

Gladys Tantaquidgeon

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Dr. **Gladys Iola Tantaquidgeon** (June 15, 1899 – November 1, 2005) was a Mohegan Tribal Medicine Woman,^[1] anthropologist, author, tribal council member, and elder.^[2] She worked with the Bureau of Indian Affairs for more than a decade beginning in 1934. She published several books about Native American traditional medicine and healing with plants. In 1994 she was inducted into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame.

Contents

- 1 Biography
- 2 Legacy, awards and honors
- 3 Notes
- 4 Further reading
- 5 External links

Biography

Gladys Tantaquidgeon,^[a] was the third of seven children born to Mohegan parents, John and Harriet Fielding Tantaquidgeon,^[4] on Mohegan Hill in *Quinnetucket* (Uncasville, in New London County, CT).^{[5][6]} She was a 10th-generation descendant of the Mohegan chief Uncas, who was prominent in the colonial era.^[7] The Mohegan were among tribes who spoke one of the many Algonquian languages.

In childhood, Gladys learned traditional practices, beliefs, and lore from *nanus*, respected elder women. By age five, the tribal *nanus* had chosen her to be schooled in the traditions that comprise Mohegan culture.^[3] One of her mentors was the Mohegan traditionalist Fidelia Fielding (1827–1908). From Fielding, she learned the ways of the *makiawisug*^[b] who guard the healing plants.^[5]

Dr. Gladys Tantaquidgeon



Born	Gladys Iola Tantaquidgeon June 15, 1899 Mohegan Hill, Uncasville, Connecticut, USA
Died	November 1, 2005 (aged 106) Mohegan Hill, Uncasville, Connecticut USA
Ethnicity	Mohegan ^[1]
Alma mater	University of Pennsylvania, School of Anthropology
Occupation	Native American anthropologist, Medicine Woman, social worker, author
Employer	Bureau of Indian Affairs, Federal Indian Arts and Crafts Board
Known for	Preserving traditional Mohegan spirituality, Native ceremonies and artforms

Another mentor was her maternal aunt, *Nanu* Emma Fielding Baker (1828-1916), who was posthumously elected in 1992 as the Mohegan Tribal Medicine Woman and was inducted into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame for her work in education and preservation.^[2] Gladys started studying with her aunt in 1904, specializing in traditional herbal medicine. In her youth, Gladys had only occasional non-Indian education and never attended high school.^[1]

In 1919, at the age of 20, Tantaquidgeon attended the University of Pennsylvania to study anthropology.^[8] The scholar Frank Speck had met her as a child while he worked with her *nanu* Fidelia Fielding. When she was old enough, he invited her to study with him at Penn; he arranged work for her support, housing with foreign students, and classes and fieldwork to broaden her understanding of Native American cultures.^[3] She later did field work related to the Lenape and other eastern Algonquian tribes. She expanded her knowledge of traditional pharmacopeia by researching herbal medicine practices among many related East Coast tribes.^[1]

From 1934 to 1947, at the time of the Indian Reorganization Act and the Indian New Deal under the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Tantaquidgeon started work with the US Bureau of Indian Affairs. She was hired in 1934 under the Wheeler-Howard Act to administer social service benefits for Indians, and was first assigned to the Yankton Sioux Indian Reservation in South Dakota.^[6] In 1938 Gladys transferred to the Indian Arts and Crafts Board to serve as a "Native Arts Specialist".^[6] Working in the Dakotas, Montana and Wyoming, she helped artisans preserve traditional skills and arts, and helped them form cooperatives and other institutions for the sale and management of their arts.^[2] She developed ways for tribes to revive their cultural practices. According to the Mohegan Tribal Historian Melissa Fawcett, while working for the federal Indian Arts and Crafts Board, Tantaquidgeon also helped preserve customs that had been prohibited in the 19th century, such as the Ghost Dance and the Sun Dance.^[9] Part of Tantaquidgeon's job was to encourage the restoration of these and other previously prohibited traditional practices.^[4]

