

Queequeg's Tomahawk: A Cultural Biography, 1750–1900

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Abstract. Since the colonial era, the tomahawk has served as a symbol of Indian savagery in American arts and literature. The pipe tomahawk, however, tells a different story. From its backcountry origins as a trade good to its customization as a diplomatic device, this object facilitated European-Indian exchange, giving tangible form to spoken metaphors for war, peace, and alliance. The production, distribution, and use of the pipe tomahawk also illustrated contrasting Indian and European notions of value and utility in material objects, exposing the limits of such goods in promoting cross-cultural mediation and understanding.

In the opening chapters of *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael notices several objects in Queequeg's possession that signify the savagery of their owner. The harpooner from the South Seas carries with him embalmed heads from New Zealand and a small black idol. Equally impressive to Ishmael is Queequeg's tomahawk, which he encounters when the two characters meet for the first time in the room they are forced to share at the Spouter Inn. Ishmael has already retired for the night when Queequeg returns to the room, unaware of his new bedfellow. While Queequeg prepares for bed in the dark, Ishmael lies awake, wondering how to address him: "But the interval I spent in deliberating what to say was a fatal one. Taking up his tomahawk from the table, he examined the head of it for an instant, and then holding it to the light, with his mouth at the handle, he puffed out great clouds of tobacco smoke. The next moment the light was extinguished, and this wild cannibal, tomahawk between his teeth, sprang into bed with me." Ishmael called out for the landlord while a surprised Queequeg brandished the lighted tomahawk over his head. The innkeeper intervened, and Ishmael and Queequeg came to an accommodation. "Landlord," Ishmael said, "tell

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him to stash his tomahawk there, or pipe, or whatever you call it; tell him to stop smoking, in short, and I will turn in with him. But I don't fancy having a man smoking in bed with me. It's dangerous. Besides, I ain't insured."

Despite his initial fright, Ishmael soon grew fond of both Queequeg and his tomahawk. As the two men plied the docks looking for work, they shared meals and stories, often passing Queequeg's tomahawk—or as Ishmael called it, "that wild pipe of his"—between them. These shared smokes developed into an easy intimacy between the two. "If there yet lurked any ice of indifference towards me in the Pagan's breast," Ishmael stated after one such exchange, "this pleasant, genial smoke we had, soon thawed it out, and left us cronies." Ishmael no longer protested when Queequeg smoked in their room, "For now I liked nothing better than to have Queequeg smoking by me, even in bed, because he seemed to be full of such serene household joy then." But neither could Ishmael shake the sense of danger conveyed by the tomahawk, and he marveled at the genius of an object that had "both brained [its owner's] foes and soothed his soul."¹

No other artifact associated with the European-Indian encounter has contributed as much to the racist stereotyping of Indians as the tomahawk. Since the colonial era, writers and artists have used the raised tomahawk as symbolic shorthand for the Indian warrior's primitive bloodlust and his providential extermination at the hands of a superior civilization, a narrative famously conveyed by Horatio Greenough's Jacksonian-Era sculpture for the U.S. Capitol, *The Rescue* (fig. 1).² Even in our supposedly more enlightened times, the tomahawk remains a symbol of a kind of lawlessness and mayhem distinctly associated with Indians, whether they are portrayed by Hollywood or Major League Baseball. Melville's depiction of Queequeg's tomahawk is thankfully more nuanced. In its first appearance, as the unsuspecting Queequeg hops into bed with the frightened Ishmael, it accentuates the cultural distance between these strangers. Later, the tomahawk facilitates Ishmael's and Queequeg's growing friendship, challenging the presumed cultural dichotomy that it first represented and inspiring Ishmael's ruminations on their common humanity. When Ishmael confesses his fondness for Queequeg's smoking in bed, the tomahawk ceases to connote impending harm and instead becomes an emblem of domestic comfort. In Melville's hands, Queequeg's tomahawk embodies civility as well as savagery, peace as well as conflict, between cultural opposites.³

Queequeg wielded a particular kind of tomahawk, a combined smoking and striking device known as a pipe tomahawk (fig. 2). Created to serve two functions, this object was naturally suited for the dual symbolism Melville invested in it. Raised by its owner over the head of another, it conveyed a message of impending violence; passed between them, it meant



Figure 1. Horatio Greenough, *The Rescue* (1853). Courtesy U.S. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-31423.

peace and friendship. The pipe tomahawk emerged from obscure origins a century before the publication of *Moby-Dick*, most likely the product of backcountry blacksmiths who altered trade hatchets to better suit the tastes and aesthetics of their Indian customers. During the Seven Years' War, production and distribution of this object increased as a result of the British Crown's effort to arm its Indian allies. Indians may have acquired the pipe



Figure 2. Pipe tomahawk, c. 1770, Seneca (Haudenosaunee), N-84.95. Courtesy Thaw Collection, Fenimore Cooper Art Museum, Cooperstown, NY.

tomahawk as a weapon, but they also put it to use in their material culture as a tool and as a smoking device. By the late eighteenth century, this hybrid product of the fur trade held meaning on both sides of the cultural divide as an object of diplomacy used to symbolize alliance and authority, as well as to give tangible form to spoken metaphors for war (“taking up the hatchet”) and peace (“smoking the peace pipe”). Its form and use continued to evolve well into the nineteenth century, as its ceremonial meaning gradually supplanted its practical uses as a tool and weapon.

In the same year that Melville published *Moby-Dick*, Lewis Henry Morgan described the pipe tomahawk as synonymous with Indians in his pioneering work of American anthropology, *League of the Iroquois*. According to Morgan, the words *tomahawk* and *Indian* had become “apparently inseparable,” and he noted that the choicer examples “are surmounted by a pipe bowl, and have a perforated handle, that may answer the double purpose of ornament and use.”⁴ In the time since Melville’s and Morgan’s books, however, Americans have erased the pipe bowl from this object in their cultural memory, preferring instead to concentrate on the blade. If the image of the tomahawk in American arts and literature is one of irredeemable Indian savagery, it is because American culture has chosen to ignore Queequeg’s version of the tomahawk in favor of its plainer but less ambiguous cousin, the trade hatchet. To reconstruct the cultural biography of the pipe tomahawk—that is, the story of its origins, exchange, and

use by the people who ascribed it value—is to challenge that prevailing narrative with one that recognizes the role this object played in mediating European-Indian relations.⁵

In its form and functions, the pipe tomahawk fused Native American and European cultures, creating a physical artifact out of the process of creative adaptation that Richard White has dubbed the “middle ground.” Like the system of intercultural trade and diplomacy in the Great Lakes region that White examined, the pipe tomahawk originated in acts of negotiation and exchange between Indians and Europeans occupying contested terrain, each side seeking to extract something of value from the other but lacking the power to do so by force.⁶ From the start, Indians and Europeans had different uses for the pipe tomahawk and attached different meanings to it, but each side found the pipe tomahawk useful in dealing with and making sense of the other. This object illuminates where the material and metaphorical dimensions of the middle ground merged, creating not only new meanings for old objects, but even entirely new objects. The pipe tomahawk also reveals the negative impact that such objects could have on intercultural relations. As with guns and alcohol, the pipe tomahawk became in European eyes a good that symbolized a particular kind of menace associated with Native Americans, justifying their exclusion from the rest of society.⁷ Objects that brought people together on the middle ground also had the potential to drive them apart, and over the pipe tomahawk’s long career, its use in word, image, and action contributed to the racial marginalization of Indians in American society.

Scholars of material culture have long recognized that the meaning of goods can change and vary according to the cultural context of their production, exchange, and use. In the realm of European-Indian relations, such insights have shifted analysis of the fur trade and diplomacy away from studies of acculturation, emphasizing the Indians’ rapid assimilation and dependence on European technology, toward studies of transculturation, or the hybridity in goods and their meanings created by intercultural exchange.⁸ The pipe tomahawk exhibited such hybridity. It was what anthropologist Nicholas Thomas has called an “entangled object”: a physical embodiment of the differing ways colonizers and colonized perceived each other.⁹ Europeans regarded it as a weapon, souvenir, and collector’s item. Indians used it as a tool, grave good, and symbol of prestige. Both groups invested it with significance as an object of diplomacy. Unlike the more common trade hatchet, its symbolic legacy was not one dimensional; it embodied the innovations, accommodations, and contradictions that arose from the collision of native and colonial peoples in North America.

Origins of the Pipe Tomahawk

The pipe tomahawk was a product of negotiation between Indians and colonists involved in the eighteenth-century fur trade, but those commercial origins were quickly overshadowed by its association with racial violence during the Seven Years' War. Any attempt to pinpoint its origin must begin with the problem of nomenclature. The words *tomahawk* and *hatchet* were used interchangeably in early America, and neither was reserved exclusively for the combined striking/smoking device described in *Moby-Dick* or Morgan's *League of the Iroquois*. Colonists derived *tomahawk* from the language of coastal Algonquian Indians in early-seventeenth-century Virginia. They used it to refer to any Indian striking tool, whether of European or native manufacture, including stone axes, ball-headed war clubs, and iron trade hatchets.¹⁰ By the time of Melville and Morgan, *tomahawk* was a general term that included, but was not limited to, the particular variant that doubled as a pipe. Thus, tracking references to "hatchets" and "tomahawks" in textual sources does little to indicate when and where pipe bowls were first attached to them.

Previous scholars have dated the origin of the pipe tomahawk to before 1710, but this argument rests on two suspect pieces of visual evidence: the portraits of a group of Indians commonly known as the four Indian kings, who visited London in 1710, and an engraving of King Philip, the Wampanoag Indian who led a war against the New England colonies in 1675–76. Each of the four Indian kings had his portrait painted, and in all four, a small hatchet appears at the subject's feet. The hatchet's blade is flared at both ends and a small flange protrudes opposite the blade. In "The Metal Tomahawk, Its Evolution and Distribution in North America," a seminal 1946 article on Indian tomahawks, Arthur Woodward concluded that this object was a pipe tomahawk. Close examination, however, reveals no conclusive resemblance between the flange opposite the hatchet's blade and a pipe bowl. Furthermore, the double-flared design of the hatchet blade in the portraits of the Indian kings bears no resemblance to extant examples of eighteenth-century pipe tomahawks.¹¹ The second piece of suspect evidence is an engraving of King Philip that Woodward attributed to a book published in Boston in 1716, *Entertaining Passages Relating to Philip's War*. But this engraving did not appear in the 1716 edition of that book; Paul Revere completed it for a 1772 reprint published in Newport, Rhode Island.¹² Revere had no image of Philip taken from life on which to base his portrait, so he borrowed Philip's pose, costume, and accoutrements—including the hatchet at his feet—from the 1710 portraits of the Indian kings. Revere borrowed the background, which includes an Indian



Figure 3. Pipe tomahawk, 6161/159, excavated from Huntoon site (Seneca), near Canadaigua, NY. From the collections of the Rochester Museum and Science Center, Rochester, NY.

smoking a pipe tomahawk, from a 1766 engraving by Benjamin West.¹³ Following Woodward's lead, other scholars have dated the pipe tomahawk's origins between 1675 and 1710, but there exists no corroborating evidence in textual or archaeological sources for this claim.¹⁴

The archaeological record presents better, but still inconclusive, evidence about the origins of this object. The majority of extant examples of pipe tomahawks in museum and private collections date to the nineteenth century. Museum cataloging on some pieces attributed to the eighteenth century refers to items "plowed up" on farms, "washed out" of river banks, or "found" by amateur collectors.¹⁵ The precise dating of such artifacts is of course difficult. More useful are pieces professionally excavated from burial sites that can be dated by the presence of other grave goods or by their proximity to documented Indian communities. The earliest such reliable find comes from the Seneca Huntoon site near Canadaigua, New York, inhabited between 1710 and the 1740s (fig. 3).¹⁶ Exactly where within that timeline this particular artifact falls is open to question, although a mid-point would place it in the late 1720s.

