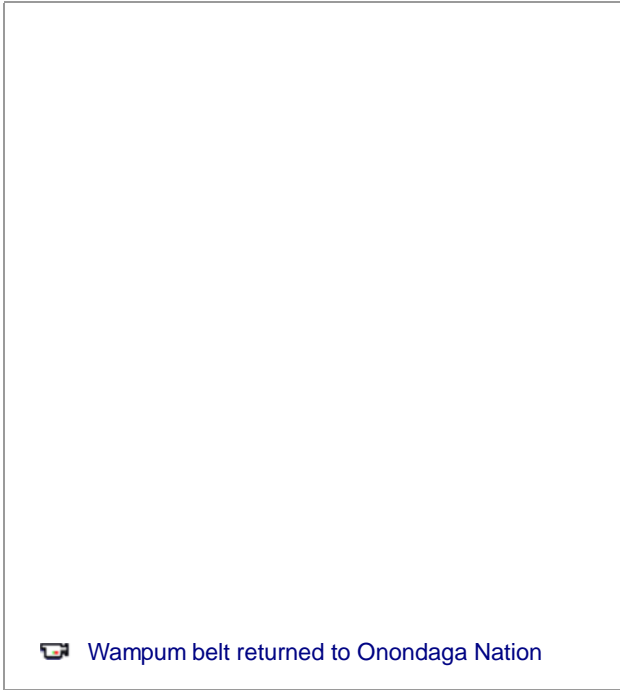


Piece of history returns to Onondaga Nation



 [Wampum belt returned to Onondaga Nation](#)

Published: 6/12 5:27 pm

Updated: 6/12 6:34 pm

Syracuse (WSYR-TV) - A sacred piece of Onondaga Nation history is back where it belongs. A wampum belt had been locked up in the Onondaga Historical Association Museum since 1919. Before then, it was in the possession of a Minoa family.

The Wampum belt is more than just intricately threaded clam shells. The belt represents a verbal agreement between two parties. The belt that returned to the Onondaga Nation on Tuesday represents an agreement with a Canadian liaison named William Clause in 1800. The initials "W.C." are beaded into the top.

"We don't write things down, so we use the Wampum in oral tradition," said Onondaga Clan Mother Karen Webster.

Karen Webster's mother had been trying to return the belt to the nation before she passed away two years ago. Gregg Tripoli, the director of the Onondaga Historical Association (OHA), presented it to Karen Webster and her two sisters.

"The OHA has voluntarily repatriated from our collections sacred items and items of cultural patrimony to the Onondaga Nation," Tripoli said.

The Onondaga Faithkeepers presented the museum with a replica of the belt as a thank you. The belt features two purple lines that represent two separate cultures living next to each other – parallel, but in harmony.

The nation's leaders hope the exchange will continue building respect for the Onondaga culture and that more people will return significant artifacts from private collections back to the nation.

Other sacred items, such as masks and even ancestral remains, were returned in private ceremonies.

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