SECRET MEDICINE SOCIETIES OF THE SENECA

BY ARTHUR C. PARKER

DURING the last six years the writer has made a detailed field study of the various phases of Iroquois culture, special attention being directed to the rites and ceremonies of the semi-secret orders and societies that yet survive among the so-called pagan Iroquois. It was only after diligent inquiry that the actual existence of these societies was clearly established. The False-face Company and the Secret Medicine Society, better termed The Little Water Company, have been known to ethnologists for some time, but no one has adequately described them or has seemed fully aware of their significance. Likewise certain dances, such as the Bird, the Bear, the Buffalo, the Dark, and the Death dances, have been mentioned. Ceremonies also, such as the Otter Ceremony and the Woman's Song, have been listed, but that back of all these ceremonies there was a society never seems to have occurred to anyone. The Indians do not volunteer information, and when some rite is mentioned they usually call it a dance. Through this subterfuge the existence of these societies has long been concealed, not only from white investigators but from Christian Indians as well, the latter usually professing ignorance of the "pagan practices" of their unprogressive brothers.

Even so close an observer as Lewis H. Morgan says: "The Senecas have lost their Medicine Lodges, which fell out in modern times; but they formerly existed and formed an important part of their religious system. To hold a Medicine Lodge was to observe their highest religious mysteries. They had two such organiza-
tions, one for each phratry, which shows still further the natural connection of the phratry and the religious observances. Very little is now known concerning these lodges or their ceremonies. Each was a brotherhood into which new members were admitted by formal initiation."

Morgan's experience is that of most observers, close as their observation may be. The writer, with the assistance of his wife, however, living with the "pagans" and entering fully into their rites, discovered that the "medicine lodges," so far from having become extinct, are still active organizations, exercising a great amount of influence not only over the pagans but also over the nominal Christians.

It was found that the organization and rites of the societies might best be studied among the Seneca, who have preserved their rituals with great fidelity. The Onondaga, although keeping up the form of some, have lost many of the ancient features and look to the Seneca for the correct forms.

The teachings of Ganio'dai'io', Handsome Lake, the Seneca prophet, revolutionized the religious life of the Iroquois to a large extent, its greatest immediate effect being on the Seneca and Onondaga. Later it greatly influenced the Canadian Iroquois, excepting perhaps the Mohawk about the St Lawrence. Handsome Lake sought to destroy the ancient folk-ways of the people and to substitute a new system, built of course upon the framework of the old. Finding that he made little headway in his teachings, he sought to destroy the societies and orders that conserved the older religious rites, by proclaiming a revelation from the Creator. The divine decree was a command that all the animal societies hold a final meeting at a certain time, throw tobacco in the ceremonial fires, and dissolve. The heavenly reason for this order, Handsome Lake explained, was that men were unacquainted with the effects of their familiarity with the spirits of the animals, which, although they might bring fortune and healing to the members of the animal's order, might work terrible harm to men and to other animals.

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1 Morgan, Ancient Society, p. 97, ed. 1907.
The chiefs who were friendly to the prophet and others who were frightened by his threats met in council and proclaimed that all the animal and mystery societies should immediately dissolve, and, by their order, were dissolved and disbanded. This they did without holding a hayânt'wâtâs, tobacco-throwing ceremony, as directed. The members of the societies, therefore, declared that the order of the council was illegal and not binding, that the sin of disobedience was upon the chiefs and not upon the body of members. The societies consequently continued their rites, although they found it expedient to do so secretly, for they were branded as witches and wizards,¹ and the members of one society at least were executed as sorcerers when they were found practising their arts.

The existence of the societies became doubly veiled. The zealous proselytes of the New Religion denied their legality and even their existence, and the adherents of the old system did not care to express themselves too strongly in the matter of proclaiming their sacred orders still very much alive. The rites of the societies were performed in secret places for a number of years after the advent of the prophet, but as the adherents of the New Religion became more conservative, the societies again gradually entered into public ceremonies held in the council houses on thanksgiving occasions. At such times some of them gave public exhibitions of their rites; others had no public ceremonies whatsoever. With the gradual acceptance of the New Religion by the great majority of the people, the older religious belief was blended into the new. The Iroquois regard it as their Old Testament. The tabooed societies became bolder in their operations, and the new religionists entered their folds with few if any qualms.

