

## Silverwork



The clothing worn by Joseph Brant tells us about the era in which he lived and shows the origin of what has become traditional attire for Mohawk men. Brant wears silver brooches and silver gorget around his neck, and a silver armband.

His headpiece represents an older tradition, decorated with dyed porcupine quills.

## Silver Brooches

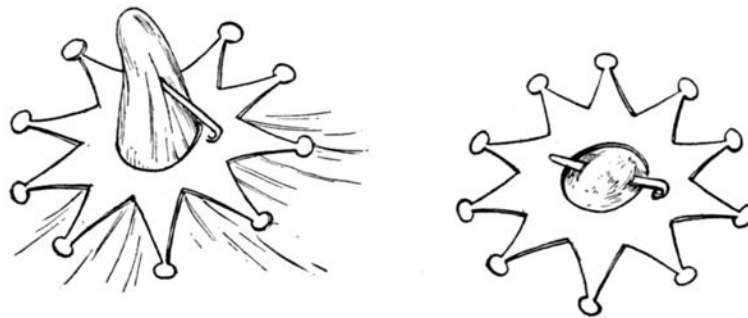


A variety of silver brooch designs. Some designs were borrowed from European models, such as the mason symbol becoming a symbol of the council fire as in the lower middle example. Another example is seen below. It can be seen as being worn either way.



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The cloth is pulled through the center of the brooch until the silver cross pin can be slide through the cloth to hold the brooch firmly in place.



Brooches are made by cutting the basic shape out of sheet of silver (or hammered out coin) with a small saw blade. The round beads at the edges of this sunburst, are actually hammered out from the backside. Then the zig-zag lines are made with an engraving tool. The maker might stamp his initials or an identifying design on the back.

Boston, Philadelphia and Montreal silversmiths were commissioned to make silverwork for the fur trade and as diplomatic gifts of Haudenosaunee leaders.



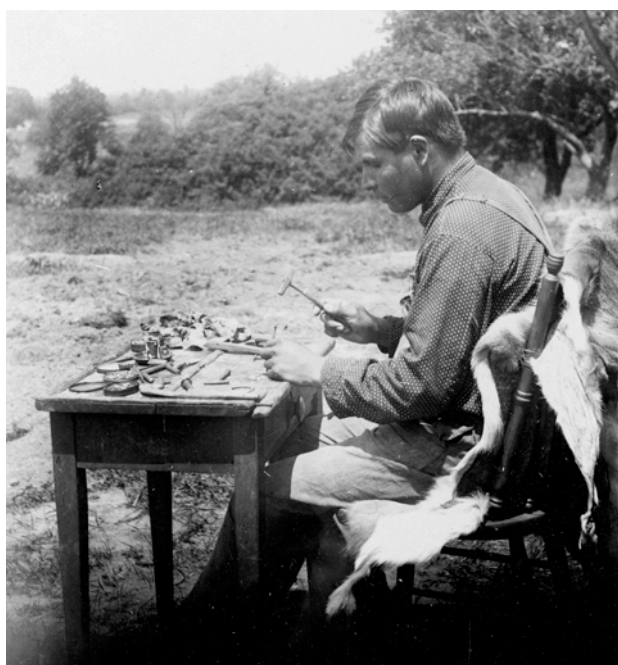
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Eventually Haudenosaunee men learned the craft of silverwork, as seen in the photo below.

In his report in 1852 Mr Morgan says of this:

The most of the silver ornaments in later years have 'been made by Indian silversmiths, one of whom may be found in nearly every Indian village. They are either made of brass or silver, or from silver coins pounded out, and then cut into patterns with metallic instruments. The earrings figured in the plate were made out of silver, by an Onondaga silversmith of Grand River, under the direction of the writer. (Morgan. Fabrics etc. p. 89)



**Chief Levi Joe, Grand River Onondaga, 1908**

Josiah Jacobs, of the Onondaga reservation, stated in the 1880s that his uncle June-gant-ha (meaning "The tribe is very large") made brooches out of silver coins on a small anvil. These were hammered out, and then cut out by patterns. Punches and chisels were used, and his greatest difficulty was in setting colored glass in pendants and earrings.

