

Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk First Nation Collection

MCC-00570

Total boxes: 2
Linear feet: 2.33ft

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Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk First Nation Collection (MCC-00570)

Shelf List Number: AX-570

Collection Overview

Creator

Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk First Nation

Dates

Unknown

Extent

2 boxes containing 20 artifacts.

Provenance

Donated by Danny Nicholas in July, 2012.

Language

English

French

Conservation Notes

The DVD is copyrighted. Handle items with care as many of them are fragile or have material like beads and feathers that could be torn off easily if not handled properly.

Conditions Governing Access and Use

Restrictions

Access: No restrictions

Physical: No restrictions

Technical: DVD player is required to view "Canada over the edge." This is a copyrighted recording that cannot be reproduced.

Rights Statement

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Recommended Citation

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Collection Description

Historical and Biographical Information

The Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk First Nation, formerly called the Maliseet of Viger First Nation, is the only Wolastoqey Nation in Quebec territory. Six other Wolastoqey Nations are in New Brunswick.¹

Until the 16th century, members of the Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk First Nation lived along the Saint John River in New Brunswick. They primarily lived off hunting and fishing, but they also grew corn. The Wolastoqey Nation is culturally similar to the Abenaki Nation and the Mi'kmaq Nation, which are all part of the Wabanaki Confederacy.

In 1840, there were more than 200 members of the Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk First Nation living on the banks of Rivière Mitis, and likely as many living elsewhere between Lévis and Rimouski, particularly on the Viger reserve. Created in 1827, the reserve was one of the first land concessions granted to an Indigenous nation in Québec. However, its land rights were disputed by the surrounding population, who asked the Canadian government to take back the land and put it up for sale. In 1869, after a few months of negotiations, the members of the Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk First Nation agreed to surrender their land under certain conditions, and the lots were sold at auction the following year.

In the late 19th century, the Canadian government granted the nation a territory in the township of Whitworth. The members of the Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk Nation tried in vain to cultivate this land, which was unsuitable for agriculture, before abandoning it and settling near Cacouna. After the federal government purchased a small lot for them in 1891, they remained there for several generations. However, no more than 10 people have ever lived there, and no one from the nation remains there today. It was not until 1987 that about 100 members of the Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk First Nation met in Rivière-du-Loup to elect a nation chief and council. The council then submitted an application for official recognition to the Québec government. In 1989, the National Assembly of Québec officially recognized the Malecite Nation as the 11th Indigenous nation of Québec. In 1998, the Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk First Nation had a building constructed on their lot in Cacouna to house their band council offices.² Today, the First Nation owns a small reserve land at Cacouna in Bas-Saint-Laurent and the members still constitute a diaspora living on the Québec territory and beyond.

Some of the artifacts have tags saying they were made or sold by boutiques selling Canadian indigenous art at the Matuweskewin boutique d'art Amerindien in Cacouna, Canada, which appears to be run by the Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk First Nation or in collaboration with the Nation. Cacouna is located about a two hour drive north-east of Fort Kent in the province of Quebec on the St. Lawrence River.

Other artifacts have a tag noting they were made by the Première Nation Malecite de Viger (now known as the Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk First Nation). It is unclear whether these artifacts were bought at the same boutique as the others. The rest of artifacts are unlabeled so it is unknown if

¹“Welcome!” Wolastoqiyik Wahsipekuk First Nation. Accessed from <https://wolastoqiyikwahsipekuk.ca/> -

²“Wolastoqiyik (Malecite)” Quebec government website. Accessed from <https://www.quebec.ca/en/government/quebec-at-a-glance/first-nations-and-inuit/profile-of-the-nations/malecite>

they were bought at this boutique or another location. The sets of clothing appear handmade and hand-designed.

The donor of these items, Danny Nicholas, is a member of the Wolastoqiyik Wamspekwuk First Nation. Due to the length of time between when the collection was donated to the Acadian Archives and when it was processed, he does not remember much about the artifacts himself. The former tribal chief who donated some artifacts, Ann Ashamble also passed away in 2023 before this collection was processed. The former archivist who accepted this collection did not remember any pertinent information either.

Phil Dumond, who created the DVD “Canada over the edge: Atlantic Frontier”, was a game warden covering the area between Escourt Station, Maine, and Grand Falls, New Brunswick.

Scope and Content

This collection is made up of 20 artifacts made by the Wolastoqiyik Wamspekwuk First Nation of Quebec as well as a DVD made by a former Maine game warden whose territory covered the northern Maine-Canadian border. Artifacts include clothing, dreamcatchers, dolls, jewelry, a drum, and wood carved birds.

Arrangement

Materials from this collection have been laid out in two boxes with tissue paper separating items. Larger items such as the clothing were laid out on the bottom of boxes with smaller items laid on top.

Separated Materials (If Applicable)

Not applicable

Subject Headings

Canada, Eastern
Dreamcatchers
Indian leatherwork
Indigenous art
Indigenous peoples
Malecite Indians
Wolastoqiyik Wamspekwuk First Nation
Wood-carving

Related Materials

Not applicable

Collection Inventory

Box	Item Description
1	Child’s vestment set made up of: Chaps with green colored fringe;

- A vest with an Indigenous man wearing a head-dress on the back and traditional tools like a bow/arrows on the front;
 A vest cover with a teepee and canoe on each side;
- 1 Adult vestment set made up of: Chaps with black colored fringe;
 Vest with an image of a hill in the horizon including wildlife on the back and images of a buffalo and eagle on the front;
 A vest cover with an image of wildlife such as a bird catching prey and a bear standing at the edge of a river on each side;
- 1 DVD titled “Canada over the edge: Atlantic Frontier”
- 1 Leather-bound dream catcher with white and brown feathers
- 1 Beaded choker with white, red, and black beads, a leather strap and a [bear?] claw
- 1 Corn doll with black wool hair and a colored bead necklace
- 1 Beaded choker with red, tan and metallic beads and a red leather strap
- 1 A small tear-shaped dream catcher with wooden beads and a small feather dangling from a strap
- 2 Feathered headpiece with green, red, blue and black colored leather and black, white/brown, and red feathers
- 2 A medium-sized carving of a long-beaked bird on a stand
- 2 A small bird carving with a large body
- 2 Large bird carving with a crooked neck
- 2 Wooden carved canoe with a paddle
- 2 Red, black, and white beaded earrings
- 2 A plastic doll in a green leather and red felt carrying bed with yellow-green and red lace. The carrying bed is bound by leather with beads and feathers attached to it.
- 2 Miniature white leather drum that rattles with white and brown feathers and brown beads dangling from straps