It was about this time that their policy seems to have changed, for after some inquiry the writer can find no restriction placed on membership by reason of phratry or clanship. Candidates might join any society regardless of clan except the society of Men-who-assist-the-women's-ceremonies, which is not a secret organization. This society consists of two divisions, the membership of a division being determined by phratry. It is purely a benevolent society.

¹ The modern Iroquois call all sorcerers and conjurers, regardless of sex, "witches." They never use the masculine form.
however, and has nothing to do with "medicine." The various societies of all kinds, and still have, individual lodges, each of which is nominally independent of any jurisdiction save that of its own officers. The leaders, however, confer and keep their rites uniform. At present, especially in the Little Water Company, it is not even necessary for the song-holder, the chief officer, to be a pagan. This company is the only one which can boast of any great Christian membership or of a lodge composed entirely of nominal Christians. This lodge is the Pleasant Valley Lodge of the Little Water Company on the Cattaraugus reservation. Mrs Harriet Maxwell Converse joined this lodge in 1892, afterward joining the pagan lodge at Newtown.

A careful study of the Iroquois societies will lead to the conclusion that most of the societies are of ancient origin and that their rituals have been transmitted with little change for many years. Indeed, that under the circumstances any changes should have been made would be stranger than that none had occurred at all. Most of the rituals are chanted in unison by the entire company of members, and any change in note, syllable, or word would immediately be detected. Rites transmitted by song are more difficult to change than simple recitals where musical rhythm is not correlated with the word. Some of the rituals, moreover, contain archaic words and expressions, and even entire sentences are not understood by the singers.

Each society has a legend by which its origin and peculiar rites are explained. Most of these legends portray the founder of the society as a lost hunter, an outcast orphan, or a venturesome youth curious to know what was farther on. The founder got into strange complications, saw strange or familiar animals engaged in their rites, was discovered, forgiven, adopted, kept a captive, and finally, after long study and many warnings, was sent back to his people to teach them the secrets of the animals and how their favor could be obtained. The secrets were to be preserved by the society which the hero was to found. There are some variations of this abstract, but it covers the general features of most of the legends.

1 Myths and Legends of the Iroquois, N. Y. State Museum Bulletin 125, p. 176.
The study of the societies was commenced by the writer in 1902, and during the years 1905–1906 an almost uninterrupted study was made for the New York State Education Department, and the results deposited in the State Library. Since that time the research has been continued for the New York State Museum. Paraphernalia have been collected, phonograph records have been made of many of the songs and ceremonial speeches, texts have been recorded and translated, legends have been gathered, and some music has already been transcribed. There still remains an enormous amount of work to be done, and it is greatly to be regretted that a multiplicity of duties bars the way for as speedy progress in this work as might be desirable, especially since many of the informants are old people and in ill health.

A brief outline of the various societies is presented in this paper. It is impossible for the sake of brevity to present a fair compend or even a systematic outline. The main features of the less-known organizations and some neglected facts of the few that are better known are mentioned, it being hoped that even such statements may be useful to students of ethnology. The list follows:

\[\text{Niganėga'\textquotesingle}a\textquotesingle oď\textquotesingle no', or Ne'\textit{Hono'\textquotesingle tcino'\textquotesingle gā, The Little Water Company}\]

This society is perhaps the best organized of all the Seneca folk-societies. It holds four meetings each year, but only on three occasions is the night song, \textit{Ganoda}, chanted. To describe adequately the rites of this society would require a small volume. For the purposes of this paper, since the society has been described at greater length elsewhere, only a few notes can be given.

