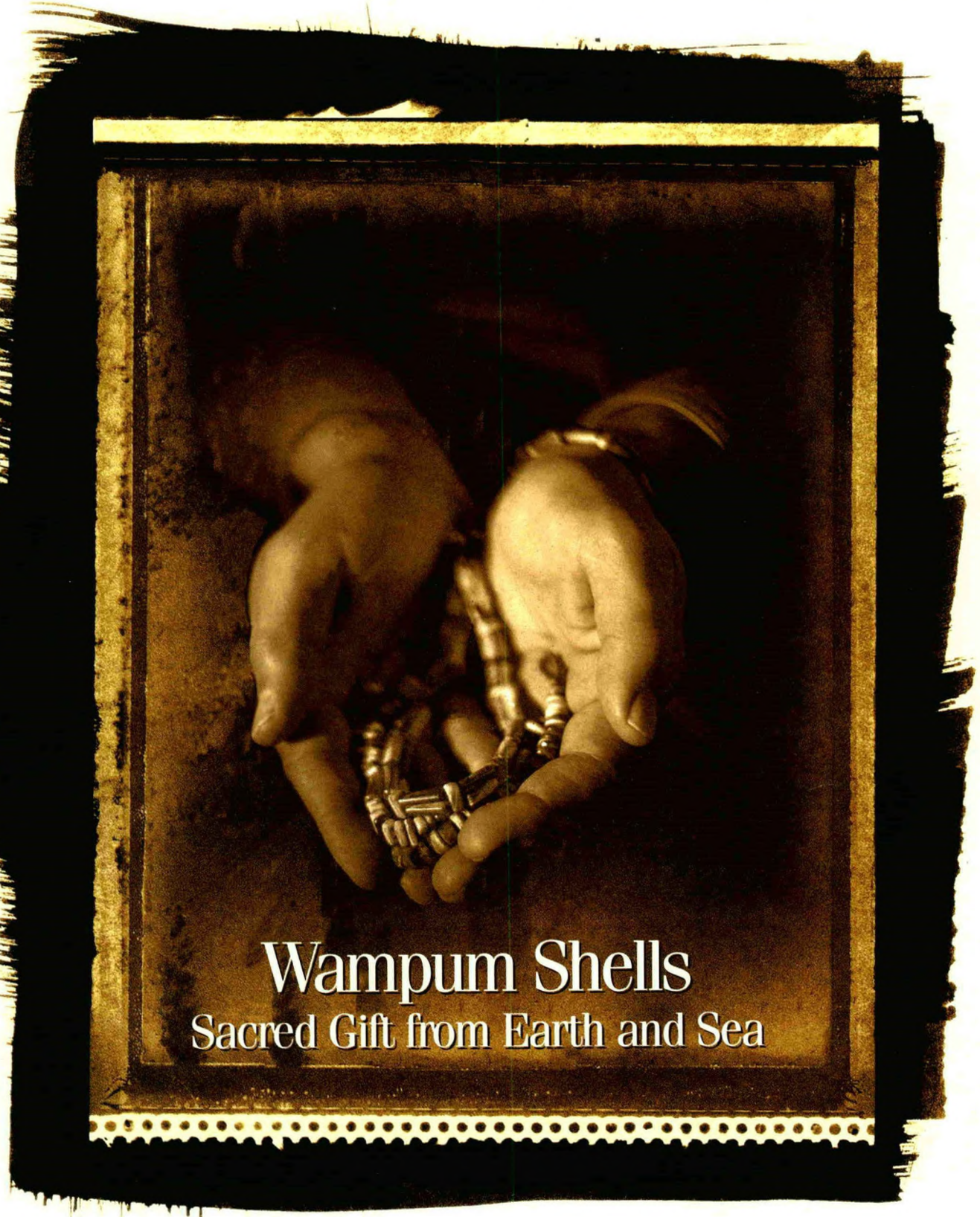


NATIONAL MUSEUM *of the*
American Indian

Spring 2000

Celebrating Native Traditions & Communities



Wampum Shells
Sacred Gift from Earth and Sea



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National Museum of the American Indian

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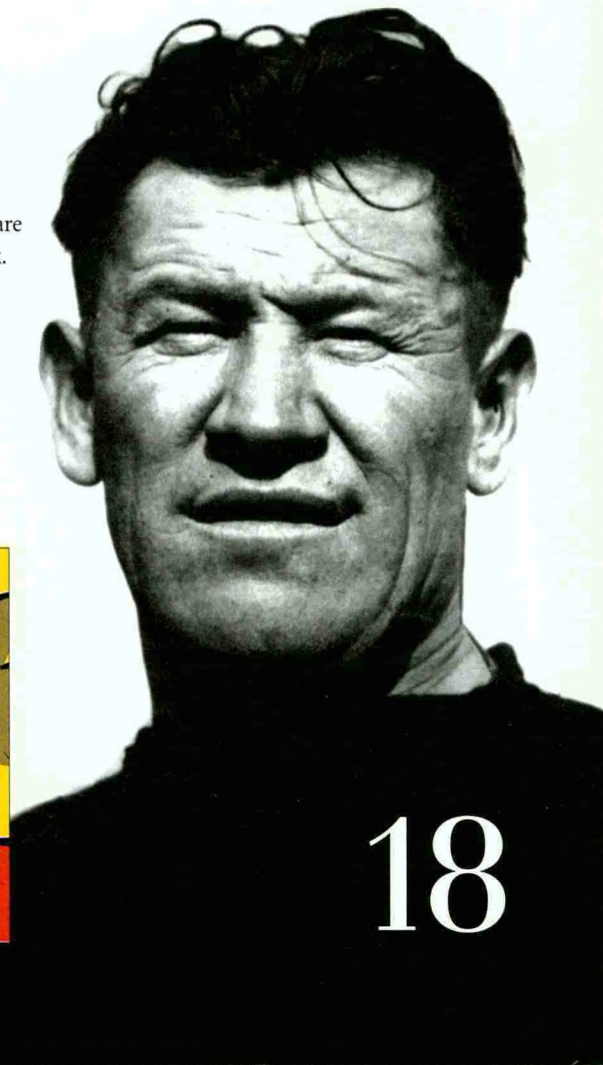
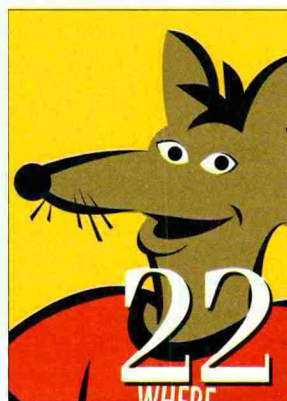
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Olympic champion, NFL Hall-of-Famer and a pretty good major league ballplayer, Jim Thorpe must be considered the dominant figure in 20th century sport.

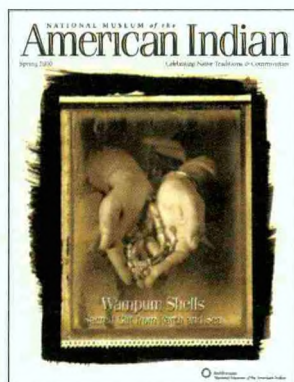
Cover photography by Roberto Ysaïs



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Celebrating Native Traditions & Communities



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Exhibition Design a Matter of Respect

by JAMES VOLKERT

In 1992, during the renovation of the George Gustav Heye Center (GGHC) in New York City and before pencil had touched paper for the design of the Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, Md., or the Museum on the Mall in Washington, D.C., new approaches to exhibitions were emerging for the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI).

At that time, development of the GGHC's inaugural exhibitions was well under way and proceeding in response to one of the most basic questions in museum work, "For whom do these objects hold the most potent meaning?" The answers led to the exhibition *All Roads Are Good: Native Voices on Life and Culture*. Twenty-three Native selectors from all walks of life were invited to visit the collections to view, discuss, and select objects that held particular significance for them. These selections formed the basis of the exhibition, and the resulting discussions served as the platform for exhibition design.

One of the selectors was a respected elder and storyteller, Joe Medicine Crow (Crow), grandson of a scout who rode with Custer. Medicine Crow is an important historian of his people. His extensive knowledge of Crow traditions drew him to three particular shields carrying images of a thunderbird, a red buffalo, and other personal symbols. These objects balanced great beauty and deep spiritual meaning for the makers, and they carried great power. Trained as an anthropologist, Medicine Crow said of himself, "I have a kind of dual nature. I can see objects both as a scientist and as a traditionalist. I've studied anthropology, so I can see these objects from a scientific perspective. But at certain times, I feel like burning incense, saying proper prayers and all that."

In developing the designs for the exhibition, we had several extended conversations with Medicine Crow that always seemed to return to the power of the shields. "The Crows

The installation of the Crow shields in the George Gustav Heye Center's permanent exhibit, All Roads Are Good, was designed to keep the shields from seeing each other.

regard the thunderbird as the most powerful *bakbeh*. The word *bakbeh* can be interpreted in several ways, but it basically means power – mysterious power, sacred power," he said. This prompted a question that I had to ask when we were talking about designs for the installation of the shields: "Given the power of the shields, can the public view them?" His response was direct and clear. "Oh, sure," he said, "no problem with that – but the shields shouldn't see each other." He did not want the shields' powers to conflict.

This is where content and exhibition design intersect. Today the shields are installed in the exhibition. If you look carefully at the display case, you'll notice the three shields are separated by dividers that seem to create an aesthetic balance and proportion. In fact, the sole reason for the dividers is to keep the shields from seeing each other. This element grew directly out

of conversations with Medicine Crow and became a part of the design aesthetic. For him, this was the proper way to share the shields with the visitors.

Exhibitions for the Museum on the Mall are now in development. The three permanent exhibitions, *Our Universes*, *Our Peoples*, and *Our Lives*, will bring forward philosophies, histories, and identities. Each will come directly from the conversations that result from connecting Native people with the collections. The designs of the exhibitions will reflect these aspects in a rich contextual environment, using all of the tools available to us: objects, sense of place, images, and media. We hope the result will reflect something Medicine Crow said to me many years ago, "Understanding. That's important." ■

James Volkert is the NMAI's Assistant Director for Exhibitions and Public Spaces.



Photo by James Volkert



Photo by David Fitzgerald

En Pointe: The Lives and Legacies of Ballet's Native Americans features (left to right) Moscelyne Larkin, Marjorie Tallchief, Maria Tallchief, Rosella Hightower, and Yvonne Chouteau, who were named Oklahoma State Art Treasures by Governor Frank Keating in 1997.

Documentary Celebrates Native American Ballerinas

En Pointe: *The Lives and Legacies of Ballet's Native Americans* will be shown at the George Gustav Heye Center in Manhattan on May 6. The National Museum of the American Indian will invite tribal chiefs and government officials from Oklahoma and the New York area to a private screening on May 4. Director Shawnee Brittan will introduce the documentary about Native American ballerinas Maria Tallchief, Marjorie Tallchief, Rosella Hightower, Yvonne Chouteau, and Moscelyne Larkin at the public screening.

The film follows the five dancers from their childhoods in rural Oklahoma, where ballet instruction was not readily available, through their careers in the 1940s and '50s. All five were soloists with major American and western

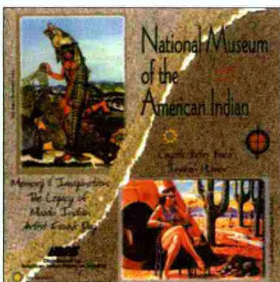
European companies, including Ballet Russe, Paris Opera Ballet, and Ballet Society (now named New York City Ballet). Later, the Tallchief sisters (Osage) helped establish ballet companies in Chicago and Dallas. Hightower (Choctaw) opened the Centre de Dance International in Cannes, established ballet companies in France and Italy, and received the French Legion of Honor for her influence on European ballet. Chouteau (Shawnee/Cherokee) helped create one of the first university degree programs at the University of Oklahoma, and Larkin (Shawnee/Peoria) helped found the Tulsa Ballet Theatre and Tulsa School of Ballet. The film touches on these legacies with a short wrap-up that captures the individual ballerinas

teaching students in some of the institutions they founded.

Brittan began filming *En Pointe* in late 1997, shortly before all five ballerinas were named Oklahoma State Art Treasures. He synthesized on-camera interviews of each dancer with motion picture footage and photographs from personal archives to produce the finished 60-minute film.

