

THE LATER AWARDS OF THE CORNPLANTER MEDAL

BY FREDERICK STARR

THE history of *The Cornplanter Medal for Iroquois Research*, from the time of its establishment to its fifth award has been made known through a series of articles, which, not only reached the readers of the magazines in which they were printed, but as separately printed were further distributed.¹ Since the fifth award, in 1912, no detailed publicity has been given to it. In the present article its further history, from that time to the present is sketched.

In establishing the medal in 1904 I indicated four classes of recipients—Ethnologists, Historians, Artists and Philanthropists. First awarded in 1904 to General John D. Clark of Auburn, New York, the medal is administered by the Cayuga County Historical Society and is given once in two years. There has been a slight irregularity in the award of late but the intention is that it is to be given in February of the even-numbered years. The awards to date are as follows:

- 1904. John D. Clark, Auburn, N. Y.
- 1906. William M. Beauchamp, Syracuse, N. Y.
- 1908. David Boyle, Toronto, Ont.
- 1910. William P. Letchworth, Buffalo, N. Y.
- 1912. Reuben Gold Thwaites, Madison, Wis.
- 1914. J. N. B. Hewitt, Washington, D. C.
- 1916. Arthur C. Parker, Rochester, N. Y.
- 1919. Alvin H. Dewey, Rochester, N. Y.
- 1920. Mrs. Mary Clark Thompson, Canandaigua, N. Y.

¹ *The Cornplanter Medal*. The American Journal of Numismatics, 1905; *The Cornplanter Medal*. The Open Court, March, 1905; *William M. Beauchamp and the Cornplanter Medal*. The Open Court, February, 1906; *The Cornplanter Medal for Iroquois Research*. The Open Court, May, 1908; *The Cornplanter Medal and William P. Letchworth*. The Open Court, 1910; *The Cornplanter Medal for Iroquois Research and Reuben Gold Thwaites*. The American Antiquarian, March, 1912.

1923. Frederick Houghton, Buffalo, N. Y.

1926. Edward H. Gohl, Auburn, N. Y.

It is expected that an award will be made in 1930. The Medal has come to be highly prized and there is no lack of names submitted for its award.

In 1914 the medal was given to a man eminent in the field of American ethnology. He is himself of Indian descent—Iroquois, a Tuscarora. John Napoleon Brinton Hewitt was born at Lewiston, N. Y., on December 16, 1859. So far as gained through schools, his education was received from the local public schools. He was ever a diligent student and an indefatigable worker. When but twenty years of age he became the amanuensis to Mrs. Erminnie A. Smith



ARTHUR C. PARKER



J. N. B. HEWITT

BY G. V. BUCK, WASHINGTON, D. C.

of Jersey City, who was a worker in the Bureau of American Ethnology, especially interested in Iroquois legends and ceremonies. She became acquainted with young Hewitt in her field work and owed much of her achievement to his assistance. Mr. Hewitt remained in association with Mrs. Smith until 1885, a period of six years. He was then for a year in business life, employed by the Adams Express Co., but then became definitely connected with the Bureau of American Ethnology, a connection which has continued to the present time. J. N. B. Hewitt is a member of the Washington Anthropological Society and of the American Anthropological

Association. His work has been especially in the direction of the mythology, sociology and sophiology of the American Indians, particularly of the Iroquois. Mr. Hewitt is an authority on the languages of the Iroquois and a large part of his printed work consists of interlinear (Iroquois and English) texts in the subjects mentioned. No one in the field commands greater respect for genuine scholarship than Mr. Hewitt and the founder of the medal and the society which administers it, felt especial satisfaction in this first award of it to a member of an Iroquois tribe.

