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INDIAN VOICES: THE POLITICS OF CULTURAL REPRESENTATION IN THREE U.S. MUSEUMS

By

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ABSTRACT

INDIAN VOICES: THE POLITICS OF CULTURAL REPRESENTATION IN THREE U.S. MUSEUMS

By

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This research analyzes how museums at the national, regional, and local level define the "inclusion" of community's voices through the process of recent collaborative work with its audiences. This work is based on poststructuralist notions of knowledge and truth that contributed to museum popularization and the reevaluation of museum professionals' authority in the representation of contemporary societies. Although new concepts, policies, and community pressures affected museum efforts, old ideologies have remained the same. Museums and communities embody different interests and goals, which are reflected in the narratives of "inclusiveness" in exhibits. My research explores how museums, influenced by internal and external forces, include "Native voices" in the collaborative process of creating more responsible and responsive cultural exhibits. Negotiations of authority as ideologies of change or persistence are at the heart of recent collaborative work between museum professionals and the communities they represent. I argue that change in policies of collaboration that include ideologies of diversity and contemporaneity, will render the negotiations on the inclusion of Native voices in museums more effective.

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Special thanks goes to the museum's staff for having taken the time to speak with me and for providing much more than answers to my questions. Our conversations served as basis for my current work in which I place myself as mediator between a long neglected multicultural audience, and the goals and responsibilities of museums.

My views about the various facets of museum work were enriched from innumerous hours of discussion with my coworkers Marclay Crampton and Cameron Wood on the relevance of definitions such as art and "Crafts." Such a dichotomy triggered my curiosity in how the value we place upon objects is derived. This evolved into my awareness in the importance of diversity in educational spaces.

Last, but definitely not least, I am thankful to Mary, Tama, Alex, Victor, Angie, Mike, and all those whom I may have not mentioned but are important as well, for bearing with me and giving me the support to pursue this endeavor.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This thesis analyzes how museums define the "inclusion of Native voices" looking closer at the process of participation and looking at how decisions about the narratives of exhibits are negotiated. Recent studies have discussed how museums have become more sensitive to their audiences' expectations (Holman 1996, Kahn 2000, Roberts 1997). However, very few analyze the social and political context that drove the recent transition in United States museum policies, particularly regarding the representation of American Indians and the way cultural diversity *vs.* homogeneity, and historicity *vs.* contemporaneity are presented. My research will fill this gap by exploring how museums, influenced by internal and external forces, include Native voices in developing cultural exhibits. The incorporation of Native voices involves collaboration between curators and Native peoples with different ideologies (Ames 1993). Collaboration joins individuals with different perspectives, interests, background and professional training. However, unless policies of collaboration include ideologies of diversity and contemporaneity, dissent will render the inclusion of Native voices in museums ineffective.

In the history of western museums the past is revered both in the language of the text (Steiner 1994) and in the symbolism of display (Fitzhugh 1997). Museums of the late nineteenth century aimed primarily at acquiring, collecting, maintaining, and presenting "natural curiosities," antiquities, art, and cultural objects (Alexander 1979, Maurer 2000). However, by mid-twentieth century, with increased need to recognize

their social responsibility (Bedno 1999), to respond to economic pressures, and to reevaluate their educational role, museums adopted many changes in the way they function. Museums committed themselves to reflect pluralism (Alexander 1979, Lavine and Karp 1991, Gaither 1992, Bunch 2000) to provide public services (Yates 1993), to offer activities supported by scholarship, and to involve their audiences in an inclusive manner (American Association of Museums 1984,1992, Bedno 1999). More recently, museums, sensitive to the demands of their visiting communities began involving their visiting audiences in the decision making of cultural exhibits (Lavine and Karp 1991, Gaither 1992, Kahn 2000). Such changes came as a response to internal and external forces, which will be discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

Internally, museums changed in many ways in the past twenty years. Interpretation of objects became common, recognition of diverse audiences a must, as well as public services and other voices were integral in exhibit planning, largely absent throughout 1800's and early 1900's (Bedno 1999). Various studies developed during museum transition period. Visitors' studies, discussed by Falk and Dierking (2000), showed that visitors brought with them personal, sociocultural and physical experiences contributing to the learning experience from exhibits. Educators, like Lisa Roberts (1997), pointed out the interpretive nature of knowledge. Education, as a form of empowerment, articulated by Paulo Freire (1998), contributed to a reformulation of exhibits' concepts. Many of these theories contested the educational role of museums provoking a reevaluation of the work they offered. Museum professionals' authority in selecting objects, deciding their relevance, and developing the narratives of exhibits

(McC. Adams 1999) was questioned. Seeking to include and best represent multicultural audiences, museums, in the 1990's, collaborated with their constituents.

