

Wampum Bracelet

Story 1

I've spent many moons travelling on foot to locate this trade metal so I could carve my vision and share this richness of my people. These circles are ground onto my skin, my soul. My ancestors live in the very cells of my body. I've dreamt through many moon lodges. When the Night Woman hangs full in the darkness, she lights her brilliance to show me this path – here where I've collected and embedded this wampum shell on my lovely bracelet. Hold my wrist. Feel her pulse. This shell lay exposed after the ocean receded. She gave me this shell. This metal dug from the deepest part of the earth's breast breathes its life into my body. I am part of all of her. Earth. Metal. Shell. Water. Story. This faith and hope, the movement of my people.

Story 2

I am a Moundbuilder. I've created the effigy of my soul, spread the body of an Eagle in the Wisconsin Hills. The black earth piled to express my form, my wishes. My tribes were nomads; we traded for centuries, travelled where boundaries did not exist. See these wiggles? These are where the serpent mound moved. I've captured her body, pressed her into this bracelet. I've sat with snakes. Watched them crane their heads to examine me. Watched them trying to read me. And I waited for their message. See this shell? They gifted me with this hard evidence where I stored a few stories. I'll pluck them out, let them sing, dance, talk. Wear it proudly on your left wrist that is closest to the heart. And listen.

Story 3

We've been here for thousands of years. We are shapeshifters, capable of changing form speaking with the tongues of the blessed beasts. Those that crawl, swim, and fly, walk with us. Children will draw lines, circles, make stick figures, collect rocks, shells, and insects. They've shown me how to preserve life, how to keep it alive with language. These are yours to decipher. Look for rain. It slashes on the straight lines. Look for the sun beams. They too travel those straight lines. In the mountains the water flows downward from that carved line. Mudslides and snow also race down that slope. Us? We meander, trying to straighten our path. These lines are the backbone, our spine, our femur. This shell will return us to earth, water and feed the nations.

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