The company is organized to perform the rites thought necessary to preserve the potency of the "secret medicine," \textit{niganėga'\textquotesingle a'}, known as the "little-water powder." The meetings, moreover, are social gatherings of the members in which they can renew friendship and smoke away mutual wrongs if any have been committed. It is contrary to the rules to admit members having a quarrel unless they are willing to forgive and forget. Both men and women are

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\(^1\)A description of some of these societies was prepared for incorporation in the Fifth Annual Report of the Director of the State Museum, Albany, 1909.
Its officers, in order of their importance, are: the song-holder, the chief matron, the watcher of the medicine, feast-makers, invoker, flute-holder, and announcers and sentinels. There are two altars, the Altar of the Fire and the Altar of the Mystery. The ritual consists of three sets of songs describing the various adventures of the founder, known as the Good Hunter. At the close of each section the feast-makers pass bowls of berry-juice, giving each singer a draft from a ladle. An intermission then follows, during which the members, men and women alike, smoke the native home-grown tobacco. The singing is accompanied by the shaking of gourd rattles, and each member shakes one while he sings. Only purified members are supposed to enter. Unclean men or women, even though members, are debarred. The society has no public ceremony and no dances.

Only members are supposed to know the precise time and place of meeting. The songs must never be sung outside of the lodge-room, but special meetings are sometimes called for the purpose of instructing novices. The office of song-holder by the Cattaraugus Seneca is hereditary to the name O'dän'kot, Sunshine. The present song holder of the Ganun'dasé lodge, the pagan lodge at Newtown, Cattaraugus reservation, is a youth who is learning the song, George Pierce, the former O'dän'kot, having recently died. Visitors may listen to the songs in an outer room, but are debarred from viewing the "mysteries." Each member, on entering, deposits his medicine-packet on the Altar of the Mystery and places his contribution of tobacco in the corn-husk basket. The tobacco is thrown by the invoker into the fire as he chants his prayer to the Creator, the
Thunder Spirit, and to the Great Darkness. The flute-song is played during the second and third sections. At the close of the ceremony a pig's head is passed, and pieces of the boiled meat are torn from the head with the teeth, the members cawing in imitation of crows. In early times a bear's head was eaten. The food is then distributed, and the meeting or "sitting" is concluded. The ceremony commences at about 11 o'clock P.M. and is adjourned at daybreak. The sun "must not see the rites." The business of the society is all conducted before the ceremony commences: the reports of the officers are given and the treasurer's report read. The paraphernalia of this society consist of the medicine-bundles, the flute, gourd rattles for each singer, the sacred tobacco-basket (fig. 22), and a bark dipper. The necessary furnishings are a table and a fire-place, these being the "altars," and a lamp. The arrangement of a lodge is shown in figure 23. The "medicine" is not used in the ceremonies; it is simply "sung for." Its power is conserved for use by the medicine people in healing ceremonies. The singing of the ritual is conducted in total darkness, the lights being brought in only during the intermissions.

_Dewanondio'so'daik'ta', Pygmy Society, The Dark Dance Ceremony_

The ritual of this society consists of 102 songs, divided into four sections, as follows: The first section, 15 songs; the second, 23 songs; the third, 30 songs, and the fourth, 34 songs. The order of the ceremony is somewhat like that of the Medicine Company. All the songs are sung in darkness. It is believed that the spirit members of the society come and join in the singing, and their voices are thought to be audible at times.
The water drum and the horn rattle are used in this ceremony for keeping time. There is a brief dance. The Dark Ceremony is designed to appease certain spirits and to procure the good offices of others. Meetings are called at any time for the purpose of appeasing the spirits of certain charms that have become impotent or which may become so, or are called by members and even by non-members who are troubled by certain signs and sounds, such as the drumming of the water fairies or stone throwers, pygmies, who by their signs signify their desire for a ceremony. Non-members become members by asking for the services of the society. 

