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## Arthur Caswell Parker: 1881-1955

Anthropologist, Historian and Museum Pioneer

By W. STEPHEN THOMAS

Several generations of Rochesterians and dwellers in western New York are the richer for their knowledge and understanding of the aboriginal inhabitants of this area as well as of the history of their white predecessors because of the life and work of Arthur Caswell Parker who died at his home in Naples, N. Y., on January 1, 1955, in his seventy-third year. As a scientist and a scholar in his own right he contributed original data to several specialized fields of history and science; as a person who could make history come alive through visual education he left his monument in the great Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences which has achieved international fame as a model community institution.

It is quite natural that Arthur Parker should be thought of in terms of museums, but he was such a versatile person that it would be unfair to confine a description of him to such limits. Here are a few of the titles which fit, but not one of them alone would be properly descriptive. He was an anthropologist, archeologist, ethnologist, historian, folklorist, dramatist, journalist, public speaker and museum administrator. Although he gained wide recognition as a scientist and as an expert on all phases of Indian culture, it is probably as a scientist with a social conscience that he will be longest remembered.

How he came to be what he was can be explained in part by his environment and upbringing, but an intangible influence can be attrib-

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uted to the heritage in his genes. His genealogy was unique and interesting, for he was one quarter Seneca Indian and three quarters Anglo-Saxon through descent from early New England settlers. His father, Frederick Ely Parker, and his mother, Geneva Griswold Parker, lived on the Cattaraugus Indian Reservation at Iroquois in Erie County, N. Y. when Arthur was born on April 5, 1881. His father, a graduate of Fredonia Normal School was at the time a station agent on the New York Central Railroad. His father's father, a leading Seneca Chief and a civil engineer, Nicholson H. Parker, had for twenty years been secretary of the Seneca Indian Nation. This grandfather was a brother of the more famous Brigadier General Ely S. Parker, who had been military secretary to General Ulysses S. Grant. His paternal grandmother Martha Hoyt, a white woman, was a Congregational missionary to the Senecas.<sup>1</sup> His mother was a Sheldon whose family lived at Springfield, Massachusetts at the time of the massacre by Algonquin Indians which led Arthur to say, "I suppose it's a bit ironical that a descendant of a survivor of that horrible massacre two hundred years later married into a western New York Indian family."<sup>2</sup> Geneva H. Griswold, Arthur's mother, of Scotch and English descent, taught for four years on the Alleghany and Cattaraugus Reservations. Four "greats" back, one of Arthur's ancestors was the Seneca sachem and religious leader, Skaniadario or Handsome Lake (c. 1735-1815). A great grandmother on the paternal side was a lineal descendant of Jigonsaseh, the Peace Queen of the Neuter Indians, who together with Hiawatha and Dekanawida around 1550 was a founder of the League of the Iroquois.

As a boy, Arthur Parker roamed the woods and fields of Erie County. Nurtured in a rural environment, he played with Indian boys and girls and listened to the history, legends and folklore which later had such influence on his future.<sup>3</sup> On the Reservation young Arthur spent time in the home of Nicholson, his grandfather who was a spiritual force. Nicholson Parker, "besides being a clerk of the Seneca Nation, United States interpreter, census agent, marshal of the Nation, orator, agriculturist and civil engineer, was the drum major of the Seneca Indian Silver Cornet Band. He was a versatile and useful citizen of the Seneca Republic. Like his brother, Ely, he never could completely accept civilization's teachings or wholly neglect the philosophy of his fathers. Seeing true virtue in each, according to his mood, he argued for each. Many Indians have this same characteristic and often

appear vacillating and uncertain in judgment when in reality the quality is merely the involuntary mental struggle between hereditary impressions and proclivities and those acquired." <sup>4</sup>

As early as his ninth year, he was interested in natural history and became an ardent birds' egg collector.<sup>5</sup> In his late elementary school days, his family moved to White Plains, New York, where Arthur graduated from the public high school in 1897. When an undergraduate, the Presbyterian minister of his town wrote a recommendation stating, "He is a good student, fond of reading the more valuable books, conscientious, faithful steadily to the duties of any position where he may be placed. I look for him to commend himself soon to the confidence of anyone in whose employ or under whose care he may be. . . ." <sup>6</sup>

