

Lacrosse Sticks



Is that a Lacrosse Stick or Snowshoe?

This photo shows a man holding a lacrosse stick which has a highly carved handle. The old style lacrosse sticks were called “bats” because they had a wide, long netting that was used to hit the lacrosse ball and throw it forward. They did not have the same kind of “pocket” like sticks to day, so it was more difficult to carry the ball in the “racket.”

Notice that the netting, made of rawhide, is about three feet in length. The size of this netting changes through time.

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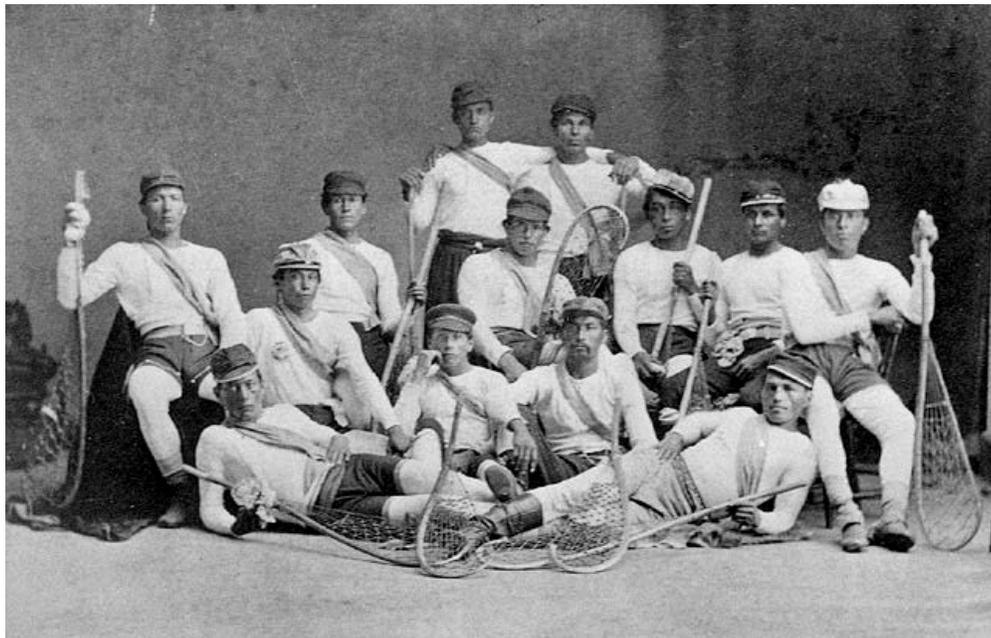
The short handle of this lacrosse stick is elaborately carved. It is difficult to see the detail on the enlarged photos, however, it is very similar to a carved lacrosse stick in the collections of the University Museum of Philadelphia.

We can see two hands shaking as a gesture of friendship. There is a carved band with the image of a deer, symbolizing fleetness of foot. At the end is a hand holding a ball. Oren Lyons, Onondaga faithkeeper and Lacrosse Hall of Famer, believes that this symbolizes the medicine origins of the game. The ball, going back and forth, is like a form of medicine.

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This Mohawk team carries the kind of lacrosse stick seen above. Carving on the handle was thought to improve the grip.

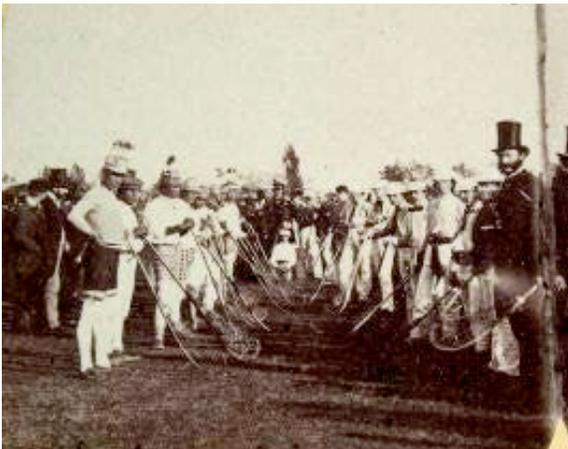


1869 Lacrosse Champions. Note the long-johns they wear to cover their legs as showing bare skin was considered inappropriate at that time. They also wear team caps, and a colourful sash to identify them as a Mohawk team.

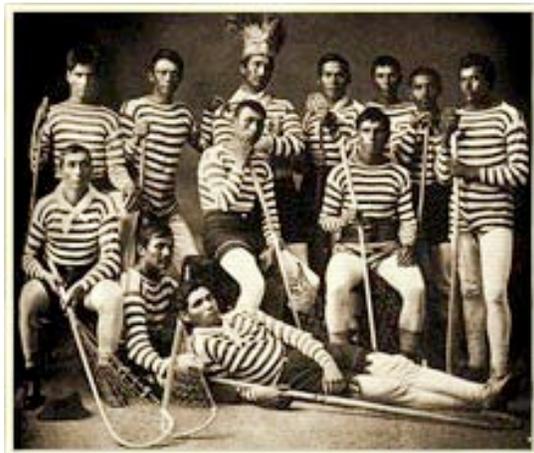
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Caption: “The Champion Lacrosse Club. In a lacrosse match, played at Montreal, between the Montreal Lacrosse Club and the Caughnawaga Indians, for the “Championship of Canada,” the above players defeated the Indians, winning three decisive games. The Match was played on the 24th of November 1866.”



