

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Notice of Intent to Repatriate a Cultural Item in the Possession of the Navajo Nation Museum, Window Rock, Arizona

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior

ACTION: Notice

Notice is hereby given under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 of the intent to repatriate a cultural item in the possession of the Navajo Nation Museum, Window Rock, AZ, that meets the definitions of "sacred object" and "object of cultural patrimony" under section 2 of the act.

On November 16, 1993, the Navajo Nation Museum sent summary information on their collections to the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin. In response to this information, representatives of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin visited the Navajo Nation Museum in October, 1994, identified a carved wooden mask as being a sacred object and an object of cultural patrimony, and requested its repatriation.

The carved wooden mask is approximately life size. The nose of the mask is twisted at an angle. The eye sockets are lined with copper sheeting. Two pieces of horse tail are nailed to the top of the mask so that the hair falls on either side of the face. The surface of the mask is painted red. A buckskin loop is nailed to the top for hanging the mask. Museum records indicate that the mask was ordered from White Deer Indian Traders of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, in 1961.

Representatives of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin have identified this item as a medicine or false face mask. Such masks represent the power of particular medicine beings. This particular mask represents the Red-Faced Spirit, also known as Keel-Nose. The Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin resides within sixty miles of Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

Representatives of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin affirm that this specific false face mask is needed by the traditional religious leaders of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin for the practice of the traditional mid-winter ceremony by present-day adherents. Representatives of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin also affirm that this false face mask is owned collectively by the members of the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin and no individual had the right to sell or otherwise alienate the mask.

Based on the above mentioned information, officials of the Navajo Nation Museum have determined that, pursuant to 25 U.S.C. 3001 (2), there is a relationship of shared group identity which can be reasonably traced between this false face mask and the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin. Officials of the Navajo Nation Museum have also determined that this false face mask meets the definitions of sacred object and object of cultural patrimony pursuant to 25 U.S.C. 3001 (3)(C).

Representatives of any other Indian tribe that believes itself to be culturally affiliated with this object should contact Clarenda Begay, Museum Director, Navajo Nation Museum, Window Rock, Arizona,

86515, telephone (602) 871-6673 before February 24, 1995. Repatriation of this false face mask to the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin can begin after that date if no additional claimants come forward.

Dated: January 20, 1995

Francis P. MacManamon
Departmental Consulting Archeologist
Chief, Archeological Assistance Division
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