

PREMIERE ISSUE

NATIONAL MUSEUM of the
American Indian

Winter 2000

Celebrating Native Traditions & Communities

**FOR NMAI
CHARTER
MEMBERS
ONLY!**

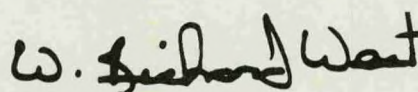
Dear NMAI Charter Member,

I would like to welcome you to the inaugural issue of *American Indian*, the official publication of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.

This quarterly publication is an exclusive benefit of NMAI Charter Membership, replacing *Native Peoples* as your window on the rich cultural heritage and traditions of the first peoples of this hemisphere.

Thank you for your steadfast support of the National Museum of the American Indian and our mission. We hope you enjoy this premiere issue.

Sincerely,



W. Richard West

(Southern Cheyenne)

Founding Director

P.S. We welcome your comments about our new publication as we want to make *American Indian* the very best it can be. Write to us at: NMAI Member Services, PO Box 23473, Washington, D.C. 20026-3473. Or e-mail us at: aimember@nmai.si.edu.



Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian

NATIONAL MUSEUM *of the*
American Indian

Winter 2000

Celebrating Native Traditions & Communities



Welcome! Our premiere
issue marks the beginning
of a new era for NMAI

☀ Smithsonian

Congratulations

To The
National Museum
of the
American Indian
on this
Inaugural Edition



From The
Oneida Indian Nation
and Indian Country Today



Supporting
Native Americans
in Journalism



AN ENTERPRISE
OF THE ONEIDA
INDIAN NATION



Photo by David Head



Volume 1, Number 1
Winter 2000

About the Cover:

When The New York Times recently asked the National Museum of the American Indian what object in its collection would be most representative 100 years hence, it provided a moment of reflection and contemplation for us. Surprisingly, in this acclaimed collection of more than 800,000 objects that spans a tenfold of millennia, we quickly determined that a single 20th-century object is our choice.

Maria and Julian Martinez's circa 1930 black-on-black plate boldly symbolizes the vitality of Native cultures and the resurgence that few expected. For the Martinez's San Ildefonso Pueblo in New Mexico, this striking pottery that combines ancient pathways and contemporary adaptation continues to symbolize a brighter future. It is this hopeful and very real change for Native communities that led us to place this seminal object of art and culture as the cover image of our new publication.

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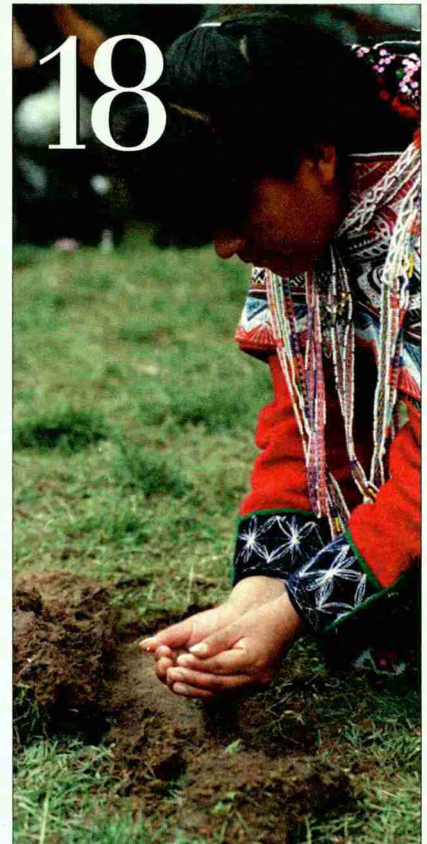
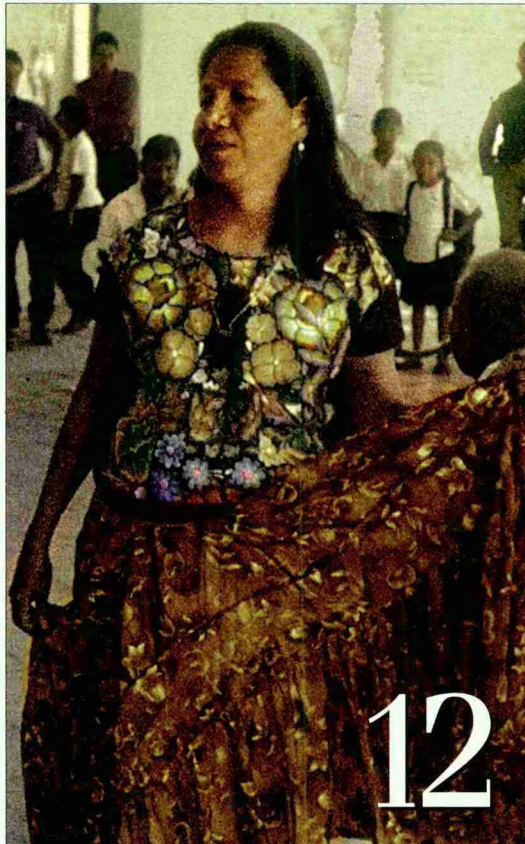
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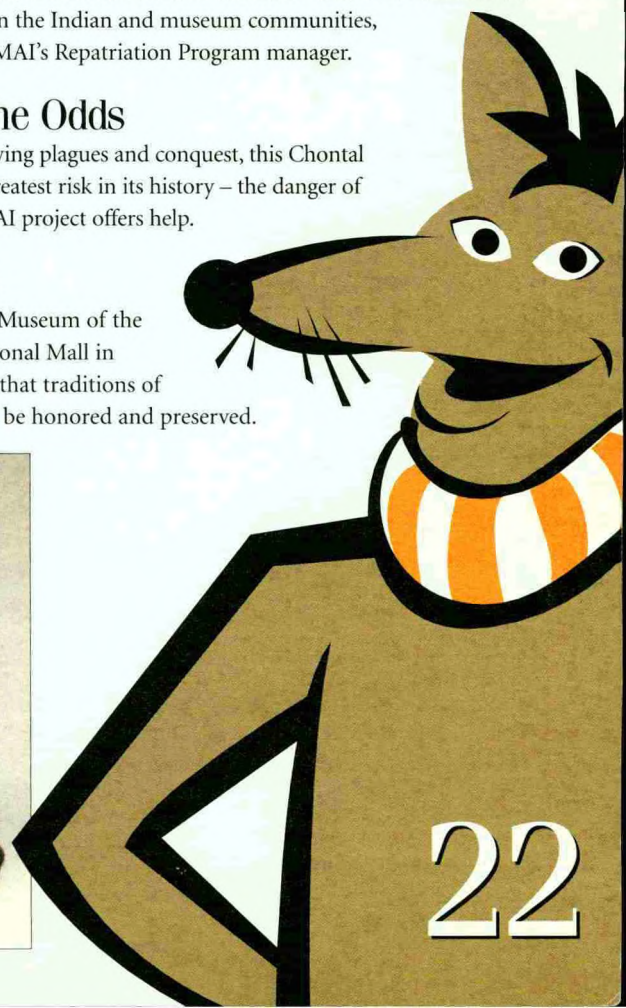
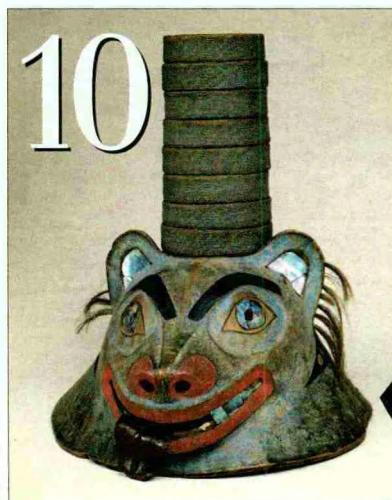
Repatriation signifies a healing between the Indian and museum communities, according to Jim Pepper Henry, the NMAI's Repatriation Program manager.

12 Chontal Are Defying the Odds

Having lasted half a millennium, surviving plagues and conquest, this Chontal community in Mexico now faces the greatest risk in its history – the danger of losing its lands and traditions. An NMAI project offers help.

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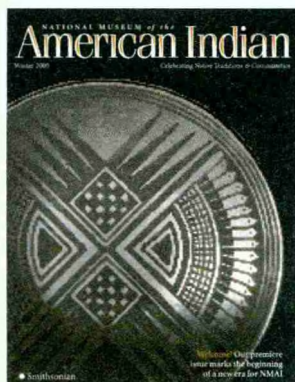
The groundbreaking for the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., signaled a promise that traditions of Native peoples of the Americas would be honored and preserved.



NATIONAL MUSEUM of the Smithsonian American Indian

Volume 1, Number 1, Winter 2000

Celebrating Native Traditions & Communities



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American Indian (ISSN 1528-0640) is published quarterly by the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), 470 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Suite 7103, Washington, D.C. 20560-0943. Periodicals postage pending at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. *American Indian* is a benefit of NMAI membership and constitutes \$8 of an individual's annual membership. Basic membership is \$20. Articles may be reprinted at no charge provided that by-lines are retained and the name "Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian" is fully credited. Letters to the Editor are welcome. Write to us at: NMAI, Office of Public Affairs, P.O. Box 23473, Washington, D.C., 20026-3473. Telephone: (202) 357-3164. Or e-mail letters to the editor to aieditor@nmai.si.edu To become a NMAI Charter Member, call 1-800-242-NMAI (6624) or write NMAI, National Campaign Office, P.O. Box 23473, Washington, D.C., 20026-3473. Or visit NMAI's web site at www.si.edu/nmai or e-mail us at aimember@nmai.si.edu For change of address requests for Charter Members, please call 1-800-242-NMAI (6624). Postmaster send change of addresses to *American Indian* P.O. Box 23473, Washington, D.C. 20026-3473.

The Beginning of a New Era

It is my pleasure to welcome and introduce you to the premiere issue of *American Indian*, the National Museum of the American Indian's new quarterly publication. Our staff has been hard at work for many months creating and developing this visually striking publication that celebrates Native traditions and communities. We hope to provide you with a direct link to hemispheric Native communities where traditional and contemporary Native cultures often coexist and strengthen one another.

The first step in creating *American Indian* began, as does nearly every museum initiative here, with a consultation meeting involving prominent Native journalists from throughout the nation. They helped us create a vision for this publication that delivers the energy and spirit of the National Museum of the American Indian in its work throughout the hemisphere.

This vitality is reflected in the publication's mission statement and, we believe, in its lively premiere issue content: "*American Indian* shall reflect the historic and contemporary cultures of the Native peoples of the Americas by telling their stories in new and meaningful ways. The publication will educate its readership about the tremendous cultural diversity of Native communities, while dispelling common stereotypes and misconceptions. The publication will tell the story of National Museum of the American Indian exhibitions, public programs, community services, and collaborations with Native peoples through the first-person Native voice and through tribal perspectives whenever possible." As a result of this emphasis, we believe that *American Indian* will better inform you, our valued members and partners, about the work of the National Museum of the American Indian with tribal communities throughout the hemisphere.

As many of you know, the museum celebrated its first decade of existence last year. So it is entirely fitting, as we begin this new century, to launch this new and more in-depth way of communicating with you each season. There's much to report on as the hemisphere's Native communities continue to progress while reclaiming and strengthening their cultures. As always, the museum stands ready to assist. Closer to home, we will report on such topics as the start of construction of the Mall Museum in Washington this year; the ongoing move of our renowned collection into the new Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, Maryland, and

fascinating new exhibitions and programs at the George Gustav Heye Center in lower Manhattan. *American Indian* will keep you informed of these and other varied topics as we draw nearer to our much-anticipated centerpiece facility on the National Mall.

Through *American Indian*, we plan to provide you with a more intimate and detailed look at the other varied work that the NMAI and its dedicated staff is performing in collaboration with Native communities. For example, Richard Peterson's (Assiniboine and Sioux) story on page 12 describes how our curator Dr. Alicia González is collaborating on a long-range project to help save the traditions and rituals of the Chontal Indians who live in a 500-year-old coastal Mexican village.

We also offer "Coyote's Place," a new children's section for children, grandchildren, and young friends of our members. There is an established and treasured Native tradition of teaching our young people tribal culture and wisdom at an early age. We hope to expand this custom by delighting, entertaining, and educating young readers with "Coyote's Place."

For all of our readers, we developed the "Did You Know" feature to highlight a little-known but important fact about Native history and accomplishment. "Did You Know" debuts with our account of an American Indian who rose to become vice president of the United States.

We take you on a journey to Alaska to experience the profound joy experienced recently by a small and enduring Native community there. A joyful and touching account of a recent repatriation by the museum is told by Rita Pyrillis (Cheyenne River Sioux) on page 10. We were extremely honored to return the Bear Clan Hat to the Tlingit people of Klukwan, Alaska. The founding legislation of the NMAI spells out our obligation to return remains and sacred objects as requested by Native communities. As NMAI repatriation manager Jim Pepper Henry (Kaw/Muscogee Creek) relates in the article, tribes throughout the hemisphere have claimed objects sparingly. He

notes that repatriation enriches tribal culture and museums alike. "The museum community will gain more knowledge, a greater understanding of humanity by investing back into these cultures."

