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A Tradition of Courage
Mohawk Ironworkers at Ground Zero

Approximately 50 Mohawk ironworkers from the Akwesasne and the Kahnawake reserves near Montreal signed up to help with rescue and cleanup efforts at Ground Zero in New York City. Valerie Taliman (Navajo) interviews Mike McDonald, Brad Bonaparte, and other descendants of generations of Mohawk ironworkers who helped build the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center, and the World Trade Center. At Ground Zero and in their communities, Mohawk people burned tobacco and prayed for their men according to Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) cultural traditions. Photographs by Jeffrey Jay Foxx and Martin Lof (Mohawk).

Ganondagan: Town of Peace

Jason Ryle (Anishinabe) visits Ganondagan, a 17th-century Seneca town of 150 longhouses and now a state historic site near Victor, N.Y. G. Peter Jemison (Seneca), site manager, speaks about the thousand-year-old landmark, once home to 4,500 Seneca people. Ganondagan has many chapters in its history including a battle with the French and the Peacemaker’s message of peace that brought together the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy. Photographs by Millie Knapp (Anishinabe).

Places of Power

Valerie Taliman (Navajo) writes about the efforts of Native leaders like Henrietta Mann (Southern Cheyenne) and the late Thomas Banyaca (Hopi) to preserve sacred sites in the Americas. Many tribes have creation stories that define traditional cultural sites and places of spiritual power like Mato Tipila, or Devil’s Tower, in Wyoming or the Petroglyph National Monument in New Mexico, the largest group of petroglyphs in the U.S.

Cover: Mohawk ironworker Albert Stalk Jr., on bridge over St. Lawrence River. Kahnawake Mohawk Territory. Photo by Todd France.

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Cover: Mohawk ironworker Albert Stalk Jr., on bridge over St. Lawrence River. Kahnawake Mohawk Territory. Photo by Todd France.
Spirit of the “People Who Were First Here”

The dedication of the GGHC staff was never more apparent than in the wake of tragedy

by John Haworth

September 11 was supposed to have been an important workday. I had an afternoon meeting with board members and the architects for the Pavilion, an educational program and exhibit space planned for the Heye Center’s ground floor. The City of New York had recently provided $1 million in capital funding toward its renovation. We were moving ahead with program plans and working hard to raise funds to support it.

One subway stop from work, I heard about a plane crash from a passenger on her way to work. Leaving the station, I saw a cloud of brown air swirling all around. One of my colleagues was running toward the Museum with a look of desperation and panic. I heard a loud, bomblike sound, which turned out to be the second plane striking the World Trade Center. I walked several miles to safety with thousands of people. Considering our Native ancestors, who were forced to take Long Walks, this was nothing in comparison. But it was a long walk, a walk with a pounding heart. The dark blue suit my father had given me got torn and covered with soot. The suit was later cleaned and repaired, but lifting one’s spirit in these times takes longer.

I am deeply proud of how the Heye Center staff responded to the attacks. The Office of Physical Plants was quick to shut off the air vents, keeping our exhibits and artifacts safe. A team addressed safety, conservation, and exhibition issues. We tracked down everyone on staff, our volunteers, and board members. On September 19, Clinton Elliot (Ojibwe), from the Resource Center, performed a blessing ceremony to welcome staff back to the Museum.

One step at a time, we are rebuilding our programs, our audiences, and our capacities. On October 1, we reopened our galleries in a Bold Resolve to Persevere, in the spirit of the New York Times headline. With the American Indian Community House, we presented Art Talk to a full house. We had the New York premiere of the film Christmas in the Clouds, which played at the Sundance Film Festival last January. The school groups are coming back. There’s still a lot to catch up on, yet we have much to celebrate.

The Plains Shirts exhibit (which closed November 4) taught us about survival and cultural continuity. The photographs in Spirit Capture give us evidence about the vitality of Native America. In our new exhibit Across Borders, the glorious beadwork of Iroquois people shows us the power and sweetness of everyday life. Knowing that Mohawk ironworkers helped build the skyscrapers and the World Trade Center, we can comprehend their skill and contribution to our urban environment.

Being part of the National Museum of the American Indian at this poignant moment means so very much, especially now.

The Pavilion, targeted for completion in 2003, will be a welcoming space for exhibits and family programs. It now takes on even greater meaning for us. Completing it is a powerful expression and symbol of our spirit to move forward.

These past weeks have been especially demanding for the George Gustav Heye Center (GGHC) staff. It also has been a time to reflect on what it means to be working in a museum, especially one so close to Ground Zero. The GGHC is located at the beginning of Broadway — once a Lenape Indian trail — on the site of a former Algonquin trade route. Across the street is a monument dedicated to the Native exchange with the Dutch. Just steps outside, you can see the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

Sometimes, when I welcome visitors, I tell them we are the Museum that tells the story of the “people who were first here,” and our friends across the water tell the story of the “people who came here.” Indeed, this is a significant, powerful place.

John Haworth (Cherokee) is the director of the George Gustav Heye Center in lower Manhattan and serves on the boards of Americans for the Arts and the Museum Association of New York.
Walking Thunder: Dreams Made of Sand

The ancient art of sandpainting has found a gifted contemporary interpreter in Walking Thunder, a Diné woman of the Hasht'ishnii (Mud People) clan. Born on May 8, 1951, in Shiprock, N.M., Walking Thunder lives and works on the Navajo Reservation, which stretches from Arizona into Utah and New Mexico and is the largest in the United States. Walking Thunder made her first sandpainting under the watchful eye of her father-in-law, a medicine man. Sandpaintings fall into two categories: those made privately in healing ceremonies and those created publicly for artistic or commercial reasons. Walking Thunder will demonstrate the latter from April 11 to 21, 2002 at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City.

"All the details of my sandpaintings come from my dreams," Walking Thunder says. In her artistic works, Walking Thunder varies time-honored designs and adds her own elements to depictions of earth, sky, the four directions, animals, and plants. For instance, she combines tradition and personal interpretation when she brightens traditional colors that represent the four directions: white (east), blue (south), yellow (west), and black (north).

Walking Thunder creates her pieces through an exacting process. First, she grinds stone into a powder and sifts it into sand. She chooses her colors before spreading the sand evenly on a flat surface. Then, she makes a mark on the sand to hold her focus and begins the painting, working on hands and knees and reaching across the sandy surface to execute her design. The size of each painting varies. The smallest commercial paintings measure approximately 8 by 12 inches; the largest can measure several feet square.

After the design is complete, Walking Thunder erases the design with her hands, mixes the sand together, and collects it into a large piece of fabric. Then, according to tradition, each painting must be destroyed and the sand returned to the earth before sundown on the day the painting is made.

Inspired by the work of Walking Thunder and Diné chants, the internationally acclaimed Pilobolus Dance Theater will present the premiere of a new work from April 11 to 14 (see Calendar of Events) in the Museum's Rotunda. Walking Thunder and the Pilobolus Dance Theater are presented in association with Ringing Rocks Foundation.

Maria A. Dering

$5-Million Anonymous Gift to NMAI

"I was at a restaurant in New York City and almost cheered out loud," recalls Elizabeth Duggal, director of external affairs and development at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), upon hearing the unprecedented news of a $5-million anonymous gift. "My assistant telephoned me and asked if I was sitting down, then told me about this amazing letter she had just opened."

The letter, sent by the State Street Research Bank in Hartford, Conn., detailed that an anonymous donor wished to bestow upon the Museum the largest gift from an individual in its history. "It was received several weeks following the September terrorist attacks," Duggal says. "It is incredibly encouraging to receive this magnificent gift after 9/11 from someone who so clearly and strongly believes in the mission of the National Museum of the American Indian. It means so much to the Museum and to Native people."

The $5 million will contribute directly to the construction of the new Mall Museum in Washington, D.C., slated for completion in 2004. "We received this gift at a critical time for the NMAI, when the Museum was about to award the latest round of construction contracts," Duggal says.

"The NMAI knows nothing about this donor and will respect his or her privacy," she continues. "If he or she were so kind as to reveal themselves, I'd give them the biggest hug for their extraordinary generosity. To give without any desire for return or recognition is the purest form of philanthropy."
Mall Partnering Workshop Brings Unique Perspective

A Native American component created a new approach to a museum partnering workshop held last fall in Bethesda, Md., under the sponsorship of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). "Partnering, as a philosophy, has been done in the design and construction field for approximately 15 years," said Debra Nauta-Rodriguez, project manager in the Smithsonian's Office of Facilities Engineering and Operations. "This one was unique because of the cultural orientation."

Duane Blue Spruce (Laguna Pueblo) NMAI's facilities planner, and other Native members of the architectural design team — Johnpaul Jones (Cherokee/Choctaw), Ramona Sakiestewa (Hopi), and Lou Weller (Caddo) — explained the cultural aspects of the construction. "It was important to have a Native perspective so that all project participants could have an understanding of the project's history, philosophy, and design," said Blue Spruce. "The design is informed by ideas based on Native culture. Partnering with a cultural orientation was essential."