Speaking of himself in the third person in his White Plains days, Arthur Parker wrote: ". . . he assisted in organizing a group of boys who explored the fields and woods and then returned to the home of their Sunday school teacher, Miss Evangeline Slosson, to read papers or to discuss what they saw in the out-of-doors." <sup>7</sup>

After high school Parker enrolled in Williamsport Dickinson Seminary at Williamsport, Pa., studying for the ministry—from 1900 to 1903. Very little is known about this phase of his career. He did not finish the course. During his college days he contributed short stories and other pieces to a student publication, "The Dickinson Union," under the pen name of Moonstone. One of these is a clever story about a Jewess who in ancient Egypt tricked a group of learned philosophers. The story is called "The Triumph of Woman's Wit." <sup>8</sup>

Before he studied for the ministry, Arthur had an avid interest in natural history, became a collector and had many questions. He described his visits to the American Museum of Natural History:

"It was there that I met research men from many parts of the world. It was in remote offices down long halls that I met the awesome Gratacap, Bogoras and Boas, the obliging Dr. Allen and Frank Chapman, the friendly Dr. Putnam and the genial Bumpus. These men were never too busy to identify pottery, fossils or birds' eggs brought in by a wondering youth. There was a thrilling world back of the scenes. It smelled of spicy dust and moth balls, but mostly of mystery and greatness. It was far better there than in the exhibit halls where the methods of installation were plainly antiquated. One just wondered and walked away." <sup>9</sup>

Apparently, his determination to abandon preparation for the ministry and become a research scientist came in the 1900's. Looking back on his transition to the career of an archeologist, Parker writes as follows:

"In the early nineties I browsed in the laboratories of the great New York physician, Dr. Salisbury, looking at his skulls and other anatomical specimens, wondering what caused man to have such strange fragments in his framework. Then came an even more fortunate time when I was permitted to examine the skeletal material at the American Museum of Natural History, to discuss the "bones" with Bogoras and Hrdlicka, and finally to have some systematic guidance from Professor F. W. Putnam of the Peabody Museum of Harvard. These were the years of the sinking in of ideas, of the molding of a career which was much tinged by philosophical as well as scientific thought. But, for a while philosophical considerations swept me from my future course. I investigated philosophy and religion and soon began to wonder why the pursuit of pure truth should not be enough, with all labels and departmentalized names stripped away."<sup>10</sup>

Apparently, he was still at the Seminary at this point. He goes on to say, "While thus engaged, a young man of remarkable talents (Dr. Mark R. Harrington, who eventually became his brother-in-law) whom I had learned to admire immensely called me into conference. 'Would I forget Greek and Hebrew and the origin of the decalogue for a few weeks and undertake an expedition with him?'"<sup>11</sup>

The expedition with his friend Harrington, an archeological survey in the summer of 1903 on the Cattaraugus Indian Reservation, was conducted on behalf of the Peabody Museum of Archeology at Harvard. Reminiscing later, Parker recalled that on the Reservation on that occasion through his Indian contacts, some of whom were his relatives, he heard again many Seneca folk tales and legends.<sup>12</sup> About this time while living in and around New York City he became associated with Mrs. Harriet Maxwell Converse (who died in 1903), and with three young men who later were to be eminent anthropologists, Alanson R. Skinner, Mark Harrington and Frank G. Speck. It is said that Franz Boas, professor of anthropology at Columbia University encouraged these young people to become his students regularly enrolled in the University, but only one of them, Speck, chose to do so. Meanwhile, Parker had come under the influence of Professor F. W. Putnam, an eminent anthropologist who was both a curator at the American Mus-

eum of Natural History in New York City and a Professor at Harvard.<sup>13</sup> Young Parker carried out various studies under him and also acted as field archeologist for the Peabody Museum in 1903-1904. In the latter year he started systematically his Archeological Survey of New York State.

As an interlude between his archeological experiences came several months as a reporter on the *New York Sun* which he describes as "exciting work." "I got the worst assignments and the best experience. . . ." <sup>14</sup> This was a very crucial period of his career and proved of great benefit throughout his life for here he developed an amazing facility for writing quickly and to the point. It was a skill which set him apart later from other scientists and teachers. All through life people marveled at his tremendous literary output and the ease and quickness with which he composed an article, very seldom making any corrections after his first draft. He also developed a gift for writing in editorial style, using an event or idea as a springboard for philosophical reflections geared to the interests of the average reader. Although he was inclined to flowery expressions, his compositions always made easy reading.