External pressures for change, that began during the 1960's but which climaxed in the 1990's, reinforced the need for museums to be responsible and responsive to the communities they represented. For example, Native Americans sought voice in museums. Mostly, museums of the nineteenth century and most of the twentieth century recorded, collected, and displayed Native American objects to salvage the cultural traditions of dying cultures (Barrat 1991, Fikes 1996, Fitzhugh 1997, Hill Sr. 2000b). However, by the 1970's, it became clear that the vanishing Indian was not vanishing but rather part of contemporary society. After the civil rights movement of the 1960's, a series of factors contributed to the future inclusion of Native voices in museums. Native American activism (Deloria Jr. 1974, Fikes 1996, Fortunate Eagle 1992, Smith and Warrior 1996), change in museum policies (United States Congress 1990), and the passing of laws (Lomawaima et al. 2000) drew attention to the diversity and contemporaneity of the Native American community. Native people identified with different tribes, beliefs and traditions and claimed that the diversity and individuality of cultural values and practices be recognized rather than homogenized. Contemporaneity speaks of change as continuous, counteracting ideas of assimilation and affirming the connection between past of Native people with contemporary society. These external pressures emphasized the need to represent the diversity, the individuality, and the continuous change of Native traditions.

Today, museums like the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), Grand Rapids Public Museum-Van Andel, and Ziibiwing Cultural Society (ZCS) are

consulting and collaborating with Native communities to include their voices in exhibits about Native culture. In chapter 4, I describe methodology and the collaborative work at each of the above museums and describe the level of audience each museum serves, which I characterize as national/international, regional, and local levels. In addition I describe how each museum, according to their resources and their interests, devised different criteria and methods for the procedures of their partnership with Native communities. I also illustrate the themes that resulted from such collaborative work, which shows different concerns and speak to different audiences.

In chapter 5, I analyze the collaborative processes and the collaborative messages to address the following questions:

- How do museums define the "inclusiveness" of Native voices?
- How do museums collaborate with the Native communities?
- Do exhibits reflect Native concerns and interests?

Such questions lead to the importance of authority negotiations (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, Lavine 1992, Penney 2000) and definitions of audience (Gaither 1992, Nason 2000). James Clifford cautions us that it is "utopian to imagine museums as public spaces of collaboration, shared control, complex translation, and honest disagreement" (1997: 208) because museums have historically tried to define and defend a unified community of values and taste. In that context, we ought to acknowledge that "exhibits carry the weight and implicit authority of an entire museum behind them" (McC. Adams 1999: 973) and that there will always be tension between goals and concerns from within and outside of museums. Although museums and Native communities have joined efforts and shared interests in developing better informed exhibits, their agendas are different.

In Chapter 6, I return to my initial question about how the inclusion of Native voices is defining the stories in exhibits, considering that two distinct ideologies are being negotiated. Karl Mannheim (1953) describes two types of ideologies as "situationally congruent" and "situationally transcendent"; the former supports old structures and functions in museums and the latter advocates a departure from such structures. Interposing these ideologies to definitions of authority and audience I explore some of the future directions museums are preparing to take. I argue that the reevaluation of museums' role as educational institutions suggests a fundamental shift in its values and priorities. Museums need not only to reconsider their responsibilities in relation to the inclusion of multicultural audiences but also of their responsibilities and goals towards the communities they represent. Even though museums will not yield complete control over the production of exhibits and their narratives; it is important that museums create new policies that reinforce their educational responsibilities towards inclusiveness at the same time as they maintain loyalty to their institutional mission. It is important that ideologies of transition connect past and present, as well as include cultural diversity on the ongoing negotiations between museums and their communities.

CHAPTER 2

The history of internal changes in museums

Museums have not changed their interest in rare and exotic objects, but the context in which those artifacts are portrayed and the way they perceive their audiences has changed dramatically. Before the twentieth century, it was enough for "material things to present themselves" (Hooper-Greenhill 1992: 198) as carrying inherent meaning. Prior to 1980's museum staff - curators in particular - were primarily concerned with collecting, gathering, storing and documenting objects and establishing displays (Yates 1993: 41). Currently, the typical museum must "address questions of social responsibility, respond to economic pressures and commercial competition, and meet its visitors' desire to have a voice in museum programming" (Bedno 1999: 39). Museums changed in their "planning of public exhibitions, the resources and techniques available to them" (Bedno 1999: 39). Museums now are not only held accountable for the information their exhibits convey, but are also accountable for entertaining while teaching (Roberts 1997), offer environments conducive to the learning experience (Falk 2000), and sometimes expected to offer gift shop stores and restaurants.