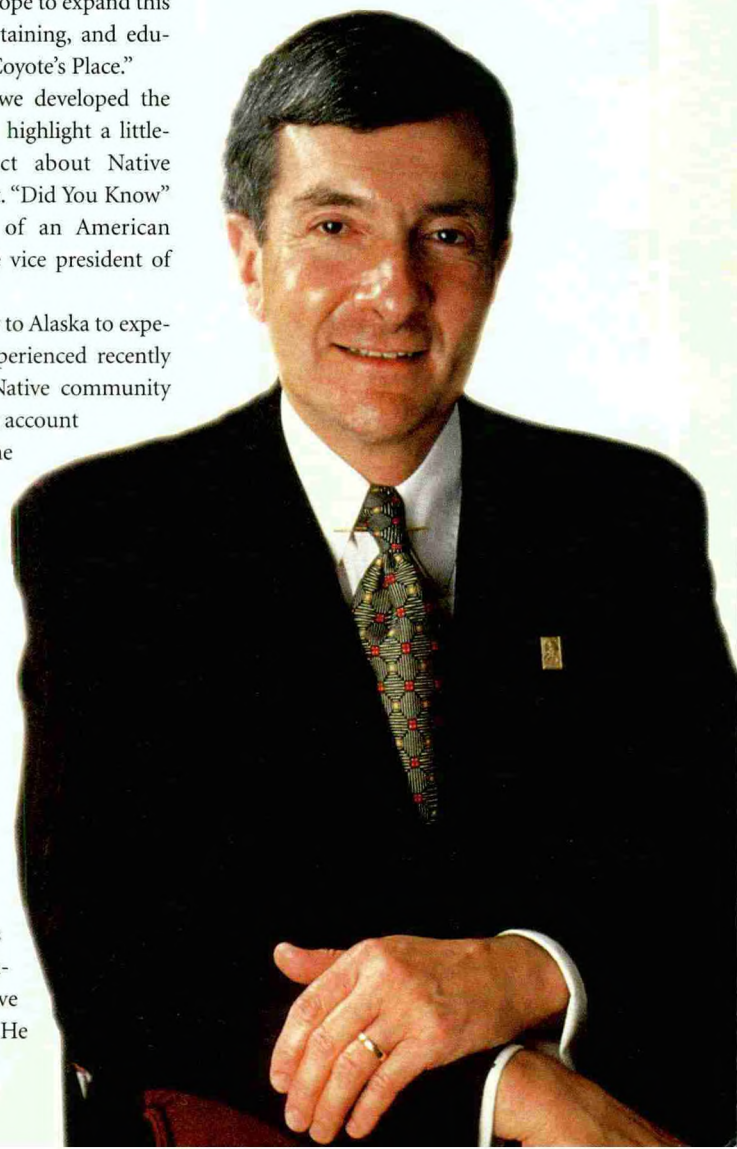
It is my sincere hope that *American Indian* will provide a closer link between you and the National Museum of the American Indian – and with the Native communities that we serve. We look forward to informing you every season of the progress, accomplishments, and collaborations established by the National Museum of the American Indian throughout our hemisphere.

W. Richard West

W. Richard West

Director

National Museum of the American Indian





Reservation X, which runs through Aug. 20, features installations produced by Nora Naranjo-Morse (top), Mateo Romero (above), Jolene Rickard (right) and four other contemporary artists from throughout North America.



Reservation X – A Study in Identity and Diversity

On April 9, the multimedia exhibition *Reservation X* will open to the public at the George Gustav Heye Center in New York City. Running through August 20, these installations by seven contemporary Native artists (three from Canada and four from the United States) pay homage to the bonds of community, inspiration, and the artists' personal and cultural identity. "Each artist is dealing with those issues, or tangential ones, in very different ways," says Peter Brill of the National Museum of the American Indian exhibitions department. Brill remarks that the highly personal and often abstract artistic expressions make it difficult to characterize the exhibition.

The installations – which include a class-

room setting, a conceptual "Big House" incorporating traditional and present-day West Coast designs, and a mural reminiscent of cave paintings – make use of photography, film, audio recordings, and CD-ROM as well as sculpture and painting. The seven featured artists are Mary Longman (Plains Cree), Nora Naranjo-Morse (Tewa), Marianne Nicholson (Kwakwaka'wakw), Shelley Niro (Mohawk), Jolene Rickard (Tuscarora), Mateo Romero (Tewa), and C. Maxx Stevens (Seminole).

Reservation X is curated by Gerald McMaster of the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC), where it was one of the inaugural exhibitions in the CMC's First Peoples' Hall in 1998. – Carrie Vaccaro

Consultation Provides Key to Inaugural Exhibitions

The National Museum of the American Indian's researchers are meeting with Native communities in North and Latin America to develop ideas for the three inaugural exhibitions in the NMAI's Mall Museum. The exhibitions titled *Our Universes*, *Our Peoples*, and *Our Lives*, will convey the philosophies, histories, and identities of Native people.

Craig Howe, (Lakota) deputy assistant director for cultural resources and curator of *Our Lives*, says the program is "a chance for these communities to present their truth," at the core of which "is a multiplicity of viewpoints about events. We're really working against the idea of the homogenous Native," he says.

Bruce Bernstein, assistant director for cultural resources, heads the team that includes Howe, Emil Her Many Horses (Lakota), and Cecile Ganteaume. "The Mall Museum is important," Bernstein comments, "but the majority of Native people will never make it there. So our partnership with their communities is also important."

It takes several months of preparation to have a community participate. After being invited into the community, the NMAI representatives meet with people who can identify key elements in tribal history, philosophy, and life. "We make a presentation to as many tribal members as possible," says Ganteaume, curator of *Our Peoples*. Ganteaume met with the Seminoles of Florida, the Eastern Band of Cherokees, the Kiowa, and the Chiricahua Apache communities between August and November last year. By late December the Seminole and Kiowa communities had each sent a delegation of tribal experts to the Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, Maryland, to participate in a workshop in which they viewed the collection and selected objects, photographs, and archival materials dealing with their tribal history.

"People in Native communities have their own ways of recalling the past," Ganteaume says. These ways are not "necessarily through oral tradition. They could be through ceremonies, songs, or the arts," she says.

Her Many Horses, curator of *Our Universes*, has worked with two Quechua communities from Peru and a Lakota delegation. These delegations also have traveled to the CRC to select exhibition objects. – Carrie Vaccaro

Different Paths to First Peoples

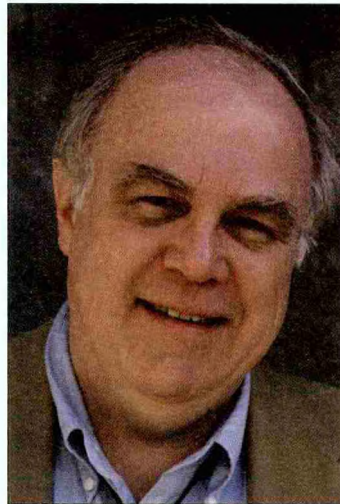
NMAI open forum seeks to reconcile different perspectives on human origins in the Americas

In October 1999, thinkers from various disciplines and backgrounds gathered to debate age-old questions concerning human origin: Who were the first peoples of the Americas? When did they first appear? Where did they live?

Native and non-Native scholars participated in the open forum, *American Indian Origins: Cultural, Historical, and Scientific Understandings*, held October 26 and 27, 1999, at the National Museum of the American Indian's George Gustav Heye Center in New York. The event marked the first forum in a series aimed at presenting topics affecting generations of indigenous peoples. Participants offered perspectives on American Indian origins from North, Central, and South America and included oral histories and academic viewpoints.

"One intent was to stimulate a dialogue that would continue beyond the conclusion of the event," says Tim Johnson (Mohawk), assistant director for community services. "In conceptualizing the forum, we hoped that the audience would ultimately recognize and appreciate that within the Indian world there exist multiple beliefs and diverse cultural understandings of our origins and emergence in the Western Hemisphere."

Renewed interest in the origins of the first peoples of the Americas was sparked by the July 1996 discovery of ancient human remains in Washington State. Radiocarbon-dated at about 9,200 years old, the "Kennewick Man," named after a town near the location on the Columbia River where he was discovered, has delineated the debate between adherents of American Indian and European traditions of knowledge more clearly than any other finding. Native peoples wish to claim the remains as an ancestor and reburial them. Scientists, directed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, are trying to identify the remains as a link to a modern



Robert W. Venables

"Hopefully, scholars will someday choose to include comparative cultural perspectives in their analyses."

people, unsuccessfully so far. Both groups seek to reconcile these lines of thought and come to a conclusion about the origin of Kennewick Man.

Human emergence in the Americas is a topic that is embraced by many fields, including archaeology, anthropology, linguistics, and religion. Details of the origins of the first peoples remain under constant evaluation. Long-established theories – such as that of the Bering Strait crossing, whereby scholars theorized that the Americas were originally populated by peoples native to Asia (Russia) who crossed over the strait into North America (Alaska) – are today questioned because of archaeological, geological, linguistic, and paleoenvironmental findings that suggest a much earlier human presence in

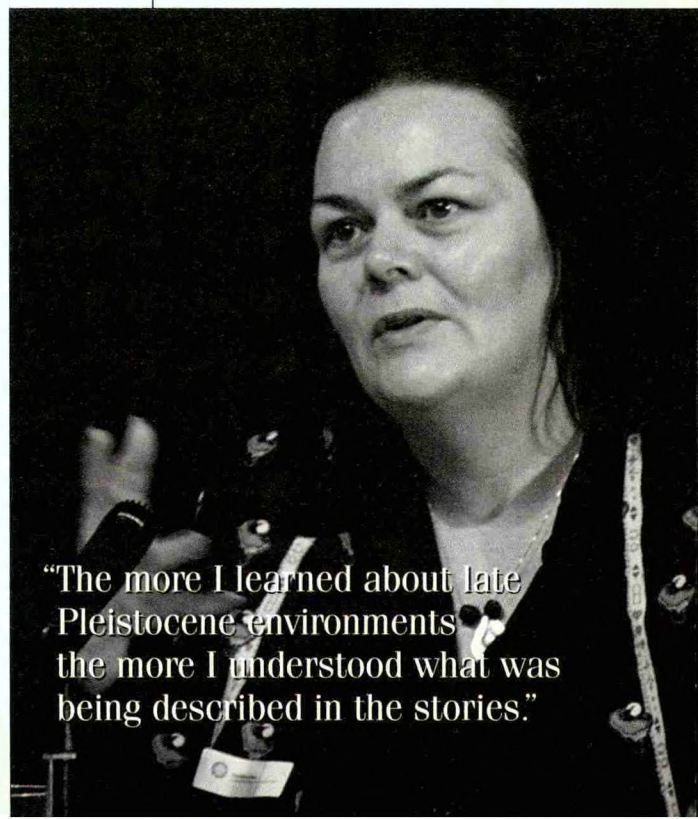
the Americas. Most scholars now recognize American Indians as the first peoples of the Western Hemisphere, and Indian oral histories, which are often associated with specific places and provide insight about the beginnings of human consciousness and the emergence of cultures and societies, increasingly are being considered alongside scientific evidence.

"Western scholars could learn so much from indigenous scholars. There are ancient and living histories that correlate with scientific evidence," says Heather Harris (Cree-Métis), professor of First Nations studies, University of Northern British Columbia. "I first thought that some of what

was related in the stories could not be reconciled to a Western perspective. As I began to realize how old the stories were, I came to understand many things that seemed fantastic were ordinary events and conditions of a time so long ago that the world was very different from what we know today. The more I learned about late Pleistocene environments the more I understood what was being described in the stories."

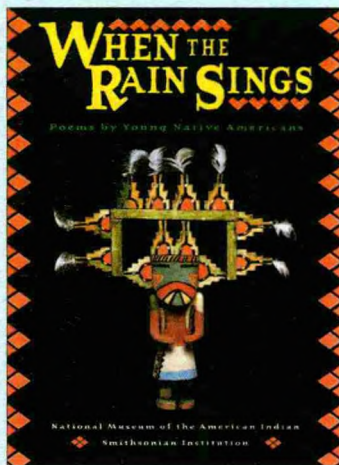
Mutual respect between representatives of indigenous and scientific communities characterized the forum presentations. "Hopefully, scholars dealing with the issues of the origins of American Indian peoples will someday choose to include comparative cultural perspectives in their analyses. Such cross-cultural comparisons, especially if set in a global rather than a regional context, would certainly broaden any issue they discuss," says Robert W. Venables, professor of history, Cornell University. "I believe that it is possible to work together to seek a broad conceptual bridge." – *Nicolasa I. Sandoval (Chumash)*

Below: Heather Harris (Cree-Métis) discussed the correlation of oral histories and scientific evidence in remembering the late Pleistocene in northwestern North America.



"The more I learned about late Pleistocene environments the more I understood what was being described in the stories."

New Book Celebrates New Voices



When the Rain Sings (ISBN: 0689822839) is available nationwide and at the George Gustav Heye Center gift shop in NYC in a hardcover edition for \$16.00. Call (212) 514-3767 for purchase information.

From the collaboration of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), the Woodcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers, ArtsReach, and Simon & Schuster comes a new book, *When the Rain Sings*. This anthology tells the story of the NMAI through poems by Indian children, ages seven to 17, written in response to pictures from the museum collection.

Even before it was available, the book started to attract attention: a forecast in *Bookselling This Week* announced, "This collection brings together young voices who have an amazing perspective on growing up. Truly beautiful and moving."

One of the most exciting discoveries in the book is Vena A-dae Romero (Cochiti-Kiowa), who is now attending Princeton University. Here is the second stanza of "Bingo Bread," written when she was only 14:

I make Folgers Crystals while gnawed by the keeper of sleep. The aroma of hot caffeine, bad breath, and yeast swirls in the air. The women's jiggling laughter calls up the sun waking the world and gentle junipers. I watch their hands work unconsciously, pounding and kneading the dough, making immaculate round loaves.

As the NMAI Director W. Richard West (Southern Cheyenne) writes in the Foreword: "This kind of dialogue [between the poets and objects] is of the utmost importance to us at NMAI, for not only does it help us to understand our own collection better, it also restores recognition of the life that we believe inhabits our objects."

New Facility Gives NMAI Collections a Fitting Home

"The world's greatest collection is finally going to be stored in an appropriate place," beams Pat Nietfeld, collections manager at the NMAI's Cultural Resources Center (CRC) in Suitland, Maryland, minutes outside Washington, D.C. She refers to the approximately 804,000 objects in NMAI's holdings that will be moved from the Research Branch in the Bronx, New York, to the CRC within five years. Nietfeld calls the New York Branch "stuffed, filled to the brim." The move to the CRC allows staff to better conserve the museum's collection and makes the objects more accessible for exhibitions.

By early December 1999, about 27,000 tribal collection objects had been shipped. An estimated 3,000 more are expected to arrive by January 31, 2000. Each tribal collection contains a wide range of items. "Garments, pottery, mocasins, decorative accessories – you name it and it's in there," says Scott Merritt, site manager and move coordinator at the Research Branch.

Collections already transferred include a comprehensive assemblage of Cherokee baskets and pipes, Seminole palmetto-fiber dolls, a coat owned by nineteenth-century Seminole war strategist Osceola, and many items from

Quechua-speaking peoples of South America, mainly those from Peru. Oversized objects – carved wooden house posts from various northwest tribes and a Kuna wooden dugout canoe from Panama – are also in storage at the larger CRC facility, as are Hopi and San Ildefonso pots and a canoe possibly of Pequot origin.