References gleaned from textual sources suggest that the Seneca site artifact and the origins of the pipe tomahawk in general may be more properly dated to the 1740s. Treaty records and traders' accounts from the first half of the eighteenth century often included lists of manufactured trade goods given to Indians as presents. Such lists referred to hatchets (typically small enough to be held and thrown with one hand), axes (larger than hatchets and suitable for felling trees), and pipes (of Dutch or English manufacture), but none prior to the 1750s mentioned pipe tomahawks.¹⁷

The earliest unmistakable textual reference to pipe tomahawks can be dated to 1748. It comes from the journal of the German Moravian bishop Johannes von Wauveville, who along with three other Moravian clergymen visited the Indian town of Shamokin in Pennsylvania's Susquehanna Valley in the fall of 1748. Entries in von Wauveville's journal during this visit include notes on conversations between the Moravians and the Oneida headman Shickellamy, who acted as a broker between the town's inhabitants and neighboring colonists. The topic of conversation was a blacksmith named Anton Schmidt, whom the Moravians sponsored to work in Shamokin at the request of Shickellamy. Schmidt had agreed to make guns and hatchets for the Indians' warriors free of charge, but if they wanted other goods, "for example, the new-fashioned pipes," they, like the other Indians, would have to pay for them. In a subsequent conversation, the Moravians and Shickellamy discussed how much Schmidt would charge "for the tobacco pipes with an attached hatchet, (which are presently the new fashion among the Indians)." ¹⁸ In 1978–79, an archaeological excavation at the site of Shamokin uncovered the foundation of the smithy established there in 1747; one of the items recovered was the smoking bowl of a pipe tomahawk. ¹⁹ Another early example of an iron pipe tomahawk was recovered from a Delaware Indian burial site in Mercer County in western Pennsylvania, dated circa 1750. ²⁰

Von Wauveville's journal and the archaeological finds at the Shamokin, Huntoon, and Mercer County sites offer important clues about where and how the pipe tomahawk originated. First, this item was new to the inhabitants of Shamokin in 1748. Second, a local blacksmith manufactured it in response to Indian demand. That blacksmith was himself an object of negotiation between the Moravians and Indians at Shamokin. Schmidt arrived in the village in July 1747 and was constantly employed in mending the guns and iron tools of Indians, many of whom traveled a great distance for his services. They complained when he refused to extend credit or to take anything but deerskins as payment. When Moravians discussed the Shamokin mission with Shickellamy, the terms on which Schmidt would remain in the village were an important topic. ²¹ While the evidence is not sufficient to claim that Schmidt invented the pipe tomahawk, it does indicate that his production of this object resulted from local negotiation between Indians and colonists present in Shamokin.

Shamokin was a likely place for such an innovation to gain currency. Indians from the north and the south passed through the village on military, diplomatic, and trading ventures between Canada and the Carolinas, and its population was an amalgam of Indian peoples from coastal and interior parts of the mid-Atlantic region. ²² The fact that a blacksmith lived

and worked there meant that Indians could directly influence the design of goods intended for them, rather than merely accept or reject what an eastern trader supplied. Furthermore, the social geography of Shamokin created a rough parity between colonial and native interests that demanded negotiation. Neither side in this exchange could act unilaterally: the Indians relied too heavily on the blacksmith to force their terms on him, and the Moravians' influence among the Indians was too tenuous to ignore their complaints about the blacksmith's practices. Schmidt appears to have been a bit of a free agent himself, generating some extra income on the side by exchanging iron goods for deerskins. His pipe tomahawks appealed to his customers because of their novelty (in his journal, von Watteville referred to them as "the new fashion among the Indians"), but his terms for making them had to be negotiated via diplomatic councils between the Moravians and Shickellamy. The pipe tomahawks in question were simultaneously commodities and objects of diplomacy, their value and purpose differing depending on the perspective of those involved in their production and exchange: Schmidt, his Indian customers, Shickellamy, and the missionaries.

Other early textual references to pipe tomahawks indicate that by the mid-1750s, their distribution had broadened in the Virginia and Pennsylvania backcountry as a result of this commercial-diplomatic symbiosis between frontier blacksmiths, traders, and Indians. Fur trader and blacksmith John Fraser, who maintained a forge and storehouse in backcountry Pennsylvania, included "4 Dozen Pipe Tomyhawks" valued at twelve shillings each on his inventory of goods lost when the French and their Indian allies seized his stock after the Battle of Great Meadows in 1754.²³ In September 1756, George Mason sent to George Washington a list of trade goods for the Catawba and Cherokee Indians on Virginia's frontier that included "pipe Tom-Hawks."²⁴ Though fleeting, these early references to pipe tomahawks indicate their diplomatic as well as commercial role on the frontier. As Anglo-French tensions flared in the Ohio country, the pipe tomahawk quickly became an item in the stock of goods used by the British to woo and keep Indian allies.

The Seven Years' War spurred the mass production of pipe tomahawks and altered the context of their exchange. In 1756, the British Crown centralized its administration of Indian affairs under two Indian superintendents—William Johnson for the northern colonies and Edmond Atkin for the southern colonies—both of whom ordered pipe tomahawks from British suppliers. Johnson had been keeping accounts of his distribution of Indian goods since serving as New York's Indian agent in the 1740s, but his first reference to pipe tomahawks comes from a list of goods he prepared

for his London agents in November 1756, in which he included an entry for “500 Pipe Hatchets neat & Strong without Handles.”²⁵ In a similar list prepared to supply the southern Indian superintendency in 1757, Atkin included “200 Pipe Hatchets, neat and strong, without Handles.”²⁶

Johnson’s and Atkin’s inventory lists are the first indications of British ironworkers making this item. In a list from October 1757, Atkin noted that while a blacksmith in the frontier town of Winchester, Virginia, made pipe tomahawks at ten shillings a piece, they could be had for less than five shillings a piece in England.²⁷ The Crown’s appointment of Indian superintendents and the outbreak of the Seven Years’ War no doubt stimulated this production. Prior to the war, blacksmiths in such frontier communities as Shamokin and Winchester may have been producing pipe tomahawks for the local Indian trade, but they could not meet the demand generated by Johnson and Atkin as they conducted diplomacy and outfitted warriors. The Indian superintendents’ ability to draw on the royal treasury for their expenses enabled them to order large quantities of such goods from British suppliers, who produced them at a cheaper rate than colonial craftsmen.

Hints as to how Johnson and Atkin intended to distribute these pipe tomahawks are also found on these lists. Both men organized their lists by placing similar goods together: cloth and clothing, weapons and ammunition, metalwares, and jewelry and novelties. Johnson clearly intended for the pipe tomahawks he distributed to be used as weapons, for he placed them among firearms, swords, and knives. Atkin, on the other hand, varied his placement of pipe tomahawks on his lists, suggesting that he intended multiple uses for them. On the 1757 list in which he ordered two hundred pipe tomahawks, he placed this entry among items having to do with tobacco and smoking: fifty gross clay pipes, two hundred steel tongs “for striking Fire,” and two hundred “Burning Glasses for kindling [fire].”²⁸ On another list from that same year, he included pipe tomahawks twice: once among items intended for outfitting Indians for war and again among “Provisions to be supplied them wherever they are.”²⁹ Thus, unlike Johnson, Atkin juxtaposed pipe tomahawks with items associated with smoking, and therefore leisure and diplomacy, as well as with fighting.

Another difference between Johnson’s and Atkin’s lists in 1756–57 suggests a variation in the distribution of pipe tomahawks between the northern and southern colonies. In the lists cited above, Johnson ordered “pipe hatchets” but not regular hatchets. Atkin, on the other hand, ordered pipe tomahawks *and* trade hatchets, with the former usually in much smaller quantities than the latter. For example, on his October 1757 list, Atkin ordered one hundred tomahawks for outfitting Indian warriors, breaking that total into quantities of “80. common ones” and “20. Pipe.”

Under the category of goods “to be supplied them wherever they are,” he listed “90. plain Tomohawks” and “20. Pipe d[itt]o.”³⁰ When compared to orders placed by Johnson in the same period, Atkin’s lists indicate a smaller distribution of pipe tomahawks in the southern colonies, intended to supplement but not replace the distribution of trade hatchets. In fact, after Atkin’s initial imports in 1757–58, the pipe tomahawk is rarely mentioned in subsequent eighteenth-century inventories of trade goods for the Southeast.

The French were also supplying the North American fur trade during the eighteenth century, and there is some limited evidence of the pipe tomahawk in French sources. The French term for the pipe tomahawk, *casse-tête à calumet*, does not show up on French trade lists until very late in the French colonial period. In a study of the records of Montreal merchants supplying posts in the western Great Lakes between 1715 and 1758, Dean L. Anderson found references to axes and tomahawks, but none to pipe tomahawks.³¹ In a study of Indian goods distributed by French traders in the Southeast between 1701 and 1763, Gregory A. Waselkov found reference to pipe tomahawks only in 1760.³² Southeastern nations such as the Creeks traded with both the British and French, but they acquired the bulk of their manufactured goods from the former and mostly powder and shot from the latter. The few pipe tomahawks recovered from eighteenth-century Creek burial sites are of design similar to those found along the Virginia-Pennsylvania-New York frontier, suggesting British origin.³³ An extensive excavation of Fort Michilimackinac, a center of the eighteenth-century French fur trade in the western Great Lakes, turned up twenty-three common trade axes but no pipe tomahawks.³⁴ An archaeological survey of a nearby Ottawa-Chippewa cemetery dating between 1740 and 1765 uncovered only one pipe tomahawk among grave goods associated with 108 burials.³⁵ The spontoon tomahawk, distinguished by its knifelike blade, was a French variation of the trade hatchet, and it sometimes featured a pipe bowl. But such specimens typically date to the Great Lakes region between 1775 and 1820, well after the pipe tomahawk was established on the mid-Atlantic frontier.³⁶

As Atkin’s and Johnson’s accounts indicate, during the Seven Years’ War pipe tomahawks ceased to be a novelty produced by backcountry blacksmiths and became instead part of the arsenal of material goods used by colonial agents to conduct intercultural diplomacy and outfit Indian allies. Not surprisingly, descriptions of the pipe tomahawk from this era most often associated it with Indian warfare and violence. Atkin described almost being killed by one during a council at the Creek village of Tuckabatchee in September 1759, when a warrior named Totscadeter grew angry

with the superintendent's speech and attacked him.³⁷ Likewise, a January 1760 newspaper report described how a group of Cherokees had almost killed a Virginia fur trader with a pipe tomahawk while plundering his store.³⁸ Virginia militia officer Henry Timberlake, who fought in the Cherokee War of 1761–62, called the pipe tomahawk one of the Indians' favorite weapons:

The warlike arms used by the Cherokees are guns, bows and arrows, darts, scalping knives, and tommahawkes, which are hatchets; the hammer-part of which being made hollow, and a small hole running from thence along the shank, terminated by a small brass-tube for the mouth, makes a compleat pipe. . . . This is one of their most useful pieces of field-furniture, serving all the offices of hatchet, pipe, and sword; neither are the Indians less expert at throwing it than using it near, but will kill at a considerable distance.³⁹

Images of the pipe tomahawk from this era also presented it in the context of Indian warfare. The earliest published image appeared in the captivity narrative of Peter Williamson, a Scottish indentured servant who claimed to have spent several months as a Delaware captive at the outset of the Seven Years' War. Williamson's narrative was filled with lurid stories of Indian torture and scalplings, and he capitalized on its popularity by touring and exhibiting himself in Indian costume. The engraving that appeared in the book's fourth edition, published in London in 1759, depicted Williamson in Indian dress, puffing on a pipe tomahawk (cf. fig. 4).⁴⁰ The first published image of a pipe tomahawk in North America came several years later during the Paxton Boys crisis in Pennsylvania. In late 1763, a mob from the Pennsylvania backcountry killed peaceful Indians in Conestoga and Lancaster and threatened to do the same in Philadelphia.⁴¹ Several anonymous prints appeared in 1764 in support of the mob, and in one, *The German Bleeds and Bears the Furs*, an Indian brandishing a pipe tomahawk rides on the back of a wounded colonist (fig. 5).

These early images, both of which offer further evidence of the pipe tomahawk's origin on the mid-Atlantic frontier, present it as a weapon used by a cruel and depraved enemy. In the Williamson engraving, the subject holds his pipe tomahawk in one hand and an unsheathed scalping knife in the other, while in the background Indians torture a captive tied to a tree. In the Paxton Boys cartoon, an Indian waves his pipe tomahawk above a scene of frontier carnage that includes a scalping victim, dismembered babies, and otherwise mutilated corpses. Of course, there is no evidence that the Indians who bargained with Anton Schmidt for pipe tomahawks at Shamokin in 1748 had violence in mind. Rather, the Seven Years' War linked the



Figure 4. "A Delaware Indian with his Tomohawk Scalping knife, &c.," from Pierre F. X. Charlevoix, *A Voyage to North-America: Undertaken by Command of the Present King of France. Containing the Geographical Description and Natural History of Canada and Louisiana*, 2 vols. (Dublin, 1766), frontispiece, vol. 2. This engraving is a retitled copy of an image that first appeared in the fourth edition of Peter Williamson's captivity narrative, *French and Indian Cruelty: Exemplified in the Life and Various Vicissitudes of Fortune of Peter Williamson*, 4th ed. (London, 1759). Courtesy John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.