FIG. 24. — Dark Dance Ceremony of the Pygmy Society, or Band of Charm Holders. (Drawn by Jesse Complanter.)

rites are preëminently the religion of the "little folk" whose goodwill is sought by all Indians living under the influence of the Ongwe'Onwe'ka', Indian belief. The Pygmies are thought to be "next to the people" in importance, and to be very powerful beings. They demand proper attention or they will inflict punishment upon those who neglect them. This society, however, "sings for" all the "medicine charms" and all the magic animals. These magic animals are members of the society, and in order of their importance are: Jōgūlō', Elves or Pygmies; Jodi'Grwado', the Great Horned Serpent; Sho'dovek'owa, the Blue Panther, the herald of
death; Dewatiowa'is, the Exploding Wren. Other members, equal in rank, are: Diatdagwut', White Beaver; O'nowaot'gont, or Gane'onttwat, the Corn-bug; Otna'yont, Sharp-legs; O'nai'ta, Little Dry Hand; Dagwun'noyaent, Wind Spirit, and Nia'gwahë, Great Naked Bear.

These charm-members are called Hotcine'gada. The charms or parts of these members, which the human members keep and sing for, are: none of the first two, because they are very sacred and "use their minds" only for charms; panther's claw; feathers; white beaver's castor; corn-bug dried; bone of sharp-legs; dry hand; hair of the wind, and bones of Nia'gwahë. Some of these charms bring evil to the owners, but must not be destroyed under any circumstance. Their evil influence can be warded off only by the ceremonies. The owner or his family appoints someone to "hold the charm" after the first owner's death. Other charms are only for benevolent purposes, but become angry if neglected. Of the evil charms, the sharp bone may be mentioned; and of the good charms the exploding bird's feathers. Most of them are regarded, however, as ot'gont. The members of this society save their fingernail parings and throw them over cliffs for the Pygmies.

The ceremonies of the societies are always opened with a speech by the invoker. The following speech is that of the Pygmy Society, and in a general way is the pattern of nearly all opening invocations.

Yotondak'eo', Opening Ceremony of the Pygmy Society

We now commence to thank our Creator.
Now we are thankful that we who have assembled here are well.
We are thankful to the Creator for the world and all that is upon it for our benefit.
We thank the Sun and the Moon.
We thank the Creator that so far tonight we are all well.
Now I announce that A B is to be treated.
Now this one, C D, will throw tobacco in the fire.
Now these will lead the singing, E and F.
So I have said.

The "tobacco thrower" advances to the fire, and, seating himself, takes a basket of Indian tobacco and speaks as follows:
Now the smoke rises!
Receive you this incense!
You who run in the darkness.
You know that this one has thought of you
And throws this tobacco for you.
Now you are able to cause sickness.
Now, when first you knew that men-beings were on earth, you said,
"They are our grandchildren."
You promised to be one of the forces for men-beings' help,
For thereby you would receive offerings of tobacco.
So now you get tobacco—you, the Pygmies.  [Sprinkles tobacco on the fire.]
Now is the time when you have come;
You and the member have assembled here tonight.
Now again you receive tobacco—you, the Pygmies.  [Throws tobacco.]
You are the wanderers of the mountains;
You have promised to hear us whenever the drum sounds,
Even as far away as a seven days' journey.
Now all of you receive tobacco.  [Throws tobacco.]
You well know the members of this society,
So let this cease.
You are the cause of a person, a member, becoming ill.
Henceforth give good fortune for she (or he) has fulfilled her duty
and given you tobacco.
You love tobacco and we remember it;
So also you should remember us.
Now the drum receives tobacco,
And the rattle also.
It is our belief that we have said all,
So now we hope that you will help us.
Now these are the words spoken before you all,
You who are gathered here tonight.
So now it is done.

Dawando", The Society of Otters

This is a band of women organized to propitiate the otters and other water-animals who are supposed to exercise an influence over the health, fortunes, and destinies of men.  The otter, which is the

1 The malific influence causing sickness.
chief of the small water-animals, including the fish, is a powerful medicine-animal, and besides having his own special society is a member of the Ye'dos, or I''dos, and the Hono'tcino'gâ'.

The Otters may appear at any public thanksgiving, as the Green Corn Dance and the Midwinter Ceremony. After a tobacco-throwing ceremony, hayânt'wütgüs, the three women officers of the Dawan'yo' each dip a bucket of the medicine-water from the spring or stream, dipping down with the current, and carry it to the council-house where they sprinkle everyone they meet by dipping long wisps of corn-husk in the water and shaking them at the people. If the women succeed in entering the council-house and sprinkling everyone without hindrance, they go for more water and continue until stopped. The only way in which they may be forced to discontinue their sprinkling is for someone, just before she sprinkles him, to snatch the pail and throw the entire contents over her head. The Otter woman will then say, Hat'gaiz, niawâ'!—meaning, “Enough, I thank you!” She will then retire.