Brittan has won more than 35 international film and video awards. Executive producer Joanna M. Champlin and co-producer/writer Drake Bingham have worked with him on a number of other documentaries, including *God's Drum*, *The Cherokee Strip Adventure*, and *Sleep My Sons: The Story of the Arisan Maru*. — Carrie Vaccaro

New CD Explores Recent Heye Center Exhibits



A new compact disc (CD) that explores two recent exhibits at the George Gustav Heye Center is reaching public radio audiences in 15

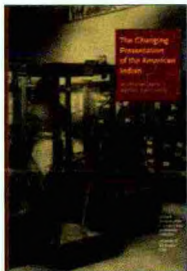
states through American Indian Radio on Satellite (AIROS), a satellite channel dedicated to Native programming. The CD contains two half-hour programs: *Coyote Bites Back: Indian*

Humor and Memory and Imagination: The Legacy of Maidu Indian Artist Frank Day. Released by the Community Services Department of the National Museum of the American Indian, the CD is the first in a series of initiatives to take the museum, through AIROS, to people who may not be able to visit it in person.

Caleb Strickland (Lumbee-Cheraw), a program assistant in the department, co-produced both programs with Keevin Lewis (Navajo), Community Services coordinator. For *Indian Humor*, the two worked with producer Susan Braine (Assiniboine) to gather interviews

with leading Native artists. Narrated by Muriel Miguel (Kuna/Rappahannock), the program features comedian Drew Lacapa (Apache/Hopi/Tewa). Peggy Berryhill (Muscogee Creek) co-produced, wrote, and narrated *Memory and Imagination*, which includes recordings of Day's stories about his people and interviews with three Maidu artists whose work he influenced. The CD, says Strickland, represents "a reciprocal relationship, a way of giving back to Native communities what they give us." — Carrie Vaccaro

Native Voices Give Museums Real Meaning



A new book, *The Changing Presentation of the American Indian: Museums and Native Cultures*, has just been published by the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), in association with the University of Washington

Press. The book describes the relationship between museums and Native peoples over time and explores issues of cultural representation from the sometimes conflicting perspectives of administrators, curators, and museum visitors, through the eyes of Indians and non-Indians.

Since the early 16th century, when sensational or romantic engravings of Indians were first published in Europe, popular perceptions of American Indians have been shaped by non-Native media and institutions. Museums have played a part in that process, along with books, newspapers, 19th-century Wild West shows, and movies and television today. To examine these perceptions, NMAI, under the leadership of George Horse Capture, deputy assistant director for cultural resources, and John Haworth, deputy assistant director for public programs, invited six prominent curators and museum administrators to take part in an unprecedented symposium on how museums represent Native cultures. The ideas discussed that day in the fall of 1995 at the George Gustav Heye Center in New York City are now available to a wider audience in this new book.

At the heart of NMAI's mission, and the point of the book, is the intent to forge a new kind of relationship between the museum and the people whose cultures and experiences it seeks to present to a larger audience. "From the start, our new museum has been dedicated to a fresh and, some would say, radical approach to museum exhibitions," says NMAI Director W. Richard West. "We believe that our use of Native voices restores real meaning and spiritual resonance to our exhibitions. And we don't believe there is any inherent conflict between Native voices and traditional museum scholarship."

The Changing Presentation of the American Indian: Museums and Native Cultures (ISBN: 0-295-97781-7; hardcover, \$25.00) is available through bookstores nationwide and at the George Gustav Heye Center gift shop. Call (212) 514-3767 for purchase information.



Photo by Katherine Fogden

One of several installations at a recent NMAI exhibit at the Heye Center entitled *The Art of Being Kuna: Layers of Meaning Among the Kuna of Panama*.

Kuna Living Cultural Center Planned

The Kuna people, of the semiautonomous territory of Kuna Yala, Panama, are developing a museum and cultural center that will interpret Kuna history from their perspective and present living Kuna culture. Still in the planning and fund-raising stages, the museum and center will be built on Uer-uer dup, an island off the Atlantic coast of Panama on the San Blas archipelago.

Niki Sandoval (Chumash), acting assistant director for community services at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), recently traveled to Panama to meet with representatives of the Koskun Kalu Research Institute of the General Congress of Kuna Culture. They discussed training Kuna community members in preserving and promoting

their culture through the museum. The ongoing collaboration is part of NMAI's Training and Consultation Program, which supports development and programming of tribal museums, cultural centers, and tribal preservation projects.

Last autumn, Betzabe Gisela Rivera (Kuna), a student at the University of Panama, helped NMAI curator Alicia Gonzalez conduct research at NMAI's Cultural Resources Center and the Library of Congress and reviewed Kuna material culture at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. Sandoval has praised Rivera's efforts in the training program and her dedication to the development of the Kuna museum. — *Carrie Vaccaro*

Festival Showcases 60-70 Films and Videos

The National Museum of the American Indian's (NMAI) 11th Native American Film and Video Festival will run from November 2-6 at the George Gustav Heye Center and elsewhere in New York City. The festival will showcase works from around the hemisphere, including community-based and experimental films, videos, documentaries, and radio and digital productions.

Elizabeth Weatherford, festival director and

head of the Film and Video Center, says that festival coordinators are expecting several hundred entries. A team of NMAI staff and Native American cultural activists, including video artist and educator Beverly Singer (Tewa/Navajo), radio producer Peggy Berryhill (Muscogee Creek), and Peter Jemison (Seneca), director of Ganondagan State Historic Site in Victor, N.Y., will choose the 60-70 works to be featured.

Filmmakers and media directors will introduce and discuss many of the works. Radio and Internet browsing stations will allow festival attendees to listen to excerpts from Native radio stations and browse Native media. — *Carrie Vaccaro*



"Native Sounds from Downtown" Rock New York City



Photo by Donovan Quintero

Indigenous band members Mato (above), Wanbdi, Horse, and Pte (Nakota) opened for B.B. King last year and will open for Bob Dylan this year.

Music lovers in lower Manhattan are in for a treat this August, when Native artists will take part in a series of free concerts featuring music unique to the Americas. "Native Sounds from Downtown" will appeal to lovers of both contemporary and traditional Native music.

On August 17, the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) and Battery Park City Parks will present Indigenous, a blues/rock band that B.B. King described as a group that "America and the world should hear." The group – two twenty-something brothers, a sister, and a cousin – will perform in Battery Park's Wagner Theater at 7 p.m. This outdoor concert is part of the park's "River and Blues Festival." Band members Mato, Wanbdi, Horse, and Pte (Nakota) opened for B.B. King last year and will open for Bob Dylan this year. Last year, Indigenous won three awards, including Group of the Year at the second annual Native American Music Awards in Albuquerque, N.M. Their fourth album, *Things We Do*, was recently released on the independent Pachyderm Records label.

"With the growth of contemporary Native music in recent years, more and more people have become aware of groups like Indigenous," says Shawn Termin, an NMAI program specialist. "While we will showcase contemporary Native artists, we also want to feature traditional forms of music." No one is better suited to do

B.B. King describes Indigenous as a group that "America and the world should hear."

both than Ulali, a female trio who blend contemporary and traditional styles in an *a cappella* format. On August 24, NMAI and the Panasonic Village Jazz Festival will present Ulali's sound of drum, rattle, and stomp in the George Gustav Heye Center's rotunda at 6 p.m. Band members Pura Fe (Tuscarora), Soni Moreno (Mayan, Apache, Yaqui), and Jennifer Kreisberg (Tuscarora) have shared stages with Buffy Ste.

Marie, Sting, and Bonnie Raitt. Ulali's first album, *Mahk Jchi*, attracted the attention of Robbie Robertson, who featured two Ulali songs on his album *Robbie Robertson and the Red Road Ensemble*.

Ulali later appeared with Robertson on *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno.

The concert series concludes August 26 and 27, when NMAI and the Peruvian Consulate will present violinist Máximo Damián (Quechua). Damián, declared a National Living Treasure of Peru, will play traditional Andean music in two performances each afternoon at the George Gustav Heye Center. The program also includes the Damián Musical Group, which performs *The Dance of the Scissors*, an acrobatic-style dance.

With Native musicians climbing the charts and public interest in Native music growing, "Native Sounds from Downtown" is an opportunity not to be missed. As Termin says, "Music has a language of its own and speaks to everyone." – Richard Peterson

George Horse Capture Celebrated

For George Horse Capture Sr., being named one of the 100 most famous and notorious Montanans of the 20th century wasn't easy news to take.

The *Great Falls Tribune*, one of the state's largest daily newspapers, listed Horse Capture (Gros Ventre) along with 99 others including actress Jane Fonda, the late broadcaster Chet Huntley, and motorcycle daredevil Evel Knievel.

"It was shocking at first. I wondered 'Why me?' because there have been more prominent people over the years," said Horse Capture, who was also stunned that Unabomber Ted Kaczynski made the list of 100. "But now, as I

look back, it's been kind of fun."

Several dozen historians and educators spent a year coming up with the list, which was published in December.

Horse Capture was recognized for his work at the National Museum of the American Indian, where he serves as senior counselor to the museum's director. His responsibilities include selecting topics and objects for exhibition and consulting with tribes on the museum's content.

The article also pointed out Horse Capture's experience as a museum curator and as an Indian activist who helped symbolically reclaim Alcatraz Island in 1970. – Richard Peterson



Photo courtesy of Buffalo Bill Historical Society, Cody, Wyoming

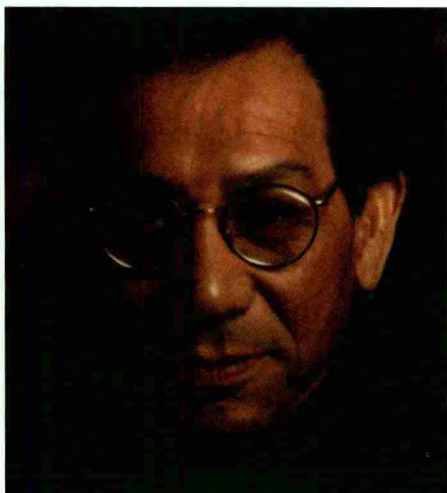


Third-graders Learn Math, Help NMAI

Twenty-one third-graders in rural Springfield, Vt., collected \$62.02 to purchase a National Museum of the American Indian membership. Diane Kemble, their teacher at the Union Street School, started the fund drive after seeing a museum ad in the *New York Times*. She tied it easily to the Native American studies in the curriculum. "I

usually don't get into fund raising for causes," Kemble says, but this drive "was so appropriate because it's what we were studying. I suggested that they could make donations to help create this brand-new museum." Adding up loose change and bottle redemptions for a month, the children also found that math lessons can be fun. — *Carrie Vaccaro*

Truman Lowe Named as NMAI's First Curator of Contemporary Art



The National Museum of the American Indian's first curator of contemporary art, Truman Lowe (Ho-Chunk), started work at the Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, Md., on January 10. Currently he is working on the Mall Museum inaugural exhibition for the Changing Gallery.

For 25 years Lowe was a full professor in the University of Wisconsin-Madison art department, serving as chair from 1992 to 1995. A 1999 recipient of the Eiteljorg Contemporary

Art Fellowship, Lowe has exhibited, taught, and lectured nationally and internationally. In 1998 he participated in a yearlong exhibition featuring Native American sculptors at the White House in Washington, D.C. He has served as an advisor to the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Cincinnati Academy of Art, and the South Dakota Arts Council.

Lowe grew up along the Black River in Winnebago Indian Mission, a small town about seven miles east of Black River Falls, Wis., in the 1940s and '50s. The natural landscape of the area inspires the primary motif in his sculptures — flowing water, especially rivers, which he likens to life. A river has a source and a destination, he explains, but all we see are the horizon points and the portion before us. "Our lives are relatively short and allow us to see only what we can from the river's banks," he says.

The concept of the National Museum of the American Indian for him "is much bigger than any one group of people. Its time has come. What it boils down to for me is an opportunity to participate," he says. "It's sort of like that river. You know the river is made up of many tributaries, and each one contributes to the whole idea." — *Carrie Vaccaro*

NMAI Fellowships Inspire Artists

Douglas Miles (San Carlos Apache/Pima) believes that history can be written through art. The belief came to him while participating in the Artist Fellowship Program, sponsored by the National Museum of the American Indian and ATLATL, a Phoenix-based organization that helps Native artists and art enterprises. "Art allows us to look at the past two to three hundred years and create a dialogue between history, tradition, and the community," says the famed artist.

Sixteen Native artists have participated in the program, and six more will be selected this year. They reside temporarily in New York or Washington, D.C., and view major Smithsonian collections. The artists may then draw upon these collections in their work and share what they have learned with their communities. "The program allows them to see knowledge and life in these collections that they would not have seen in their own communities," said Keevin Lewis, the program's coordinator. "It's a life-changing experience."

Miles agrees that the experience affected him profoundly. After his fellowship, Miles has been teaching in classrooms throughout the Southwest. "This allows us to see Indian art as a great world art form. It puts Pueblo pottery on a par with Grecian urns." — *Richard Peterson*

Third Annual Children's Festival

The third annual Children's Festival at the George Gustav Heye Center (GGHC) in New York City will be held May 20-21 from noon to 4:30 p.m. The free event will feature films, videos, storytelling, and games by Matoaka Little Eagle (Tewa/Chickahominy) and Trudie Lamb Richmond (Schaghticoke). Additional activities include a beading workshop by Ben Geboe (Yankton Sioux), gourd painting taught by Fred Chapella (Hopi), and *Coyote Tales*, a theatrical retelling of Tiwa children's stories by Gateway Performance Productions. GGHC staff will also teach children's dances in the rotunda.

