

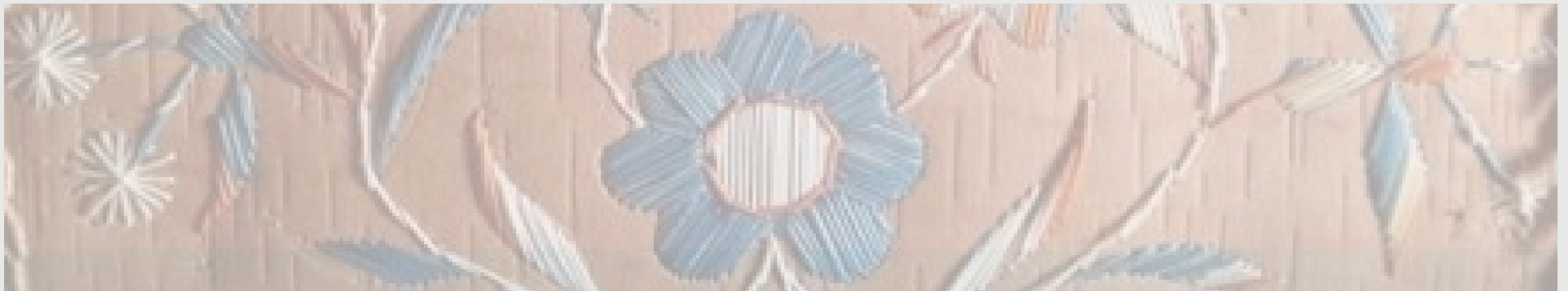
# Gifts from Rice Lake to the Prince of Wales, 1860

*Dr. Lori Beavis & Dr. Laura Peers*



In 1860, Michi Saagig people at Rice Lake met His Royal Highness Albert Edward, the Prince of Wales, who was on the first official royal tour of North America. Across his tour the Prince visited Indigenous communities as well as settler towns, in part as a way for government officials to position Aboriginals as representative of the past and therefore in contrast to the progress that had been made through colonization and British settlement. Indigenous people, presented to the Prince in their regalia, also helped to create a sense of a distinct colonial identity. For their part, Indigenous participants in this visit clearly took the opportunity to reaffirm their relationship with the Crown, demonstrate their loyalty to the monarch and assert their own sovereignty and continued identity.

*light budget!*



The Prince was brought to Rice Lake on September 7, 1860. He was welcomed to the small Michi-Saagig village there--now Hiawatha First Nation--by Chief George Paudash. We have not yet found any records of the speeches made or photographs of the event, but what does survive from that meeting is a group of items that were given to the Prince that day. Most unusually for items now in museum collections, the names of the women makers of most of these items have been preserved.

The items are now in the Royal Collection Trust at the Swiss Cottage Museum, part of Osborne House, one of Queen Victoria's favorite residences, on the Isle of Wight, south of London.



"On the north side of the lake a sort of arch had been erected by the Mississaga tribe of Indians, who stood by the landing place, fired guns as the Prince approached, and endeavoured to play "God Save the Queen," with their brass band, and their chief, Pandosh [sic], who is 100 years old, presented an address to His Royal Highness signed with both his English name and Indian, "Totem" then a number of birch bark baskets filled with Indian work, and having labels with the names of the [women] who had made them, were given to the Prince, and in the midst of a parting volley the royal train moved away."



# MARGARET ANDERSON



Royal Collection Trust accession number RCIN8433





Margaret Anderson was Margaret Jane “Peggy” David (born c. 1822-d. before 1871), who was married to John Anderson (c. 1811-d.1876). In 1860 she was 38 years old. Her wonderful birchbark and porcupine-quilled creation is reminiscent of a Victorian lady’s satchel (which reminds us today of a laptop case!). The satchel has split spruce root handles decorated with a few colourful quills, and a carefully cut and quill-wrapped hide fringe around the edges. There is some quillwork loss on the back, giving us the opportunity to see the pencil patterning and punched holes.

The dedication, “Presented to the Prince of Wales by Margaret Anderson Rice Lake” is written in pencil on the bottom.







# POLLY SOPER



Polly Soper was born Polly Anderson (c. 1806-d. before 1891), she was married to Robert Soper (c. 1817-1890). In 1860 she was 54 years old.

