

NATIONAL MUSEUM of the

American Indian

Spring 2002

Celebrating Native Traditions & Communities

Secret Warriors

Native American code talkers finally receive
the recognition they so richly deserve



Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian



Adam Beach (far right) and Roger Willie (second from right) in a scene from MGM's WINDTALKERS

MGM Pictures Salutes

The Navajo Heroes of World War II



Adam Beach as code talker Pvt. Yahzee

In 1942, 29 Navajo Marines completed boot camp at the Marine Recruit Depot in San Diego, California. They were then sent to Camp Elliot (modern day Marine Air Corps Station Miramar) where they developed the code based on the Navajo language that was used for secure military communication in the Pacific arena of World War II. Eventually around 400 Navajo men were trained in the code's use and served as code talkers, relaying messages through the airwaves with incredible speed and accuracy. At Iwo Jima alone, the code talkers transmitted over 800 error-free messages in a 48-hour period. The Japanese were never able to decipher the code, and it is largely credited as a major factor in helping the United States to victory.

Roger Willie as code talker Pvt. Whitehorse



Because of its success and its possible use in future combat, the code talkers were sworn to secrecy about their involvement in the war and the code wasn't declassified until 1968. As a result, the code talkers' accomplishments went largely unheralded. Last summer, however, the 29 Marine code talkers who developed the code were awarded with the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor Congress can bestow on a citizen of the United States. The rest of the code talkers who served in the war were awarded the Congressional Silver Medal in November 2001 – an award that hadn't been given in over 75 years.

MGM Pictures is proud to tell the heroic story of the Navajo Marine code talkers in John Woo's *Windtalkers*, starring Nicolas Cage, Adam Beach, Brian Van Holt, Roger Willie and Christian Slater, written by John Rice & Joe Batteer, opening in theaters this summer. The story of the code talkers is an indispensable part of our United States history.

It's a story of heroism and incredible courage, and it's time that story is told.

Nicolas Cage (right) and Adam Beach in a scene from MGM's WINDTALKERS



A group of the original Navajo code talkers at the Congressional Gold Medal ceremony in Washington, D.C.





On the Cover: Secret Warriors

15 The contributions of lesser-known code talkers in World Wars I and II have only recently been acknowledged. Soldiers from tribes like the Choctaw, Cheyenne, Comanche, Cherokee, Osage, and Yankton Sioux transmitted their languages for field communications. Martha Davidson writes about the history of code talkers from tribes like the Hopi, Sauk and Fox, Chippewa, Choctaw, Creek, Kiowa, Menominee, Oneida, Pawnee, Lakota, Dakota, and Winnebago who also used their languages to secure telecommunications.



About the cover: Three of the first 29 Navajo code talkers who landed with the Marines on the beaches of Saipan. (l-r) Cpl. Oscar B. Ilthma, Pvt. First Class Jack Nez, and Pvt. First Class Carl N. Gorman. Photo courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration/J.L. Burns, USMC, photographer. Negative #127-MN-82619.



21 More Than a Movie

Directed by John Woo, *Windtalkers* is a milestone in the Navajo code talkers' history in World War II and a significant moment for Native actors Roger Willie (Navajo) and Adam Beach (Saulteaux). President George W. Bush awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to the Navajo code talkers and the families of those now deceased in Washington, D.C. on July 26, 2001. Jason Ryle (Anishinabe) tells us what it all means to newcomer Roger Willie.

10 Native American Olympians

The 2002 Winter Olympics may have been one of the most successful games for Native peoples since 1912. Curler Ken Trainberg (Dene/Cree) won a silver medal for Canada and Thereon Fleury (Metis) won a gold medal in hockey. Naomi Lang (Karuk) finished 11th in the ice-dancing competition with partner Peter Tchernyshev. Sports events like the North American Indigenous Games in Winnipeg, Manitoba this summer and sports organizations like the

Indigenous People's Sports Council and the Native American Sports Council work to create opportunities for athletes to succeed.

Somewhere out there is the next Jim Thorpe, writes Miles Morrisseau (Cree/Saulteaux).

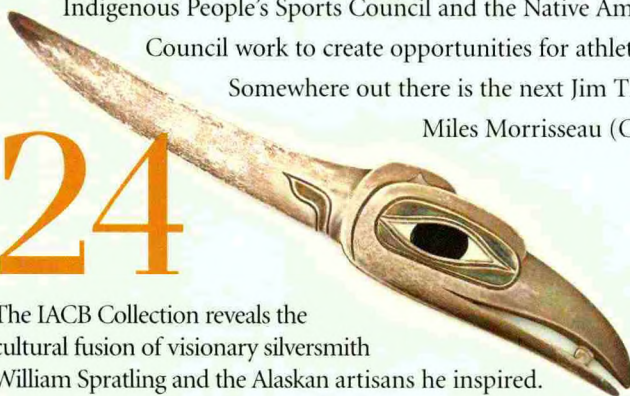


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The IACB Collection reveals the cultural fusion of visionary silversmith William Spratling and the Alaskan artisans he inspired.



Correction: In the fall issue of *American Indian*, we mistakenly reported that Raquel Chapa discovered and photographed the gray pipestone bearing Gray Wolf's signature. Natalie Russo was responsible for discovering the signature and was the photographer of the pipe. We regret this error.

NATIONAL MUSEUM of the American Indian

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Celebrating Native Traditions & Communities



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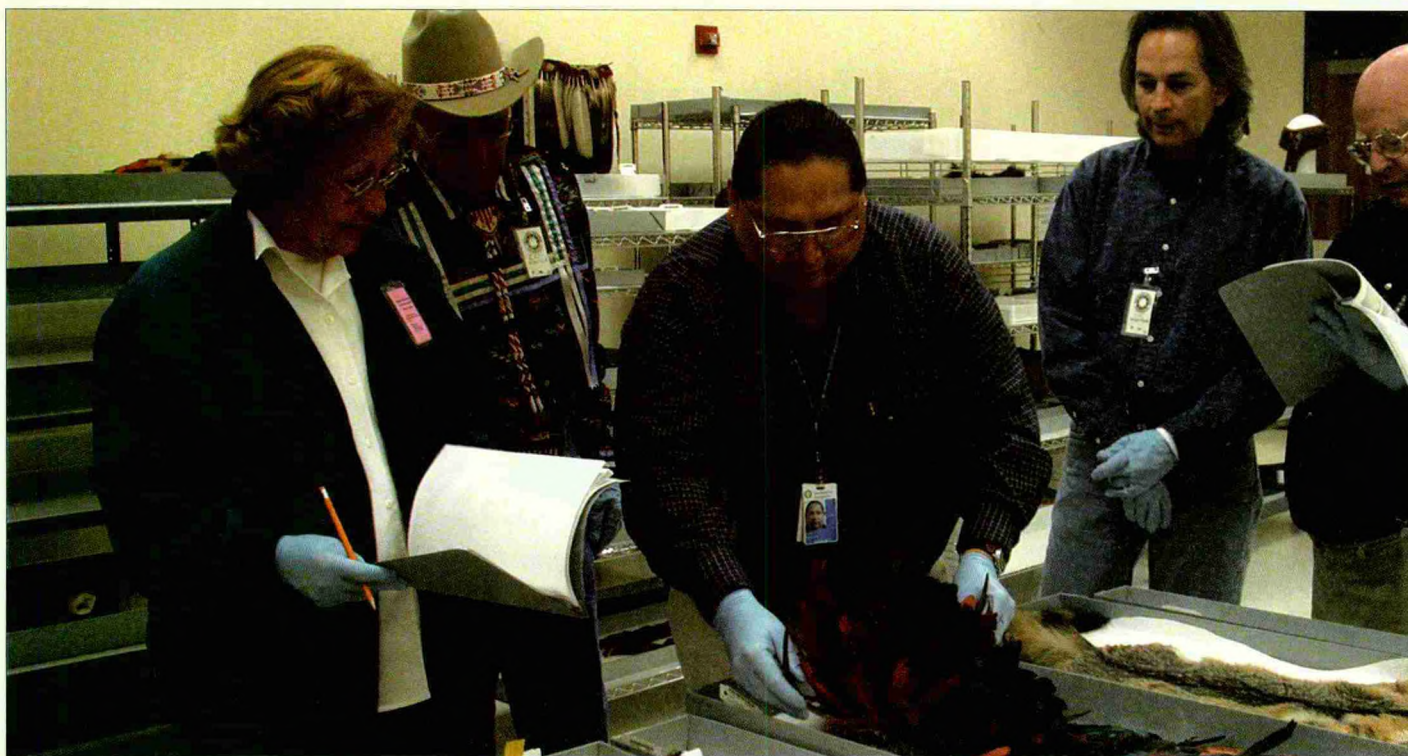


Photo by Nancy Kmetz Oswald

Terry Snowball (Winnebago/Potawatomi), NMAI museum specialist (center), shows Comanche delegates a Comanche war dance bustle. (l-r) Ava Doty, tribal representative, Albert Clark, tribal representative, Jimmy Arterberry, Office of Environmental Programs director, and W. Clark.

Repatriation Program a Matter of Mutual Trust and Respect

by Stephanie Makseyn-Kelly

It took almost two years for Jimmy Arterberry, the Comanche tribe, and the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) to work out the details and complete preparations for a repatriation consultation visit. Four representatives of the Comanche tribe of Oklahoma – Jimmy and three elders – visited the NMAI on January 7, 8, and 9, 2002. They spent the first two days at the Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, Md., reviewing 200 objects they had chosen for spiritual significance from the inventory of general Comanche collections. On the third day they visited the museum's Research Branch in the Bronx, New York City, to view sensitive objects.

The Comanche delegation intently viewed examples of their material culture. The Comanche delegates instructed us in traditional methods of caring for certain objects, provided us with a list of the kinds of artifacts they considered potential candidates for repatriation, and identified other items. Some of their instructions concerned cultural aspects of handling certain objects, such as spears, shields, and

other weapons made and used in the 19th century by Comanche warrior societies. The Comanche delegation requested that women not see or touch certain articles that had been made by men for use in men's societies. The handling and treatment of those items in the museum would need to be carried out by men whenever possible. We agreed to take care of the objects according to their instructions and gave them all the information they needed to present to their elders and tribal leaders.

I first met Jimmy Arterberry, repatriation officer for the Comanche tribe, in 2000 in Wagoner, Okla., at a repatriation conference organized by the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History's Repatriation Review Committee. I stood before an assembly of tribal and museum representatives as a Smithsonian repatriator for the umpteenth time, having spent eight years in the National Museum of Natural History's Repatriation Office. After less than one year at the NMAI, this was the first time I had represented the NMAI in public.

I saw old friends and new friends in the assembly at Wagoner, so I didn't need to introduce myself to everybody. I did need to inform them of my new role as deputy manager of the

NMAI's Repatriation Program. One important point that I wanted to stress is that consultation is the cornerstone of our repatriation policy.

Jimmy Arterberry came over to me after a picnic lunch at the lakeside resort that hosted the conference in Wagoner, and we talked about issues specific to his tribe and their needs. We kept in touch over the next two years, while he and the Comanche elders and cultural preservation team worked on preparing for their trip to Washington and New York City.

This partnership between the NMAI and the Comanche delegation was an extraordinary collaboration and a friendly way to achieve a common purpose. It begins before our visitors arrive and continues after they leave – and often continues beyond the deaccession and return of the objects they request for repatriation. At some point in this process, we find that a relationship of mutual trust, respect, and fellowship has developed, and consultation after repatriation has the character of friendly collaboration while working together for a common purpose. ■

Stephanie Makseyn-Kelly is the NMAI's repatriation program specialist.



NMAI Hosts Equinox Celebration

The first day of spring is the perfect time to celebrate the building of the National Mall Museum, asserts Rick West, director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI).

In a recent speech at a Spring Equinox Celebration in Washington, D.C., West explained that to many Native people, the equinox represents both renewal and their close connection to the earth – values that the new Mall Museum will also accent.

"As in many cultures, the change of seasons has a special meaning to Native peoples. Tonight we celebrate the spring equinox in a Native way," West told the crowd of 500 gathered at the Smithsonian Castle on March 20. The event, the first of four functions promoting the Mall Museum, featured Native art, dance, and music from across the hemisphere. Guests included key museum supporters and prominent representatives of Native communities.

Paying traditional homage to the spring-related themes of renewal and rebirth, five teenage dancers from the Hopi Sinom Club of Keams Canyon, Ariz., presented the Pahlkmana (or "liquid-drinking maiden") dance, a Hopi spring observance that honors the reproduction of life and expresses hope for

a successful corn crop. Ethnobotanist Donna House (Navajo/Oneida) spoke about the museum's planned Native landscape and its origins.

The celebration showcased the resilience and vibrancy of contemporary Native culture. A myriad of Native artists performed during the equinox festivities, including Hawaiian singer Nalani Olds, the Ecuadorean band Inkay, singer Sadie Buck (Seneca), and Native Roots, a lively Native reggae band from Albuquerque, N.M. "Each of these presentations is intended to provide you with an introduction to our coming National Mall Museum and the range of Native cultures – from the Arctic Circle to Tierra del Fuego – that millions of visitors will experience here," West remarked in his speech.

The spring soirée offered a special glimpse into the format of the Mall Museum, which will open in 2004. A small exhibition represented the



"As in many cultures, the change of seasons has a special meaning to Native peoples. Tonight we celebrate the spring equinox in a Native way."

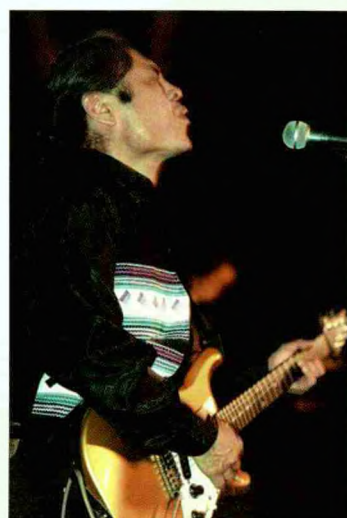
– Rick West

building and Native peoples are all about," said Duane Blue Spruce (Laguna Pueblo), the NMAI's facilities planner. "We also wanted to say, 'Hey, this thing is soon to be completed – get ready, everyone.'"

– Carl Warren



(Clockwise from above) Museum construction in progress; dancers Chelsea Laban, Anthony Puhuyesva, and Yanaka Pewo (Hopi) show a sample of the cultural performances that visitors to the new museum will be able to view; Sadie Buck (Seneca) is from the Six Nations Grand River Territory in Ontario and a member of the Six Nations Women Singers. William "Bluehouse" Johnson (Isleta/Dine) is a member of the band Native Roots from Albuquerque, N.M., which is dedicated to the sound and spirit of both Native American and reggae music. Roger Mase, Mark Talaswaima, Jr., and Raymond Namoki (Hopi) are singers from the Hopi Sinom Club of Keams Canyon, Ariz.



Photos by Katherine Fogden

\$750,000 Grant from Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has generously donated a \$750,000 grant to the National Museum of the American Indian's George Gustav Heye Center in New York City. Approved on January 25, 2002, by the Special Committee of the Trustees of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the grant was bestowed to ease the financial burden incurred by the GGHC as a result of the events of September 11.

Located only a few blocks from Ground Zero, the GGHC collections and building escaped physical damage. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant will be used to

rebuild attendance numbers, develop partnerships with other museums and organizations in the area, and bolster the museum's public and educational programs.

