

**Seneca music and dance style: songs and
ceremonies of Coldspring longhouse [1951]**

Circa 1951

Mss.497.3.K965s

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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Background note	4
Scope & content	5
Scope & content	6
Administrative Information	7
Indexing Terms	7

Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Creator	Kurath, Gertrude Prokosch
Title	Seneca music and dance style: songs and ceremonies of Coldspring longhouse [1951]
Date	Circa 1951
Call number	Mss.497.3.K965s
Extent	1.0 Volume(s)
Extent	1 volume, ca. 200 p.
Location	LH-MV-E-8
Language	Iroquoian (Other)
Container	1
Abstract	Analysis of music; scores of songs, dances.

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

36 ink sketches of diagrams of Seneca dances performed at the Allegany reservation, New York, 1951. Drawn by Kurath while conducting field studies, images include formations of the round, feather, fish, war and stomp dances. Referenced in the online [Daythal Kendall Guide to Native American Collections at the American Philosophical Society](#).

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

This material has access restrictions. Please consult a curator for details.

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Donated by Gertrude P. Kurath, 1951.

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- Diagrams.
- Music--Scores.
- Sketches.

Subject(s)

- Dance--Anthropological aspects--United States
- Eastern Woodlands Indians
- Indians of North America--Dance
- Indians of North America--New York (State)
- Indians of North America--Rites and ceremonies
- Iroquois Indians--Music

- Musical analysis
- Seneca Indians