

Wampum Money.

Wampum has been used among the Indians east of the Rocky Mountains since the whites first had dealings with them. Among the eastern Indians it was found to be made of the white and purple parts of clam shells were carefully cut into small pieces by means of sharp-edged stone knives, and a hole was bored through the pieces, making them like little tubes.

The white and the dark-colored beads were threaded and carefully arranged into patterns when belts or other woven pieces of ornament were made. The thread was either of vegetable fiber or of deer sinews, and long strings were sometimes made of the bark of the slippery-elm tree. Dark colored parts of the shells from which the beads were made were called black, but they were really dark shades of purple. White beads meant peace. Dark beads were woven into the belt either in square or diamond patterns or in some more irregular shape.

The wampum belt used in the treaty between William Penn and the Indians is now in the rooms of the Pennsylvania Historical Society. It was given to this society by a great-grandson of William Penn. This wampum belt was given to its first white owner as a solemn token that they would keep their pledge. History has shown how faithfully these red men kept their pledge with the Quakers.

This famous belt is an unusually wide one, having eighteen rows of wampum and nearly three thousand beads, which is proof that it was an important token. The center of the belt is of white wampum with two figures are pictured as clasping each others hands. One man pictured on the belt wears a hat, while the other

does not; this shows that one was a white man, the other an Indian.

This belt was kept in the Penn family and treasured with as much care as the chain and medal given to William Penn by the English Parliament; indeed, the medal and the wampum belt each served a like purpose; they were reminders of the promises of a nation.

Wampum belts of great historic value are kept by the Onondaga Indians; the finest of these is called the George Washington belt. It is believed by those who have had charge of it to be a pledge relating to the treaty between the early government of the United States and the Six Nations. Fifteen men are pictured on this belt. These may mean the original thirteen colonies and the people who were the speakers at the time of the treaty.

Such uses of belts of wampum were common among the different tribes of Indians. Small belts were woven for the chiefs to wear, and the women made themselves bracelets and neck chains of the beads.

It was necessary for the whites in the very early times to have this Indian money ready when they wished to purchase furs or other supplies of their wild neighbors. The beads had a certain value according to the number of strings. This value never changed.

It is told by the people who wrote back to England in those early days that the Indians could not be made to understand why they should pay more wampum for anything when it was plentiful. They were used to having one price for things they wished to buy and never having the price changed. For this reason the early settlers were able to buy

(Concluded on page 6)