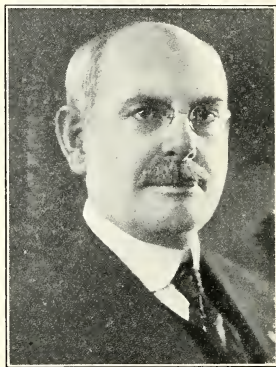
It happens that the award of 1916 was also made to an Iroquois. Arthur Caswell Parker is a member of the Seneca tribe and was born on the Cattaraugus Reservation on April 5, 1881. He was the grandnephew of General Ely S. Parker, who was military-secretary of U. S. Grant and a co-worker with Lewis H. Morgan in the preparation of that famous book—*The League of the Iroquois*—a classic in American ethnology. Handsome Lake, “the Seneca Prophet” and founder of “the New Religion,” was Arthur C. Parker’s grandfather’s grandfather. Arthur received his education first in the reservation schools and then outside in high school and seminary. Later, he made studies in American archaeology under Professor Frederic Ward Putnam of the Peabody Museum, Cambridge. Mr. Parker did a valuable and useful work in connection with the Society of American Indians. One of its founders in 1911, he long served as its secretary-treasurer and the editor of its magazine. His writings upon the status, condition and problems of the Indian have been many and valuable. His scientific work has been chiefly in the direction of Iroquoian archaeology and ethnology. His professional work began with field exploration in 1901 for Professor Putnam and the American Museum of Natural History. In 1905 he did archeological work for the New York State Educational Department and in the next year he was appointed archeologist for the State Museum at Albany. He here built up a most interesting and popular department and published a series of works dealing with Iroquois subjects. *The Code of Handsome Lake*, published by the Museum has a double interest in itself and in the fact that Mr. Parker is a descendant of the prophet. Limitations of space prevent a full discussion of Arthur Parker’s printed works. His *Archeological History of New York* and his *Seneca Folk-Tales* are perhaps the best known. Since 1925 Mr. Parker has been the director of the Rochester Municipal Museum, which under his con-

trol has grown from obscurity and insignificance into an institution which is creditable to that beautiful city and promises a great future development.

In 1919 the Cornplanter Medal was given to Mr. Alvin H. Dewey of Rochester, in which city he was long a real power, his influence being felt alike in business, civic and social life. He was born in Watertown, New York, August 5, 1859. He was educated in that city and for a time published a daily paper there. He removed to Rochester in 1885 and from that time up to his death, in 1928, he was in active business in that city. His interest in archaeology began early. He came into personal contact with the Indians, who gave him the name *Gawa Sowanch*, meaning perhaps "the Talking Leaves." He was active in the founding of the Lewis H.



MRS. MARY CLARK THOMPSON



ALVIN H. DEWEY

Morgan Chapter of the New York State Archeological Society and for twelve years was its president. At the time of his death he was president of the State Society. Mr. Dewey was greatly interested in the founding and development of the Municipal Museum, serving as president of its committee and his sympathy and helpful advice have counted for much in its growth.

The one woman to receive the medal up to the present was Mrs. Mary Clark Thompson, to whom it was given in 1920. Daughter of Myron H. Clark, once governor of the State of New York, she was born in the village of Naples, December 27, 1835. Her parents

moved afterward to Canandaigua. She received her education in the village schools and in the once famous Ontario Female Seminary. She was married in 1857 to Frederick Ferris Thompson, well known New York City banker. A woman of large means and social position, Mrs. Thompson was constantly a contributor to varied and helpful community services. While she spent much time in the great city and at beautiful country homes she was always particularly interested in the advancement and improvement of Canandaigua. Without ostentation or display, she liberally contributed to many worthy causes. She aided not only New York and Canandaigua enterprises, she gave substantial assistance to Vassar College and Williams College. Her chief claim to the Cornplanter Medal was the fact that she provided the means for the construction of the series of Iroquois Indian "habitat groups" at the State Museum in Albany. At the time when they were made Doctor John M. Clark, her kinsman, was the director of the Museum and Mr. Parker was State Archeologist. It was under his direction and in accordance with his plans that they were assembled. There are six of them, representing hunting, warfare, council, ceremony, industry and agriculture. The figures in the groups are of life size and were made from living models. Mrs. Thompson is said to have supplied \$60,000 for the project. When the Cornplanter Medal was awarded to her, Mrs. Thompson was unable to be present and Doctor John M. Clark went to Auburn to represent her and receive it. Mrs. Clark died in Canandaigua in July, 1923, at the age of 87 years. She will be long remembered for her good works.