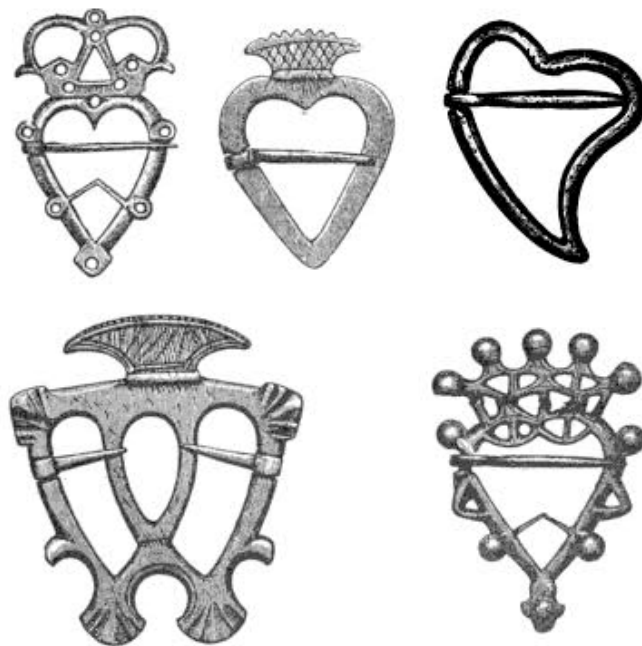
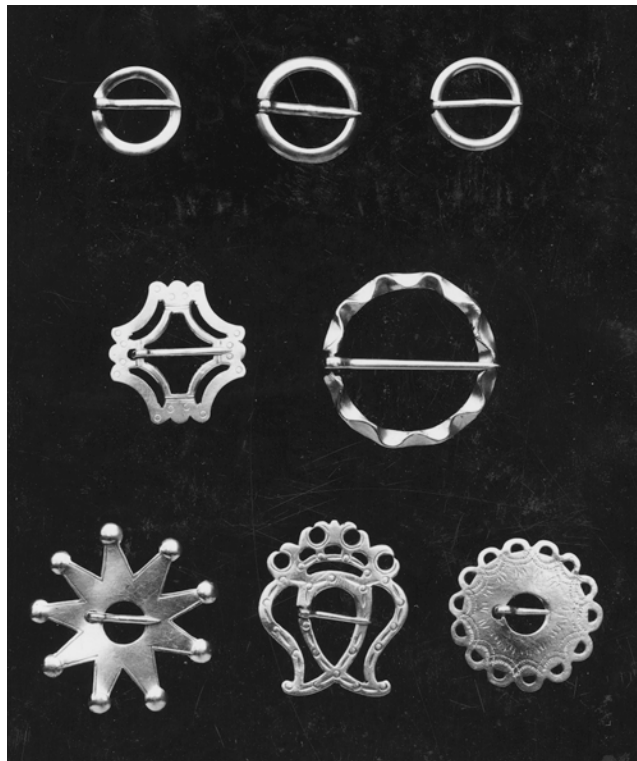


FIG. 35.—Scotch Luckenbooth brooches, heart motif (actual size).

The Scots made silver brooches to be used as betrothal pins. The heart and crown was the basic imagery that was elaborated on in these pins seen above.



The first luckenbooth brooches date from the late 17th Century. These early versions were very small and delicate in appearance. The Luckenbooth became the traditional gift from a man to his sweetheart on betrothal but was also regarded as a lucky charm that would protect the wearer from the evil eye. The brooch was also created with the power of easing child birth and insuring a good flow of breast milk when pinned to the undergarments near the left thigh.