When he became affiliated with the New York State government in 1905, first as ethnologist in the State Library and then as State Archeologist attached to the Museum in Albany, Arthur Parker entered the first phase of his long career in public service. He reports his initial call on the State Commissioner of Education, Dr. Draper, whom he quotes as saying, "So you want a chance to be an archeologist? Don't you know you'll starve to death?" "Not if you'll allow me to make archeology what I think it is!" <sup>15</sup> He got the chance.

He took up his new duties with vigor, pursuing his work along many fronts. He wrote: "An archeologist is supposed to be a backward-sighted person whose life is devoted to a study of antiquity. Indeed, the old time archeologists were given the name of antiquarian. In real life an archeologist is a person who, having a knowledge of the past, applies it to real human needs of today." <sup>16</sup> That material evidences of past cultures in the form of relics could have a distinctly practical bearing on the present was proven again and again by Arthur Parker when he cleared up land titles based on Indian occupation by unearthing the evidence, or when he determined that the unburied bones found by police were not those of a murdered man but of some

Iroquois chief buried over two hundred years ago. He was proud, too, of the fact that in exhibiting the thousands of types of Indian tools, implements and weapons of stone, bone and pottery, he devised what were then unique methods of presentation, displaying them by classes, localities, by specific sites, by geographical areas, by uses and in series showing stages of manufacture. In these and other ways, Parker helped to create a living museum by the vitalization of his division of the state institution. One of his great contributions in this regard was the series of six full scale Iroquois Indian life groups or dioramas with accurate models of aborigines against painted backgrounds, the construction of which he planned and directed. He conceived the idea of interior illumination in these life dioramas with the surrounding hall darkened and nothing to be seen but the group. In this way he obtained the effect of viewing a natural scene through a window. Interested at this early date in the psychology of the museum visitor upon which many scientific studies were later focused, Parker wrote concerning his particular exhibition scheme:

"There is nothing attention-holding but the exhibit, and visitors will not stand before it and gossip about scandals in politics or about the latest play. They talk about the exhibit. I have listened to many hundreds of persons standing before such exhibits and their conversation was always consistent with what they were seeing. There is a psychological value in getting people to talk about the exhibit. It means that their minds are impressed by facts we have desired to teach. The subject dominates their thinking while their attention is held by the exhibit. The imagination is busy and without being aware of it, they are being instructed." <sup>17</sup>

Herein one detects the seeds of his interest in the problems of using the museum and using it effectively for educational purposes.

Aside from his curatorial and exhibit work, this period from 1905 to 1924, almost twenty years, was the richest one from the point of view of creative research and writing. He produced eight major monographic works of from 100 to 150 printed pages, each of which was virtually a book. In addition 132 papers, addresses, articles, biographies, essays and other writings came from his typewriter. His first major monograph (Bulletin 117 of the New York State Museum) "An Erie Indian Village and Burial Site at Ripley, Chautauqua County, N. Y." was based on field work conducted in 1906 but published in

1907. It was not only a beautifully presented and illustrated piece of scientific research but also included in its preface observations on the field of New York State archeology, sources of information and methods of collecting. His next major project was the editing of "Myths and Legends of the New York State Iroquois" which had been collected by that remarkable woman, Mrs. Harriet Maxwell Converse, whom Arthur had known since he was a little boy. Published in 1908 by the State Museum, it included 34 legends as well as many miscellaneous notes and a biography of Mrs. Converse by Parker. It was the precursor of Parker's own important book on the subject, "Seneca Myths and Folk Tales," consisting of 456 pages with 74 myths and published by the Buffalo Historical Society in 1923. His "Iroquois Uses of Maize and Other Food Plants" appeared as Bulletin 144 of the New York State Museum in 1910 and is still a classic of its type. It treats exhaustively of the history and early records and customs of Indian corn cultivation, ceremonies and legends of corn, cooking, and foods prepared from it. The story of other Iroquois food plants, comprising nine chapters, is extensive and lavishly illustrated. Another major contribution of Parker's in this period is his monograph of 144 pages, published in 1913 and titled "The Code of Handsome Lake, the Seneca Indian Prophet."<sup>18</sup> This publication is important because the religion described is the one carried on by the non-Christian or so-called pagan Indians on up-state New York reservations today. Handsome Lake whose Indian name was Skaniadariio, and also called Ganiodaii, was a Seneca sachem and religious leader who had led a dissolute life until 1796 when he suffered a severe illness induced by his dissipation. He almost died, but recovered and declared he had been visited by the four messengers of the Creator of Life and had been instructed by them in certain principles that were to constitute a new religion. Thereafter he wandered from village to village preaching and demanding that his people abstain from drunkenness, witchcraft and infidelity and hold faith in his revelations. In 1900 the followers of his religion among the Iroquois of New York and Ontario numbered one fourth of all these people.