Blue Spruce outlined Native-inspired elements in the Museum, including the symbolism of an east-facing entrance, the importance of the circle, and the use of cultural and spiritual materials such as wood and stone.

Partnering workshops bring together participants in large construction projects for team-building exercises. Last fall's partnering workshop brought together Smithsonian representatives and NMAI staff; the architects Polshek Smith Group and Jones & Jones; and the general contractor, a joint venture between Clark Construction and Table Mountain Rancheria Enterprises. Nearly 40 people participated in the one-day event, held on October 18. - Jennifer David

Native Networks Web Site Launched

The Film and Video Center (FVC) of the National Museum of the American Indian has created a Web site for Native media artists that is both visually striking and extremely useful. Part multimedia magazine and part database, the Native Networks Web site assists artists throughout the Americas with promotion, networking, and the creative process.

"It's an extension of the work we've been doing for years, only now we reach more people," said Elizabeth Weatherford, FVC head. "We have to help promote the work of media makers, and this is the way to do it."

"Users can read feature articles, peruse film festival schedules, watch video clips, connect to indigenous people's radio stations, and download extensive lists of films, organizations, and distributors at www.nativenetworks.si.edu."

"The idea to deploy a Web site emerged from the FVC's biennial film and video festivals. At the festivals, North and South American media makers present and discuss their film, video, radio, television, and new media. Weatherford says that there was such a demand for the workshops that the next logical step was to put a version on the Internet. "We're taking the workshops we've offered at our festivals and extending that knowledge to the Web," she says.

Weatherford says the site has a strong international focus, resulting from the fact that 40 percent of the festival participants come from Latin America and 60 percent come from the United States and Canada.

The FVC is also developing a Native Networks CD-ROM for those without access to the Internet. A CD-ROM version ensures that all indigenous artists benefit from the information. - Jamie Monastyrski
**Hearst Foundations Renew Support for NMAI with $1-million Grant for Learning Center**

With a vision of shared knowledge through computer technology, and a $1-million grant, the William Randolph Hearst Foundations have brought the new National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) one step closer to completion. Through its generosity, the foundations will ensure the completion of the Interactive Learning Center (ILC) of the Resource Center in the Mall Museum, scheduled to open in 2004. "It is a pleasure to have the support of the Hearst Foundations," says Elizabeth Duggal, director of external affairs and development at the NMAI in Washington, D.C.

The largest component of the future Resource Center at the Mall Museum, the ILC will focus on educating the visiting public as well as communities throughout the hemisphere about the Museum’s collection and about Native Americans. "At the Interactive Learning Center, visitors learn more about specific areas in the Museum’s collection and about Native American people, histories, and societies," says Todd Cain, a Museum development officer.

In a significant advancement for the Museum, the ILC will pursue electronic outreach to Native and non-Native communities through Web-based programming. Native students will document NMAI objects displayed in the Mall Museum that originally emanated from their communities. This insight will provide a valuable Native perspective. "The Interactive Learning Center opens the Museum to those who can’t visit it in person. Through the work of the ILC, many of the Museum’s resources will be available to computer users around the world," Cain says. "The Hearst Foundations have a long history of support for the NMAI that goes back to the days of the former Museum of the American Indian. This latest gift — its largest to the Museum — demonstrates the Hearst Foundations’ commitment to bringing Native communities together online and will ensure the facility achieves its goal of advancing the knowledge and understanding of Native cultures." - Jason Ryle

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**NMAI Patrons Receive Opportunity to Meet Black Elk’s Great-granddaughter**

Patrons of the National Museum of the American Indian will have a rare opportunity this spring to hear the great-granddaughter of Lakota holy man Black Elk share extraordinary family stories of events surrounding the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee, S.D.

Charlotte Black Elk, a scholar of Lakota oral history and a fluent Oglala Lakota speaker from the Pine Ridge Reservation, will share her considerable knowledge of the legacy of Wounded Knee. The event is scheduled for March 7 at 6:30 p.m. in the George Gustav Heye Center Rotunda in Manhattan.

Black Elk’s rich family history is replete with stories passed down through the generations about great leaders in her family and their historic struggles for the land, language, religious beliefs, and ultimate survival of the Lakota people. Her ancestors include Good Thunder, one of three men chosen to journey west to the Great Basin to visit with the Paiute prophet Wovoka, whose teachings of the Ghost Dance spread like wildfire among the Lakota, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Assiniboin after they had been devastated by recent warfare.

Good Thunder brought the Ghost Dance back to the Lakota who, in only 20 years, had seen the annihilation of millions of buffalo, epidemic disease, defeat in numerous battles, and confinement on reservations. For them, the dead outnumbered the living. The Ghost Dance included songs from the spirit world that promised their dead would return to life, the killings would cease, and the buffalo herds would return. Neighboring white communities were alarmed by the spread of ghost dancing and called for army intervention that ultimately led to the death of Sitting Bull and the massacre at Wounded Knee.

Charlotte’s great-grandfather, Black Elk, had the vision of the Ghost Dance shirt, and his family became very involved with the Ghost Dance. Her great-grandmother, Katie War Bonnet, came from Sitting Bull’s people and was one of the very few who survived the battle at Wounded Knee, where Chief Big Foot’s band of 250 Minniconjou and Hunkpapa Lakota were killed. Black Elk tells the story of her grandmother’s journey that bitter winter.

A hundred years later, in the winter of 1990, Tokala, Charlotte Black Elk’s 12-year-old son, rode in the Chief Big Foot Memorial Ride, which retraced the 250-mile route taken by their ancestors in 1890 to evade the soldiers. "I rode behind him the whole way, and I kept thinking about our ancestors," she said. "Here was my son, raised traditionally with the language and ceremonies — free to be Lakota in a way that my Grandma Katie’s generation was not allowed to be. I knew then that my grandmother’s tears were not in vain."

Black Elk and many of her generation have not only survived but have made lasting commitments to ensure that their people and traditional culture live on. - Valerie Taliman
Bolivian Films Seen in the U.S. for the First Time

Eye of the Condor/Ojo del Condor, the first video festival to showcase Native Bolivian directors in the United States, will premiere in March 2002 (see Calendar of Events). The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) program will introduce nine award-winning works to audiences in New York City and the Washington, D.C., area. "The quality of these productions is remarkable," says Elizabeth Weatherford, the head of the NMAI’s Film and Video Center. "We understood that, without a tour, many in the United States would never have a chance to see works from the region and understand the strong modern indigenous outlook they reflect."

In the late 1980s, the Cinematography, Education and Production Center/El Centro de Formación y Realización Cinematográfica (CEFREC) and Bolivian Indigenous Peoples’ Audiovisual Council/Coordinadora Audiovisual Indigena Originaria de Bolivia (CAIB) sparked a national indigenous film and video movement in Bolivia. The resulting productions have an international reputation for skill and authenticity. The NMAI’s 2000 Native American Film and Video Festival screened eight CEFREC/CAIB videos. Awards followed in 2001 at the ImagineNATIVE Media Festival in Toronto and at the Film and Video Festival of Abya Yala in Ecuador.

The directors produce their work with the approval and participation of the Indian communities involved. The project is broadly national, with locations and filmmakers chosen from indigenous areas throughout the country. "It makes you feel confident that the stories they are telling really are coming from the grassroots," says Carol Kalafatic, the tour coordinator.

The festival’s program has been chosen by the Film and Video Center in cooperation with Alma Boliviana, a Bolivian community organization in Fairfax, Va. In one production, Quechua director Marcelino Pinto’s Oro Maldivo/Cursed Gold, a young man’s obsessive search for gold forces him to confront greed and redemption. In the documentary Dusting Off Our History, directed by Alfredo Copa, Quechua elders learn about their ties to other communities.

In addition to screenings at the NMAI’s George Gustav Heye Center in New York City, the tour will be hosted by New York University’s Center for Media, Culture and History and Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies; Alma Boliviana; and the District of Columbia’s Environmental Film Festival, presented in Washington, D.C., by the NMAI in cooperation with the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. The tour was organized with support from the Smithsonian’s Latino Initiatives Fund, administered by the Smithsonian Center for Latino Initiatives, to reach diverse audiences and to maximize Latino and indigenous exchanges.

- Derrick Henry

Living Voices Wins Radio Award

Living Voices/Voces Vivus won the Best in Radio award at the international ImagineNATIVE Media Arts Festival awards show in Toronto, Ontario. The National Museum of the American Indian’s (NMAI) radio series won the newly created radio award at the second annual festival. "We were honored that a prestigious organization like the NMAI entered our radio project, especially in our first year of giving radio awards," says Cynthia Lickers, director of festival programming.

Elizabeth Weatherford, Keevin Lewis, and Caleb Strickland produced the series in a collaborative NMAI effort between the Film and Video Center at the George Gustav Heye Center in New York City and the Community Services Department at the Cultural Resources Center (CRC) in Suitland, Md. The producers worked with community interviewers to record the interviews of Native people with various life experiences.