The fun and educational festival — popular with children as well as with adults — drew approximately 7,000 last year, more than twice the typical weekend attendance. Planners anticipate at least as many visitors this year. — *Carrie Vaccaro*

Virtual Trade Routes

by JAMIE HILL



Illustration by David Beyer

The Oneida chief commanded the messenger onto the long journey with a flick of his wrist. The lush hills of the Oneida homelands vanished as the messenger set out along the main Iroquoian artery, the Iroquois Trail, and moved swiftly through the rich green undulations of the terrain as had other emissaries before, over eons of time.

The messenger charged ahead past Lake Erie and ascended the portage once responsible for the trading wealth of the Miami Indians. The messenger dashed south through the territory of the Illinois Indians (Ilanawiki), then traversed to the west to what remains of Cahokia. Cahokia once sat as the majestic trading hub at the confluence of the Mississippi, Missouri, and Illinois Rivers, an expanse now called St. Louis,

Mo. The messenger zigzagged through the lands of tribe after tribe and finally entered the Rio Grande basin in New Mexico, home of the Pueblo people.

The messenger then flickered at the speed of light through the last Internet computer router and into the computer network of the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (IPCC) in Albuquerque, N.M. The center's computer

unraveled the packet of digital bits of information that was the messenger. The order for the children's book for the Oneida chief's six-year-old daughter was being placed.

A chief's messengers today transport communiqués not by canoe or by truck, but by electrons. Inter-tribal communications and trade routes are being reclaimed with the use of the rapidly expanding World Wide Web.

Web sites allow individuals and tribes to learn about whom they are doing business with across great distances. IPCC's Web site opens the story of the 19 Pueblo communities to the world (www.indianpueblos.org). Visitors to the Web site are invited to any one of the Pueblo villages spread along the Rio Grande Valley. The Web site offers information about how Pueblo life is rich in ceremony and how the villages have been continuously occupied through the centuries.

Joyce Merrill, IPCC's vice president, says the center's Web site was built "so that we could disseminate more of the information that we have on the Pueblos to more people, and also to disseminate correct information about the Pueblos. The Web site has a page on each one of the 19 Pueblos, which collectively own the cultural center. We clear the information every year with the governor of each Pueblo in case they want to make any changes."

In addition to selling products online, the Web site promotes the center's tourist attractions. Visitors to the site learn that the center's facilities include a museum, a theater, a children's interactive museum, a gift shop, and a restaurant that serves authentic Pueblo food. The center houses an impressive collection of photographs, on loan from the Smithsonian Institution, which depict Pueblo life from 1880 to 1910.



The astonishing thing about a tribal chief's electronic Internet messages is that they really do travel along trade routes that are thousands of years old. Much of the Internet backbone cabling in North America is strung along highways and railways that are, in turn, stretched out on top of the Indian thoroughfares that saw heavy traffic for millennia. These underlying ancient trading networks shored up Indian commerce long before any Europeans ever set sail for the edge of the world.

In earlier times, trade routes throughout the Western Hemisphere supported trade in goods, services, technologies, news, and ideas that spawned a rich living environment for the first peoples of the Americas. Strategic centers of trade arose at the hubs of ancient transportation networks. North American centers like Tenochtitlan in Mexico, Cahokia in the interior, The Dalles in the northwest, and the Grand Portage in the Great Lakes region supported hundreds of thousands of negotiations between the traders, manufacturers, brokers, and diplomats of those times.

Today, IPCC's Web site reinvigorates these trade networks. When the Oneida chief clicked his mouse and his message flashed into the Cultural Center's computer nanoseconds later, the message immediately transferred to the server of the museum shop's business partner, book giant Amazon.com. Once again, the message had sped along ancient information highways across the continent to reach the state of Washington.

In its agreement with Amazon.com, IPCC selects children's books authored by Native Americans that are appropriate for impressionable young Indian minds. The Oneida chief's purchase would be delivered by Amazon.com, and the Cultural Center and Amazon.com would share in the proceeds of the sale. The chief had merely flicked his wrist to click his mouse to launch a three-way, mutually benefi-

cial trade made possible by the Internet.

The benefits of Web technology have not been lost on the 46 tribes who form the Inter-Tribal Bison Cooperative (ITBC). Early American expansion reduced bison herds from approximately 60 million to a few thousand. Established in 1990, ITBC assists tribes who want to return the much-respected bison to Indian country. The Web site allows ITBC to provide information to anyone in the world interested in helping them rejuvenate bison populations (www.intertribalbison.org).

ITBC president Louis LaRose explains, "A lot of people talk to me about information on buffalo they picked up on the Web site. It helped when we were dealing with government officials killing bison that had wandered away from Yellowstone." ITBC had spearheaded a program in 1998 that transported wandering bison to tribal lands. The bison were potential transmitters of brucellosis, a disease that affects cattle. ITBC clashed with state and federal officials, who thought it easier just to kill the bison. "Those animals within the park represented the fulfillment of the vision that the bison would return," says LaRose. "People could understand our position of trying to save the buffalo. The last free-ranging bison herd was being decimated."

ITBC's Web site heralds the return of the buffalo. "These are exciting times for ITBC," LaRose beams. "We had been hammering away like a voice in the wilderness, and all of sudden lots of people became aware of us."

As each tribe brings the buffalo back, they learn more about their culture. "After all the conflicts between the federal government and tribes, our relationship to the earth, to the bison, and to other animals wasn't destroyed. It's still there," says LaRose. "But we have a lot more to learn." He explains, "It's like a newborn buffalo calf. Sometimes, we jump up and down and act like we know everything. But when we stop, we still wobble around. That's what's happening to a lot of tribes. Soon, that calf will be walking. The next day that calf will outrun its

mother, and its mother can outrun a horse."

Light-speed trading networks are being mapped out by Indian business leaders looking to revitalize Indian talents for commerce lost in the turmoil of the past two centuries. The Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber of Commerce (RMICC) in Denver, Colo., has signed up 256 members in an effort to mobilize Indian-owned businesses onto the economic landscape of six Western states. "It's a two-way mission," says Joseph Serna, RMICC's president. "On the one hand, it is to help Indian businesses manage businesses more effectively. On the other, it is to teach corporate and government America that there are very capable Indian businesses out there." The Web site is a key component of RMICC's communications strategy (www.rmicc.org). "We drive everybody to our Web site," Serna says. "If you want to find out about meetings, events or news, go to our Web site."

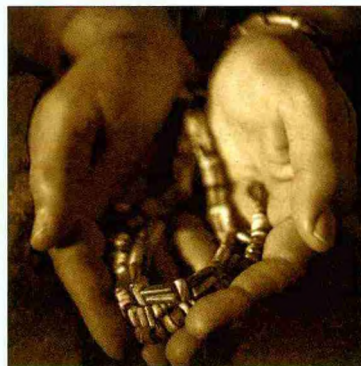
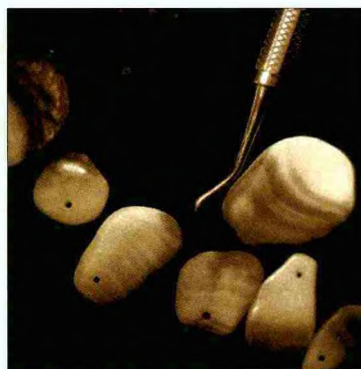
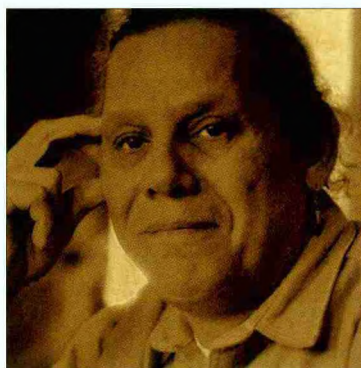
When he is not lobbying on behalf of Indian ventures, Serna operates a printing business with locations in Denver and on the Hopi reservation in Arizona. Where other Indian organizations may exchange only information, Serna uses the virtual routes for actual trade. He equipped the Serna Enterprises Web site with an online quotation and ordering system (www.serna-ent.com). "We've done estimates from all over the U.S., including Alaska," he says. "One of our customers has 28 locations throughout the country. All of their locations input their orders on our Web site."

As a testament to the changing nature of business in Indian country, Serna advertises only through his Web site. "We don't formally advertise in any other way," says Serna. "Being able to put a huge banner, like we have, on the Internet has really increased the number of people that can see our business."

While the Internet is playing an unexpected role in saving the buffalo and preserving the Pueblos, Indian commerce is mounting a comeback. All are trailblazing virtual trade routes that promise to rejuvenate the ancient networks that Indians had built across North America. "And don't forget," Louis LaRose says, "the buffalo are back." ■

Jamie Hill (Mohawk) is the president of eMergeUs Inc., an e-commerce company.

FROM Earth AND SEA



On Martha's Vineyard, gifted Wampanoag artisans like Donald Widdiss (left) are leading a resurgence in the ancient and uniquely beautiful art of wampum shell beadwork. **by PAULA PETERS**

For many years beadwork, Pendleton blankets, and silver and turquoise jewelry have dominated the market for those in search of "Indianness." Now wampum shell – beads and jewelry made from the shell of the quahog – is increasingly in demand and on the way to becoming as representative of American Indian culture as the Navajo blanket. Artisans like Donald Widdiss (Aquinnah Wampanoag), one of the elite Native American wampum bead makers, and Carol Lopez (Mashpee Wampanoag), who has been making polished pendants, earrings, and

necklaces from wampum shell for more than 25 years, can tell you the art is experiencing a resurgence.

On Martha's Vineyard, off the coast of Massachusetts, 100 square miles of rolling hills framed by dunes and beach grass are an internationally known playground for the notably well-to-do. Aquinnah sits on the westernmost tip of the island, where spectacular sunsets over the colorful Gay Head Cliffs draw applause. Of the 950 members of the tribe, 300 still live on the island that has been their ancestral home for thousands of years. A wampum shell jeweler for more than a decade, Widdiss, 53, has

Photographs by ROBERTO YSAIS



noticed that purple and white beads are growing in popularity. "I started seeing them on the wrists of all the rich and famous," Widdiss says of the island's summer visitors. Of his motivation to make wampum, he says, "I have never been comfortable with our people needing to represent their Indian culture with Western style art and jewelry." He devotes much of his time to cutting, grinding, and drilling tiny bits of the shell, using lapidary tools he customized through trial and error. He markets his custom-made jewelry at several Vineyard gift shops, including Charlie's

Trading Post in Aquinnah, selling the beads for about \$30 an inch.

Widdiss first discovered the beauty of the shell as a young Wampanoag shell fisherman, raking quahogs from the Menemsha Pond mudflats in Aquinnah. Sometimes when he got hungry, he would slip a knife through the two hard lips of a shell, fresh from the brackish water, carve out the mass of meat, and suck out the raw clam. Spread open like the wings of a butterfly in the palm of his large, callused hand, the empty shell was more than the former home of his recent snack. The rare bit of pig-

ment in the largely bone-white shell, in gradations of violet to deepest purple at the hinge, had an obvious allure.

"You open that quahog and that purple hits you in the face. It's so intense. When it comes right out of the water, it glistens," Widdiss says on a walk along the beach off Maushop Trail. The tide, licking at his heels, leaves a bed of sea foam over the sand and rocks where Widdiss's tall frame straddles a section of beach. He keenly watches the dissolving foam; then, "Ah ha!" he cries, stooping down to grab a piece of shell. "Funky," he says, tossing it back to the sea. "Nice thickness, no color. We are here for the purple." Above the tide line he finds a hunk of shell with a nice ridge between the white and purple sections, jams it into the pocket of his leather bomber jacket, and trudges over the dunes.

In his kitchen/workshop, with Mohawk blues performer Murray Porter's *1492, Who Found Who* playing in the background, Widdiss cuts the shell into quarter-inch hunks or "blanks." Then he grinds them into smooth disks or cylinders—tedious work on a tiny chip of shell that his massive fingers do with seeming ease. "The shell tells me what kind of bead I'm going to make," he says, remarking that no two beads are alike. He doesn't approach the shell fragment with a plan and is always surprised by the outcome. "You have got to have some mystery in what you are doing." Before the bead is done, he bevels the ends and then, using a diamond drill, bores a hole, hoping it will not be one of the many that crack. Less than an hour after the shell was picked from the beach, Widdiss raises his safety glasses and holds a tiny purple bead up to the light.