Photo Project Provides a Unique View of Hopi Life

Philton Selina's photograph *Repairing Womanhood* – featured in the exhibition *Real Village Kids: Photographs by Hopi Youth* – shows men rebuilding a Hopi *piki* house. In Hopi tradition, this small house is a place built for women to prepare *piki* bread, which is used in all aspects of ceremonial life. For Selina, the rebuilding of this house became a metaphor for the rebuilding of womanhood to his people.

"Hopi life means different things to different Hopi people at different stages of their lives," says Susan Secakuku (Hopi), NMAI program specialist.

Last summer Secakuku led the NMAI-supported project in two northern Arizona Hopi villages, Sipaulovi and Paaqavi. She introduced Hopi photographer Owen Seumtewa to the students: Dorian Dalton, Shirley Fred, Eriq James, Callie Nutongla, Deldrick Poleahla,

Philton Selina and Sivayah Tootsie. "Seumtewa taught [them] more than basic photography," says Secakuku. "He opened their eyes to another form of cultural expression."

This exhibition of 24 photographs will be displayed at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, and the Arizona State Museum, in Tucson, Arizona, beginning this spring. It was originally on view at the Hopi Cultural Center Museum at Second Mesa, Arizona.

New Video Introduces Visitors to NMAI's Maryland Center

Visitors to the Cultural Resources Center (CRC) in Suitland, Maryland, can now view a videotape that introduces the CRC through the eyes of staff members. Produced by Dan Davis, audiovisual specialist, with Tarik Benbrahim, director, and Marty Kriepe de Montañó, George Gustav Heye Center Resource Center manager, the videotape is "not exactly a documentary," says Davis. With a running time of less than 10 minutes, the videotape includes interviews with staff who present the CRC as "a place designed to be very welcoming" to scholars and researchers. Viewers also learn how staff members exercise cultural sensitivity when handling objects. – *Carrie Vaccaro*

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Navajo Textile Exhibit Tours Latin America

The exhibition *Woven by the Grandmothers: Nineteenth-Century Navajo Textiles from the National Museum of the American Indian* will begin a 14-month tour of Central and South America this spring. Museums in Montevideo, Uruguay; Guatemala City, Guatemala; La Paz, Bolivia; Santiago, Chile; and Mexico City, Mexico; will host the traveling exhibition for seven to eight weeks.

Drawn from one of the largest collections of Navajo wearing blankets woven between 1825 and 1880, the more than 40 pieces in the exhibition include serapes, chief blankets, mantas, two-piece dresses known as *biil*, and utility blankets called *diyogi*. They predate the production of rugs for a non-Indian market.

Lifelike forms will display many of the blankets as apparel. "It's more usual to see

Navajo weavings as paintings spread-eagled against the wall, but that misses the point because they're supposed to be worn," says Jim Volkert, assistant director for exhibitions.

The exhibition also explores "the theme of language as the carrier of culture," Volkert says. "Because Navajo is such a vital language, we looked at that as a way of communicating the culture the weavings come from." Text panels and labels will be in Navajo as well as Spanish and English. Videotapes in the exhibition will be in Navajo with Spanish subtitles.

The exhibition originated at the Heye Center in late 1996 and has since traveled to the Navajo Nation Museum in Window Rock, Arizona, the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C., and the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona.



Photo by Eric Haase

Color Guard Honors NMAI

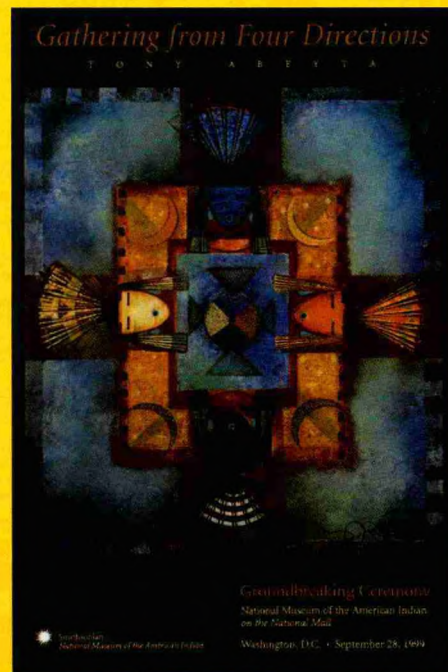
Drumming to a drum beat, two military color guards honored the National Museum of the American Indian's (NMAI) September 28, 1999, groundbreaking ceremony by presenting the colors and carrying a fully beaded staff. Approximately one-and-a-half inches in diameter, the seven-foot high eagle staff was beaded with depictions of Iroquois clan animals, American and Canadian flags, and military symbols, including a soldier. It took Lorne Taylor (Ojibwa) two years to complete the beadwork.

The Vietnam Era Veterans Inter-Tribal Association (VEVITA) Color Guard, whose

members are part of the Washington, D.C. chapter of the VEVITA – the largest American Indian veterans' group in the United States – led the North American Iroquois Veterans Association Color Guard onto the site.

Harold "Jack" Johnson (Mohawk), the Iroquois association's president and father of the NMAI's Assistant Director of Community Services Tim Johnson, carried the staff at the head of the group. "I was really very, very proud to be Native American," he recalls. "It was one of the greatest moments of my life. And I think that about sums it up for my buddies, too."

– Carrie Vaccaro



Gathering from Four Directions, Tony Abeyta's mixed-media painting, was created for NMAI's Mall Museum groundbreaking.

A Gift from Tony Abeyta

Award-winning Navajo artist Tony Abeyta created the mixed-media painting *Gathering from Four Directions* for the National Museum of the American Indian's (NMAI) September groundbreaking. Abeyta and his wife Patricia, a fashion designer, attended the event, which had the theme "Blessings from the Four Directions."

As the visual cornerstone of the ceremony, the mixed-media painting was used on invitations to the groundbreaking and has adorned other museum literature. At the image's center a circle of blue, yellow, black, and white beadwork echoes the four surrounding faces, which represent the artist's interpretation of north, south, east, and west. Moons of different colors hang in the corners to signify a multidimensional world and to mark events and changes in time.

Abeyta, who lives in Taos, N.M., works in a variety of media, often mixing sand into hand-ground pigments to develop a rich texture. He has donated *Gathering from Four Directions* to the NMAI's permanent collection. Reproductions of the painting are available on T-shirts and as unframed posters at the GGHC gift shop. Call (212)514-3767 for purchase information. – Carrie Vaccaro

Repatriation's Open Door Helps Museums as Well as Native Communities

by RITA PYRILLIS



Photo by David Heald

Several weeks before her death, Annie Hotch told her son Joe about a Bear Clan Hat that was stolen from the Tlingit people of Klukwan, Alaska, many years ago. She described the hat – worn by a clan leader – in detail, from the elaborate carving of a bear's head on the front to the eight cedar rings on top signifying great deeds done. Joe Hotch never forgot these images, but he never imagined

that one day, he would return the culturally significant hat to his community.

In April 1999, Hotch and his wife, Georgianna, traveled from Chilkat Indian Village in Klukwan to the National Museum of the American Indian's George Gustav Heye Center in New York City. They came to the museum to bring the Tlingit Bear Clan Hat back to its rightful place in his great-uncle's clan house after nearly a century's absence.

On April 7, Hotch performed a transfer ceremony in the center's *Creation's Journey* exhibition hall while curious museum visitors looked on. As required by Tlingit society, a member of an opposing clan was there to witness the event. In this case, Georgianna Hotch, a member of the Raven Clan, was there to legitimize the transfer, Hotch explained.

The event marked the first time an object had been repatriated directly from a National Museum of the American Indian's (NMAI) exhibition. From the exhibition's text, visitors learned about the intriguing and poignant story of the Bear Clan Hat and its planned return. The event was joyous for the Klukwan Tlingit community and for the NMAI Repatriation Office. Since 1993, the NMAI office staff has been facilitating the return of human remains, ceremonial, funerary, and sacred items and objects of cultural patrimony to the Indian communities from which they were taken.

Repatriation signifies a healing between the Indian and museum communities, according to Jim Pepper Henry (Kaw/Muscogee Creek), the NMAI's Repatriation Program manager. "We have sensitive materials in the collection that in this day and age may not be appropriate for the museum to have," he explains. "There have been lots of hard feelings in the past between museums and tribes. Now people can witness a healing process."

For Hotch, receiving the Bear Clan Hat was more than just the return of an important cultural object; it was "like the return of a family member." Chilkat Indian Village near Haines, about 100 miles north of Juneau in southeastern Alaska, welcomed the hat with a great celebration. During the ceremony, community members spoke to the hat as if to a long-lost loved one. Hotch recalls, "We said, 'You came back to us, we missed you, but now you're back among us.'"

No one in Klukwan knows for sure how the Bear Clan Hat ended up in the museum, only that it was stolen before 1907. Hotch says he is grateful to have it back and thankful that the museum took good care of it all these years. He first saw the hat in 1994 at the Research Branch in the Bronx after the museum notified him that it was there. Museum officials asked if they could exhibit the hat for two years, and he

agreed. "It was gone for 98 years, so what's another two years," he says. "I was taught that if something's given back to you, you don't just yank it back. And I wanted other people to know our culture and our art – to know that it's still working today as it was in the past."

This kind of cooperation with Indian communities is the museum's guiding principle. Community members work closely with the office and provide ongoing consultation. The process usually begins with a phone call or a letter from a tribal representative inquiring about a specific item or items. The museum responds in writing, providing any available information about the object. If the tribal representative wishes to seek repatriation, the museum provides transportation for two persons to view the materials and consult with museum staff. Meanwhile, the Repatriation Office gathers information to present to the curatorial committee, which then determines the validity of the claim.

The whole process can take six to 18 months depending on the complexity of the case and the number of other pending cases, according to Pepper Henry. With only two full-time researchers, sometimes a backlog occurs. "We try to process requests as quickly as possible," he explains, but "some cases are more immediate than others. For example, if there is a particular traditional society, and there is an elder who is the only one who knows a particular ceremony using the object, and he wants to pass that knowledge down, we will make that a priority."

The highest priority for the Repatriation Office is the return of all human remains, which number approximately 300. These remains are housed at the Research Branch, where they will stay until all the collections have been moved to the new Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, Maryland, in conjunction with the NMAI's expansion to Washington, D.C. – a process that museum officials estimate will take five years. Pepper Henry hopes that will be enough time to return all the remains to their communities.

He emphasizes that the repatriated items represent a tiny fraction of the NMAI's vast collections, which number more than 800,000 objects. "We are talking about the most sacred ceremonial objects in the museum," he says. "Many things can be considered sacred, but under the law these items must be used for religious purposes by living leaders for the continuance of a ceremony. The guidelines are very specific."

Pepper Henry bristles over the misconception that the NMAI Act and its sister legislation, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990, could result in the depletion of valuable museum

holdings. "Initially, some people thought tribes would be driving up with U-Hauls and carting things away, but that's simply not the case," he explains. In fact, he sees repatriation as a way to enrich not only Indian communities but museums as well. "How valuable is an object when it's taken from its cultural context?" he asks. "We are placing objects in their cultural context and they come back to life. We learn so much more about the culture and the community. The museum community will gain

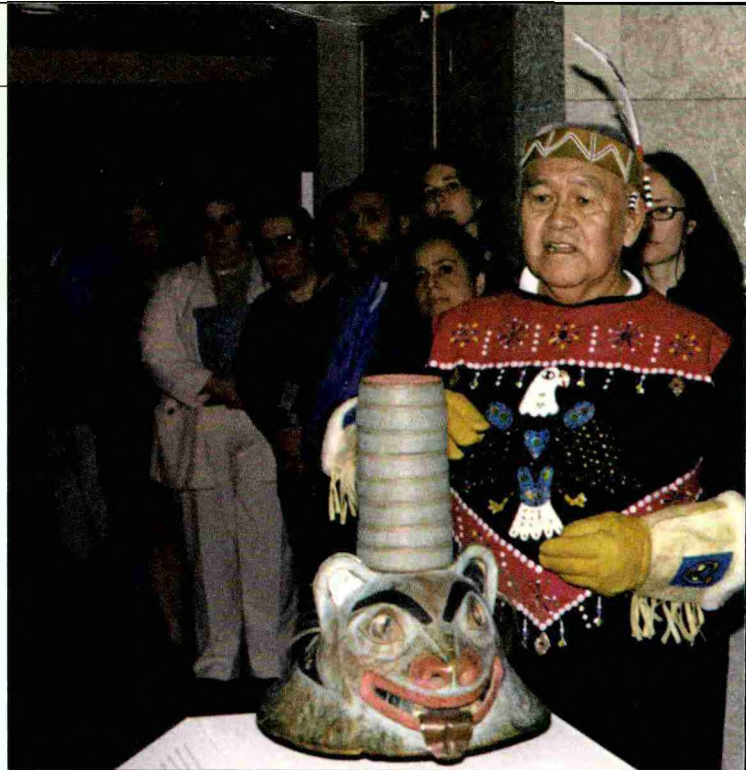
more knowledge, a greater understanding of humanity, by investing back in these cultures."

Like the NMAI, many museums with Indian collections – such as the Heard Museum in Phoenix and the Field Museum in Chicago – are opening their doors to Indian communities. At the NMAI, these communities are not limited to those within the United States. Unlike NAGPRA, which applies only to federally recognized tribes within the U.S., the NMAI's repatriation work encompasses all indigenous cultures of the Western Hemisphere, including Canada, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. The museum has objects and human remains from Peru, Belize, Cuba, and Jamaica, among many other countries.

One benefit of working closely with Indian communities is greater representation of contemporary Indian life. Mary Jane Lenz, a long-time NMAI curator, says that a critical part of the museum's mission is to show the world "that Indian people are not historic figures frozen in the past, but alive and well, carrying on traditional beliefs and practices as well as being imbedded in a modern world."

