

Decorative Art of Indian Tribes of Connecticut.

A fortunate phase of the research work among the Indians of New England has recently led to the extension of our knowledge of the decorative art of the eastern Algonkin tribes. This has been made possible by the discovery of specimens, and by information furnished by several aged Indians of the Mohegan and Niantic tribes of eastern Connecticut.¹

During several visits in the winter of 1912-13, Mrs. Henry Mathews (Mercy Nonsuch), the only full-blooded survivor of the Niantic Indians, formerly inhabiting the shore of Long Island sound around the mouth of Niantic river, and the Mohegans, Cynthia Fowler, Charles Mathews, and the late Fidelia Fielding, the last person who could speak the Mohegan language, all contributed towards the material here presented.²

The principal field of decoration among the Mohegan and Niantic, so far as we can now tell, seems to have been chiefly in paintings on baskets. Decorative wood-carving upon household utensils and sometimes upon implements was also quite common. Bead-work, on the other hand, appears to have been a secondary activity. A short account of the basket-making itself is required, before the basket decorations are described. For household and gardening purposes these people have developed a few types

¹ A few baskets made by an old woman, named Pually Mossuck, of the Tunxis tribe (in the vicinity ofington, Conn.) were incidentally obtained. A number of years ago this woman died at Mohegan, the last of her people. This entire collection is now in the possession of Mr. George G. Heye.

² In previous papers the writer has already published other ethnologic notes on the Mohegan and Niantic tribes. See *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History* (N.Y.) vol. III, pp. 183-210 (1909), where are also listed papers in collaboration with Prof. J. D. Prince on the Mohegan language.