

OJIBWE POW WOWS

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Woman in foreground is wearing a headband and a bandolier bag.

Stocker, Stella Prince, 1858-1925. 1916-06-14. "Ojibwe women and children at the Annual White Earth Celebration and Pow Wow, White Earth, Minnesota." University of Minnesota Duluth, Kathryn A. Martin Library, Northeast Minnesota Historical Collections, Accessed January 4, 2021. <https://reflections.mndigital.org/catalog/nemhc:5066>



Pow Wow Grand Entry
Photo courtesy of Michele Hakala-Beekma



Stocker, Stella Prince, 1858-1925. 1916 - 1917. "Medicine man George Farmer, Neff Lake, Minnesota." University of Minnesota Duluth, Kathryn A. Martin Library, Northeast Minnesota Historical Collections, Accessed January 4, 2021. <https://reflections.mndigital.org/catalog/nemhc:4986>

OVERVIEW

Pow wows are social and spiritual gatherings that have evolved over time within our living Anishinaabe culture. Pow wows include dancers in regalia, drums, a sacred fire-for sending prayers to the Creator, food, Native craft vendors, and games. It is a time to pray (by word, song, and dance), to strengthen community bonds, relax and have fun. The round-shaped dance arena referred to as the circle is the center of the pow wow. The circle is a reminder of our medicine wheel teachings, a small part of which are that we are all one and equal and connected to the Earth. The dancers, songs and drum all connect and work together to create one prayer/one voice that is sent to the Creator. The pow wow starts with a prayer given by a Spiritual Advisor and then Grand Entry where all dancers are welcomed into the dance arena and given tobacco to pray with. Next the are flag songs and honoring of veteran's songs and dances. All should stand during these songs and prayers. During inter-tribal songs everyone (Native and non-Native) are invited to dance. There is an MC that will announce the different types of songs and drum groups.

Eagle Staff

Eagle Staffs

The Eagle Staff is similar to a flag in that it represents and honors a Tribal Nation, Band, or group such as veterans, clan, or organizations. Tribal members and family members dance with the staff at pow wows next to the American Flag, state flags, veteran flags, and Tribal Community Flags. Each type of flag will have its own honor song.

Stocker, Stella Prince, 1858-1925. Portrait of Shaw-ga-boab at the Annual White Earth Celebration and Pow Wow, White Earth, Minnesota. 1916-06-14. University of Minnesota Duluth, Kathryn A. Martin Library, Northeast Minnesota Historical Collections, reflections.mndigital.org/catalog/nemhc:4951 Accessed 4 Jan 2021.



Fond du Lac Reservation Veterans' Pow wow, Minnesota 2019
Photo courtesy of Michele Hakala-Beekma



Eagles



Thunderbird leggings from Hakala-Beekma collection

Photo courtesy of Michele Hakala-Beekma

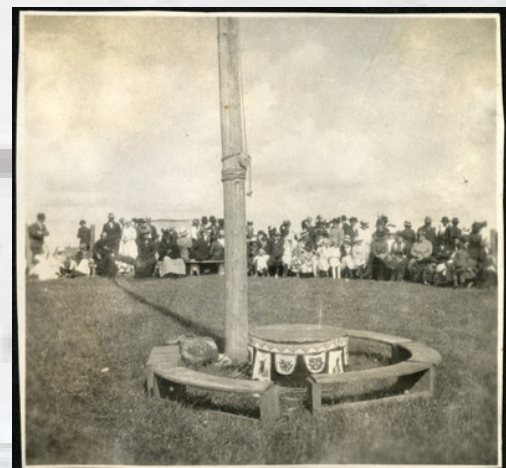
Eagles are thought to be related to thunderbirds. They are the ones that carry our prayers to the Creator with their ability to fly so much higher than other birds. There is a traditional story of the eagles offering to intercede for the Anishinaabe to the Creator when they were living in an unhealthy way. The eagle brought back the four medicines and ceremonial traditions. Many Anishinaabeg pray with eagle feathers and are Eagle Feather carriers, which is a responsibility and an honor. Eagle feathers are considered a sacred prayer item. Eagle feathers are also a symbol of warriors/veterans because they have both made that personal sacrifice for the good of the people. There are protocols that must be followed, i.e., not letting it touch the ground. If it does touch the ground, only a veteran who has seen battle may pick it up. In the Thunder Bay, Ontario, area there is a mountain that tradition says is the site of a thunderbird's nest.