In Hotch's view, this changing relationship between museums and Native communities, particularly the repatriation efforts, will strengthen Indian cultures. In Chilkat Indian Village, this strength is evident in the plans to build a cultural center to house the Bear Clan Hat and other existing and returned items. The vitality of Native culture is especially important to the community's young people, who, says Hotch, are hungry for their past. "Repatriation gives us something to work with in rebuilding our traditions." ♦

Rita Pyrellis (Cheyenne River Sioux) is a freelance writer living in Evanston, Ill.



Above: Klukwan Tlingit representative Joe Hotch with the Bear Clan Hat (also shown on facing page).

"We have sensitive materials in the collection that in this day and age may not be appropriate for the museum to have... there have been lots of hard feelings in the past between museums and tribes. Now people can witness a healing process."

– JIM PEPPER HENRY
NMAI'S REPATRIATION
PROGRAM MANAGER



15 Mexico

Estado de Oaxaca

Defying the Odds

Having lasted half a millennium, surviving plagues and conquest, this Chontal community in Mexico now faces the greatest risk in its history – the danger of losing its lands and traditions. An NMAI project offers help. **By RICHARD PETERSON**

Elizabeth Zárate Escamilla and her family recently celebrated the 500th anniversary of their village, known by the Nahuatl name of Huaumimilollan, in southwestern Oaxaca, Mexico. This village and its neighboring villages make up a community of 3,000 Chontal people. The Chontal survived the Spanish conquest and smallpox epidemics of the 16th century, although half the population of Huaumimilollan died from smallpox. The Chontal paid tributes of gold dust to the Spanish viceroys, but never surrendered their language and traditions.

Now poverty, hurricanes, and tourism threaten the life of this community. The villages still struggle to recover from the ravages of hurricanes in 1997 and 1998. Major damage to their

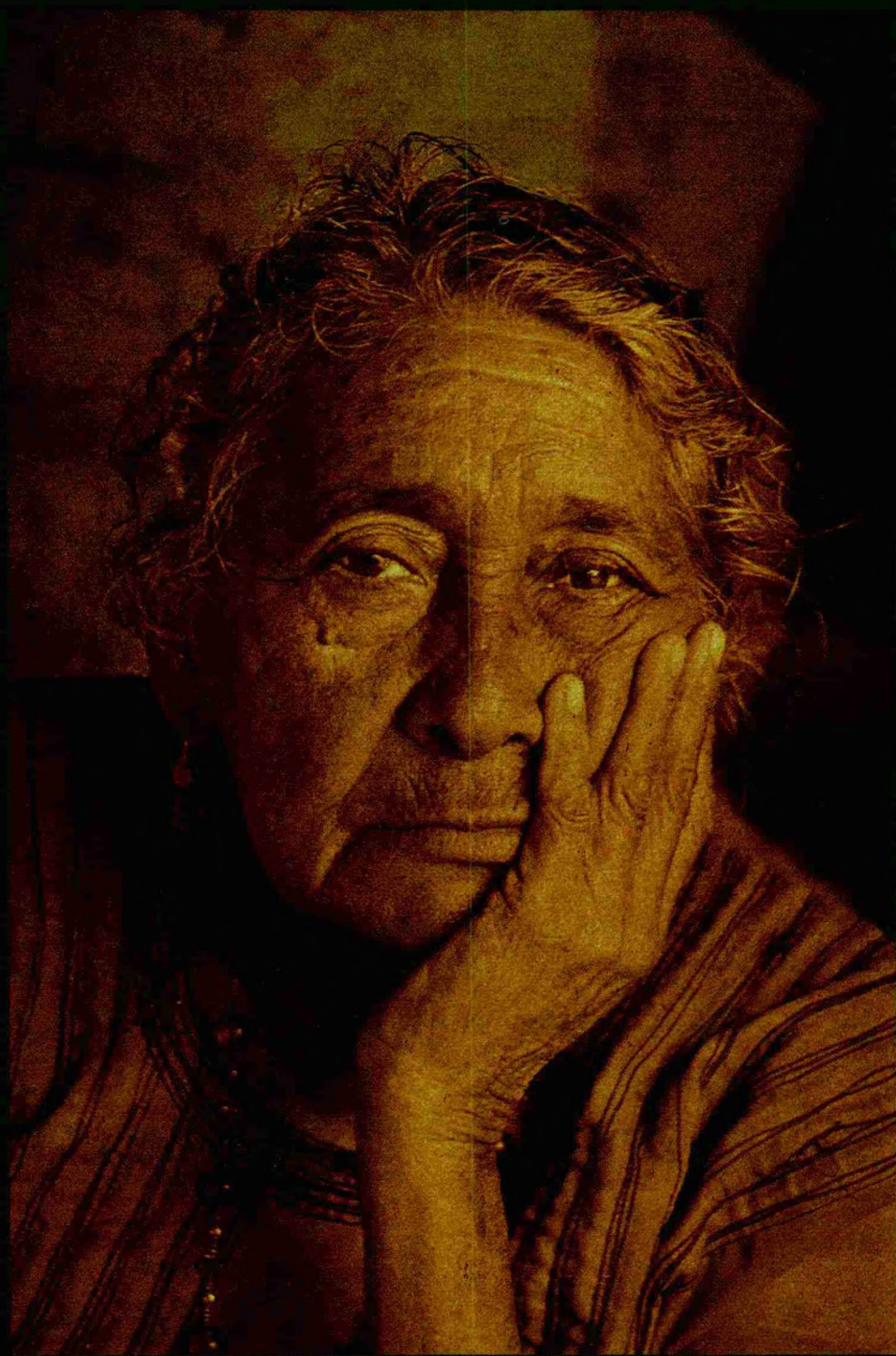
roads made access treacherous and isolated the community. The storms destroyed the crops and cut off the food supply. Now the erosion of farmland makes future harvests uncertain. Developers buy up lands long held by the Chontal, displacing many from their homes. Huaumimilollan, especially, is in danger of having its landscape dramatically altered in the name of tourism. A superhighway connecting the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean looms on the horizon and could bring heavy traffic and crowds of people to this isolated and fragile area.

In response to these calamities, communities and even families split up. Some people end up working for the tourist industry, others farm, but many more, especially the young, simply leave. The old people are left behind with no one to harvest the crops. And as the social structure

disintegrates, so do the traditions and ceremonies that make up the Chontal heritage.

“The ceremonies are the glue that holds the village together. Without these ceremonies, the village would die,” says Alicia González, a curator at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), who has been tracking the migration path of the Chontal and others from this community. Against all odds, Zárate Escamilla and her family strive to protect the rituals and traditions in their village. They know these rituals draw everyone home. People travel thousands of miles at least twice a year to attend the ceremonies. There are at least seven major feasts each year. Zárate Escamilla and her parents, brother Jaime, and sister Josafat have stepped forward to become the organizers, historians, and caretakers of their village. With little or

Roberto Ysaías’ hauntingly beautiful photographs serve not only to document the culture, ceremonies, and rituals of the Chontal, but also to capture the timeless quality of these unique people and the mystical landscape they call home. Soft colors and antique frames pay homage to Mexico’s golden age of postcards (1900-1918). In times past, postcards were a way to re-establish ties with community and family in distant places. With this exquisite work, Ysaías has created a sensitive visual travelogue of his time with the Chontal.



*Above: María Escamilla is the Zárate Escamilla family matriarch.
Left: The musicians lead the procession followed by the women and girls carrying flower offerings.*

“These traditions mean a lot to our family,” said Zárte Escamilla. “The area had been threatened by many outsiders, including the Dutch pirates and Jamaicans.”

no financial support, the Zárte Escamilla family had taken on this task alone until recently, when a collaboration was formed with the NMAI.

Last March, González met the Zárte Escamilla family at a Good Friday vigil. González was documenting the ritual with photographer Roberto Ysáis, NMAI training coordinator Nicolasa Sandoval (Chumash), and NMAI curator Emil Her Many Horses (Lakota). Just as the NMAI team was getting ready to leave, Josafat asked Sandoval and González to adjust her camera. While Ysáis was fixing it, she invited the group to her home to meet her parents and her sister, Elizabeth Zárte Escamilla.

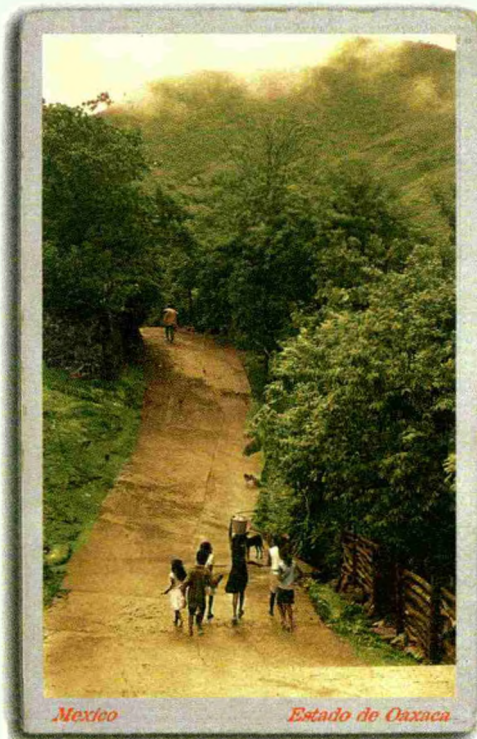
“Josafat told me how her sister’s dream had been to document the festivities of the village and asked if I would help,” recalls González. Moreover, a family friend from a nearby village insisted that González visit this Chontal village. From these meetings came the ongoing collaborative effort between the NMAI and the residents of the village to document the life of the Chontal.

“These traditions mean a lot to our family,” says Zárte Escamilla. “The area had been threatened by many outsiders, including the Dutch pirates and Jamaicans.” Few historians know that these invasions along the Pacific coast of Oaxaca are re-enacted in performances by the villagers. To document the history and traditions of the Chontal, one need look no further than the summer rituals. During a six-day period in June, villagers use song and dance to re-enact the highlights in their history, including the assault

on the village in 1587 by British pirate Thomas Cavendish, territorial battles with other Indians in Mexico, and the Spanish conquest.

But the celebrations come at a price. *Mayordomos*, those people responsible for the year’s festivities, pay the costs of food, costumes, and other necessities. González found that some even work temporarily in the United States to make money for these expenses or to lessen the debt. With partial support from the NMAI and grants from the Smithsonian’s Latino Initiative Fund, González has been documenting how Oaxacan coastal villagers, who live in one of the most poverty-stricken areas of the Western Hemisphere, often must leave their homeland to find work in central Mexico and the United States. González and Ysáis recently followed their trail. “Some Oaxacans end up in the vineyards of the Napa Valley. Their children stay in Oaxaca, usually with their grandparents, and wait for their parents to return home,” says González. “It is one of the biggest dilemmas facing the Chontal.”

Elizabeth Zárte Escamilla knows all too well about being away from home. As a communications specialist with the National Indigenous Institute of Mexico, located in Mexico City, she returns home with her son, Cristóbal Contreras Zárte, for the village celebrations and the chance to visit her family. “The biggest love I feel is for my village and my people,” Zárte Escamilla says. She speaks with pride about her family. Josafat is a medical doctor. After earning her medical

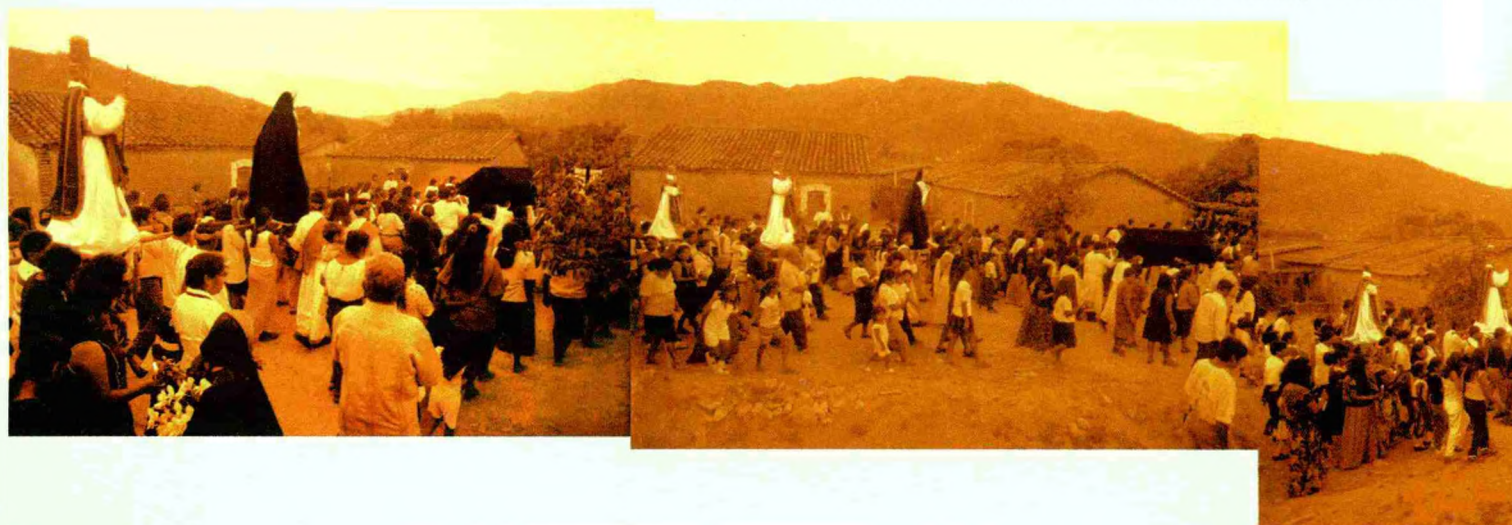


Mexico Estado de Oaxaca

Above: Children play along the path home from the village once the ceremonies end for the day.

Right: The Zárte Escamilla family home at dusk.

Below: The much worn path through the village is used for every festive or solemn occasion.





Elders teach small children

Chontal and quiz them on their way home from school.

Zárate Escamilla hopes that her family's efforts will pay off by saving their language, which belongs to one of the oldest linguistic families in North America, the Sioux Hokan.

degree – for which she paid by taking several jobs, including selling brooms door to door – she came home and set up a medical clinic in the town. Common illnesses in the region are diarrhea and tuberculosis, and before the clinic was established, villagers had to travel long distances for treatment. Josafat found an X-ray machine for the clinic, so that tuberculosis patients could

be treated locally. Jaime, a musician, is also doing his part to save the traditions and history of the village. He has recorded three cassettes. Written in the minstrel tradition, most of his songs – like *Chilena Chontal* – recount the beauty of the Chontal villages in southwestern Oaxaca.