"With this extremely generous support from the Mellon Foundation, the National Museum of the American Indian's George Gustav Heye Center will now be able to reinvigorate the programs that bring children and families to the museum," says W. Richard West (Southern Cheyenne), director of the NMAI. "For this support, we are very touched and appreciative as we strive to overcome the events of September 11." — Jason Ryle



Photo by Katherine Fogden

NEW WELCOME CENTER FACADE
The new facade on the Welcome Center has helped attract more than 900 visitors each month.

Kuna Leaders Learn From Visit to CRC



Photo by Alex Benitez

Above: Kuna leaders Anelio Merry Lopez and Maximiliano Ferrer learn about NMAI object storage methods with CRC collections staff.

Right: NMAI conservator Susan Heald with Anelio, Maximiliano, and Alex Benitez of the NMAI's community services department discuss the conservation of Kuna molas housed at the CRC.



Photo by Jen Bosworth

The National Museum of the American Indian welcomed Kuna leaders Maximiliano Ferrer and Anelio Merry Lopez as part of its 10-day Visiting Professional Program, held in December 2001 at the Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, Md. "The Visiting Professional Program offers hands-on, practical experience for individuals working in tribal museums, cultural centers, and archives," says Niki Sandoval (Chumash), assistant director of community services.

Ferrer, general secretary of the General Congress of Kuna Culture, and Lopez, executive director of the Koskun Kalu Research Institute, arrived from the Kuna Yala district of Panama to gain knowledge in developing and establishing a Kuna community museum and research institute on the island of Uer-Uerdup. "The NMAI has enjoyed a long-standing collaborative relationship with the Kuna of Panama," Sandoval says. "This visit – a natural

continuation of this partnership – is in direct support of their community's effort to develop their own museum and cultural center."

Alexander Villa Benitez, former training program specialist at the CRC, explains that "the Kuna island museum project, through its programs, is meant to preserve and disseminate Kuna history." He adds that "it will also exhibit the objects that were used and are still used by Kuna people to residents within Kuna Yala and to the thousands of tourists who visit the islands every year."

The Kuna visit demonstrated the potential of the Visiting Professional Program in assisting indigenous communities across the hemisphere. According to Benitez, "Its success, as measured in the positive response of the program participants, also demonstrates the importance of the NMAI's commitment to Latin American indigenous peoples."

— Jason Ryle



Great Masters of Mexican



Centerpiece, 1996, by Odilón Marmolejo Sánchez. Silver bowl in relief.



Top: Brooch, 1996, by Fernando Espinosa Gómez. Gold filigree with carved amber. Above: Rebozo, 1996, by Isabel Rivera Díaz and Julia Sánchez Vargas. Silk, colored with natural dyes and fringe work done by hand.

Arte popular, as folk art is called in Spanish, is translated literally into English as “pop art.” However, this label means something different to Mexicans than it does to a North American audience who might immediately think of Andy Warhol. Instead, *arte popular* means “art of the people,” a term based in the grassroots of Mexican cultures. In the National Museum of the American Indian’s forthcoming exhibition *Great Masters of Mexican Folk Art/Grandes Maestros del Arte Popular Mexicano from the Collection of Fomento Cultural Banamex*, folk artists – men and women – specialized in the use of natural materials create works of cultural meaning and beauty. “Folk art is connected to the people and is a result of their connections to their communities, their land, their traditions, and their cultures,” says Gerald McMaster (Plains Cree), deputy assistant director for cultural resources.

Opening July 21 at the National Museum of the American Indian’s George Gustav Heye Center, *Great Masters of Mexican Folk Art from the Collection of Fomento Cultural Banamex* showcases more than 600 masterworks from nearly 200 artists from all 31 states of the Mexican Republic. “This exhibition fits nicely into the NMAI’s hemispheric mandate to show works by indigenous cultures from across the hemisphere,” says McMaster. “It’s an example of what they’re doing in Mexico today, with a strong continuity traceable to their ancestors.”

The exhibition offers a comprehensive view of contemporary Mexican folk art not seen before in the United States. Mexican folk art is acknowledged for its beauty and as an artistic expression that embodies the complexity and diversity of Mexican indigenous cultures. “The larger Mexican culture and identity are integrally woven with indigenous peoples,” McMaster

says. “To show this rich fabric through its folk art is important for an understanding of Mexico.” From gold filigree necklaces to a tin rooster and figures from Day of the Dead celebrations, the art invokes a cross-cultural representation of art and life as seen by the artists.

“From peninsula to peninsula, coast to coast, indigenous and *mestizo* hands forge an intimate relationship with their natural surroundings and convert the materials within their reach – clay, flowers, feathers, metal – into objects which achieve a harmony between the utilitarian, the decorative, and the ceremonial,” writes Cándida Fernández de Calderón, director of Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C., in the exhibition’s accompanying book *Great Masters of Mexican Folk Art from the Collection of Fomento Cultural Banamex*. The artists employ nine natural materials in their work: clay, wood, stone, textiles, metals, paper, leather, vegetable fibers, and various materials like amber, horn, or coconut.

“Contributing, to the degree possible, to fortifying such work, endeavoring to ensure that the skills and wisdom of the great masters are not lost, and providing them with a positive foundation for their development are, then, the founding principles on which the Programa de Apoyo al Arte Popular (Program of Support of Folk Art) initiated by Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C.,” writes Fernández de Calderón.

Great Masters of Mexican Folk Art from the Collection of Fomento Cultural Banamex, a traveling exhibition, is organized and sponsored by the Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C., based in Mexico City. It has been made possible by the generous support of Banamex Citigroup, Corona Extra, CONACULTA (National Council for Culture and Arts), Tequila Herradura, and Aeromexico and runs until March 15, 2003, at the Heye Center in New York City. – Jason Ryle

Folk Art



“Folk art is connected to the people and is a result of their connections to their communities, their land, their traditions, and their cultures.” – Gerald McMaster (Plains Cree), deputy assistant director for cultural resources

Left: Catrina, 1999, by Adrián Luis González. Clay molded with appliqué and terra cotta. Right: Niche, 1996, by Francisco Aguirre Tejeda. Wood, with glass mirror inlay.

All photos appear in the book *Great Masters of Mexican Folk Art* from the Collection of Fomento Cultural Banamex

From Jim Thorpe to Billy Mills to Naomi Lang, the achievements of Native American athletes tell a story of dedication and fierce cultural pride. They are all...



Photo courtesy of Cumberland County Historical Society

Olympic Heroes



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

Above: Members of the Shoshone-Bannock tribe of Fort Hall, Utah, drum at a team welcoming ceremony at the Olympic Village in Salt Lake City.

Right: Jim Thorpe throws javelin at 1912 Olympic Games.

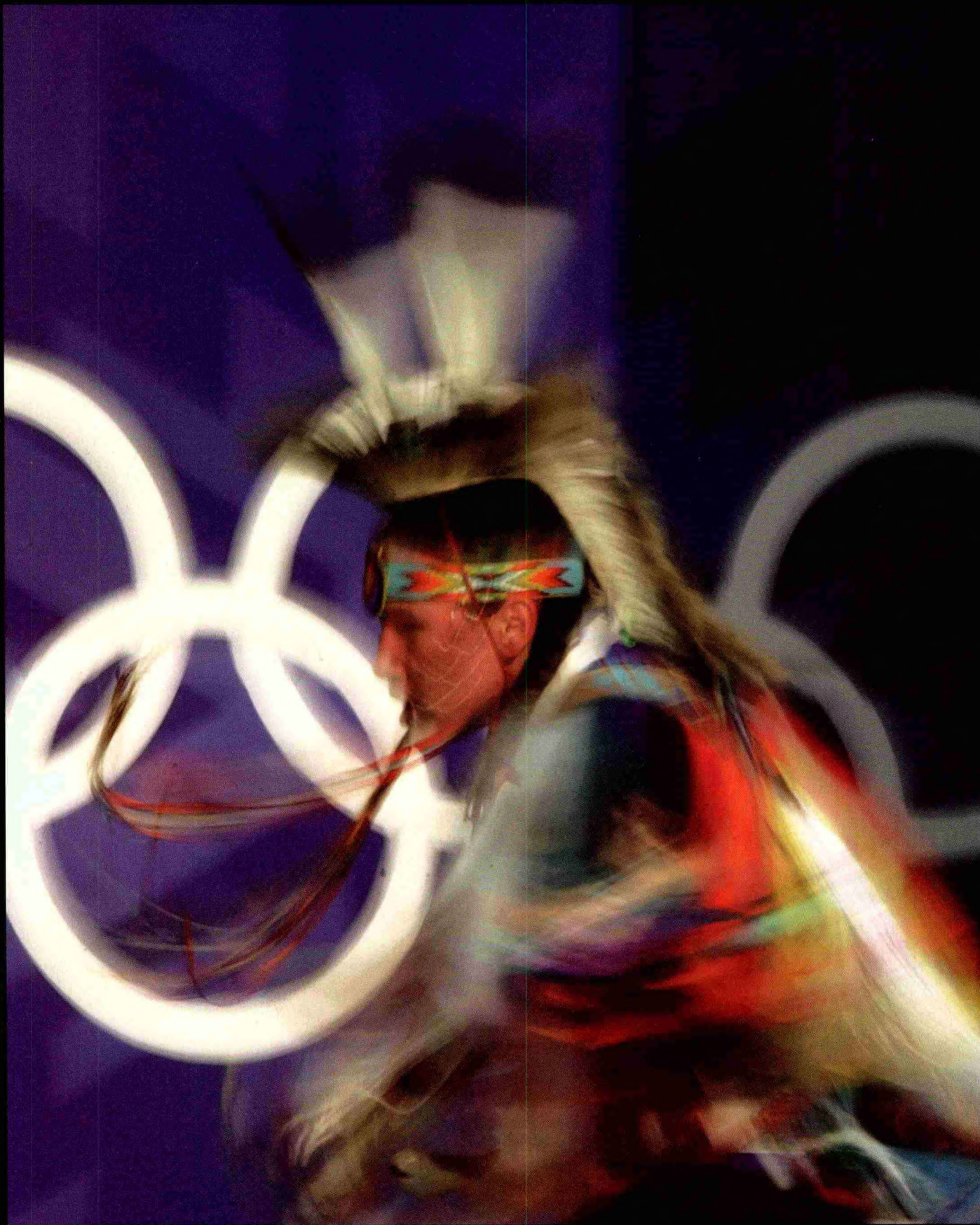
To the beat of the drum, the 2002 Winter Olympics began in Salt Lake City. It was an awesome moment, and Native people who watched it swelled with pride. The ceremonies honoring the Native American tribes from the state of Utah were highlighted by a show-stopping performance led by Robbie Robertson (Mohawk) and Sadie Buck (Seneca). Robertson's brilliant collage of traditional and modern music came to life with singers, dancers, and drummers from many nations.

The Native representation in the opening ceremonies at the winter games was significant, but as in any Olympics, what people looked for were athletes in competition. In that regard this may have been one of the most successful games for Native peoples. Curler Ken Trainberg (Dene/Cree) won a silver medal as an alternate on Canada's team, and Thereon Fleury (Metis) won a gold medal in hockey. For Team USA, Naomi Lang, of the Karuk Nation in Northern California, finished 11th in the ice-dancing competition with partner Peter Tchernyshev.

Lang's accomplishments point to a rising star – she and her partner have been the U.S. champions for the last three years, and most recently they placed ninth at the World's Figure Skating Championship, held March 18-24, 2002 in Nagano, Japan. They are most definitely a pair to watch for in the 2006 games.

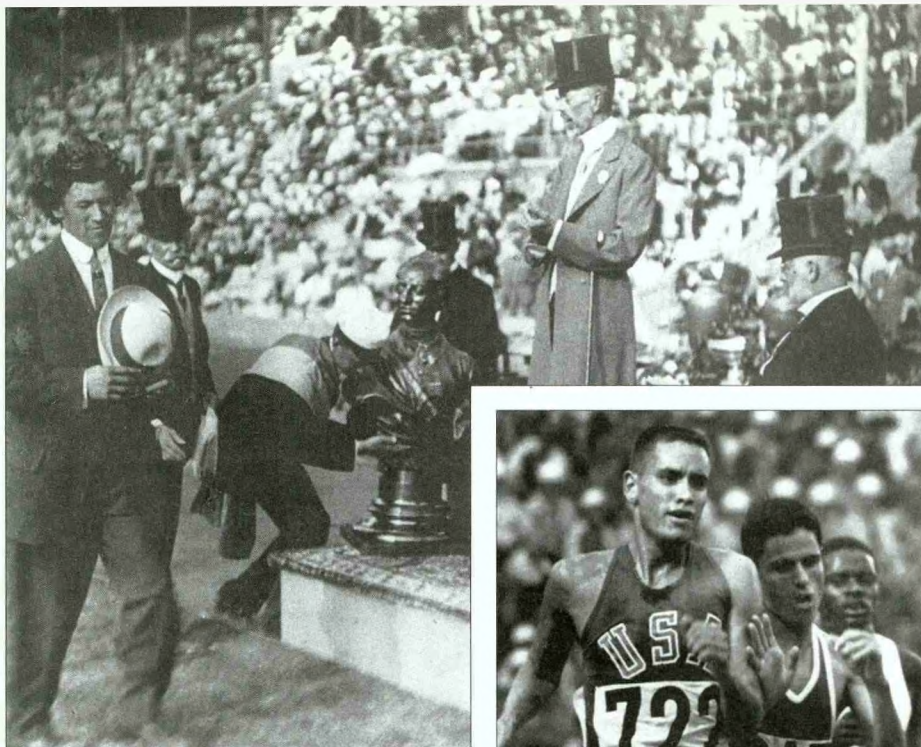
These winter games were among the most successful Olympics for Native peoples since the summer games of 1912, when a promise was shown that may finally be coming to pass.

By Miles Morrisseau



AP Photo/Joe Cavaretta

A Chippewa Cree dancer from Montana performs in a welcoming ceremony for the Austrian Winter Olympic Team in Salt Lake City.



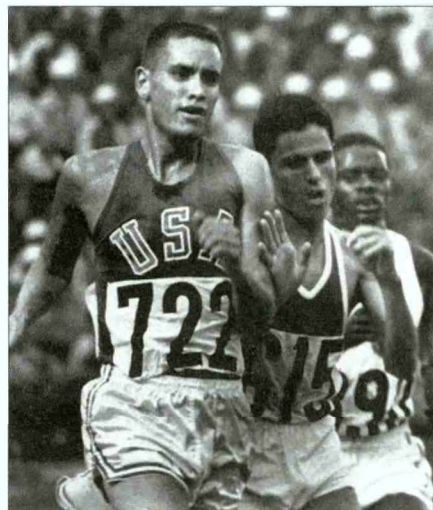
Cumberland County Historical Society"

The Greatest Athlete of All Time

His exploits were superhuman. His athletic accomplishments were beyond imagination. He dominated in every sport he played, including professional football and professional baseball. He led the unknown, underfunded Carlisle Indian School to the national collegiate championship in football. That same year, at the 1912 Olympic games, Jim Thorpe (Sauk and Fox) won gold in two events - the decathlon and the pentathlon - and excelled in 15 events to accomplish that feat. He had an athletic prowess unseen before or since.

In 1950 the nation's press selected him as the most outstanding athlete of the 20th century. Also that year he was declared "America's greatest football player of the half-century." As the 20th century ended, the pundits tallied up the votes and opinions for Athlete of the Century. Thorpe finished in the top ten, but not at the top. All other athletes in that list were one-sport athletes, and it is likely that the voting reflected the role of athlete as media figure. Surely other factors besides athletic prowess must be considered to rate Babe Ruth higher than Thorpe.