Figure 5. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, *The German Bleeds and Bears the Furs* (Philadelphia, 1764), Bc 612 D32b. The Indian figure holds a pipe tomahawk in his right hand. This is the earliest printed image of a pipe tomahawk in North America.

pipe tomahawk to racial violence in the European imagination, associating it with a kind of warfare that included scalping, mutilation, and the murder of noncombatants. This presentation of the pipe tomahawk was consistent with race-based arguments used by Anglo-Americans and the British during the Seven Years' War to justify fighting Indians by means that transgressed conventional rules of war.⁴² In such words and images, Britons and Anglo-Americans made the pipe tomahawk an emblem of Indian savagery, in spite of the obvious role that colonial craftsmen, traders, and officials played in its production and distribution.

Indian Uses of the Pipe Tomahawk

Despite European associations of it with warfare and violence, the pipe tomahawk was much too versatile to be used only as a weapon. Even as its centralized distribution by royal Indian agents declined in the period

between the Seven Years' War and the American Revolution, Indians continued to incorporate it into their material culture, and in doing so, attached social and ideological significance to it independent of the Anglo-American perception of it as a weapon. The transculturation between European technology and native consumer tastes that produced this object in the 1740s continued to shape its material evolution into the nineteenth century. The Indians' multifaceted use of pipe tomahawks, while muted in some documentary sources by the authors' fixation on the tomahawk's violent connotations, can be recovered from other archaeological, textual, and visual sources that recognized its utility in the Indians' trade, work, leisure, and diplomacy.

After the Seven Years' War, the pipe tomahawk appeared less frequently in inventories of trade goods and in much smaller quantities than during the war. Under the ill-advised policy of Jeffrey Amherst, the British cut back considerably on their Indian presents after the war, especially those that could function as weapons, but Indians still demanded a steady supply of trade goods at western posts.⁴³ Two lists for the northern colonies from 1761 included pipe tomahawks among necessary Indian goods.⁴⁴ Three years later, however, in a comprehensive list for the northern Indian superintendency, Johnson included ten thousand "axes" at three shillings each (the price of a typical trade hatchet), but did not mention pipe tomahawks.⁴⁵ Accounts from the mercantile firm of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan, which supplied trading posts in the Ohio country in the 1760s, listed a wide variety of Indian goods but rarely mentioned pipe tomahawks.⁴⁶ The same pattern seemed to apply to the southern colonies. Atkin's successor as southern Indian superintendent, John Stuart, did not include pipe tomahawks on a 1767 list of trade good tariffs he negotiated with the Creek Indians, although there was an entry for "hatchets . . . according to size."⁴⁷ A combination of factors seem to have contributed to the reduced distribution of pipe tomahawks after the Seven Years' War: their higher cost relative to common trade hatchets, a lingering British association of them with Indian warfare, and the declining need to use them as presents with which to court Indian allies.

This decrease in the supply of pipe tomahawks would suggest that by the 1760s, the balance of power within intercultural diplomacy and the fur trade had shifted so decisively in favor of the British that Indians had no choice but to accept the goods offered to them. Indians, however, remained interested in pipe tomahawks, and the archaeological record provides details about their continuing influence on the production and use of this object that the documentary record lacks.⁴⁸ The variety in materials and sizes found in eighteenth-century pipe tomahawks suggests local

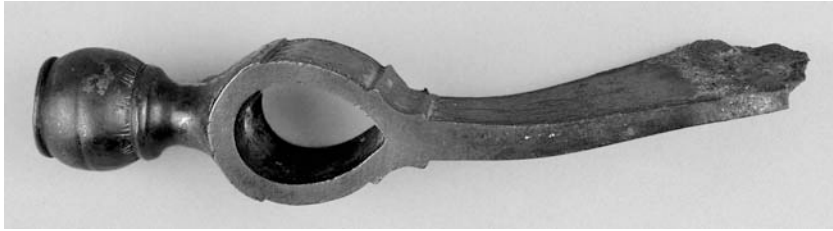


Figure 6. Pipe tomahawk, 55/u, Avon Bridge site. Brass pipe tomahawks often had iron inserts for cutting edges (indicated here by the corrosion at the end of the blade). The bend in the blade indicates that this pipe tomahawk was used as a striking device. From the collections of the Rochester Museum and Science Center, Rochester, NY.

rather than centralized production, most likely by colonial blacksmiths responding to Indian demand even after the Crown's Indian superintendents had ceased ordering pipe tomahawks from British suppliers.⁴⁹ Blacksmiths forged them using "belt" iron, long strips that could be folded over and worked into a hatchet head, leaving a tear-drop or oval shaped eye for inserting a handle. Scrap iron, such as from damaged gun barrels, could also be used for this purpose. British and Anglo-American pipe tomahawk heads had a "half-hatchet" design, meaning the blade was flared only at the edge pointing to the handle. Sometimes the head may have been made out of brass, a much softer metal, but in such cases the maker usually rendered it functional as a striking device by inserting an iron or steel cutting edge into the blade (fig. 6).⁵⁰ Decoration on pipe tomahawk blades and bowls prior to the Revolutionary Era was minimal. Extant examples reveal some decorative filings and rudimentary engravings, such as floral patterns. Two eighteenth-century examples from the Smithsonian Institution collection have had tally marks notched into the blade.⁵¹

The pipe bowl was also manufactured out of iron or brass. During the eighteenth century, it was typically rounded and shaped like an inverted acorn, tapering toward the top. This shape imitated the "Micmac bowls" of native pipes manufactured out of stone by Algonquian peoples in the Northeast. On native-made pipes, Micmac bowls usually sat on narrow stems that were connected to a rectangular stone base. The same design is evident on eighteenth-century pipe tomahawks, with the hatchet's poll (the flat side opposite the blade) serving as the base for the stem. This distinctive bowl shape is further evidence of the pipe tomahawk's origin in the Northeast and the influence of native aesthetics on its design.⁵² No

Table 1. Comparative Sizes of Early Pipe Tomahawk Heads (c. 1750–1820)

Size	Weight	Height*	Blade Length	Bowl Length
Small	~200 g	~14 cm	~8 cm	~4 cm
Medium	~400 g	~18 cm	~10 cm	~4 cm
Large	~600 g	~21 cm	~12 cm	~4 cm

*Measured from top of bowl to lowest point of blade.

Source: Measurements based on collections of NMAI, CRC; SI, MSC; and RMSC.

contemporary commented on whether Indian smokers preferred metal pipe bowls to European clay pipes or stone pipes of their own manufacture, but the presence of dottle, the residue of burned tobacco, in the bowls of museum pieces proves that they were used for that purpose. A great material advantage of the pipe tomahawk, as noted by Peter Williamson in an otherwise specious account of the object's origin, was its durability.⁵³ It was less likely than clay pipes to be broken or misplaced. Nevertheless, Indians continued to make their own pipes, and a study of native archaeological sites in the Great Lakes–Riverine region shows a preference by Indians for native pipes over European ones during the eighteenth century.⁵⁴ Indian smokers, in other words, may have found a metal pipe bowl in the Micmac style a pleasing addition to the trade hatchet, but they appear to have used the pipe tomahawk as a smoking device mostly as an occasional substitute, not a replacement, for native-manufactured pipes.

The size of pipe tomahawk heads varied considerably, more evidence of local rather than centralized production. Early examples may be divided into three categories—small, medium, and large—based on their weight and overall length (see table 1). Small pipe tomahawks, weighing in the vicinity of two hundred grams, lacked the heft necessary to serve as chopping tools, but the medium and large sizes (weighing in the range of four hundred and six hundred grams, respectively) could function quite well as tools and weapons. The dimensions of the bowl tended to remain constant between the sizes; greater variation was evident in the blade: the heavier the pipe tomahawk, the longer and wider its blade and the more diversified its functions. The lighter the pipe tomahawk, the more likely it was to be limited to use as a smoking device or presentation piece. Variances in the size, design, and composition of pipe tomahawks did not occur in a linear evolution. Considerable variety was present from the start, indicating that local blacksmiths continued making them in response to Indian demand, even after royal Indian agents decreased their importation of them after the Seven Years' War. In form and function, the pipe tomahawk remained an

object of negotiation, and Native American uses and preferences continued to shape its production through the eighteenth century.

It is harder to gain a sense of what handles for eighteenth-century pipe tomahawks looked like because wood rots quickly when interred, but contemporary reports attribute this part of the production process to Indians. Thomas Anburey, a British officer in Burgoyne's 1777 campaign, observed that after Indians purchased pipe tomahawks from traders, they would "take off the wooden handle, and substitute in its stead a hollow cane one, which they do in a curious manner."⁵⁵ Recall that when Johnson and Atkin ordered pipe tomahawks for their Indian agencies during the Seven Years' War, they specified that they come without handles, perhaps out of deference to the Indians' skill and preferences in manufacturing this part themselves. Early examples of pipe tomahawk handles include such materials as brass tacks, coiled wire, and plaited quills worked into their design, as well as decorative carvings and burn marks. In the latter part of the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth, the decoration of pipe tomahawk handles grew more elaborate, incorporating silver and brass inlays, bands, and mouthpieces. Decoratively carved handles survive from the nineteenth century; one noteworthy example from the Seminole Indians of Florida features an alligator effigy.⁵⁶ Nineteenth-century pipe tomahawks often had handles with small, perforated protuberances, through which Indians threaded leather thongs decorated with beads, feathers, bits of cloth or metal, and even animal parts.⁵⁷ Through such customization, an Indian turned a commodity into a personal possession, invested with a singularity that increased its value to its owner, and later, to collectors.⁵⁸

The social and ideological value that Indians associated with the pipe tomahawk is demonstrated in its use as a grave good. During the Reverend Samuel Kirkland's stay in a Seneca village in 1764–65, he attended the burial of a chief's son and saw a pipe tomahawk placed among other goods in the coffin.⁵⁹ The adult male burial that yielded the pipe tomahawk from the Seneca Huntoon site described above also included among its grave goods a brass kettle, an iron axe, an iron strike-a-light, five gun-flints, scissors, a curved knife, a clasp knife, and a carving knife. Judging from the positioning of the objects in this subterranean hardware store, the corpse held the axe in one hand and the pipe tomahawk in the other.⁶⁰ Other eighteenth-century burial sites that have yielded pipe tomahawks have likewise contained a trove of other goods. Pipe tomahawks placed in such burials indicate this object's importance as a prestige good. Grave goods served as status markers: generally, the more lavish the supply, the higher the status of the person they accompanied.⁶¹

When Guy Johnson, a nephew of Sir William Johnson who succeeded

his uncle as a royal Indian superintendent, wanted to discount the violence associated with the tomahawk for a London correspondent in 1776, he wrote, "The Tomahawk which is so much talked of, is seldom used but to smook thro', or to cut wood with." Almost seventy years later, George Catlin echoed that sentiment when he described pipe tomahawks as "the most valued of an Indian's weapons, inasmuch as they are a matter of luxury, and useful for cutting his fire-wood, &c. in time of peace."⁶² Such observations attest to the value Indians placed in this object's versatility, which is also evident in visual images from the 1760s and 1770s. Unlike images from the Seven Years' War, those produced between 1765 and 1777 showed Indians using the pipe tomahawk in peaceful contexts of trade, leisure, and diplomacy. Consider, for example, cartouches used to illustrate maps of British North America. For a 1765 map of the Ohio country, Philadelphia engraver Henry Dawkins produced two cartouches, both of which featured Indians' using pipe tomahawks in peaceful contexts.⁶³ One presents a camp scene with several Indians gathered around a fire; two of the seated Indians smoke from pipe tomahawks (fig. 7). The second cartouche is of a treaty council, and it depicts two seated Indians who are smoking while listening to a speech; the view of one is obscured, but the other clearly holds a pipe tomahawk (fig. 8).⁶⁴ Another cartouche, from *A Map of the Inhabited Part of Canada*, engraved by William Faden and published in London in 1777, presents an Indian resting on his haunches and smoking from a pipe tomahawk while he watches a compatriot exchange an animal pelt for trade goods with a British merchant and sailor (fig. 9).

