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Bulletin 55

METALLIC IMPLEMENTS

OF THE

NEW YORK INDIANS

LIST OF AUTHORITIES ON METALLIC IMPLEMENTS

The following works are referred to in the bulletin by the abbreviations in the left margin.

Abbott — **Abbott, C. C.** Primitive industry. Salem (Mass.) 1881.

Abbott. Copper. — ——— Use of copper by the Delaware Indians. (*see* American naturalist, 1885, 19:774)

Barber — **Barber, Edwin A.** Antiquity of the tobacco pipe in Europe. (*see* American antiquarian, 1879, 2:1)

Beauchamp — **Beauchamp, W: M.** The good hunter and the Iroquois medicine. (*see* Journal of American folk-lore, 1901, 14:153)

Belknap — **Belknap, Jeremy.** Biographies of the early discoverers of America. 1798.
New York reprint n. d.

Boyle — **Boyle, David.** Notes on primitive man in Ontario. Appendix to report of minister of education for Ontario. Toronto 1895.

Cammerhoff — **Cammerhoff, J: F:** Diary of the journey of Br. Cammerhoff and David Zeisberger to the 5 Nations from May 3-14 to August 6-17, 1750.
Manuscript in the N. Y. state library, translated from the original in Bethlehem Pa. by Miss Clara Frueauff.

Cartier — **Cartier, Jacques.** Short and brief narration of the navigation made by the commandement of the king of France, to the islands of Canada, Hochelaga, Saguenay, and divers others which are now called New France (*in* Hakluyt's prin-

cipal navigations) Lond. 1600. (*see* Dawson, Sir J: W. Fossil men and their modern representatives. Lond. 1883)

Champlain — **Champlain, Samuel de.** Voyages; tr. fr. the French by C: P. Otis. Bost. 1878. (*see* Prince society. Publications. 2:236)

Cheney — **Cheney, T. A.** Ancient monuments in western New York. (*see* New York state cabinet of natural history. 13th annual report. 1859. *in* Senate documents 1860. no. 89 [e])

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Frey — **Frey, S. L:** Were they mound-builders? (*see* American naturalist, Oct. 1879, 13: 637-44)

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Hazard — **Hazard, Samuel.** Pennsylvania archives, 1664-1790. ser. 1. Phil. 1852-56.

Hoy — **Hoy, P. R.** How and by whom were the copper implements made? Racine 1886.

Jordan — **Jordan, Francis.** Aboriginal wood working. (*see* Numismatical and antiquarian society of Philadelphia. Proceedings. Phil. 1891. p. 76)

Kellogg — **Kellogg, D. S.** Aboriginal dwelling-sites in the Champlain valley. (*see* American association for the advancement of science. Proceedings. 1887. 36: 308)

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Moore — **Moore, C. B.** Certain sand mounds of the St John's river, Florida. (*see* Academy of natural sciences of Philadelphia. Journal. Phil. 1894. 10: 5)

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Van Curler **Van Curler, Arent.** Arent Van Curler and his journal of 1634-35; ed. by Gen. J. G. Wilson. Wash. 1896.
Later journal in O'Callaghan, v. 13.
The name is usually spelled Corlear or Coriaer.

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METALLIC IMPLEMENTS OF THE NEW YORK INDIANS

The stone and bronze ages of Europe have little reference to America except in a very broad sense. Using stone implements here from the earliest times to the present day, men may have used copper also in New York when the whites came, as some others had done centuries before. There had been a time when durable or massive implements were made of this. Customs changed. The later New York aborigines knew little or nothing of these implements, and others employed the material only in an ornamental or reverential way. The earlier nations did not despise this use, and well wrought articles for personal adornment are found in many parts of the United States and Canada. South of our national limits beautiful early articles of silver and gold occur. Recent metallic ornaments are frequent in New York, but none have been reported of native copper except beads.

Most of the early discoverers had something to say of copper ornaments, but these may not have been of native metal in all cases. When the Cabots landed at Newfoundland or Nova Scotia in June 1497, they observed that "the inhabitants had plenty of copper," probably the native metal. When Verrazano visited the coast of New England in 1524, he saw many articles of wrought copper, highly esteemed for their color and beauty. The source of these may be doubtful. Cartier found no copper among the Iroquois of Montreal on his visit there in 1535, but heard of it. "They took the chayne of our capitaines whistle, which was of silver, and the dagger-haft of one our fellow mariners, hanging on his side being of yellow copper guilt, and showed us that such stuffe came from the said river. . . . Our capitaine shewed them redde copper, which in their language they call Caquedaze, and looking towarde that countrey, with signes asked him if any came from thence, they shaking their heads answered no; but they shewed us that it came from Saguenay, and that lyeth cleane contrary to the other."—*Dawson*, p. 37