Like groups in other parts of North America, the Chontal are losing their language. The com-

munity and the local government are working together to develop bilingual schools in the village. Elders teach small children Chontal and quiz them on their way home from school. Zárate Escamilla hopes that her family's efforts will pay off by saving their language, which belongs to one of the oldest linguistic families in North America, the Sioux Hokan. Some linguists





*Above: Chontal women and children wait on the stairs of the municipal building for the ceremonial parade.
Right: Elizabeth Zárate Escamilla proudly dances to music of the "banda" playing for June festivities.*

“People assume that the Oaxacan migrations to the United States are new. They’re not,” says González.

“I think they’ve been taking place for millennia. How else could one explain the distance between the Chontal and their nearest linguistic relatives 1,000 miles away?”

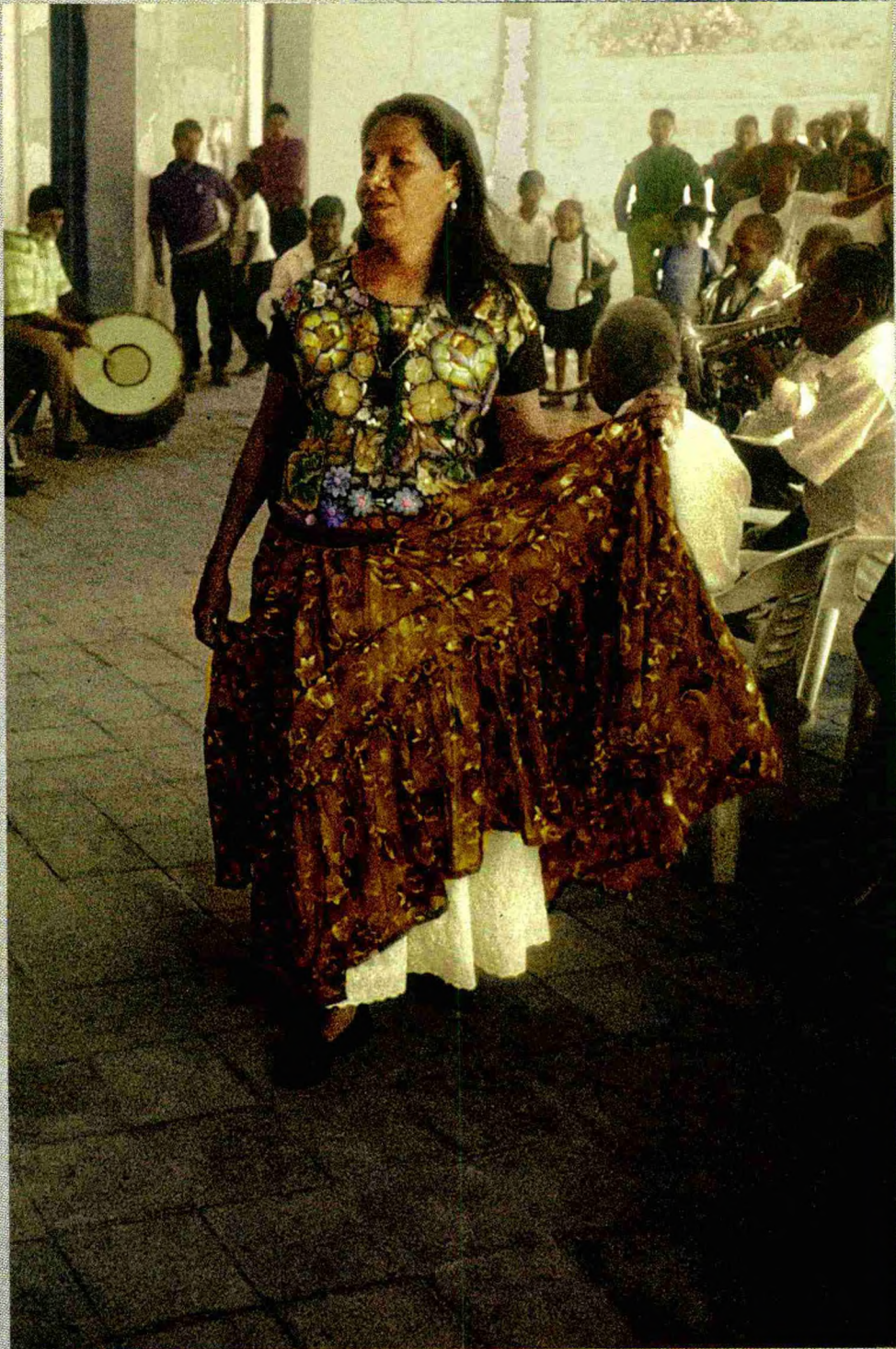
believe these Mexican Natives, the Chontal, are linguistically related to the Havasupai and Chumash tribes and others of California and Arizona. “People assume that the Oaxacan migrations to the United States are new. They’re not,” says González. “I think they’ve been taking place for millennia. How else could one explain the distance between the Chontal and their nearest linguistic relatives 1,000 miles away?”

González’s project will be the most extensive work ever conducted with these people.

González and photographer Roberto Ysáis have worked in southwest Oaxaca for several years, and in June 1999 they documented the summer ceremonies. Zárate Escamilla and González completed the script draft together last September at the NMAI’s Cultural Resources Center. Film producer Hector Galán has agreed to produce the film project. With continued support, this body of work from Oaxaca will be developed into an exhibition and book on the Chontal. Some of the Chontal traditions are

incorporated into plans for the inaugural exhibitions of the new museum on the National Mall. And so it seems that Elizabeth Zárate Escamilla and her family have reason to hope that their Chontal heritage will indeed be preserved. ♦

Richard Peterson, a Dakota and member of the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of Montana, is a freelance writer and former newspaper, magazine, and television news reporter.



Mexico

Estado de Oaxaca



The Land Is Still Here

“**T**he land is still here,” observed Chief Billy Redwing Tayac (Piscataway) recently as he discussed the gradual yet dramatic changes to the land and Native populations of the Washington, D.C., area. Although Tayac’s people continue to inhabit their original homeland in southern Maryland, many others did not survive what Tayac calls “the clashes of cultures, clashes of values, and clashes of the spirit” that characterized early encounters between Native peoples and Europeans along the East Coast. Until now, the most prominent pieces of evidence that remain of the once-powerful Indian nations like the Potomacs and the Anacostias are their names.

By LIZ HILL, Photography by ERIC HAASE



The groundbreaking for the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., signaled a promise that the traditions of these and other Native peoples would be honored and preserved. Thousands attended the joyous event, christened *Return to a Native Place*. Members of Congress, Smithsonian officials, museum supporters and friends, and Native peoples, many of whom had traveled great distances, came to witness this commitment.

Tayac was invited to offer a blessing from the East, as were others representing the West (Native Hawai'ian),

North (Inuit), and South (Quechua). Tayac noted the interconnectedness of this hemisphere's indigenous peoples; even though they did not know each other, he said they all brought the same things – water and earth – to use in their blessings. Tayac carried earth that he had scooped up from a 12,000-year-old Piscataway sacred site, *Moyaone*, located just south of the District of Columbia in Maryland. As he told it, the ancestors were (and are) a living, breathing part of the earth that he brought, and it was important that they were present to bear witness to that day on the National Mall.

When the new NMAI opens to the public in late 2002, it is expected to attract some six-million visitors annually from all corners of the globe. Located at the foot of the U.S. Capitol, a 250,000-square-foot, canyon-like building with exterior walls of light-colored Minnesota Kasota stone, the museum will house one of the finest collections in the world (800,000 pieces collected from the Arctic Circle to Tierra del Fuego). Museum Director W. Richard West (Southern Cheyenne) says visitors will experience a “revolutionary change in the presentation of Native art, cultures and histories.” While touring the three inaugural exhibitions – *Our Universes*, *Our Peoples*, and *Our Lives* – visitors will learn of the philosophies, histories, and identities of indigenous peoples, seen from a Native perspective.



They will enter by first passing through a five-story welcoming area, fittingly named “Potomac”; Tayac says Potomac is an Algonquian word that means “gathering space.” Inside the Potomac, a lively, folk-like festival atmosphere will draw people into a world of contemporary Native activities. Already planned for the 2002 opening is a display of Native boats from Northwest Coast, Plains, South America, Upper Midwest, and other cultures across the hemisphere. The boats, both life-size and scaled down in size, will show the diversity of boat styles and the importance of boat building to many Native societies. Visitors – especially children and families – will enjoy the opportunity to meet and learn from each boat builder and have fun in the interactive projects such as hide-scraping, reed bundling, and other types of preparatory work that goes into making boats. Displays in the Potomac area will change every few years, and already there are plans for a (Mexican) Oaxacan market to follow the boat-building display.

Many Native people hope that the museum will broaden visitors' understanding of Native history and culture by presenting not only the positive aspects but also the more difficult episodes of the encounters with Europeans, which began more than 500 years ago when Columbus landed on these shores. Since then, Indian peoples have lost much: their health and their lives through the introduction of

Facing page, top: A crowd of thousands gathers for historic NMAI groundbreaking. Facing page, bottom: Guadalupe Holgado (Quechua) blesses the future site of the Mall Museum. Above: (l-r) Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (Northern Cheyenne), Senator Daniel Inouye, Robert McC. Adams, I. Michael Heyman, W. Richard West (Southern Cheyenne) and Norbert Hill, Jr. (Oneida).

“It (the museum) is now becoming a reality and it will provide a focus of authority for things Indian which we have never had before.”

– VINE DELORIA, JR. (Standing Rock Sioux)
Professor, University of Colorado
and trustee of the National Museum of the American Indian

“This will be a wonderful opportunity for the true impact and contributions of the Native peoples of this country to add to the sharing of the circle of knowledge and wisdom with all the peoples of the world.”

– ADA DEER (Menominee)
Former Bureau of Indian Affairs Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

“The National Museum of the American Indian is a meaningful expression of our belief that all of mankind is connected.”

— GENE A. KELUCHE (Wintun)
Chairman of the Board of International Conference Resorts, Inc. and co-chair of the National Museum of the American Indian’s International Founders Council

“The National Mall

is an extraordinary place, really, one that captures the essence of the ideals and the sensibilities that make ours a great nation... We have reached a juncture, after two centuries of extermination and cultural annihilation, where we as a nation have come to recognize and appreciate and honor the cultures and traditions of our many Native peoples.”

— KEVIN GOVER (Pawnee)
Bureau of Indian Affairs Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs

“The NMAI on the National Mall will again bring to the forefront before the public eye the values that give strength to the Navajo people.”

— KELSEY BEGAYE
Navajo Nation President

“In Iroquois society, as among other Original Peoples, those who bring the past forward for each new generation are held in high esteem and respect; as such custodians exercise their responsibilities, we gain a clearer picture of who we are today – individually and as a people... They help us understand what our place is on this earth, and our relationship with others and with the entire creation; they encourage us to cherish life and to use our understanding of the past to move toward the future.”

— ROBERTA L. JAMIESON (Mohawk)
Ontario’s Ombudsman

“The museum means that tribes are here to stay; they are a permanent part of American life and society... The National Museum of the American Indian will be a constant reminder of that.”

— JOHN ECHOHAWK (Pawnee)
Executive Director of the Native American Rights Fund

foreign diseases; their traditional homelands and ways of life; their languages; and their identities through assimilation into mainstream American society.

“Although annihilation (of Native peoples) ultimately did not happen, it came perilously close,” West said in a speech at Washington’s National Press Club on September 27. “Demographers now estimate that from a Native population of some six to nine million people at the time of contact in what is now the United States, the attrition of war and disease reduced Native numbers by the year 1900 to barely 250,000, a staggering depopulation of some 95 percent.” Alexander Ewen (Purepecha, with family roots in western Mexico), co-author of the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of American Indians in the Twentieth Century (Facts on File)*, adds, “At the turn of the century, it was thought that Indians would disappear.”

Its message is powerful: Indians were vanishing peoples, one more casualty, like the buffalo, of the rapidly disappearing western frontier.

But Native peoples did not disappear, Ewen is quick to point out. Although their numbers were drastically reduced, this country’s Native population is now estimated at more than two million and growing. Contrary to the popular turn-of-the-century perception of “the vanishing race,” the opposite has, in fact, occurred. Ewen believes that “the most powerful city in the world” will acknowledge the resilience of Native peoples once the NMAI is built.

