



New York State Archives

**New York State Museum Original Bill of Sale and Record of
the Action of the Council of the Onondaga Indians Whereby
the University of the State of New York Became Wampum
Keeper of the Six Nations A0492**

New York State Archives
222 Madison Avenue
Albany, NY 12230
archref@nysed.gov
URL: <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/>

Table of Contents

Overview of the Records	3
Administrative History	3
Scope and Contents	4
Access Terms	4

Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	This series consists of the original bill of sale and record of the action of the Council of the Onondaga Nation which sold and transferred the Onondaga Nation's interest in the wampum belts and office of wampum-keeper to the State University of New York.
Creator:	New York State Museum
Title:	Original bill of sale and record of the action of the Council of the Onondaga Indians whereby the University of the State of New York became Wampum Keeper of the Six Nations
Quantity:	0.2 cubic feet
Quantity:	1 item(s)
Quantity:	1 35mm microfilm roll(s)
Date:	1898
Series:	A0492

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative History

Chapter 153 of the Laws of 1899 relates to the custody of wampum and states that the State University of New York was elected to the office of wampum-keeper by the Onondaga nation on February 26, 1898. The Board of Regents accepted the custody of the wampum on March 22, 1898 and the election and transfer of the wampum was approved by the Council of the Six Nations on June 22, 1898. Chapter 153 also gave the authority to secure, through purchase or lawsuit, any wampum in the name of the Onondaga. This chapter was incorporated into section 27 of the New York State Indian Law (Chapter 31 of the Laws of 1909).

This section of the State Indian Law was challenged by several indigenous groups during the 1970 session of the State Legislature. Legislation was introduced on behalf of the groups for the return of wampum to the Onondaga Nation (Assembly bill 6326). The bill was passed by the Assembly but the Senate Finance Committee elected not to report the bill out for a vote by the full body. Legislation was passed in 1971 to return the wampum belts to the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy (Chapter 960 of the Laws of 1971). The return of the belts was contingent on the construction of a suitable building on the Onondaga Reservation for proper preservation. In 1975, a bill was introduced to remove this stipulation (A. 5478). This bill passed

the Assembly and was referred to the Senate Finance Committee but not reported out. The wampum belts were returned to the Onondaga Nation in 1989 and section 27 of the State Indian Law was repealed under Chapter 612 of the Laws of 1992.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Content Note

This series consists of the original bill of sale and record of the action of the Council of the Onondaga Nation. This bill of sale sold and transferred the Onondaga Nation's interest in the wampum belts and office of wampum-keeper to the State University of New York. The bill of sale lists the terms of the sale and transfer and is signed by the sachems and chiefs of the Onondaga Nation. This record was damaged in the 1911 Capitol fire which resulted in brittleness, bleeding of ink, and damage to the wax seals of the sachems and chiefs.

Also included in this series is an article entitled "Wampum" by John DuPont which includes a typewritten transcript of the bill of sale. This article ran in the Winter 1969-1970 edition of the New York State Museum's publication *Naho*.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Access Terms

- Negotiating
- Onondaga Indians
- Indians of North America--New York (State)
- New York (State)
- University of the State of New York
- New York (State). Education Department