It was during the Albany period of Arthur Parker's career that he began his zealous course of action in behalf of the Indians, particularly those in New York State. One of his associates in writing of him Skaniadariio was the fourth great-grandfather of Arthur Parker.<sup>19</sup> recently has said:

"(His) genetic and nurtural background left its indelible impress on the man. To many of his friends and colleagues he seemed to be essentially Indian in his emotional and psychological reactions. From this course, too, sprang his intimate and sympathetic comprehension of the beliefs, customs and problems of the contemporary Seneca, which consistently characterized his whole life. His keen concern with the political, social and economic well-being of the American Indian was manifested in many directions. . . ."<sup>20</sup>

As early as 1911, he was organizing secretary of the Society of American Indians, serving until 1915 in which year he became President. He was the founder of American Indian Day in 1911, the second Saturday in May each year. He was founder and editor (1911-1916) of the *American Indian Magazine* and contributed many articles with such titles as "The Philosophy of Indian Education," "Congress and the Indian Problem," "What Makes the Indian a Problem?," "The Tragedy of the Red Race," "The Road to Competent Citizenship" and others. The end he sought was a fighting chance for the Indian to make good, to demonstrate ability, and to take a place side by side with other elements of the American population.<sup>21</sup> In reviewing his work as New York State Archeologist, he said: "We have been able to defend the Iroquois from harmful influences and notify them of impending legislation. That a museum of archeology should do this is most fitting and demonstrates that we are capable of acting as an intermediary not only between the Indians of today and their past history, but between the Indian and the white man of today. . . ." <sup>22</sup>

It was quite fitting that he should have served as New York State Indian Commissioner 1919-20 and as president at one time of the New York State Indian Welfare Society. At various times he was personal advisor on Indian Affairs to Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William H. Taft, Woodrow Wilson and Calvin Coolidge. The Secretary of the Interior in 1923 appointed him chairman of the committee of 100 to investigate prevailing conditions among the reservation groups.

It was a turn of fate that named Arthur Parker head of the "embryonic" Municipal Museum at Rochester, New York, in December 1924. He had been recommended to Mayor Edward Van Zandt by Earl Weller, whom he had known in Binghamton, to fill the position

of curator left vacant by the death of Edward D. Putnam.<sup>23</sup> Rochester was not unknown to Parker nor was he unknown to the city. Alvin H. Dewey, local amateur archeologist was one of his friends. In 1922 the University of Rochester had conferred the honorary degree of Master of Arts upon Parker following his significant two volume book, "The Archeological History of New York," issued as Bulletins 237 and 238 of the New York State Museum.<sup>24</sup>

Rochester's Municipal Museum which had been encouraged by Mayor Edgerton opened on September 12, 1912, in quarters in Building No. 9 at Edgerton Park shared by the Public Library and the Rochester Historical Society. The museum, with a mixed assortment of exhibits including Indian relics, historical objects and old portraits, was administered by the Library Board of Trustees.<sup>25</sup> Some people were surprised that a person of Dr. Parker's eminence in archeology and history should be willing to take over such a limited venture as the Municipal Museum appeared to be. On his appointment he showed vision in explaining that he planned to develop not only a natural history museum but one that would demonstrate the commercial and industrial progress of the city from its beginning. He added, such a program should hold a definite appeal to the wage earner and the taxpayer. "I have come to Rochester," Parker said, "because I believe there is a field of real opportunity. We ought to have a great Municipal Museum here in time as it proves its value. . . ." <sup>26</sup>

The situation in Rochester was, perhaps, the greatest challenge in Arthur Parker's life. Although confronted with an untrained staff, a low budget, a poor physical location for the building and apathy on the part of the public he took over his new duties with enthusiasm.<sup>27</sup> He set out at once to inform people as to what a museum was and its importance to modern culture and social progress. It was in the years from 1926 up to the middle forties that he stressed again and again the concept of the museum as a social instrument.