This last scene, of an Indian smoking a pipe tomahawk while engaged in trade, complements a comic scene from J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer*. In the most famous essay from that collection, "What Is an American?" Crevecoeur told the story of Andrew the Hebridean, a Scottish indentured servant on the Pennsylvania frontier. One day, Andrew returns from work to find a party of nine Indians relaxing in his master's home with furs to trade. Andrew confronts the Indians, but they laugh at him and by gesturing with their tomahawks, threaten to scalp him. Fearing for his life, Andrew runs two miles to the meeting house, where he tells his master that "nine monsters were come to his house—some blue, some red, and some black; *that they had little axes in their hands out of which they smoked* [emphasis added]; and that like highlanders, they had no breeches; [and] that they were devouring all his victuals."⁶⁵ Although Crevecoeur's rendering of this scene plays on European associations of the tomahawk with savagery (a point driven home by his not-so-subtle comparison of Indians to Scottish Highlanders), its reference to Indians smoking from their tomahawks reveals other uses for this object.



Figure 7. Cartouche of Indian camp scene from Thomas Hutchins, “A Topographical Plan of That Part of the Indian-Country through which the Army under the Command of Colonel Bouquet Marched in the Year 1764,” in [William Smith], *An Historical Account of the Expedition against the Ohio Indians, in the Year 1764: Under the Command of Henry Bouquet, Esq.* (Philadelphia, 1765). Courtesy John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

Andrew expected violence when he saw the Indians, but he had actually stumbled on them in a moment of leisure, enjoying a smoke while they waited to trade with his master.

The archaeological, visual, and textual record indicates that the first generation of Indians to use the pipe tomahawk valued it as much more than a weapon. It offered a veritable Swiss Army knife’s range of applications in their daily affairs, as well as conferring prestige on its owner in this life and the next. Indians influenced the design of the pipe tomahawk, the bowl of which imitated their native stone pipes, and they participated in the production process by making and customizing handles. They found the same uses for it as they did for the more common trade hatchet, with the notable addition that they could smoke out of it. A good example of the Indians’ regard for this multifaceted utility is a 1793

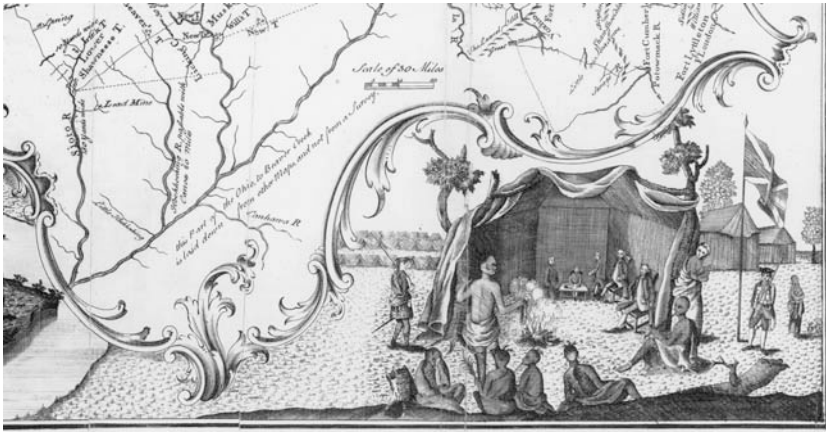


Figure 8. Cartouche of Indian council scene from Thomas Hutchins, “A Topographical Plan of That Part of the Indian-Country through which the Army under the Command of Colonel Bouquet Marched in the Year 1764,” in [William Smith], *An Historical Account of the Expedition against the Ohio Indians, in the Year 1764: Under the Command of Henry Bouquet, Esq.* (Philadelphia, 1765). Courtesy John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

newspaper report relating that Indians who had set a captive free in Kentucky outfitted him with “a knife and pipe tomahawk,” tools that they no doubt expected him to find useful on his journey home.⁶⁶

Smoke Signals: The Pipe Tomahawk as a Prestige Good

The outbreak of the American Revolution in 1775 initiated a protracted contest between native and colonial peoples for dominion over eastern North America that did not end until 1815. In that time, the pipe tomahawk continued to evolve as a tool, smoking device, and weapon, but the most significant change occurred in its function as a prestige good associated with European-Indian diplomacy. Gift exchange and tobacco smoking were important parts of Native American diplomatic rituals, and well before the emergence of the pipe tomahawk, an intercultural parlance had developed that included such metaphors as “take up the hatchet,” “bury the hatchet,” and “smoke the peace pipe” for making war and peace. The pipe tomahawk, with its dual function so evident in its form, served as a useful presentation piece on such occasions. Indians and Europeans alike came to regard it as a symbol of martial power on the one hand and alliance



Figure 9. Cartouche of trading scene from Claude Joseph Sauthier, *A Map of the Inhabited Part of Canada from the French Surveys; with the Frontiers of New York and New England from the Large Survey*, engraved by William Faden (London, 1777). Courtesy Fort Ticonderoga Museum. Note that the sailor leaning on the hogshead smokes from a European clay pipe while the Indian resting on his haunches smokes from a pipe tomahawk.

on the other. As its use as a diplomatic gift increased, its design changed, incorporating new materials to create singular pieces that embodied the power and prestige of their givers and possessors. By the mid-nineteenth century, the form and function of this object had shifted so much that its original uses as a tool and weapon became secondary to its importance as an object of diplomacy.

The pipe tomahawk naturally suited customs and habits related to tobacco smoking and intercultural diplomacy. Among Indian peoples east of the Mississippi, tobacco was commonly incorporated into ceremonies associated with healing, religion, and hospitality.⁶⁷ Indians smoked when they met in diplomatic councils because they believed in tobacco's ability to purge bad feelings and encourage clear thinking among the smokers.⁶⁸ The calumet ceremony—what Europeans often referred to as “smoking the peace pipe”—was a pre-Columbian custom that spread eastward from



Figure 10. Lt. William Sharp, powder horn, 1766 (882.1.1). View showing Indians and British officers in council. Reproduced with permission of the Royal Ontario Museum © ROM.

the Plains to southern and northern Algonquian peoples during the colonial era.⁶⁹ By the mid-eighteenth century, even Iroquoian peoples who had not previously participated in ceremonies associated with the calumet were encountering this object with increasing frequency at treaty conferences convened in New York and Pennsylvania with Catawbas, Cherokees, Delawares, and Shawnees.⁷⁰

Indians and their colonial counterparts smoked incessantly at such treaty conferences. Treaty records often refer to the distribution of clay pipes and tobacco among Indians by their European hosts at the outset of their proceedings and during “entertainments” before and afterward.⁷¹ The sheer amount of smoking that Indians engaged in during such councils could annoy or discomfort European observers.⁷² By the 1760s, pipe tomahawks were found among the smoking devices used on such occasions. The Indians’ use of them was described with clarity by Continental Army officer Joseph Bloomfield, who attended treaty councils in the Mohawk Valley in 1776: “It is really surprising to see what an assuming behavior those Savages put on whilst in Council. They sett in their Indian painted warlike dress with their Indian Tomahawks with Pipes (the handle of the Tomahawk being the tube and the head of the Hatchet the Bole) and smoaking with such a confident air of Dignity and Superiority as if they were above all other being mad[e] and their Authority extended over the whole Earth.”⁷³ A powder horn carved by a British officer at the Fort Picolata treaty in Florida in 1765 (fig. 10) depicts a similar scene, although this one shows

British officers, as well as Indians, smoking from the “Indian Tomahawks” described by Bloomfield.

Treaty records often refer to smoking and pipes as part of diplomatic ritual but do not specify as to whether pipe tomahawks were used in such a manner. The descriptions cited above testify to the use of this object at treaty councils when participants listened to speeches or gathered informally, but they do not describe pipe tomahawks being used as ceremonial objects. There is some evidence that they did occasionally serve as substitutes for native-made calumets. In a description of the calumet ceremony from his memoir of the Seven Years’ War, French soldier Charles Bonin noted that “there are some tribes that present it [the calumet] when they go to war. Then, instead of the calumet, it is the tomahawk which they smoke in the same way. The head opposite its sharp edge is shaped like a pipe, and the handle is pierced lengthwise.”⁷⁴ At a treaty conference in Albany in 1775, colonial commissioners presented a “great pipe” that they smoked with their Iroquois counterparts at the outset of negotiations. The Indians accepted this gift and promised to bring it home with them, where it would serve as “our council-pipe.” The minutes do not state that this particular pipe was a pipe tomahawk, but the description of its design—“on one side the tree of peace, on the other a council-fire”—suggests engravings on opposite sides of a pipe tomahawk’s blade.⁷⁵ These two examples of ritual presentation and smoking of a pipe tomahawk are noteworthy for their rarity; references to native-made calumets are much more common on such occasions. Nonetheless, these examples reveal that the functional duality of the pipe tomahawk also made it symbolically versatile in diplomatic proceedings. In Bonin’s case, it served as a specific type of calumet for declaring war or “taking up the hatchet.” In the Albany case, it was used to confirm peace and friendship.

These rare instances of the pipe tomahawk’s use as a ceremonial pipe call to mind the selectivity Indians exhibited in general when using European-manufactured pipes. As already noted above, the archaeological record from the eighteenth century shows a marked preference among Indians in the Northeast for pipes of their own manufacture, and as a smoking device, the pipe tomahawk appears to have been used chiefly as a substitute rather than as a replacement for native pipes. The paucity of references to pipe tomahawks used as calumets suggests that the same practice occurred in diplomacy. Even as the fur trade transformed Indian gender roles and subsistence patterns, leading to the abandonment of many native forms of production in favor of European substitutes, Indian males continued to cultivate tobacco and fashion pipes for ritual use.⁷⁶ European pipes, and the pipe tomahawk in particular, never supplanted the calumet in diplomacy

because that was an arena of intercultural contact over which Indians continued to exert considerable power even as their material dependence on European goods increased. Yet the pipe tomahawk did acquire symbolic value because its form called to mind the rituals and language of diplomatic negotiation. This mental association is evident in native use of catlinite to make pipe tomahawks in the nineteenth century. Catlinite is a soft red stone ideal for carving but ill suited for use as a striking tool. Indians commonly used it to make calumets, and after 1850, they began fashioning pipe tomahawk heads out of catlinite as well. The blades on such pieces are small and without edge. Such pipe tomahawks could not function as tools or weapons, but the presence of their vestigial blades allowed them to convey meaning in diplomatic contexts as symbols of “taking up” or “burying” the hatchet.⁷⁷

The pipe tomahawk's significance as an object of diplomacy rested primarily in its association with Indian leadership. As early as the Seven Years' War, there is evidence that Indians incorporated pipe tomahawks into their costume as marks of chiefly distinction. A news item in the 5 February 1756 edition of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* reported that a Pennsylvania militia party had skirmished with a party of Delawares, killing two of the Indians and taking from them scalps, matchcoats, guns, and “a fine Pipe Hatchet.” The militiamen believed one of their victims was “the famous Captain Jacobs,” an erroneous identification perhaps encouraged by the pipe tomahawk included in their loot.⁷⁸ In an account entry from 15 October 1757, the British commandant of Fort Augusta (built on the site of Shamokin) charged to Delaware chief Teedyuscung a regimental coat, gold-laced hat, ruffled shirt, and pipe tomahawk. When Delaware leader White Eyes died in western Pennsylvania in 1778, an inventory of his possessions included a silver peace medal, a scarlet silk jacket trimmed with gold lace, a beaver hat, and a pipe tomahawk. These references suggest that the pipe tomahawk quickly found its way into the costume of Indian leaders, who regarded it as a prestige good similar to the medals, gorgets, ruffled shirts, and laced hats that colonial agents often presented to chiefs as marks of distinction.⁷⁹

Another clue to the early association of pipe tomahawks with chiefly status is the quantity of this object relative to trade hatchets in inventories of Indian goods. As already noted, in the southern colonies, Indian Superintendent Atkin ordered pipe tomahawks in smaller amounts than trade hatchets, suggesting that he distributed the former item with greater discrimination than the latter.⁸⁰ Likewise, an inventory of Indian goods sent to Fort Pitt in February 1759 listed ninety-six tomahawks but only sixteen pipe tomahawks.⁸¹ In 1761, Johnson included pipe tomahawks on a list of

goods necessary for his Indian superintendency, yet they were not included on price schedules for Indian goods at Detroit and Fort Pitt from that same year. This apparent contradiction suggests that by 1761, Johnson considered this item a gift to be given to Indians rather than a commodity to be sold to them.⁸²