That Jim Thorpe was among the greatest athletes ever is not up for debate; his accomplishments speak for themselves. It was as though he stepped out of the reservation ready to compete with the world. But it is less known that at the beginning of the last century, he wasn't the only one. A second Native American brought home Olympic hardware from the 1912 games. Lewis Tewanima (Hopi) won a silver medal in the 10,000 meters (See page 33). And just five years before those ground-break-



AP Photo/Wide World Photos

ing Olympics, Tom Longboat (Onondaga) had won the Boston Marathon in record time.

It wouldn't be unreasonable to think that these accomplishments were a sign of what was to come. It would not have been too much to assume that Thorpe could have been a Native American equivalent of Jackie Robinson, an athlete whose abilities set a path for others of his race to follow. But it never happened. There would be no more medals until Billy Mills (Oglala Lakota) won a gold medal in the 10,000 meters at the Tokyo Olympics in 1964. From Thorpe's and Tewanima's medals to Mills', 52 years had passed.

It is not hard to see why there was such a drought during those 52 years. It was a time when what was hoped to be the final solution for Native people was in full swing. Following the outright genocide of the first 400 years, and with all Native people placed upon reservations or on the fringes of society, came the assimilation process. The results were devastating. Despite the terror that they had faced in those first four centuries, at least they had each other - family, community. For most of the last century, that bond was severed. Children were torn from their homes and placed in residential schools or with non-Native families. This was common policy in both Canada and the United States. The scars still remain today.

But they are healing, and in the years since Mills won gold in Japan, Native people have seen unbelievable changes. The social move-

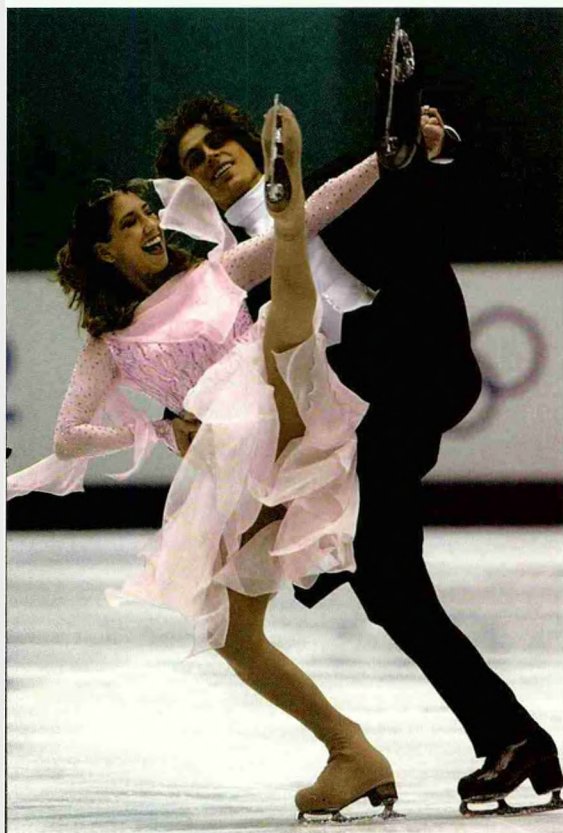


Photo by Martin Loft

From left to right: Jim Thorpe (Sauk and Fox), Billy Mills (Oglala Lakota), Alwyn Morris (Mohawk), Naomi Lang (Karuk), Thereon Fleury (Metis), and Ken Trainberg (Dene/Cree).

ments of the sixties did not exclude Native people. They saw political empowerment, cultural rebirth, and social activism begin to grow. Methods varied but the goals were the same: to reestablish the bonds, the responsibilities, and the rights of Native peoples. It has been a time of great change and great challenge, yet the victories are evident. Political, economic, educational, and cultural gains have been significant. No one would claim that the war is over, but battles have been won. As the payoff is seen in many areas of Native American society, benefits are apparent in sports as well. It would not take another 52 years for the next Olympic victory after Mills' gold. In the 1984 Olympics, Mohawk Alwyn Morris won gold and bronze in kayaking. Then Cheri Becerra (Omaha) won a bronze medal in the 800 meters at the 1996 Olympic games and became the first Native American woman to win a medal.

In 2002, in the most successful Olympics for Native people since the beginning of the last century, it seems that the promise of 1912 is finally becoming fulfilled.



AP Photo/Joe Cavaretta



AP Photo/Hans Deryk



Brad Crowfoot/Windspeaker

That Jim Thorpe was among the greatest athletes ever is not up for debate; his accomplishments speak for themselves... But it is less known that at the beginning of the last century, he wasn't the only one.

The Olympic Movement

In the last 10 years, a movement has started to help make the promise of 1912 come true. Organizations across the United States and Canada are developing programs to give Native youth their chance at an Olympic experience. Since 1990 the North American Indigenous Games have become the most important step in realizing that dream.

Darrel Mckay (Dene/Cree) was both competitor and organizer at the first games, in Edmonton, Alberta, 1990. John Fletcher and Wilton Littlechild had first proposed the games to the United Nations as a way to strengthen the Aboriginal people. Mckay recalls the Friends in Sports competition in 1985, an Alberta-only competition that was very successful and served as a trial for the North American games. He says it was the success of those first games that encouraged the organizers to take on a continental vision of a North American-wide competition.

The NAIG provide Olympic-style competition plus an opportunity for cultural

exchanges, including demonstrations of traditional sports. For Mckay, it was a way to compete outside the often lonely mainstream events. As an athlete, Mckay remembers competing in the Edmonton marathon. "There were hundreds of competitors, and I was the only Native athlete in the running," says Mckay. He competed in numerous competitions and saw few other Native athletes. He contrasts that experience to the first North American Indigenous Games. "To go to the games and see thousands of Native athletes was inspiring. To see all these strong, committed athletes standing together really boosted my self-esteem," says Mckay. He now works as one of the mission staff, preparing the athletes Team Ontario will be taking to this summer's games in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He believes that athletes share a special connection. "You appreciate the work, the effort, the pain and loneliness that it takes to be an athlete. You understand the sacrifice, and you can relate to them."

Mckay is sure that the promise of 1912 can be reached. He believes that the athletic poten-

tial of Native communities is just starting to be realized. "The Aboriginal athlete is an untapped resource," says Mckay. He believes that Native athletes will one day make a great mark in the Olympics and in sports in general.

Team Florida has been involved in the NAIG since 1995. The team has grown from 40 at those games to more than 250 representing Florida at the upcoming games. Bo Young, recreation director for the Seminole tribe, is a key player in Florida's involvement. He also serves as the president of the Indigenous People's Sports Council. Team Florida is selected through a series of competitive tournaments. "We are very serious about Florida competing, and qualifiers must meet the highest standards," says Young. His competitive fire drives his passion for Team Florida and its developing athletic program, especially in track and field. He visits many reservations as IPSC president to promote athletics across the United States. "I've had the chance to visit different reservations across the country, and I've seen what a lot of kids have to deal with. They don't have the



Photo courtesy Sandra Laronde

Above: Sandra Laronde (Ojibwe) receives her gold medal at the North American Indigenous Games. Left: Marthoner Darryl Mckay (Dene/Cree).



Photo courtesy Darryl Mckay

resources to participate in sports."

Young understands implicitly the important role that sports can play in young people's lives. The IPSC was formed to promote athletics at local and regional levels. "It's our role to be that contact between sports at the grass-roots - to give them support and give the youth an opportunity to participate in Olympic-style

games," he says. These events and tournaments then lead to competition at the NAIG. "They are becoming a goal for athletes. It's something to look forward to."

Young has seen many athletic events across North America. "The quality of competition at the (North American Indigenous) games is very high. The quality of athletes from all over North America is very high. But sometimes they don't have the opportunity to show that, if they didn't get to compete at the college level or they didn't shine in high school," he says. "Then the games are their opportunity to compete at that level."

If an athlete grows beyond the local and regional levels and moves to the level of an elite athlete, the support is there as well. The Native American Sports Council is an organization committed to supporting athletes who reach the Olympic games.

The opportunities for Native athletes to succeed are unlike those at any other time in the last 100 years. Competition is only part of the experience for many athletes. Dancer, editor, producer, and theater artist Sandra Laronde (Ojibwe) competed in Tae Kwon Do at the 1997 games in British Columbia. "I wanted to be surrounded by Aboriginal athletes," says Laronde.

Growing up in Temagami, a remote First Nation in northern Ontario, Laronde excelled at sports. "I competed in track and volleyball," she says. "I was always interested in martial arts, but you know how it is - you don't have that opportunity in Temagami. When I came to Toronto, I started going to the Native Canadian Center for lessons. Then I moved to a full-time program." She continues, "Martial arts incorporates a philosophy of Native peo-

ple - the connection between mind, body, and spirit. If you are to strike out at a point, your hand and arm become like an arrow, with all the power at the point where you will strike," says Laronde.

At the games, "what I saw was a vitality of First Nations. During the opening ceremonies, they had Native people paddle into shore having traveled thousands of miles along the Pacific coast. Then the athletes shook the hands of all the traditional leaders." Laronde carried the flag for the Anishinabe Nation of Ontario, and she considers it the high point of the experience. "The athletes were so disciplined, and the coaches and community were so supportive. The team spirit, the nation spirit - it was really beautiful to see. It's not just the athletes who win - they have their family, their team, and their nation with them."

Laronde is sure that somewhere out there is the next Jim Thorpe. "I think there are many Jim Thorpes out there, but natural gifts can only get you so far. To get to the Olympics is such a long road. Most Native athletes haven't had the chance because the money and the resources just aren't there."

She knows truly gifted athletes are out there. "We had a Jim Thorpe in our community. His name was Sonny Moar. The way he pitched, nobody could hit him. The ball seemed to move slowly when he let it go and then pick up speed. No one could touch him. But not just him - the whole team was dominant. They would paddle in 15 miles to a game as a warm-up. And they'd paddle another 15 when they were done. He was my first hero, my first role model."

Following the path of her role model, Laronde became active first in sports and then in the arts. She is a key figure in the burgeoning Native arts scene. In addition to editing and publishing anthologies for Native Women in the Arts, she is artistic director of Red Sky, a theater production company. She also remains much in demand for acting and dancing. Most recently she completed a feature role in a sold-out run of the Tomson Highway (Cree) play, *The Rez Sisters*. She credits sports for giving her the background to succeed. Sports not only taught her about commitment and discipline but also showed her what can be. Reminiscing about the accomplishments of the unbeatable Bear Island Braves, led by the unhittable Sonny Moar, she says, "That's what sports can give you - heroes." ■

Miles Morrisseau is a Metis (Cree/Saulteaux) journalist based on the Kettle and Stoney Point First Nation in southwestern Ontario.

Secret Warriors

The contributions of lesser-known code talkers in World Wars I and II have only recently been acknowledged.



AP Photo/USMC via National Archives

In times of war, one of the most urgent military needs is for secure and instantaneous communications that cannot be understood by the enemy. Throughout the 20th century, military forces relied heavily on spoken language transmitted by telephone and radio, both easily intercepted. But in the First and Second World Wars, codes based on American Indian languages provided a means of communication that proved intelligible only to the men who developed and used them. These languages evolved in North America over thousands of years and were distinctly different from most languages of other continents, providing a unique and valuable resource for the United States.

By Martha Davidson

Navajo code talkers Cpl. Henry Bahe, Jr., left, and Pvt. First Class George H. Kirk in a jungle clearing behind the front lines on the island of Bougainville in New Guinea (present-day Papua New Guinea), December 1943.

The story of the Navajo code talkers, whose extraordinary system for encoding secret messages contributed to the Allied victory in World War II, has been popularized in books, television, and a new film, *Windtalkers*. Yet few people are aware that the Navajo were not the only code talkers of the United States armed forces, nor even the first.

WORLD WAR I

The first official use of an American Indian language-based code by the U.S. military was in 1918, in the Meuse-Argonne campaign, toward the end of the First World War. The 142nd Infantry Regiment (which included a company of Indians who among them spoke 26 different languages or dialects) was operating in an area from which the Germans had just retreated. Convinced that their communications lines were tapped, Capt. E.W. Horner selected 14 Choctaws to transmit messages. Because the Choctaw language lacked certain military terms, they invented code words. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Battalions, for example, were identified in Choctaw as one, two, or three grains of corn; a machine gun was "little gun shoot fast."

Using the code, they ordered troop operations in the campaign. In his report, the commanding officer, Col. A.W. Block, said: "The enemy's complete surprise is evidence that he could not decipher the messages... The results were very gratifying." Following that successful experiment, other Indians in the American Expeditionary Force – Cheyenne, Comanche, Cherokee, Osage, and Yankton Sioux – were called on to use their languages for field communications.

Germans, who had long had an interest in the cultures of American Indians, showed an increased curiosity about their languages after the war. A number of German linguists and anthropologists reportedly visited Indian communities to study their dialects. Some people suspected that their interest was not simply scholarly and that they were agents of the German military.

CONFIDENTIAL

MILITARY MEANING

Battalion
Company
Platoon
Section
Squad

NAMES OF ORGANIZATIONS (Con't)

NAVAJO PRONUNCIATION

Tachene
Nakia
Has-clish-nih
Yo-ih
Debeh-li-zini

NAVAJO MEANING

Red Soil
Mexican
Mud
Beads
Black Sheep

MILITARY MEANING

Telephone
Switchboard
Wire
Telegraph

COMMUNICATION NAMES

NAVAJO PRONUNCIATION

Besh-hal-ne-ih
Ya-ih-e-tih-ih
Besh-le-chee-ih
Besh-le-chee-ih-beh-hane-ih

NAVAJO MEANING

Telephone
Central
Copper
Comm by copper wire

Semaphore

Dah-na-a-tah-ih-beh-hane-ih

Flag Signals
Fire Blinder
Radio
Carpet Signals

Blinker
Radio
Panel

Coh-nil-kol-ih
Nil-chi-hal-ne-ih
Az-kad-be-ha-ne-ih

MILITARY MEANING

Officers
Major General
Brigadier General
Colonel
Lt. Colonel
Major
Captain
1st Lieutenant
2d Lieutenant

OFFICERS NAMES

NAVAJO PRONUNCIATION

A-la-jih-na-zini
So-na-kih
So-a-la-ih
Atash-besh-le-gai
Che-chil-be-tah-besh-legai
Che-chil-be-tah-ole
Besh-legai-na-kih
Besh-legai-a-lah-ih
Ola-nah-ih-ni-ah

NAVAJO MEANING

Headmen
Two stars
One star
Silver Eagle
Silver Oak Leaf
Gold Oak Leaf
Two Silver Bars
One Silver Bar
One Gold Bar

MILITARY MEANING

Airplanes
Dive Bomber
Torpedo Plane
Observation Plane
Fighter Plane
Bomber
Patrol Plane
Transport Plane

AIRPLANE NAMES

NAVAJO PRONUNCIATION

Wo-tah-de-ne-ih
Gini
Taa-chizzie
Ne-as-jah
Da-he-tih-hi
Jay-sho
Ga-gih
Atash

NAVAJO MEANING

Air Force
Chicken Hawk
Swallow
Owl
Humming Bird
Burrard
Crow
Eagle

MILITARY MEANING

Ships
Battleship
Aircraft Carrier
Submarine

SHIPS NAMES

NAVAJO PRONUNCIATION

Toh-dineh-ih
Lo-tao
Teldi-ney-ye-hi
Besh-lo

NAVAJO MEANING

Sea Force
Whale
Bird Carrier
Iron Fish

CONFIDENTIAL

-2-

Senate Photographic Studio

A sample of a Navajo language code book. This page shows how the Navajo code talkers translated military terminology into Navajo, at times using specific cultural references.