Something of his expanding philosophy can be found in the following brief quotations:

"The museum is more than a storehouse of curiosities and antiquities . . . [it is] a new factor of great significance in the field of education. Today no type of educational institution is advancing with such rapidity as the modern museum." <sup>28</sup>

"It is the mission of the museum to show things of value to human experience—things that will guide the mind into productive and inspiring channels. A museum to a community is an education to the individual; its value is seldom realized until actually possessed." <sup>29</sup>

"[Museums] reveal and interpret nature. They display the best and the beautiful. More than this, a good museum not only enlightens, but it thrills and inspires a community. Schools take care of the growth of the intellect; hospitals care for the sick; churches minister unto the needs of the human soul. But the museum is an important unit in the triune soul of the community itself." <sup>30</sup>

"Museums are a community's ideas crystallized. They reveal to the traveler, to the citizen, to the school child, what a city thinks of itself. More than that the museum tells the degree to which a community understands its responsibility to the world of science, art, letters and civic well being. Unimportant cities have no museums; great cities have flourishing museums." <sup>31</sup>

"All museum exhibits must be properly interpreted. Interpretation is one of the most important features of exhibition. The visitor not only wants to see an object but he wants to know what it means and what value it has to himself and to knowledge in general. . . ." <sup>32</sup>

"The modern museum is fitting into the accepted educational pattern. It has been called the poor man's university. Here the adult may study as deeply or as superficially as he wishes. He may study alone or join with others in an adult class. Children have the same privilege as adults and additional advantages of special programs, organized clubs, scheduled class visits escorted by teachers and definite instruction by museum guides and docents. On the other hand, the museum may visit the children through its extension service. . . ." <sup>33</sup>

### **A Museum Is a Place in Which to Live!**

"Museums are destined to become universities for every class and age of our citizenship wherein the essential facts of the universe are presented and explained. The full swing of the new advance will come when our museums begin to provide resident courses that will hold the student rather than appeal only to the "transient" visitor. Men and women will then come with their families to stay in museums, not for a few moments of passing fancy but for a day, a week, a month of zestful recreation and pleasurable instruction that can be absorbed by participating in the activities of the institution. The museum of the future is going to hold its students because it has hotel accommodations, recreation facilities and forms of constructive amusement that are entertaining as well as instructive. Whether it knows it or not the

country is getting a new type of social and educational center. It is going to be a place where one can eat and sleep and learn by doing things." <sup>34</sup>

One of the first things this dynamic crusader did was to define the fields of the museum which he determined to be the anthropology, biology, geology, culture history and industrial arts or manufacturers of the Genesee Valley. From a collection of archeological and historical miscellany he converted the exhibits into a unit which told a sequential story. As early as January 15, 1925, a new law was passed by the City Council whereby the Municipal Museum was placed under a three-man Commission and the museum was designated as a city department. Up to this time the museum had been under the direction of the Library Board Trustees.<sup>35</sup> There were a number of important innovations including the recognition of the needs of the schools of Rochester and the establishment of a School Service Division in 1926 with circulating collections which grew to such an extent that they reach approximately 121,751 children. In the same year a printed bulletin, *Museum Service*, was inaugurated which not only served as an advertising medium for the museum but also contained many articles on museum problems of administration, education, exhibition and research and soon attained national recognition. It still flourishes. For the months of July and August 1926 the museum was closed (something which hasn't happened since) so that new exhibits could be installed and new arrangements made of old material. At this time Parker pointed out in an editorial, widely copied in other cities, that Frank Munsey, the publisher, had died and left 40 million dollars to the Metropolitan Museum of Art because he knew the value of museums and the unique services they rendered.<sup>36</sup>