The Otters are especially active during the Midwinter Ceremony, and when the water is thrown over their heads it very often freezes, but this is something only to be enjoyed. When possessed with the spirit of the otter, the women are said to be unaware of their actions, and sometimes, when they are particularly zealous, the whistle of the otter is heard. This greatly frightens the people, who regard it as a manifestation of the presence of the “great medicine otter.” The women afterward deny having imitated the otter’s call, saying that they were possessed of the otter and had no knowledge of what they did.

The Otter Society has no songs and no dances. Its members are organized simply to give thanks to the water-animals and to retain their favor. When one is ungrateful to the water-animals, as a wasteful fisherman, or a hunter who kills muskrats or beaver without asking permission or offering tobacco to their spirits, he becomes strangely ill, so it is believed. The Otters then go to a spring and conduct a ceremony, after which they enter the sick man’s lodge and sprinkle him with spring water, hoping thereby to cure him.
I'dos oñ'no', Society of Mystic Animals

The I'dos Company is a band of "medicine" people whose object is to preserve and perform the rites thought necessary to keep the continued good-will of the "medicine" animals. According to the traditions of the company, these animals in ancient times entered into a league with them. The animals taught them the ceremonies necessary to please them, and said that, should these be faithfully performed, they would continue to be of service to mankind. They would cure disease, banish pain, displace the causes of disasters in nature, and overcome ill luck.

Every member of the company has an individual song to sing in the ceremonies, and thus the length of the ceremony depends on the number of the members. When a person enters the I'dos he is given a gourd rattle and a song. These he must keep with care, not forgetting the song or losing the rattle.

The head singers of the I'dos are two men who chant the dance song. This chant relates the marvels that the medicine-man is able to perform, and as they sing he proceeds to do as the song directs. He lifts a red-hot stone from the lodge fire and tosses it like a ball in his naked hands; he demonstrates that he can see through a carved wooden mask having no eye-holes, by finding various things about the lodge; he causes a doll to appear as a living being, and mystifies the company in other ways. It is related that new members sometimes doubt the power of the mystery-man and laugh outright at some of the claims of which he boasts. In such a case he approaches the doll, and though his face be covered by a wooden mask, cuts the string that fastens its skirt. The skirt drops, exposing the legs of the doll. Then the doubting woman laughs, for everyone else is laughing, at the doll she supposes, but shortly she notices that everyone is looking at her, and to her utmost chagrin discovers that her own skirt-string has been cut and that she is covered only by her undergarments. Immediately she stops laughing and never afterward doubts the powers of the medicine-man, who, when he cut the doll's skirt-string by his magic power, cuts her's also.

The I'dos is said to have been introduced among the Seneca by the Hurons. The ritual, however, is in Seneca, though some of
the words are not understood. The principal ceremonies are: 
(a) Gai'youwë́nogowa, The sharp point; (b) Gahadì'yo'go, At the wood's edge; (c) Gai'do', The great Gai'do'. Other ceremonies are O'to'do'gwàwà, It is blazing, and Tci'gwàwà, The other way around. During ceremonies b and c only individual members sing. The chief of the society is said to be a man who is able to see through a wooden mask which has no eye-openings. By his magic power he is able to discover hidden things previously concealed by

Fig. 25.— Masks used by the I'ðos Company. 1, Dual-spirit’s mask. 2, Witch’s mask. 3, Conjurer’s mask.

the members, probably by some particular member. He discovers the ceremonial, no matter where hidden, and juggles with a hot stone drawn from the fire. When the ceremonies are finished the members feast on a pig’s head. In early times a deer’s head was used. As do the members of the Medicine Lodge upon such an occasion, the members tear the meat from the head with their teeth. The ceremonies of the society are now considered an efficacious
treatment for fevers and skin diseases. The rites are supposed to be strictly secret.