Drums

The ceremonial dance drum (The Big Drum or The Sioux Drum) used at pow wows originated with the Sioux. The story, which dates to somewhere around 1870, is of a girl/woman (Tailfeather Woman) who hid in a lake to escape an attack by the white settlers on her village. The Great Spirit appeared to her and told her to have the drum made and taught her songs and said that it would bring peace. The drum was to be given to other Native Peoples as well. Before the dance drum, smaller hand drums were used either alone or with shakers/rattles. The sound of the shaker is said to be the first sound of the universe—before there was evil in the world. As such, the sound is said to be cleansing. Shakers and water drums are used in medicine ceremonies. Women can play hand drums and shakers. In some communities, women express an interest in having a dance drum which causes some controversy with traditional Native peoples. Dance drums are cared for by a drum keeper. When a drum is played, we stand out of respect (unless specifically told not to for a certain song). The drum should always have a dancer whenever possible. At the start of a pow wow all stand for the first Grand Entry song and Veterans honor songs. After that, it is permissible to sit. During times of tension or sorrow in situations, there will sometimes be a 'call for a drum'. The intent is for the drum/drummers to come and to sing healing songs/prayer songs. Often a 'call for jingle dress dancers' will happen at the same time as they bring healing as well. Drums mimic the sound of a heartbeat both human and the earth.



Ojibwe Drum
Photo courtesy of Michele Hakala-Beeksmma



Stocker, Stella Prince, 1858-1925. 1916-06-14. "Drum and assembled people at the Annual White Earth Celebration and Pow Wow, White Earth, Minnesota." University of Minnesota Duluth, Kathryn A. Martin Library, Northeast Minnesota Historical Collections, Accessed January 4, 2021. <https://reflections.mndigital.org/catalog/nemhc:5055>

OJIBWE VOCABULARY



CLICK EACH WORD TO HEAR IT
SPOKEN BY A NATIVE SPEAKER!

Dewe'igan
Drum

Opwaagan
Pipe

Migizi
Eagle

Niimi'idiwin
Pow wow/dance

Pipes



Stocker, Stella Prince, 1858-1925. 1916-06-14. "Portrait of Ak-jah-shah-wah-shik at the Annual White Earth Celebration and Pow Wow, White Earth, Minnesota." University of Minnesota Duluth, Kathryn A. Martin Library, Northeast Minnesota Historical Collections, Accessed January 4, 2021. <https://reflections.mndigital.org/catalog/nemhc:5058d>



Stocker, Stella Prince, 1858-1925. 1916-06-14. "Pipe ceremony at the Annual White Earth Celebration and Pow Wow, White Earth, Minnesota." University of Minnesota Duluth, Kathryn A. Martin Library, Northeast Minnesota Historical Collections, Accessed January 4, 2021. <https://reflections.mndigital.org/catalog/nemhc:5026>

Pipes are used to pray with by persons called a pipe carrier. Being a pipe carrier is a responsibility and an honor. Sometimes pipes are gifted to someone who has 'apprenticed' with an elder who is a pipe carrier/spiritual advisor. Some people dream about a pipe (or other spiritual items) then make it themselves. The pipe, because it is a spiritual item, is always stored with the stem detached from the bowl. The bowl is made from pipestone (catlinite) from the Pipestone Minnesota National park area. The traditional story is that the Great Spirit appeared above the area where the ground was a reddish/brown color, heated the ground and it turned to rock. The people were told to use the stone (which was the color of the Native peoples) to make pipes for prayer and to foster peace among differing tribes. Hence, the name peace pipe. The pipe is loaded prayerfully. The smoke is brought into the mouth to be infused with the person's prayer and exhaled to go up to the Creator. The pipe is offered to the four directions (all of the earth/mankind/spirit world) and at times offered among those present to add their prayers. The Lakota have a different story of the origin of the pipe. White Buffalo Calf Woman appeared to two men and gave the Lakota ceremonies and the pipe during a time when they were experiencing a famine.