During the Revolutionary and Early National Eras, customized pipe tomahawks became an accessory sought after by Indians and Europeans alike. Such pieces featured silver or brass inlays, silver or wire bands around the handles, and engravings with the names of the maker, giver, and recipient or the date and place of the exchange.⁸³ Pieces identified as belonging to chiefs of the Seneca, Shawnee, Cherokee, Miami, and Chippewa nations during this period survive in museum collections, and they also appear as chiefly accoutrements in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century portraits and prints.⁸⁴ When Mohawk chief Joseph Brant traveled to London at the outset of the American Revolution for an audience with King George III, he had his portrait painted by George Romney. This painting presents Brant as a dignified ally of the British Crown, displaying a number of objects associated with Indian diplomacy, including a silver gorget with the royal arms around his neck and a pipe tomahawk held at his side.⁸⁵ A rare engraving from the late eighteenth century shows an Indian, most likely Brant, in similar pose and costume, holding a pipe tomahawk in the same way (fig. 11).⁸⁶ Red Jacket, another Iroquois leader of the Early National Era, posed for a portrait that incorporated a pipe tomahawk in a similar manner.⁸⁷

British officers who served in America during the Revolutionary Era also appropriated the pipe tomahawk as a symbol of prestige and authority. Some had elaborate, customized versions made while they were in America, and others carried samples back with them to Britain. The earliest example of such a piece can be dated by the “1760” engraved on its brass head. Also engraved on the head are the letter “R” (perhaps a maker’s mark or owner’s initial) and an image of scales, a symbol of intercultural trade as well as justice meted out, either of which would have appealed to a military officer involved in Indian affairs. This intriguing piece, now in the National Museum of the American Indian, was purchased by a nineteenth-century collector in London, suggesting that it may have found its way to Britain as the possession of a veteran officer.⁸⁸ Another example was made by Pennsylvania gunsmith Richard Butler in the 1770s. It features a silver-plated head engraved with the names of the maker (“R: Butler”) and owner (“Lt/MacLellan”) and decorated with a sun motif; the handle features native quillwork.⁸⁹ Arent Schuyler DePeyster, a Dutch-American officer in the British army who served on the Great Lakes frontier, brought



Figure 11. Anonymous untitled print of an eighteenth-century Indian. The costume and pose of the print's subject suggest that it is based on George Romney's portrait of Joseph Brant. Courtesy U.S. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-14987.

a pipe tomahawk and a collection of other Indian artifacts with him when he settled in Scotland with his wife after the American Revolution.⁹⁰ John Caldwell, a Scottish officer stationed at Fort Niagara during the Revolution, did likewise and posed for his portrait draped in Indian goods, including a pipe tomahawk held in his left hand (fig. 12).⁹¹

The ways in which Indian chiefs and European military officers incorporated pipe tomahawks into their self-presentation reveals much about how each group defined this object's role as a prestige good. It is easy to imagine that at treaty conferences where Indians and Europeans of all types rubbed shoulders, a pipe tomahawk customized with unique inlays became, along with a laced hat and ruffled shirt, a mutually recognized cue of authority for chiefs and officers. In making it a part of their costume before European audiences, Indian chiefs such as Joseph Brant used the pipe tomahawk as visual shorthand for their autonomy and equality with their European counterparts. On the other hand, military officers who placed pipe tomahawks in their cabinets of curiosities or posed with them in portraits regarded this object as a souvenir, evidence of their foreign travels and encounters with exotic others over whom they had exerted power. Caldwell's portrait is a billboard declaring his American service, and the pipe tomahawk he holds in his left hand, pointing to the war belt in his right, offers visual testimony of his role in the British imperial project.⁹²

For Europeans and Indians alike, the pipe tomahawk served double duty between 1775 and 1815 as a prestige good and tool. Not coincidentally, this period marked the high tide for the pipe tomahawk's artistry and versatility. So long as it remained important to recruit and arm Indian allies, pipe tomahawks continued to have iron or steel blades heavy and sharp enough to make them deadly weapons. A visitor to Fort Pitt in 1775 noted their use in this manner when he observed the unburied remains of soldiers killed during Braddock's Defeat twenty years earlier: "We could not find one whole skull, all of them broke to pieces in the upper part, some of them had holes broken in them about an inch in diameter, suppose it to be done with a Pipe Tomahawk."⁹³ Archaeological evidence of the pipe tomahawk's use as a weapon during the Revolutionary Era comes from the excavation of a cemetery at the site of Fort Laurens in eastern Ohio. During its occupation by Continental soldiers in 1778–79, Fort Laurens faced constant Indian hostilities. Archaeologists found cut and hack marks consistent with tomahawking and scalping on nineteen of the twenty-one sets of human remains in the fort's cemetery. Tomahawk blades left distinctive long, narrow cuts in the skull. Four skulls featured a circular depressed cranial fracture that appears to have been made with a spherical or cylindrical object, perhaps the bowl of a pipe tomahawk.⁹⁴



Figure 12. Sir John Caldwell, Lieutenant Colonel of the Eighth Foot, King's Regiment (N1998.0609). Courtesy National Museums, Liverpool.

In 1809, a U.S. Indian agent who oversaw the distribution of goods at western posts sent explicit instructions to a supplier in Philadelphia about quality control in the manufacture of pipe tomahawks. He enclosed a sample that was “exactly such as the northern Tribes require and is made for the use of edge as well as pipe.” The agent complained that pipe tomahawks previously made in Philadelphia were “unfit for use” as cutting tools or weapons, “quite too light and tawdry,” and fit only for giving away “to the old men to smoke with and use in their dances.” He asked for one hundred or two hundred made from an enclosed model, warning that the pipe bowls “must be made in the solid and not screwed, brazed or welded on,” so that they could withstand blows made with the tomahawk. The blade had to be of tempered steel and carry a “good edge[,] the thickness and weight nearly as possible similar to the model.”⁹⁵

Customized presentation pieces produced in this era varied in size and composition, incorporating softer metals such as brass and pewter and heads small enough to fit into the palm of a hand. These pieces functioned as gifts rather than as commodities, and therefore had different uses and meanings.⁹⁶ Their purpose was to ascribe social characteristics to the parties involved in their exchange: to denote the prestige of the recipient, the generosity of the giver, the friendship between them, or the weightiness of the occasion on which they met. In portraiture, they signaled the subject’s elevated status and diplomatic credentials. In person, their customized heads, handles, engravings, and inlays served as markers of personal identity, testaments of expertise that could be presented to strangers at a diplomatic council.

The experiences of the Lewis and Clark expedition highlight the pipe tomahawk’s multifaceted meanings and uses on both sides of the cultural divide during the Early National period. Members of the expedition used pipe tomahawks themselves but also exchanged them with Indians they encountered. One member lamented leaving his pipe tomahawk behind at the previous day’s camp, for he used it “common[ly] to Smoak in.”⁹⁷ A dismayed William Clark reported his pipe tomahawk stolen by a group of Indians on the Columbia River. Passing through the same region five months later, Clark’s party recovered the purloined pipe tomahawk from another group of Indians, who had supposedly stolen it from the first. A few days later, Clark traded the same pipe tomahawk to an Indian chief who admired its brass bowl. When another pipe tomahawk was subsequently stolen from the expedition, Clark had to trade two strands of beads and two horses to retrieve it from an Indian family intending to use it as a grave good.⁹⁸ The value Clark and his compatriots placed on their pipe tomahawks is evident in the energy they devoted to retrieving them when



ANS 1915.144.1

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Figure 13. James Madison Indian Peace Medal, 1814 (1915.144.1). Although dated 1809 to commemorate the start of Madison's tenure in office, this medal was not issued until 1814. The pipe tomahawk on the reverse replaced a plain trade tomahawk used on the Jefferson version.

they went missing. Likewise, the value Indians placed on these objects is apparent in the literal horse-trading necessary to recover them.

In the early nineteenth century, the pipe tomahawk's rising significance as an object of diplomacy led to its appearance on peace medals distributed by the U.S. government. Imitating European precedents, in 1801 the federal government produced a silver medal for use in Indian diplomacy that featured a bust of President Thomas Jefferson on one side and on the other, two clasped hands under a crossed pipe and hatchet, framed by the motto "PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP." This design was used until 1850, with the president's bust updated periodically to reflect subsequent occupants of the office. After Jefferson's administration, a more subtle change occurred in the design on the reverse: a pipe tomahawk replaced the hatchet (fig. 13).⁹⁹ This alteration reflected the two important semiotic advantages of the pipe tomahawk over the common trade hatchet: it could convey chiefly power and negotiation, and it could serve simultaneously as a symbol of war and peace. It was at once less martial than a trade hatchet (and therefore less threatening to European viewers of this image) but more evocative of the prestige that a peace medal was supposed to bestow on its wearer.

After 1815, contractors for the U.S. government manufactured fewer

pipe tomahawks from forged iron and more from cast iron and brass. These pieces tended to be weaker, and after 1830 they featured steel edges less often. Pipe tomahawk heads became smaller and lighter and their pipe bowls grew taller and narrower, form following function as diplomatic and ceremonial uses eclipsed more martial ones.¹⁰⁰ The elevation of the pipe tomahawk as a presentation piece over its other uses is apparent in nineteenth-century images of Indians. While eighteenth-century images depicted Indians using this item in a variety of ways from war to trade to leisure, in the age of photography, the pipe tomahawk usually appeared as a prop in portraits of Indian chiefs visiting Washington, DC, signaling the authority of a chief who had traveled east to negotiate surrender to the federal government on behalf of his people (fig. 14).¹⁰¹

The pipe tomahawk began the nineteenth century as a symbol of Indian prestige and power in diplomacy and warfare; by the end of the century, it had been declawed and domesticated. After 1870, private collectors purchased pipe tomahawks on Indian reservations for placement in curio cabinets and museums. Some white and Indian craftsmen continued to produce them for the tourist trade that developed on Indian reservations during the early decades of the twentieth century. Today they are made for sale to historical reenactors and other hobbyists. In the century and a half since Melville and Morgan described the pipe tomahawk, its use in these contexts, overwhelmingly by whites interested in “playing Indian” rather than by Indians themselves, has transformed it from a symbol of Indian autonomy into one of European mastery.¹⁰²

Conclusion

In the Smithsonian Institution’s collections, there is a pipe tomahawk noteworthy not only for its artistry, but also for the story it tells about the individuals responsible for its creation, exchange, and preservation. Tom Hill was a Delaware Indian who moved west from Ohio in the 1830s and worked as a scout for the U.S. Army. While fighting Indians in the Salinas Valley of California in 1847, he lost his tomahawk. Three years later, Major P. B. Reading, who had served with Hill in California, had a replacement custom-made for him. The maker, W. A. Woodruff, created a masterpiece: the head and mouthpiece are silver, as is a serpentine inlay running the length of the handle (fig. 15). On one side of the blade Woodruff engraved an American eagle, the crescent moon and stars, a bow and arrows, and a pipe tomahawk crossed with a musket and powder horn. The other side features a rising sun over the date “1850” and clasped hands above the motto “Peace & Friendship.” Woodruff also inscribed his name and “Tom Hill