One of the best museums in the United States, one in which the idea of popular education is particularly emphasized, is the Buffalo Museum, outgrowth and development of the old Buffalo Society of Natural History. Mr. Frederick Houghton, principal of Public School Number 69; is one of the men to whom it is due. He has been a deep student of the early history and archeology of his region. From 1908 to 1918 he was in charge of the archeological and ethnological department of the museum of the Buffalo Society of Natural Science (originally the Buffalo Society of Natural History). He carried on field work, organized the displays, and studied all printed sources of information. By careful comparative studies, based upon the excavation of town sites and archaeological specimens, he separated the difficult cultures represented in the region

and was able to trace the movement of the Senecas into the area. He clearly characterized three cultures,—that of the Neutral Nation, that of the Senecas, and that of an unknown Iroquois tribe who were in possession before the Senecas came crowding in. The results of his investigations were presented in a series of scholarly papers. Professor Houghton not only traced the movement of the Senecas into the Western New York area, he followed their history from the time of their arrival up to the present. He has shown a practical interest in the recent dispute between the Seneca Indians and the State of New York and has aided the Indians in the effort to re-establish their legal rights. He has also been active in securing the free passage of the Seneca back and forth between the United States and Canada, passage which had been barred by the customs authorities. Mr. Houghton, is of course, a member of the Board of Directors of the new Museum of Natural History. His school service deserves mention. He has been on the public school force for thirty-five years, and has three schools, with nineteen hundred pupils, mostly Polish, in his charge. He is also director of immigrant education for Buffalo and has about one hundred classes of adult foreigners in citizenship instruction under his jurisdiction. His list of activities is, however, too long to be further followed.

The last award of the Cornplanter Medal was made under exceptional circumstances. Edward Heinrich Gohl was born in Harrisville, Pennsylvania, November 3, 1862, the tenth in a family of sixteen children. From early childhood he was an indefatigable reader and a serious student. As a little boy he used a pencil and delighted to copy and recopy the illustrations of a book about Indians that was on the family bookshelf. From a neighboring boy friend he learned of Indian relics and became so keen a collector that at fourteen years he had accumulated a large collection. At that time he determined to devote himself to art and, disposing of his collection, discontinued his archaeological activities. Through his early life he was delicate and weakly. His out-door rambles, archaeological and artistic, no doubt did much to improve his physique but he was always frail and slight—his height but five feet three inches and his weight never more than ninety-eight pounds. Once committed to art Mr. Gohl threw himself into it with enthusiasm. His success in landscape was greater than in portraiture. In

1884 he visited the Finger Lake Region of New York and was so much pleased with it that he settled in Auburn, which was his home from that time. Here he plied his art and here he resumed his interest in Indians and in archaeology. In 1906 Mr. Gohl made a series of mural paintings for the grill-room of the Osborn House. They represent the coming of the first white settlers and the life of the Cayuga Indians. Mr. Gohl used Iroquois (Onondaga) models and made warm friendship with them. He became deeply interested not only in them, but in their people. He was adopted by them and given the name *Tai-Goh-wens*. Mr. Gohl was long interested in Socialism and was for a time an outspoken champion and supporter of its principles. He was an ardent admirer of Lewis H. Morgan's *Ancient Society*. He was interested in designing and materializing the bronze memorial tablet to Morgan which is at Wells College, Aurora. It was perhaps his political views which gave him a particularly keen sense of the wrongs done the Iroquois. He was a staunch supporter of their rights and actively opposed measures, both at Albany and Washington, which he considered against their interest. At Auburn he resumed his studies in archeology and early local history. He not only located unknown village sites and explored them, he aroused an interest in other Auburnians in the subject and called the attention of the state archeologists to his finds. He was a devoted friend of the Cayuga County Historical Society and in the candidates for the Cornplanter Medal. He had long been in line for the award, but actively interested himself in directing its bestowal on others—Parker, Dewey, Mrs. Thompson. When, in May, 1926, Mr. Gohl was seriously ill and it was recognized that death was approaching, it was decided that the medal should be given him without delay. A special meeting was arranged at the home of the president of the Society. A program was carried out in which Mr. Parker—coming from Rochester for the purpose—made the chief address and received the medal on Mr. Gohl's behalf. A small committee, including President Searing and Mr. Parker, then went to Mr. Gohl's apartment, where the medal was transferred to him. He was keenly appreciative and deeply touched. A few days later he died.

Surely the recipients of the Cornplanter Medal for Iroquois Research form an interesting, a worthy, list.