Regalia

clothing

Regalia is modern clothing with a style reminiscent of past times. Styles have changed and evolved over the years. It is not referred to as a 'costume'. Clothing and outfit are acceptable verbiages. Regalia should only be worn by people of Native ancestry with Native community ties. Necklaces and earrings are not considered regalia. Ojibwe people are 'brought into the circle' the first time they dance. It is a life stage event.



1930 - 1939. "Ojibwe family visited by Sister Laura Hesch, Order of St. Benedict at Mille Lacs Indian Reservation, Minnesota." Saint Benedict's Monastery, Accessed January 4, 2021.
<https://reflections.mndigital.org/catalog/stbm:454>

jingle dresses

There is a story that the jingle dress came about from a dream during the 1918 pandemic. The dresses' cones are meant to sound like rain. Rain, which is a cleansing, nourishing gift from the Creator and the sound brings healing. Being a jingle dress dancer is a duty, to dance for healing and to live in a clean, honorable way, and honor. The dress must be cared for as a spiritual item. Sometimes the dress is dreamt and at other times, it is given to or made by the wearer.

OJIBWE VOCABULARY



Bwaanzzhiwi'on
dance regalia

Ziibaaska'igangooday
jingle dress

Zenibaanh-majogoodehn
ribbon dress

Bimoonjigan
dance bustle

Miskwaazigan
roach headress



Yellow Jingle dress owned by Phoebe Davis
Photo courtesy of Michele Hakala-Beeksmä



Red Jingle dress and Men's Ribbon Shirt on loan to the St. Louis County Historical Society by Michele Hakala-Beeksmä
Photo courtesy of Michele Hakala-Beeksmä



Ojibwe traditional strap dress and shawl regalia Michele Hakala-Beekma collection. Standing Wind Woman on banner in background-Eastman Johnson, St. Louis County Historical Society
Photo courtesy of Michele Hakala-Beekma

ribbon skirts and women's traditional

Ribbon skirts are worn at ceremonies, during prayer, and more modern ones as an expression of culture. Our teaching is that women wear them out of respect for the Creator as a symbol of who we are as women (the circle of the skirt represents the home/where the family is cared for), and as a reminder to remember our cultural values. Women's traditional regalia worn at pow wows serves the same purposes and is generally worn by our Elder women who are the keepers of our traditions-the wise ones in our community. When they dance, they keep one foot in contact with the ground- to remember their connection to the earth.



Ojibwe ribbon skirts and dress
Photos courtesy of Liz Beekma

fancy or shawl dancers

The younger women are generally the shawl/fancy dancers. They are light on their feet-jumping and spinning. Their dance style and bright colors reminds us of the lightness and joy of youth and growth. They are said to resemble butterflies who have transformed from the caterpillar-transformative growth.



Ojibwe shawl dancer Phoebe Davis
Photo courtesy of Jeremy Davis



Ojibwe traditional strap dress, Eastman Johnson, St. Louis County Historical Society
Photo courtesy of Michele Hakala-Beekma

OJIBWE VOCABULARY



Manidoominensag.

Beads

Makizinan

Moccasins



Stocker, Stella Prince, 1858-1925. 1916-06. "Sam Kegg, Jim Mitchell and two unidentified dancers, Mille Lacs, Minnesota." University of Minnesota Duluth, Kathryn A. Martin Library, Northeast Minnesota Historical Collections, Accessed January 4, 2021.
<https://reflections.mndigital.org/catalog/nemhc:5016>

grass or Omaha dancers

The tradition is that the Grass dancers are the warrior dancers. Their style of dance is meant to mimic the swaying of the grass and their footsteps are meant to tamp down the long grass for blessing, ceremony or battle. Grass dancers have few if any feathers instead they have ribbons or yarn fringe.