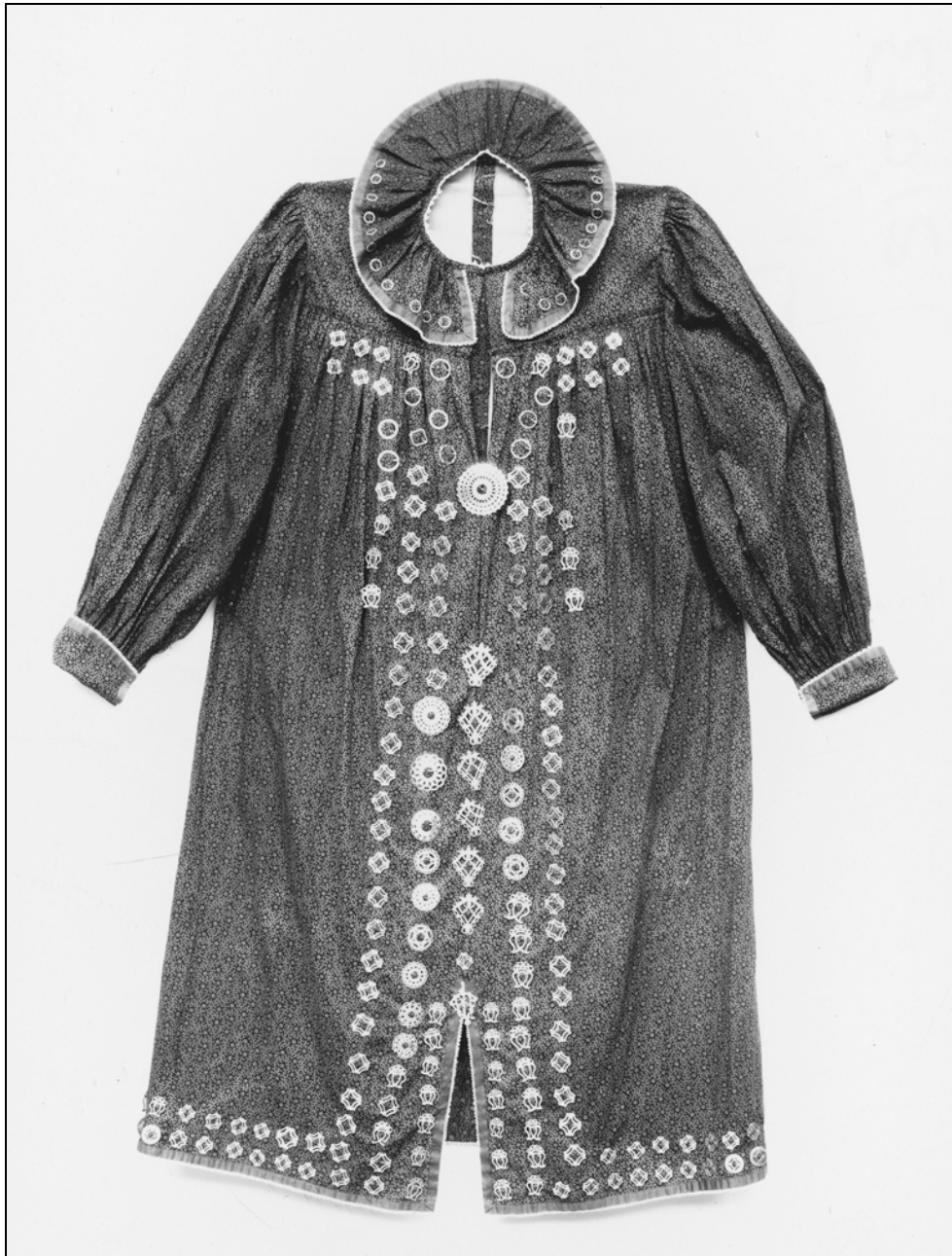
([http://www.celticjackalope.com/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=72&osCsid=361504c7809e4af4dffa7a1407f8ea4c](http://www.celticjackalope.com/product_info.php?products_id=72&osCsid=361504c7809e4af4dffa7a1407f8ea4c))

A little silver heart was pinned to a child's clothing to keep it safe. Some would say this was to protect against witches; others mentioned "the guid folk" or mischievous fairies. (thus the name Witch's brooch) In some regions a girl's brooch was put near her left hip, and a boy's half-way down the left thigh.