Another transformation of the institution during the 1980's was the increasing number of educators working in museums (Roberts 1997: 5). The addition of educational theories through educators contributed to the popularization of museums and the transition toward collaborative work between museums and their constituencies. Displays changed, the way meanings were communicated changed, and who communicated those meanings also changed. With growing awareness about the interpretive nature of knowledge scholars understood how "social forces ultimately shape

definitions of art, beauty and quality" (Roberts 1997: 57) and began to give voice to their audiences. The multiple voice approach contributed to the participation of Native peoples in the construction of stories that spoke about them. However, the influence of internal changes in the inclusion of diverse perspectives, the changes in museums' concerns as a result of their collaboration with multicultural societies, are some of the questions that need to be addressed. This chapter will focus on such issues.

Objects without meaning

Throughout the nineteenth century, in the United States, museums flourished whose primary concern was in acquiring and maintaining collections. The objects in museums included treasures, oddities, relics, proofs of great deeds, or trophies that symbolized far away and strange places and cultures. As a practice, exhibits were developed to present private collections to public view (Roberts 1997: 75) where objects were displayed in orderly fashion and without any interpretation. Additionally, in museums of art, natural history, industry and technology or history, artifacts were arranged either taxonomically or geographically (Errington 1998). Exhibitions mainly focused on presenting large numbers of similar things, providing little, if any, interpretive information about historical, social, or political context of the objects' meaning. Archaeological artifacts were provided with place of provenience, country of origin or the cultural group's name, and geological pieces informed the year of formation and so on. The stories of man, life, and civilization were not as important as the physical identities of material things (Hooper-Greenhill 1992).

Nonetheless, the undertone of these muted displays spoke of technological and cultural evolution (Errington 1998), of progress into civilization, and of enlightenment. By the turn of the twentieth century, museums of European nations and in North America included colonial exhibits that showed typical architecture, artifacts, and often people were also displayed (Errington 1998). For example the U.S., in 1904, as it annexed the Philippines, displayed Natives in the World Fair in St. Louis (Errington 1998). However, after the civil rights movements, of the 1960's museums engaged in presenting context and interpretation with the objects they displayed.

Context in exhibits

The museums that presented objects in early twentieth century spoke of glory and of conquered nations to consolidate the political power of colonial nations (Errington 1998). Objects were presented to convey meaning and collections became the vehicles that presented those narratives. However, because exhibits can only offer glimpses into the lives of peoples, they convey static images that do not represent the reality of ever-changing identities. Shelly Errington (1998) correlates the museums' images of Native peoples shown in the early part of the 20th century with what is primitive as opposed to what is modern. Similarly, Roberts shows that messages in exhibits no longer emerged from an object's "inherent" meaning but they expressed ideas that people "create and that are ultimately shaped by decisions coming from perceptions of reality" (1998: 75).

Later in the twentieth century, with instant communication and unlimited access to images and information, audiences focused not only on what was being said about objects (Bedno 1999: 40) but more importantly, on who was doing the saying. By then

the museum public became more diverse, which made museums more vulnerable to critiques about the type of information they exposed to visitors. Exhibits moved away from uncontextualized, artifact-based displays that were narrow and focused, instead they presented broad narrative/theme-based displays. However, museums represented but one point of view, which became increasingly problematic with the broader audience of museums in the 1980's.

One voice

After the contextualization of objects in exhibits, and the inclusion of a broader visiting audience museums' exhibit approaches were contested. Until the mid 1900's, museums "spoke and you listened" (Bedno 1999: 40). Museums worked under the assumption that taste and expertise justified the right of trustees, curators, and museum scholars to present what they believed their audiences should know (Lavine 1992: 138). Part of the change came when scholars, in the late 1800's, focused on transforming museums into educational institutions for the advancement of scientific research. With the founding of the United States National Museum in 1879, museum staff focused on creating a museum "of record to preserve material foundations of scientific knowledge, a museum of research to further scientific inquiry" (Alexander 1979: 52). Curators then believed academic training gave them ultimate authority in the diffusion of knowledge.