Richard La Course (Yakama), associate editor of the *Yakama Review*, also looks forward to NMAI’s opening. La Course remembers wandering the old American Indian exhibition hall of the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) years ago, hoping to catch a glimpse of Yakama objects. “When I first visited the Smithsonian in 1971, the depiction of

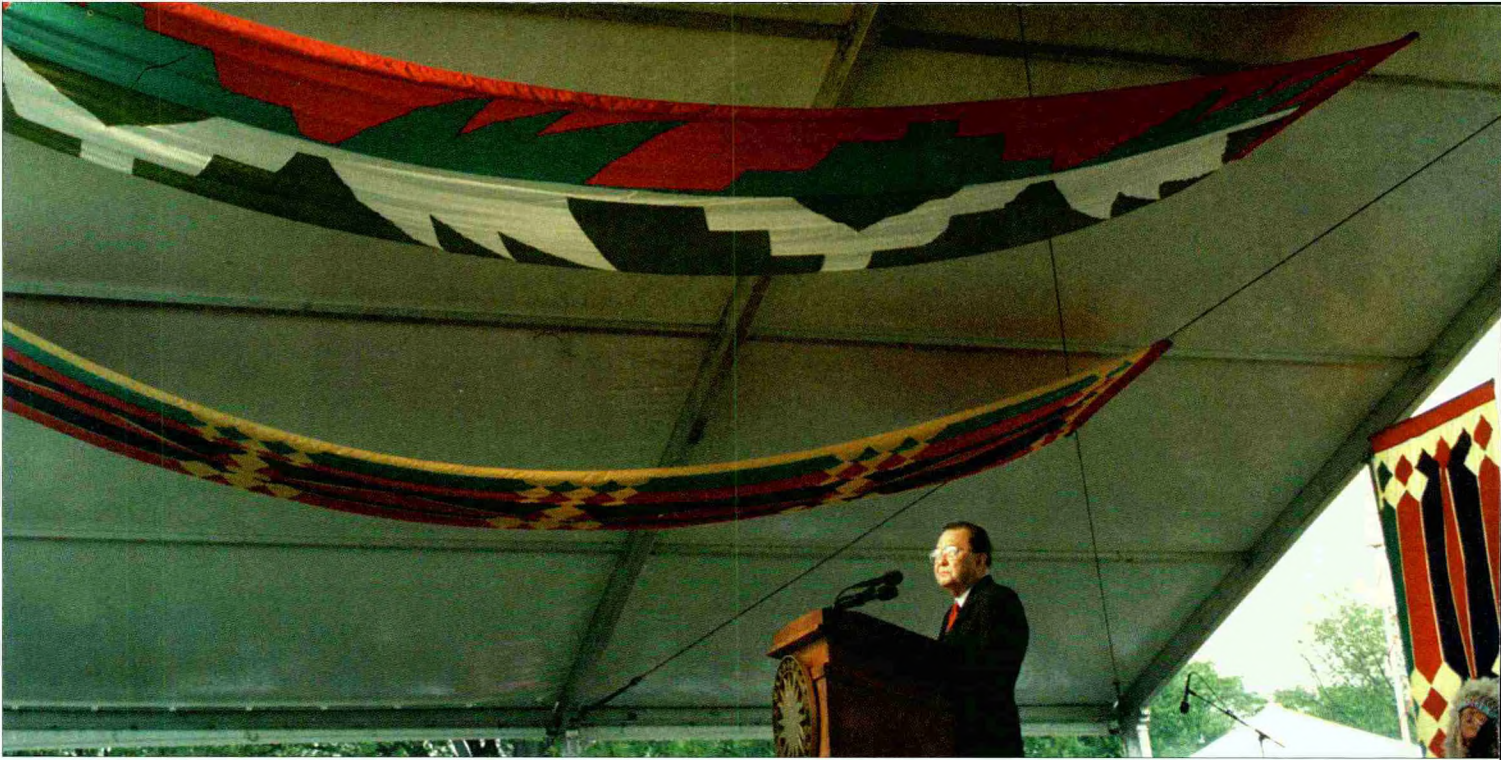


Chief Billy Redwing Tayac (Piscataway) offers traditional blessing for the Sept. 28 groundbreaking.

This view – reflected upon by West during the museum’s groundbreaking ceremony – consumed the national psyche in the late 19th century. West referred to a popular sculpture by James Earle Fraser, *The End of the Trail*. Created in 1894 and later exhibited recast in an 18-foot-high version for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition held in San Francisco in 1915, *The End of the Trail* depicts a Plains Indian slumped over his horse, head lowered, his hand clasping a spear that threatens to fall.

Native cultures was way off the real cosmic mark. Since that time, the Smithsonian has made a number of course corrections,” he says, noting the contributions of NMNH curators Dr. Herman Viola and Dr. William Sturtevant.

La Course is encouraged by a growing awareness and sensitivity of indigenous peoples occurring within the U.S. government as well. He mentions the passage of the NMAI Act in 1989 and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)



in 1990 as instances when the federal government cemented into law the concerns voiced by Native American peoples for their rights to preserve their cultures and honor their ancestors. “There is a tremendous level of expectation out here,” La Course adds, referring to the interest expressed by Native communities. “Tribes with museums of their own will come (to the NMAI) with a keener, more critical eye.”

Others, like Suzan Shown Harjo (Cheyenne/Hodulgee Muscogee), president of the Morning Star Institute, assert that the NMAI represents “a federal commitment to the permanence of Native peoples.”

Ewen says he sees the NMAI as “a monument to the resilience of American Indian peoples – a real statement of the value of American Indian cultures and a statement that they will continue.” Bringing together the past and the present in the long overdue recognition of the art, histories, and cultural achievements of Native peoples, the NMAI will formally acknowledge their presence on the last available parcel of land on the Mall.

“This museum will be on the level of other great world museums,” Ewen says. “It will be a celebration of Indian people – a victory by Indian people, for Indian people – a museum that celebrates the achievements of the first Americans.” ♦

Liz Hill (Red Lake Ojibwe) is a writer and communications consultant living in Washington, D.C.



Top: Under banners of Osage ribbonwork patterns, U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye gives his remarks. Above: U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell

With the advent of the National Museum of the American Indian and its prestigious placement on the last available parcel of land on the National Mall, the presence of Native peoples is acknowledged in a highly formal manner.

Coyote's Place



Welcome to COYOTE'S PLACE!

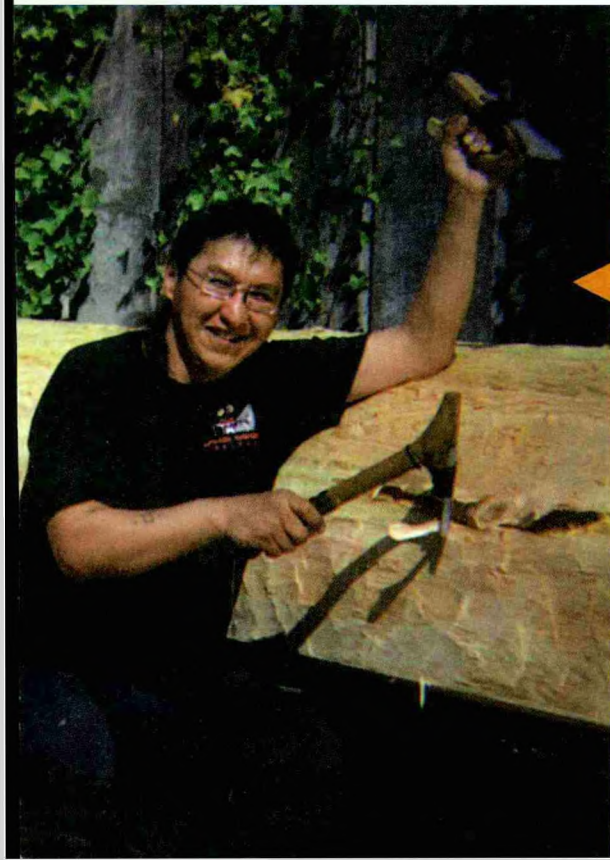
This is a place for children and young people to learn and have fun at the same time.

At COYOTE'S PLACE you will meet my friends. There will be stories and games for you to share with your family.

Do you know that coyotes are special to some Native people?

Some people call us tricksters. We teach lessons by playing pranks and tricks – on ourselves and others! Native people learn from us. We want you to learn, too. Not all tricksters are coyotes, however. There is the Raven, the Rabbit, and even a Spider. They are all special. Stories about tricksters are often told in the winter – a time for storytelling.

These stories have been passed down from parent to child for many, many years. Trickster stories will last forever. Read the Raven story from the Native people of the Northwest Coast. See what lesson you can learn.



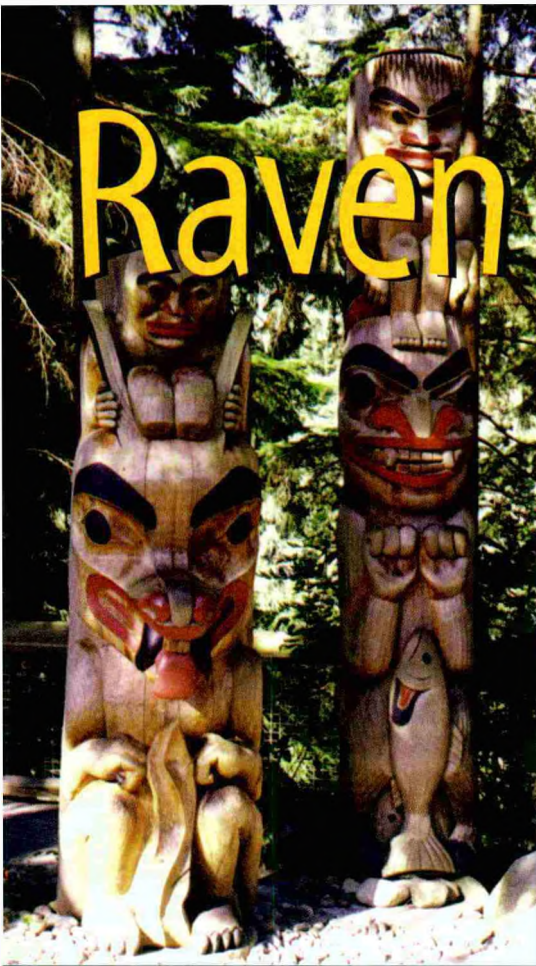
Meet my friend,

Wayne Carlick, a Tlingit from the Northwest Coast. Wayne is a member of the Tlingit and Taltan Nation. He was raised on the Taku River in Northern British Columbia, Canada. He is from the Raven Clan. A clan is an extended family identified by different birds and animals. His Tlingit name is *Deck Kin Yaith* which means - Flying Raven. Elders in Wayne's community gave him his first carving tools. Elders are wise, respected leaders in a clan. Their gift gave Wayne a responsibility to his people. He learned his traditional stories, songs, and carving designs by working hard and studying. Wayne states that working with young people inspires him, "I believe you make your own limits. You can do and be anything you want. Do it well and do it with respect."



Raven

Goes Fishing



Raven and his friends sat high in a tree. Below them, hundreds of fish called salmon swam up the river. Raven was hungry but was not a good hunter. He could never catch a salmon. Suddenly, an Eagle dove into the water and caught a giant salmon in his powerful claws. Raven's friends were impressed with Eagle. Raven became jealous.

"That's nothing," cawed Raven. "I can fish better than Eagle!"

"Sure you can, Raven," teased his friends.

Boastfully, Raven cried, "Oh yeah?"

Raven decided to show them. He dove in the river for a salmon. He missed!

Determined, he flew higher to get a better look. He couldn't believe his luck. He spotted the BIGGEST and SLOWEST salmon. So slow, it hardly moved. Raven dove head first into the water. His friends, watching from the tree, heard a strange sound. CRACK! Raven had not caught a salmon. He had caught a BIG ROCK and bent his beak.

Embarrassed more than hurt, Raven flew back to the tree. Raven decided never to hunt or fish again. He would follow other hunters. When they got something to eat, Raven would stay close by and eat their leftovers.

Photo by W. Carlick

Try This Puzzler!



Q F R E D I P S Z E X N L Y O
 R I O H K W G T E A B S D U P
 A W T P C I T O L G N E N T K
 B A C R G D V R P L E A W I J
 B E A K I N T Y I E L U P V E
 I K R A M I A T S C R M D B P
 T O V X I D F E G K K R N G L
 G L I G P S V L E D Z S A D Y
 Y A N E N S A L M O N A T F S
 E X G N I H S I F H F B I E P
 Q O L P R T A N T P N E V A R
 T O T E M K F G R D S W E Q X

The following words from the story appear forwards, backwards, and diagonally. When you find one, circle it.

- | | | |
|-----------|---------|--------------|
| BEAK | CARVING | CLAN |
| EAGLE | FISHING | NATIVE |
| TOTEM | RABBIT | RAVEN |
| SALMON | SPIDER | STORYTELLING |
| TRICKSTER | | |

Edited by SHAWN TERMIN & JOHANNA GORELICK



Photo by Cindy Frankenburg

Every Basket Tells a Tale

by BRUCE BERNSTEIN

In the spring of 1999, the National Museum of the American Indian made a most fortunate acquisition: nine Patwin baskets by expert weaver Bertha Wright Mitchell, who learned her artistry in Cortina, Calif. This extraordinary group of baskets represents the finest work of a talented artist and also the cultural expression of her Patwin community in Cortina. The baskets tell a tale of struggle and ultimately of survival.

Bertha now lives in Arbuckle, Calif., and is one of the last fluent speakers of Cortina Wintun. She was born in the old Patwin village of *klet*, also known as Cortina, in Colusa County, Calif., nestled against the Coastal Range foothills about two hours north of

Sacramento. Patwin culture has long acknowledged basket weaving as one of its highest forms of artistic expression, and both her mother and grandmother were well-respected basket makers. She was never formally taught to weave, but as a young girl she learned by watching and practicing. For Bertha, weaving became a passion that “had to come out.”

These nine baskets were produced in the early 1970s, before she was forty years old.

They were Bertha’s demonstration baskets: She kept them in a suitcase and showed them to potential customers as samples of the styles, sizes, and designs of baskets that she could make. When I first met Bertha some twenty-two years ago, I felt honored that she shared her suitcase of baskets with me, carefully explaining and discussing each one.



Above: The author with Bertha Wright Mitchell in 1977.

Top: The fine three-rod tray or *k’enni’* is notable for its balance of white background and red-brown quail plume design.

Baskets are a gathering and expression of consciousness. When Bertha weaves a basket, she is telling us about her life, the Cortina community, and Patwin culture. Her baskets share a cultural consistency, which enables us to call them Patwin or Southern Wintun baskets. Like all works of art, baskets are individualistic enough that we can identify the work of a particular basket weaver, who must integrate the larger cultural and also the immediate community styles of weaving. The ability to mesh these two factors into a single basket is the signature the weaver leaves on her work.

But we need to be careful in looking for difference. We view Indian art so often as a barometer of cultural change (using words like “contemporary,” “modern,” and “traditional”) that we may find we neglect its value as a mechanism to maintain the aboriginal patterns and worldview. Basketry in particular can

help us understand more about the continuities of Patwin lives.

Cortina is a small, remnant community, as are all of the California Indian rancherias. These communities are the sad result of the first century of European contact, a period in which entire populations were reduced by 90 to 95 percent or even exterminated entirely. In reaction to these shattering changes, Patwin people banded together to retain their language, religion, arts, and worldview, isolating themselves for protection from the aggressive encroachment of the non-Indian world, the rancheria providing a buffer against the outside world.

Within this context, basketry connects every weaver and user directly to an unbroken line of indigenous ancestry, reminding people of their heritage. A Patwin basket expresses volumes about worldview and the relations of people to their surroundings; the patterns, shapes, and materials are direct, symbolic connections to place and history. In turn, these baskets can be understood as the outcome of the Patwin philosophical system – an outpouring of an ethical way of living, put into practice.

