

# Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

July 2016

Not native to the Southeast, this month's artifact of the month comes from the Southwest and is a 1940s "Pretty Girl" Split Shank Navajo-style tourist bracelet. From the 1900s to early 1950s, Southwestern jewelry was a popular tourist item and jewelry from that era is identified as "Fred Harvey Jewelry" or "Railroad Jewelry" which was sold along the Santa Fe railroad lines, hotels, and nearby retail shops in New Mexico and Arizona. The "Pretty Girl" bracelets were machine-made and mass-produced lightweight jewelry that was made to the Anglo tourist's taste with smaller design elements and less stones. Whereas, Navajo made jewelry was bulkier and heavier with lots of Sterling Silver and large turquoise stones.



"Pretty Girl" Split Shank Navajo-style Bracelet  
c. 1940s  
1994.9.1

In 1909, Fred Harvey (entrepreneur) copyrighted the "Thunderbird" design and his company assigned their own interpretative meaning to the design. Although the Harvey Company didn't make Southwestern jewelry, they provided the market for it. As a result, tourists associate designs such as arrows, lightning (zig-zag), crosses, animal tracks, and animals with Native American culture. Referring to the Indian Symbols and Meanings chart (left), which is still used today, the design elements on the THPO Collection's bracelet are the Thunderbird (Sacred Bearer of Happiness Unlimited), Rattlesnake Jaw (Strength), Hogan (Permanent Home), Lightning (Swiftness), and Bear Track (Good Omen).

2353 INDIAN SYMBOLS—Explaining the Markings Used by the Indians on their Handicraft such as Silver, Rugs, Pottery, etc.				
THUNDER BIRD ... SACRED BEARER OF HAPPINESS UNLIMITED		DAYS AND NIGHTS ... TIME	MORNING STARS ... GUIDANCE	
SWASTIKA ... GOOD LUCK		SUN SYMBOLS ... HAPPINESS	RUNNING WATER ... CONSTANT LIFE	RAINDROP RAIN ... PLENTIFUL CROPS
ARROW ... PROTECTION ALL WAYS		HOGAN ... PERMANENT HOME	TEPEE ... TEMPORARY HOME	SKY BAND ... LEADING TO HAPPINESS
CROSSED ARROWS ... FRIENDSHIP		MEDICINE MAN'S EYE ... WISE - WATCHFUL	WARDING OFF EVIL SPIRITS	PEACE
ARROWHEAD ... ALERTNESS		SUN RAYS ... CONSTANCY	BIG MOUNTAIN ... ABUNDANCE	LASSO ... CAPTIVITY
4 AGES ... INFANCY, YOUTH, MIDDLE AND OLD AGE		HEADDRESS ... CEREMONIAL DANCE	FENCE ... GUARDING GOOD LUCK	ENCLOSURE FOR CEREMONIAL DANCES
CACTUS ... SIGN OF THE DESERT		BUTTERFLY ... EVERLASTING LIFE	EAGLE FEATHERS ... CHIEF	TRAILS CROSSING
GILA MONSTER ... SIGN OF THE DESERT		MAN ... HUMAN LIFE	RAIN CLOUDS ... GOOD PROSPECTS	
CACTUS FLOWER ... COURTSHIP		LIGHTNING AND LIGHTNING ARROW ... SWIFTNES		
HORSE ... JOURNEY		SWASTIKA 4 CORNERS OF THE WORLD - LAKE IN CENTER		
SADDLE BAGS ... JOURNEY				
BIRD ... CAREFREE - LIGHTHEARTED				
SNAKE ... DEFIANCE, WISDOM				
THUNDERBIRD TRACK ... BRIGHT PROSPECTS				
DEER TRACK ... PLENTY GAME				
BEAR TRACK ... GOOD OMEN				
RATTLESNAKE JAW ... STRENGTH				

So how did this bracelet end up in the Southeast and on the Brighton Reservation? Since this was a tourist item, the bracelet could have been an item sold in a nearby trading post, or given as a gift by a person who travelled to the Southwest, or someone from the Brighton Reservation could have visited New Mexico. However this bracelet found its way to the Brighton Reservation is a mystery, just like all things in archaeology, but it opens our eyes to the extensive networks that are still in place even in the 1940s.