Keevin Lewis (Navajo), community services program coordinator at the CRC, accepted the ImagineNATIVE award. "The series tries to say, 'This is my story in my own words. This is who I am,'" he says about the work’s intent to express the diversity of Native experience. Lickers adds, "Living Voices is a unique and very large undertaking. It’s a collection of thought-provoking stories." The 36-part series gathers the words of people like Frank Dukepoo, a Hopi geneticist. With the recent death of Dukepoo, the project gained another profound meaning for Lewis, who says that "Dukepoo’s words, thoughts, and wisdom are still alive today on Living Voices."

"There is a listenership in the Americas that really wants to know about Native peoples but hasn’t had the opportunity to hear first-person accounts," says Weatherford. NMAI’s Film and Video Center head. Living Voices is available for broadcast by Native-run and other public radio stations across the Americas. - Andre Morriseau
ganondagan is one of the most historic places you've never heard of," says G. Peter Jemison (Seneca), manager of the New York State-sponsored site south of Victor, N.Y. Little was known about this 17th-century Seneca town until efforts began in the 1940s to excavate it and reveal its history. Today, visitors to the Ganondagan State Historic Site learn about the thousand-year-old landmark, once home to 4,500 Seneca people, through stainless-steel trail markers set up throughout the 3.5 miles of trails that explore the site's 522.5 acres. "Ganondagan's history has many chapters, from the time of the Peacemaker to the battle with the French to the present," Jemison says.
The Peacemaker instructed all the nations to bury their weapons under a white pine tree. Today, a white pine stands near Ganondagan's entrance to remind visitors of this message of peace.
Amid birch-bark shavings, craftsman’s tools, and cups of coffee, Daniel Smith (above, center) and his assistant Jimmy Whiteduck work tirelessly as the nine-day construction nears completion.

moments in Ganondagan, the Seneca burned their longhouses but they left the granary, three corn-filled bark silos on nearby Fort Hill. When the French arrived, they set fire to the granary and surrounding cornfields.

“That battle left the town in ruins,” says Jemison. For centuries, Ganondagan was all but forgotten.

**GANONDAGAN TODAY**

For some 250 years, settlers, farmers, and metalsmiths worked the land, turning the soil and covering Ganondagan completely. In 1935, Arthur C. Parker, director of the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences, called upon historian and archaeologist J. Sheldon Fisher to begin excavation work at Ganondagan. Later, Fisher helped establish the Gannagaro (the Mohawk word for Ganondagan) Association, which was dedicated to preserving the site. In 1964, the U.S. Department of the Interior designated Ganondagan as a National Historic Landmark, a distinction reserved for only the most significant historic sites. Two years later, Fort Hill was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Ganondagan was dedicated as a New York State Historic Site on July 14, 1987, the only such site in New York dedicated to Native Americans.

Friends of Ganondagan, an 800-member organization, was established in 1989 to deal with the park’s popularity and assist in managing its growth. “We sponsor the site’s special events, do all the fundraising, handle its public relations, and maintain its website,” says Jeanette Miller (Mohawk), the group’s executive director. “The annual music festival is one of our largest events. Last year, we attracted over 4,800 visitors.” Entering its fifth year, the two-day Native American Dance and Music Festival blends entertainment and education. The 2002 festival will be held July 27-28. Over the years, musicians such as Grammy-nominated singer Joanne Shenandoah (Oneida) and Bill Miller (Mohican) have performed.

Last summer, 30 white tents were spread out on the land just below the site’s new longhouse. Visitors ambled by an outdoor gallery that showcased artists Tom Huff (Seneca/Cayuga), Nora Noranjo Morse (Santa Clara Pueblo), and Tammy Tarbell-Boehning (Mohawk). “It’s a great place to present my work and see old friends,” says Huff.

“I’m here to gain a better understanding of Native American culture,” says William Johnson, the mayor of Rochester, N.Y., which is 15 miles to the east. Erin Fletcher, Victor (N.Y.) Local Development Corporation representative, says Ganondagan holds the key to the area’s history. “Ganondagan is the main historical site in the Victor region,” says Fletcher.

Visitors learn about Seneca, Iroquois, French, and American history through Ganondagan’s programs. The site is open to the public seasonally from May 1 until the end of the first week in November, although Ganondagan operates year round, offering educational outreach programs to nearby non-Native elementary schools. “It’s part of our mandate to promote and teach Native American history,” Jemison says.

The longhouse and trails give glimpses of Seneca life 300 years ago. Just behind the longhouse, the Earth is Our Mother Trail begins with an opening in the thick brush. The natural archway formed by hickory trees and hedges invites visitors to hike the trail of nearly three miles through the natural-growth hillside and learn the significance of indigenous plant life. Poison ivy abounds, so it is with great care that guide Larry VerWeire identifies the plants and their uses. On this journey,
VerWeire points out traditional remedies for colds and poison ivy rashes and identifies plants used for moccasin linings and ceremonial uses. "It’s not just bush. It’s like a pharmacy or a medicine cabinet," VerWeire says of the woodlands.

Another walkway, the Granary Trail, explores Fort Hill, from which Ganondagan’s longhouse stands in contrast to the festival tents. Several years ago, Jemison approached the Ancient Lifeways Institute, located in Michael, Ill., which had supervised the construction of a longhouse for the New York State Museum in Albany, to build the longhouse for Ganondagan. Constructed in 1998, the longhouse is a replica of a midsize Seneca longhouse. The structure is covered with synthetic bark sheets, cast from a mold of real elm bark and surprisingly realistic. Inside, exposed wooden beams tied together with strips of hickory bark line the 65-foot-long building. Small storage rooms stand at each entrance, and two sets of bunks run the length of the large inner room. "A midsize longhouse like this one would have housed six families," Jemison says. "With approximately five people per family, this longhouse housed 30 or more people."

Under an English walnut tree near the entrance, two men hunch over an unfinished birch-bark canoe while a crowd of onlookers watches. Using materials derived from the birch tree, canoe maker Daniel “Pinock” Smith (Anishinabe) builds traditional canoes using methods his parents taught him in Maniwaki, Que. "I learned by watching first, then by doing," Smith says. Amid birch-bark shavings, craftsman’s tools, and cups of coffee, Smith and his assistant Jimmy Whiteduck (Anishinabe) work tirelessly as the nine-day construction nears completion.

In the main tent, Joanne Shenandoah sings about beauty, thanksgiving, and healing with her daughter, Leah, and her sister Diane.

On the last day of the festival, Jemison beams. Inside the packed main tent, he addresses the crowd and thanks them for attending. Wearing a red ribbon shirt and a gustoweh, a Seneca headdress, he concludes the festivities with a traditional Seneca prayer of thanksgiving. Outside, the warm July sun shines as the Seneca language is heard throughout Ganondagan once again.

For more information about Ganondagan State Historic Site, visit the website at www.ganondagan.org or call (585) 742-1690.

Jason Ryle (Anishinabe) is a writer and public relations practitioner based in Toronto, Ont.
Walking on steel beams 14 floors above the Hudson River shoreline, Mike McDonald heard the plane before he saw it. As the Boeing 767 airliner crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center directly across the river, he and his fellow ironworkers were stunned by the horror unfolding before their eyes.

by Valerie Taliman
Men from their communities helped build much of New York City’s famous skyline, and now they worked at the scene of the disaster, helping to dismantle what they had helped to build.

Brad Bonaparte and Andy Jacobs had left the local union hall and were crossing the George Washington Bridge on foot when they saw the burning 110-story twin towers collapse into a mountain of twisted steel, lost lives, and unspeakable devastation.
"When we walked into the site with other ironworkers, everyone was silent," said Bonaparte. "We were greeted by firemen carrying out body bags. There was so much destruction everywhere, it was like a scene from a war movie."
Working as partners, Bonaparte and Jacobs had the difficult job of using “air lances,” torches fueled by magnesium rods, to melt the heaviest steel. Laboring under the weight of protective leather clothing, goggles, and a respirator, they could not hear or see much and got burned constantly, even catching on fire at times.

“When we saw the building explode, we wondered if it was an accident or a bomb,” said McDonald. “When the second plane hit, we knew for sure it was terrorists. We were told to evacuate immediately.” McDonald, a citizen of the Akwesasne Mohawk Nation that straddles the Ontario, Quebec, and New York state borders, was among dozens of Mohawk ironworkers who witnessed firsthand the terrorist attacks on September 11. Richard Otto was on the 50th floor of a construction site only 10 blocks from the World Trade Center when the wing of the airliner nearly clipped their crane before slamming into the north tower.

Brad Bonaparte and Andy Jacobs had left the local union hall and were crossing the George Washington Bridge on foot when they saw the burning, 110-story twin towers collapse into a mountain of twisted steel, lost lives, and unspeakable devastation. As members of Ironworkers Local 40 at Akwesasne, they hold profound knowledge about the kind of force it takes to destroy a skyscraper and the tough work involved in building megastructures like the World Trade Center. Men from their communities helped build much of New York City’s famous skyline, including the twin towers, the United Nations building, Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center, the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, and the George Washington Bridge. Countless friends and relatives were injured or lost their lives in the process. McDonald’s father was killed when he fell from Rockefeller Center’s steel frame after a cable swung loose and knocked him over the edge.