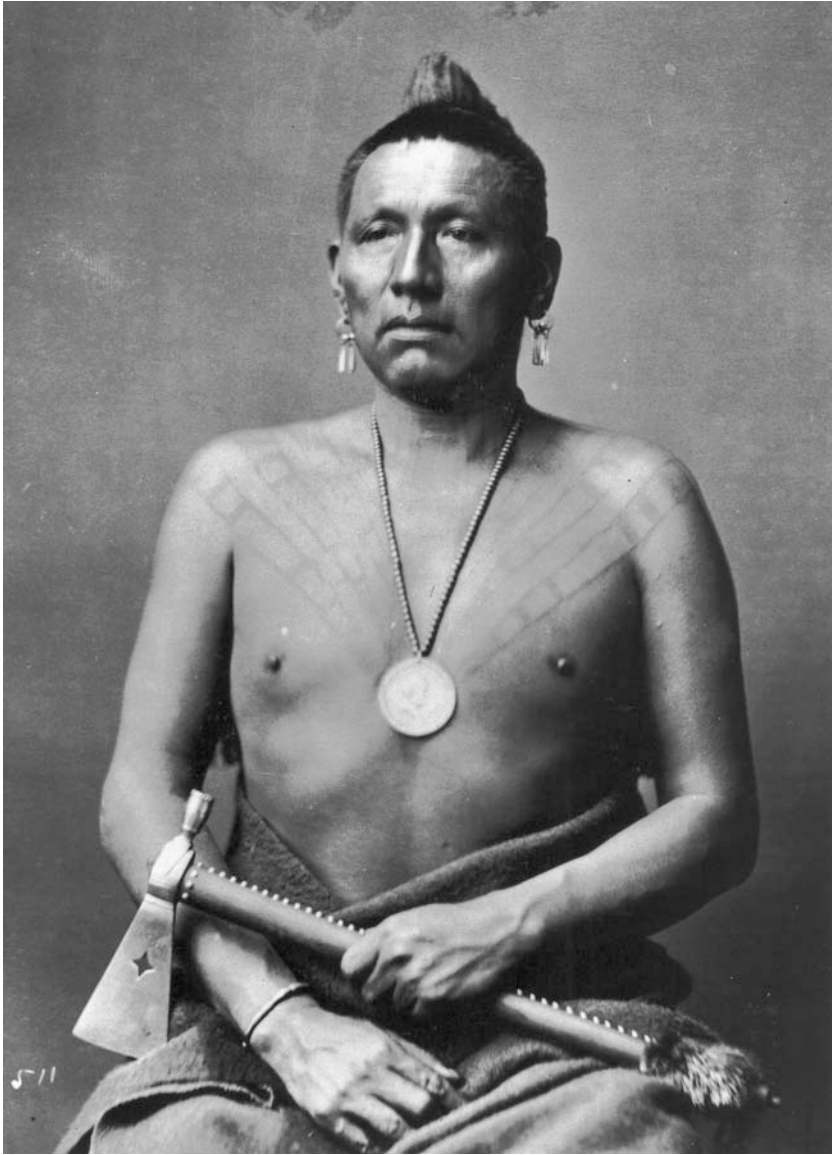


Figure 14. “Governor Joe (Pa-thin-non-pa-zhi, or Not Afraid of the Pawnee)” (Osage), albumen print. This photograph was most likely taken when its subject visited Washington, DC, in 1876. Courtesy Sheldon Jackson Collection, Manuscript Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.



Figure 15. Tom Hill pipe tomahawk, 1850 (negative number 76-6707). Courtesy Smithsonian Institution.

from P B Reading” on the blade. Hill later settled among other Delawares living in Kansas and died in 1860; his pipe tomahawk found its way to the Smithsonian by way of Reading’s son, who worked as a civil engineer and surveyor at the Crow Agency in Montana in the late nineteenth century.¹⁰³

Hill’s pipe tomahawk tells a number of different stories. To Reading’s son, it was a collector’s item, a souvenir from the Indian wars of the American West. To the senior Reading and to Hill, it was a gift, a reminder of the dangers and hardships they had shared in their California campaign. The images engraved on the blade testified to Reading’s and Hill’s cross-cultural bond. The clasped hands and “Peace & Friendship” motto were borrowed from the iconography of Indian peace medals, and the rising sun and American eagle were popular nationalist emblems. These same images conveyed a deep irony. The friendship they commemorated was forged during the conquest of the California Indians, a particularly bloody episode in the long contest between natives and newcomers in North America.

Tom Hill’s pipe tomahawk is a fitting stand-in for Queequeg’s fictional one. Each was manufactured at about the same time, the first in a craftsman’s workshop, the second in a writer’s imagination. Each symbolized friendship and intimacy across a cultural divide while also conjuring a sense of the danger and violence born of that contact. Melville expressed that ambiguity in the menace and comfort that Queequeg’s tomahawk inspired in Ishmael. Likewise, Reading’s gift to Hill honored their friendship but also evoked the racial violence of the American frontier.

American arts and literature have manufactured a savage Indian, a primitive and violent foil to the conquering pioneer hero. That image, so powerfully rooted in our cultural imagination, cannot provide the Indians' perspective on this encounter because it comes from sources they did not produce. The material record is different. Some goods exchanged in the fur trade, the tomahawk in particular, did shape the image of the irredeemable savage, but Indians told their own version of this story through their incorporation of these goods into their everyday lives. Their use of European goods did not always come to violent or destructive ends; in fact, the fusion of European technology with native aesthetics could produce objects of remarkable innovation and enduring beauty. Yet this hybridity also created ambiguity. Material objects did play a vital role in mediating between cultures, but they obscured as much as they clarified each side's perception of the other. An object that Indians valued because it symbolized personal prestige and diplomatic autonomy was in the end conflated by Europeans with its plainer cousin and associated primarily with notions of Indian savagery and defeat.

Notes

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- 1 Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick, or the Whale* (New York, 1982 [1851]), 33, 73-74, 77-78, 144. My thanks to Corinna Dally-Starna for mentioning these passages to me.
- 2 For classic studies of the evolution of this stereotype in American arts and letters, see Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian in the American Mind* (Berkeley, CA, 1988); Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, CT,

- 1973); and Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York, 1978).
- 3 Melville directly challenged the racist stereotype of the Indian savage in his chapter "The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating" from *The Confidence-Man* (1857); see Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization*, 244–51.
 - 4 Lewis Henry Morgan, *League of the Iroquois*, introduction by William N. Fenton (New York, 1962 [1851]), 364.
 - 5 I draw inspiration here from anthropological material culture studies, particularly Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in a Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge, UK, 1986), 69–91.
 - 6 See Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge, UK, 1991).
 - 7 On guns and alcohol, see, respectively, Patrick M. Malone, *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics among the New England Indians* (Lanham, MD, 1991); and Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca, NY, 1995).
 - 8 A path-breaking article in this regard was Christopher L. Miller and George R. Hamell, "A New Perspective on Indian-White Contact: Cultural Symbols and Colonial Trade," *Journal of American History* 73 (1986): 311–28. For more recent examples of material culture studies emphasizing transculturation in the European-Indian encounter, see Ruth B. Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Indian Art from the Northeast, 1700–1900* (Seattle, 1998); Laurier Turgeon, "French Fishers, Fur Traders, and Amerindians during the Sixteenth Century: History and Archaeology," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 55 (1998): 585–610; Turgeon, "The Tale of the Kettle: Odyssey of an Intercultural Object," *Ethnohistory* 44 (1997): 1–30; and Timothy J. Shannon, "Dressing for Success on the Mohawk Frontier: Hendrick, William Johnson, and the Indian Fashion," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 53 (1996): 13–42. For studies that emphasize the Indians' influence as consumers on the types of goods exchanged in the fur trade, see Arthur J. Ray, "Indians as Consumers in the Eighteenth Century," in *Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference*, ed. Carol M. Judd and Arthur J. Ray (Toronto, 1980), 255–71; and James Axtell, "The First Consumer Revolution," in *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial America* (New York, 1992), 125–51.
 - 9 See Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA, 1991).
 - 10 The word *tomahawks* first appeared in English in John Smith's *A Map of Virginia* (London, 1612), in a vocabulary of Indian words. Smith translated it as "axes." See Philip L. Barbour, ed., *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith*, 3 vols. (Chapel Hill, NC, 1986), 1:137. On the etymology of the word *tomahawk*, see William R. Gerard, "The Term Tomahawk," *American Anthropologist* 10, new ser. (1908): 277–87; and William H. Holmes, "The Tomahawk," *American Anthropologist* 10, new ser. (1908): 264–76. For an example of the eighteenth-century usage of *tomahawk* that includes native ball-headed war clubs and European trade hatchets, see Robert Rogers, *A Concise Account of North America* (London, 1765), 225–26.
 - 11 See Arthur Woodward, *Denominators of the Fur Trade: An Anthology of Writings*

- on the *Material Culture of the Fur Trade* (Pasadena, CA, 1979), 45. Woodward states that “an axe of this type was found on an Indian village site in New York” but does not document this claim. It is more likely that the model used in these portraits was a European battle-axe, which had a double-flared blade.
- 12 The first edition of this book appeared under the title *Entertaining Passages Relating to Philip's War*, and its author's name was given simply as “T. C.” It had no illustrations. The reprint appeared with the author name Thomas Church and the title *The Entertaining History of King Philip's War*. It contained two engravings by Paul Revere. Although this book is usually attributed to Benjamin Church, the military leader on whose recollections it is based, both editions identified the author as Thomas Church, Benjamin's son.
 - 13 See Bradford F. Swan, “Prints of the American Indian, 1670–1775,” in *Boston Prints and Printmakers, 1670–1775* (Boston, 1973), 269–71.
 - 14 Woodward's article has been the standard source on the history of the pipe tomahawk since its publication. Harold L. Peterson relied on it in *American Indian Tomahawks* (New York, 1971 [1965]), 33–39. More recently, books written for the collectors' market in these items have cited Peterson as the authority on the pipe tomahawk's date of origin. See Daniel D. Hartzler and James A. Knowles, *Indian Tomahawks and Frontiersmen Belt Axes* (New Windsor, MD, 1995), 111–13; and John Baldwin, *Tomahawks, Pipe Axes of the American Frontier* (West Olive, MI, 1995), 40–46. Prior to Woodward, researchers did not date the pipe tomahawk's origin earlier than the 1750s. See George A. West, *Tobacco, Pipes, and Smoking Customs of the American Indian*, 2 vols. (Westport, CT, 1970 [1934]), 1:317–25; and Joseph D. McGuire, “Pipes and Smoking Customs of the American Aborigines: Based on Material in the U.S. National Museum,” in *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution, 1897* (Washington, DC, 1899), 464–68.
 - 15 For example, see Smithsonian Institution, Museum Support Center (hereinafter SI, MSC) A397711, described in its catalog notes as “purchased by Frank Christopher, who had plowed it up in his land” in Michigan; also SI, MSC A274043, described as “found with Indian remains” by a collector; and Rochester Museum and Science Center (hereinafter RMSC) 6114/177, described as “found washing out of the river bank at Owego, New York.”
 - 16 RMSC 6161/159.
 - 17 Especially relevant here are the records of Indian treaty conferences in New York and Pennsylvania; lists of Indian presents distributed at such conferences during the first half of the eighteenth century included pipes, hatchets, and axes, but no pipe tomahawks. See, e.g., the lists of goods distributed to the Indians attending Albany treaty conferences in 1711 and 1721 in E. B. O'Callaghan and Berthold Fernow, eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 15 vols. (Albany, NY, 1853–57), 5:272, 640. For New York, also see William Johnson's accounts for his distribution of Indian presents while serving as the colony's Indian agent in 1746 and 1747 in *Papers of Sir William Johnson*, ed. James Sullivan et al., 14 vols. (Albany, NY, 1921–62), 9:15–31 (hereinafter WJP). For Pennsylvania, see the lists of goods distributed at the following Pennsylvania treaty conferences: *A Treaty of Friendship Held with the Chiefs of the Six Nations, at Philadelphia, in September and October, 1736* (Philadelphia, 1737), 12; and *The Treaty Held with the Indians of the Six Nations at Philadelphia in July 1742* (Philadelphia, 1743), 12–13. The minutes of a 1748 Pennsylvania Indian

