/16" wide steel blade, 9 1/4" overall length
Etched design of a bird in branches with flying
insect; chip-carved decoration
Micmac
Collected in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia
Private Collection

33. Mocotaugans

Left:

Maple, brass wire, steel nails, converted curved
3/8" wide steel knife blade, 11 3/4"
overall length
Carved and steamed from one piece of wood
in a continuous spiral
Micmac
Collected in Massachusetts
Private Collection

Right:

Circa: 1880
Maple (?) burl, steel wire, reworked 1/2" wide
steel/iron strap blade, 10" overall length
Thick, concentrically carved spirals
Tribe unknown
Collected in New York, NY
Private Collection

34. Mocotaugan

Circa: 1870 — 1880

Maple, stain, copper wire, converted 7/16"
wide steel file blade, 10 1/2" overall length
"Fiddle handle" style with chip carving with
hearts in punctuated design
Penobscot?
Collected in New York
Private Collection

35. Mocotaugan

Circa: 1870 — 1880

Maple, brass wire, converted 1/2" wide steel
knife blade, 9 1/2" overall length
Split "Y" or branching design
Tribe unknown
Collected in Massachusetts
Private Collection

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ackland, D., and Son. Catalog No. 15, Winnipeg, Canada, n.d.
- Ackland, D., and Son. Catalog No. 23, Winnipeg, 1923.
- Adney, Edwin T., and Howard Chapelle. *The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America*. Smithsonian Institution: U.S. National Museum Bulletin 230, 1964.
- Adovisio, J.M., and Jake Page. *The First Americans: In pursuit of archaeology's greatest mystery*. Random House: New York, 2002.
- Baldwin, John, *Early Knives and Beaded Sheaths of the American Frontier: Early American artistry*. Trading Company Publishers: West Olive, Michigan, 1997.
- Bell, Theresa. *Gifts of the Forest: Native traditions in wood and bark*. Catalog of an exhibit, Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center: Mashantucket, CT, 2000.
- Bender, Cora, et al. *The Cultures of Native North Americans*. Könemann: Cologne, Germany, 2000.
- Berlo, Janet, ed. *The Early Years of Native American Art*. University of Washington Press: Seattle, 1992.
- Berlo, Janet, and Ruth B. Phillips. *Native North American Art*. Oxford Press: New York, 1998.
- Bjorklund, Karna L. *The Indians of Northeastern America*. Dodd, Mead & Company: New York, 1969.
- Brandson, Lorraine. *From Tundra to Forest: A Chippewyan Resource Manual*. Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature: Winnipeg, 1981.
- Brasser, Ted J., "Bo'jou, Neejee!" The National Museum of Man: Ottawa, Canada, 1976.
- Brose, David S., et al. *Ancient Art of the American Woodland Indians*. H.N. Abrams: New York, in association with the Detroit Institute of Art, 1985.
- Burgesse, J.A. "Snow Shoes," *The Beaver*. Outfit 271: March 1941.
- Cawthorne, Nigel. *The Art of Native North America*. Advanced Marketing Services: New York, 1997.
- Coe, Ralph T. *Sacred Circles*. Nelson Gallery of Art - Atkins Museum of Fine Arts: Kansas City, Missouri, 1977.
- Driscoll, B. *The Spirit Sings; Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples*. Glenbow Museum and McClelland and Stewart Publisher: Toronto, 1988.
- Eckstrom, Fannie Hardy. *The Handicrafts of the Modern Indians of Maine: Bulletin III of the Abbe Museum*. Second printing. Jordan-Frost Printing Company: Bangor, ME, 1979.
- Ewing, Douglas C. *Pleasing the Spirits*. Ghylen Press: New York, 1982.
- Feder, Norman. *American Indian Art*. Harry N. Abrams: New York, 1973.
- Fenton, William N. "Masked Medicine Societies of the Iroquois," *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of The Smithsonian Institution*: Washington, 1940.
- Fenton, William N. *The False Faces of the Iroquois*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK, 1987.
- Field, Richard Henry. *Spirit of Nova Scotia: Traditional Decorative Folk Art, 1780-1930*. Dundurn Press: Toronto, 1985.
- Fitzhugh, William and Aaron Crowell. *Crossroads of Continents*. Smithsonian: London and Washington. 1998.
- Flint Institute of Art. *The Art of the Great Lakes Indians*. Flint, Michigan, 1973.
- Furst, Peter T. and Jill L. *Native American Indian Art*. Rizzoli: New York, 1982.
- Gidmark, David. *The Algonquin Birchbark Canoe*. Shire Publications Ltd.: Aylesbury, UK, 1988.
- Gidmark, David. "A Developing Talent: Steve Cayard, Canoe Builder." *Wooden Canoe* magazine, October 1998.
- Hanson, Charles E. "The Crooked Knife." *The Museum of the Fur Trade Quarterly*, v. Summer 1975. Chadron, NE.
- Hodge, Frederick Webb, ed. *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*. Smithsonian Institution Bureau of Ethnology Bulletin 30.