It is dangerous work, and men from the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, known traditionally as the Haundenosaunee, have become legendary for the skill, fortitude, and bravery they have demonstrated over six or seven generations of building skyscrapers and bridges throughout the United States and Canada.

Their history of building intricate structures dates back hundreds of years, says Richard Hill Sr. (Tuscarora), a historian and author of *Skywalkers: A History of Indian Ironworkers.* “Ironworkers perform a very ancient skill – they build structures, not unlike their ancestors who built 200-foot longhouses,” Hill said. “Don’t forget that the Iroquois call themselves hodinowen, meaning ‘they build longhouses.’ Building is part of our tribal identity. Ironworkers have become the builders of long bridges and tall lodges of the
“Don’t forget that the Iroquois call themselves hodinoso:ni’, meaning ‘they build longhouses.’ Building is part of our tribal identity. Ironworkers have become the builders of long bridges and tall lodges of the modern world.”

By 1987, Hill estimates, about 7,500 Indian ironworkers were members of the international union, predominantly from Woodlands tribes in the Northeast, where ironwork has become a major occupation. Indian ironworkers must often travel great distances to the next job in Detroit or Philadelphia or San Francisco—wherever there is lucrative work to support their families, challenge their skills, and show pride in a job well done. During the 1940s and ‘50s building boom, as many as 700 ironworkers and their families lived in the Brooklyn area. The men joined the Brooklyn and Manhattan locals of the international ironworkers union, and over the years they worked on the Time and Life Building, the Seagram Building, and other prominent skyscrapers.

They never imagined they would see New York City’s steel giants come tumbling down. In the days that followed the attacks, Bonaparte and Jacobs joined thousands of others in the urgent effort to rescue survivors, working in smoky, hazardous conditions for 10 hours a day. They were among some 50 Mohawk ironworkers from Akwesasne and the Kahnawake reserve near Montreal who signed up to help with rescue and cleanup efforts. As structural ironworkers, they had the expertise needed at Ground Zero to begin cutting through tons of shredded, twisted steel that had to be removed by cranes before rescue workers could search for survivors.

“When we walked into the site with other ironworkers, everyone was silent,” said Bonaparte. “We were greeted by firemen carrying out body bags. There was so much destruction everywhere, it was like a scene from a war movie.” Working as partners, Bonaparte and Jacobs had the difficult job of using “air lances,” torches fueled by magnesium rods, to melt the heaviest steel. Laboring under the weight of protective leather clothing, goggles, and a respirator, they could not hear or see much and got burned constantly, even catching on fire at times. “We would attack the largest pieces of steel with torches and cut them down to a workable size so the cranes could move them. Then the firemen and emergency personnel would search the area,” he explained. On “the pile,” small fires were burning everywhere, and shards of sharp metal made for difficult climbing. Pockets of gas and hidden fuel tanks underneath the rubble were ever-present dangers, as was the instability of the mountain of rubble. Men got hurt physically everyday: burned skin, smashed toes and fingers, broken arms, cuts and bruises. But it was the emotional pain that caused intense suffering for many firefighters and police officers when they carried out the bodies of their brothers and sisters.

On his first night, Bonaparte slipped on a piece of iron and fell into a pile of tangled wreckage. He was pierced through the back by a blade of steel, and the injury landed him in Bellevue Hospital’s intensive care unit. He checked himself out the next day and returned to Ground Zero to continue working the graveyard shift, roughly 3 p.m. to midnight, in an exhausting schedule that lasted more than three months.

“There was so much we had to improvise at first,” Bonaparte said of the dangerous work that took him 200 feet above the site in man buckets and down subterranean tunnels under-
Recently, a day was set aside in Kahnawake to honor ironworkers. Pictured are 51 active and retired ironworkers from Kahnawake.

Underneath the wreckage. "No one had ever done anything like this before. There were no plans or blueprints to go by, no estimations of weight. We had some of the world's top engineers and demolition experts down there looking at the buildings, trying to figure out how to take them down. Lots of times it would boil down to asking the ironworkers what we thought. We had to figure out ways to get things done."

In the course of the work, they came across reminders of Mohawks who had been there before them. "I often thought of a good friend of mine, the late Julius Cook, who was a welding foreman on the World Trade Center, which was about 80 percent welded," Bonaparte said. "We saw that many of the man-made welds held up while machine-made welds failed during the collapse." One ironworker who worked on the WTC as a young man actually found graffiti he had written on parts of the antennae more than 30 years ago.

Underneath the mountains of debris they found distorted structures teetering on the verge of collapse. "We saw walls that were sheared off to expose layers and layers of floors that had pancaked onto one another," said Bonaparte. "There were sparks flying off electrical lines, fires smoldering, and thick smoke that burned our eyes and throats. At times we could only see three feet in front of us. I wasn't sure we were going to make it out of there alive."

An artist, cultural teacher, and fourth-generation ironworker from the Akwesasne Mohawk Nation, Bonaparte had a lot at stake. Like many Mohawk ironworkers, he left children at home to go where the work is. His partner, Leslie Logan, an editor of Cornell University's award-winning Native Americas journal, is expecting their second child in the spring and had constant worries about his safety. At Ground Zero and at home in their communities, people were burning tobacco and praying for protection for their men. Before going home, Bonaparte had to bathe in medicine tobacco water to properly cleanse himself, according to Haudenosaunee cultural traditions, so he would not bring any negative things upon his family. That ritual is part of a broader understanding and ceremonial respect toward death that Mohawks and other tribes in the Iroquois Confederacy still practice.

"We have a ceremony to deal with grief," said Mike McDonald. "We burn tobacco to free the spirits who were trapped there so they can journey to meet their Creator. For the surviving families, we use the tobacco water to wipe the tears from their eyes, to remove the dust from their ears, and to remove the knot from their throats. Those are the three communicators that we open up.

"Then we help the family, care for them, and support them in every way while they're grieving. We encourage them to remember that tomorrow the sun is going to rise and life is going to go on. And we have to go on, too," McDonald added. "It helps them to deal with grief and overcome their sorrow. Ceremonies like this were held in New York City and at Kahnawake to help us all deal with this."

McDonald said historically the Mohawk people had to deal with similar tragedies caused by war against their people. "We lost a lot of people too. Yet we have managed to remain strong. We've done it, and maybe we can show America that it is possible to overcome great losses. There's real strength in the power of our prayers."

Author's note: In December, the National Museum of the American Indian held a ceremony at its George Gustav Heye Center in New York City to restore and renew those who were working at the site and to help the community at large. It was the Indian way of reminding us that we are all related. Bonaparte, on behalf of his colleagues, expressed his thanks: "They helped us more than they realize, and for that, we are truly grateful."

Valerie Taliman (Navajo) is associate producer of Native America Calling, a nationally syndicated Native talk radio show heard on 46 stations in the U.S. and Canada.
There is a growing movement among Native people to protect sacred places like Mato Tipila (above) from intrusion, defilement, and in some cases, destruction.

In spring 2001, the Seventh Generation Fund coordinated the Sacred Earth Conference in Seattle, Wash., to expand the work of a growing coalition of environmental, human rights, religious, and Native organizations dedicated to preserving sacred sites. In her keynote address to some 400 participants, Dr. Henrietta Mann (Southern Cheyenne) explained the importance of Native peoples maintaining their connection to the land. Access to and protection of sacred sites are a constant struggle, she said, with as much as 75 percent of those sites unavailable to Native people today.

by Valerie Taliman
As Cheyenne, we are made from the soil, the dirt, the dust of this land, and the winds of the four directions gave us the breath of life.

It is Our Responsibility to Renew the Earth

As Cheyenne, we are made from the soil, the dirt, the dust of this land, and the winds of the four directions gave us the breath of life. The Great One created four sacred substances: sinew to hold the world together, sweetgrass as the beginning of plant life, buffalo fat which was the beginning of animal life, and finally, the red Earth which was the substance of all things on Earth. These substances are sacred, and these four sacred beings were fused into something that looked like a ball. So he breathed on the ball four times to give it life.

This is the same thing that happens every year at our sundance – we bring down and renew the breath of life. That is our responsibility, to renew this Earth, and we do this through our ceremonies so that our Mother, our Grandmother, the Earth can continue to support us. We have ceremonial and spiritual responsibilities to renew the Earth.

DR. HENRIETTA MANN, Southern Cheyenne
Endowed Chair of Native American Studies
Montana State University
“We’ve lost 98 percent of our land base, so what is so wrong about keeping our sacred sites from development?” she asked. “Mutuality and respect are part of our tradition – give and take. Somewhere along the way I hope people will learn that you can’t just take, that you have to give back to the land. When you are talking about Earth-based spirituality, the whole erosion of our land base threw us into cultural chaos. The road we are on to protect the Earth is a sacred road that leads way back to our creation.”

**Who Defines What Is Sacred?**

Within the natural landscapes of the Americas are countless sacred sites revered by indigenous peoples. Many tribes have ceremonies and spiritual responsibilities dedicated to caring for and renewing Mother Earth that have been carried on for virtually hundreds of years.