In 1931 Tantaquidgeon had worked with her brother Harry, a former chief, and father John to set up the Tantaquidgeon Indian Museum. It is the oldest one owned and operated by Native Americans. After concluding her government service in 1947, Tantaquidgeon returned to Mohegan Hill,^[6] Uncasville. She worked full-time at the museum for the next fifty years, until 1998.^{[2][7]}

As a librarian in the Niantic Women's Prison in the late 1940s, she had helped minority women.^[3] During the 1970s and 1980s, Tantaquidgeon also served on the Mohegan Tribal Council,^[6] encouraging the preservation and revival of tribal customs and language.

She published several books in her lifetime about traditional herbal medicine. Her best-known work, *A Study of Delaware Indian Medicine Practices and Folk Beliefs* (1942),^{[c][10][11]} was reprinted in 1972, 1995 and 2000^[d] as *Folk Medicine of the Delaware and Related Algonkian Indians*.^[7] In 1992 she was elected as the Tribal Medicine Woman of the Mohegan.



The Mohegan Tribe's museum is the oldest Indian owned and operated museum in America.

Tantaquidgeon preserved numerous records and tribal correspondence in boxes under her bed. These proved critical in aiding the tribe's case for federal recognition.^[3] As a people without a reservation, they had to prove community continuity. They gained federal recognition in 1994.^[3] Dr. Gladys Tantaquidgeon was the great aunt of author and current Mohegan Medicine Woman Melissa Tantaquidgeon Zobel.

Legacy, awards and honors

During her lifetime, Gladys Tantaquidgeon received many awards and honors, including:

- As an "outstanding role model", Tantaquidgeon was awarded the 'Tiffany Jewel' by the University of Connecticut.
- Connecticut Education Association's Friend of Education Award
- For "consistent endeavor in the area of social justice", she received the National Organization for Women's Harriet Tubman Award in 1996.^[9]
- She received honorary doctorates from the University of Connecticut (Doctor of Humane Letters degree, 1987)^[6] and Yale University (1994).^[3]
- 1994, she was inducted into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame.^{[2][3]}
- Her 100th birthday, June 15, 1999, was declared as 'Gladys Tantaquidgeon Day' by Gov. John G. Rowland of Connecticut;^[12] and was marked in the U.S. Congress by Hon. Sam Gejdenson.^[13]

Notes

Footnotes

- a. Name meaning "fast runner"^[3]
- b. "Sacred woodland little people"^[5]
- c. Facsimile reprint of the original title released 10 Sept 2010 (ISBN 1163185817)
- d. Paperback; ISBN 0892710896

References

1. "Gladys Tantaquidgeon" (http://www.mohegan.nsn.us/heritage/gt_makiawisug.aspx). The Mohegan Tribe. November 1, 2005. Retrieved 2008-02-24.
2. "Gladys Tantaquidgeon" (<http://www.cwhf.org/inductees/education-preservation/gladys-tantaquidgeon/>), Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame
3. "Running Against Time - Medicine Woman Preserves Mohegan Culture" (<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/sasalum/newsltr/summer2001/running.html>). *School of Anthropology; Alumni Newsletter*. University of Pennsylvania. Summer 2001.
4. "Gladys Tantaquidgeon - Obituary" (<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/hartfordcourant/obituary.aspx?n=gladys-tantaquidgeon&pid=15586855#fbLoggedOut>). *Hartford Courant*. November 5, 2005. Retrieved 25 November 2012.
5. "Fidelia Fielding, 1827-1908" (<http://www.mohegan.nsn.us/heritage/FideliaFielding.aspx>) *The Mohegan Tribe*. 2004 (retrieved 13 July 2010)
6. "Obituary - Dr. Gladys Tantaquidgeon" (<http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-gQj5CQxKbI8/TVvuBBQhSql/AAAAAAAAAINc/-JzSiBiCV0o/s1600/Gladys+Tantaquidgeon+Obituary.jpg>). *The Irregular*. Retrieved 25 November 2012.
7. Associated Press, "Gladys Tantaquidgeon, Mohegans' Medicine Woman, Is Dead at 106" (<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/02/nyregion/02tantaquidgeon.html?adxnml=1&adxnmlx=1321801277-FS8QvehYIL6sZ0Q/rzZiWA>), *New York Times*, 2 November 2005