- Washington, 1912.
- Hoxie, Frederick, ed. *Encyclopedia of the North American Indian*. Houghton Mifflin: Boston, 1996.
- Isaac, Barbara, ed. *The Hall of the North American Indian*. Peabody Museum: Cambridge, MA, 1990.
- Jenness, Diamond. *Indians of Canada*. Bulletin 65, National Museum of Canada, Ottawa. 1963.
- Johnson, Harmer. *Guide to the Arts of the Americas*. Rizzoli: New York, 1992.
- Kent, Timothy J. *Birchbark Canoes of the Fur Trade*. Silver Fox Enterprises: Ossineke, MI, 1997.
- King, J.C.H. *Thunderbird and Lightning: Indian Life in Northeastern North America*. 1600-1900. British Museums Publications Ltd: London, 1982
- Krech, Shepherd, III, and Barbara A. Hail, eds. *Collecting Native America 1870-1960*. Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington and London, 1999.
- Lathem, Sid. *Knives and Knifemakers*. Collier-Macmillan: New York, 1974.
- Latta, D.G., Ltd. *Catalog No. 2*. Edmonton, n.d.
- Lothem, Lar. *Collecting Indian Knives: Identification and values*. Krause Publications: Iola, WI, 2000.
- Malcolmson, Wilson. "Trade Goods." *The Beaver*. Outfit 279: December, 1941.
- Mandelbaum, David G. "The Plains Cree." *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol XXXVII, Part 2. New York, 1940.
- Mandelowitz, David. *History of American Art*. Stanford University/Holt, Rinehart and Winston: New York, 1970.
- Mason, Otis Tufton. "The Man's Knife Among the North American Indians," *U.S. National Museum, Annual Report for 1897*. Washington, 1899.
- Maurer, Evan M. *The Native American Heritage: A Survey of North American Indian Art*. Art Institute of Chicago, 1977.
- McBride, Bunny. *Our Lives in Our Hands: Micmac Indian basket makers*. Tilsbury House: Gardiner, ME, 1990.
- McMullen, Ann, and Russell G. Handsman et al. *A Key into the Language of Wood Splint Baskets*. American Indian Archaeological Institute: Washington, CT, 1987.
- McPhee, John. *The Survival of the Bark Canoe*. Farrar, Strauss and Giroux: New York, 1975.
- Monro, Dan L., et al. *Gifts of the Spirit*. The Peabody Essex Museum: Salem, MA, 1996.
- National Museum of Man. *The Athapaskans: Strangers of the North*. Ottawa, 1974.
- Newman, Peter C. *Empire by the Bay: An illustrated history of the Hudson's Bay Company*. Madison Press: Toronto, 1989.
- Noble, William C. "The Excavation and Historical Identification of Rocky Mountain House." *Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History* No. 6. National Historic Sites Service. Ottawa, 1973.
- Page, Daniel H. *Heritage of the North American Indian People*. Borealis Press: Ottawa, 1982.
- Painter, John W. *American Indian Artifacts*. George Thassian Publishers: Cincinnati, Ohio, 1990.
- Penney, David W. *Art of the American Indian Frontier*. University of Washington Press: Seattle, 1992.
- Penney, David W. *Great Lakes Indian Art*. Wayne State University Press: Detroit, 1989.
- Petersen, Harold. *American Knives: The First History and Collector's Guide*. Charles Scribner and Sons: New York.
- Philips, Ruth B. *Trading Identities: The souvenir in Native American art from the Northeast, 1600 - 1900*. University of Washington Press: Seattle, 1998.
- Pilon, Jean-Luc, and Sandra Zacharias. "Mocotagan, Couteau Croche Algonquien: techniques et origins." *Journal Canadien d'Archaeologie*, v. 10. Ottawa, 1986.
- Richter, Daniel K. *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA and London, England, 2001.
- Ritzenthaler, Robert, and Pat. *The Woodland Indians of the Western Great Lakes*. Published for the American Museum of Natural History Press: New York, 1970.
- Ritzenthaler, Robert. "Woodland Sculpture." *American Indian Art* magazine, v.1, No. 4. Scottsdale, AZ, 1975.
- Rogers, Edward S. *Algonquins of the Eastern Woodlands*. Royal Ontario Museum: Toronto, 1970.
- Rogers, Edward S. *Material Culture of the*