Nonetheless, by the late 1900's, museums were producing exhibits, scholarly lectures, tours, demonstrations, and hands-on activities to an increasingly multicultural audience which began to contest labels and assumptions produced by museums (Roberts 1997). Unidirectional interpretation of collections, of what Roberts (1997) classifies as

"uninstructive entertainment," satisfied museum professionals' unconscious but powerful need to experience a sense of personal control. Perhaps the most fundamental challenge to curators' during the 1970's and 1980's was dispute on the value of "scientific" and "scholarly" work (Lavine 1992) by those who argued that "feelings about the future are more important than so-called factual accounts" (Lavine 1992: 138). It provoked curators to reflect on the influence of their personal cultural, social, and political points of views included in how objects were presented in exhibits. Those challenges came at a time when anthropologists also began scrutinizing the cultural biases in their work and found racist undercurrents in their own depictions of other cultures (Roberts 1997: 57).

Critics voiced their concerns about the alienation of lower classes and minorities from museums, and scholars critiqued the lack of other than scholarly perspectives in museum exhibits. Therefore, in the 1990's, museums reassessed their educational role, who spoke in exhibits, and the type of audience museums served. Such factors greatly affected the way exhibits were developed (American Association of Museums 1992).

At the same time curators' responsibilities were redefined and their authority reevaluated (American Association of Museums 1992). Curators who once controlled the topics of exhibits, the material to be exhibited, the theme of the exhibit, and the aesthetics of the exhibit design (Yates 1993, Nason 2000) began to share those tasks with other staff and museum audiences. Although the information put out in museums was educational, presenting only one perspective produced but one interpretation that "reinforced traditional historical viewpoints" (Alexander 1979: 165) and neglected materials connected to the lives of ordinary individuals. Curators were criticized for "engaging in

interpretive approaches that fixed non-western cultures and peoples as temporally and geographically distant, exotic, others" (Kahn 2000: 57).

However, curators, in the past twenty years, have made efforts at welcoming people of different racial, ethnic, social, economic, and educational backgrounds (American Association of Museums 1992). In addition, curators took steps towards representing culture as adaptable, dynamic, and evolving (Kahn 2000).

Excellence and equity report

An internal influence to museums was the Excellence and Equity Report issued by the American Association of Museums (AAM) in 1992. The Excellence and Equity Report was a document that reflected the need to reassess the educational role of museums. It was adopted as a policy statement by the American Association of Museums Board of Directors in May 1991. The report invited museums to take pride in their tradition as stewards of excellence and to embrace cultural diversity, recommending equity in everything museums do (American Association of Museums 1992).

The report was based on three main ideas. It asserted education as a central role to museum's public service and that this role should be expressed in museum's mission and programs. It demanded that museums reflect pluralism in their operations and programs and become more inclusive places that welcomed diverse audiences. The report laid out the principles for consideration and action. Such principles directly pointed out the great need for change in how museums, in the past ten years, had been working. The Excellence and Equity Report asserted that collaborative work between

museums and their diverse communities was important in translating the concerns of the time.

Community participation

Many of the changes that transformed museums' image were due to the innovative educational views about knowledge-processing and the reconsideration of the authority that exhibits' messages conveyed. More and more, educators became key professionals in museums. For one thing, the first appointments of staff "instructors" in museums started in the 1920's and 1930's, but by the 1980's, the increasing number of educators working in museums transformed the institution (Roberts 1997: 5). Early in the twentieth century educators criticized the selected clientele of museums and promoted popular use of museums and their collections (Roberts 1997: 22). Under the influence of educators museums started to provide "educational activities" to their audiences and to include entertainment that "spoke to visitors in their own language and encourage further exploration of the collection" (Roberts 1997: 44). Interactive and computerized activities became the teaching tools of museums.

In the past decades, museums established various public-outreach programs to enhance the ties between museums and their audiences. These efforts came from the realization that the transfer of knowledge needed to be facilitated (Dierking 2000:59). Activities became centered on practical, experience based with the assumption that visitors come to museums with previous knowledge and that meaning is processed differently. Museums became places where visitors could experience creative interpretive materials, where new exhibit techniques were discovered, where school

groups complemented their educational curricula. They now offer commodities such as restaurants, gift shop, a comfortable area to rest between exhibits, and handicap facilities (Ambrose 1993, Falk 2000). Museums became a place for social interaction, entertainment, and fun activities (Falk 2000: 93). Hands-on activities were developed to facilitate and moderate the learning process.

