ONEIDA OF WISCONSIN

Following the Revolutionary War, many Oneida in upper New York State sold their lands. In 1838 a group of these Oneida bought land from the Menominee in what is now northern Wisconsin (ENAT, 169). The Oneida of Wisconsin are today the largest concentration of Oneida in the United States.

The Wisconsin Oneida share the symbols utilized by the eastern branch of the tribe in New York [see Oneida]. Both employ the great tree, the wolf, the eagle, the bear, and the wampum belt as symbols in their tribal seals. The seal of the Wisconsin Oneida features the great tree standing atop the "turtle island" representing the earth. From either side of the tree appear the bust of a wolf and the head of a bear, the two clan totems of the Oneida people. The inner circle, a green line, forms the outline of an eagle's head at the top, above the tree. The eagle, an important creature in Native American beliefs, serves as the contact between the Great Spirit and man. Below the turtle stretches the wampum belt of the Iroquois League [see Iroquois Confederacy].

On the white background of the flag, the seal appears in green outline with a brown wolf and bear head. The wampum belt is depicted in purple, the natural color of the quahog shells that composed it. The Oneida of New York and the Oneida of Wisconsin demonstrate their common ancestry through the unity of their emblems, despite the 1,000 miles that separate them.