

Gränsfors Tomahawks

The tomahawk hatchet was introduced by the Europeans, but was so frequently used by Native Americans that over time it became one of their leading symbols.

The Vikings who landed on the eastern shores of North America were the source of the first contact with axes and other metal items for a small number of Native Americans. Before the arrival of the Europeans, the Indians lived in the Stone Age and had never seen iron objects. Their axes were made of stone. When America was rediscovered centuries later by the Europeans, the so-called trade axes played a major role in trade with the natives. Trade axes served as a currency and the Europeans could trade a given number of hatchets for guides, bearers, leather and fur, and other valuables. The practical tomahawks soon became very popular and were used for hunting, as battle arms, for household needs and for religious rites. In close combat, the tomahawk was primarily used as a hand weapon – much like a war club, but the Indians were also skilful in throwing axes. Whether in combat or while hunting, the Indians rarely missed their target and the tomahawk was a feared weapon even after the introduction of the rifle.

With the passing of time, decorative brass axes which also doubled as smoking pipes became more common. Perhaps it was the imagination of the white immigrants that gave form to the

axe as artifact – from battle axe to peace pipe. The transformation from an everyday working tool to a decorated work was dependent on the pride of the bearer, who often contributed to the changes and decoration of the object himself.

Most of the Indian tribes were nomadic and did not concern themselves with house building or chopping firewood. Thus they were not interested in the larger broad axes, carpenter's axes or splitting axes. Rather, they preferred smaller, more convenient models suited for field use. So-called belt axes that could be kept under the belt had been fairly common in Europe since the Iron Age.

The word tomahawk stems from the Lenape tribe and their word *tamahak* (-an), roughly translates to "cutting tool". The Lenape Indians belong to the Alonquian people, an anthropological term that refers to the many tribes of the North-East coast of the USA, in the lands between Virginia and New York. The first Europeans to use the word tomahawk as we use it today were the settlers that founded Jamestown in 1607.

The tomahawks that we forge at Gränsfors Bruks are two basic original models – one of French and one of British origin. The tomahawks from Gränsfors Bruks are normally forged by Lars Enander (LE) or Ulrika Stridsberg (US.)



Art.nr 499-1
French Trade Axe, Tomahawk

*Blade guard in grain
leather supplied*

1,15 lb haft included
Blade ca 8 cm
Haft 50 cm



Art.nr 499-2
British Trade Axe, Tomahawk

*Blade guard in grain
leather supplied*

1,54 lb haft included
Blade ca 9 cm
Haft 50 cm



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