8. Medicine Woman Gladys Tantaquidgeon and Mohegan Cultural Renewal (<http://connecticuthistory.org/gladys-tantaquidgeon-preserves-the-states-native-past/>) Connecticut Humanities
9. Groark, Virginia (March 1, 1996). "Mohegan medicine woman honored for life's work" (<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=XAohAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=nXYFAAAAIBAJ&pg=4717%2C40711>). *The Day*. Retrieved 25 November 2012.
10. Tantaquidgeon, Gladys; Pennsylvania Historical Commission (1942). *A study of Delaware Indian medicine practice and folk beliefs (1942)* (<http://archive.org/details/studyofdelawarei00tant>). Harrisburg, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Dept. of Public Instruction, Pennsylvania Historical Commission. pp. ~114.
11. Tantaquidgeon, Gladys. *Study of Delaware Indian Medicine Practices and Folk Beliefs* (<http://collections.nlm.nih.gov/catalog/nlm:nlmuid-8209737X1-mvpart>). U.S. National Library of Medicine (NLM) Collection. Retrieved 13 March 2015.
12. Bixby, Lyn (June 16, 1999). "A Great Dose of Life" (http://articles.courant.com/1999-06-16/news/9906160256_1_gladys-tantaquidgeon-day-related-algonkian-indians-tantaquidgeon-museum). *Hartford Courant*. Retrieved 18 March 2013.
13. Gejdenson, Hon. Sam. "Marking the 100th Birthday of Gladys Tantaquidgeon" (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CREC-1999-06-23/html/CREC-1999-06-23-pt1-PgE1365.htm>) *Congressional Record* Volume 145, Number 90 (Wednesday, June 23, 1999); Congressional Record Online, Government Printing Office; P. E1365

Further reading

- Fawcett, Melissa Jayne (2000). *Medicine Trail: The Life and Lessons of Gladys Tantaquidgeon* (<http://www.worldcat.org/search?qt=wikipedia&q=isbn%3A0816520690>). Tucson: University of Arizona Press. ISBN 0816520690.
- Turner, edited by Erin (2009). "Gladys Tantaquidgeon 1899–2005" (<http://books.google.com/books?id=QHD3h5-sDp4C&pg=PA93#v=onepage&q&f=false>). *Wise Women: From Pocahontas to Sarah Winnemucca, Remarkable Stories of Native American Trailblazers*. Guilford, Conn.: TwoDot. pp. 93–103. ISBN 0762755385.

External links

- Gladys Tantaquidgeon biography (http://www.mohegan.nsn.us/heritage/gt_makiawisug.aspx), The Mohegan Tribe, official website
- Gladys Tantaquidgeon Collection (<http://articles.courant.com/keyword/gladys-tantaquidgeon>), *Hartford Courant* newspaper articles
- Tantaquidgeon Indian Museum (<http://www.ctvisit.com/historic-site/tantaquidgeon-indian-museum/summary/3945>), Connecticut Office of Tourism

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Gladys_Tantaquidgeon&oldid=674747184"

Categories: Native American anthropologists | Native American writers
 | Native American politicians | University of Pennsylvania alumni | American centenarians
 | People from Montville, Connecticut | 1899 births | 2005 deaths
 | Indigenous American traditional healers | Native American women in politics

-
- This page was last modified on 5 August 2015, at 21:50.

- Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.