(<http://quezi.com/12874>)

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This Seneca dress shows the way in which silver brooches were usually attached to enhance the design of the woman's clothing. Some dresses were known to have over two hundred brooches.



## Silver Gorget



Silver Gorget, a gift from King George III to Joseph Brant in 1776  
Silver Gorget, a gift from King George III to Joseph Brant in 1776.

A gorget is a crescent-shaped decoration worn at the throat, popular with British officers in the late 18th century. Derived from a piece of armour once worn to protect the throat (in French, la gorge), it became both an ornament as well as an insignia of the wearer's rank.

Joseph Brant's silver-gilt gorget was given to him during his visit to England in 1776, when he met King George III. It is inscribed "The Gift of a Friend to Capt. Brant."

Silver Gorget, a gift from King George III to Joseph Brant in 1776

(Joseph Brant Museum, # 2003.5.1)



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A miniature enamel portrait of Captain Joseph Brant. He wears the gorget seen above, along with a headband of small circular silver brooches, and a wampum belt over his shoulder.

The portrait is oval in shape, painted on copper and has a small circular clasp at the top centre. The portrait of Joseph Brant depicts him wearing a feather head-dress and a blue overcoat. Around his neck is a gorget, likely the same one given to him as a gift by King George III during his first visit to England 1775-1776. The back of the portrait is inscribed \_Katerine Rone, 1786\_.

Katerine most likely means Catherine, Joseph Brant's third wife. Rone is the anglicized word for wife in the Mohawk language.

This miniature, along with a matching one of Lord Rawdon (969.71.8), are the works of enamel artist Henry Bone (1755-1834), elected R. A. in 1811 and appointed enameller to King(s) George III, George IV, and William IV. The miniature of Lord Rawdon is inscribed \_From Lord Rawdon to his Friend Capt. Jos. Brant 1786\_. The portraits were given to Joseph Brant during his second visit to England in 1786.

(Joseph Brant Museum, # 969.071.7)

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Shell gorget with silver decorations Iroquois; Mohawk shell; silver Centimetres:  
9.25 (length), 2.25 (height), 9 (width) 18th century Area of Origin: Northeast.  
ROM



Royal Ontario Museum

## Silver Armbands



Armbands associated with John Quinney (Stockbridge Mohican [Mahican], 1797–1855)  
1793 or 1813 Brotherton, Wisconsin Silver 5.5 x 8.5 cm Presented by Dr. Frederick J.  
Dockstader NMAI 24/1108

## Silver Pipe



The silver pipe dates to 1769, given to the Mohawks by the British. It has a chain attached to it, recalling the silver convent chain relationship to the Crown and the British colonies.

The pipe bowl is engraved with the image of two figures, the Covenant Chain partners, greeting each other under the bright sun. The flat panel is engraved on both sides with the words: *To the Mohock Indians, from the Nine Patentees, of the tract near Schoharie granted in 1769 . . . As A Testimony of the Sincere Esteem.*

The Pipe changed hands often. From the *Memoirs of Evelyn H.C. Johnson*, (Chapter 3, p. 14 c. 2009) we see how valuable items might become lost:

*After father became Chief, the silver Pipe of Peace hung by the silver chain in our drawing room. On the silver under the bowl was engraved "Presented to the Six Nations Indians from the Nine Patentees of the Tract near Schoharo," and on the reverse was engraved "As a Testimony of their Sincere Esteem, 1769.*

*The pipe itself was about a foot long, and the bowl about an inch and a half deep. Engraved on the base of the bowl were the figure of a white man and the figure of an Indian, each holding the end of a chain. Behind them was the shining sun, an indication that everything was clear between them.*

*At father's death this famous Pipe went to the next Chief, who was my cousin George Elliott. When he died soon afterwards, his brother John became Chief. As one could do anything with John for money, it was thought that he sold the Pipe although he said that he would not take \$200.00 for it. The Pipe is now in the United States.*

