

**Religious Customs of Modern
Michigan Algonquians, 1955
1955**

Mss.497.3.K965a

American Philosophical Society
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Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Creator	Kurath, Gertrude Prokosch
Title	Religious Customs of Modern Michigan Algonquians, 1955
Date	1955
Call number	Mss.497.3.K965a
Extent	1.0 Volume(s) Ca. 500 pages
Extent	1 volume, ca. 500 p. with pictures and musical score added.
Location	LH-MV-E-8
Language	Algonquian (Other)
Container	1
Abstract	<p>The draft of an unpublished book, lacking chapter VI, Ottawa feasts. Attempts, by detailed analysis and description of present-day customs in historical perspective, to evaluate powwows, feasts, and camp meetings in Ottawa culture. 12 chapters give brief history, biographies, and locations; describe festivals and dances in detail; analyze native songs (scores); describe a Chippewa Methodist camp meeting and hymns, with analysis of hymn texts and tunes. Presents Ottawa "superstitions" (bear walking, medicines, herbs), 42 Ottawa myths (see Jane Willets, Ottawa material, Rec. 1), material on natural-history usage. Attempts to reconstruct function of ritual, with historical references.</p>

Background note

Gertrude Prokosch Kurath (1903-1992) was educated at Bryn Mawr College (MA, 1928, History of Art) and at the Yale University School of Drama (1929-1930). She received extensive training in music practice and theory, and in several systems of art dance as well as folk dancing, in Germany and the United States. From 1923-1946, she was an active teacher of modern dance, as a concert performer with the stage name Tula, and as a producer of pageants and dance dramas. In the mid-1940s, she turned her focus to the study of the American Indian dance. From 1949-1973, with the assistance of field research grants from the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the American Philosophical Society, and the National Museum of Canada, she studied among the Aztec, Otomi, Tarascan, and Yaqui Indians of Mexico, and the Iroquois, Cherokee, Ottawa, Chippewa, Menomini, Fox, Tewa, Keresan Indians of North America. In 1962, she founded the Dance Research Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Scope & content

From 1951-1965, Kurath was awarded various Phillips funded grants to study the songs and dances of the Algonquian and Iroquois. Her works include Religious customs of modern Michigan Algonquians with Jane Willets Ettawageshik (497.3 K965a, Film 1396); [Seneca music and dance style: songs and ceremonies of Coldspring longhouse](#), (497.3 K965s); [Ceremonial songs of the Tonawanda Seneca longhouse: tonal and rhythmic patterns and ritual functions](#), (497.3 K965st); [Observations of Michigan Indians](#) (497.3 Am4, no.55, Film 1257). Plus, audio recordings of songs and dances of the Ottawa, Chippewa, Keresan, and Tewa tribes. Kurath's other archival papers are held by the Cross-Cultural Dance Resources in Arizona, with some of her other Iroquois materials held by the Woodlands Cultural Center in Brantford, Ontario.

Scope & content

Native American Images note : 16 color photographs, sketches, maps and diagrams of Ottawa, Chippewa (Ojibwa) Indians performing native dances in Northern Michigan from 1954-1955. Taken by Kurath while conducting field studies primarily in Cross Village, Harbor Springs, Michigan. Images include the eagle, pipe, sun, and corn dances with men depicted in full native attire. Referenced in the online [Daythal Kendall Guide to Native American Collections at the American Philosophical Society](#).

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Presented by Gertrude P. Kurath, 1959.

Processing Information

Inventory is not complete, only scanned items are noted.

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- Diagrams.
- Maps.
- Photographs--Color
- Sketches.

Subject(s)

- Algonquian Indians
- Dance--Anthropological aspects--United States
- Eastern Woodlands Indians
- Indian dance--Michigan
- Indians of North America--Michigan
- Ojibwa dance
- Ojibwa Indians
- Ottawa Indians

Other Descriptive Information

FILM 1396

Collection Inventory

David Kenosha with drum	1955
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David Kenosha with drum , 1955

[\[http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/graphics:36371\]](http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/graphics:36371)

David Kenosha with pipe

1955

David Kenosha with pipe , 1955

[\[http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/graphics:3636\]](http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/graphics:3636)