There may have been misunderstandings on both sides, but the plain statement is that this people knew copper and had a name for it, though they had none themselves. When Bartholomew Gosnold was at Cape Cod in 1602 he saw a young Indian with plates of copper hanging from his ears. These may have come from European contact, but Gosnold did not suggest this. Farther south they were visited by natives, one of whom wore a copper plate, a foot long and half as broad, on his breast. Others had copper pendants in their ears. John Brereton added to this, accounts of their beads, chains, arrows and other things, and said that not one lacked something of the kind. Another described pipes partly of copper, much as Hudson did in New York a few years later. Belknap says of these statements:

All these Indians had ornaments of copper. When the adventurers asked them, by signs, whence they obtained this metal, one of them made answer by digging a hole in the ground and pointing to the main; from which circumstance it was understood that the adjacent country contained mines of copper. In the course of almost two centuries no copper has been discovered; though iron, a much more useful metal, wholly unknown to the natives, is found in great plenty. The question, whence did they obtain copper? is yet without an answer.—*Belknap*, p. 151

To this it may be said that the arrows, tubes, belts and pipes of copper, as described by Brereton, are all represented on recent Iroquois sites, and may fairly be considered as European articles, furnished by some unknown early trader.

When it is said that Henry Hudson saw "copper tobacco pipes" among the Indians of New York bay, he may have mistaken those of bright red clay for this metal, or they may have come from the same unknown trader. They were not afterward mentioned by any one, and none of native metal have ever been found. The natives could not have cast them, and it would have been extremely difficult to make them by hammering. The copper ornaments seen in this voyage may have had the same source. The brass pipes which Roger Williams thought the Narragansetts made may well be classed with these. They are never mentioned inland, and this affects the question of origin,

but every article described above was in use by the Iroquois in the 17th century. The arrowheads of 1602 are said to be "much like our broad arrowheads, very workmanly done," and brass arrowheads are spoken of by others.

Native copper articles are rare along the New York seacoast and in our mounds, and perhaps are found more rarely still on camp sites. They seem to have been lost in travel. Apparently implements of native copper have not been made in the interior of New York within 400 or 500 years. This conjecture may be changed at any time, though well founded now. The Iroquois of Montreal knew of this metal in 1535, but had none. The Atlantic coast Indians were then more fortunate, either having European or home sources of supply, or communication with the Lake Superior mines, from which the Iroquois proper were cut off. Both these things are probably true.

For the last we may remember that the larger part of the Huron-Iroquois family were somewhat isolated, the Algonquins surrounding them and for a long time keeping some of them under. No members of the Iroquois family lived west of Lake Huron, but their foes did. So they told Cartier that in the country of metals "there be Agojudas, that is as much to say, an evill people, who goe all armed even to their fingers' ends." These wore the aboriginal armor and were continually at war. The Iroquois were then unwarlike and commanded no access to the mines.

The question of a home supply merits attention. Copper occurs in mines, but so it does in scattered fragments. There are even unprofitable copper ores in New York, but no ledges of this metal. Nodules of several pounds weight have been found in Connecticut and New Jersey, and some may have been used and prized by the aborigines near the coast. Farther north there is little doubt that all articles came from Lake Superior at an early day, and they have such marked peculiarities as to make it probable that they were commonly wrought into shape in that vicinity. Occasional rude pieces found in New York also show this was not always the case.

Soon after Quebec was founded Champlain mentioned a piece of very handsome and pure copper given him by an Algonquin. It was a foot long. The great discoverer said, "He gave me to understand that there were large quantities where he had taken this, which was on the banks of a river, near a great lake. He said that they gathered it in lumps, and having melted it, spread it in sheets, smoothing it with stones."—*Champlain*, 2:236

Presumably this refers to Lake Superior, and the melting merely to softening the metal by heat. The statement lacks precision in these ways, but it would have been possible for an eastern Algonquin while in alliance or friendship with the Hurons to reach Lake Superior.

A succeeding statement is more precise. Radisson wintered in 1658 on the shore of that great lake, and mentioned the native copper several times. He seems to refer to ornamental forms when he speaks of a "yellow waire that they make with copper, made like a starr or a half-moon."—*Radisson*, p. 188, 212. This would bring the making of native copper ornaments far within the historic period, but there is no notice of implements. In the same year occurred the visit which brought Lake Superior copper plainly to view. This was made by an Algonquin chief living on the Saguenay, who had passed 10 years in the country of the Nipisiriniens, and whose name was Awatanik. Thence he went to Lake Superior in 1658, spending the following winter there. Two Frenchmen returned from this lake in 1660 with 300 Algonquins, but they said nothing about copper, though they had wintered there also.

The first definite Jesuit report of Lake Superior ore is in the *Relation* of 1660. In that year a French missionary met the Algonquin mentioned, just returned from that region, where he had gone in 1658. He found there "copper so excellent that it is found fully refined, in pieces as large as the fist." The inference is that the Indians east of Michigan had little knowledge of this before. The *Relation* of 1667 contains the journey of Father Claude Allouez to Lake Superior in 1665. He reached the lake September 2, and went on to say: