

Creation of man from the native point of view

OHSWEKEN — In my last column, I started telling the traditional Six Nations story of creation.

I told of the female being who fell from a sky world, her daughter who died giving birth to twin males and the unceasing battle between "the right-handed twin" and "the left-handed twin."

The grandmother named the left-handed twin, Sawiskera (Mischievous One). She named the right-handed one, Teharonhiawako (Holder of the Heavens).

The right-handed twin was upright and good but the left-handed twin wanted to displace his brother by kicking the grandmother off the edge of the world into the water.

We must remember they were more powerful than mere beings. As they fought over the body of their grandmother, Sawiskera tore off her head and threw it far into space.

Thus we speak of our grandmother the Moon, who brightens up the night world for her favorite grandson. In spite of his mischief and trouble-making, the left-handed twin was always her favorite.

After he had buried the grandmother properly, the right-handed twin created beautiful flowers, birds and creatures of all kinds.

Sawiskera followed him trying to undo his perfect creations as much as possible. For example, when his brother created roses, the left-handed twin put thorns on them.

At last they decided to have a contest to see who would be the Ruler of the World.

They played lacrosse, but after six days the contest ended in a draw.

Other contests ended the same way because both twins were very powerful and smart. They agreed to fight a fight to the finish with only one weapon each.

The left-handed twin picked a spear and the right-handed twin picked deer antlers to use as a weapon. Sawiskera used every dirty



trick he could think of but his brother always fought fair.

For days they fought evenly until the right-handed twin knew that he too had to use trickery. He began to let Sawiskera appear to win. When Sawiskera grew careless, the right-handed twin suddenly picked him up and flung him down on the sharp deer antlers.

He had disabled him.

Holder of the Heavens did not kill his brother but instead he generously offered to divide the world in half. The night time would belong to Sawiskera and the day would belong to him. Sawiskera was not a good loser but it was an offer he could hardly refuse.

They agreed to split.

The right-handed twin then created four more creatures in his own likeness. The first was made from the bark of a tree, the second from the white foam of the sea, the third from black soil and the fourth from red earth.

Soon after the four types of human beings were created, they began to fight. To ensure that they would survive, they were separated from each other.

Holder of the Heavens took the white, black, and yellow humans across the salt water and placed them far away from each other.

The red being was left at his place of origin. He was called Onkwéhonwe (Original Being) and he is still called that at Six Nations.

Our Town is an Expositor feature which provides a forum for news and views from some of the smaller centres in the region. George Beaver is a freelance writer who lives on the Six Nations reserve.