A few years ago, it became necessary for Bertha to sell her sample baskets. She sold them to a local rancher, a loyal collector of her baskets for many years, who in turn sold them to a dealer. Fortunately, the museum was able to acquire this remarkable set of baskets before they were split up and sold individually. Although it is sad to accept that Bertha had to sell her collection of baskets, it is an honor to be able to preserve them for perpetuity in the permanent collection, where they will be available for all to see and study. ♦

Bruce Bernstein is the NMAI’s Assistant Director of Cultural Resources.

CALENDAR of EVENTS

FEBRUARY • MARCH • APRIL

EXHIBITIONS

On view through Feb. 6

INSTRUMENT OF CHANGE:

JIM SCHOPPERT RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION, 1947-1992

The work of the influential Tlingit artist Jim Schoppert (1947-1992) is showcased in this exhibition of 50 objects that includes large woodcarvings, masks, and poetry. This retrospective celebrates the innovative art of Schoppert, an artist who challenged the traditional norms of Northwest Coast art while at the same time serving as a spokesperson for all contemporary Alaska Native artists. Organized by the Anchorage Museum of History and Art.

Ongoing

CREATION'S JOURNEY:

MASTERWORKS OF NATIVE AMERICAN IDENTITY AND BELIEF

This exhibition from the museum's collection features 165 objects, with dates ranging from 3200 B.C. to the 20th century, selected for their beauty, rarity, historical significance, and representation of diverse cultures.

Ongoing

ALL ROADS ARE GOOD: NATIVE VOICES ON LIFE AND CULTURE

23 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.

April 9 – August 20

RESERVATION X

Through major art installations of multi-media, seven Native artists from across Canada and the United States express the complex connections between community and identity.

Organized by the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the exhibition was curated by Gerald McMaster (Plains Cree). Artists participating in the exhibition are Mary Longman, Gordon Indian Reserve in Saskatchewan; Shelley Niro, Mohawk of the Six Nations Reserve; Marianne Nicholson, Kingcome Inlet, B.C.; C. Maxx Stevens, Seminole of Oklahoma; Nora Naranjo-Morse, Tewa of Santa Clara Pueblo, N.M.; Mateo Romero, Cochiti Pueblo, N.M.; and Jolene Rickard, Tuscarora of New York.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 12 - 13

TALKING CIRCLES

ENRIQUE VELASCO (IXIL MAYA) AND ANGEL BRITO (IXIL MAYA) Ixil Mayan weavers, Enrique Velasco and Angel Brito, demonstrate weaving of Mayan carrying bags and explain how the woven designs are significant in Mayan culture.

11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Exhibition Pause Area

Feb. 12 and 19

SPINNING AND FINGERWEAVING WORKSHOP

Learn to spin wool and create a basic finger weaving sample in this two-session workshop taught by Cultural Interpreter Angela Lamphere-Friedlander (Métisse). Materials fee is \$16 (\$14 for members) for two sessions. Enrollment is limited. Advance registration is required.



Reservation X, April 9 - August 20

Please call (212) 514-3714.

16 years and up.

10 a.m. - Noon

Education Classroom

MARCH

March 4 and 11

BEADING WORKSHOP

Amy Tall Chief (Osage) demonstrates and teaches participants how to create beadwork designs using the flat, lazy, and peyote stitches with glass beads. Materials fee is \$16 (\$14 for members) for two sessions.

Enrollment is limited. Advance registration is required. Please call (212) 514-3714. 16 years and up.

10 a.m. - Noon

Education Classroom

March 16

NORTHERN DRUM PRESENTATION THE MANKILLERS

The Mankillers, an all-woman Northern drum group, perform in honor of Women's History Month. 6:30 p.m.

Rotunda

March 18

THE MANKILLERS

11:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. & 3 p.m.

Rotunda

APRIL

April 6

CURATOR'S LECTURE

GERALD MCMASTER (PLAINS CREE)

Gerald McMaster (Plains Cree), Curator of Reservation X, shares insights into the development of the new exhibition of installation art. McMaster is curator of Contemporary Indian Art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization and designed the moccasin display in the NMAI exhibition All Roads Are Good. 5 p.m.

Collector's Office

Continued...



Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian

April 22

FILMS AND CULTURES

Dr. Beverly R. Singer, PhD (Tewa/Dine) leads a discussion about films and videos produced by Native Americans. Advance registration is required. Please call (212) 514-3714.

10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Education Classroom



April 29

THE NEW MOHAWK VISION: TRADITION AND PROGRESS
Tom Porter (Mohawk), spokesman and spiritual leader of the Mohawk Community of Kanatsiohareke in Fonda, N.Y., shares the story of his community and how Mohawk tradition is being preserved. He will be joined by The Mohawk Singers and Dancers. This program is a collaboration with Lotus Music & Dance Studios.
Rotunda
1 p.m.

FILM/VIDEO/RADIO

ESPECIALLY FOR KIDS

A film and video series for all ages.
Video Viewing Room
At 11:00 a.m. and noon daily

February 1 - 20

TOTEM TALK (1997, 22 min.) Annie Frazier-Henry (Sioux-Blackfeet-French). Computer-animated clan totems put urban youth back in touch with their Northwest Coast Heritage.

BENTWOOD BOX (1985, 9 min.) Sandra Osawa (Makah). The making of a traditional Northwest Coast-style box of steamed cedar wood, constructed by hand without using nails, screws, or glue.

BOX OF DAYLIGHT (1990, 9 min.) Janet Fries for the Sealaska Heritage Foundation. The Naa Kahidi Theater of southeast Alaska presents the Tlingit story of how Raven brought daylight to the world.

QUILLIG (1992, 12 min.) Susan Avingaq, Madeline Ivalu, Mathilda Hanniliqq, Martha Maktar, Marie-H. Cousineau. Inuit videomakers portray women using an old-fashioned seal-oil lamp.

February 21 - March 12

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

RABBIT PULLS HIS WEIGHT (1982-86, 28 min.) Eric Jordan, Paul Stephens, and Keith Leckie. Spirit Bay series. Young Rabbit saves the life of a bush pilot downed in the snowy woods of northern Ontario.

March 13 - April 9

JULIA THE GOURDCARVER (1980, 25 min.) Paul Saltzman. An 11-year-old Quechua girl from Peru carves a gourd for sale in the market.

PAULINA AND THE CONDOR (1995, 10 min.) Marisol Barragan. An animation tells the story of an Aymara girl who leaves her mountain home for a life in the city.

HAUDENOSAUNEE: WAY OF THE LONGHOUSE (1982, 13 min.) Robert Stiles. This look at the philosophy and contemporary life of the Six Nations Iroquois people focuses on the Mohawk.

HOLY ELK/LADY MOON (1995/6, 11 min. together) Alfreida Beartrack (Lower Brule Sioux). Two animated tales bring to life Sioux history and folklore.

April 10 - 30

MOOJK/CORN (1996, 21 min.) Tito Antunez Nunez (Mixe). The Mixe of Oaxaca, Mexico, are farmers of corn, a source of their daily food and a sacred connection to Mother Earth.

HOPIT (1984, 20 min.) Victor Masayesva Jr. (Hopi). Vivid

scenes from life in the Hopi villages during four seasons.

POPOL VUH (1989, 57 min.) Patricia Amlin. The great Maya creation epic is told through animation adapted from ancient Maya writings and pottery. Moojk/Corn repeats.

NATIVE NETWORKS

A year-long series celebrates the work of Native media organizations from throughout the Americas and their productions.

Video Viewing Room

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

EYES ON VIDEO IN THE VILLAGES
In Brazil an innovative project, invited by Indian communities in the upper Amazon and in the Mato Grosso, produces videos about Native concerns and provides support for indigenous media production.

February 1 - 20

PEMP (1989, 27 min.) Vincent Carelli. A remarkable Gavião chief, Kokrenum, leads his people in the use of video to preserve their culture and their territory.

ALSO OF INTEREST

BEADWORK FROM THE FOUR DIRECTIONS
Artists from throughout the country celebrate the spectrum of traditional and contemporary Native American beadwork through a mixed-media exhibition.

Jan. 21- March 27
American Indian Community House Gallery/Museum
708 Broadway, 2nd Floor
Opening reception, Jan. 21, 6 - 8 p.m.
For more information, call (212) 598-0100 ext 240
www.aich.org

BODY ART: MARKS OF IDENTITY
Through May 29, 2000, members and visitors to the Heye Center are entitled to a special discount on admission to the new exhibition Body Art: Marks of Identity. Celebrating cultural invention and individual artistry, this exhibition showcases ways in which humans have decorated their bodies throughout the ages.

Nov. 20, 1999 - May 29, 2000
American Museum of Natural History
Central Park West at 79th St.
New York, NY 10024
www.amnh.org

MEETING ANCESTORS: THE ZOE (1993, 22 min.) Vincent Carelli and Dominique Gallois. Chief Wai-Wai of the Waiapi provides his village an account of a visit made to a village which recently had its first contacts with non-Natives.

SIGNS DON'T SPEAK (1996, 27 min.) Dominique Gallois and Vincent Carelli. The Waiapi are asserting their sovereignty through their own land demarcation initiative.

February 21 - March 12

THE SPIRIT OF TV (1990, 18 min.) Vincent Carelli. Waiapi tribe members of Brazil's upper Amazon region talk of their encounter with video and speculate on its possibilities and drawbacks.

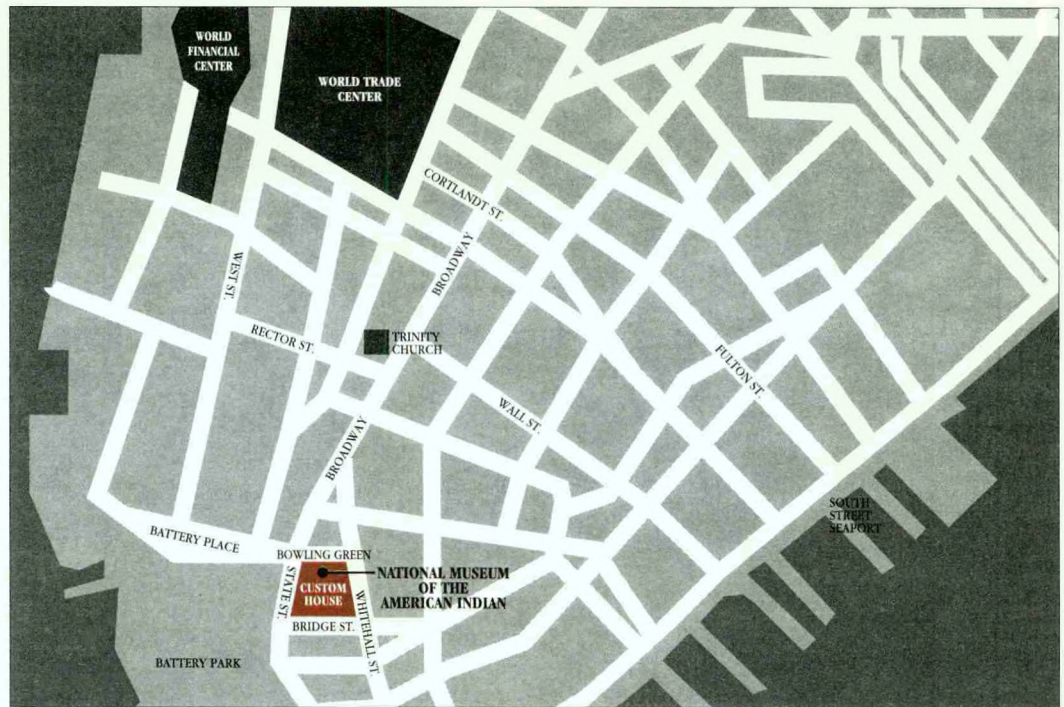
TEM QUE SER CURIOSO/YOU HAVE TO BE CURIOUS (1996, 16 min.) Caimi Waiassé (Xavante). A young man shares his experience using video for the first time to document life in his village in the Mato Grosso and in other Native communities.

YÁKWÁ: THE BANQUET OF THE SPIRITS (1995, 54 min.) Virginia Valadão. In a seven-month ritual the Enauêñê-Nauê of the Mato Grosso prepare and celebrate the spirits which protect them.

EYES ON NATIVE AMERICAN PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS NAPT is the key producer, funding organization, and distributor of Native productions for public television and radio in the U.S.

March 13 - April 9

BEYOND THE RESERVATION ROAD (1997, 30 min.) George Burdeau. The Cherokee community of Cherry Tree, Oklahoma, makes a grassroots effort to improve the lives of its young people.



MINO-BIMADIZIWIN: THE GOOD LIFE (1997, 58 min.) Deb Wallwork for Prairie Public TV. On the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota, Ojibwe retain important connections to the harvesting and use of wild rice.

April 10 - 30

DANCING WITH PHOTONS (1998, 29 min.) Beverly Morris (Qawalangin and Aleut) for KNME, Albuquerque. Leading nuclear scientist Dr. Fred Begay reconciles the contrasting outlooks of his scientific world and of the Navajo community from which he comes. New York premiere.

MY CULTURE, MY ART: BOB HAOZOUS, NATIVE AMERICAN SCULPTOR (1990, 29 min.) Sandy Garritano and Brian Gonda. Through his sculpture Bob Haozous expresses concern with ecology and society, and explores his own Native vision.

JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH (1982, 29 min.) Anthony Schmitz for NAPT. An intimate portrayal of the personal and artistic vision of the influential contemporary painter.

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

Radio Listening Station in the Heye Center's Resource Center

March 1 - April 30

TRADING IN METAPHORS. Executive Producers: Peggy Berryhill (Choctaw), Elizabeth Weatherford.

NATIVE ARTS. Executive Producer: Elizabeth Weatherford. Producers: Milt Lee (Standing Rock Sioux) and Jamie Lee.

COYOTE BITES BACK: INDIAN HUMOR. Executive Producers: Susan Braine (Assiniboine), Keevin Lewis (Navajo), Caleb Strickland (Lumbee/Cherokee).

MEMORY AND IMAGINATION: THE LEGACY OF MAIDU INDIAN ARTIST FRANK DAY.

Executive Producers: Peggy Berryhill, Keevin Lewis, Caleb Strickland.