He was constantly attempting to tie in the museum's needs and potentialities with Rochester's community life. As early as 1927, seven years ahead of time, he suggested that the construction of a new museum building would be a fitting manner of celebrating the City's Centennial to come in 1934. As it happened the Museum *did* take a prominent part in the actual celebration and its special exhibits in Exposition Park were among the real attractions. He early saw the significance of the collectors clubs and amateur scientific bodies which used the Museum as a meeting place, helping organize new ones and serving on their boards. When in 1932 a sudden political move severely threat-

ened the museum budget these organizations rallied to the defense of the Museum and the cut was restored. Dr. John R. Williams, now Chairman of the Museum Commission, was a vital factor in waging a newspaper campaign and in molding public opinion to save the Museum. In 1934 the Rochester Museum Hobby Council, the first federation of avocational groups of its type, was formed and enabled the Museum to put on annual Hobby Shows. Parker always saw the relationship between his museum and the business and industry of the city, so that the article "Museums Stand for Commerce" which he wrote in July 1927 was no surprise to those who followed his significant moves.<sup>37</sup>

Dr. Parker drew around him a small but energetic and gifted staff of co-workers whom he trained and developed, inculcating in them the best principles of the "museist," a word, by the way, which he coined. He laid down four cardinal rules for the devoted museum professional. He must be sold on his job, he must be a student, he must express himself creatively, and finally, he must be an idealist. He added, "A real museist is interested in his work. To him it is a vital thing and he works as if the whole success of it depended upon him alone. When he does this it will be observed that he is not continually concerned with how many days off he will have or how little he may accomplish and still draw a salary."<sup>38</sup>

At another time he wrote: "The Life of a museum worker—well, it's the life for it requires the exercises of all powers that go toward making every sort of man and sometimes requires hijacker nerve. Meaning, we've put our budget over and got a 20% increase."<sup>39</sup>

Many of the persons he trained have become eminent in the museum field or in specialties related to it. Dr. William A. Ritchie, nationally known anthropologist and now New York State Archeologist, worked under Dr. Parker at the Rochester Museum during the latter's full term of 21 years. Thomas G. Paine, assistant in geology at the Museum in the thirties and author of "The Genesee Country," went on to the U. S. Geological Survey. Edwin H. Reiber, technician and preparator, developed a new translucent plastic at the Museum which he named "Glacite" and now makes museum models on contract as a private business. The late John Bailey, a young archeologist, became Director of the Davenport, Iowa, Museum. Sheldon Fisher became curator of the Rochester Historical Society and later went into the antiques business. Ernest

Luhde, educational assistant, became Director of the Stamford Children's Museum. Earl Hilfiker, biologist, became a natural history photographer and lecturer. There are many others, including Janet MacFarlane, now curator of the New York State Historical Association at Cooperstown, N. Y., and a number of present Rochester Museum staff members.

The depression years of the 1930's, although lean ones for large numbers of people, were relatively fatter for the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences because they saw the strengthening of the Commission, the establishment of the Rochester Museum Association, an auxiliary voluntary body of citizens, founded in 1935, and the coming of the Works Progress Administration, the National Youth Administration and other Federal agencies with funds for aiding museum projects. With W P A assistance and that of N Y A, almost fifty artists, technicians, librarians and clerks, besides the regular staff, contributed their various skills to the Museum. In this era repair shops, a cabinet shop, print shop, research and photographic laboratories and a sound studio for making recordings were added. All these facilities not only made possible the expansion and improvement of exhibitions but the stepping up of the multitudinous community services of the Museum.

Writing in 1939, and listing the divisions and services which included public education, children's clubs, adult hobby organizations and the regular museum departments of archeology, history, geology, biology and industry, Parker said: "It takes all the skill of an old stage-coach driver who can control a 'Twenty Mule Team' to keep the horses running in the same direction. This may account for my lame shoulders. But it is a joyful task and I would not trade it for a single track museum and a lot of possible ease."<sup>40</sup>

The Federal Indian Arts Project, conceived by Dr. Parker and administered by him, employed approximately 50 Seneca Indian artists, sculptors and craftsmen on the Tonawanda and Cattaraugus Reservations. Its purpose was to provide employment and revive the material culture of these people's Seneca forebears in the form of religious objects such as masks, silverwork, costumes, weapons, tools, implements and musical instruments, some of which went out of use a generation before. Many of the designs which were being forgotten were expressive of their traditions of the creation of the world and the arrangement of the earth and the heavenly bodies.<sup>41</sup> The Rochester Museum

has been enhanced with many hundreds of these specimens which make our collections perhaps the richest in Iroquois Indian arts and crafts.