“Everybody had his own pet term for something – and one was about as good as the other – but we finally came up with a code that worked. It took about eight weeks,” Comanche veteran Haddon Codynah told the *Lawton* (Okla.) *Constitution* in 1983.

COMANCHE CODE TALKERS

In 1940, foreseeing that the United States would be drawn into World War II, William Karty, a Comanche who was the director of the Fort Cobb Indian Conservation Corps camp in Oklahoma, proposed to the Army that the Comanche language be used for communications. The idea was attributed to his wife, who probably was not aware of the earlier use of Choctaw. The Army was receptive and authorized Karty to recruit volunteers for a special mission. The two requirements, beyond their fitness for the Army, were that they be unmarried and fluent in Comanche as well as English.

Karty found 20 qualified men, and they were assigned to the 4th Signal Corps Company, 4th Infantry Division. They began training at Fort Benning, Ga., in 1941. Because most of the men had attended government boarding Indian schools with military-style discipline (where they were often punished for speaking their native language), they amazed their drill sergeant with their mastery of Army skills. “The drill sergeant put us out there and was going to have some fun with a bunch of raw recruits,” recalled Roderick Red Elk in a 1991 interview in the journal *Prairie Lore*. “There were 16 of us that knew exactly what commands he was going to give and we knew how to march... We were supposed to take six weeks of that basic training but I think they kicked us out of there in three weeks.”

Only after completing basic training were they told of their special mission. For the remainder of the year, they were sent to other Army camps up and down the East Coast for advanced communications work and amphibious training – from Georgia to Florida, to New Jersey and South Carolina and back again.

During that time, they met weekly with their platoon leader, a West Point graduate named Hugh Foster, to devise codes for about 250 military terms that had no Comanche equivalents. Comanche at that time was purely a spoken language with no alphabet or dictionary, and to complicate matters, the code talkers represented several different bands of the Comanche nation, each with its own dialect. Red Elk later described (*Comanche Newsletter*, May 1993) the process of code development:

For instance, a gun, we have only one name for a gun... “tah-wah.” So we had to make up names for artillery, machine guns, bazookas and all that. There’s no... name in the Comanche language for “tank.” So we came up with the word “turtle” [“wa-ka-ray”] because a tank has a hard shell and a turtle has got a hard shell.

U.S. Marine Maj. Frank Shannon (arm raised at left) administers oath of allegiance to the first 29 Navajo recruits to enlist in the Marines as Navajo code talkers. May 4, 1942, Fort Wingate, N.M.

For a machine gun, which reminded one of the men of the sound of a sewing machine, they combined the Comanche words for “gun” and “sewing machine.” In a similar manner, a bomber became “bo-ah hoo-too,” meaning “pregnant bird,” and Adolf Hitler was “posah-tai-vo,” for “crazy white man.”

“Everybody had his own pet term for something – and one was about as good as the other – but we finally came up with a code that worked. It took about eight weeks,” Comanche veteran Haddon Codynah told the *Lawton* (Okla.) *Constitution* in 1983.

Their work was kept top secret. In January 1944, 17 of the men were shipped to England to prepare for operations in Europe. They frequently practiced amphibious landings along the coast of England, loading onto warships at night and landing on beaches the next morning with sounds of gunfire all around them. When they finally landed on Utah Beach, Normandy, on June 6, several of the code talkers initially thought it was another practice run. They quickly realized it was not.

That day – D-Day – they laid the communications lines for the invading Allied forces. Charles Chibitty sent the first coded message: “Five miles to the right of the designated area and five miles inland the fighting is fierce and we need help.” Over the next 11 months, the Comanche code talkers participated in four other major campaigns in northern France, Ardennes (the Battle of the Bulge), Rhineland, and Central Europe. They rotated between battlefield positions and work at division headquarters, laying and maintaining communications lines as well as transmitting and translating coded messages. Their succinct messages concerned troop movements, strength, and weaponry.

The code talkers did not remain together after training but were divided and assigned to different regiments. Some of the men did not see one another from D-Day until the war was over. None of the 17 Comanche code talkers were captured or killed, though several were wounded.

NAVAJO CODE TALKERS

In September 1941, while the Comanches were in training, the Army’s 32nd Division was staging war games in Louisiana. Seventeen Oneida and Chippewa men from Wisconsin and



Photo courtesy of the Navajo Nation Museum, Window Rock, Ariz. Photograph by Milton “Jack” Snow, 1942.

The code was so effective that it was incomprehensible even to Navajos who had not been trained in it (besides the code talkers, about 3,000 other Navajos served in World War II).

Michigan were tested in sending radio messages in their languages, translating them from English and back again. To overcome linguistic obstacles, they improvised codes. An article in the *New York Times* about these war exercises noted that the signal officer “had to comb the division for Indians who had not forgotten their tribal tongue or did not have trouble translating it.”

A World War I veteran, Philip Johnston, read about these war games. Johnston, the son of white missionaries, had grown up on the Navajo (Diné) Reservation and was one of the few non-Navajos with fluency in the language. He knew that the complexities of Navajo syntax, the precision of its vocabulary, and the subtleties of its pronunciation would make it an ideal language for code talking.

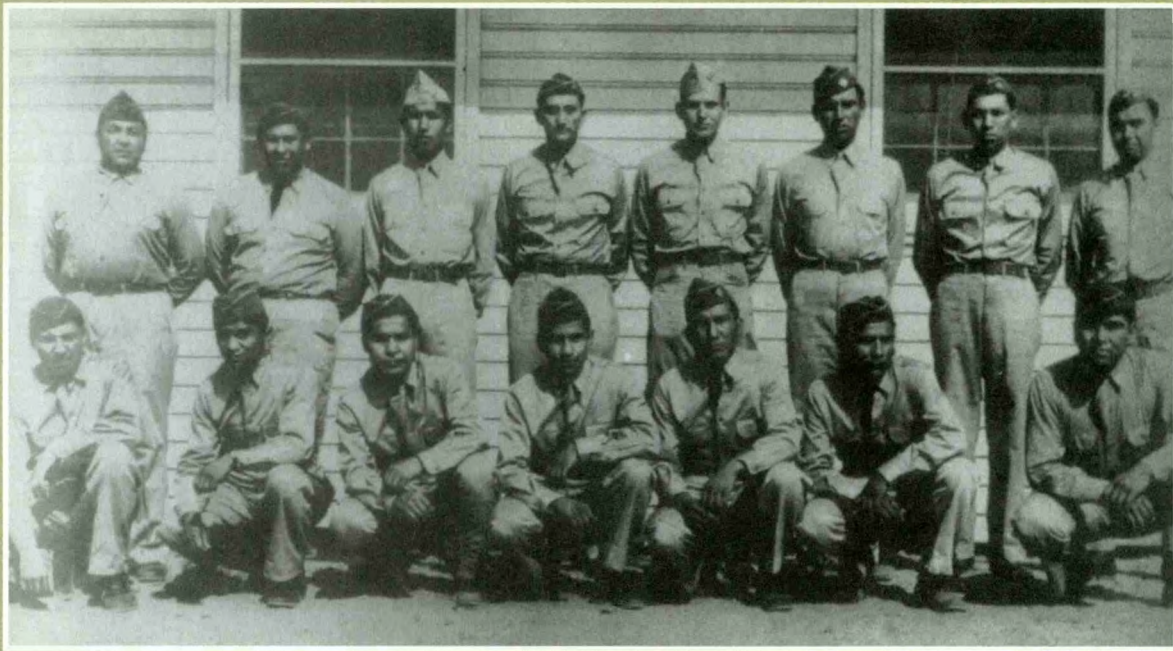
In February 1942 Johnston sent a proposal to Maj. Gen. Clayton Vogel of the Marines’ Pacific Fleet, at Camp Elliott in San Diego. He pointed out that as the largest tribe in the country, with a population of nearly 50,000 at that time, the Navajo offered a sizable pool of potential recruits. Johnston also mentioned Sioux, Chippewa, and Pima-Papago as suitable candidates for an Indian signal corps. The fact that many of the young Navajos still spoke their language fluently, although they had been educated in English at government schools, was a factor in their favor. Moreover, the Navajo language had never been studied by the Germans, although one foreign student, possibly German,

had made an attempt in the 1930s.

Vogel was interested but skeptical. To convince the Marines, Johnston quickly arranged a demonstration with six Navajo volunteers. They were given messages to send over field telephones. In 20 seconds they coded, transmitted, and decoded a three-line message; cryptographers using a machine required 30 minutes to do the same. The Navajos’ rapid and accurate translations convinced Vogel and the other officers. Within a month, the Marines had recruited the first 29 Navajo code talkers, telling them only that they would be assigned to special duty. By September, the recruits were on their way to boot camp in San Diego; from there, they went to Camp Pendleton for training with the Field Signal Battalion.

During their eight weeks of training, which included rigorous physical conditioning, mastery of technical skills, and study of the Morse code and semaphore systems, they also developed their own code, much as the Comanches had done. Like the Comanche code talkers, the Navajos devised and memorized codes for more than 200 military terms (the vocabulary was later expanded to more than 450). Most of the code words drew on associations with the natural world or Navajo culture. Aircraft were named after different species of birds, and ships after fish; for military units they used clan names.

An important feature of the Navajo code was the alphabet, which they devised in their



From the collection of the Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee

Although the Comanche and Navajo were the only officially trained and designated code talkers in World War II, instances have been reported of code talking (using Indian languages, often with improvised code words) by soldiers from at least 15 other tribes.

Above: Comanche code talkers, Fort Benning, Ga., 1941. (front row, l-r) Roderick Red Elk, Simmons Parker, Larry Saupitty, Melvin Permansu, Willie Yackeschi, Charles Chibitty, and Willington Mihecoby. (back row, l-r) Morris Sunrise, Perry Noyebad, Ralph Wahnee, Haddon Codynah, Robert Holder, Albert Nahquaddy, Clifford Ototivo, and Forrest Kassanavoid.

first session at the suggestion of two of the men, Wilsie Bitsie and Oscar Ilthma. For each of the 26 letters of the English (Latin) alphabet they assigned a word ("ant" for A, "bear" for B) and then used its Navajo equivalent. For commonly used letters, they created two or three alternative codes, so that enemy cryptographers would not detect a pattern in their messages. To switch between the basic code and spelling in a message, they would signal "ABC." The entire code was committed to memory. Code Talker William McCabe, quoted in Margaret Bixler's *Winds of Freedom* (1992), observed that "when we made that... code within a code... the message comes out word for word on the other end, and including the semicolons, commas, periods, questions marks, everything."

When the code was completed, it was tested again. Navy intelligence officers tried for three weeks to decipher one message but failed. The code was so effective that it was incomprehensible even to Navajos who had not been trained in it (besides the code talkers, about 3,000 other Navajos served in World War II).

Two of the original code talkers, John Benally and Johnny Manuelito, remained in the

United States to train hundreds of new recruits, and Johnston was made a Marine officer to assist with the training. The other code talkers of the first group were shipped to Guadalcanal in the fall of 1942 for active duty. Working in two-man teams, they communicated orders and reported on troop movements by telephone and radio. Their competence and bravery at Guadalcanal were noted by their field commanders.

Navajo code talkers – 375 to 420 by the war's end – served with all six Marine divisions, the Marine Raider battalions, and Marine parachute units, providing communications for every Pacific assault from Guadalcanal in 1942 to Okinawa in 1945. Some remained in Japan to assist during the occupation and reported – in code to San Francisco – the devastation of the atomic bomb at Nagasaki. Their transmissions were occasionally jammed by U.S. forces who mistook their code for Japanese. With their dark skin and hair, the code talkers themselves were sometimes mistaken for Japanese; for protection, they were assigned white Marine bodyguards.

The Navajo code talkers are most often remembered for their distinguished service at

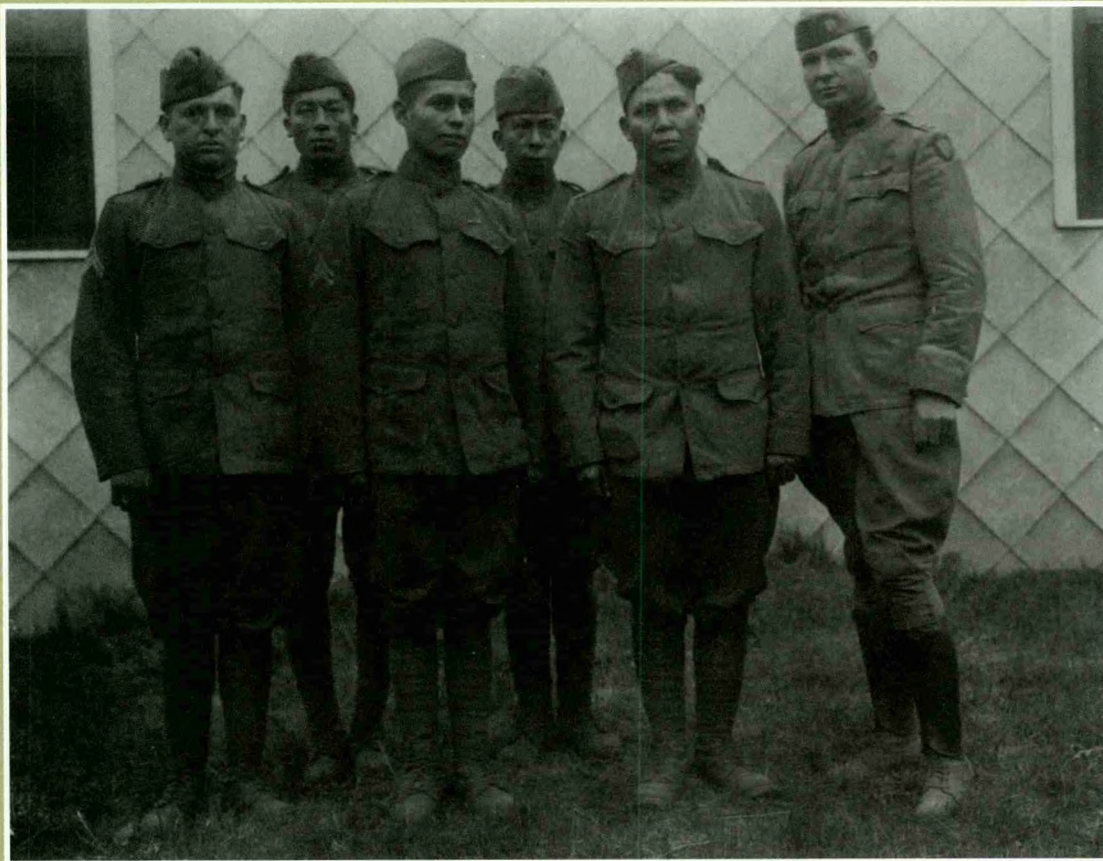


Photo courtesy of the William Hammond Mathers Museum, Wanamaker Collection, Indiana University

Iwo Jima. During the month-long battle, they transmitted all orders and directions for the operation. In the first 48 hours of fighting, the code talkers worked around the clock in two-man teams, transmitting more than 800 messages without a single error. The raising of the flag depicted in Joe Rosenthal's famous photo was reported by the code talkers spelling out "Suribachi," the name of the mountain whose capture represented a victory for the United States. Maj. Howard M. Conner, the Marine communications officer, acknowledged that "were it not for the Navajos, the Marines would never have taken Iwo Jima."