"It's not perfect," he says, "but a real spiritual craftsman does not want it to be perfect. The only one who makes anything perfect is the Creator." For Widdiss, the craft brings him closer to his Creator, who is not forgotten in the process. As he sacrifices the shells to make jewelry, he offers his prayers to the Creator in a private tobacco ceremony.

Across Vineyard Sound in Mashpee, on the Massachusetts mainland, Lopez, a 65-year-old grandmother, also lets each shell define its destiny. Demand for the free form of wampum shell that has become her signature is increasing at the tribe's annual powwow. "People enjoy it. It's not commercial-looking, and they like the idea it's made by a Native," says Lopez, who distinguishes her jewelry from mass-produced wampum, which has a uniform quality. Each piece is unique, and her heritage lends authenticity to the work.

Unlike Widdiss, Lopez has never had to walk the beach to find shells. As the wife of a

More than just a bead



Manitou, the Creator, gave the Algonquin a gift from the sea, the quahog. The clam meat was eaten and certain shells became tools, but it was the bone white and deep purple section of some shells that began a centuries-old tradition, the manufacture of wampum. The tiny tubular beads were made tediously by hand—cut out, drilled and smoothed over flat stone—and then woven into belts, strands, or sashes. Wampum was highly regarded by the northeast coastal tribes, the Iroquois of present-day New York State, and eventually by European settlers as currency. Wampum became legal tender in Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1637.

"The tradition of wampum-making spread through the shore areas where these shells were abundant in Wampanoag and Narragansett country, in the land of the Pequots and across Long Island Sound to the Montauk Confederacy, and southward through the territory of the Lenni-Lenape," said Pequot/Wampanoag historian Tall Oak of Charlestown, R.I.

Wampum belts made of the beads documented words, deeds, and promises in symbols woven into the design. Not meant to be worn, the belts were interpreted by chosen orators who traveled great distances to deliver invitations,

record events, announce marriages, births or deaths, consecrate agreements or treaties, or even declare war, according to Tall Oak. The belts so impressed George Washington that he had one made to negotiate peace in the 1790s with the Haudenosaunee, the six Iroquois nations of Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk, and Tuscarora. Repatriated from the New York State Museum in Albany in 1988, the Washington treaty belt is now in the hands of the Onondaga Nation. For more than 10 years, Seneca tribal member Peter Jemison has been repatriating belts from museums for the Haudenosaunee.

Jemison, historic site manager at Ganondagan State Historic Site in Victor, N.Y., says the belts, like Indian promises, far outlasted documents made by Europeans to record treaties, such as the one between the Dutch and the Haudenosaunee in 1613. The belt signifying that treaty—the *Guswentah*, or Two Row Belt—is in safe storage at the Woodland Cultural Center in Brantford, Ontario; the Dutch document has been lost. The Haudenosaunee interpretation of the belt, which has two rows of purple beads on a field of white beads, has been passed safely on for generations.

"One purple line represents the Haudenosaunee traveling along the river of life in our canoe. In our canoe we carry our language, law, way of life, and beliefs. The other purple line is the Europeans traveling along in their boat, carrying their language, law, religion, and customs," explained Jemison, who said three of the white rows represent peace, friendship, and eternity. He explained that the treaty assumes that "the Europeans will not get out of their boat and climb into the Haudenosaunee canoe and try to steer it," and the Haudenosaunee likewise promised the same. — Paula Peters



shell fisherman, Lopez began to collect, cut, and polish bits of the quahog shell in the early 1970s as she raised her seven children. The quahog is not only her husband's livelihood but also a staple in her home, where she is almost as well known for her quahog chowder, fritters, and stuffed quahogs as she is for her jewelry. The shucking provides her with an endless supply of shells. "Or I would just go out in the driveway and find pieces there. Mashpee people always dump their shells in the driveway," Lopez says of the Wampanoag custom of lining the driveway with shells, which has become a feature of Cape Cod.

Born in a saltbox cottage next door to her grandmother's house in Mashpee, Lopez has lived in the town ever since. Growing up a

Wampanoag in Mashpee was a simple life. The fathers were hunters and shell fishermen, and the mothers worked the land. Quietly they practiced their traditions at a time when it was not popular to be Indian. Today about half of the tribe's nearly 2,000 members live in and around Mashpee, a town of just over 13,000 residents. The tribe is recognized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, but culturally and historically there is little distinction from the Aquinnah tribe, and the Mashpee tribe is not yet federally recognized—a political struggle the tribe has been engaged in for more than 20 years. Nearing the top of the Bureau of Indian Affairs recognition list, Mashpee Wampanoag tribal members like Lopez hang onto their heritage, a strength she shows best in

her wampum shell jewelry.

In her basement, a laundry room doubles as a workshop, with a sturdy wooden bench cluttered with tumblers, drills, and lapidary tools. Turning a hunk of purple shell in her fingers, she humbly denies any magic in what she does. But the perfectly matched wampum disks dangling from her ears belie her modesty. Matter-of-factly, she explains the circles are cut from the spots on either side of a shell that are symmetrically alike in pigmentation. "The two sides are identical, you know," she says, holding open an empty shell and showing the twin sides.

A woman of few words and considerable talent, she smiles brightly when talking about her work. At a recent tribal gathering she



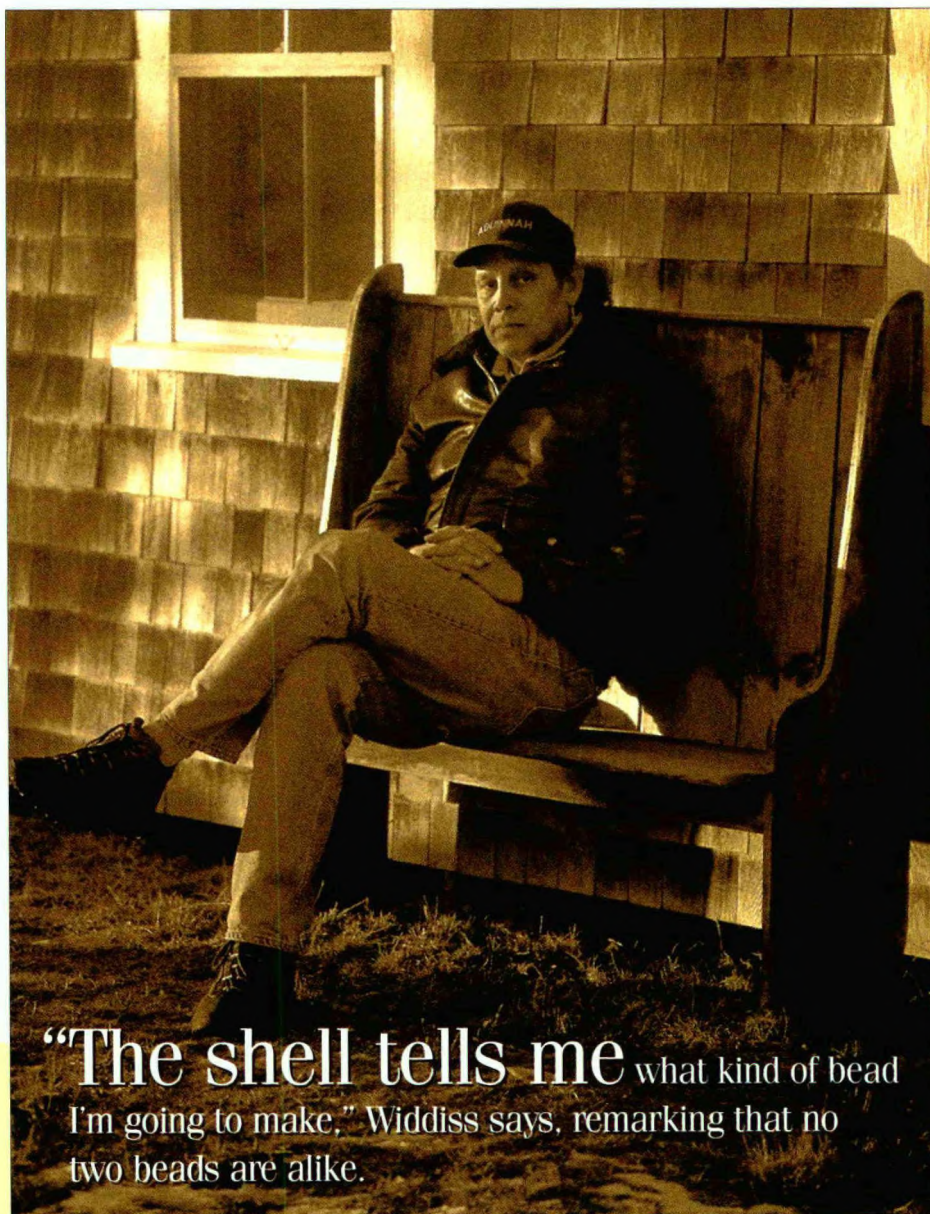
Lopez has never had to walk the beach

to find shells. As the wife of a shell fisherman, Lopez began to collect, cut, and polish bits of the quahog shell in the early 1970s as she raised her seven children. The quahog is not only her husband's livelihood but also a staple in her home, where she is almost as well known for her quahog chowder, fritters, and stuffed quahogs as she is for her jewelry.

noticed many people wearing her jewelry, as if a new fad had swept the community, anointing purple as the latest trend in color. "That was the first time I saw so many people wearing my work," she says. "It really made me feel proud."

Her jewelry, which varies in price from about \$20 to several hundred dollars, is sold in gift shops and craft fairs, displayed at the Boston Children's Museum, and worn by security guards at the Mohegan Sun casino in Connecticut as part of their uniform. In the close, familiar Indian community, however, Lopez does not need to open a shop. Her telephone rings and it is someone placing an order, or else people just stop by, like fellow tribal member Lenny "Iron Tree" Pocknett. He kicks the snow off his boots before entering Lopez's tidy living room, where pieces of jewelry are scattered on the coffee table. Looking for a pendant for a "lady friend," Pocknett picks through a box of unfinished pieces and asks Lopez to model a pendant on several different lengths of silver chain. Before leaving with his purchase, he says, "You just feel good when you wear wampum, or when you give it to someone else. You can make that connection with the earth and the sea." ■

Paula Peters (Mashpee Wampanoag) lives on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. She is a staff writer at the Cape Cod Times and is currently editor of her tribe's newsletter, Nashounk Mittark.



Wampum Used in New Museum Design



The beauty of wampum shell is not lost on the team of architects charged with creating the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. The designers' mission – to incorporate into the structure many diverse elements of Indian culture – has taken them all over the country to visit tribal elders and many others. The resulting theme for the museum is an eclectic mosaic of American Indian style, including a display of inlaid wampum shell.

Kevin Carl, associate project architect of Jones and Jones Architecture in Seattle, Washington, says wampum shell will be integrated into a series of display benches that will

skirt the perimeter of the museum's two-level gift shop. "We envision it to be installed by working directly with tribal artisans," he says. "It's part of a cultural exchange, and a very practical, high-end design."

A band of wampum shell, two inches wide and totaling approximately 220 feet in length, will be set into hand-adzed alder, a clear hardwood that will be combined with East Coast beech to make the benches. The benches are modeled after those in a traditional long house but will be used to display gift shop items. "Johnpaul [principal architect Johnpaul Jones] made it into a functional aspect of the design," says Carl. — Paula Peters

Jim Thorpe

The Greatest Athlete

At the close of the millennium, as people began to reflect upon the achievements of the passing century, a great debate broke out in sports bars and sports radio talk shows across the country over this question: "Who was the greatest athlete of the 20th century?"

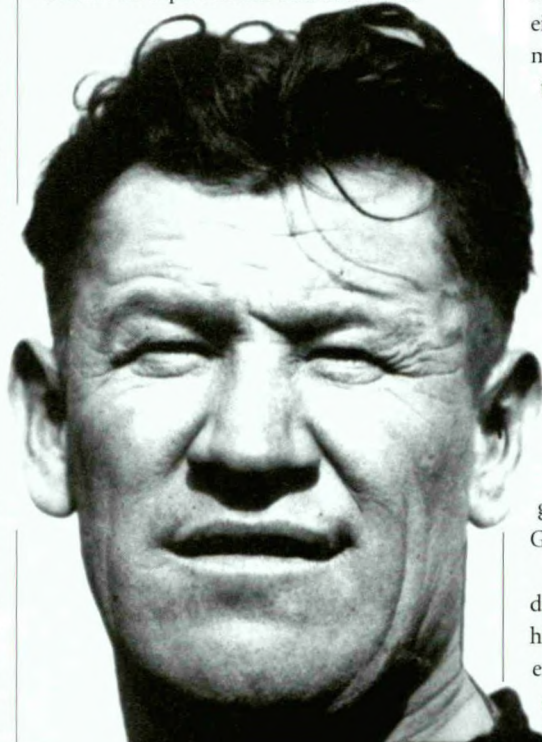
The experts were deeply divided. Bert Randolph Sugar, author of *The Sports 100: A Ranking of the Greatest Athletes of All Time*, picked Jim Brown. Bill Gallo of the *New York Daily News* awarded the honor to Michael Jordan. Bob Oates of the *Los Angeles Times* nominated Babe Ruth. Unwilling to risk its reputation on such a contentious issue, *Sports Illustrated* hedged its bet and chose three – Jordan, Ruth, and Muhammad Ali. Some say that true wisdom is to be found among the people, and *ABC Sports* sought that wisdom in a recent Internet poll. Overwhelmingly, the people chose a Sac and Fox Indian named Jim Thorpe, despite the fact that Thorpe died almost 50 years ago. What possible feats of athletic prowess have endured so long in the collective memory of the American people that they would choose a figure from long ago over any of the richer, flashier superstars of today? What could Jim Thorpe have done to triumph over "His Airness," Michael Jordan, a man who could fly over his peers in basketball? How could he best baseball's "Sultan of Swat," Babe Ruth? Therein must lie one remarkable story.