In addition, educators' work indicated that personal, sociocultural, and physical contexts (Falk 2000) trigger different types of experiences and interpretations, of critical significance in collaborative work in creating exhibits (Ambrose 1993). Because notions of knowledge were reevaluated, planning a cultural exhibition required that museum professionals take into consideration how objects were to be displayed, in what context, whom the messages will affect, and plan collaborative strategies.

Educators played an important role in mediating the scholarly work with the public's interests, anticipating and negotiating the interpretations constructed by visitors with the interpretations constructed by museums (Roberts: 1997: 3).

> Knowing and knowledge for museums have become three-dimensional, all involving, and all encompassing. The main themes of knowledge are people, their histories, their lives, and their relationships (Hooper-Greenhill 1992: 198).

Such changes in museums have shocked most those who felt that they knew what museums were, how they should be, and what they should be doing (Hooper-Greenhill 1992). From the realization that museums affected visitors' ways of seeing and the ways visitors made sense of exhibits, collaborative work contributed to the empowerment of marginalized groups. Community participation as an emancipatory process was first articulated by Paulo Freire a Brazilian educator of the 1930's. He advocated a "problem-

posing" approach to education that intended to enhance and expand every human being's ability to understand and transform the world of which they are part (Reed 2000: 187).

Freire proposed a break with authoritarianism, which conveys a total disbelief in the potential of others. He proposed that "participation, when it is the exercise of voice... making decisions at certain levels of power, as in citizenship rights, is found in direct relation to progressive educational practice" (Freire 1998: 68).

Therefore, community participation in museums resulted from simplistic mechanics of exhibit design to the complexities of visitor experience. Views on the important role exhibits played in learning provoked a shift in exhibit development (Falk 2000). Some of the innovations in exhibits include the creation of exhibits that challenge visitor's interpretations. Wallach (1998), for example, discusses the potential in critical exhibitions or revisionism in that it reveals art works as ideological. It is a type of exhibition that instead of focusing on "treasures," "masterpieces," and "genius," submits its materials to critical scrutiny (Wallach 1998: 105). This type of critique strikes at the very heart of the museum's traditional function, its capacity to produce "an eternal image of the past" (Wallach 1998: 106). The power of such critiques is that they challenge museum audiences to see deeply embedded social and cultural complexities of times. Museum exhibits can also strengthen cultural traditions or reinforce assumptions on identities. According to Lois Silverman museum visitors go to museums seeking to "make opportunities to create, express, and affirm who they believe themselves to be" (Silverman 1995: 161).

Exposing different voices, says Freire, allows museum professionals to see that lived experiences can contribute to the growth of institutions (Freire 1998: 71). The

implications of those ideas to museums are reflected in the inclusion of multicultural views of museum communities in the process of exhibit development and in the sharing of authority not only over objects but also over themes.

Authority/knowledge

The way knowledge is understood has impacted museums in the past decade. Knowledge stopped being objective and verifiable but socially constructed and shaped by individual's particular interests and values (Roberts 1997: 2). Knowledge is a commodity that museums offer (Hooper-Greenhill 1992), in which context, meaning and discourse of exhibits can either reinforce previous perceptions or generate new ones (Falk 2000). Because museums are institutions that influence people's perceptions and perceptions are a result of previous knowledge and free interpretation of what is seen, heard, and read, exhibits can and do enhance stereotypes about peoples. Additionally, old exhibit techniques spoke "more about our own values and concepts than those of the culture they profess to portray" (Weil 1990: 59). However, some museums are changing although others have been slower to act. For some museums change is more difficult, in part for being products of their particularly hierarchical background and in part for serving not only local but national and international audiences (Lavine 1992: 139).

Nevertheless, museums complied with the subjectivity of knowledge and brought visitor's perspectives to bear on the treatment of collections: how they are displayed, what is said about them, and who does the saying. In doing so, questions about such core tenets as the sanctity of objects and the authority of curators were raised. Curators made decisions and spoke for the institution they represent with all the authority conferred by

advanced university training and professional experience (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, Roberts 1997, Penney 2000). In exhibitions, decisions "represented by both object selection and interpretive text preparation, came from the curator and not from the community being represented by the objects and text" (Nason 2000: 29).