Three code talkers were killed at Iwo Jima; eight others are believed to have been killed in other battles.

OTHER CODE TALKERS

Although the Comanche and Navajo were the only officially trained and designated code talkers in World War II, instances have been reported of code talking (using Indian languages, often with improvised code words) by soldiers from at least 15 other tribes. These cases are not well documented and usually occurred on an ad

hoc basis where two or more Indians spoke the same dialect.

Col. Ernest Childers, the first American Indian to receive the Medal of Honor, recalled such experiences in an interview with columnist Suzan Shown Harjo of *Indian Country Today*. He said that Indian soldiers of Company C, 45th Infantry Division Thunderbirds, "communicated on the walkie-talkies or out on patrol in Muscogee or Cherokee or our other languages and used our different signals and noises — horse laughs, roosters crowing — for 'be aware' or 'I'm coming' or 'I'm over here.'"

Eleven Hopi soldiers served as code talkers for the Army's 223rd Battalion in the Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, and the Philippines. Eight Sauk and Fox communications officers in the Iowa Infantry were trained to use walkie-talkies, and Sioux of the 3rd Field Artillery Battalion used their language in the Battle of the Ardennes, in 1944. In similar ways, Chippewa, Choctaw, Creek, Kiowa, Menominee, Oneida, Pawnee, Lakota, Dakota, and Winnebago soldiers also used their languages and ingenuity for secure telecommunications in the Second World War.

Above: The Choctaw Telephone Squad, World War II. (l-r) Taylor Lewis, Mitchell Bobbs, James Edwards, Calvin Wilson, James Davenport, and Capt. E.H. Horner.



Chester Nez salutes President Bush on Capitol Hill upon receiving his Congressional Gold Medal on July 26, 2001 as fellow Navajo code talkers Lloyd Oliver, far left, and John Brown Jr. look on.



Above: President Bush shakes hands with Navajo code talker John Brown Jr. in the Rotunda as House Speaker Denny Hastert, R-Ill., far left, applauds.



Charles Chibitty, the last surviving Comanche code talker of the 4th Signal Corps Company, receives the Knowlton Award at the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes on November 30, 1999 for his contributions to the Allied effort in World War II.

AFTER THE WAR

Of all the official codes used by the United States in that war, the Navajo and Comanche codes are the only ones that remained unbroken. Yet when they returned from the war, these code talkers received no special recognition for their remarkable achievements.

In 1968 the Navajo code was declassified. At a Marine Corps reunion in 1969, Philip Johnston and a few of the Navajo code talkers were presented with bronze medallions; soon after, the Navajo Code Talkers Association was formed. President Nixon awarded them Certificates of Appreciation in 1971, and in 1982 President Reagan declared August 14 to be



The obverse of the Congressional Gold Medal, above, features two Marine Navajo code talkers communicating a radio message.

National Code Talkers Day. A statue was dedicated to them in Phoenix, Ariz., in 1989. In 1992 they were honored in a ceremony at the Pentagon. On July 26, 2001, President George W. Bush presented the Congressional Gold Medal to four of the five living veterans of the original 29 Navajo code talkers and to the families of the fifth, who was too ill to attend, and of the 24 who were deceased.

For the Comanches, recognition was slower to come. At the 1983 Comanche Powwow, the code talkers received high tribal honors, and in 1989 the French government awarded them and the Choctaw soldiers of World War I the Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite. The Department of Defense recognized Charles Chibitty, the last surviving Comanche code talker, with a certificate of appreciation in 1992. In 1999 the U.S. Army presented him with the Knowlton award for outstanding intelligence work.

At the Knowlton award ceremony, Kevin Gover, the Department of the Interior's assistant secretary for Indian Affairs, observed, "It's incredibly ironic that my agency, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, dedicated itself for the first half of this century to destroying the native languages that proved to be so useful to our armed forces during World War II."

The story of the Comanche code talkers is told by Dr. William Meadows of the University of Indiana in his forthcoming book, *They Spoke Comanche*.

The contributions of other, lesser-known code talkers have only recently been acknowledged outside of their families or tribes. A petition movement (<http://www.comanche-lodge.com/code.html>), started in 1998, is appealing to Congress to honor all of them. ■

Martha Davidson is a Washington, D.C.-based writer who contributes regularly to American Indian.



Nicolas Cage (right) and Adam Beach star in *Windtalkers*.

Photo by Stephen Vaughan

More Than a Movie

In bringing the heroic story of Navajo code talkers to the screen, Hollywood makes the Navajo language into an improbable movie star

By Jason Ryle

In war, there are secrets that need to be kept – and heroes that need to keep them.

– Slogan from *Windtalkers*

Roger Willie, from the Navajo Nation in Arizona, and Adam Beach, a Saulteaux Native from Manitoba, Canada, star in the largest mainstream film featuring prominent Native American characters since *Dances With Wolves* in 1990. The John Woo-directed *Windtalkers*, which opens in June, marks the first big-budget feature roles

for both Willie and Beach, who play Navajo code talkers in World War II. “This whole movie has been a positive influence,” Willie says. “I think it will remotivate young people about the Navajo language and promote Navajo identity while telling the story of the code talkers.”

One of MGM’s major summer releases, *Windtalkers* is a fictional account of the real-life Navajo code talkers, who were crucial in protecting military radio messages from being detected by the Japanese in the Pacific Theater campaign in World War II, especially the Battle of Saipan. Besides Willie and Beach, the film, which is extremely graphic and bloody, stars

Academy Award winner Nicolas Cage and Christian Slater as American soldiers assigned to protect the code talkers. Directed by the acclaimed John Woo, *Windtalkers* is a milestone in the Navajo code talkers’ history and a significant moment for Willie and Beach as Native American actors.

Already unique among mainstream films for its subject alone, *Windtalkers* shatters stereotypical portrayals of Native Americans on the silver screen. For decades, most celluloid interpretations of American Indians cast them as the enemies in frontier battles with cowboys despite the historic record of American Indian tribes assisting the United States in every mili-

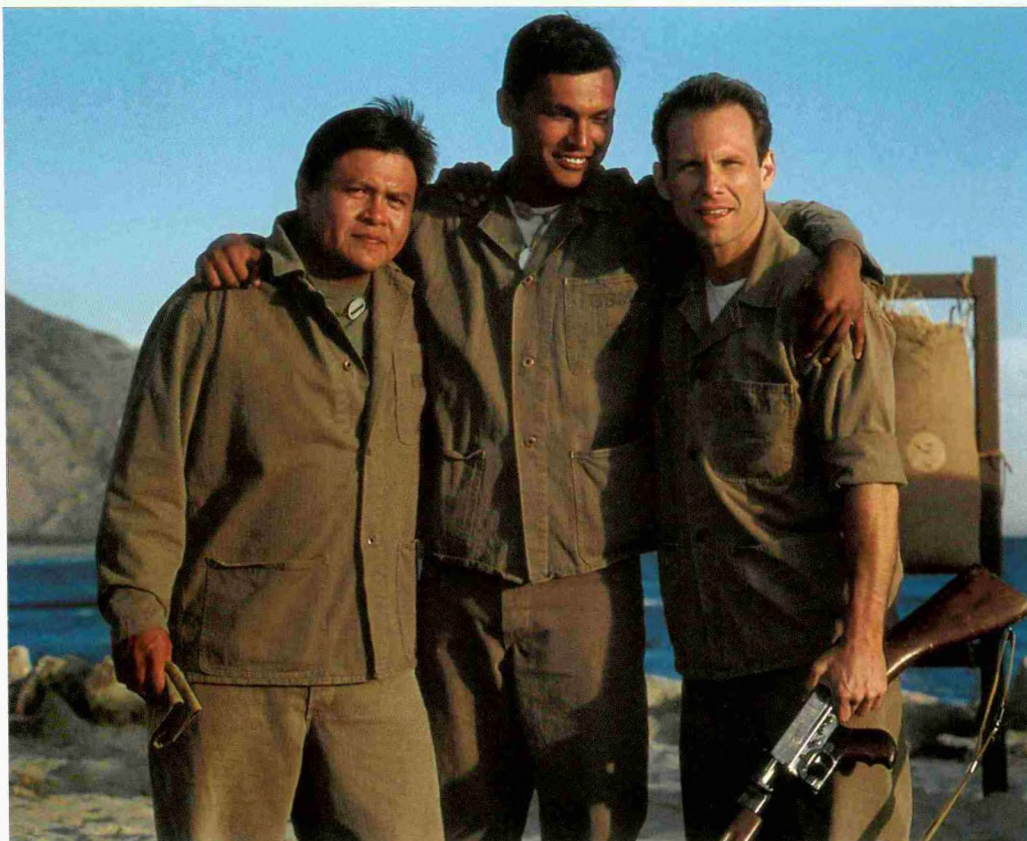


Photo by Stephen Vaughan

As a member of the 82nd Airborne Division, Willie (above, left) served his country for four years at Fort Bragg, N.C. "I'm proud to say I was part of the 82nd Airborne Division. It definitely helped me prepare for my role."

Above: Roger Willie and Adam Beach with Christian Slater.

tary encounter since the American Revolution.

Roger Willie never intended to become an actor. In fact, he still does not consider himself an "actor" in the conventional sense of the word, but rather a storyteller in the traditional sense. "I don't know where I would stand in the mainstream sense," Willie says. "But culturally I think all Native people are natural actors, because within our cultures we have a rich sense of humor that involves imitation, and even our oral stories require strong narratives that create drama and humor."

Regardless of his modesty, Willie's role in *Windtalkers* is one that any actor, Native or non-Native, would be grateful to claim. The significance of this role is not lost to him, both in its nonstereotypical representation of Native Americans and in its historical retelling of one chapter in Navajo history. Willie plays Charlie Whitehorse, a man in touch with traditional

Navajo spirituality and ceremonies and a father figure to Beach's character. "Charlie has a balance in his life, especially between Navajo and non-Native cultures," Willie says. "He's protective of Adam's character, Ben Yahzee, whom he watched grow up on the Navajo Reservation. There are a lot of people like Charlie on the Navajo Reservation. I felt like I knew him already before I became him."

Willie's attachment to his character goes beyond personal proclivity or cultural similarity. He grew up speaking Diné, the Navajo language, and continues to speak to his children in his ancestral language. "The language is a central element to the Navajo culture and the focus of the movie," Willie says. "Language is a form of communication that tells us in audible ways about culture. It gives me a strong sense of identity, and I feel proud to hear it on the big screen."

Willie can relate to more than just Charlie Whitehorse's Navajo cultural roots. As a member of the 82nd Airborne Division, Willie served his country for four years at Fort Bragg, N.C. "I'm proud to say I was part of the 82nd Airborne Division. It definitely helped me prepare for my role," he says.

One reason why *Windtalkers* marks a significant departure from Native American portrayals is the presence of patriotism among the Navajo. "The movie and the characters are a step in the right direction for mainstream portrayals of Native Americans," Willie says. "Here are American Indian men who are also patriotic to the United States, despite historical incidents and colonization. For the first time that I can think of, you see Navajo on screen with short hair, in military clothes, who can speak English fluently and who don't say only a few words."

The film made a particular effort not to offend or misrepresent Navajo cultural elements. The cultural and spiritual scenes in *Windtalkers* were faithful in their authenticity. "It all came down to John Woo. He wanted it to be authentic and sensitive and wanted it to be right," Willie says. "He left these scenes open to change by those who know about these things. We portrayed Navajo culture correctly."

The people Willie refers to are three Navajo tribal members who served as the film's cultural advisers. The main adviser was Albert Smith, an original Navajo code talker who served in the Pacific Theater in World War II. "Albert was the main source of information for the cultural elements for the Navajo characters," Willie says. Smith was also in attendance last summer at a special ceremony in Washington, D.C., honoring the code talkers.



AP Photo/Ron Edmonds

Willie and Beach were in attendance on July 26, 2001 when President George W. Bush awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to the still-living Navajo code talkers and the families of those now deceased. (l-r) Allen Dale June, Lloyd Oliver, Chester Nez, John Brown Jr., and President George W. Bush.

“The reality was that some part of me thought it was unreal that MGM would actually recruit an inexperienced Navajo actor for a feature role in a movie starring Nicolas Cage. I thought their effort to get a Navajo actor was a token gesture before getting another actor to play a Navajo. But I was wrong.”

Windtalkers and Charlie Whitehorse will forever remain a part of Willie's life. He says that his experience working on the film, traveling, and meeting new people was one of his life's highlights. At a weekly family dinner in the winter of 1999, his sister-in-law Sheila Willie had showed him a newspaper ad announcing auditions in the Southwest for Native actors for a film starring Nicolas Cage. One of the auditions was to be held in Durango, Colo. “I was planning on being in Durango on December 7, 1999, anyway,” he says. “I kept on debating if I would audition or not, but my nephew kept on insisting that I do it, so I did.”

After three auditions over the next few months, he received word on June 8, 2000, that the role was his. “It was emotional, absolutely unbelievable,” Willie recalls. “The reality was that some part of me thought it was unreal that MGM would actually recruit an inexperienced

Navajo actor for a feature role in a movie starring Nicolas Cage. I thought their effort to get a Navajo actor was a token gesture before getting another actor to play a Navajo. But I was wrong.” It was a momentous month for Willie, as June also saw the birth of his second child, Jodi Whitehorse Willie, a daughter whom he named in honor of his character.

Willie and Beach were in attendance on July 26, 2001 when President George W. Bush awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to the still-living Navajo code talkers and the families of those now deceased. “The atmosphere was incredible,” Willie recalls. “At one point, I looked up at the Rotunda dome and thought, ‘If there's any perfection in this world, this is as close as it's going to get,’ because here we were focusing on love, appreciation, and generosity.”

Willie looks forward to *Windtalkers'* premiere on June 14, 2002, in what is sure to be a star-studded affair. In the meantime, he has set

aside acting in favor of completing a master's degree in American Indian studies at the University of Arizona, where he also teaches the Navajo language. Beach, now a Los Angeles resident, is garnering unprecedented mainstream media coverage for a Native actor and more work, including the lead role in the film adaptation of Tony Hillerman's popular novel, *Skinwalkers*.

Windtalkers is a legacy, not only for the Navajo code talkers but also for Roger Willie and Adam Beach and all Native American actors who follow them. “I recognize that I am a role model,” Willie says. “In fact, everyone involved in this movie is a role model and has a responsibility to represent Navajo culture, the army, and whatever the best way possible. We're real life people playing real life heroes.” ■

Jason Ryle is a writer and public relations practitioner based in Toronto, Ont.



Remarkable Story Uncovered

The IACB Collection reveals the cultural fusion of visionary silversmith William Spratling and the Alaskan artisans he inspired

By Anya Montiel

Many museum items possess a remarkable history, sometimes traveling thousands of miles from their original location. Often the difficulty comes in unraveling their history and journeys. Recently I had the task of cataloging more than 100 items that had arrived without documentation from the Indian Arts and Crafts Board (IACB) Headquarters collection.

I observed that these silver and gold objects bore Arctic animal motifs and carving in ivory and baleen (whalebone). The use of Alaskan materials and imagery led me to suggest that they had been made by a Native Alaskan artist or cooperative. Fortunately, many items had a "WS" hallmark in script. Yet who or what was WS?

In 1998 Congress appointed the National Museum of the American Indian to care for and house the IACB Headquarters collection of 6,500 items. The U.S. Department of the Interior established the IACB in 1935 to foster and develop Native arts and crafts. To raise public understanding and appreciation of Native handiwork, the IACB collected and exhibited contemporary artworks made by Native artists and regional cooperatives.