Fancy Dancer
 Photo courtesy Free-images.com

men's traditional

The men who wear the traditional regalia are the ones who remind us that the Elder men are the keepers of the Earth. They have a responsibility to see that the resources are being used in a proper manner. Their regalia is reconized by beaded or applique vests, breach cloths, and animal parts carried or used as arm or leg decoration. The headress is know as a roach headress.



Stocker, Stella Prince, 1858-1925. 1916-06-14. "Drummers and dancers at the Annual White Earth Celebration and Pow Wow, White Earth, Minnesota." University of Minnesota Duluth, Kathryn A. Martin Library, Northeast Minnesota Historical Collections, Accessed January 4, 2021.
<https://reflections.mndigital.org/catalog/nemhc:5067>



Jeremy Davis-grass dancer
 Photo courtesy Michele Hakala-Beeksma

men's fancy dancers

A relatively modern dance (the early 1900s) is based loosely on the war dance done in the Oklahoma area. This is the regalia with large bustles (circles of feathers attached at the back). It is a very fast-paced dance.

Craft and Food Vendors



frybread

One food unique to Native culture is frybread. There are many recipes and ways of preparing it from across the county. Frybread has its origin at the beginning of the reservation era and the government commodities distribution. As such, today there is some division in the Native community about whether it should be offered/consumed. Some feel it is not part of our original pre-contact diet and should be avoided. Others feel that it should serve as a reminder of the hardships suffered by our ancestors. Frybread can be eaten alone, with butter or jam, dipped in maple syrup, or as a base for a taco, or cheeseburger.



Around the outside of the circle-shaped dance arena, there are food and Native craft vendors. Native craft vendors sell a wide variety of handmade and commercially made items. Beadwork, regalia, blankets, and silverwork are just some of the items that you might see for sale. Food vendors sell a variety of modern food and as well as some food that is more traditional or unique to the Native culture.

