

music is played on rare occasions, but it merely consists of beating of a drum, and whether the rhythm is old Iroquois is very doubtful. The introduction of the white man's music to the Oneidas goes back to the time of Eleazer Williams, who translated Christian hymns into Mohawk. The Oneidas have been singing hymns in Indian ever since, and have evolved a rather distinctive interpretation of the music, although using the standard four-part harmony. The people like to sing, and have organized not only church choirs, but also singing societies which meet at the homes of members for the purpose of singing hymns. The hymns may also be sung at such non-ecclesiastical gatherings as parties and other social gatherings, and this is explained on the grounds that the hymns are the only vocal music known in common by the group.

A rather interesting cultural miscegenation occurred when some of the Oneidas were sent to school at Hampton, Virginia, during the Transitional Period. The school was composed of about nine hundred Negroes and a hundred and sixty Indians, and although each group had its own dormitories, the classes were held in common. Four of the Oneidas learned to sing Negro spirituals, returned to Oneida, and continued to sing them with not a little of the Negro verve. They became very popular at social affairs, sang over the radio, and traveled around the state for a while. The "Jubilee Singers," as they are called, are still singing, although two of the original quartet have died, and two others had to be trained to take their places.

Another startling musical event took place at a recent gathering, where an Oneida boy appeared on the program with a guitar, and sang western ballads in a characteristic nasal twang, western style.

A number of the men play band instruments, and at one time a band was organized which went on a tour around the country. One of the members, Tom Elm, could not read or write, but he could read music, and he still plays the trumpet.

Oneida Music

Legende

Bulletin, Milwaukee

Public Museum

#### Myths and Legends

of the Oneidas seems to have persisted in rather great measure. The old myth was never recorded for the Oneidas, and its antiquity is based upon a comparison of the recorded myths of other New York Iroquois peoples. The myth of the eighty-six-year-old Aaron House is as follows:

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"I do not know exactly where the Oneidas came from. I do know that there was once another country in the sky, and there was a hole in the ground where bad people would be dropped. In America there was only water and water animals: mink, muskrat, beaver, and turtle. An animal one day said, 'Get ready, there is a woman coming.' This was repeated. A woman had been thrown in the hole and was now coming. She was what you would call a fast woman—very bad. The animals met and called upon mud turtle to let the woman land on his back. But Turtle was not large enough. So Muskrat went down to get some mud to widen Turtle's back. He came floating to the surface—dead. Then Mink went down, and he too came up dead, but had some mud between his toes which they scraped off and put on Turtle. Other animals went down, until finally they had enough mud to enlarge Turtle so that when the woman landed she had just enough room to sit on. In a few days the animals had enlarged the Turtle's back so that it took her half a day to walk to one edge. The next day it took her all day to reach one edge. The last day she went walking she saw many animals in the brush and woods. She didn't go out anymore, and one night a man came to her and told her she must get married, and warned her not to marry any of the animals around here except Turtle. He said, 'You must marry Turtle, who will come to you in the form of a man.'

"The man came, and they were married, but that night instead of sleeping with her, he laid two sticks under the bed and went away. Some time later she was about to bear twins. One of the babies wanted to get out the side, but the other said, 'Don't do that, you will hurt your mother.' But the other would not heed him, and came out of the side of the woman, so the other could do nothing but follow him. The first boy was made of skin, and was very bad. He was called *dawisga*<sup>65</sup>; meaning 'Devil.' The other boy was of flesh and was very good. He was called *debaluyawá*<sup>66</sup>.

"The evil boy made a huge mosquito as big as a horse, that lived on human blood. The good brother chased the mosquito and said, 'Don't kill anyone anymore, or I will kill you.' The brother went away, and when he came back he saw the body of the mosquito was red and full of blood. He said 'You have been drinking blood.' The mosquito said, 'No, I have been eating herbs.' But the good brother knew better, gave chase, and killed the mosquito near the present city of Syracuse. You can still see the tracks of the big mosquito and the brother today.