What to do about the hallmark? Linda Greatorex, IACB project manager, suggested taking a digital image of the hallmark and e-mailing it to Alaskan institutions. An answer arrived from Steve Henrikson, curator of collections at the Alaska State Museum in Juneau, who hoped that a "long-standing mystery" had been solved.

Artists place hallmarks on their work to identify products of their design and handiwork. The stamped, painted, or incised marks also serve as testimonies to the quality and authenticity of the pieces. Henrikson informed us that the WS hall-

mark belongs to a non-Native silversmith, William Spratling, known by some as the "father of Mexican silver." Born in Sonoma, N.Y., in 1900, Spratling was raised in the South and studied architecture at Auburn University in Alabama. Four years later, he moved to New Orleans to teach at Tulane University. There he became part of the artistic and literary scene, befriending writers John Dos Passos and William Faulkner.

Spratling first visited Mexico in 1926 to lecture at the National University of Mexico on colonial architecture, and he was attracted to the proliferation of art in everyday life. Later he moved to Mexico, writing articles, sketching, collecting pre-Columbian art, and marketing his lithographs as well as the work of Mexican artist Diego Rivera in New York galleries. Dwight Morrow, U.S. ambassador to Mexico, employed Spratling to draw plans for expansions on the Morrow home in Cuernavaca. He told

Spratling about the nearby town of Taxco in Guerrero and its silver mines. Spratling soon moved to Taxco and hired goldsmith Artemio Navarrete to execute his designs for silver rings.

By 1933 Spratling opened Taller de las Delicias (Workshop of Delights), later renamed Spratling y Artesanos. He developed a distinctive style, which Spratling biographer Taylor D. Littleton described as the "fusion of pre-Hispanic folk symbols and Aztec and Mayan design motifs with both the sweeping curves of Art Deco and the restraint of Cubist patterns." His workshop rapidly expanded its production of silverwork, employing local craftsmen in an apprenticeship

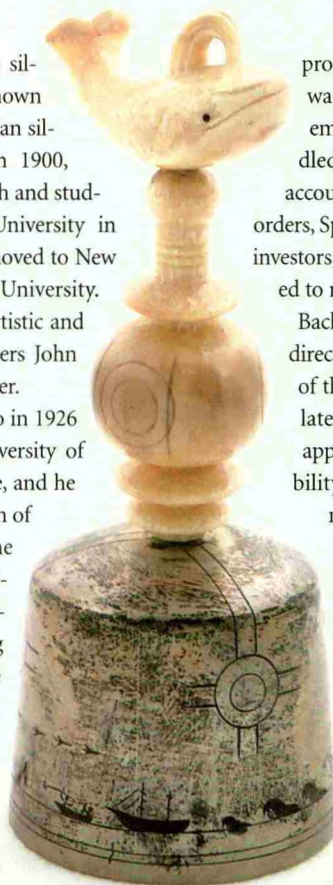
program to make jewelry and silverware. By 1945 Spratling y Artesanos employed 400 silversmiths and handled 140 foreign and 25 Mexican accounts. To manage the volume of orders, Spratling opened his shop to private investors, thereby losing control. He decided to retire that same year.

Back in 1932, Ernest Gruening, then director of the U.S. territories division of the Department of the Interior and later Alaska's governor, had approached Spratling about the possibility of adapting his handicrafts model to Native Alaskan arts and crafts. Gruening spoke about the wealth of Alaskan materials such as gold, silver, ivory, baleen, and even a jade deposit in Shungnak, Alaska. By 1945 the Interior Department contracted him to visit Alaska, review its arts, and propose ideas for craft production and economic stimulation.

Flying to Alaska solo in his two-seater Ercoupe plane, Spratling visited Native communities

in Wrangell, Wales, and Klukwan and surveyed the local materials and designs. He also interviewed artists, archaeologists, teachers, newspaper editors, and civic leaders. His report to the IACB included suggestions to "encourage, dignify, and build up production of crafts" in Alaska. He recommended a shift away from souvenir production and a move toward the promotion of well-made, unique, and utilitarian items that represented Alaska. He proposed a six-month training program for Alaskan carvers in Mexico, modeled on the Taxco apprenticeship system of students working alongside master silversmiths.

The Alaska Native Service approved the training program in 1948, along with a contract for Spratling to design and manufacture 200 marketable models with Alaskan motifs. His models consisted of belt buckles, necklaces, letter openers,



*Top: Delicate and detailed, this bell is incised with a whaling scene and has a carved fossil ivory handle in the shape of a spouting whale.
Above: A carved fossil ivory pin with 18-karat gold utilizes Alaskan materials but the design is pure Spratling.*

and ashtrays with North Star and Arctic animal imagery. In October 1948 seven Native Alaskans, including Francis Eben, Marley Lincoln, Floyd Singyke, and Frank Okpealuk, arrived at Spratling's Mexican ranch for six months of metal and stonework instruction. Spratling suggested annual training for Alaskan youths in Mexico, and he also offered to teach in Alaska.

Per his contract, Spratling returned the models to the Department of the Interior, stating that he saw them "as a mere starting point in order to broaden (Alaskans') horizon of possibilities in the use of materials." In 1952 he wrote to Gruening and an insurance company about his frustrations over the lapse of the project and his wish to reproduce the designs himself or establish a company in Alaska. Nothing ever came of his plan.

The models traveled to exhibits at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, the Interior Department museum in Washington, D.C., and various Alaskan sites. Spratling did not know that the models remained at the Interior Department; he assumed that they were in Alaska as teaching aides for Native artists. Spratling did produce a North Star series inspired by the models. It was one of his last ventures before he died in a car crash in 1967.

Among the Spratling documents that Henrikson sent me was a list of the 200 models, organized by catalog number and a brief description. That list was valuable to the cataloging process. Stickers on the objects matched those on the list, such as "PN125" for a pin of carved fossil ivory in a triple-braid design with 18-karat gold. It explained other codes on the stickers, such as "PC" for "paper cutter" and "BB" for "bonbon dish." The list verified that some items without hallmarks, like buttons, were made by Spratling but were too small for a hallmark stamp. The IACB Headquarters collection at the NMAI contains 167 of the 200 models, and two more items (a cigarette box and a bonbon dish) are at the Alaska State Museum in Juneau. The location of the remaining 31 pieces is still unknown.

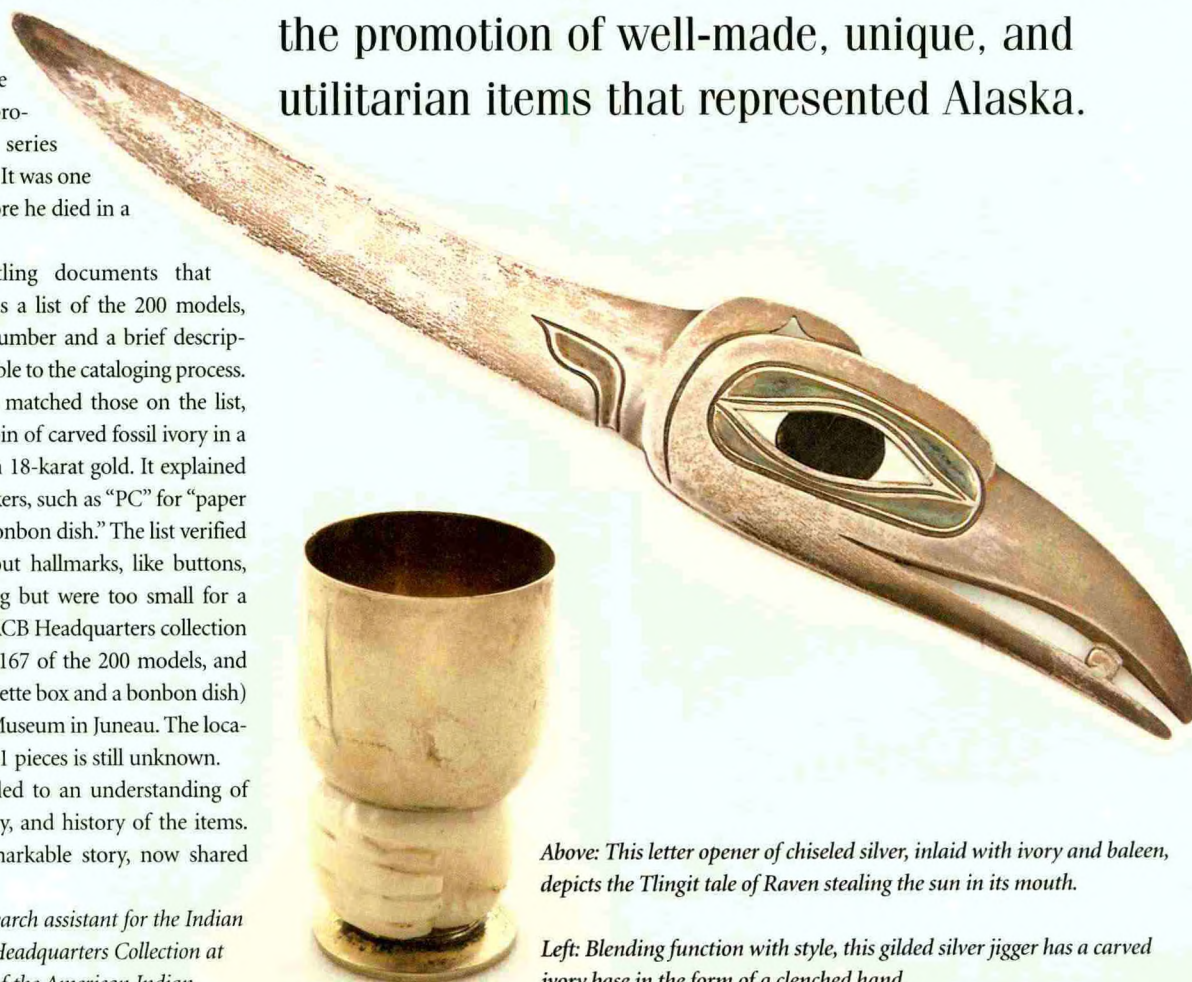
The WS hallmark led to an understanding of the style, form, imagery, and history of the items. The models tell a remarkable story, now shared after 50 years. ■

Anya Montiel is the research assistant for the Indian Arts and Crafts Board Headquarters Collection at the National Museum of the American Indian.



A pair of silver salad servers with carved fossil ivory handles in the shape of whales.

Spratling recommended a shift away from souvenir production and a move toward the promotion of well-made, unique, and utilitarian items that represented Alaska.



Above: This letter opener of chiseled silver, inlaid with ivory and baleen, depicts the Tlingit tale of Raven stealing the sun in its mouth.

Left: Blending function with style, this gilded silver jigger has a carved ivory base in the form of a clenched hand.

Coyote's Place

Hi, friends. I have a riddle for you. What is small and round, has a hole in the middle, and comes in many bright colors?

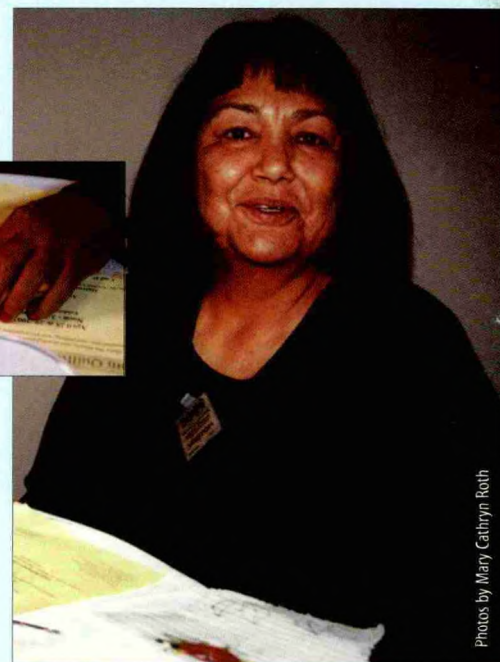
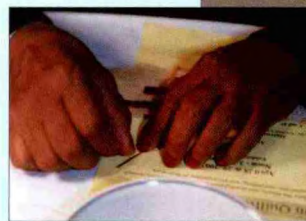
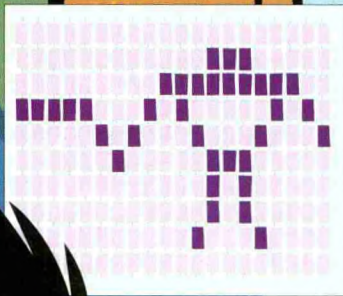
If you guessed a doughnut, guess again! The answer is B-E-A-D-S. I love beads and beadwork. Today, beads decorate Native American clothing, jewelry, and other items like key chains and even tennis shoes. When the Europeans first arrived in America, they traded small glass beads to Indian people. Before that, Native people had used shells, bones, seeds, and porcupine quills for decoration. These natural beads were and still are used for more than decoration. The designs made with them can tell a story or highlight a significant event.

The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) use beads made from shells to create wampum belts. Some of these wampum belts represent important events such as the signing of treaties. Treaties are agreements made between two nations. Paul Betancourt (Seneca) tells us about wampum in the gallery guide [All Roads Are Good, Haudenosaunee: People of the Longhouse](#). Paul writes that the Haudenosaunee use purple and white beads to make wampum belts. Artists cut pieces from quahog (kwa-hog) clam shells and use bowdrills to cut a small hole in the shell.

Among many Native nations, porcupine quills were the most prominent source of decoration before beads. When quills are soaked in water, they become soft and easy to bend. Native women use the quills to make beautiful

designs on clothing like shirts and jackets. Recently, Ina McNeil (Hunkpapa Lakota) gave quillwork demonstrations at the George Gustav Heye Center. Ina softens the quills in a bowl of water. Once the quills are softened, she flattens them, and then she folds and sews them into beautiful designs.

Expert quillworkers easily became experts with beads. The beads were larger than quills and were usually white, black, or blue. These beads are called "pony beads" because the traders traveled in wagons pulled by ponies. Later, the beads came in many colors and were much smaller. These beads are named "seed beads." Beadwork patterns can tell a story and may even identify where a person comes from. For example, many Native people who live near trees and flowers in the Northeast Woodlands use these designs in their beadwork. Plains Indians often use triangles, rectangles, and many other geometric shapes in their designs.



Ina McNeil flattens porcupine quill.