Certain places in the natural world – mountains, rivers, forests, springs, canyons, mineral deposits, rock formations, echo canyons, lava tubes, craters, and areas where spiritual events occurred or medicines grow – are among sites sacred to Native peoples. Ancestral burial grounds are also hallowed. “In the Native belief system, sacred places are not sacred because Native people believe they are sacred,” said Chris Peters, executive director of the Seventh Generation Fund, a Native advocacy foundation based in Arcata, Calif. “They are sacred in and of themselves. Even if we all die off, they will still be sacred.”

Many tribes have origin or emergence stories that define traditional cultural sites and places of spiritual power. Oral histories and cultural values are passed down to younger generations through stories, ceremonial rituals, and songs embedded with instructions on how to live with respect for natural laws and all of creation. It is the responsibility of each generation to protect and honor these holy places.

But as time goes on and growing populations place increasing burdens on the land, many of these sacred sites have been destroyed or damaged by those seeking to develop Mother Earth for timber, mining, farming, dams, or other development ventures. The Native worldview of the land as a living, breathing entity is not well understood or appreciated by those who view the land only as real estate.

**Tsimontukwi**

For more than a decade, Hopi religious leaders tried in vain to prevent a private landowner from bulldozing sacred shrines at Woodruff Butte, a cinder cone peak in Northern Arizona.
Dalton Taylor (Hopi) examines bullet holes in petroglyphs at Woodruff Butte.

In the conflict to balance economic interests and spiritual values, public opinion appears to be swaying toward greater understanding and appreciation for places that are sacred.

The Hopi call it Tsimóntukwi after the jimson weed, and it is one of nine important pilgrimage shrines that mark the boundaries of Hopi territory. For more than 1,000 years, Hopi people had made journeys to the butte to gather eaglets for ceremonies, to pray for rain, and to collect healing plants.

In 1990, the landowner decided to grind Woodruff Butte into gravel to supply asphalt for paving Interstate 40, a major freeway that crosses the homelands of a dozen tribes in the Southwest. When Hopi people objected, he offered to sell the property for $1 million, an amount they could not pay. So the mining continued. “Native people are the only ones who take care of that area by prayer,” explained the late Thomas Banyanca in the 2001 award-winning documentary In the Light of Reverence. “[We] fast, meditate, [do] ceremony. That’s how we keep this land in balance.”

A new owner, Dale McKinnon, bought Woodruff Butte in 1996. “I didn’t realize I was destroying anything but a big ugly pile of rocks out in the middle of nowhere,” said McKinnon. “When the Native Americans came with their concerns, I had to take a step back and I tried to put myself in their position. And realizing that I can’t totally agree with them for my own religious reasons and beliefs, I was willing to make a compromise.” His compromise was to raise the selling price to $3 million.

Despite legal efforts by the tribe to use the National Historic Preservation Act to stop the destruction and to seek a cultural resources inventory, the archaeologist responsible for conducting a cultural sites survey did not make note of the shrines in his report to the court. The quarrying continued. “We literally saw one Hopi shrine bulldozed before our presence there,” said Leigh Kuwanwisiwma, Hopi cultural preservation officer. He likened it to “Hopiis going into [the town of] Woodruff and bulldozing part of the Mormon church.” When the top of the butte was pulverized, it destroyed nearly all of the Hopi clan shrines, along with eagle nests that once rested there. Today, tourists traveling I-40 to see Indian Country have no idea they’re driving on Hopi heritage.

Climbing the Bear’s Lodge

Far to the north in Wyoming lies Mato Tipila, or Bear’s Lodge, a massive granite tower that rises dramatically from the Northern Plains. It is an ancient ceremonial place used by more than 20 tribes in the region, whose oral histories about its formation say it was created to save a group of children from an angry bear. It is said the Lakota were given the sacred pipe from the spirit world by the White Buffalo Calf Woman there, and many ceremonies still occur there. In 1875, Col. Richard Dodge assigned the moniker Devil’s Tower to the 867-foot-high volcanic plug, which became America’s first national monument. The name offends tribes in the region because of the reference to evil; they’ve asked that it be renamed Bear’s Lodge or Grey Horn Butte.

Outdoor enthusiasts charted more than 200 climbing routes on the tower, and after the site...
was popularized in the movie Close Encounters of the Third Kind, visitor traffic increased to some 450,000 people annually. It has become the center of ongoing conflict and legal battles over the Plains tribes' need for privacy while conducting ceremonies and rock climbers' right to use it for recreation.

The National Park Service (NPS), which manages the national monument, first attempted to accommodate multiple uses as required by law in 1995 and asked climbers to voluntarily stay off the tower for the month of June, around the summer solstice, when vision quests and sundance ceremonies are held.

Many honored the request, and the number of climbers in June dropped from some 1,300 to about 200 who refused to honor the Plains tribes' request. Andy Petefish, a climbing guide and member of the Wise Use movement, argued that the voluntary ban constitutes a legal "taking" of his right to use public lands to earn his living. He said climbing was his religion.

With the help of the Mountain States Legal Foundation, he sued the Park Service for the right to use public lands any time he and other climbers desire.

In response to the lawsuit, Lakota Chief Arvol Looking Horse, 19th-generation keeper of the White Buffalo Calf Pipe, explained to the court, "Grey Horn Butte, He Hota Paha, is a sacred place which our people need so we can pray for world peace, preserve our traditional sacred sites which our people need so we can conduct ceremonies without interference at our sacred sites. Only in this way can we receive our sacred sites. Only in this way can we receive spiritual protection, and spiritual knowledge. How would you like climbers constantly assaulting the outside of your church or cathedral?"

In the conflict to balance economic interests and spiritual values, public opinion appears to be swaying toward greater understanding and appreciation for places that are sacred. The new NPS general management plan for Mato Tipila will look at zoning for particular uses, including one that will better accommodate those seeking a quiet, natural experience. Until then, climbing the Bear's Lodge continues.

**Protections for Sacred Sites**

There are dozens of sacred sites that are the focus of ongoing struggles by Native activists, elders, environmentalists, and religious organizations working to protect sacred sites and the spiritual welfare of Native peoples. They include:

Dzil Nchaa Si An (Mount Graham) in central Arizona, where a seven-telescope observatory is being erected on a holy mountain that is home to the Apache Mountain Spirits, sacred springs, and pilgrimage sites where medicines are gathered. Two of the telescopes have been built, and more are coming. The San Carlos Apache and many tribes throughout the region oppose expansion plans.

Zuni Salt Lake, New Mexico, home of the sacred deity Ma'liYattik', or Salt Woman. The lake could be drained by an Arizona utility company, which plans to mine coal 12 miles from the lake and pump millions of gallons of water from beneath it. Puberty ceremonies for young Zuni boys are held here, and the Navajo Salt Clan reveres the area as home of their clan mother.

Petroglyph National Monument, the largest group of petroglyphs in the country, carved into lava flows more than 1,000 years ago. The 17,000 petroglyphs are threatened by the city of Albuquerque's plans to build a six-lane highway through the monument to provide easier access to new homes. The road is opposed by all of New Mexico's 19 Pueblo tribes, who want to preserve the messages their ancestors left behind.

Several organizations are working to broaden coalitions and craft amendments to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act and the National Historic Preservation Act that will offer real protections for these sites. They include the Seventh Generation Fund, the Indigenous Environmental Network, the American Land Alliance, the Indigenous Women's Network, the Sage Council, and the Washington Association of Churches. Educating the public about the critical need to protect sacred sites and support religious freedom for First Americans seems to work best through partnerships. To this end, they supported the efforts of filmmaker Christopher McLeod, who spent ten years producing In the Light of Reverence. They also worked with the authors of the newly published Sacred Lands of Indian America in hopes that greater understanding will foster greater respect.

"Without the land there is no sovereignty, without sovereignty there is no relationship, and without relationship there is no responsibility to the Earth," said Dr. Mann who serves as an NMAI trustee. "I hope our brothers and sisters of all races will learn to walk with us on this sacred road." 

Resources on Sacred Sites

Christopher McLeod produced In the Light of Reverence, an award-winning documentary narrated by Peter Coyote, about the struggle to preserve sacred sites. The film is scheduled to be screened March 18-22 at the American University in Washington, D.C. To obtain a copy, call Bullfrog Films at (800) 543-3764 or visit the Sacred Land Film Project Web site at www.sacredland.org.

The Seventh Generation Fund, founded in 1977, is an advocacy organization dedicated to promoting and maintaining the uniqueness of Native peoples. For information contact Chris Peters at (707) 825-7640 or visit www.7genfund.org.

The Indigenous Environmental Network is a nonprofit Native environmental organization. For information contact Tom Goldtooth at (218) 751-4967 or visit www.ienearth.org.

**Further Reading**


This is a popular game across North America, and it comes from the Iroquois. Recently, I learned a lot about lacrosse from one of my Iroquois pals, Paul Betancourt (Seneca). He is in the education department of the National Museum of the American Indian. In a gallery guide that he wrote, Haudenosaunee: People of the Longhouse, he talked about the game of lacrosse. I learned a lot from this guide, which surprised me. I already thought I knew it all!