On May 28, 1888, near Prague, Oklahoma, James Francis Thorpe was born to Hiram Thorpe, who was half Irish and half Sac and Fox, and Charlotte Vieux, who was part

Potawatomi. Young Jim was enrolled in the Sac and Fox tribe and given the name *Wa-tho-huck*, or "Bright Path." Hiram Thorpe was a farmer, and Jim and his three brothers – one, Charles, was his twin – and two sisters grew up working with the farm animals. While still young, Jim became an expert hunter and horseman.

He also developed an outstanding reputation for running away from school. Although the Sac and Fox Indian Agency School was more than 20 miles from their house, by the age of six Jim and Charles were already sneaking out of school and running home to play in the woods around their father's farm. When the twins were eight years old, Charles was stricken with pneumonia and died – the first of many tragedies that Jim endured in his lifetime. After that he was sent to the Haskell Indian School, but he came home after his mother died in 1900, when he was 12 years old. Jim attended public school on and off near his house but spent most of his time working on the farm or hunting and riding. In 1904, at the age of 16, he was enrolled in the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, the elite school of its day in the Indian educational system. Although technically not a college, Carlisle had been playing against top colleges in football since 1893, and by 1899 its successful sports program was being run by the brilliant coach Glenn "Pop" Warner.

Warner first heard of Thorpe by a fluke. One day in 1907, the track and field team had left the high jump bar set at 5' 9" after practice. The entire team had failed to clear the bar that day, and with good reason: a jump that high would have broken the school record. Jim Thorpe was by then almost 19, but until that time he



The Original Triple Threat:
Olympic champion, NFL Hall-of-Famer and a pretty good major league ballplayer, Jim Thorpe must be considered the dominant figure in 20th century sport.

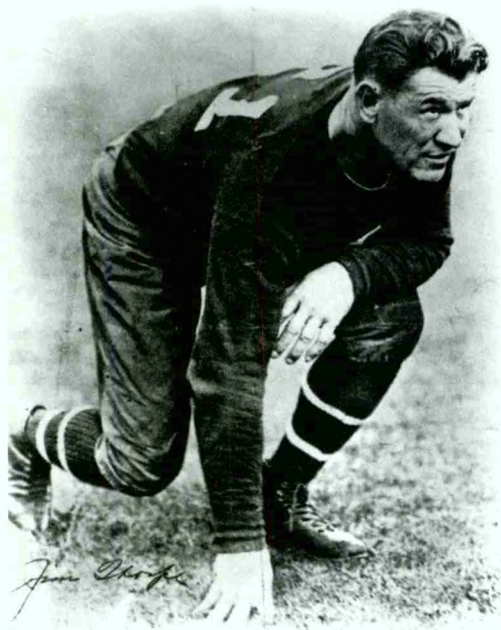
had yet to play any organized sport; he was just another student walking to his dorm from his classroom. He decided to cut through the athletic field, and when he saw the high bar still set, he casually jumped over it rather than go around it. When Warner heard the news that Thorpe had broken the record, dressed in his school uniform, Warner immediately signed him up for every sport Carlisle played.

school policy required, he opted to make money playing baseball with a minor-league team in North Carolina – a decision that would have serious consequences for him later. In 1911, when the league abruptly folded, he returned to Carlisle, where Warner was eager to have him back.

At 6' 1" and 195 pounds, Thorpe was a big man for his day, a bruising runner with

by ALEXANDER EWEN

of the 20th Century



Thorpe was too inexperienced in football to crack the starting lineup of Carlisle's great 1907 team, so mostly he just watched from the bench as Carlisle won 10 games, losing only once. In 1908 he was the starting halfback, winning third-string All-American honors and leading the Indians to a 10-2-1 record. In track and field, Thorpe was even more remarkable. At a meet against Lafayette, Thorpe and his two teammates, Hopi long-distance runner Louis Tewanima and Chippewa sprinter Gus Welch, first shocked the Lafayette welcoming committee, who could not believe the Carlisle team was so small, then stunned the Lafayette track team, thrashing them 71-41. The trio went on to defeat Harvard, Georgetown, Johns Hopkins, and Syracuse.

That year Thorpe earned varsity letters in 11 different sports, but although he loved athletics, he was unhappy at Carlisle. Rather than bale hay for a white farmer to earn room-and-board, as

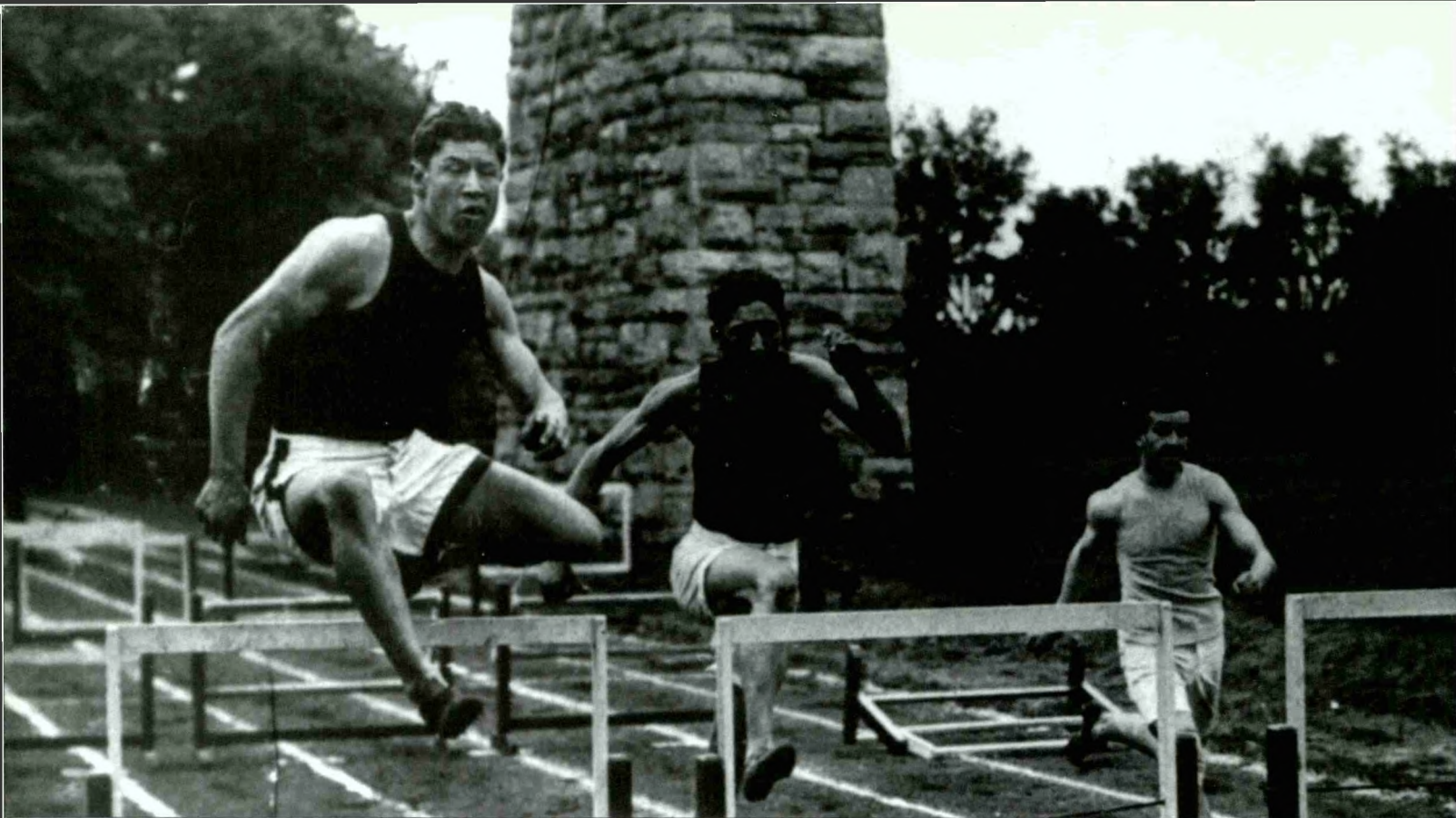
unprecedented speed. Trying to tackle Thorpe, it was said, was like trying to "tackle an oak tree that runs the hundred in 10 seconds flat." He was also a great passer and an extraordinary kicker. Well into his old age, Thorpe would put on kicking exhibitions – standing at midfield, he would boom a towering 50-yard punt through one upright, then turn around and loft another punt through the other one. In those days, there were no "defensive" and "offensive" players; they played both ways, and often were in for every down of the entire game. A devastating defensive player, Thorpe could run down the speediest back and make crushing tackles.

Thorpe opened the 1911 season with an 85-yard run for a touchdown to beat Dickinson, leading the way as Carlisle mauled its next six opponents, including mighty Penn, by the combined score of 228-10. Against Pitt, Thorpe fielded his own 50-yard punt – almost seeming to be in two places at once – running with the ball another 20 yards for a touchdown, a feat he would later accomplish twice more. Then he shocked the defending national champs, Harvard, by kicking four field goals and scoring a touchdown to win 18-15, leading the stunned Harvard coach, Percy Haughton, to exclaim that he had finally seen "the theoretical super player in flesh and blood." Although the Indians then lost to Syracuse by one point, they rebounded to beat Johns Hopkins and Brown and ended the year winning 11 games and losing only one, scoring 298 points and conceding only 49.

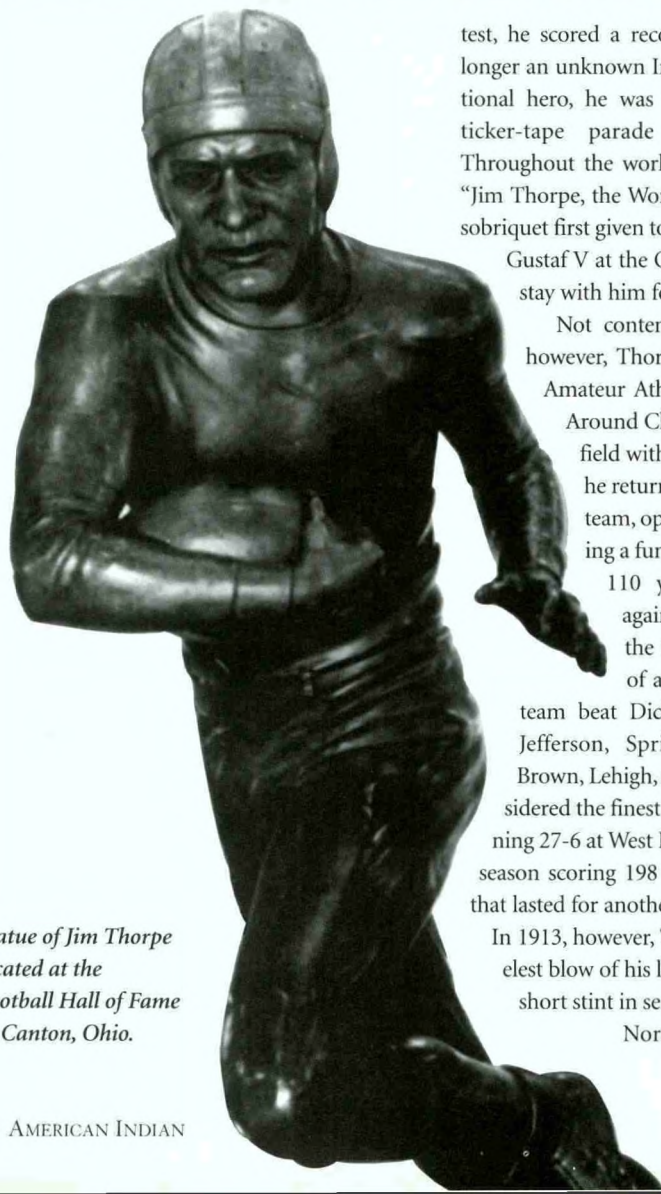
In 1912 Thorpe joined the U.S. Olympic team and went to Stockholm where he became the first Olympic athlete ever to win both the pentathlon and the decathlon. His athletic prowess caused the 1912 Games to become known as the "Olympics of Jim Thorpe." He won four of the five pentathlon events outright, tripling the score of the runner-up. In the decathlon, considered the ultimate Olympic



Football's popularity, thanks largely to the legendary exploits of Jim Thorpe, led team owners in 1920 to organize the American Professional Football Association, soon renamed the National Football League. Thorpe was appointed its first president. Truly, it was Thorpe who ushered in the era of modern football.