The writer has transcribed the entire text of the I'ıdos ritual in Seneca and has translated it. Three masks are used in the rites—the Conjurer's mask, the Witch mask, and the Dual-spirit's mask. These masks are never used in the rites of the False-face Company, and differ from them in that they have no metal eyes (see fig. 25). A flash-light picture of a corner of the I'ıdos lodge was made by the writer in January, 1909, but the session of the lodge was not one of the "regular" ones. This picture is shown in figure 26.

![Fig. 26. — I'ıdos oå'no' (Society of Mystic Animals) in session.](image)

**Sha’dolge’a, The Eagle Society**

The ritual of the Eagle Society consists of ten songs and a dance. The song is called Ganat’gwaë oå’no’. Every member participating in the ceremony paints on each cheek a round red spot. No one but members may engage in its ceremonies, even though these be performed publicly. The Eagle Society's ceremony is re-
garded as most sacred, in this respect next to the Great Feather Dance, O'stową'gowa. It is believed that the society holds in its songs the most potent charms known. It is said that the dying, especially those afflicted with wasting diseases, and old people, have been completely restored by its ceremonies. This is because the Dew Eagle, to which the society is dedicated, is the reviver of wilting things.\(^1\) The membership is divided into two classes by phratry-

Fig. 27. — The Lodge Dance of the Eagles. (From a drawing by Jesse Cornplanter.)

\(^1\) The Dew Eagle refreshed the scalp of the Good Hunter by plucking a feather from his breast and sprinkling the scalp with dew from the lake in the hollow of its back.
continue to dance and sing until completely exhausted, unless someone strikes the signal pole and makes a speech. The dancers then retire to their benches until the speech ends, when the singers take up their song and the dance is continued. After his speech, the speaker, who may be any member, presents the dancers for whom he speaks with a gift of money, tobacco, or bread; but the old custom was to give only such things as birds liked for food. The speeches are usually in praise of one's own clan and in derision of the opposite phratry. At the close, the speakers all apologize for their clannish zeal, and say, as if everyone did not know it, that their jibes were intended only as jests. The dancers each hold in their left hands a calumet fan, made by suspending six heron or four eagle feathers parallel and horizontally from a rod or reed. In their right hands they hold small gourd rattles with wooden handles, or small bark rattles made of a folded strip of hickory bark patterned after the larger False-face bark rattles. The signal pole and the striking stick are spirally striped with red paint. After the ceremony, when held in a private lodge, the members feast on a pig's head; but this is a modern substitute for a bear's or a deer's head, though crows' heads once were eaten also.

Nia'gwai' oda'no', THE BEAR SOCIETY

The ritual of the Bear Society consists of twenty songs and a dance. During the intermissions in the dance, that is, between songs, the participants eat berries from a pan on the dance-bench, or, in winter, eat honey, taking portions of the comb and eating it as they walk about the bench. The ceremony is opened by making a tobacco-offering to the spirits of the bears, during which the chief Bear-man makes an invocation. The high officer of the society, however, is a woman. The symbol of membership is a black streak drawn diagonally across the right cheek. The object of the society is to cure the diseases of its members and candidates by chanting and dancing. The ceremony is believed to be a remedy for fevers and rheumatism, as well as to bring good fortune. In a healing ceremony the chief woman blows on the head of the patient. After a ceremony the members carry home with them pails of bear-
pudding, a sweetened corn pudding mixed with sunflower oil. The Bears use the water-drum and horn rattles. All Seneca dances are counter-clockwise.