Paul also explained to me many things about the Iroquois or the Haudenosaunee. They formed an alliance called the "Iroquois Confederacy." Six different Native American nations came together to form this confederacy. They are the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora. Haudenosaunee, or "people of the longhouse," live in the American Northeast.

Iroquois men wear a headdress called a gustoweh (ga-STO-way). These gustoweh are beautiful and unique to the Iroquois. Many people think all Indians wear the same headdresses, but they don't.

Paul shared a fun activity with me that explains the differences in Iroquois headdresses.

Solve the Jumbles: Each nation of the Iroquois has a different number and position of feathers on their gustoweh. Solve the jumble and you will identify which nation the gustoweh is from.

1. OARRTCSAU  2. NOOGAADN  3. OWKMAH  4. NEECSA  5. IEAANID  6. UCAYGA
"Our sense of who we are and our world view are wrapped up in these stories. Even the clothing, tools, baskets, and other material culture so important in everyday life have direct links to the stories of the people."

—Dale Curtis Miles
(San Carlos Apache)

FROM
Stories of the People: Native American Voices


STORIES OF THE PEOPLE
Native American Voices

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COMPELLING NARRATIVES, archival photographs, and a rich selection of pottery, textiles, beadwork, and other objects chosen by the authors from the collections of the National Museum of the American Indian highlight the spiritual and artistic achievements of diverse Native peoples—Northern Plains, Tuscarora, Cherokee, Makah, Quechua, and Western Apache.
The Iroquois have always depended upon three main vegetable crops for food: corn, beans, and squash. They are called the “Three Sisters.” Paul told me that special dolls are made from the cornhusks. The husks, which are the green leaves around an ear of corn, are dried and stored. These dried husks are soaked in warm water to make them bendable so they can be made into dolls and other items.

One interesting fact about the Iroquois cornhusk dolls is that most of them don’t have faces. The following story explains why.

Why the Cornhusk Doll Has No Face
A story as told by Stephanie Betancourt (Seneca)

A long time ago there lived a girl who was given the gift of beauty. Everyone in her village would turn their head to see her when she walked by. Everyone would talk about how beautiful she was. The girl realized that she was beautiful and spent all her time looking at herself in a pond (in those days there were no mirrors). When it came time to plant the Three Sisters (corn, beans, and squash), she was nowhere to be found. When the garden needed weeding, she was nowhere to be found. When it was time to prepare animal hides for clothing and other useful things, she was nowhere to be found, and when it was time to grind corn into meal, she was nowhere to be found.

When it was time to serve the meals, she was the first one to eat. When it came time to get new clothing, she got the best hides, and when it was time to dance and sing at the ceremonies, she was the first in line to start. The people were very unhappy with the way the young girl was behaving. They carried on so much that the Creator decided that something had to be done.

The Creator came to the young woman one day and said to her, “I gave you the gift of beauty and you misused it. I will have to punish you.” The Creator reached out and took her face and hid it. That is why the cornhusk doll has no face: to remind us that no one is better than anyone else, and that we must always cooperate with one another.

Paul’s guide includes instructions on how to make a cornhusk doll.

How to Make a Cornhusk Doll

Materials: Dried cornhusks (four to six for each doll)
One ball of twine, string, or sinew
Bucket of warm water
Newspapers, scissors, masking tape
Optional (to decorate the dolls): Small pieces of fabric, felt, and yarn; acrylic paints, brushes, and a can of water; tissue paper; and glue

Separate all the pieces of cornhusk and place them in a large container of warm water. Four to six pieces of cornhusk are needed for each doll. Soak the husks for about two hours, until they are soft and flexible. Cover the tables with newspaper and secure them with masking tape. The following method is one of many ways to make cornhusk dolls:

1. The head. Tear off a small piece from the fourth husk and roll it into a ball to form the head. Fold one-half of the first piece of husk over the ball and tie it off with a thin strip of the fourth husk at the neck.

2. The arms. Take the second piece of husk and roll it lengthwise. Place the rolled piece below the neck and between the two pieces of husk extending from the head. Tie off the wrists with twine and trim the edges.

3. The shoulders. Split the third piece of husk in half lengthwise and fold each piece in half. Drape the halves over the upper arms to form the shoulders.

4. The waist and legs. Take a strip of the fourth piece of husk and tie off the waist, and then trim off the bottom. This makes a doll with a dress. If you want to make a doll with legs, simply divide the bottom in half to form the legs and tie off at the ankles using twine.
American Indian Pop

In 1977, pop art icon Andy Warhol shone his bright light of celebrity on an icon of a different kind — AIM activist Russell Means.

by Gerald McMaster

The Los Angeles Times dubbed Russell Means (Lakota/Oglala) “the most famous American Indian since Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse,” and pop artist Andy Warhol memorialized him on canvas. Warhol borrowed iconic images from the media and refashioned them into monumental paintings from the 1960s to the 1980s. Using a Polaroid camera, Warhol made images of people such as Jackie Onassis, Wayne Gretzky, and Mick Jagger because they were famous and powerful. Russell Means, the American Indian Movement (AIM) activist and media darling, also encapsulated those qualities. Means represented a new generation of Indians with his powerful voice and presence. The Warhol portrait was a “celebrity portrait,” in which the cult of celebrity was as American as Campbell’s soup — or fry bread, depending on one’s perspective.

It is one of several works by a non-Indian artist in the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI)’s collection. Warhol painted Means in 1977; 15 years later, in 1992, the St. Paul Companies gave Warhol’s Portrait of Russell Means to the NMAI. Warhol had attended the opening of his American Indian Series exhibition and I Need No Blanket: Hide Robes of the Great Plains at the old Museum of the American Indian on Broadway and 155th Street in 1986. The St. Paul Companies may have been aware of this history when they donated the Means portrait to the NMAI.

Warhol, the founder and most influential figure of the pop art movement, received his graphic art training from the Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1949. He later moved to New York City to find work as a commercial artist. By 1955 he had become the most influential commercial artist in New York City. His most important technique was the photographic enlargement silk-screened onto canvas, which he developed in the 1960s. Warhol took Polaroid photographs of his subject and passed the images on to assistants, who enlarged and painted them subject to Warhol’s final approval. At first, he was careful to create a precise register of overlapping colors, but later, when some registers didn’t correspond, he saw it as an opportunity to free himself artistically from exactness. He became freer in his application of color. In the Means portrait, large areas of color are expressively applied.

One of AIM’s first directors, Means remained active for more than 27 years and traveled throughout the world fighting for Indian rights. Warhol’s portrait, one of several, shows Means as a stern-looking Indian warrior with long braids and choker, reminiscent of 19th-century photographic portraits of Indians.

In the complex, global world of image making, Warhol’s portrait of Russell Means was a celebration of power and identity. Means, as an image maker, was elevated as an icon of late-20th-century international fame.

Gerald McMaster (Plains Cree) is the deputy assistant director of the National Museum of the American Indian’s Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, Md.
EXHIBITIONS

Through July 21

SPIRIT CAPTURE: NATIVE AMERICANS AND THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE

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

Opening February 15, 2002

TELLING A CROW STORY: THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF RICHARD THROSSEL

This exhibition – the first to feature Richard Throssel’s photography since his death in 1933 – presents 33 images and introduces visitors to the work of one of the first Native American photographers to document American Indian life and culture.

Through April 28

ALL ROADS ARE GOOD: NATIVE VOICES ON LIFE AND CULTURE

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

Opening May 19

ACROSS BORDERS: BEADWORK IN IROQUOIS LIFE

Exploring the artistic, cultural, economic, and political significance of beadwork in the lives of Iroquois people, this traveling exhibition also examines the fascinating ways in which beadwork has been used to cross cultural boundaries and create a dialogue between Native and non-Native peoples. More than 300 stunning examples of beadwork are on display – including clothing, moccasins, souvenirs, pincushions, and beaded picture frames – dating from the mid-19th century to the present. The exhibition is organized and circulated by the McCord Museum, Montreal, and the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, N.Y., in collaboration with the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, N.Y., and the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. No catalog is available.

Through April 28

BEADING BASICS

Learn the basic beading technique of the lazy stitch and use the flat stitch to make a rossette in this hands-on workshop taught by Amy Tall Chief (Osage). Enrollment is limited. Advance registration required; please call (212) 514-3714. Materials fee is $12 ($10 for members). Age 16 years and up.

February 19, 10 a.m.-noon (workshop), Auditorium

WALKING THUNDER: (DINE SANDPAINTER) AND PILOBOLUS DANCE THEATRE

In collaboration with the Pihobolus Dance Theatre and in association with Ringing Rocks Foundation, the NMAI debuts an original dance presentation created with sandpainter Walking Thunder inspired by Diné traditions and chants.

April 11, 6 p.m.

April 12, 2 p.m.

