

was the national cultural patrimony of the Haudenosaunee, Johnson did not have the right to sell, loan or hock the wampum belt. In one letter she states that the belt she is offering is shown in a photograph of her grandfather holding the wampum belt. The photo was taken by Horatio Hale in 1871 showing Grand River Chiefs holding several wampum that were still in their possession at that time. The photo was taken in the living room at Chiefswood, the house of Pauline Johnson. Chief John Smoke Johnson is standing, holding a wampum belt, while the other Chiefs are seated with wampum belts draped over their arms and legs.

The wampum belt held by Chief Johnson is difficult to recognize, however, the distinctive zig zag pattern of the belt can be seen.

When Heye acquired the belt the catalog card he wrote stated that it was the League Belt of the Iroquois. In 1908 Heye agreed to loan objects to the University of Pennsylvania for their exhibitions. It is assumed that this belt was at the museum from at least 1910. Frank Speck, a ethnographer who taught at the University of Pennsylvania recognized that some of the wampum on exhibition were those reported to have been stolen from Grand River. Heye withdrew some of his collection from the University Museum in 1912, but the wampum belts remained on view.

Duncan Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs, wrote George Heye to inform him that the "treaty belts of wampum" were stolen and asked how Heye came to acquire them. (Letter from Scott to Heye, June 11, 1914) Heye tried not to address the issue and stalled, at one point even denying that the wampum belts came from Grand River.

Scott wrote to Heye in November of 1914 to state that the wampum belts in question were the "property of the Six Nations League and could not be sold or dispersed of in any way without the consent of the tribes, which was never given." One month later Scott asked Heye to return the stolen belts to the Haudenosaunee. Heye refused. Scott appeared to lose his desire to pursue the case in 1915.

Lucy Williams, Keeper of the American Section Collections at the University Museum explained that in 1996 Elisabeth Tooker, in preparing a report for the museum, discovered a faded Heye Collection tag on the wampum belt. Upon closer examination the object number "8386" was revealed. The University Museum contacted NMAI and returned the belt. NMAI Collections Staff notified the Haudenosaunee Standing Committee of the discovery. The belt in question had been deaccessioned from the NMAI Collection on March 28, 1996.