**Fig. 28. — Horn rattles once used by the Tonawanda-Seneca Bear Society.**

*Degi'ya'go'o oá'no', The Buffalo Society*

The ritual of this society consists of a number of songs which relate the story of the origin of the order. After a ceremony in which there is a dance, the members depart, carrying with them the buffalo-pudding. The dancers imitate the action of buffalo when stamping off flies, and the pudding is supposed to be of the consistency of the mud in which the buffalo stamp. When it is eaten it acts as a charm that “stamps off” disease or ill-fortune. The Buffalos use the water-drum and horn rattles.
O'gi'we o'dno', CHANTERS FOR THE DEAD

The O'gi'we Ceremony is called for by any member who dreams of the restless spirit of some former member, relative, or friend. At the Ceremony the set of songs is sung, the large water-drum beaten, and a feast indulged in. The food is supposed to satisfy the hungry ghosts that for some reason are "earth-bound," as spiritists might express it. The O'gi'we Ceremony must not be confused with the Death Feast Ceremony, which is a clan affair. The diviner of the O'gi'we people is able to identify the unknown spirit which may be troubling the dreams of a member. The sickness and ill-fortune caused by evil ghosts may be dispelled by the ceremony. The chief officer is a woman.

Deswadenyationdotit, THE WOMAN'S SOCIETY

This society preserves the ritual by which good fortune and health are obtained for women. The singers, fourteen in number at Cattaraugus, are all men. During their singing the women dance. The office of chief singer is hereditary. The women join in a chorus as the men sing. Horn rattles and water-drums are used.
Towii'asas, Sisters of the Dio'he'ko

This society is composed of a body of women whose special duty is to offer thanks to the spirits of the corn, the beans, and the squashes, Dio'he'ko (these sustain our lives). By their ceremonies of thanksgiving the Towii'asas propitiate the spirits of growth, and people are assured of a good harvest. The Towii'asas have a ceremonial song and a march, but no dances. The legend of the society relates that the entire band of Towii'asas, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, was captured by the Cherokee and carried down the Ohio river. Thereafter two men were admitted as escorts in their march through the woods. At the closing of the ceremony the head-woman chants the Dio'-he'ko song as she leads her band about a kettle of corn pudding. She carries an armful of corn on the cob; in her right hand she holds some loose beans, and in her left some squash seeds, the emblems of fertility. The Towii'asas hold one ceremony each year, unless some calamity threatens the harvest. The rattle of this society is made of a land tortoise (box-turtle) shell. These are often found in graves, but their exact use in the Iroquois territory has not generally been known to archeologists.

Indigo'sa sho'ot, The False-face Company

This organization is one of the better-known societies of the Iroquois, and its rites have often been described, though not always correctly interpreted. There are three divisions of the False-faces, and four classes of masks—doorkeeper or doctor masks, dancing masks, beggar masks, and secret masks. The beggar and thief's masks form no part of the paraphernalia of the true society, and the secret masks are never used in public ceremonies in the council-house at the midwinter ceremony. The False-face ceremonies have
been well described, though by no means exhaustively, by Morgan\textsuperscript{1} and Boyle.\textsuperscript{2} The main features are generally known.

The paraphernalia of this society consist of the masks previously mentioned, turtle-shell rattles (snapping-turtles only), hickory-bark rattles, head throws, a leader's pole upon which is fastened a small husk face, a small wooden false-face, and a small turtle rattle, and a tobacco basket. Masks are shown in the accompanying illustrations.

![Figure 31](image)

\textbf{FIG. 31.} -- Typical False-face Company masks, from the collection of Mr Joseph Keppler, New York City.

There are two Seneca legends setting forth the origin of the False-faces, and three with the Mohawk story. These stories, however, explain the origin of different classes of masks. Each mask has a name. One story relates that the False-faces originated with the Stone Giants. However this may be, the writer obtained in 1905,

\textsuperscript{1}Morgan, Fifth Annual Report N. Y. State Cabinet (Museum), 1852, p. 98.

MASKS OF THE SECRET FALSE-FACE COMPANY

1. The Traitor Mask. 2. The Stone Giant Mask. 3. Beggar Mask (this is not used in any Lodge ceremony).
from a woman claiming to be the keeper of the secret masks, a mask representing the Stone Giant's face. With it was a mask made of wood, over which was stretched a rabbit-skin stained with blood. This mask was supposed to represent the face of a traitor as he would look when drowned for his infamy. Chief Delos Kettle said it was used to cure venereal diseases. These masks are shown in plate viii. They are not typical masks by any means.

