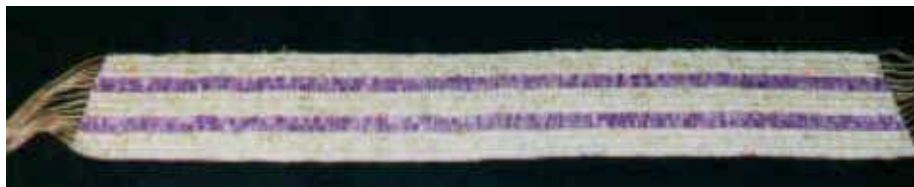


## Two-Row Wampum

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### Objectives:

- Describe the use of wampum by the Haudenosaunee.
  - List some of the ways you believe each nation, the Haudenosaunee and the United States, adhered / did not adhere to the agreement defined by the Two-Row Wampum.
  - Describe the meanings conveyed by the symbol of the Haudenosaunee.
  - Relate the significance of the Two-Row Wampum to the life of Ely Parker.
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The Haudenosaunee have a strong oral tradition. Important cultural concepts, events and agreements in Six Nations history are not recorded in written form, but are passed down from generation to generation in absolute detail by elders, Faithkeepers and Clan Mothers. Wampum belts are also part of this cultural documentation, and the Two Row Wampum belt remains one of the most important to the Haudenosaunee.

The Two Row is a visual record of the very first treaty the Six Nations made with 17<sup>th</sup> Century Dutch traders. The Wampum Belt memorializes that early agreement, that the Haudenosaunee would retain complete economic, political and cultural independence, or sovereignty in its dealings with the other nation. Since then, the Two Row has remained an important element of Six Nations treaties. Each nation desiring to make a pact with the Haudenosaunee is first read the Gustwenta which is a description of the concepts behind the symbols on the Two Row Wampum Belt.

It is two rows of purple wampum, this wampum being quahog (clam) shell – this is the purple part of the shell. This is on a field of white. The purple lines represent the Haudenosaunee travelling in their canoe. Parallel to them, but not touching, is the path of the boat of the Europeans that came here.

In our canoe is our way of life, our language, our law and our customs and traditions. And in the boat, likewise are the European language, customs, traditions and law. We have said, please don't get out of your boat and try to steer our canoe. And we won't get out of our canoe and try to steer your boat. We're going to accept each other as sovereign – we're going to travel down this road of life together side by side.

**G. Peter Jemison**  
Faithkeeper  
Cattaraugus Reservation  
Seneca Nation

The Hiawatha Wampum Belt is another important record of Haudenosaunee history. It memorializes the creation of the League of the Six Nations of the Iroquois. The Haudenosaunee symbol, the "Great White Pine" is the central figure on the belt – it also represents the Onondaga Nation where the Confederacy's central council fires reside. All issues involving the entire Confederacy are debated and decided there. The other Haudenosaunee nations are visualized as squares: on one outer edge are the Mohawks, guardians of the Eastern Door, and the Seneca, Keepers of the Western Door. The

Oneida and Cayuga are shown in the two inner squares; the Tuscarora, the sixth nation in the Confederacy, joined after this Wampum was created. But the Hiawatha Belt is more than an emblem, its interpretation reveals the underlying principles of the Six Nations Confederacy. Those principles are still handed down today through oral tradition. It begins with the arrival of the Peacemaker, a man who came to the Six Nations centuries ago during a time of great internal warfare. He delivered his message to a gathering of Haudenosaunee at Onondaga Lake, which is near modern-day Syracuse, New York. Details of his mission and message are given by Peter Jemison, the Faithkeeper for the Cattaraugus Reservation of the Seneca Nation, and Oren Lyons, Faithkeeper for the Onondaga Nation.”

And he said, now I am going to instruct you on the process of how you will run your nations. How you will raise your chiefs. How you will raise your Clan Mothers. How you raise the Faithkeepers, and what are the duties and responsibilities of those people....and what are the principles of your government. And the first principle was peace, the second was equity and justice and the third one was the power of the good minds. And that's great power, but it's a collective power. It doesn't work unless it's together. Each nation maintained its own leadership, but they all agreed that common causes would be decided in the Grand Council of Chiefs. The concept was based on peace and consensus rather than fighting.

**Oren Lyons**

"One good mind" to make decisions, that's the way we proceed. When the Confederacy was born, each nation agreed to act as a part of a league. There is autonomy for each nation, each nation has its own fire. Each nation has its own chiefs, its own Clan Mothers, but when it comes to matters that impact the entire Confederacy, then we act as one.

The Peacemaker used as a symbol of our Confederacy, not a flag, but a tree, the great white pine. The Tree of Peace. And at the base of that tree grow four white roots in the four cardinal directions of the earth; north, south, east and west. And any nation that can embrace the concepts of peace, power and righteousness, can follow back one of those roots to the tree of Peace and join there with us.

**G. Peter Jemison**



### *Middle School Level*

- **THE MEANING OF WAMPUM BELTS**

Describe the significance of the use of wampum belts by the Haudenosaunee, or by other Native American groups. Review other information on wampum available through the links below. Why did Europeans consider wampum only to be an Indian form of money? Was this an ethnocentric view of Native American customs? Was wampum later used as a form of money?

- **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HIAWATHA BELT**

Discuss the meanings conveyed by the Hiawatha Belt. Create a story about the meetings or agreements that might have taken place for which this wampum belt was made.

### *High School – Advanced Levels*

- **THE AGREEMENT**

List some of the ways in which each nation, the Haudenosaunee and the United States, adhered to the agreement defined by the Two-Row Wampum. List the ways the United States did not adhere to the agreement. Do you find evidence that the Haudenosaunee violated the agreement?

- **DEBATE**

In his interview, Rick Hill said that, just as with the very first agreement, the two-row wampum, there are two paths for Indians to this day: the Indian's canoe or the white man's boat. "The minute you put your feet in both...you're going to fall in the water in the middle. Nobody can reach in there and pull you out." Oren Lyons said that Ely "just went into the boat. He wasn't standing in both." Relate the significance of the Two-Row Wampum to the life of Ely Parker; do you believe he straddled both worlds, one foot in each vessel, or do you believe he went into the boat entirely? Form two teams to debate this question once you have made your "case" from the evidence available.

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## ON-LINE RESOURCES

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Lessons from history

[http://sixnations.buffnet.net/Lessons\\_from\\_History/?article=2](http://sixnations.buffnet.net/Lessons_from_History/?article=2)

Two row wampum

<http://oneida-nation.net/facts/wampum.html>

Wampum- Treaties and Sacred Records

<http://indy4.fdl.cc.mn.us/~isk/art/beads/wampum.html>