- Mistassini*. Bulletin 218. National Museum of Canada: Ottawa, 1967.
- Rousseau, Jacques. "Mistassini Calendar." *The Beaver*. Outfit 280: September, 1949.
- Rue, Leonard Lee. "Barriere Indians." *The Beaver*. Outfit 292, 1961.
- Russell, Carl P. *Firearms, Traps and Tools of the Mountain Men*. Knopf: New York, 1967.
- Shaw, Robert. "New England Baskets." *Antiques* magazine, August, 1998.
- Skinner, Alanson. "Notes on the Eastern Cree and Northern Saulteaux." *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*. Vol. IX, part 1, 1911.
- Speck, Franklin G. *Penobscot Man: The life history of a forest tribe in Maine*. The University of Maine Press: Orono, 1997.
- Strung, Norman. *An Encyclopedia of Knives*. Lippincott: Philadelphia, 1976.
- Tooker, Elizabeth. *Lewis H. Morgan on Iroquois Material Culture*. University of Arizona Press: Phoenix, 1994.
- Tooker, Elizabeth, ed. *Native North American Spirituality of the Eastern Woodlands*. The Paulist Press: Mahwah NJ, 1977.
- Torrence, Gaylord, and Robert Hobbs. *Art of the Red Earth People: The Mesquakie of Iowa*. The University of Washington Press: Seattle, 1989.
- Vincent, Gilbert T., Sherry Brydon and Ralph T. Coe, eds. *Art of the North American Indian: The Thaw Collection*. University of Washington Press: Seattle, 2000.
- Waldman, Carl. *Atlas of the North American Indian*. FactsOnFile: New York, 1985.
- Weinstein-Farson, Laurie. *The Wampanoag*. Indians of North America Series. Chelsea House: New York, c 1989.
- Whitehead, Ruth Holmes. *Elitekey: Micmac Material Culture from 1600 to the Present*. Nova Scotia Museum, Halifax, 1980.
- West, W. Richard Jr. et al. *Treasures of the National Museum of the American Indian*. Abbeville Press: New York, 1996.
- Wilbur, C. Keith. *The New England Indians*. The Globe Pequot Press: Old Saybrook, CT, 1978.
- Wissler, Clark. "The Story of the Crooked Knife," *Natural History : The Journal of the American Museum*, New York, July-August, 1923.
- Woodland, Arthur. "Trade Goods of 1748," *The Beaver*. Winnipeg, 1948.

**SOURCES OF ANTIQUE AND MODERN EMBELLISHED
MOCOTAUGANS**

TRIBAL ART DEALERS

Walter Banko, Box 97, Westmount P.O., Montreal, Quebec H3Z 2T1, Canada

Kim Cartwright, Bayside Road, Ellsworth, ME 01605, USA

Will Channing, W.E. Channing & Company, 805 Apodaca Hill,
Santa Fe, NM 87501, USA

Jeff Cherry, Cherry Gallery, 40 Stissing Mountain Lane, Pine Plains,
NY 12567, USA

Donald Ellis, RR3, 1002 Mineral Spring, Dundas, ON L9H 5E3, Canada

Paul Gray, 203 Thomas Road, Old Chatham, NY 12136, USA

Jim Hart and Loretta Carbonaro, 590 S. Lenola Road #PMB 188,
Maple Shade, NJ 08052, USA

Jonathan Holstein, 132 1/2 Albany Street, Cazenovia, NY 13035, USA

Ned Jalbert, 57 East Main Street, Westboro, MA 01581, USA

Brant Mackley, Brant Mackley Gallery, 7096 Union Deposit Road,
Hummelstown, PA 17036, USA

Henry Monahan, Morning Star Gallery, 513 Canyon Road, Santa Fe,
NM 87501, USA

Alan Silberberg, Nashoba Trading, 2 Aspen Road, Littleton, MA 01460, USA

Ted Trotta and Anna Bona, P.O. Box 34, Shrub Oak, NY 10588, USA

CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS

David Cameron, EarthSea, Box 95, Riverport, NS B0J 2W0, Canada

Aaron York, 750A 26th Avenue, Lachine, Quebec H8S 3Y6, Canada