Nonetheless, in the past decade, museums have responded to their various constituencies. For example, museums appoint trustees from their constituency, add to their staff underrepresented groups, and organize advisory committees with community representatives. These efforts often generate conflicts between the institution's historical mission and efforts to accommodate more diverse constituencies (Lavine 1992: 137). As more communities collaborate, however, museums hope to offer communities a chance to interpret museum collections' significance to others that share some of the same views.

Communities and museums are more and more sharing authority over the objects that are presented in exhibits and that represent cultural groups. Gaither (1992) argues that minority museums, which see African-American, Hispanic, and other cultural groups as their primary public, are "able to introduce fresh ideas and suggest how museums may become more socially responsible and responsive" (Gaither 1992: 64).

In an article about the expression of a pluralistic society in museums, Gaither (1992) discusses the obligations of educational and social institutions in participating and contributing to the restoration of communities. Gaither advocates that understanding within and between cultural groups and the correction of often incomplete stories about social histories that deal with controversy will arise from a reappraisal of the past (Gaither 1992: 58). However, the museums that do not embrace such practices need to be prepared to justify it to their public. Gaither believes that to promote a better

understanding of historical experiences museums need to delight, educate, and enhance the representation of cultural diversity through diversity within the institution (Gaither 1992: 59). Growing evidence of participation in decision making, the formation of new coalitions and networks, and opposition to the authority of large institutions, established new obligations for museum professionals (Lavine and Karp 1991, Hooper-Greenhill 1992, Kahn 2000).

In this chapter, I have pointed out that museums have responded to internal pressures to reevaluate their role as educational institutions and their authority over objects and narratives that represent multicultural communities. They are more inclusive of the diversity of their visiting communities and are taking steps towards working collaboratively with their audiences. However, there are also other pressures external to museums that influenced their current work with the communities they represent through exhibits. In the next section, I discuss the external forces coming particularly from and on behalf of Native American communities. Specifically, I focus on assessing the types of demands and concerns coming from Native communities, which reflect the important role of collaborative work between museums and Native peoples.

CHAPTER 3

External pressures for museums' collaboration with communities

Much has changed in how museum professionals perceive their responsibilities toward their visiting audience and how authority is understood. Museums in the past twenty years have become more inclusive institutions and more sensitive to the demands of a growing multicultural visiting community (Lavine and Karp 1991, Gaither 1992). Additionally, museum professionals' control over what, how, and who is represented in exhibits has been reevaluated. Currently, museums have been forming partnerships with the communities they represent in the development of exhibits.

However, the incorporation of Native voices involves collaboration between individuals with different perspectives, interests, background, and professional training (Hill Sr. 2000a, Penney 2000). We know that museums are taking steps towards recognizing and representing the cultural diversity of their audiences. However, what are such audiences interested in having presented in museum exhibits? I am interested in exploring the concerns and interests of Native American communities, who for so long have been represented by other voices other than their own. What are the types of stories Native communities want to tell in exhibits that represent them?

As discussed in the previous section, internal changes in museums contributed to efforts to include the voices of museums' audiences. Additionally, changes in museums came as a result of many social and political pressures; the American Indian community is one of the parties that provoked some of those changes. Pressures external to museums also contributed to a response to the demands for better-informed and more responsive exhibits that included voices other than of white male scholars. Native American

activism influenced museum policies, and laws that have contributed to the inclusion of Native perspectives to museum work.

Diversity and contemporaneity

To comply, museums sought Native perspectives in the planning, organization, and messages of their exhibits to dispel some misconceptions about Native cultures (Hill Sr. 2000b). As Richard Hill Sr. (2000a) discusses, scholarly work of early 1900's influenced views that homogenized diverse cultures and reinforced ideas about salvaging cultures that would soon disappear. Museums validated such ideas through exhibits that presented only a "partial and abstract reality frozen in time and space" (Nason 2000: 42).

In the nineteenth century scientists embarked on a quest to record information about Native groups before, it was thought, they would completely disappear into the modern world. It was in the 1880's that

> The U.S. Bureau of Ethnology began a study ... of Indians, which included collecting skulls, to support... theories of social evolution,... The result was the creation of a museum myopia that saw Indians as ethnological being and cultural types; [through which] very diverse cultures were grouped under one expansive heading (Hill Sr. 2000b: 42).

That period produced exhibits which focused on presenting Indians as tribal people rather than as individual characters in changing communities. In exhibits made then, and in some produced today "Native Americans present a cultural type rather than a specific individual: one or two anonymous mannequins are meant to represent a whole nation of people" (Hill Sr. 2000b: 40). In addition, dioramas, used in most museums until very recently, also tended to keep Indians confined to the natural history arena and presented them "next to the stuffed animals and frozen specimens" (Hill Sr. 2000b: 40).