Her lidded mokuk has a quill-wrapped handle on top and one attached to the sides. Inside is a piece of wrapped sweetgrass or another fine twine of root with wrapped coloured quills at intervals.

RCIN 84306



# POLLY SOPER



"Polly Soper was my great great grandmother, and when I first saw a photo of this piece I was so moved. I can't wait to see it and touch it. Seeing this inspired me to pick up quills and learn quillwork."

--Kim Muskratt, Hiawatha First Nation





# HANNAH MCCUE

Hannah McCue was likely originally from Mud or Chemong Lake (now Curve Lake FN). She married Jeremiah Crowe of Hiawatha. Census records are unclear, but we think she would have been 21 years old in 1860. Her basket is in the shape of a small fishing creel – the lid and basket are edged with triangles and the top and sides has stylized flowers that look like tulips.









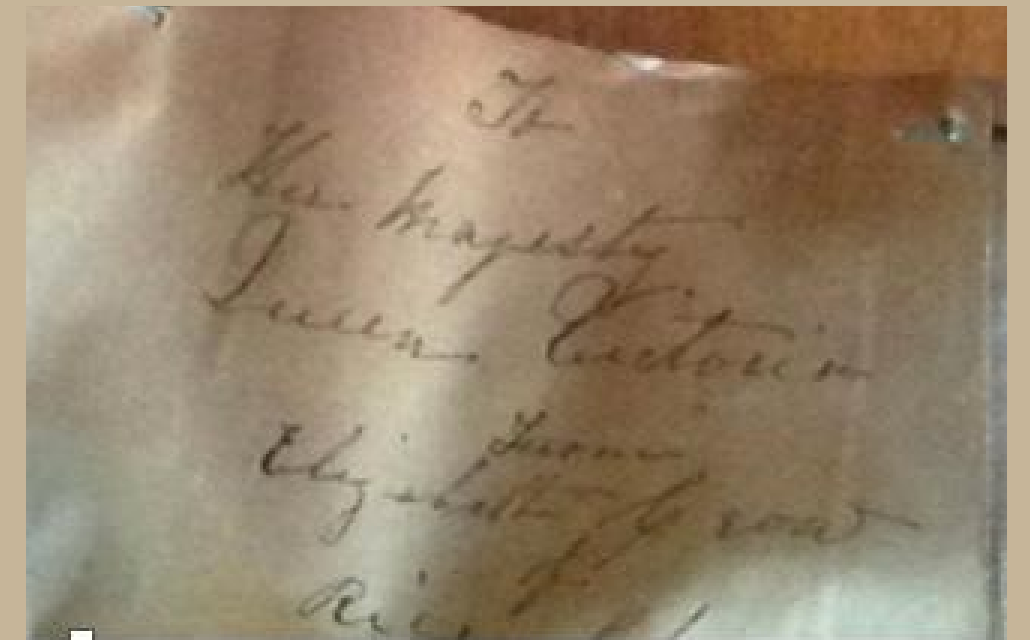
# ELIZABETH CROW

Elizabeth Crow (ca. 1806 – ?) was married to John Crow / Kaagaasi (ca. 1806 – ?), one of the hereditary Chiefs of Rice Lake. Elizabeth would have been 54 in 1860. Her large mokuk has feathers and abstracted flower shapes and chevrons of distinctive character across the front, sides and back.



RCIN 84327

Intriguingly, the accompanying note makes it clear that Mrs. Crow sent her gift not to the Prince of Wales, but to Queen Victoria herself. Is this a rare sign of women's agency in affirming Indigenous relations with the Crown?



# LIZIE (ELIZA) CROWE

Eliza Naugon (ca. 1839-after 1910) married Henry Crowe (ca. 1832-before 1879).

Eliza married four times. In 1860 she would have been 21 years old.