April 13-14, 2 p.m. and 4 p.m., Rotunda

PAGES OF HEALING BOOK SIGNING

Walking Thunder will sign copies of her book, Profiles of Healing, Walking Thunder: Dine Medicine Woman, before the dance performance on April 11, 5 p.m., Museum Shop

DINÉ SANDPAINTING DEMONSTRATIONS WITH WALKING THUNDER

In association with Ringing Rocks Foundation, the Education Department features demonstrations by Diné sandpainter Walking Thunder.

April 11-14, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

April 17-21, 10:30 a.m.-noon, 2-3:30 p.m., Rotunda

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PUBLIC PROGRAMS

WORKSHOPS AT THE NMAI

IROQUOIS: PAST AND PRESENT

This workshop, designed for educators, focuses on the history of the Iroquois, the structure of their society, and Iroquois life in contemporary times. An Iroquois corset-doll activity is included. All participants will receive the new gallery guide. Haudenosaunee: People of the Longhouse. Call Paul Betancourt at (212) 514-3714 for times and dates.

February 7, 5-8 p.m.

February 9, noon-3 p.m.

March 2, noon-3 p.m.

March 21, 5-8 p.m.

April 4, 5-8 p.m.

Education Classroom, 2nd Floor

BEADING BASICS

Learn the basic beading technique of the lazy stitch and use the flat stitch to make a rossette in this hands-on workshop taught by Amy Tall Chief (Osage). Enrollment is limited. Advance registration required; please call (212) 514-3714. Materials fee is $12 ($10 for members). Age 16 years and up.

February 28 and March 14, 5:45-8 p.m.

Education Classroom, 2nd Floor

THE ART OF STORYTELLING

Experience the tradition of storytelling with Midge Deen Stod (Seneaca) and Clinton Elliott (Anishnabe). February 20-23, 11 a.m., noon, 1 p.m., and 2 p.m., Orientation Room

MEN'S HISTORY MONTH LECTURE – WOUNDED KNEE

Charlotte Black Elk (Oglala Lakota), great-granddaughter of Black Elk, discusses her family stories and history.

March 7, 6 p.m.

Auditorium

ART TALK

In collaboration with the American Indian Community House Gallery, the NMAI presents Seneaca artist G. Peter Jemison as he discusses his work, which addresses social issues and portrays traditional Iroquois teachings.

March 15, noon-1 p.m.

Video Viewing Room, 2nd Floor

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Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian
HONORING MOHAWK IRONWORKERS
April 25, 6 p.m., Auditorium
Join the NMAI in an evening honoring the Native ironworkers who helped to build, and are now helping to rebuild, the city of New York. The history of the ironworkers from Kahnawake Mohawk Territory will be presented by Kanakata, executive director for Kanien’kehaka Onkwawènna Raotitióhkwa, and Mohawk ironworker Kyle Karonhiakatie Beausais, who has worked at the World Trade Center site. A historical photographic overview will also be shown. Presented in collaboration with the Canadian Consulate General.

IRONWORKERS ONSCREEN
April 27, 2-4 p.m., Auditorium
SKYWALKERS, IROQUOIS WOMEN: THE THREE SISTERS and THE GREAT LAW OF PEACE (1998, 34 min.) Pat Ferrero. The many strengths of Iroquois culture are the focus of interviews with ironworkers and their families, including an inquiry into the strength and equality of women in Iroquois tradition and a presentation of the central spiritual teaching of the Iroquois. Among those featured are Doug George (Mohawk), G. Peter Jemison (Onondaga), and Chief Jake Swamp (Mohawk). Produced for the Carnegie Museum of National History, Pittsburgh.

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

January 28—April 30
FILM SERIES: A NATIVE PRESENCE
Screenings daily at 1 p.m. Repeated Thursdays at 5:30 p.m.
Video Viewing Room, 2nd Floor

February 1–18
A NATIVE PRESENCE – THE XAVANTE OF BRAZIL
WAPTÉ MHÎNÔ: THE XAVANTE INITIATION (1999, 75 min.) Divino Berezowah (Xavante), Caimi Waisiè (Xavante), Bortidone Patin (Xavante), Jorge Prateli (Xavante), and Wini Suyiê (Suyi). Produced by The Video in the Villages Workshops. Native videomakers present a two-year initiation cycle of Xavante boys in the Amazon region of Brazil.

February 19–March 10
A NATIVE PRESENCE – WIPE THE TEARS
SAVAGERY AND THE AMERICAN INDIAN (1991, 50 min.) Ken Kirby for BBC’s TimeWatch. Charlotte Black Elk (Oglala Lakota), Chief Arvol Looking Horse (Lakota), and others speak about the 1990 Big Foot Memorial Ride to Wounded Knee, S.D., framing a look at U.S. policies toward American Indians. No 5:30 p.m. screening on March 7. See Women’s History Month Lecture.

March 11–24
A NATIVE PRESENCE – BOLIVIA
For more information, see the listing for Eye of the Condor/Ojo del Cóndor video tour.

QAMASAN WARMI/WOMAN OF COURAGE (1993, 42 min.) José Miranda (Aymara Mestizo). A docudrama about Gregoria Apaza, who led the 1871 Aymara uprising against the Spanish.

Y NUEVAMENTE PARTIERON/AND THEY LEFT AGAIN (1997, 21 min.) Adrian Waldmann for APCOB. The story of a sacred mountain is the backdrop for a documentary about the historic 1996 March for Territorial Rights in Bolivia.


March 25–April 7
NUESTRA PALABRA/OUR WORD: THE STORY OF SAN FRANCISCO DE MOXOS (1999, 22 min.) Julia Mosia (Moxeno-Trinitario). Produced by CEFREC-CAIB. Aymara community members give an account of their history since the 1930s, focusing on the attempt to maintain control of their land.

QATIQATI/WHISPERS OF DEATH (1999, 35 min.) Reynaldo Yujra (Aymara). Produced by CEFREC-CAIB. Adapted from a tale of the Barabuco region of Lake Titicaca, the story tells of the consequences of the loss of respect for Aymara beliefs and traditions.

March 14, 8–9:30 p.m.
EYE OF THE CONDOR/OJO DEL CóNDOR
In their first U.S. tour, Native Bolivian videomakers will present nine award-winning fiction and documentary works produced in association with the Cinematography, Education and Production Center (CEFREC) and the Coordinadora Audiovisual Indígena Bolivia (CAIB). CEFREC and CAIB are national indigenous organizations in La Paz that support video training, production, and media development. The featured producers are journalist Marcelina Cárdenas (Quechua) and Jesús Tapia (Aymara), director of CAIB. Also introducing the works will be Ivan Sanjines, the founder and coordinator of CEFREC. Programs will be presented in Spanish, English, and indigenous languages.


March 15, 7–10 p.m.

March 18, 1–3 p.m.
Organized in cooperation with New York University’s Center for Media, Culture and History, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and American Studies Program at the King Juan Carlos I Center, 53 Washington Square South, New York, N.Y. Subway: N/R to 6th Street; A, C, E, B, D, F to W. 4th Street; IRT-6 to Bleeker Street; 1/2 to Christopher Street. Free. Reservations recommended; call (212) 998-3759.

March 21, 6–8 p.m.
At NMAI’s George Gustav Heye Center Auditorium, One Bowling Green, New York, N.Y. Free. Reservations recommended; call (212) 514-3737.
April 8–30
A NATIVE PRESENCE – THE IROQUOIS OF NEW YORK/ CANADA
MOHAWK BASKETMAKING (1979, 28 min.) Frank Semmens. A tribute to the life and work of basketmaker Mary Adams.

IT STARTS WITH A WHISPER (1993, 28 min.) Shelley Niro (Mohawk) and Anna Gronau. A short fictional story imagines a young woman on the brink of adulthood exploring her identity with the help of three "spirit aunties."


No 5:30 p.m. screening on April 24 or April 27. See Honoring Mohawk Ironworkers listing.

ESPECIALLY FOR KIDS
Program starts at 11 a.m. and noon. Video Viewing Room, 2nd Floor

February 1–24
KNOW YOUR ROOTS (1995, 23 min.) Joshua Homnick. In a lively video collage, youths from the Mescalero Apache Reservation share their thoughts on Apache history, language, and identity.

LETTER FROM AN APACHE (1983, 12 min.) Barbara Wilk. An animated film tells the remarkable story of Carlos Montezuma, or Wassijah, who became one of the first American Indian medical doctors.

WEB LINKS
http://www.AmericanIndian.si.edu

ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL
In cooperation with the Hirshhorn Museum, the NMAI presents Native American filmmakers introducing their award-winning productions, as part of the District of Columbia's annual film festival. Host: Elizabeth Weatherford, head of the NMAI Film and Video Center (FVC), and Barbara Gordon, program manager of the Hirshhorn Museum. Free. No reservations are required. For more information please call (202) 342-2564. Hirshhorn Museum of Art and Sculpture Garden, Ring Auditorium, Independence Avenue at 7th Street SW, Washington, D.C. Metro stop: Smithsonian.

February 25–March 17
HAUDENOSAUNEE WAY OF THE LONGHOUSE (1982, 13 min.) Robert Stiles and John Akin. We learn about the philosophy and life of the Iroquois, or Haudenosaunee, with a focus on the Mohawks of the Akwesasne Reservation.