Museums created, in conjunction with anthropological departments, displays of indigenous cultures to preserve and recover Native American cultures and languages before they vanished.

In a study done by the National Museum of the American Indian, the museum staff was able to identify attitudes of Smithsonian visitors toward Native Americans. The study showed that although visitors had some contact with contemporary Native Americans, imagery of the past dominated their responses. Indian people are thought to have fully assimilated into urban environments (Doering et al.1999). Visitor comments regarding the Native past pertained to closeness to nature and warlike communities; comments about present Native American life referred to assimilation, poverty, and alcoholism (Doering et al. 1999: 136). One of the conclusions of this study was that for museums the challenge was that of "bridging the chasm between the imagery of the Native past and perception of the present" (Doering et al.1999: 147). The challenge was in showing continuity and change in Native philosophy and life, since many visitors appeared to assume that many Native cultural practices remained static (Doering et al.1999: 148).

Sven Haakanson, a Native of Kodiak Island, Alaska, gives an insightful description of the stereotypes that are maintained in exhibits and the dilemmas faced in exhibiting northern cultures at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. It illustrates the problems in conveying past and present views of culture and cultural history, and explores problems in the use of authoritative rather than reflexive voices (Fitzhugh 1997: 207). The exhibit, from 1957 and still in place, is entitled "Eskimo."

Haakanson found that visitors take home stereotyped images some fifty years old (Henderson 1997). Haakanson describes visitors' reactions to the "Eskimo" exhibit

> All who pass before these sculpted Inuit eyes find themselves conducted into an arctic Native past of unknown age, but they leave perplexed as to whether these timeless people still exist (Fitzhugh 1997: 229).

And Haakanson speaks of his feelings after seeing such exhibit

> Here I am, an 'Eskimo' too, but from thousands of isles west of these Greenland Inuit. Our people in Kodiak Island, Alaska call ourselves Sugpiaq. I am wondering if I should tell these kids, tourists, and students that this *Eskimo* term is wrong. It doesn't say who we are anymore. We're not a single unified culture. We don't even speak the same language as the Polar and Canadian Inuit (Fitzhugh 1997: 229).

Haakanson asks why the museum did not change the exhibit to inform about arctic people's lives in contemporary times- i.e. that there is no such thing as single unified culture. Seeking to reflect different needs, messages, and values of a society in a continuous process of change is now an ongoing effort in museums.

However, some museums set examples through their exhibits. In 1988, the creation of the Arctic Studies at the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) with special funds provided by the National Museum of the American Indian emphasized themes of tradition, dynamism, and change that characterize North American Indian and Inuit societies today. This exhibit showed that Native Americans and Canada's first peoples rather then being silent over the representation of their ancestors' tradition and sacred objects, control the construction of their cultural identities. Steiner observes that Native peoples "want to control the market that traffics their identity, they want to have the main say in determining who makes arts, or crafts and who speaks legitimately through these creations as a voice of Indian identity" (1994).

Authority

Some of those new images that Native communities want included in museums were articulated at the invasion of the Alcatraz Island by American Indian activists in 1969 (Fortunate Eagle 1992). Among other concerns, the Native residents of Alcatraz proposed to build a museum/cultural center that more accurately represented them. They planned to build a Center for Native American Studies, American Indian Spiritual Center, and Indian Center of Ecology, Indian Training School (that would include a Center for Indian Arts and Crafts and an Indian restaurant), and American Indian Museum. Described in the proclamation of the takeover of the Island, in the section entitled "Use To Be Made Of Alcatraz Island" an American Indian Museum was

> To be used to exhibit Native foods, cultural contributions, and the influence of disease, alcohol, poverty and the cultural decimation to Indians. The museum would maintain a dungeon symbolizing both those Indian captives who were incarcerated for challenging white authority, and those who were imprisoned on reservations (Fortunate Eagle 1992: 47).

In the proposal to the American government the museum at Alcatraz was to show the noble and the tragic events of Indian history, including the broken treaties, the Trail of Tears, the Massacre at Wounded Knee, as well as the victory over Yellow-Hair Custer and his Army (Fortunate Eagle 1992). The museum was committed to bringing greater awareness of the Indian presence and to voicing Native experiences about broken treaties, neglected property rights, scaling poverty and environmental damage.