RCIN 84334







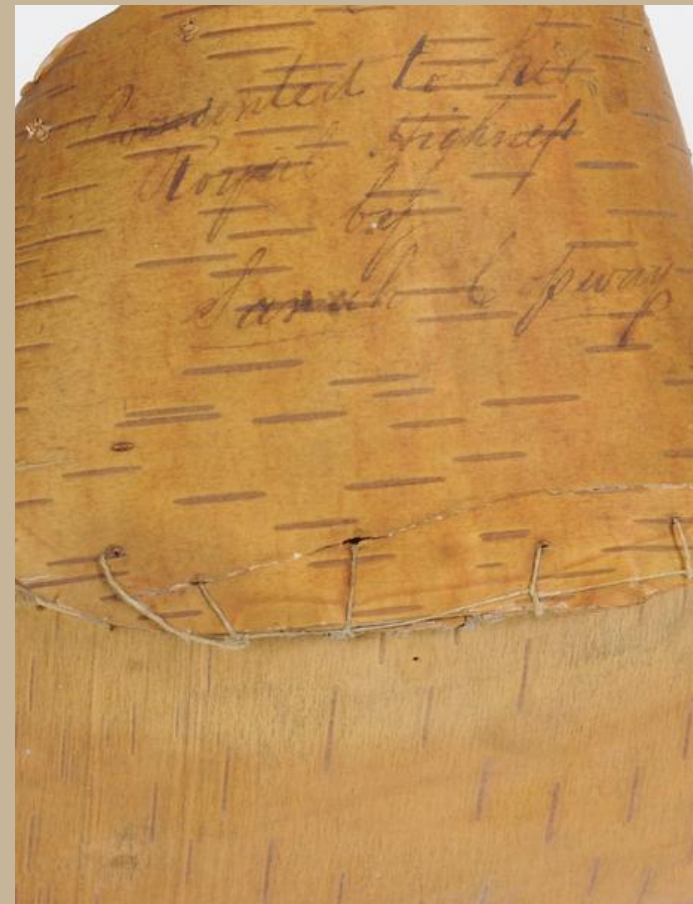
# DYES

By 1860, women at Rice Lake had access to chemical (aniline) dyes, which they used alongside traditional plant dyes. The quillwork on these gifts shows a limited range of colours and a similar range of colours across the items. It is possible that the materials for all the baskets were all prepared at the same time in advance of the Prince's visit and that the same batches of blue, yellow, orange-red and white quills were used by all the women to decorate their work.





# MATERIALS





# BETSEY SIMSON (SIMON)



RCIN 84308

Betsey Simon worked her box in a very different style to that used by the other women. Her work shows great skill, and is reminiscent of earlier Wendat work from the Montreal area. The careful construction of the bark box and the use of rows of parallel quills to edge it creates a formal effect.

While the tag with this box reads "Betsey Simson," Hiawatha community members think this is Betsey Simon, who is listed on the 1861 census as a widow with two sons. She was 45 in 1860.







The Prince of Wales  
Jamaica  
Betty Simon  
of  
New Lake





# SARAH TAUNCHY

Sarah was the daughter of John and Mary Crow. She was born about 1806 and died before 1871. In 1860, she was 54. Her colourful lidded mokuk is of traditional form and medium size.



RCIN 84305



# SARAH COPWAY

The maker of this simple, traditional mokuk may have been the Sarah who is listed on the 1851 census as married to John Copway at Rice Lake, born about 1801 so aged 59 at the time of the Prince's visit. She might also have been Sarah Spencer Crow, b.1847, aged 13 in 1860.





# CATHERINE MUSKRAT

Catherine Muskrat (ca.1821-1892) was married to Moses Muskrat (ca.1809-1879), who was considered a patriarch of the village (Drayton). Catherine was 39 in 1860.



# NANCY NAUGON

Nancy Naugon (ca.1823-1878) was from Grape Island in Rice Lake. She was married to John Naugon before 1844, and would have been 37 in 1860. Her husband is mentioned as a visitor in Susanna Moodie's household in *Roughing it in the Bush* (1852) and *Life in the Backwoods* (1887).

This basket also has a piece of paper in it with the handwriting "Presented to the Prince of Wales by Mrs John, Rice Lake." The item associated with this label appears to be missing from the collection now.

Nancy's mokuk has a quill-edged gift tag with her name, a braided quill handle, and beautifully even spruce-root edging with a bold design.





The gifts given to the Prince of Wales at Rice Lake in 1860 reaffirmed Michi-Saagig people's relation to the Crown.

They are also important heritage items today. We hope to bring these items to visit in the future, so that Michi-Saagig people can experience first-hand and learn from the work of their ancestors.



## Swiss Cottage Museum, Osborne House, England

The mokuks have been displayed in this building which was created as a museum for the Royal Family.









Images courtesy Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2020; Dr. Lori Beavis; and Dr. Ruth Phillips. Miigwetch to the RCT staff and Dr. Phillips for their support of this project.

# CONTACT US!



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