One revealing feature of his scientific studies, his literary productions and his general interest in the cultural achievements of mankind was his approach from the historical side. He early was fascinated by history, particularly the history of western New York. Two important works were essentially history: "The Code of Handsome Lake," 1912, and "Archeological History of New York," 1919, already mentioned. He contributed ten chapters to Volume I of Lockwood R. Doty's "History of the Genesee Country," including the important one on "Indian Place Names of the Genesee Country." In July 1945, when the announcement of his election as President of the New York State Historical Association appeared in the *Rochester Times-Union* stressing his background as an archeologist, he sent to the editor his *curriculum vitae* in the field of history, saying "Just to indicate there is another tag which seems appropriate as well." It lists nine major works in history, 50 historical papers, ten pageants and plays dealing with historical episodes and recorded that he was at the time a member of ten historical organizations and had lectured before fifteen different historical societies.

Frequently, he put the emphasis on history as a science. In 1925 he wrote: "An historian who desires to promote truth and knowledge and who guides his pen by the light of science knows full well that he has no right to select his facts; he must record all the facts and seek out all the causes."<sup>42</sup> In commenting on the fine work of the Rochester Historical Society in 1927 he said: "A community that takes pride in itself makes an effort to understand its history. History is the surname of a community or nation. Citizens who care nothing for their parents and forefathers may be expected to care nothing for history." Another point he stressed was that history could be written by piecing together man's material culture as revealed in an object, whether it was a Hawaiian feathered cape, the knot bowl of the pioneer or the spice boxes of our great-grandmothers. The fact that history could be revealed in objects properly interpreted was a justification for historical museums.<sup>43</sup>

Parker's valuable 200 page book, "A Manual for History Museums," published in 1935 as one of the New York State Historical Association Series, edited by Dixon Ryan Fox, and partly subsidized

by the Carnegie Corporation, brought to fruition years of experience and a lifetime of creative thought and idealism. It is a thoroughly practical text which presents the challenge of service to history museums, how to organize them, how to finance them, the creation of exhibits and the many details of running and improving such institutions. He showed that to be active museums they should present values that attract youth as well as maturity. Those drawing visitors and financial support had "to discover the simple principles that every good showman uses but the museist must also so manipulate his material that it serves a highly useful end." 44

Parker's persistent harping on the theme of using history as an explanation of man and for guidance for future action reminds one of Al Smith's admonition: "Let's look at the record." In 1943 Parker wrote: History is the one clue to where we are going and it explains the source of our propulsion. Not to look into history is an indication of mental myopia or more alarming, of blindness of judgment. . . . History . . . consists of all the facts and a study of modifying influences. It tells who pulled the trigger and what kind of a gun fired the shot that hit the target, and why it was aimed, . . . history . . . is the basis of judgment." 45

Arthur Parker's social service work in history was of a remarkable and extensive nature. He was instrumental in marking innumerable spots throughout western New York notable as the sites of events or the birthplaces of distinguished or little known but important people. He ferreted out correct locations, raised the money for the monument or plaque, aroused local interest and frequently, as the principal speaker, dug up new facts for his commemorative addresses. His sponsorship and authorship of historical plays and pageants was notable and in his seventy-third year, after writing and producing the Canandaigua Lake production of last summer, he was hard at work on an ensuing work on Hiawatha for the next season of the Nundawaga Society for History and Folklore which he had founded in Naples, N. Y. One of his great contributions was his revival of the Genesee Country Historical Federation in 1938, an organization of about 30 historical societies of western New York which met annually to promote interest in local history. This movement of affiliated groups was called "An Adventure in Friendship." He proposed and carried out programs of action. One of these was a celebration in 1940 of the centennial of the Genesee Valley Canal. He

saw that the federation each year sponsored pilgrimages and visitations to other organizations and to other places. He advocated a third principle, "Something to say." This was a quarterly news sheet which twenty-five years later the organization still publishes. Finally, he recommended to all member societies the missionary principle "Somebody to help," urging each body to organize its program for helpfulness for civic betterment. He suggested a number of other commemorative events for future years, most of which were carried out, and added: "Nor must we forget the movements which sprang into existence and flourished here making it seem as though the Genesee Country were indeed the incubation ground for plans and movements that had a considerable influence upon the entire world. In the Genesee Country started the Chautauqua movement, Fourierism, Mormonism, spiritualism, the woman's suffrage movement, the movement for male attire for females as sponsored by Amelia Bloomer, the preachings and religion of the Seneca prophet, Handsome Lake, and the Free Methodist Church." 46