Photos courtesy of Cumberland County Historical Society



Statue of Jim Thorpe located at the Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio.

test, he scored a record 8,412.955 points. No longer an unknown Indian boy but an international hero, he was welcomed home with a ticker-tape parade in New York City. Throughout the world he was now known as "Jim Thorpe, the World's Greatest Athlete," the sobriquet first given to him by the Swedish King Gustaf V at the Olympics. This title would stay with him for the rest of his life.

Not content to rest on his laurels, however, Thorpe proceeded to win the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU)'s All-Around Championship in track and field with a record score. In the fall he returned to the Carlisle football team, opening the year by recovering a fumbled snap and running it 110 yards for a touchdown against Dickinson and leading the team to within one game of an undefeated season. The team beat Dickinson, Washington and Jefferson, Springfield, Syracuse, Pitt, Brown, Lehigh, and even Army, then considered the finest team in the country, winning 27-6 at West Point. Thorpe finished the season scoring 198 points, a collegiate mark that lasted for another 76 years.

In 1913, however, Thorpe was dealt the cruelest blow of his life. When it learned of his short stint in semiprofessional baseball in North Carolina, the AAU

stripped him of his Olympic gold medals. The decision created a furor that bitterly divided the sports world; many felt the AAU was making Thorpe a scapegoat for all the white athletes who had previously gone unpunished. Thorpe did not have a lawyer, relying on Warner to counsel him, and he did not know that the AAU had violated its own bylaws in order to punish him, since the allotted time for challenging his Olympic triumphs had long since elapsed. He never forgave the sports establishment for the loss of his medals. In 1982, the International Olympic Committee posthumously restored the gold medals he had won in 1912.

That summer Thorpe began to play baseball with the New York Giants, though his six-year career in the major leagues would be modest. He clashed with John McGraw, the imperious Giants manager, who gave Thorpe the tag that "he could not hit a curveball." According to John "Chief" Meyers, a Cahuilla Indian and Thorpe's teammate on the Giants, it was not so much that Thorpe couldn't hit a curveball but that Thorpe couldn't stand McGraw's racist diatribes and dictatorial manner. When Thorpe was finally traded to Boston halfway through the 1919 season, he proved his point by breaking out and hitting .327, a number that would have won him the batting title had he accumulated enough at-bats.

Long before Bo Jackson and Deion Sanders made headlines for playing professional baseball



Photo courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

and football at the same time, Thorpe had beat them to it. In 1915 he joined the Canton Bulldogs, drawn by the handsome sum of \$250 a game. On the football field he had no equal, receiving top billing over the team itself and drawing thousands to watch a legend play ball. In 1916 Thorpe starred on a defense so tenacious, it was not scored upon the entire year, leading the Bulldogs to an undefeated season and the championship. The next year he again led the Bulldogs to the championship, but he suffered another personal tragedy when his young son died of pneumonia. In 1919 Thorpe led the Bulldogs yet again to an undefeated season and another championship.

Football's growing popularity, thanks largely to Jim Thorpe himself, led team owners in 1920 to organize the American Professional Football Association, soon renamed the National Football League, and Thorpe was appointed its first president. Today, in the lobby of the NFL Hall of Fame, in Canton, Ohio, a life-size bronze statue of Thorpe greets visitors, and the award given every year to the league's most valuable player is the Jim Thorpe Trophy. Truly, it was Thorpe who ushered in the era of modern football.

Thorpe continued to play football until he was 41, and after his retirement from sports, his life was pleasant and devoted to hard work. He made a living in construction, as a bit player in Hollywood, and, in his later years, on



the lecture circuit. His fame endures.

When Jim Thorpe died on March 28, 1953, at his home in Lomita, California, the entire world mourned. "The World's Greatest Athlete" had died, and since that time, there has never been his equal. ■

Alexander Ewen (Purepecha) is the co-author of the forthcoming Encyclopedia of American Indians in the 20th Century (Facts on File).

Above: Thorpe (wearing the victor's laurel) at the 1912 Olympics, where he won both the pentathlon and the decathlon. Also pictured is Sweden's King Gustaf V, who first dubbed him "The World's Greatest Athlete."

Coyote's Place

By SHAWN TERMIN & JOHANNA GORELICK



Hi, everyone, and welcome back to Coyote's Place. Winter is melting away and spring is just around the corner. This spring Coyote is taking a trip to visit friends in the Southwest. These friends call themselves Diné. They are also known as Navajo. They live on the largest reservation in the United States. It covers parts of three states – Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico.



On the reservation, many families raise sheep. Sheep are important to Diné. They are used for food and for wool. During the winter, the sheep grow a thick covering of wool to keep them warm. In the spring, the sheep's wool is cut off in a process called shearing.

Shearing does not hurt the sheep. It is like getting a haircut.

The wool that has been shaved off is saved. This wool is then cleaned with special tools called cards. Cards are usually made of wood and have sharp, metal pins on them. They look like combs used on cats and dogs. After the wool is cleaned, it is spun into yarn with a spindle. The spindle looks like a funny-shaped spinning top. The yarn is then dyed many different colors.

Once the yarn is ready, it can be woven on a loom to make a blanket or rug.

There is no Navajo word for loom. Diné believe that weaving is a gift to them.

Over 100 years ago, the woven blankets were used as clothing. Today, most weavings are made to sell. It takes a long time to weave a rug. Often it takes many months! Luckily, everyone in a weaver's family helps with the shearing, carding, spinning, and dyeing. It is a family business.

Meet my friend, **Barney McCabe** and his grandmother, Dolores. Dolores McCabe has been weaving since she was a young girl. She loves to share the Navajo weaving tradition with children. Barney and his grandmother visited the National Museum of the American Indian to demonstrate Navajo weaving. At the museum, Barney made her loom. Navajo looms are very large. In the past, looms were built outdoors between two trees. Today, most people weave indoors.

On the loom, spun wool is wound from the bottom to the top. Weavers lace a strand of wool in and out of the up-and-down threads on the loom. The weaver decides the size of the rug and how it will look. Navajo weavers have always experimented with new materials, colors, and designs. They often design their rugs as they weave and do not follow a drawn pattern. After many months, wool that was once a warm coat for sheep has been transformed into a beautiful object – a Navajo rug.



Photo by Katherine Fogden



Photo by David Heald

This blanket was woven a long time ago. It is called a *beeldléi*, which means blanket in the Diné language.

Letter Scramble

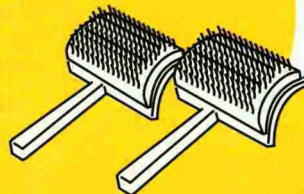
Put these letters together. See if you can match the word with the appropriate figure:



pehes



molo



sradc



npedisl



This beautiful horse head cover was used by a Teton Sioux chief to lead a Fourth of July parade in 1904 at Pine Ridge, S.D.

Lakota Horses Get the Royal Treatment

By EMIL HER MANY HORSES

The Fourth of July used to be a good time," Grace Pourier, my grandmother, told me. She was born in 1907 on the Pine Ridge Reservation and raised on the Horse Head Ranch in Manderson, S.D. When the Lakota people were placed on the reservation in the late 1800s, practicing traditional customs was banned. The Fourth of July celebrations became a vehicle to incorporate the dances, "giveaways," and other Lakota traditions while seeming to celebrate the American Independence Day. Grace remembered how her extended family and community members gathered to celebrate the Fourth of July with traditional dances, parades, giveaways, and feasts. Among the Lakota people, these Fourth of July celebrations became important occasions for expressing generosity and honor.

Dances were considered very special events, and it was a great honor to be chosen for the dance committee. The family of the chosen person would have a giveaway, which consisted of giving away money, horses, clothing, blankets, and many other material objects, in honor of the committee member. One custom my grandmother told me about was the "penny song," also known as the "giveaway song." The

person selected to be on the dance committee was given a red penny to begin raising money for next year's celebration. Before the giveaway was held, a song using the person's Lakota name was sung – thus the song was known as a "penny song."

When my grandmother was a little girl, horses still played an important role in the lives of the Oglala Lakota people. Beautiful beaded items, such as horse head covers, saddle blankets and saddlebags, were used to decorate a favorite horse on a special occasion, such as the Fourth of July parade. Horses were a favorite prize in traditional giveaways. My grandmother said about her grandparents, "Grandpa Pourier would have been a rich man, but Grandma Pourier kept giving the horses away." The horse or horses to be given away were brought to the dance arbor and displayed to the people there, while men on horseback waited outside. Then the horses were taken outside the arbor, given a slap on the rump, and set free. The men on horseback were free to catch the horses, and anyone skillful and lucky enough to catch them became their proud owner. Lakota giveaways continue today, but it is a rare occasion when horses are given away as they were in my grandmother's time.

Grace Pourier later wished that her grandmother had made her pay more attention to

the traditional events surrounding her; at the time, she was just a kid interested in having fun. But there are other ways of sharing the experience of that time and place. In the collection of the National Museum of the American Indian is an excellent example of a beautiful, elaborately beaded horse head cover, used at a Fourth of July parade and later collected by J. W. Good. The cover is decorated with geometric designs and beaded with a lazy-stitch technique. The documentation stated that this piece was "used by chief of Teton Sioux to lead parade at Pine Ridge Agency, July 4, 1904." This horse head cover is a unique piece of artistry in itself, especially because it appears that it was intended to be recycled later. The head section of the cover is actually a woman's beaded legging, and the cheek section is the beaded panel section of a pipe bag. The upper neck section of the cover is the beaded panel for a tipi bag, or "possible bag," so named because "anything possible" was stored inside. Along the lower neck section of the horse head cover is the beaded top for a moccasin. The creator of this beaded masterpiece obviously had future plans for it: fortunately for us, those plans were never carried out, and we can all enjoy this beautiful piece in the museum. ■

Emil Her Many Horses (Lakota) is an Associate Curator in NMAI's Curatorial Department.

CALENDAR of EVENTS

MAY • JUNE • JULY 2000

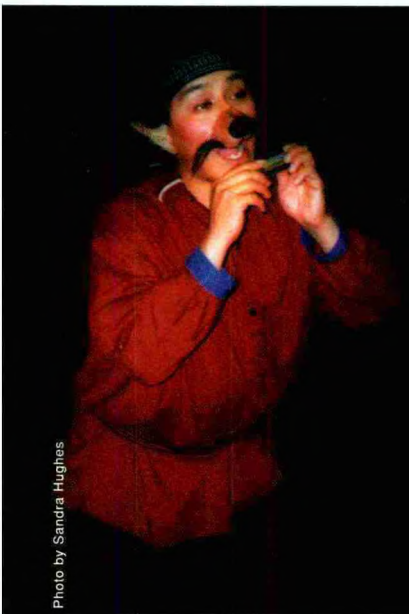


Photo by Sandra Hughes

Above and right: John Jaramillo (Tiwa) plays the role of Coyote Blue in *Coyote Tales*, a play inspired by Tiwa stories.



Photo by Stella Niro

Artist/filmmaker Shelley Niro (Mohawk) discusses her *Reservation X* installation, which is based on her feature film *Honey Moccasin*.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS MAY - JULY

MAY 20 - 21

Children's Festival

Noon - 4:30 p.m.

Museum-wide

The third annual Children's Festival features theater, dance, storytelling, hands-on workshops, videos, and more. Don't miss the fun!

Coyote Tales, a play inspired by Isleta Pueblo Tiwa stories and written by Sandra Hughes, artistic director of Gateway Performance Productions.

Stories and Games with Trudie Lamb Richmond (Schaghticoke).

Designs in Beads, a bead workshop led by Ben Geboe (Yankton Sioux).

Children's Dances, such as *Duck*, *Snake*, *Stirrup*, and *Rabbit* led by NMAI staff.

Explore Lenape History with hands-on learning activities led by NMAI staff.

Gourd Rattles will be painted in a workshop led by Fred Chapella (Hopi).

Story Corner, interactive storytelling with Matoaka Little Eagle (Tewa/Chickahominy).