There is some dispute as to the antiquity of the False-face Company. Dr Beauchamp, in his History of the Iroquois, says it is comparatively recent. From a study of the Seneca society, however, the writer is inclined to believe that it is quite old with them, although it may be more recent with the other Iroquois. Early explorers certainly could not have seen everything of Iroquois cul-

![Blowing mask pipe from Erie county, New York. Collected for the Peabody Museum, Cambridge, by Harrington and Parker in 1903. A similar pipe is in the State Museum at Albany.](image)

...ture, especially some of the secret things, and their lack of description may be regarded as negative testimony rather than as positive evidence of the non-existence of certain features which later students have found. It is quite possible that the author of "Van Curler's"
Journal of 1634-'35 mentions a false-face when he writes: "This chief showed me his idol; it was a head with the teeth sticking out; it was dressed in red cloth. Others have a snake, a turtle, a swan, a crane, a pigeon for their idols. . . ." The Seneca at present drape their false-faces when they hang them up for safe keeping, and use them as well as turtle and snake charms as bringers of good fortune. Some pipes from seventeenth-century graves seem to represent blowing masks. Mr M. R. Harrington and the writer found one in 1903 while excavating a seventeenth-century site, since learned to be of Seneca occupancy, on Cattaraugus creek, near Irving (fig. 32). The counterpart of this pipe was found by R. M. Peck on the Warren site, near West Bloomfield, N. Y. The Indians say it is a False-face blowing ashes, and such it may represent. Mr Harrington, and the writer as well, have found what may be false-face eye-disks, as well as turtle-shell rattles, in Seneca and Erie graves.

The principal False-face ceremonies are: Ganoi'iiowii, Marching Song; Hodigoshos'ga, Doctors' Dance, and Yea'sëdädi'yas, Doorkeepers' Dance.

Gaji'sa shô'ôt, THE HUSK-FACES

This society seems rather loosely organized among the Seneca, but its chief members act as water doctors. They endeavor to cure certain diseases by spraying and sprinkling water on the patients. Two Husk-faces are admitted with the False-faces in their midwin-
THE GREAT WIND MASK, A MEDICINE OR DOCTOR MASK OF THE FALSE-FACE COMPANY
ter long-house ceremony, and act as door-openers. As a company they also have a ceremony in which the Grandfather's Dance is featured. The grandfather is attired in rags, and, holding a cane stationary, dances in a circle about it, using the cane as a pivot. The company dance is one in which all the members participate. Non-members may partake of the medicine influence of the ceremony by joining in the dance at the end of the line when the ceremony is performed in the council-house at the midwinter festival.

That the foregoing so-called societies are in fact organizations, and that their rites are not merely open ceremonies in which anyone may engage, is apparent from the following considerations:

1. The organizations have permanent officers for the various parts of their rites.

2. They have executive officers.

3. They have certain objects and stand for specific purposes.

4. They have stable and unchangeable rituals.

5. Those who have not undergone some form of an initiatory rite are not allowed to enter into their ceremonies.

6. They have legends by which the origin and objects of the rites are explained.

7. It is not permissible to recite the rituals or to chant any of the songs outside of the lodge to anyone who has not been inducted into the society.
Some of the societies have other features, such as stated meetings and officers' reports, but the foregoing characteristics apply to all the Seneca secret or semi-secret ceremonies, and entitle them to the name of societies.

When an Indian is afflicted with some disorder which cannot be identified by the native herb doctors, the relatives of the patient consult a clairvoyant, who names the ceremony, one of those above described, believed to be efficacious in treating the ailment. Sometimes several ceremonies are necessary, and as a final resort a witchdoctor is called upon.

As to the influence of these organizations on the people, while it must be confessed that they foster some "superstitions" inconsistent with the modern folk-ways of civilized society, they serve more than any other means to conserve the national life of the people. The strongest body of Iroquois in New York today are the
two bands or divisions of the Seneca, and the Seneca have the largest number of "pagans." They are perhaps likewise the most patriotic, and struggle with greater energy to retain their tribal organization and national identity.

The customs of these adherents of the old Iroquois religion react on and influence the entire body of the people, "pagans" and Christians alike.

New York State Museum,
Albany