

Basic Detail Report



Architectural Panel

Date

late 19th Century

Medium

Wood

Description

This 19th century carved wooden panel is from a series of six which depict various scenes, animals, and grains referenced in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic 1855 poem, *The Song of Hiawatha*. Little is known about where the panels came from or why they were carved, though given that the donor of the pieces was a Santa Ana lawyer

for many years, it is possible they were originally used as architectural decorations for a building in Santa Ana around the turn of the 20th century. Cornstalks appears in two of the six panels, and in this one carved letters interspersed between the stalks form the word "MAIZE." Four of the six panels are captioned in a similar fashion with what would be the appropriate Ojibwe words, given the reference to Longfellow's poem. However, maize is an Anglicization of the Hispanicization of the Taíno word, mahiz. Why the Caribbean term was used in this context only deepens the mystery of this darkly patinated carving.

Dimensions

14 1/4 × 14 1/8 in. (36.2 × 35.9 cm)