

Mounts, Indians discuss warrior symbol

By Brian O'Neill

The origin of the Saltine Warrior, Syracuse University's mascot, has been missing from recent discussions of the warrior Indian's appropriateness as SU's symbol.

In two recent meetings between Melvin C. Mounts, vice president for student affairs, and ONKWEHONWENEHA, a native American student organization seeking to discontinue the Warrior's use, Mounts alluded to the warrior's long tradition, but neither

side spoke definitely about its origin.

The warrior's origin was brought to the attention of Mounts this week.

The Saltine Warrior originated in a fictional article written for the October 1931 Orange Peel, a campus humor magazine. It was written by the Director of Public Relations, Burgess Johnson.

The story said a 16th century Indian chief's tribal home was uncovered in 1928 during the excavations for Hendricks Chapel. In later years, both The

Daily Orange and the downtown newspapers reported the fictional piece as factual.

Mounts said the new evidence "confirms the sense most of us had that the Saltine Warrior had some relatively long history."

He said he will meet again with representatives of ONKWEHONWENEHA and they will make an attempt to define the issue. Mounts has already met with Gerry Muskrat, a visiting law professor from the Univer-

sity of Oklahoma, and Judy Maggesto, a third-year SU law student. At the next meeting undergraduate members of ONKWEHONWENEHA will also attend.

Mounts said he is not yet sure who will make the decision regarding the issue, and he said there must be clearer definition of the objections to the Indian before decision is made.

Muskrat said Friday that he planned to continue using the administrative

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★ Saltine Warrior in question

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process to achieve his group's goals. He added, however, ONKWEHONWENEHA reserves the right to pursue other avenues if it does not succeed.

Muskrat said other schools

have discontinued the use of an Indian symbol because "it is racist."

The Dartmouth University "Big Green" and the Stanford University "Cardinals" were both named the "Indians" until a few years ago, according to Muskrat.

The University of Oklahoma "Sooners" once had an Indian mascot, "Little Red," Muskrat said. However, unlike SU, which Muskrat said uses a "clown-type" costume, Oklahoma used an Native American who did an authentic war dance. This practice was recently discontinued.

Mounts said that when the issue arose here a few years ago, Onondaga reservation Indians consulted had no objection to the Saltine Warrior's continued use, as long as it was done in a dignified manner. Mounts and ONKWEHONWENEHA have agreed that the question is the concern of SU students, and not the Onondagans.