Mohawk players, Montreal



Mohawk players

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19th Century Lacrosse match.

Note the shortness of the field and the goals that are two posts with flags on top. The large sticks have a wide curve on the netting, without much pocket to carry the ball. They were referred to as lacrosse bats because they were used more like tennis rackets to bat the ball back and forth.



**“Our Country and Our Game, 1st
July 1867.” National Lacrosse
Association of Canada.**

Canada adopted Lacrosse as a summer time sport. In this photo we can see that the long stick has a smaller head, with a tighter curve to the wood. This was to allow for better ball control and to help in throwing and catching.

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Australian Lacrosse, 1897.

Note the size of the netting. Their sticks were likely made in Canada. The tops become more squarish in shape, to aid in scooping up the ball from the grass.



The goalie is named Chief Sai-no-wa, who weighted 320 pounds, kneeling on the lower right. He holds a unique record of having caught the ball at the goal he was protecting and throwing it across the field into the opposite goal. He was said to have “big medicine.”

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Seneca Lacrosse players, Buffalo, 1901.



Seneca players 1902.



Onondaga Nation team 1902.

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Onondaga Nation team 1902.

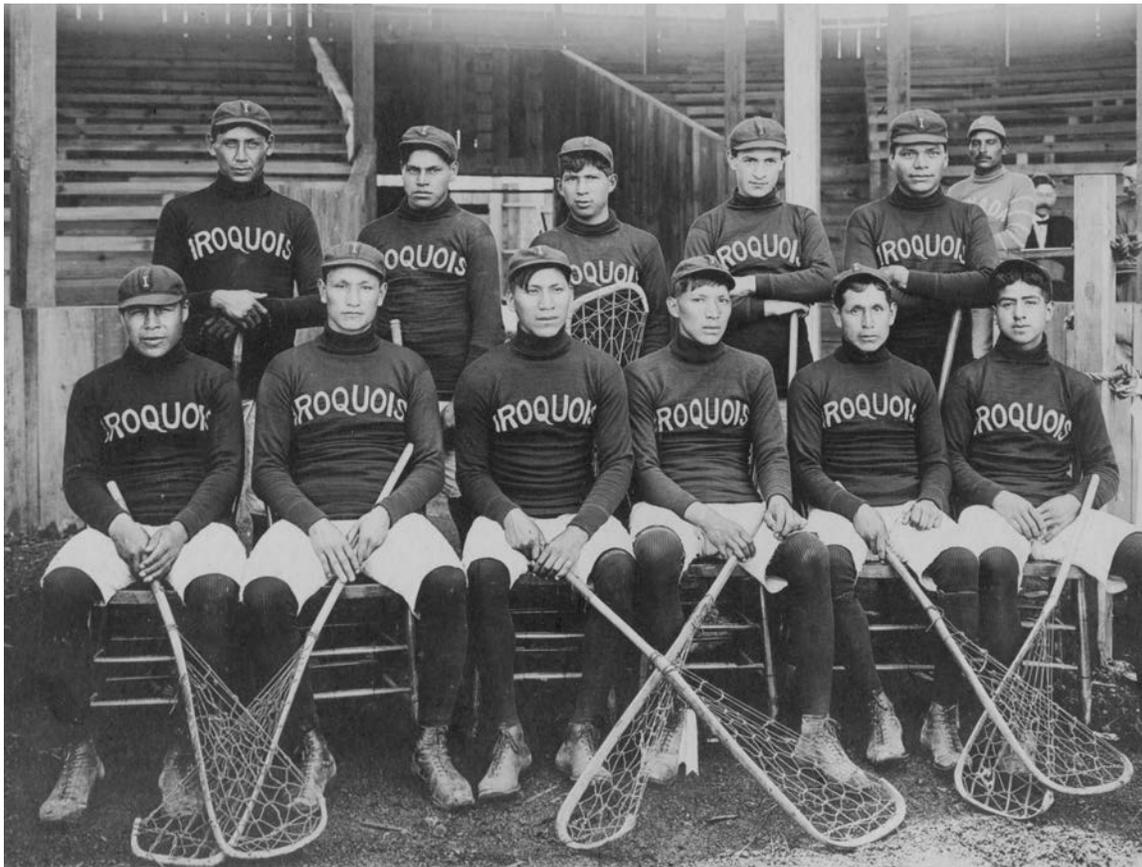


Oshawa Player, c.1910. The handles are getting longer, squared end and long netting remains.

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Team Canada, St. Louis World's Fair, 1904



Team Iroquois, St. Louis World's Fair, 1904.

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Seneca team, 1914



Onondaga Lacrosse Club, Onondaga Nation team, 1921.

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This shows the changes in the overall shape and size of the lacrosse stick over the years. The rounded netting on the right gave way to the squared end on the left, which gave way to the shorter stick in the middle. Another, less ornate, carved handle can be seen in this stick from the collections of the American Museum of Natural History.



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These two lacrosse sticks have a more squarish head and are painted, rather than carved. This young Akwesasne Mohawk boy holds a similar kind of lacrosse stick.



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**Akwesasne Players,
Collection of the Akwesasne
Museum.**



The Saint Regis Lacrosse Club.

These sticks are extremely wide and we can see a “pocket” beginning to form as an extra webbing of rawhide has been added to form a wall opposite the wooden handle. Notice that the two men at either end of the back row hold miniature versions of the lacrosse stick.

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Below: Inter-Collegiate Champions 1914.





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