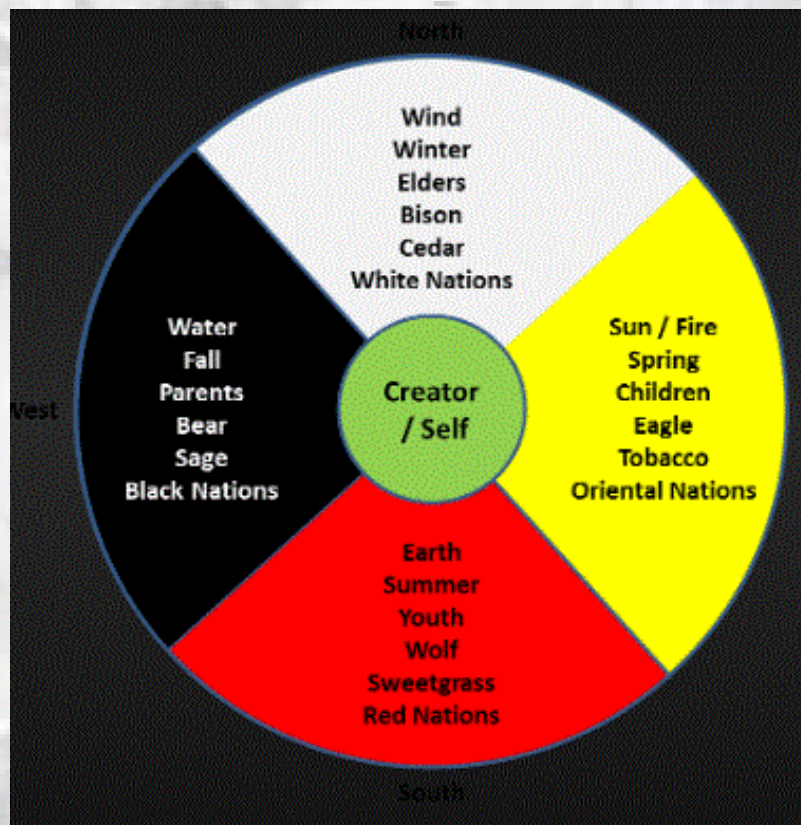


Photos courtesy of Michele Hakala-Beeksma

Medicine Wheel Teachings

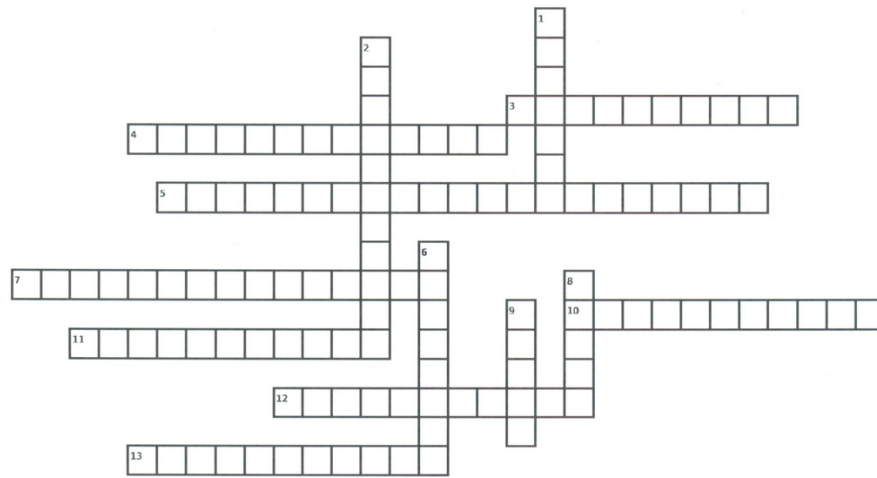
The Medicine Wheel is a symbol used to represent many aspects of living life in balance (in a good way).

Different Tribes and Nations may/will have different colors in different sectors and may have different teachings associated with them. We say that all teachings are correct. The one shown is what is usual for this area (Anishinaabeg). When praying in the four directions, Anishinaabeg start in the East. There are more teachings than can fit on the wheel shown. For example, physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental aspects of our being. The concepts and lessons learned of each direction are thought of when praying and offering tobacco in each direction. So, as an adult, I might remind myself to pay attention to details and have a wonderment about the world when facing East—the place of new beginnings. South might remind me to love without reservation and try to recapture idealism. West is the place of raising a family, responsibility, and taking care of the Earth and the way we treat each other. North is the place of wisdom and when we are at our highest spiritually. Those in the North must pass on knowledge so it is not lost before they journey to the spirit world. Elders in Native communities are highly respected for their knowledge. They are viewed and treated like honored guests. Our youth bring them food at gatherings if they wish, or they are always at the front of the food line. If you are starting a community project you would seek out an elder to be the advisor for the group. It is their job to make sure things are done according to our traditions and values.



CROSSWORD

Crossword Puzzle



Down:

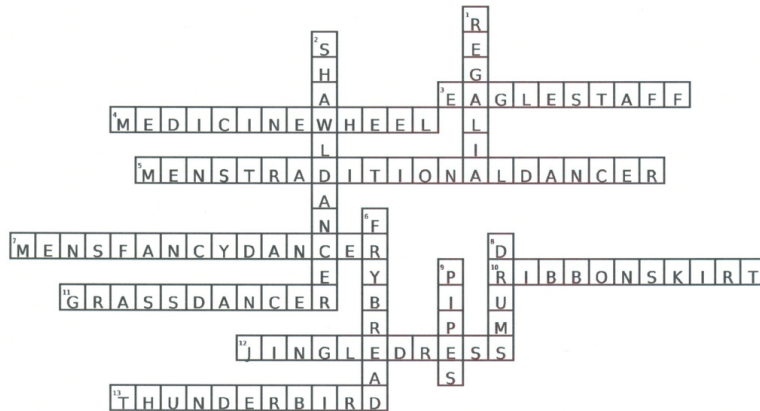
1. modern clothing with a historic connectedness
2. butterfly dancer
6. came into being during the reservation era
8. called to played during times of tension
9. offered to the four directions

Across:

3. similar to a flag
4. represents many teachings, circular
5. keepers of the earth
7. wears a bustle
10. worn as a sign of respect
11. warrior dancer
12. healing dress
13. related to eagles

CROSSWORD ANSWER KEY

Crossword Puzzle



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