By Shawn Termin & Johanna Gorelick



Photo by Katherine Fogden

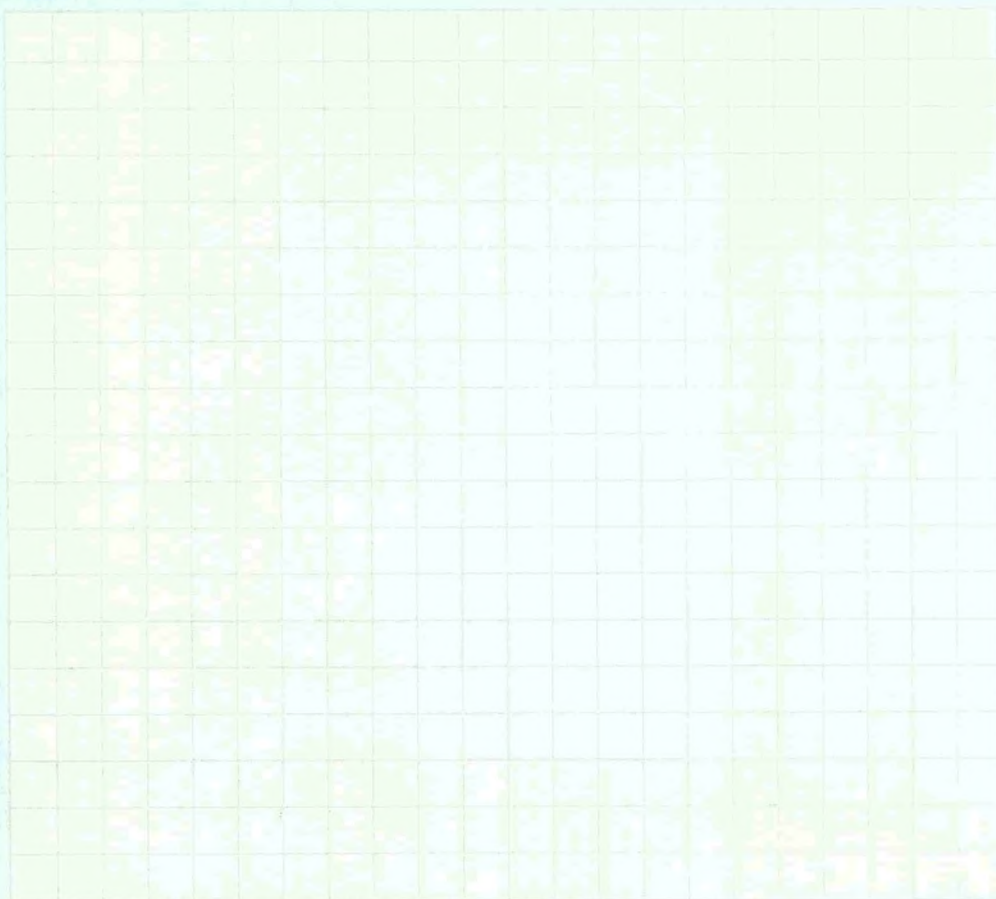
Apsaalooke (Crow)
ca. 1880

Photo by Mary Cathryn Roth

This shirt is a fine example of beaded geometric designs popular with Plains Indians such as the Crow, Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho. Study this shirt and see how many different geometric shapes you can find.



Design Challenge: Beadworkers often plan their designs on paper before they begin beading. Use the grid below to create your own design. Create a pattern that is special just for YOU!



Meet my friend

Emil Her Many Horses (Oglala Lakota). Emil is an award-winning beadworker who grew up on the Plains on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. Emil enjoys creating beadwork patterns in his mind and seeing them come to life in his beadwork. Emil is an associate curator at the National Museum of the American Indian and is the lead curator for the future exhibition Our Universes in the NMAI Mall Museum in Washington, D.C.



Photo by David Heald

Ojibwe Bandolier Bag, ca. 1890

With its fruit and floral patterns, this Ojibwe bandolier bag is an excellent example of Woodland designs. Ojibwe men wore the bandolier bags beaded by women. It could take up to one year for a woman to bead a bag as beautiful as this.

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(Hopi/Tewa)
with accessories
designed by notable
Native American artists.

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WENDY MCEAHERN



CALENDAR of EVENTS

MAY/JUNE/JULY 2002

EXHIBITIONS

Through September 1

SPIRIT CAPTURE: NATIVE AMERICANS AND THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE

This exhibition explores the meaning of photographic images of and by Native Americans in order to communicate Native perspectives about the cultural history and experiences of Native peoples during the past 150 years. Photographer, subject, and viewer are considered as the exhibition seeks to reveal the understandings of the people in the photographs, while examining the roles and motives of those who created the images. Drawing upon the National Museum of the American Indian's photo archive of approximately 125,000 images, the exhibition was curated by Richard W. Hill, Sr. (Tuscarora) and Natasha Bonilla-Martinez. A catalog is available in the museum shop for \$29.95.

Through May 19

ACROSS BORDERS: BEADWORK IN IROQUOIS LIFE



Photo by Katherine Fogden

Mohawk bird figure (1906). Maker unknown

Exploring the artistic, cultural, economic, and political significance of beadwork in the lives of Iroquois people, this traveling exhibition also examines the fascinating ways in which beadwork has been used to cross cultural boundaries and create a dialogue between Native and non-Native peoples. More than 300 stunning examples

of beadwork are on display – including clothing, moccasins, souvenir pincushions, and beaded picture frames – dating from the mid-19th century to the present. The exhibition is organized and circulated by the McCord Museum, Montreal, and the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, N.Y., in collaboration with the Kanien'kehaka Raotitiohkwa Cultural Center, Kahnawake, the Tuscarora Nation community beadworkers within New York State, and the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. No catalog is available.

Through April 28

ALL ROADS ARE GOOD: NATIVE VOICES ON LIFE AND CULTURE

Twenty-three Native American selectors from throughout the Western Hemisphere chose more than 300 objects from the museum's collection to display for their artistic, spiritual, and personal significance. A catalog is available in the museum shop for \$29.95.

Opening April 26, 2002 - October 2002

BOOMING OUT: MOHAWK IRONWORKERS BUILD NEW YORK

This exhibition presents photographic images depicting Mohawk peoples engaged in ironworking. The exhibition will be a powerful visual representation of how Mohawk communities and individuals have contributed to America's unique and unparalleled cityscapes, with a focus on New York City.

Opening July 21, 2002 - March 15, 2003

GREAT MASTERS OF MEXICAN FOLK ART

Featuring more than 600 masterworks from all 31 states of the Mexican Republic, this exhibition offers a comprehensive view of the most exceptional contemporary folk art of Mexico. Nearly 200 master artists draw from their ancestral traditions, dating back more than 1,000 years in some cases. The artists employ a vast array of materials, including clay, wood, straw, leather, feathers, silk, cotton, metals, and stone. This traveling exhibition is organized and sponsored by the Fomento Cultural Banamex A.C. based in Mexico City. The exhibition has been made possible by the generous support of Banamex Citigroup, Corona Extra, CONACULTA (National Council for Culture and Arts), Tequila Herradura, and Aeromexico. A catalog will be available in the museum shop.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

2002 CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

May 18 and 19, noon - 5 p.m., Museumwide

This two-day festival offers many fun and educational activities for the whole family to enjoy. Take the opportunity to:

- Learn Iroquois social dances with the group Ganondagan's Young Spirit Dancers.
- Listen to the teachings of Mother Earth as Renee Hill (Mohawk) tells Iroquois stories with the help of her puppet friends.
- Make Iroquois cornhusk dolls and pony-bead bracelets.

- Learn about Native objects in the Discovery Room.
- Join Mohawk ironworker Jerry McDonald as he discusses Tools of the Trade.
- Explore the Across Borders gallery exhibition to earn your honorary museum educator certificate.
- Watch various videos and films.

This program is generously funded by the Rudin Foundation.

ART TALK

In collaboration with the American Indian Community House (AICH) Gallery, the NMAI presents a visual lecture by Melanie Printup Hope (Tuscarora) as she discusses her work featured in the AICH Gallery exhibition Digital Vision Quest.

May 10, noon - 1 p.m.
Video Viewing Room



Photo by Martin Loft

HISTORY OF MOHAWK IRONWORK

Kanataktá (Mohawk), curator of Booming Out: Mohawk Ironworkers Build New York, will lead an in-depth gallery program sharing the history of Mohawk ironworking in his community of Kahnawake.

June 7 and 8, 2:00 pm
Photo Gallery

WORKSHOPS AT THE NMAI

IROQUOIS-STYLE BEADED PURSE WORKSHOP

Pauline Kahsennenhawe Loft (Mohawk), a Kahnawake beadworker who specializes in Iroquois raised beadwork and is featured in the exhibition Across Borders: Beadwork in Iroquois Life, will conduct this two-day workshop. For ages 12 and above, with a \$10 materials fee (\$8 for museum members). Pre-registration required; call (212) 514-3714.

June 1 and 2, noon - 4 p.m.
Education Classroom, 2nd Floor

MEXICAN EMBROIDERY WORKSHOP

Angela Friedlander (Métis), an NMAI cultural interpreter, will conduct a three-day beginner/intermediate workshop on Mexican-style embroidery. The workshop will tour and discuss the exhibit Great Masters of Mexican Folk Art. The first session will be devoted to learning and practicing basic embroidery techniques, the second session to planning and executing designs and patterns, and the third and final session to finishing projects. For ages 16 and up, with a materials fee of \$10 (\$8 for museum members). Pre-registration is required; call (212) 514-3714.

July 25, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
July 27, noon - 4 p.m.
August 3, noon - 4 p.m.
Education Classroom, 2nd Floor



Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian

PUBLIC PROGRAMS (continued)

Norman Cohn © Iglook Isuma Productions



Atanarjuat (Natar Ungalaaq) and his brother Amaqjuaq (Pakkak Unukshuk) share a joke in Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner.

JUST-FOR-KIDS WORKSHOPS

This series of workshops is especially for kids. Each workshop focuses on a different Native American culture or theme and includes a hands-on activity. Parents/chaperones are required to attend and assist their children. Workshops are free, but pre-registration is required; call (212) 514-3714.

AIR, WATER, FIRE, AND EARTH: CLAY STORYTELLING

Join NMAI Cultural Interpreter William Vargas (Kichua) as he leads a hands-on workshop on how Native people tell stories using designs and shapes in clay. Participants will use clay to tell a story of their own.

June 6, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
Education Classroom, 2nd Floor

FRIENDSHIP BRACELETS

Cultural Interpreter Juanita Velasco (Maya) leads a hands-on workshop to make friendship bracelets. Friendship bracelets are exchanged between friends to make their friendship deeper and more memorable.

June 20, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
June 22, 10 a.m. - noon and 1 - 3 p.m.
Education Classroom, 2nd Floor

BEADED BRACELET & NECKLACE

Amy Tallchief (Osage), NMAI cultural interpreter, conducts a hands-on bracelet and necklace-making workshop to introduce children to the idea and art of beading.

June 27, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
Education Classroom, 2nd Floor

IROQUOIS CORNHUSK DOLL WORKSHOP

Make an Iroquois-style cornhusk doll with Amy Tallchief (Osage).

July 11, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
Education Classroom, 2nd Floor

AT THE MOVIES

New York previews and premieres of new feature films celebrate the work of Native American directors, actors, and community activists. Reservations required; call (212) 514-3737 or send email to FVC@si.edu.

May 2 and 4

EYE ON ZACH KUNUK

Presenting the award-winning film that won at Cannes and swept the 2002 Genie Awards (Canada's Oscars) and a retrospective of the writer and director's independent video.

Atanarjuat

ATANARJUAT/THE FAST RUNNER

(2001, 172 min., 35mm). In Inuktitut with English subtitles. Canada. Director: Zacharias Kunuk (Inuit). Writer: Paul Apak Angilurq (Inuit) (1954-1998). Director of photography: Norman Cohn. Produced by: Iglook Isuma Productions. Starring: Natar Ungalaaq (Inuit) as Atanarjuat, Paul Qulitaliq (Inuit) as Quitaliq, and Mary Qulitaliq as Nuriuniq.

This is the first Native-language feature film written, directed, and acted by Inuit people. An exciting action-thriller set in ancient Iglookik (in what is now Canada), the film unfolds as a life-threatening struggle between powerful natural and supernatural characters. Winner of the Camera d'Or Best First Feature Award at the 2001 Cannes Film Festival, the Claude Jutra Award 2002, and five Genie Awards for best picture, best director, best screenplay, best original score, and best editing. New York sneak preview; U.S. theatrical release scheduled for June 7.

May 2, 6 - 9 p.m.

Auditorium

ZACH KUNUK: A RETROSPECTIVE

All works are video in Inuktitut with English subtitles.

QAGGIQ/GATHERING PLACE

(1988, 58 min.) The first of a trilogy of dramatic works loosely set in the 1930s about the Iglookik Inuit in Arctic Canada. In late winter, four families build a large,

communal igloo to celebrate the season with games, singing, and drumming. A young man, seeking a wife, gets a no from the girl's father, but her mother says yes.

NUNAQA/GOING INLAND (1991, 58 min.) Summer is the time to walk inland and hunt caribou for the hard winter ahead. Two families go on the hunt, while an old couple awaits their return. Second in the trilogy.

SAPUTI/FISH TRAP

(1993, 30 min.) As summer ends, three families build a saputi to trap fish. Young people daydream while they wait, but nature is not always predictable. Third in the trilogy.

ANGIRAQ/HOME (1994, 30 min.) One of 13 episodes produced for Nunavut/Our Land. This story looks at events in Iglookik while the men are away for the seal hunt in the fall of 1945.

May 4, 2 - 5 p.m.
Auditorium

July 18 and 20

EYE ON CHRIS EYRE

From the director of the highly acclaimed Smoke Signals, NMAI premieres a new feature film.

SKINS (2001, 84 min.) New York premiere (world premiere at 2002 Sundance Film Festival). Director: Chris Eyre (Cheyenne-Arapaho). Writer: Jennifer D. Lyne; based on a novel by Adrian C. Louis (Paiute). Producer: David Pomier. Starring: Graham Greene (Oneida) as Rudy Yellow Lodge, Eric Shweig (Inuit and Chippewa) as Mogie Yellow Lodge, and Gary Farmer (Cayuga) as Verdell. Skins tells the story of the unconditional love between two brothers who live on the Pine Ridge Reservation. They find themselves on different paths after coming home from Vietnam. Rudy gets a college degree and a job; Mogie turns to the alcoholism that devastated his family and his Lakota tribe for years. Angry about the lack of change on the reservation, Rudy takes matters into his own hands, going on a vigilante quest to save his community. Discussion following the screening with Chris Eyre and lead actor Graham Greene.

July 18 and 20
Auditorium

At the Movies, presented May - October 2002, is made possible with funds from the New York State Council on the Arts. With thanks for support from Lot 47 Distribution Company and First Look Media.

FILM/VIDEO

For information on Native film, video, radio, television, and multimedia throughout the Americas, visit www.nativenetworks.si.edu (English) or www.redesindigenas.si.edu (Spanish).

DAILY SCREENINGS

Programs start at 1 p.m. Repeated Thursdays at 5:30 p.m.
Video Viewing Room, 2nd Floor
May 5 - August 4

NATIVE DIRECTORS/SHORT WORKS

May 5 - 17

AYOUWIN: A WAY OF LIFE (1996, 28 min.) Paul Rickard (Cree). Canada. The videomaker documents his father as he follows old ways of hunting and trapping in northern Quebec.

HOCAC ECOLOGY (1997, 21 min.) Daryl Lonetree (Hocak-Iowa-Dakota). United States. A community production teaches Hocak (Winnebago) language and values.

QAGGIQ/THE GATHERING PLACE (1989, 58 min.) Zacharias Kunuk (Inuit). Canada. Villagers of Iglookik in Arctic Canada recreate an earlier time in a drama about matchmaking between families.

No screening at 5:30 on Thursday, May 2. See At the Movies.

For May 18 and 19, see Children's Festival.

May 20 - June 9

SONG JOURNEY (1994, 57 min.) Arlene Bowman (Navajo). United States. The filmmaker travels the powwow trail to learn about women's role in Native music.

HOZHO OF NATIVE WOMEN (1997, 28 min.) Beverly Singer (Tewa-Navajo). United States. Four women in community wholeness and wellness programs talk about their work.

June 10 - 30

LIGHTING THE SEVENTH FIRE (1995, 48 min.) Sandra Sunrise Osawa (Makah). United States. Documents the Chippewa's struggle against anti-Indian racism and the treaty fishing rights issue in Wisconsin.

TENACITY (1994, 10 min.) Chris Eyre (Cheyenne-Arapaho). United States. A tragic encounter between two Native boys and travelers on a reservation road.