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"The good brother one day shot his bow and arrow, and when he looked he could not find his arrow. He walked and walked, until he came to a marsh in which he sank deeper and deeper until he came to another country. There sat an old man who was the father of the two boys. He said, 'I was the cause of your coming to this place.' The father then told the boy how to kill the evil brother who had been trying to kill the good brother. His father gave him an ear of corn and said, 'Be very careful, and don't lose the seed.' He also showed him how to grind the corn and how to make bread and soup out of it. He was to put the ear of corn before the fire where his brother would see it. The corn would start to pop, and the brother would want some. He was instructed not to let the evil brother have any, unless he was given a piece of flesh from the calf of his leg. Good brother returned and did all this, and evil brother wanted some of the corn, offering parts of his body except the calf of his leg. Finally he gave him a piece of the calf, and ate some of the popped corn. The good brother then moved his brother's chair closer to the fire as he had been instructed, and threw more corn on the fire. The evil brother could not move out of his chair because he had eaten the corn. Soon the corn in the fire began to pop, and good brother ran away. The corn popped and flew around, and hit the evil brother, causing bits of flint (his body) to fly in all directions, until his body was gone; and so evil brother disappeared." The informant added that *debatuhyawé*<sup>22</sup> would some day return to destroy the white man and restore the Indian to his proper place.

A number of incidents found in the old Iroquois accounts are missing in this version, but the basic elements, such as the woman falling through a hole in the sky, the council of sea animals, the woman landing on the turtle's back, and the birth of the twin brothers, leave no doubt as to its antiquity. A number of incidents have been added to the Oneida version: the fight between *debatuhyawé*<sup>22</sup> and the big mosquito, and the second coming of *debatuhyawé*<sup>22</sup>, inspired probably by the Book of Revelation.

Probably the most interesting myths from the standpoint of acculturation are those in which Bible stories are combined with Indian myths, or those in which Bible stories have been reinterpreted in terms of the Indian. An example of the former, as told by Andrew Beechtree, provides a different ending to the Hiawatha story. Briefly, it is as follows:

After Hiawatha had organized the League of the Iroquois, he called the people together and said to them, "I must leave you now. I have work to

du across the great sea." He then went eastward to the Atlantic Ocean and walked across the water with a halo of light around his head. Some time later he returned, and again called the people together. He said, "I have visited our relatives across the sea and look what they have done to me." He held out his hands and there was a hole in each palm.

An example of an "Indianized" Bible story is Loomis Skenandore's version of the story of the Tower of Babel.

A long time ago people were very bad. When they began building a high chimney on which to climb to heaven, God decided it was time they were punished. He mixed up their language so people could not understand one another, and then killed all the bad ones by drowning them. The few good ones he led to the sea which opened up, and they walked across the bottom to America. These good people were the Indians.

A version of the creation story is told by Oscar Archiquette: When the Maker decided he wanted man on earth, he moulded a figure out of clay and put it in the fire. The fire was too hot, however, and the figure was burned. This was the first Negro. Another man was molded and put in the fire, but he was pulled out too soon. This half-baked man was the first white man. A third figure was molded and baked to a nice warm brown, and he was the first Indian. This story is told by all the Wisconsin Indian tribes, however, and the informant made no pretense of its being either old or Iroquois.

Historical legends are encountered, with most of them dealing with the part played by the Oneidas in the Revolutionary War. One of these, for example, is an exposition of how General Washington called upon the Oneidas for food supplies for his army at Valley Forge. The Oneidas complied, food was sent, and many of the soldiers were saved from starvation. Many of the Oneidas believe that Indians were never accorded their proper place in history by historians, and that American history should be rewritten with this in mind.

## Conclusion

The Wisconsin Oneida offer an example of a people who have nearly completed the process of cultural transformation from Indian to modern rural American. It can safely be said that less than five per cent of the present culture is Indian in origin, and that this community has become almost indistinguishable from any surrounding white rural community of

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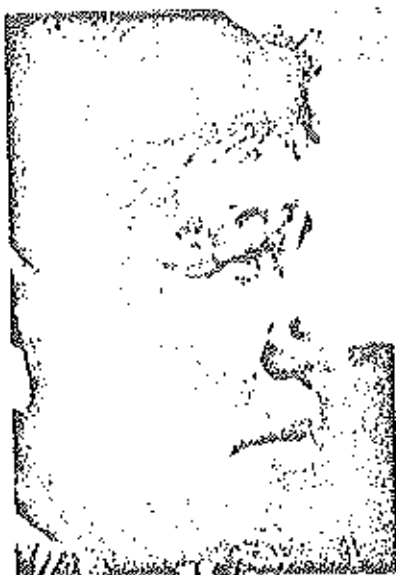


FIG. 14—Physical Study.