ADDRESS:

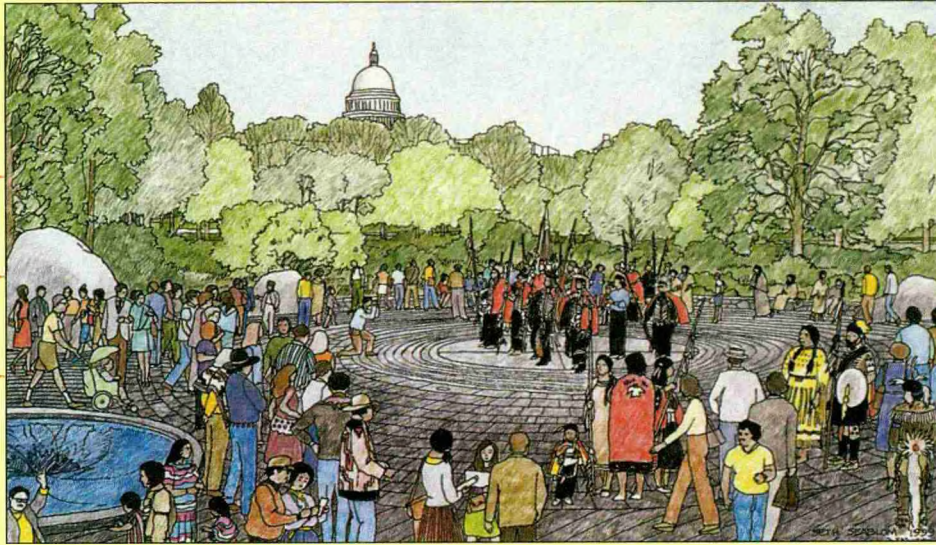
National Museum of the American Indian
Smithsonian Institution, George Gustav Heye Center
One Bowling Green, New York, NY 10004

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

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

The George Gustav Heye Center is located at One Bowling Green, New York, NY, 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, NY. Russ Tall Chief, Calendar Editor.



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National Museum of the American Indian – Membership Benefits

When you join as a Charter Member, there are many benefits waiting for you. Please review the list of benefits and indicate your preferred level on the enclosed form. Thank you for your support.

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- ◆ Eligible for Smithsonian Institution tours

\$35 RIVERBED CIRCLE

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\$50 EVERGLADES CIRCLE

All of the above PLUS

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- ◆ A free gift for your child when you visit the Heye Center's Museum Shop

\$100 SKY MEADOWS CIRCLE

All of the above PLUS

- ◆ An embossed NMAI lapel pin

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Charter Members may also e-mail membership concerns to: aimember@nmai.si.edu

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Check enclosed
(payable to National Museum of the American Indian)

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To join today or give a gift membership, please call 1-800-242-6624 or visit our website at www.si.edu/nmai

AMINDMAG



Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian

Charles Curtis: Was He Friend or Foe?

By ALEXANDER EWEN

At the beginning of the 20th century, a number of American Indians reached positions of prominence in national politics, including election to the U.S. Congress. William Wirt Hastings (Cherokee), served in the House of Representatives from 1915 until 1921 and again from 1923 until 1935. Charles David Carter (Chickasaw) also served in the House, from 1907 until his death in 1929. Both Hastings and Carter represented the state of Oklahoma as did Robert L. Owen (Cherokee) who served in the Senate from 1907 until 1924. Most prominent, however, was Charles Curtis, who served in the House and Senate and eventually became vice president of the United States.

Curtis was born in North Topeka, Kan., on January 25, 1860. His parents were Orren Armes Curtis, a white man, and Ellen Curtis, part Kaw, who died when Charles was four. Curtis lived with his Kaw grandmother, a descendant of leader White Plume, on the Kaw reservation near Council Grove, Kan., and attended the Friends Mission School. In 1868 the Kaws were removed from Kansas to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma), and Curtis returned to North Topeka to live with his paternal grandmother.

After graduating from Topeka High School in 1879, Curtis apprenticed to a local attorney and was admitted to the bar in 1881 at the age of 21. Only four years later he was elected county attorney of Shawnee County, Kan., where he established his reputation as a zealous prosecutor of bootleggers and other petty criminals, leading to his election as a Republican representative to Congress in 1892. In the House, Curtis became active in Indian affairs and authored the Curtis Act of 1898, one of the most important and influential pieces of Indian legislation in the 20th century. The Curtis Act dissolved the governments of the Five Civilized Tribes (as the Creek, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Choctaw, and Seminole were known) and paved the way for Indian Territory to become the state of Oklahoma. Curtis was an assimilationist (also known as a “reformer” or a

“progressive”) – that is, he sought to phase out Indian reservations, end communal ownership of tribal property, and detribalize Indians. Like most progressives in his day, Curtis believed that the only way Indians could survive was to become just like white people.

Curtis became chairman of the House Committee on Indian Affairs in 1903, and in 1906 he helped pass the controversial Burke Act, which gave the Commissioner of Indian Affairs wider powers over the federal government’s allotment policy. Allotment was another attempt by the assimilationists to break up Indian reservations, which were thought to hinder Indians from becoming more like whites. Each Indian household on a reservation would be given an allotment of land, usually 160 acres, and “surplus” reservation land was sold off. It was hoped that this would induce Indians to give up their hunting and gathering lifestyles and become farmers and eventually businessmen. This and other assimilationist policies caused a great deal of harm to Indian peoples, leading to the loss of two-thirds of their remaining land base and the destruction of many Indian communities and cultures. In fairness to the assimilationists, however, it must be said that they intended ultimately to benefit the Indians, unlike the conservatives, who favored continued warfare against Indians – in fact, their complete extermination.

In 1907 Curtis was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Senator Joseph R. Burton of Kansas, joining Robert Owen as one of two Indians in the Senate. Curtis was elected to the seat in 1914 and reelected in 1920 and 1926, serving until 1928. In 1924, Curtis blocked an attempt by Interior Secretary Albert B. Fall to unilaterally transfer 22 million acres of Indian land to the public domain.

Also that year, Curtis succeeded Henry Cabot Lodge as the Senate majority leader, and he gradually became detached from Indian affairs. Curtis was a consummate insider in an age when national policy was made in “smoke-



U.S. Vice President Charles Curtis (Kaw)

filled rooms.” He was known in the press as the “whisperer,” both for his power brokering and his reluctance to give speeches. Colleagues and opponents alike called him “the Injun.”

In 1928, he sought the Republican nomination for the presidency but had to settle for second place on Herbert Hoover’s ticket, becoming the nation’s 31st vice president. Although he attained the White House, his four-year tenure was unhappy, as he grew tired of his mostly symbolic duties. As the country began its plunge into the Great Depression, Hoover’s defeat in 1932 ended Curtis’s political career. The election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt ushered in a new era in Indian politics, known as the Indian New Deal, which repudiated Curtis’s assimilationist policies. Once the great political insider, Curtis was now on the outside, and he returned to private practice in Washington, D.C. He died there on February 8, 1936, of a heart attack. ♦

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



Let the Renaissance Begin

By SUZAN SHOWN HARJO

The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) stands as a mighty symbol for Native America – a symbol of excellence, a symbol of justice, a symbol of hope.

Many cultural centers in one, the NMAI is our Louvre, Metropolitan, and museums of modern art, history, and culture.

Tragically, it also is our Holocaust Museum – a memorial to those Native nations who did not survive the excesses of western civilization; a tribute to those who did. They earned their place of honor on the National Mall and deserve no less than the truth when their names are spoken and their stories are told there.

On NMAI's global stage, we celebrate our relatives who lived lives on the run and still had the heart to make babies and to cover them in beauty. The approximately 800,000 works of power and magnificence are a priceless gift to us and our coming generations, and now to the world.

Only a few people alive today have seen this vast collection, or even a sufficient portion of it to appreciate its splendor and magnitude. Native and non-Native people who are cataloging and moving it from New York to Washington count themselves as privileged to be entrusted with this duty of care.

Soon, Native artists, tribal historians, elders, and our living cultural treasures will be able to study this extraordinary collection to inform their art, philosophy, language, and life. These ancient messages and visions already are enhancing the cultural wisdom of Native peoples throughout the hemisphere, and will dramatically reshape art and scholarship by and about us.

This is our chance to clear out the underbrush of stereotypes, myths, and Indian kitsch to make way for authentic images and fine art of Native masters.

As the Museum on the Mall becomes a fixed point on the Capitol horizon, policymakers will see a daily reminder of something that has been missing altogether in the Washington area since the Anacostias were killed – positive images of Native Americans as human beings and as civilized peoples with long histories of achievement.

At the beginning of last century, the future of American Indians was in grave

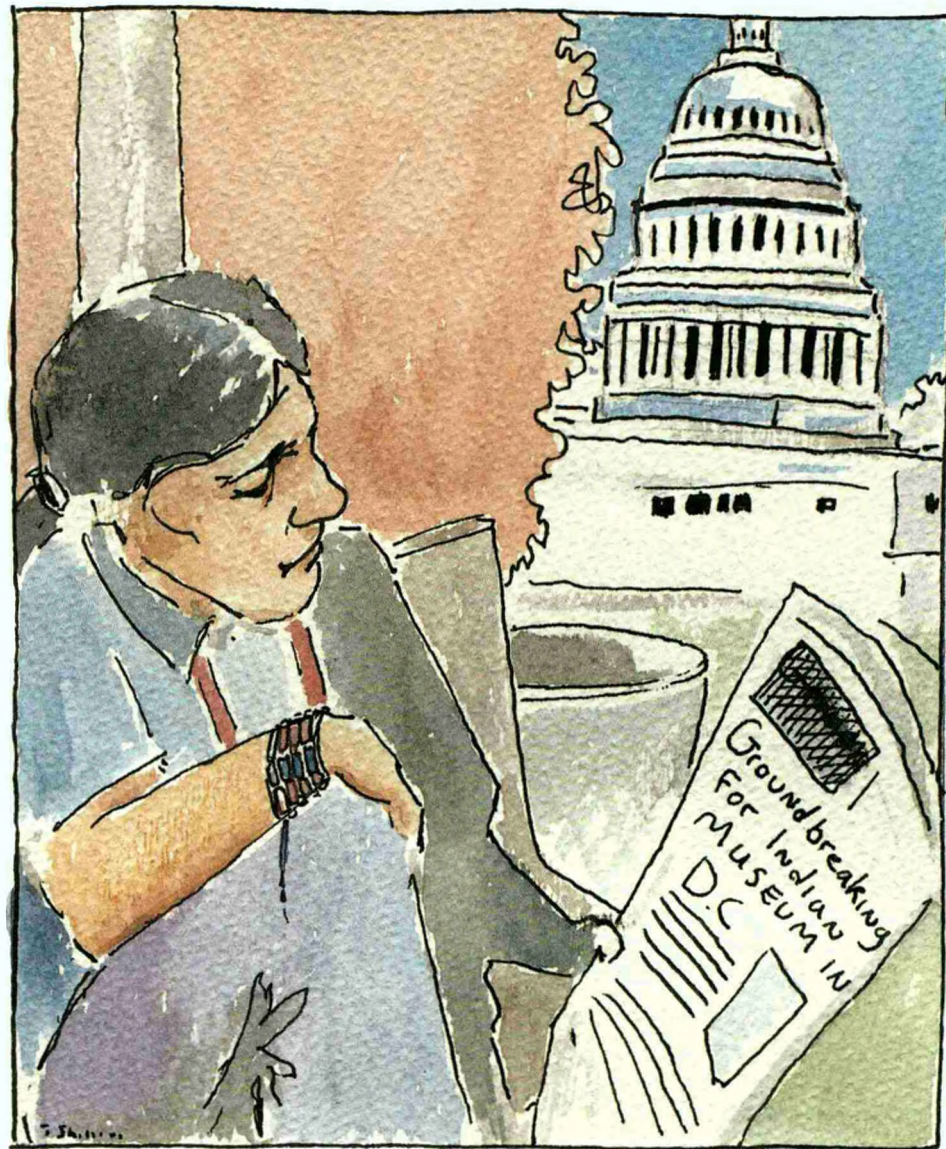


Illustration by Travis Shilling

doubt. Our total population in the country was only 250,000, our traditional religions were outlawed, and our languages were banned in federal Indian schools. Now, 100 years later, our numbers have increased fourfold, our religious leaders can pray openly, and our children are not beaten for speaking their ancestors' languages. We can see a time when we may live as free, unendangered people again.

The NMAI is an eloquent statement of the United States' commitment to our permanence.

These were the expectations and reflections voiced by Native people who traveled from all parts of Indian country to the groundbreaking of the Museum on the Mall

last year. Each one embodied evidence of an ancient cultural continuum and a strong family's long struggle for basic human and civil rights. It was a gathering of many proud parents and good friends of the NMAI. Most importantly, it was a gathering to thank Mother Earth for receiving this symbol of an arduous but joyous journey. ♦

Suzan Shown Harjo (Cheyenne & Hodulgee Muscogee), a poet, curator, and a founding trustee of the NMAI (1990-1996), she was the first chair of the NMAI program committee and a trustee of the Museum of the American Indian in New York (1980-1990).

A LEGACY *of* SUPPORT

One woman's generous gift will forever change the way millions of people view "First Americans"



"I hope and pray that others, observing the steadily growing number of supporters and the generous donations of so many, will be inspired to make contributions."

— RU LANG

The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian has lost a special friend; Ru Lennox Lang, journalist, author, and playwright. As a Charter Member, Ms. Lang was a strong supporter of NMAI, and through her bequest, her impact on the NMAI continues today. Deeply concerned about the culture, spirit, and art of American Indian peoples, Ms. Lang believed the Smithsonian was the ideal place to keep their histories alive. Because of Ms. Lang's foresight in establishing a bequest for young Native American interns at NMAI, her legacy will live in perpetuity. It remains a fitting testimony to her remarkable life.

For more information on planned giving opportunities, please contact:
Veronica Brandon Palermo
470 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Suite 7103, Washington, DC 20560-0934
Phone: 202-357-3164 Fax: 202-357-3369 email: palermov@nmai.si.edu
All inquiries are confidential.

Send me information on how to include the NMAI in my will or living trust.

I have already included NMAI in my estate plans.

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Office of Public Affairs
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Washington, D.C.
20560-0934