In 1914, one pipe had disappeared. The Council decided that the Silver Pipe that was in the possession of Chief Jno. W.M. Elliott be placed in the care of some one who will give suitable bond for its safe keeping. On December 1, 1914, the Council instructed the Secretary to write J.W.M. Elliott and tell him that the Council desires that he give up the Silver Pipe of Peace which was given to the Confederacy of the Five Nations prior to 1664. It is not clear how Elliott responded. It is also not clear why they attached a different date to the pipe.



### Silver Earrings



Small pieces of glass were placed on such earrings



Cast silver bobs



About 1775-1780



## Headpiece - Diadem

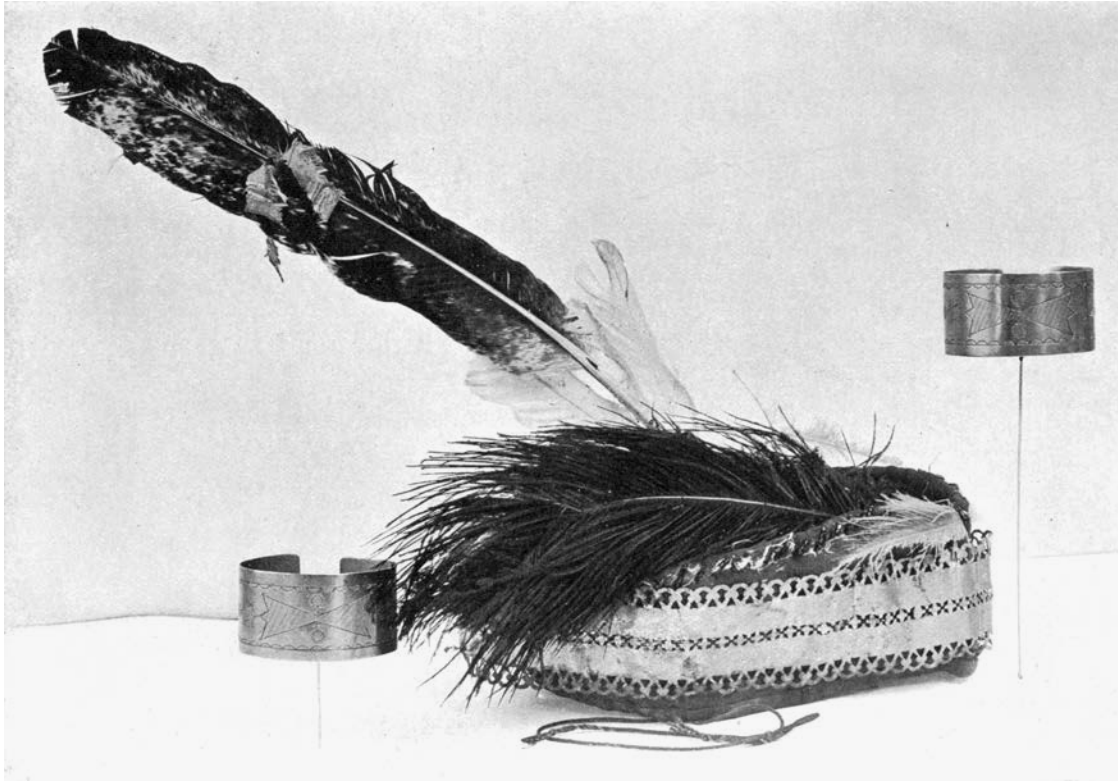


Michael Galban

The diadem is loosely based on an existing 1780's headdress in Cambridge Museum. The body of the crown is fawnskin. The quilled bars are wrapped on black ash splints. The tubes on either end are river cane and red-dyed feathers are tucked inside. These objects seem to be typical formal headdresses throughout the 18th century and in the famous painting of Joseph Brant by Romney he wears one.

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**Seneca silver hat band.**



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