MUSIC AND DANCE OF THE SENECAS (1980, 11 min.) Seneca Nation of Indians with the NY State Education Dept. Seneca educator Midge Dean shows kids how Seneca musical instruments are used and teaches them a Seneca street dance.

PATH OF OUR ELDERS (1986, 20 min.) Shenendoah Films. Traditional Pomo elders pass on traditions of song, dance, and weaving.

ALICE ELLIOTT (1975, 11 min.) Richard Lair. The famed Pomo basketmaker, born in 1886, talks about her life as a weaver.

March 18–April 7

EN CAMINO/ON THE MOVE (1997, 14 min.) Elisabeth Hutterman and Jesús Pérez. An animation tells the story of a family who leave their home in the highlands of Bolivia hoping to find a better place to live.

HOPIT (1984, 14 min.) Victor Masayev Jr. (Hop). Impressions from the Hopi pueblos show changes during the four seasons.

April 8–30
ONENHAKENRA: WHITE SEED (1984, 20 min.) Frank Semmens for the Akwesasne Museum. Mohawks of the Akwesasne Reservation share their views on corn and the making of traditional corn soup and cornhusk dolls.


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.

EYE OF THE CONDOR/OJO DEL CONDOR: SELECTED WORKS
Indigenous videomakers from Bolivia present award-winning fiction and documentary productions. This program is part of a touring video showcase organized by the FVC in cooperation with Alma Boliviana in Virginia and CEFRREC and CAIB, indigenous media organizations in Bolivia. Introduced by the videomakers and the FVC's Carol Kalkafats. March 14, 8–9:30 p.m.

THE DOE BOY (2001, 83 min.) Randy Redroad (Cherokee). An award-winning independent feature gives a moving and insightful portrayal of a sensitive young man. Hunter is a boy of mixed heritage, living in the heart of the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma, who comes of age facing the difficulties of finding one's way in a world where blood matters. Introduced by the director. March 15, 8–9:30 p.m.
The Smithsonian's NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN invites you to be among the first to inscribe your name, or the name of someone you wish to honor, permanently on the Museum's Honor Wall. For a modest contribution of $150, you can commemorate your family or other loved ones for posterity on the Honor Wall circling the Potomac, the Museum's soaring central welcoming space. Imagine the emotions you and your family will feel when the Museum opens on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in 2004, knowing that, through your generosity, you helped to fulfill the dreams of millions of Americans - young and old, Native and non-Native alike. To receive a brochure about the Honor Wall, simply fill out the coupon below and mail it to: NMAI Honor Wall Project, PO Box 23473, Washington, DC 20026-3473. Or visit our website at www.AmericanIndian.si.edu/memgive. Or call 1-800-242-NMAI (6624).

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Name: ___________________________________________________________________________
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One of Latin America's most gifted photographers of the early 20th century, Martín Chambi (Quechua), sought to document the heritage and contemporary life of Indian peoples in Peru. Traveling by horseback or on foot, Chambi carried view cameras and glass plates (8 by 10 inches and 4 by 6 inches) to small villages to photograph the inhabitants or to document important Indian festivals. Born in 1891 in the town of Coaza, Peru, Chambi was himself descended from the ancient Incas. Although his remarkable photographs included landscapes, architecture, and portraiture of all social classes, it was his documentation of indigenous cultures that was closest to his heart. "I feel I am a representative of my race; my people speak through my photographs," he said.

Chambi's interest in photography was sparked when he was fourteen and accompanied his father, a farmer, to work at a British-owned mining operation. Martin learned the fundamentals of photography through an apprenticeship with the company's photographer. In 1908, Chambi left for Arequipa, the largest city in southern Peru, where he found work with Max Vargas, one of Peru's most renowned photographers. Chambi honed his skills, and eventually Vargas entrusted him with most of the studio work.

In 1917, Chambi set out for Cuzco to start his own business. Learning that Cuzco already had photo studios, he settled instead in Sicuani with his new wife. Later that year, a son was born, the first of nine children (three died in infancy). Chambi opened a portrait studio and began his documentation of the culture, architecture, and landscape of the region, recording the ancient Inca ruins of Peru, such as Machu Picchu. He refined his techniques, experimented with light, and published Peru's first picture postcard on November 28, 1917.

In 1920, Chambi moved to Cuzco, which remained his home for the rest of his life. His talent, energy, and engaging personality soon attracted the interest of elite society, and he was sought after to photograph their gatherings. He made portraits of Cuzco's prominent families, civil authorities, artists, and intellectuals. He also photographed newsworthy events (the first successful Andean airplane flight from Lima to Cuzco in 1921, for example).

Chambi associated with members of Peru's Indigenista movement, which defended the rights of Indians and exalted Peru's pre-Hispanic heritage. In a speech in 1936, he explained the motivation behind his work: "It is thought that Indians have no culture, that they are uncivilized, that they are intellectually and artistically inferior when compared to whites and Europeans. More eloquent than my opinion, however, are graphic testimonies. It is my hope that impartial and objective witnesses will examine this evidence."

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, his work was published and exhibited in Peru, Chile, Argentina, and Bolivia, winning many awards. In Cuzco, Chambi helped found the Institute of Plastic Arts and the American Institute of Art, which promoted traditional artistic crafts.

After the 1930s, Chambi rarely exhibited his work, although he continued photographing. An exhibition in Cuzco in 1958 honored his fifty years as a photographer, and his photographs were shown in Mexico City and Lima in the 1960s. In 1971, he was recognized as a "patron" of the first graduates in photography from the National School of Graphic Arts in Lima. One of his photographs, of an Indian and a llama, was reproduced on a Peruvian airmail stamp (he received no payment). But largely, after the 1950s, his work was forgotten. He died in 1973, leaving a legacy of more than 15,000 uncataloged glass-plate negatives.

Interest in Chambi's work was revived in the 1970s. Edward Ranney, a photographer from the United States who worked in Peru, obtained support to preserve and exhibit a portion of the Chambi collection. Ranney arranged for exhibitions in several countries with Chambi's children, Victor and Julia, who were photographers themselves. Since this rediscovery, Chambi's photographs have been more widely published and exhibited than they were in his lifetime, testimonies to the world he so ardently and tenderly recorded.

Martha Davidson is a freelance writer and picture researcher based in Washington, D.C.
An Interview with Nemesho by Harlan McKosato

"Aho, nemesho (my grandfather). Welcome to the show," I pronounced in a humble but meaningful delivery. As the host of Native America Calling, a live, nationally syndicated radio talk show, I’ve talked with former president Bill Clinton; Leonard Peltier, an Anishinabe who is the world’s most famous political prisoner; and people in underground shelters in Kosovo as bombs exploded overhead. I have had conversations with tribal leaders from the northern Yukon Territory to the Four Corners to the Amazon Basin of Colombia. I’ve posed questions to a Jewish woman rabbi, a Lakota pipe carrier, and a Pulitzer Prize winner. But this interview was special.

"Kewawiyamene (thank you) noshihi (my grandchild)," said my great-great-grandfather, Makwasato. In our old Sauk language, I am told, his name means "sounds like a fox." He lived during a good portion of the 19th century. He had become a chief. A Scotch-Irish census worker changed the name to its present form in nemesho’s later years. "Nethakiwa (I am Sauk). Newakoshitehio (I am fox clan)," he said.

And then, suddenly, he started speaking to me in English. "We are fox people. Within our clan, there are two groups – warrior and peace. You, noshihi, are from the warrior side. This means you must always protect the people first. The best you can. You must be a good communicator, you must keep in good physical shape, and always keep your heart strong and your spirit healthy."

I was dreaming, of course, but it seemed so real – a radio interview with my namesake. There he was, sitting across the table, in a red cotton shirt, with buckskin leggings and moccasins with green and yellow porcupine quillwork. A red-dyed deer-hair roach sat atop his shaved, scalp-locked head. A mixed scent of cedar smoke and Indian tobacco drifted out of the medicine pouch hanging from a strap around his neck and danced around the room.

"Thakiwaki (Sauk people) and all the indigenous people of this Great Turtle Island must carry on the way we were taught to pray to Ketchimanito (Great Spirit). Our songs and our drum ceremonies must be taken care of by those who have been designated," he said. "There is still an Almighty who is watching what we do."

Just then a heavy fog rolled into the studio. nemesho and I began walking. I looked around. We were in a creek bottom that was beginning to suck us into the sand. We reached for the small roots of trees growing along the banks. They snapped. A giant grandfather oak reached down and pulled us away from danger.

We were then surrounded by wheat, new green wheat as far as you could see. We heard voices. Children were laughing and playing. We moved toward them. In the distance, in a clearing, were little Indian children chasing each other while adults watched nearby. I looked closer. There was the spirit of my deceased father, singing an old Sauk song to my newborn son.

"Kewawiyamene, nemesho," I said. The interview was over, but the dream lives on. Harlan McKosato (Sauk/Ioway), from Oklahoma, is the host and managing editor of Native America Calling.

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