- treaty refer to “tomahawks” distributed to the Indians, but the term is not specific enough to know if the object referred to is a pipe tomahawk or simply a trade hatchet. See “Treaty with the Indians of Ohio, Held at Philadelphia, November 1747,” in *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 16 vols. (Harrisburg, PA, 1852–53), 5:151–52.
- 18 “Johannis Reise Diarium unter die Indianer im Oct. 1748,” travel diary by Johannes von Watteville, 15–16 October 1748, Records of the Moravian Mission among the Indians of North America, reel 30, box 225, folder 2, Archives of the Moravian Church, Bethlehem, PA. Corinna Dally-Starna, “Beyond Beauchamp: Revisiting the Moravians among the Iroquois” (paper presented at the Annual Conference on Iroquois Research, Rensselaerville, NY, October 1995). While the references appear in von Watteville’s journal, according to Dally-Starna the first passage quoted above is an insertion in the handwriting of one of von Watteville’s travel companions, Bishop John Christoph Frederick Cammerhoff. My thanks to Dally-Starna for sharing her work with me.
 - 19 See Deborah L. Nichols, “Field Report on the 1979 Excavations at 36 Nb 71, Fort Augusta, Sunbury, Pennsylvania,” in *Northumberland Historical Society Proceedings and Addresses* 28 (1980): 102, 118–20. The bowl is now on display at the Northumberland County Historical Society with a tomahawk blade recovered from the same site.
 - 20 A photograph of this pipe tomahawk, which has since been repatriated and reinterred, appears in John Witthoft, Harry Schoff, and Charles F. Wray, “Micmac Pipes, Vase-Shaped Pipes, and Calumets,” *Pennsylvania Archaeologist* 23 (1953): 89–107, plate 3, no. 17. It is highly corroded, but its shape conforms to mid-eighteenth-century examples.
 - 21 On the terms of Schmidt’s service, see John W. Jordan, ed., “Bishop J. C. F. Cammerhoff’s Narrative of a Journey to Shamokin, Penna., in the Winter of 1748,” in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 29 (1905): 161, 173–77. For the blacksmith’s role in the Moravians’ Shamokin mission, see also George Henry Loskiel, *History of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Indians in North America, in Three Parts*, trans. Christian Ignatius La Trobe (London, 1794), pt. 1, 93–102.
 - 22 James H. Merrell offers a provocative overview of Shamokin’s history in “Shamokin, ‘the Very Seat of the Prince of Darkness’: Unsettling the Early American Frontier,” in *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750–1830*, ed. Andrew R. L. Cayton and Fredrika J. Teute (Chapel Hill, NC, 1998), 16–59. For the nature of European-Indian negotiation on the Pennsylvania frontier at this time, see James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York, 1999); and Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700–1763* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003).
 - 23 See “Account of the Losses of John Fraser,” 3 August 1756, in Kenneth P. Bailey, ed., *The Ohio Company Papers, 1753–1817, Being Primarily Papers of the “Suffering Traders” of Pennsylvania* (Arcata, CA, 1947), 85. My thanks to Scott Stephenson for sharing this and related references with me.
 - 24 W. W. Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington: Colonial Series*, 10 vols. (Charlottesville, VA, 1983–95), 3:407, n. 2. My thanks to Emory Evans for sharing this reference with me.
 - 25 *WJP*, 2:899. Johnson also mentions “pipe hatchets” on two similar lists from

- the same period; see *ibid.*, 9:562, 563. Compare these lists from 1756 with Johnson's detailed account of his distribution of Indian presents during King George's War, in *ibid.*, 9:15–31. In that account, Johnson refers frequently to axes and pipes, but never mentions pipe hatchets or tomahawks.
- 26 See "A List of Goods Proper to be sent from England to Charles Town in South Carolina, to be given as presents from His Majesty to the Indians in the Southern District, for the Service of the Year 1757," Loudoun Papers, LO 3517B, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. My thanks to Kathryn E. Holland Braund for sharing this and related references with me.
 - 27 See Edmond Atkin, "List of Presents for Distribution to the Indians," October 1757, in Kenneth P. Bailey, *Christopher Gist: Colonial Frontiersman, Explorer, and Indian Agent* (Hamden, CT, 1976), 203.
 - 28 Loudoun Papers, LO 3517B.
 - 29 Bailey, *Christopher Gist*, 200, 203.
 - 30 *Ibid.*
 - 31 See Dean L. Anderson, "Variability in Trade at Eighteenth-Century French Outposts," in *French Colonial Archaeology: The Illinois Country and Western Great Lakes*, ed. John A. Walthall (Urbana, IL, 1991), 218–36.
 - 32 Gregory A. Waselkov, "French Colonial Trade in the Upper Creek Country," in *Calumet and Fleur-de-Lys: Archaeology of Indian and French Contact in the Midcontinent*, ed. John Walthall and Thomas E. Emerson (Washington, DC, 1992), 35–53. For a similar survey of the Anglo-Indian trade in the Southeast, see Waselkov, "The Eighteenth-Century Anglo-Indian Trade in Southeastern North America," in *New Faces of the Fur Trade: Selected Papers of the Seventh North American Fur Trade Conference, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1995*, ed. Jo-Anne Fiske, Susan Sleeper-Smith, and William Wicken (East Lansing, MI, 1998), 193–222.
 - 33 On the Creek fur trade, see Kathryn E. Holland Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels: Creek Indian Trade with Anglo-America, 1685–1815* (Lincoln, NE, 1993); and Joshua Piker, *Okfuskee: A Creek Indian Town in Colonial America* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), 135–61. The Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL (hereinafter ADAH), has in its Archaeological Collections four pipe tomahawks that can be dated to eighteenth-century Creek burial sites (accession numbers 85.7.353, 85.14.656, 85.14.643, 865.14.273). All are in the British half-hatchet style.
 - 34 See Lyle M. Stone, *Fort Michilimackinac, 1715–1781: An Archaeological Perspective on the Revolutionary Frontier* (East Lansing, MI, 1974), 297–98.
 - 35 See Robert C. Mainfort Jr., *Indian Social Dynamics in the Period of European Contact: Fletcher Site Cemetery, Bay County, Michigan* (East Lansing, MI, 1979), 300, 327, 379. Other archaeological sites in Michigan have yielded occasional pipe tomahawks from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. See, e.g., Emerson F. Greenman, *The Wolf and Furton Sites, Macomb County, Michigan* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1939), 24; and Ruth Herrick, "A Report on the Ada Site, Kent County, Michigan," *Michigan Archaeologist* 4 (1958): 1–27.
 - 36 On spontoon pipe tomahawks, see Peterson, *American Indian Tomahawks*, 24–26. A good overview of pipe tomahawks associated with the Great Lakes fur trade is provided in Richard A. Pohrt, "Pipe Tomahawks from Michigan and the Great Lakes Area," in David W. Penney, ed., *Great Lakes Indian Art* (Detroit, 1989), 95–103.

- 37 See David H. Corkran, *The Creek Frontier, 1540-1783* (Norman, OK, 1967), 206.
- 38 *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 24 January 1760. The encounter took place near Augusta, GA, and occurred in December 1759.
- 39 Samuel Cole Williams, ed., *Lieut. Henry Timberlake's Memoirs, 1756-1765* (Marietta, GA, 1948 [1927]), 77-78. Woodward (*Denominators of the Fur Trade*, 48) cites this description of the pipe tomahawk but erroneously dates it to the 1750s. Subsequent writers on the pipe tomahawk have repeated this error, dating Timberlake's remarks as early as 1750. See Peterson, *American Indian Tomahawks*, 33; and Baldwin, *Tomahawks, Pipe Axes*, 46. On the Cherokee's hostilities with neighboring colonies in 1759-61, see Tom Hatley, *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians through the Era of Revolution* (New York, 1995), 119-40.
- 40 See Peter Williamson, *French and Indian Cruelty: Exemplified in the Life and Various Vicissitudes of Fortune of Peter Williamson*, 4th ed. (London, 1759), frontispiece.
- 41 See Alden T. Vaughan, "Frontier Banditti and the Indians: The Paxton Boys' Legacy, 1763-1775," *Pennsylvania History* 51 (1984): 1-29.
- 42 On the racialization of Indian warfare during the Seven Years' War, see Merrell, *Into the American Woods*, 225-52; and Peter Way, "The Cutting Edge of Culture: British Soldiers Encounter Native Americans in the French and Indian War," in *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600-1850*, ed. Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern (Philadelphia, 1999), 123-48. Also useful in this regard for its discussion of how Europeans justified transgressing their usual code of warfare when fighting Indians is Elizabeth A. Fenn, "Biological Warfare in Eighteenth-Century North America: Beyond Jeffrey Amherst," *Journal of American History* 86 (2000): 1552-80.
- 43 See Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York, 2000), 457-71; and Wilbur R. Jacobs, *Wilderness Politics and Indian Gifts: The Northern Colonial Frontier, 1748-1763* (Lincoln, NE, 1966 [1950]), 160-85.
- 44 See William Johnson to Jeffrey Amherst, 12 February 1761, *WJP*, 3:335; and "List of Goods for Presents to the Indians," 24 November 1761, in Bailey, *Ohio Company Papers*, 169-71.
- 45 See "A Scheme for Meeting Expenses of Trade," 8 October 1764, *WJP*, 4:559.
- 46 See Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan accounts for Fort Pitt, 12 June 1766, and for Fort Chartres, 13 September 1768, in *WJP*, 5:248, 6:375.
- 47 Braund, *Deerskins and Duffels*, 128.
- 48 The use of archaeological sources to fill in gaps from the textual record of the European-Indian encounter is modeled by Rob Mann in "The Silenced Miami: Archaeological and Ethnohistorical Evidence for Miami-British Relations, 1795-1812," *Ethnohistory* 46 (1999): 400-427. For the purposes of researching pipe tomahawks, I have relied on the archaeological and ethnohistorical collections of several museums. In addition to the collections already cited at the SI, MSC and the RMSC, I have examined pipe tomahawks at the National Museum of the American Indian, Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, MD (hereinafter NMAI, CRC); the Pennsylvania State Museum in Harrisburg (hereinafter PSM); the Mitchell Museum of the American Indian at Kendall College

- in Evanston, IL (hereinafter MM); and the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology in Bristol, RI (hereinafter HMA).
- 49 While some Christian Indians did learn ironworking so that they could repair their own tools and weapons, I have found no references from this era to native-made pipe tomahawks. Henry Timberlake described pipe tomahawks as “being all made by the Europeans,” although customized “according to the country or fancy of the purchaser.” See Williams, *Timberlake's Memoirs*, 78. For Indian ironworking, see Loskiel, *History of the Mission of the United Brethren*, 16.
- 50 The best description of the materials and process involved in manufacturing pipe tomahawks is found in Peterson, *American Indian Tomahawks*, 34–38, 55–77. For useful charts and diagrams tracing changes in their composition and design, see Baldwin, *Tomahawks, Pipe Axes*, 41, 43.
- 51 See SI, MSC E359630 and A397711.
- 52 See Witthoft, Schoff, and Wray, “Micmac Pipes”; and Barry C. Kent, *Susquehanna's Indians* (Harrisburg, PA, 1989 [1984]), 145–56.
- 53 In a 1759 article for Dublin's *Gentleman's and London Magazine*, Peter Williamson provided a brief description of Indian culture to accompany his image in native costume. In a brazen fabrication, he attributed the invention of the pipe tomahawk to William Penn, whom Williamson claimed was inspired to design the object because the clay pipes Penn distributed to the Indians kept breaking from the Indians' “rough useage.” See Williamson, “A Short Account of the Indians,” *Gentleman's and London Magazine* (June 1759), reprinted in *Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of New Jersey* 31 (1974): 14–16.
- 54 See Neal L. Trubowitz, “Thanks, But We Prefer to Smoke Our Own: Pipes in the Great Lakes–Riverine Region during the Eighteenth Century,” in *Proceedings of the 1989 Smoking Pipe Conference, Selected Papers*, ed. Charles F. Hayes III (Rochester, NY, 1992), 97–111.
- 55 Thomas Anburey, *Travels through the Interior Parts of America*, 2 vols. (New York: New York Times, 1969 [1789]), 1:402. According to George Catlin, Indians manufactured pipe tomahawk handles from “the stalk of young ash, which generally grows straight, and has a small pith through the center, which is easily burned out with a hot wire or a piece of hard wood, by a much slower process.” See Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis, 1965 [1841]), 1:235.
- 56 NMAI, CRC, 227271.000.
- 57 For decorated handles associated with nineteenth-century cultures, see Barbara A. Hail, *Hau, Kóla! The Plains Indian Collection of the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology* (Seattle, 1980), 160–61, 168. A noteworthy museum piece in this regard is SI, MSC E178877. This brass pipe tomahawk was donated without a handle to the Smithsonian by a collector. In 1879–80, a Cheyenne Indian named Tichkematse, working for the Smithsonian, made a handle for it in the Plains style, with a perforation for threading a leather thong.
- 58 Kopytoff, “Cultural Biography of Things,” 72–77. A similar kind of customization occurred with European hatchets traded to Pacific Islanders. See Thomas, *Entangled Objects*, 103–6.
- 59 Walter Pilkington, ed., *The Journals of Samuel Kirkland: Eighteenth Century Missionary to the Iroquois, Government Agent, Father of Hamilton College* (Clinton, NY, 1980), 11. My thanks to George Hamell for sharing this reference with me.