For Arthur Parker adventure literally began at home. He reiterated the fact that we had much to explore without going far. His deep knowledge of archeology, folk lore and history not only inspired him personally but induced him to talk and write about it and to infect others. Early in his Rochester years he said in an address before the Rochester Zonta Club: "The Genesee Country is the true Garden of the Gods and so named not by white men, as was the wonderland of the desert chasms, but by the red men who lived here and understood the voices of the glen as they spoke in wind and waterfall." 47 One of the many organizations for helping others enjoy the natural wonders and resources of the out-of-doors was the Genesee Valley Hiking Club of which he was a founder and many of whose day-long excursions he led and guided.48 In one article he extolled the opportunity for the stay-at-homer and wrote: "Consider our own region, for example, as a source of intellectual wealth. I have traveled it for many years, seeking to know intimately the history of every nook and corner to know the lives of its men and women; . . . were I to live two centuries I could not complete all the investigations that might be made or write all the books that crowd to mind as worthy of publication. I have only produced ten or a dozen and not one is all that I would like to make it." 49

Meanwhile, Parker used the building, originally built as a reform school, as a laboratory and testing ground for the ideal community museum which was to come later. By 1929 there were 30 trained staff members of high quality. He never ceased in his campaign for large givers who could finance a real museum building which could be the model he sought. In 1936 there was issued from the museum press a 15-page illustrated brochure entitled "Opportunity." He had a place for the name to be inserted—The ..... Foundation—"Your effective influence in 1991—A plan Enabling a Great City Through You to Serve Humanity." He waited three years more but not in idleness. Finally, the miracle happened. But we'll let Parker tell it.

"One morning (in 1939) without previous announcement, one of Rochester's eminent citizens knocked at the door of the Director's office. 'I feel that I should do more for my city,' said he. 'I have liked your program and approve of it. But that isn't enough, I know. How would you like a new building?' We gratefully answered that we would welcome one. 'Then,' demanded the visitor, 'you must have a plan for it. Let me see it.' Thus did Edward Bausch, the microscopist, challenge our sincerity and preparedness. A drawer was opened and a set of blueprints taken out. Dr. Bausch looked them over and asked us to see his architect. We did. A better set of plans, by far, was produced, since the new plans embodied every modern feature that a trained staff struggling in poor quarters, could devise for better facilities. . . ." <sup>50</sup>

To Parker's mind, great as was the fulfillment of his dream, beautiful Bausch Hall of History and Science was merely one unit of a much larger group of structures which he had planned. There was, and *is*, to be an industrial wing, an auditorium wing, planetarium and a number of other features.

After the building opened in 1942, it took four more years of dedicated planning and direction to achieve a functioning institution, and this he accomplished despite the strains of World War II which reduced his staff and complicated matters. The increased pressure didn't prevent him either from conducting a successful Rochester Speaker's Bureau as his part in the defense effort or from helping in innumerable other civic ventures. He retired on January 1, 1946, becoming director-emeritus and in May of that year was awarded the Civic Medal, an award given by the associated councils of the Museum which his fertile brain has created. Afterwards, he by no means slunk off into seclusion, though he did repair to his home in Naples overlooking Canandaigua

Lake. There in the last eight eventful years of his life, GAWASO-WANEH (Talking Leaves) wrote at a prodigious rate, composing three books and putting final touches on his master work a three volume ethno-psycho-history, "The Amazing Iroquois." In his capacity for research in the fascinating lanes of anthropology, archeology, history and folklore, Parker achieved international eminence. In his pioneering and his prediction of the acceptance of the museum in the life of the common man to come he was a leader and a prophet. There will not soon come an end to the good he did for his fellow man.

"Science may tell us how man evolved through the ages and what natural causes induced his evolution but science scarcely stops to point out that in his evolution there may be a design that man but faintly comprehends. . . . If I should hazard a guess as to this design I should say that man's whole evolution . . . was designed to lead him away from the cave-man-animal and toward the wonderous future that lies in store at the god-man goal. . . ." <sup>51</sup>

## Footnotes

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