FIG. 15—Physical Study.

comparable low economic status. Perhaps the main theoretical purpose of a study of such a people has been in the revealing of what cultural phases have survived under the long and consistent impact of foreign culture. In summary it may be noted that, in accordance with the usual acculturational pattern, the material culture of the Oneidas was the first phase to be replaced. It is also apparent in this instance that with the survival of language there also survived some of the elements intimately tied up with language, such as myths and legends and the knowledge of clan, kinship, and the numeral system. On the other hand such survivals as basketry, foodways, and medical practices have persisted apparently because of like or utility.

An interesting aspect of Oneida acculturation is the complete lack of cultural interchange between them and other Wisconsin Indians. I could not discover a single trait taken over from surrounding Woodland tribes by the Oneida, and I know of no trait contributed to the Woodland tribes by the Oneidas, except, perhaps, ash splint basketry. While there is considerable inter-tribal visiting and participation in ceremonies by other Wis-



FIG. 16—Physical Study.

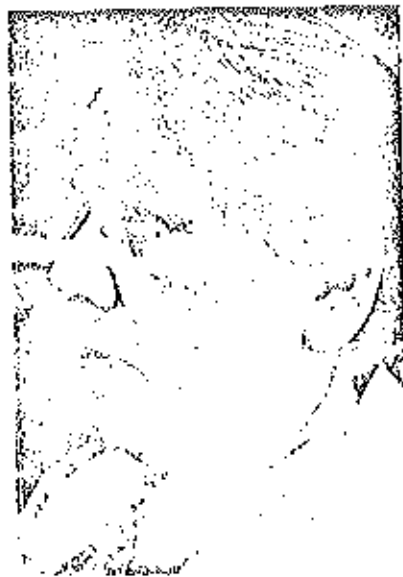


FIG. 17—Physical Study

consin tribes, the Oneidas have remained aloof and isolated. The Drum Dance (or Dream Dance) which spread from the Sioux to the Wisconsin Indians during the latter part of the nineteenth century, is to be found among all Wisconsin tribes except the Oneidas. The Peyote cult, another late introduction taken over by some of the Wisconsin Indians, has made no inroads among the Oneidas. The only example of the breakdown of this isolation is to be found in the rare cases of Oneidas intermarried with members of other tribes.

✓ Another aspect of the acculturational picture of the Oneidas is that the Christian church has been the most important single agency of acculturation. The Oneidas were Christianized while still in New York. Their removal to Wisconsin and the setting up of a new community was under the leadership of the Episcopalian missionary Eleazer Williams. The new community thus began with the church and mission school as important institutions, and today the church is still the chief ethical and socially cohesive force in the community.

In a sense it is a tribute to the toughness of culture that any of the old culture has survived in the face of the long period of white contact and pressures and the complete lack of refertilizing Indian influence.

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## Orthography

### Vowels.

i is like the *ee* in the English word *feet*.

e is like the *a* in the English word *make*.

a is like the *o* in the English word *rod*.

o is like the *o* in the English word *rope*.

u is like the *u* in the English word *room* except that it is nasalized.

A is about like the *u* in the English word *but* except that it is nasalized.

### Consonants:

y is like the *y* in English word *young*.

w is like the *w* in the English word *water*.

l and n are usually the same as in English.

ɓ, g, and j are the same as in English. g is always hard.

t and k are similar to the English except that they are pronounced with a more forceful release of air.

c is like the *ch* in the English word *child*.

z is like the English *z* except that it is a little softer.

s is like the English *s* except that it is pronounced more strongly.

h is like the English *h*.

### Signs:

• indicates a catch or glottal stop.

˘ indicates accent.

• is a length mark.

Raised letters (<sup>h</sup>) indicate whispered syllables.

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