- On the use of European trade goods in Indian burials, see James Axtell, "Last Rites: The Acculturation of Native Funerals in Colonial North America," in *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York, 1981), 110–28. For other eighteenth-century descriptions of native grave goods that include references to tomahawks and hatchets, see Williams, *Timberlake's Memoirs*, 90–91; and John Heckewelder, *History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighbouring States* (Philadelphia, 1876 [1818]), 120, 269–75. While neither refers specifically to the inclusion of pipe tomahawks on these occasions, Timberlake's use of the term *tomahawks* in his description of grave goods is consistent with his earlier usage of it when describing pipe tomahawks.
- 60 RMSC 6161 159; see also site report for burial #10 in the Huntoon site in Charles Wray, "Townley-Read, Huntoon, Steele, Dann Site Reports," bound transcript, RMSC. Also see Charles F. Wray, *Manual for Seneca Iroquois Archaeology* (Rochester, NY, 1973), for background on historical Seneca archaeological sites and their contents.
- 61 In addition to the Seneca burial described above (Huntoon site, burial #10, RMSC), see also burial #50, Fletcher Site Cemetery, MI, in Mainfort, *Indian Social Dynamics*, 325–27. For a similar example from the Southeast, see Craig Sheldon, field notes on Fusihatchee site, Elmore County, AL (1EE191), feature no. 1821, Archaeology Laboratory, Auburn University Montgomery, Montgomery, AL. For a discussion of grave goods as status markers, see Mainfort, *Indian Social Dynamics*, 303–9.
- 62 Johnson to Lord George Germain, 12 March 1776, as cited in Woodward, *Denominators of the Fur Trade*, 48; and Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, 1:236.
- 63 The map, drawn by Thomas Hutchins, appeared in [William Smith], *An Historical Account of the Expedition against the Ohio Indians, in the year 1764: Under the Command of Henry Bouquet, Esq.* (Philadelphia, 1765). For the attribution of the cartouches to Dawkins, see Lawrence C. Wroth and Marion W. Adams, *American Woodcuts and Engravings, 1670–1800* (Providence, RI, 1946), #22.
- 64 The scene depicted in this cartouche illustrates a passage from Smith's text, in which Bouquet agreed to confer with some Indians in a bower outside his camp. According to the text, the Indians present smoked their pipes and presented wampum with their speeches. See [Smith], *Historical Account*, 13–16. When Smith's *Historical Account* was published in London in 1766, the Hutchins map appeared without the engravings. Benjamin West completed two engravings for this London edition, one of which, "The Indians Giving a Talk to Colonel Bouquet," featured a seated Indian exhaling from a pipe tomahawk while he listens to the speech.
- 65 J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer and Sketches of Eighteenth-Century America*, ed. Albert E. Stone (New York, 1981 [1782]), 99–100.
- 66 See *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 22 May 1793.
- 67 See Bruce G. Trigger, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15, *North-east* (Washington, DC, 1978), 163, 381.
- 68 See Rogers, *Concise Account of North America*, 224–25.
- 69 For the calumet ceremony, see Donald J. Blakeslee, "The Origin and Spread of the Calumet Ceremony," *American Antiquity* 46 (1981): 759–68; James Warren Springer, "An Ethnohistoric Study of the Smoking Complex in Eastern North

- America," *Ethnohistory* 28 (1981): 217–35; and Ian W. Brown, "The Calumet Ceremony in the Southeast and Its Archaeological Manifestations," *American Antiquity* 54 (1989): 311–31.
- 70 See William N. Fenton, *The Iroquois Eagle Dance: An Offshoot of the Calumet Dance* (Syracuse, NY, 1991 [1953]), 165–71.
- 71 For examples, see *Propositions Made by the Five Nations of Indians* (New York, 1698), 7–8, 13; *The Particulars of an Indian Treaty at Conestogoe* (Dublin, 1723), 14; *Two Indian Treaties* (Philadelphia, 1728), 7, 16; *A Treaty of Friendship Held with the Chiefs of the Six Nations* (Philadelphia, 1737), 12; *A Conference Held at the Fort at St. George's in the County of York* (Boston, 1742), 9; *The Treaty Held with the Indians of the Six Nations, at Lancaster, in Pennsylvania, in June, 1744* (Williamsburg, 1744), 2; and *Minutes of Conferences Held with the Indians, at Easton, in the Months of July and November, 1756* (Philadelphia, 1757), 8, 12, 27.
- 72 See, e.g., Williams, *Timberlake's Memoirs*, 61, 65.
- 73 Mark E. Lender and James Kirby Martin, eds., *Citizen-Soldier: The Revolutionary War Journal of Joseph Bloomfield* (Newark, NJ, 1982), 49.
- 74 *Travels in New France by J. C. B.*, ed. Sylvester K. Stevens, Donald H. Kent, and Emma Edith Woods (Harrisburg, PA, 1941), 41.
- 75 O'Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents Relative to New York*, 8:614, 620, 623.
- 76 See James Adair, *The History of the American Indians; Particularly Those Nations Adjoining to the Mississippi, East and West Florida, Georgia, South and North Carolina, and Virginia* (London, 1775), 423–24; William A. Turnbaugh, "Cloud-blowers and Calumets," in *Fifth Annual Plain Indian Seminar in Honor of Dr. John C. Ewers*, ed. George P. Horse Capture and Gene Ball (Cody, WY, 1980), 61–64; and Turnbaugh, "Elements of Nativistic Pipe Ceremonialism in the Post-contact Northeast," *Pennsylvania Archaeologist* 47 (1977): 1–7.
- 77 Non-Indian craftsmen became involved in manufacturing catlinite pipes for the Indian trade in the mid-nineteenth century, using lathes to speed the work. By 1892, one observer claimed that less than one percent of such pipes were produced by Indians. See Frederick Webb Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, Part I* (Washington, DC, 1907), 218–19. The anonymous donor of one such catlinite pipe tomahawk to the HMA claimed it came from the Oglala Sioux of Pine Ridge, who used it in their councils, "where they sit on the ground in a circle . . . passing [it] from one to another until it makes the round of the circle, a very solemn and impressive ceremony, anyone interrupting which is liable to get into trouble." See Hail, *Hau, Kóla!* 243.
- 78 The militiamen's report of the demise of Captain Jacobs was premature; he was killed in another engagement six months later. See Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 163.
- 79 See *Pennsylvania Archives* (Philadelphia, 1852–1935), 1st ser., 3:293. Also see Anthony F. C. Wallace, *King of the Delawares: Teedyuscung, 1700–1763* (Syracuse, NY, 1990 [1949]), 163. For White Eyes, see Louis Phelps Kellogg, *Frontier Advance on the Upper Ohio* (Madison, WI, 1916), as cited in James F. O'Neil II, comp. and ed., *Their Bearing Is Noble and Proud: A Collection of Narratives Regarding the Appearance of Native Americans from 1740–1815* (Dayton, OH, 1995), 47–48. On the use of trade goods to distinguish chiefs, see Shannon, "Dressing for Success," 37–39. Wilcomb E. Washburn discussed the symbolic value of pipe tomahawks in "Symbol, Utility, and Aesthetics in the Indian Fur Trade," *Minnesota History* 40 (1966): 198–202.

- 80 See Bailey, *Christopher Gist*, 200, 203.
- 81 See Donald H. Kent, Louis M. Waddell, and Autumn L. Leonard, eds., *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, 6 vols. (Harrisburg, PA, 1972–94), 3:153.
- 82 For 1761 price schedules for Fort Pitt and Detroit, see “Indian Trade Regulations, Fort Pitt,” 18 September 1761, in *ibid.*, 5:762–63; and Capt. George Croghan, “Prices of Goods Sold to Indians,” 5 February 1761, in *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, ed. Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent (Harrisburg, PA, 1940–43), ser. 21646, 26. For Johnson’s list of necessary goods, see *WJP*, 3:335.
- 83 For examples of such presentation pieces, see Peterson, *American Indian Tomahawks*, items 114, 122, 124, 133, 256; and Hartzler and Knowles, *Indian Tomahawks*, 131, 135, 142–43.
- 84 See the examples in Peterson, *American Indian Tomahawks*, items 119, 120, 129, 133, 134, 240. For presentation pieces associated with the Seneca from the early nineteenth century, see *RMSC*, AE 548 and 70.89.78.
- 85 On the Romney portrait of Brant, see Leslie Reinhardt, “British and Indian Identities in a Picture by Benjamin West,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31 (1998): 286, 292; and Milton Hamilton, “Joseph Brant, ‘The Most Painted Indian,’” *New York History* 39 (1958): 119–32.
- 86 This print is in the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division. It has been cropped, so its title and artist are unknown. I have not been able to locate any other copies that might provide that information. The Library of Congress’s catalog identifies the print’s subject as Hendrick, an Anglophile Mohawk chief who was killed at the Battle of Lake George in 1755, but the pose and costume of the print’s subject, as well as the time of its publication (estimated as being the late eighteenth century), suggest that it is based on the Romney portrait of Brant.
- 87 Robert W. Weir, *Sa-Go-Ye-Wat-Ha, or “Red Jacket”* [painting, ca. 1758–1830] (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1828). Frederick Bartoli’s portrait of another Iroquois leader, *Seneca Chief, Ki-On-Twog-Ky, Also Known as Cornplanter* [1732/40–1836] (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1796), also features a pipe tomahawk, although the design of this pipe tomahawk is so unique as to suggest that it is an invention of the painter.
- 88 *NMAI*, CRC, 034812.000.
- 89 This piece, long on loan to the New York State Historical Association’s Thaw Collection in Cooperstown, has been reclaimed by its owner, The Earls of Warwick Collection, Warwick, England. An image of it can found in Gilbert T. Vincent, *Masterpieces of American Indian Art from the Eugene and Clare Thaw Collection* (New York, 1995), 21.
- 90 An image of the DePeyster pipe tomahawk, now in the Merseyside County Museum, Liverpool, appears in David A. Armour and Keith R. Widder, *At the Crossroads: Michilimackinac during the American Revolution* (Mackinac Island, MI, 1978), 57.
- 91 On Caldwell’s career and this portrait, see Beth Fowkes Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-Century British Painting* (Durham, NC, 1999), 84–91; Reinhardt, “British and Indian Identities,” 294; and Colin G. Calloway, *Crown and Calumet: British-Indian Relations, 1783–1815* (Norman, OK, 1987), 56.
- 92 On British military officers’ appropriation of native goods as souvenirs, see

- Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power*, 84–91. On the collection of Indian artifacts by gentlemen and military officers, see Christian F. Feest, “European Collecting of American Indian Artifacts and Art,” *Journal of the History of Collections* 5 (1993): 1–11; J. C. H. King, “Woodland Artifacts from the Studio of Benjamin West, 1738–1820,” *American Indian Art Magazine*, Winter 1991, 35–47; and Phillips, *Trading Identities*, 24–27.
- 93 Nicholas Cresswell, *Journal of Nicholas Cresswell, 1774–1777* (London, 1925), 65.
- 94 Paul W. Sciulli and Richard M. Gramly, “Analysis of the Ft. Laurens, Ohio, Skeletal Sample,” *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 80 (1989): 21–22.
- 95 John Mason to Thomas Waterman, 4 April 1809, in Ora Brooks Peake, *A History of the United States Indian Factory System, 1795–1822* (Denver, 1954), 62–63.
- 96 On the distinction between commodities and gifts and the social significance of each, see Thomas, *Entangled Objects*, 14–22.
- 97 Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expeditions, 1804–1806*, 8 vols. (New York, 1969 [1904]), 7:125.
- 98 *Ibid.*, 3:197–98; 4:258, 268; 5:97–98. See also James P. Rhonda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* (Lincoln, NE, 1984), 176.
- 99 Francis Paul Prucha, *Indian Peace Medals in American History* (Madison, WI, 1971), 90–142.
- 100 See Peterson, *American Indian Tomahawks*, 34–36; Woodward, *Denominators of the Fur Trade*, 46–47; Hartzler and Knowles, *Indian Tomahawks*, 144–45, 186–87.
- 101 See photographs reproduced in Herman J. Viola, *Diplomats in Buckskins: A History of Indian Delegations in Washington City* (Washington, DC, 1981), 38, 73, 114; and Alfred L. Bush and Lee Clark Mitchell, *The Photograph and the American Indian* (Princeton, NJ, 1994), 27, 34, 37, 45, 85, 92.
- 102 On late-nineteenth-century Indian artifact collecting, see Shepard Krech III and Barbara A. Hail, eds., *Collecting Native America, 1870–1960* (Washington, DC, 1999). On hobbyists in the twentieth century, see Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 128–53.
- 103 SI, MSC E362064. The details on Hill and Reading are from the catalog card for this piece.