JUNE 3 - 4

Photo Image Workshop

Wil Grant (Anishinabe)

11 a.m. & 2 p.m.

Education Classroom

Artist and educator Wil Grant (Anishinabe) creates fun and unique images on Polaroid photographs. All ages. Each session limited to 30 participants.

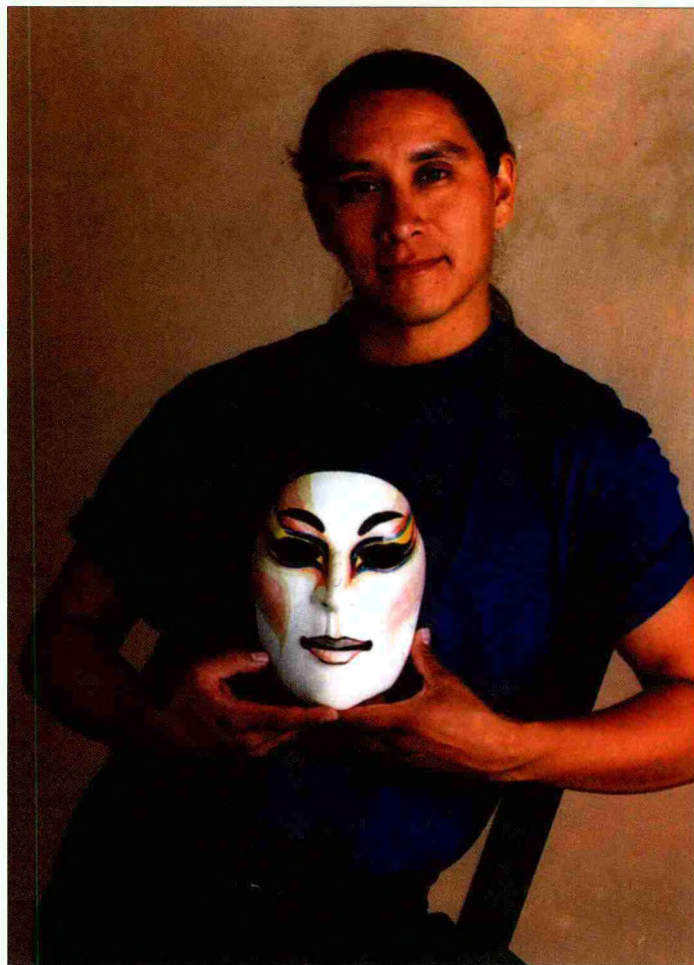


Photo by George N. Ancona

JUNE 17 - 18

Talking Circles

C. Maxx Stevens (Seminole)

11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Reservation X Gallery

A featured artist in *Reservation X*, C. Maxx Stevens (Seminole) shares insights into her installation piece titled *If These Walls Could Talk*.

JULY 16

Visions From the Four Directions

Shonto W. Begay (Navajo)

11 a.m. & 2 p.m.

Rotunda/Education Classroom
NMAI Artist Fellow Shonto W.

Begay (Navajo) leads a slide presentation and workshop in which the participants incorporate visions from their own culture into a painting project. All ages.

JULY 20 - 22

Talking Circles

Shelley Niro (Mohawk)

11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Reservation X Gallery

Artist/filmmaker Shelley Niro

(Mohawk) discusses her

Reservation X installation, which is based on her feature film *Honey Moccasin*.



Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian

MEDIA TALKS

May 6

En Pointe: The Lives and Legacies of Ballet's Native Americans

2 - 4 p.m.

Auditorium

This new documentary celebrates the lives and careers of five internationally recognized Native American ballet dancers: Yvonne Chouteau (Shawnee/Cherokee), Rosella Hightower (Choctaw), Moscelyne Larkin (Shawnee/Peoria), Marjorie Tallchief (Osage), and Maria Tallchief (Osage). The film's director, Shawnee Brittan, will introduce this world premiere. (2000, 60 min.)

July 20



Here's Looking at You/Shelley Niro (Mohawk)

6 - 8 p.m.

Auditorium

Reservation X artist and film director Shelley Niro (Mohawk) introduces two of her films. In It Starts with a Whisper (1993, 28 min.), a young Native woman explores her complex identity with the help of her "spirit aunties" and their cinematic musical celebration. In Honey Moccasin (1998, 49 min.), actress Tantoo Cardinal (Metis) stars as a ballad-singing sleuth, whose coffeehouse on the reserve is the scene of intrigue.

DAILY FILM AND VIDEO SCREENINGS

Programs start daily at 1 p.m. and are repeated on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m.

Video Viewing Room

NATIVE NETWORKS

This yearlong screening series celebrates the work of Native media organizations from throughout the Americas. Their productions are part of NMAI's Native media study collection. For more information, contact the Film and Video Center at (212) 514-3730.

May 1 - 19

EYES ON THE PACIFIC

In recognition of Asian Pacific Heritage Month, the museum celebrates Pacific Islanders in Communications (PIC), which produces works for public radio and television that reflect the perspectives of Native Hawaiians and other Native people of the region.

Hawaiian Sting (1997, 10 min.)

Produced by PIC's Screenwriting Workshop. Director: Peter D. Beyt. A Native Hawaiian takes an ironic look at non-Native life as he demonstrates "traditional" fly-swatting techniques.

Storytellers of the Pacific: Self-Determination (1996, 60 min.)

Produced by PIC and Native American Public Telecommunications. The continuing struggles of Native peoples for sovereignty are seen in five profiles of communities in the Pacific Rim – the Nisqually of the Northwest Coast, Native Hawaiians, Maori of New Zealand, Seri of the Sonoran Desert, and Aleuts of Alaska's Pribiloff Islands.

No screenings on Saturday, May 6. See Media Talks.

May 22 - July 9

EYES ON CANADA/NATIONAL FILM BOARD

The museum celebrates the National Film Board of Canada, which since the 1970s has developed special support for Aboriginal production, including workshops, funding initiatives, access to state-of-the-art studios, and active distribution of its many works.

May 22 - June 18

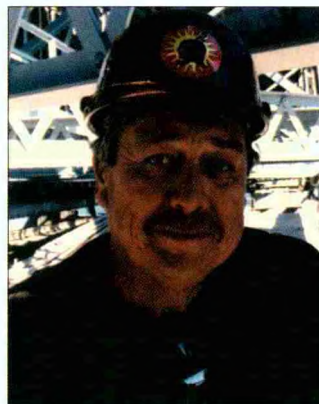
Foster Child (1987, 43 min.)

Gil Cardinal (Metis). Reared by a non-Native foster family, the filmmaker seeks his roots, uncovering not only family history but the story of how Canadian child welfare policies affected Native children of his generation.

The Gift (1999, 49 min.) Gary

Farmer (Cayuga). Features Reservation X artist Jolene Rickard. From the Iroquois peoples of upstate New York and Canada to the Maya in Chiapas, Mexico, this film explores the powerful bond that indigenous people in the Americas have with corn.

June 19 - July 9



Spudwrench: Kahnawake Man

(1997, 60 min.) Alanis Obomsawin (Abenaki). This portrait of Randy Horne, a Mohawk ironworker from Kahnawake in Quebec, explores life in his community and the role he played in defending Mohawk burial grounds at Oka.

EYES ON CANADA/ABORIGINAL TV

This series celebrates a major new development in Native media. Last fall, the world's first all-Native television network, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), was launched in Canada. APTN, which is included in Canada's basic cable service, presents 13 hours of programming daily – Native news magazines, original talk shows and cultural programs, and works from Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, NFB, and independent Aboriginal productions.

July 10 - 30

Starting Fire with Gunpowder

(1991, 57 min.) David Poisey (Inuit) and William Hansen, for the series As Long as the River Flows. Poisey presents a lively history of the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, the first Native broadcasting organization in North America, with examples of its various programs and discussion by various Inuit people of its impact.

No screenings on Thursday, July 20 at 5:30 p.m. See Media Talks.

ESPECIALLY FOR KIDS

Film and Video Programs for All Ages

Daily at 11 a.m. and Noon
Video Viewing Room

May 1 - 19

Star Lore (1984, 9 min.) Faith

Hubley. Native American sky myths from throughout the hemisphere.

We'll Still Be Dancing (1992, 3 min.) Dan Jones (Ponca).

Children of the Ponca tribe of Oklahoma practice their traditions. Shown with permission of Sesame Street.

Folklore of the Muscogee Creek (1983, 28 min.) Gary Robinson for the Muscogee Creek Nation Communication Center and KOED-TV. Tales told by Oklahoma Creek elders Susannah Factor and Woodrow Haney are illustrated by Creek artists.

Bear Dance (1988, 13 min.) James Ciletti. Young Southern Utes of Colorado participate in the annual Bear Dance each May.

May 22 - June 18

Corn Is Life (1982, 19 min.) Donald Coughlin. A look at the role of corn in Hopi life.

Goin' Home (1994, 3 min.) Sandy Osawa (Makah). A music video celebrates a Pueblo family.

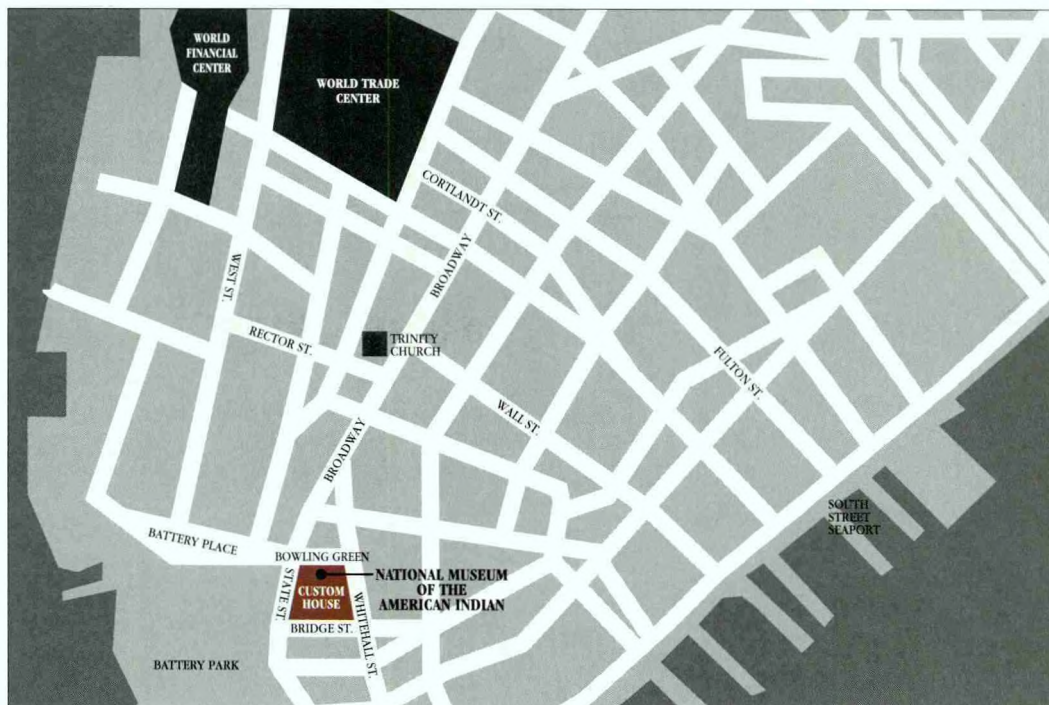
Toka (1994, 24 min.) David Wing and Cyndee Wing. Women and girls of the Tohono O'odham tribe of Arizona play an exciting game of stickball.

June 19 - July 9

Haudenosaunee: Way of the Longhouse (1982, 13 min.) Robert Stiles and John Akin. A look at Iroquois history and society is followed by a visit to Akwesasne, a Mohawk community.

Rock Art Treasures of Ancient America (1983, 25 min.) Dave Caldwell. Native Americans tell myths associated with rock art sites in Southern California.

Kaluscap and Creation (1992, 12 min.) Produced by the Indian Island School. Penobscot Indian children of Maine use animation to tell traditional stories.



July 10 - 31

Overweight with Crooked Teeth (1997, 5 min.) Shelley Niro (Mohawk). A visual essay considers Native identity and Indian stereotypes.

Music and Dance of the Senecas (1980, 11 min.) Seneca Nation of Indians with the New York State Education Department. Children learn about Seneca musical instruments and learn a social dance.

The Dancing Ducks (1994, 5 min.) Lynn Whidden. Ojibwe children act out a traditional story and a song.

The Legend of Corn (1981-83, 26 min.) An Ojibwe version of the origin of corn.

LOCATION: The NMAI Heye Center is located at One Bowling Green in lower Manhattan. Subway: 4 & 5 to Bowling Green, N & R to Whitehall Street, and 1 & 9 to South Ferry. Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day, except December 25. Thursdays to 8 p.m., made possible by grants from the Booth Ferris Foundation. Admission to the museum and all public programs is free. To become an NMAI Charter Member, call 1-800-242-NMAI (6624).