SISKYAVI (1991, 28 min.) Victor Masayeva Jr. (Hopi). United States. Through documentary and drama, the videomaker explores the meaning of Hopi pottery within and outside the culture.

ASÍ ES MI TIERRA/MY HOMELAND IS LIKE THIS (1996, 24 min.) Mexico. Juan José García (Zapotec). Traditional healers from San Cristóbal Chichicastepec, Oaxaca, explain their approach to healing and demonstrate a variety of remedies for illnesses.

MOOJK/CORN (1996, 21 min.) Mexico. Tito Antúnez Núñez (Mixe). Corn is central to the Mixe of Oaxaca's connection to Mother Earth as well as a basic source of sustenance.

Monday, Sept. 16 - Sunday, Oct. 6
MAYA TV: TIME WARPS (1985, 10 min.) United States. David Pentecost and Lyn Tiefenbacher.

POPOL VUH (1989, 57 min.) United States. Patricia Amlin.

No screening at 5:30 on Thursday, Sept. 26. See *At the Movies*.

Monday, Oct. 7 - Sunday, Oct. 27
These productions are in indigenous languages and Spanish with English subtitles

PIDIENDO VIDA/PETITION TO LIFE (1993, 48 min.) Mexico. Guillermo Monteforte. Mexicanero and Tepehuano Indians make offerings to preserve and protect life's resources in an elaborate ritual in Durango.

VIKO NDUTE/WATER FESTIVAL (1995, 22 min.) Mexico. Emigdio Julián Caballero (Mixtec). This film examines a rain-making ritual and its significance for a Mixtec community in Oaxaca.

ADDRESS:

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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 sites?
<http://www.AmericanIndian.si.edu>
<http://www.conexus.si.edu>

ESPECIALLY FOR KIDS

Programs start at 11 a.m. and at noon unless otherwise noted. Video Viewing Room, second floor.

Monday, Aug. 5 - Sunday, Aug. 25
Program daily, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

POPOL VUH (1989, 57 min.) United States. Patricia Amlin. The great Maya creation epic is told through animation adapted from ancient Maya pottery and books.

THE IROQUOIS (1993, 30 min.) United States. Henry Nevison for the Indians of North America series. Interviews with contemporary Iroquois are featured in this brief history of the Six Nations since the arrival of Europeans.

ONENHAKENRA: WHITE SEED (1984, 20 min.) United States. Frank Semmens for the Akwesasne Museum. Mohawks from the Akwesasne Reservation in New York tell the story of the origins of corn and demonstrate its continuing importance to the Iroquois people today.

Monday, Aug. 26 - Sunday, Sept. 15

AGUAS CON EL BOTAS (1994, 10 min.) Mexico. Dominique Jonard. In Spanish. An animation by Nahua children of coastal Mexico tells the story of their town and their relationship to the sea turtle.

SKYWALKERS/IROQUOIS WOMEN: THE THREE SISTERS/THE GREAT LAW OF THE IROQUOIS (1998, 34 min.) United States. Pat Ferrero. Produced by the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Videos on Iroquois life include interviews with ironworkers, the role of women in Iroquois culture, and the spiritual teachings of the Great Law of Peace.

LAS OLLAS DE SAN MARCOS (1992, 11 min.) Mexico. Teófila Palafox (Ikoods). Women of a Zapotec village in Mexico make large ollas or clay pots.

Monday, Sept. 16 - Sunday, Oct. 6

KLUSCAP AND HIS PEOPLE AND CREATION (1992, 12 min.) United States. Produced by the Indian Island Intermediate School, Maine. Two animations by Penobscot children tell of the creation of the world, the people, and the animals.

AGUAS CON EL BOTAS (1994, 10 min.) Dominique Jonard. Mexico. In Spanish. An animation by Nahua children of coastal Mexico tells the story of their town and their relationship to the sea turtle.

TOKA (1994, 24 min.) United States. David Wing and Cyndee Wing. Tohono O'odham women and girls of Arizona play an exciting form of stickball.

RARAMURI: PIE LIGERO (1994, 10 min.) Mexico. Dominique Jonard.

Drawings and voices of Raramuri Indian children from northern Mexico bring to life a traditional ball game.

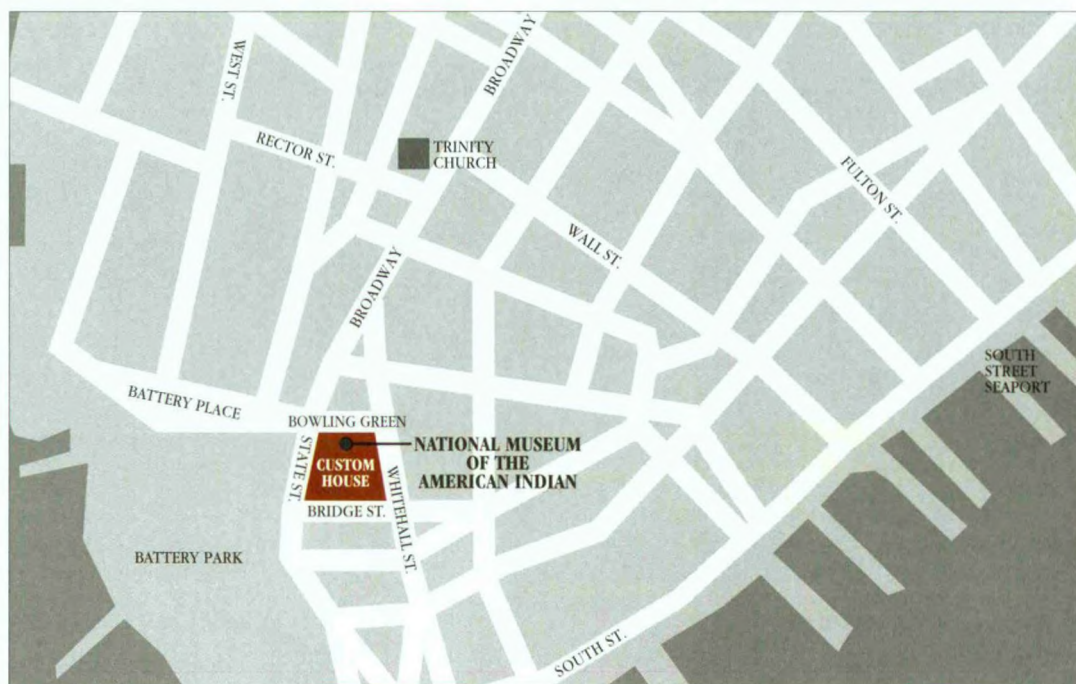
Monday, Oct. 7 - Sunday, Oct. 27
SHARING ONE EARTH (1993, 20 min.) United States. Produced by the Indian Island Intermediate School, Maine. Penobscot and non-Indian students share in a cultural exchange and filmmaking project.

RARAMURI: PIE LIGERO (1994, 10 min.) Mexico. Dominique Jonard. Drawings and voices of Raramuri Indian children from northern Mexico bring to life a traditional ball game.

TOTEM TALK (1997, 22 min.) Canada. Annie Frazier-Henry (Sioux-Blackfoot-French). Computer-animated clan totems teach urban youth the importance of their Northwest Coast Native culture.

NATIVE CINEMA SHOWCASE

The Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian presents the **NATIVE CINEMA SHOWCASE** in Santa Fe, N.M. Co-produced with Taos Talking Pictures, Plan B Cinematheque and the Institute for American Indian Arts
August 12 - 18, 2002
For further information, please visit www.nativenetworks.si.edu or www.ttpix.org



LOCATION: The NMAI Heye Center is located at One Bowling Green in lower Manhattan. Subway: 4 & 5 to Bowling Green or N & R to Whitehall Street. 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 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. Rachahd Garguilo, Calendar Editor.



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*About the image: Circular Haida slate dish inlaid with bone. Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia, Canada. Photo by Katherine Fogden. 19.3518.



Hopi Olympian Lewis Tewanima

Carrying on a great Hopi tradition to become the first American to win a medal in the 10,000 meters

by **Patty Talahongva**

On any given day lone runners make their way along the mesas and Highway 264, which cuts across the Hopi Reservation in northern Arizona. Young and old, Hopi men and women pray as they run, giving thanks to the Creator for all of life's blessings. They pray for precious rain to water their fields of corn. They pray for good health. And they pray for all people throughout the world. In the morning, traditionally, the Hopi run to greet the sun. Running plays a key part in many ceremonies. For the Hopi, running is an exercise that focuses more on the spiritual than the physical. Lewis Tewanima followed this custom of running. In 1908 he became the first Hopi ever to compete in the Olympics.

Every Labor Day, Tewanima's family sponsors the Lewis Tewanima Footrace. When he returned home after his Olympic runs, Tewanima ran in village footraces. "When there was a race, people would say, 'The big C is coming up,' because he would wear his Carlisle (Indian School) jersey," says his great-great-granddaughter, Melanie Honwyteawa, a footrace coordinator.

Three hundred runners competed in the 10,000-meter, 5,000-meter, two-mile, and one-mile runs in the 28th annual race, held in August 2001. The course today follows some of the paths Tewanima ran. "I want people to remember him and keep the tradition of running, because that's part of being Hopi," says Lynette Shupla, another footrace organizer.

Tewanima actually competed in the Olympic games twice. For Sheila Nicholas, the Hopi Olympian was known to her as taaha, or "uncle." In 1997, as part of her research at the University of Arizona, Nicholas learned the story behind the Olympic glitter.

"Lewis was a resister," she explains. "He was

not resisting the white man's education. He was resisting the manner in which it was being imposed on Hopi peoples' way of life." Nicholas goes on to say that Tewanima spoke out against the forced removal of Hopi children from their families to attend government boarding schools.



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Some children stayed at the schools for years, returning to their families and villages much changed from their experience. "Parents couldn't see their kids even if they were just in Keams Canyon, 11 miles away from the nearest village," says Nicholas. Travel was difficult because cars were few and the roads were unpaved.

Tewanima was arrested in November 1906 along with several others. It is not clear what the actual charge was. According to an annual report by the U.S. War Department in 1907, 19 Hopi men were sent to the federal prison on Alcatraz Island for resisting the "Americanization" of Hopi youth. But Tewanima and 10 other Hopis were sent to the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, nearly 2,500 miles away. Nicholas estimates that Tewanima was in his thirties when he arrived at Carlisle.

In 1908, one year after his arrival, Tewanima made the U.S. Olympic track team. He traveled to London for his first Olympics and placed ninth

in the marathon. In 1912 he returned to the Olympic arena in Stockholm, along with his teammate, the great Jim Thorpe (Sauk and Fox). Winning the silver, Tewanima became the first American to win an Olympic medal in the 10,000-meter race. It would be 52 years until another American won an Olympic 10,000-meter medal, when Billy Mills, an Oglala Lakota runner, won the gold medal at the Tokyo games, setting a new Olympic and American record.

Tewanima returned to his homeland after the Swedish games. Now in his forties, he resumed his life as a traditional Hopi, farming and attending to his ceremonial duties. He continued to run, but in his later years his running was reduced to herding sheep. Still, with that daily chore he covered 20 to 30 miles each day.

He died in January 1969, when he was about 90 years old. After spending

the evening in the kiva, praying during the winter ceremonies, he took a wrong turn in the dark, cold night and fell off the mesa edge. Nicholas was a young girl then and recalls the entire village searching for him all night. She stayed at the family home and kept vigil. Tewanima was buried within four days after his death following Hopi tradition.

Since then his family and several tribal members have honored him and his accomplishments in various ways. Anna Silas, manager of the Hopi museum on the Hopi Reservation in northeastern Arizona, helped get him inducted into the American Indian Hall of Fame in Anadarko, Okla., in 1990. He was inducted into the Arizona Sports Hall of Fame in 1957. "He's our only Hopi Olympian," says Shupla. "I don't want his name to die." ■

Patty Talahongva (Hopi) is an independent journalist and vice president of the Native American Journalists Association.

Illustration by Jeffrey Furrow

The Art of Inuit Storytelling

By Zacharias Kunuk

In 1957 I was born in a sod house at Kapuivik, my family's winter campsite. We lived happily, waking up with frozen sealskin boots for pillows. Government workers told my parents in 1965, "You should send your kids to school or you could lose your family allowance check." I was nine years old, getting ready to be like my father. The next summer, I was on a boat to Igloolik, the nearest settlement. While my parents lived a nomadic life on the land, I stayed in Igloolik, several hundred kilometers away – a day's trip by dog team – and learned English.

Movies were shown at the community hall in Igloolik. I remember watching John Wayne spearhead the U.S. cavalry and kill Indians. One time, scouts didn't return to the fort. In the next scene, as soldiers stared at arrows sticking out of dead soldiers, one said, "What kind of Indians did this?" I was shocked, too. As I became educated, I learned to think like the soldiers.

When I began to see myself as an Aboriginal person and a filmmaker, I learned there are different ways to tell a story. For 4,000 years, people in Igloolik learned who we were and where we came from without a written language. In the 1930s and '40s, missionaries preached Paul's epistles in Inuktitut to my parents and said, "Turn away from your old way of life." Fifty years of priests, schools, and cable TV silenced 4,000 years of oral history. In the 1970s, people in Igloolik voted twice against TV from the south since there was nothing in Inuktitut, nothing in it for us.

I noticed my father and his friends would sit down with tea and tell the story of their hunt. I thought it would be great to film hunting trips. In 1981, I sold some soapstone carvings and bought a video camera. Children often played around my house. When I watched my videos at home, I noticed they gathered outside my window, looking in to see the TV. In 1985, I received a Canada Council grant to produce an independent video from an Inuk point of view. I worked as the director, Paul Apak became the editor, Pauloosie Qulitalik was the cultural narrator, and Norman Cohn worked as the cameraman. This became our Isuma team.

Can Inuit bring storytelling into the new millennium? Can we listen to our elders before they all pass away? Can we save our youth from killing themselves at ten times the national rate? Can producing community TV in Igloolik make our community, region, and country stronger? Is



Illustration by Travis Schilling

there room in the world of filmmaking for our way of seeing ourselves?

To try to answer these questions, the Isuma team shows how our ancestors survived and how new ways of storytelling can help our community survive. Video and filmmaking are a new way of storytelling for the 21st century. Inuit storytelling is one of the world's oldest living art forms. As other cultures excelled at building temples or empires, making money, or waging war, Inuit learned to tell good stories: entertaining and suspenseful enough to keep listeners spellbound, carrying complex cultural information hidden in multiple layers of meaning. The feature film *Atanarjuat* is part of this stream of oral history. *Atanarjuat* marks the first time Inuit storytelling has been made widely accessible to the world. The filmmaking style sought to be visually compelling, quietly intelligent, and surprisingly funny. True to Inuit storytelling

practice, the closer you watch, the more you see.

Our company name, Isuma, means "to think." Our building in Igloolik's center has a big sign on the front that says "Isuma." Think. Almost 60 percent of Igloolik's population of 1,200 was involved in making *Atanarjuat*. We had an all-Inuit cast entirely from our town. Local artists and elders handmade all costumes, props, and sets for the film, drawing on Inuit oral history and traditional knowledge and the journals of Arctic explorers. We, at Isuma, create traditional artifacts, digital multimedia, and needed jobs – all in the same activity. Our productions give a view for all to see where we came from, what Inuit were able to do then, and what we are able to do now. ■

Zacharias Kunuk (Inuit) is president of Igloolik Isuma Productions and director of the world's first Inuit feature film, Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner.

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