The 11th Native American Film and Video Festival will be presented by the National Museum of the American Indian at the George Gustav Heye Center on November 2 - 6, 2000. The festival features Native film, video, television, radio, and interactive media productions from North, Central, and South America.

For further information call the festival at 212-514-3737.

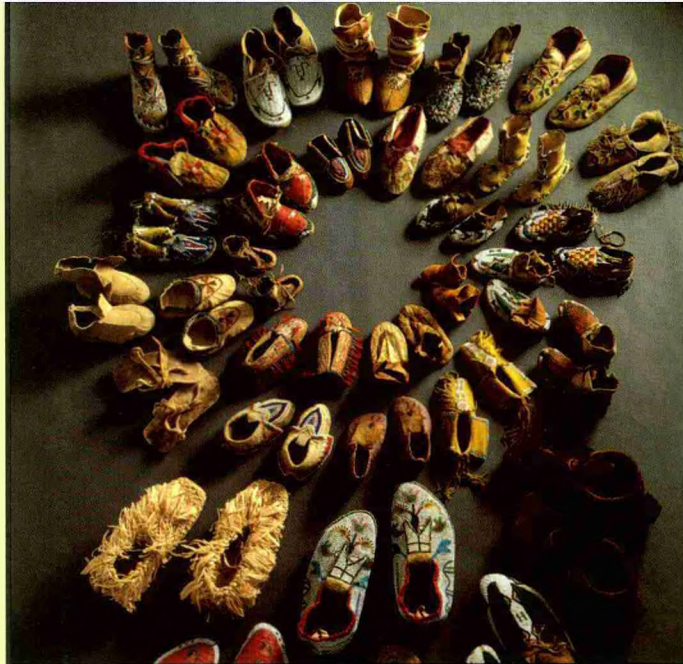
ADDRESS:

National Museum of the American Indian
Smithsonian Institution, George Gustav Heye Center
One Bowling Green, New York, NY 10004

MUSEUM SHOPS: For special-occasion shopping, jewelry by Native artists, books, and children's gifts are available in the museum shops located on the gallery and ground floor. Open daily 10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. For information, call 212-514-3767.

WEB SITE: Have you visited the NMAI Web site? <http://www.si.edu/nmai>

The George Gustav Heye Center is located at One Bowling Green, New York, N.Y., and is open daily, except December 25, from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m., and, through the generosity of the Booth Ferris Foundation, Thursdays until 8 p.m. Admission is free. All programs are subject to change. For membership information, call (800) 242-NMAI. For program updates, call (212) 514-3888. Produced by NMAI, One Bowling Green, New York, N.Y. Russ Tall Chief, Calendar Editor.



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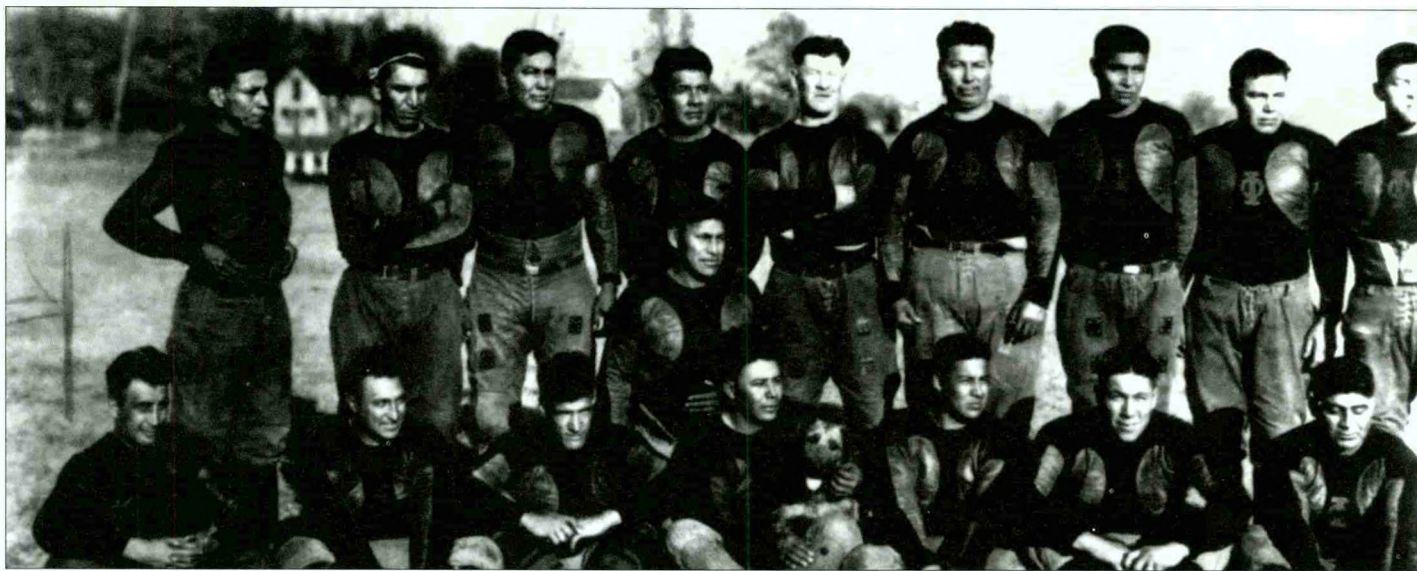


Photo courtesy of NFL Properties

*Back row: Asa Walker, Haskell Hill, Buck Jones, Elmer Busch, Jim Thorpe, Ted St. Germaine, Xavier Downwind, Baptist Thunder, Pete Calac
Middle row: Nick Lassa. Front row: Pearl Clark, Leon Boutwell, Joe Guyon, Stillwell Sanooke, Bill Winneshick, and Bemus Pierce.*

The Oorang Indians

Jim Thorpe and the NFL's All-Indian Team

By ALEXANDER EWEN

In 1922, legendary athlete Jim Thorpe left his position as head coach of the Cleveland Tigers to put together his own football team. His friend and hunting companion, Walter Lingo, had offered to put up the money for a franchise if Thorpe would recruit and coach a squad of Indian athletes. At that time American Indians, such as Thorpe (Sac and Fox) in football, "Chief" Charles Albert Bender (Chippewa) in baseball, and marathon runner Tom Longboat (Onondaga), were some of their sports' most successful and popular athletes. The National Football League, just recently formed, was looking for new franchises, and an all-Indian team would bring publicity to the fledgling league. Lingo hoped the team would promote his new breed of hunting dog, the Oorang Airedale.

Finding these Indian athletes was not easy. Other franchises enjoyed a steady stream of recruits from the college football powerhouses of the day, but few Indians attended college. The Carlisle Indian Industrial School, a boarding school for Indian students, had developed outstanding Indian players for more than 20 years, but the school closed in 1918. Thorpe, a Carlisle alumnus himself, had to recruit among his classmates from the glory

days of more than 10 years before.

Late in the summer of 1922, Thorpe managed to cobble together a group of football veterans, most of whom were well past their prime; he was 34 himself. The oldest was Bemus Pierce, 49, a Seneca and all-American guard at Carlisle. A 37-year-old Chippewa, Ted St. Germaine, was the team's center. The rest of the line was stacked with Chippewas: Xavier Downwind at right tackle, Lone Wolf at right guard, and Baptist Thunder at left tackle. Elmer Busch, the left guard, was a Pomo. Two Cherokees, Nick Lassa at left end and Stillwell Sanooke at right end, rounded out the front seven. In a day when football players normally played both offense and defense throughout the entire game, the only backups were Pierce, Iroquois Asa Walker, and a Sioux, Joe Little Twig.

Thorpe was counting on his outstanding backfield, which featured Attache, an Apache, and Pete Calac, a Mission Indian, as the halfbacks, and Joe Guyon, a Chippewa from the White Earth Reservation, as the quarterback. However, Guyon suffered an early injury and the Indians started the season slowly, losing the first three games. Thorpe was forced to put on his old uniform and join the game. Thanks to Thorpe and Calac, the Indians managed to win four of the next eight games and finish the season with a respectable 4-7 record. The team

drew the league's biggest crowds and played the most games in the NFL that year. Halftime shows resembled a powwow, with the Indian players donning Native dress and dancing for the crowd. The Oorang Indians were the most popular team in the young NFL.

Thorpe and Lingo had high hopes for the 1923 season, but it was soon clear that the previous season had taken its toll. Most of the line had retired, and although Calac stayed, other good young players, such as Guyon and Little Twig, were picked up by other teams. The team had been booked to play a league-high 12 games, and Thorpe had to scramble to put the team together. The Indians lost their first 10 games. Thorpe managed to get Guyon back, and together Thorpe, Guyon and Calac managed to win the last two games to end the dismal season on a winning note.

Although the team was still a popular success, Thorpe and Lingo decided to disband rather than try to form a team for the 1924 season. Without the Carlisle School as a source, the flow of great Indian athletes into professional sports was shut off. The demise of the Oorang Indians marked the end of a remarkable era in the early 20th century, when Indian athletes were among the finest and most popular figures of their day, so much so that an aging, all-Indian team could compete successfully in the NFL. ■



They Might Be Worth Something Someday

Pick up some coins, shuffle them in your hand, and hear the sound of a story

by MARK TRAHANT

When I was a child, an elderly relative came to visit. She had just come from Nevada and casually shared a prize with me and my sister. It was a stack of half dollars. A few were old, Ben Franklin editions; the rest were the brand-new, shiny Kennedys. My grandmother watched us admire the silver. Then she swooped in with common sense. "You know," she said, "you two will lose this money. Let me save this treasure until you're bigger; one day these coins might be worth something." My grandmother died last year, half a season before her 90th birthday. After her funeral, I asked relatives if they had found any coins. Yes, I was told, my grandmother left an envelope in her safe deposit box with our names on it. She left more than mere coins; she left us her stories. Each coin is a reminder of when she scooped up a childish notion and saved it for another time.

Now I hear stories all the time. I pick up the stack of coins and shuffle them back and forth between my fingers.

Irene Clark Trahant, my grandmother, often would sit in her living room and tell me about the twentieth century – her century. She was born in 1911 on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Montana. Her father, Walter Clark, was an Assiniboiné tribal leader responsible for making certain that the U.S. government lived up to its treaty obligations. I remember her showing me a picture of her father at work: he was dressed in a dapper three-piece suit, standing on the steps of the U.S. Capitol, where he had gone to lobby.

A few years ago, I took my grandmother to Washington, D.C., and to the White House Treaty Room, where her father once signed documents. On that trip, we talked about what her



father had taught her about leadership. She said people would often visit her house and bring their problems, day or night. Her parents would feed them, listen, and try to help.

Another coin drops, and I hear my grandmother talking about her train ride from Montana to Haskell Indian School in Lawrence, Kans. Home was hard work – always cooking or cleaning – and school was seen as a relief, almost a lark. One of her favorite stories was about the packages she and her sister would get from home. They would open a box and find fresh jam, dried meat, and sometimes a few dollars. My grandmother admitted to blowing the whole wad the week it arrived. She'd take friends out to dinner; she'd snack on the goodies until they were gone. Her sister, by contrast, would dole out the contents carefully, taking a bite, then wrapping and saving each treat for as long as possible. Before the next package would arrive,

my grandmother would ask her sister for some of her treats or even a loan.

I loved hearing her tell this story because it sounded so unlike the person I knew. I grew up seeing her frugal nature. When we ate in a restaurant, she'd never finish the meal, always wrapping up leftovers for later. She'd also pack up the crackers and bread, joking, "I have a lot of grandchildren."

When my grandparents were married, during the Depression, they could not afford a home of their own. "Few of the men held jobs – they just weren't being offered to them," my grandmother said. She had an offer to work in Oklahoma but was worried that my grandfather wouldn't find work, too, so they stayed with his family in southern Idaho.

My grandfather finally found a job with the Census Bureau. "It paid a dollar a day," she said. "We

found an old railroad boxcar and moved there. We lived on beans and potatoes for months and months – but at least we had our own home and that was better than living with his mother."

I shuffle the coins again, back and forth, with a rhythm making the sounds of a dancer. I am fortunate because I hear so many stories; my memories are vivid. Even more so because my two young sons know some of these stories, too.

I pass my coins to them. I tell a few stories, let them admire the silver – and then swoop in with common sense. "Let me save these for you," I say. "They might be worth something someday."

We all have coins, or other small items, that remind us of stories that tell us who we are and where we have come from. Pick up some coins. Shuffle them. Hear a story. ■

Mark Trahant (Shoshone-Bannock) is a columnist at the Seattle Times.

Illustration by Travis Shilling

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