In the 1960's, alternative perspectives in museums based on the growing multiculturalism of museum audiences and concerns about the representation of such diversity seriously challenged curation. At the same time, things began to change in

Indian country. Reuben Snake describes how the opening of the Omaha Indian Center became the expression of a revitalized Native identify

> People who are dominated by other groups undergo phases wherein their culture is oppressed and suppressed. So it was just about the right time for Indian people to be doing this (cultural revitalization and political activism) (Fikes 1996: 109).

In the late 1960's throughout the 1970's, there was a resurgence of Indianness and pride of being Indian. Reuben Snake recounts that treatment of Natives had not changed much but that at least Native peoples began to be treated more respectfully (Fikes 1996). The civil rights movement was one of the major forces that encouraged the Native community to demand changes in how museums responded to Native peoples.

Native Activism

In the 1960's and 1970's, Indian communities began to demand change regarding what was being said, how it was being said, and who was doing the saying about Native identity. The Native community, that for the most part of the twentieth century was invisible, started to be noticed. American Indians became noticed in part because of the population increase in urban areas. Native urban migration followed the implementation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) relocation program in the 1950's (Thornton 1982). Cultural centers sprang up in many urban areas and Native peoples began to build their communities away from reservations (Weibel-Orlando 1991, Fortunate Eagle 1992, Fikes 1996).

The movement called "Red Power" that began after 1966 (Deloria Jr. 1974: 34) affected the Indian population all over the country. Tired of waiting for policies that

helped them adjust to the mainstream society (Deloria Jr. 1974), and having experienced the effects of broken treaties and threatened sovereignty, American Indians rebelled and took to the streets in marches and demonstrations. The American Indian Movement (AIM) was one of the most active groups of the early 1970's. The group was formed in Minneapolis to oversee the actions of the police, known for their brutality and discrimination, in the Indian sections of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. AIM became powerful throughout Indian country, spreading its influence beyond the Midwest. AIM acted in defense of Native peoples' and supported protests against the treatment of Indians across the nation (Deloria Jr. 1974, Fortunate Eagle 1992, Smith and Warrior 1996). As AIM became more and more popular branch offices were created in many states in the country.

However, AIM was not the only Native organized group of urban activism that in the 1960's sprang up around the country. A group of recent college graduates organized the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC) that fought, among other issues, for fishing rights. The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) also pushed for policy changes regarding treaties and sovereignty. Indian people who emerged on the public stage at the time ran their own business, were corporate executives, worked at newspapers, or were accountants. American Indian educators, health professionals, journalists, artists, lawyers, artists, actors, scholars and others formed organizations and emerged onto the scene with a "suddenness that was difficult even to keep track of, much less make sense of" (Deloria Jr. 1974: 100).

The invasion of Alcatraz, and other Native takeovers in the 1970's moved Native people everywhere in the country. The significance of these actions were that Native

people were not silent anymore, they were looking for a place in the national identity. Native people were ready to tell their stories, organize their own cultural centers, and speak for themselves.

One of the missions of the AIM was to raise the consciousness of the entire country about Indian people (Fikes 1996). Native activism contributed to make Native peoples public and their concerns visible and marked the beginning of conversations about authority and voice in museums. As one observer pointed out, after the upheavals of the 1960's "Native people were not reborn, they were just noticed" (Smith and Warrior 1996: 101). Reporters and authors produced articles and books about how the vanishing American was not vanishing, but was ready to grasp the future. Some stereotypes remained, such as Hollywood's cowboys and Indians, notions of savages and passive nobles, and images of lazy, jobless, Indian drunks living off the public welfare on prison-like reservations out west (Smith and Warrior 1996). Nevertheless, along with those, "several new images of who Indians were and what Indians were all about emerged into public consciousness" (Smith and Warrior 1996: 101); the Indian militant, the environmentalist, the spiritualist were such new images.

Later in the twentieth century, other pressures reinforced the demands voiced through Native activism. These found expression in new legislation that emphasized the need for a sound representation of Native peoples. Two laws in particular, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and the Arts and Crafts Act fulfilled some of the activists' demands.

NAGPRA

The 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) pointed out the need for museums to consider not only their non-native visitors but also their Native constituency. Previous to the passing of NAGPRA there had been conversations between Native peoples and museums regarding material put on display (Merrill 1997, Lomawaima et al 2000). NAGPRA required that museums respect the cultural, spiritual, and moral aspect of the materials that are displayed in exhibits.

NAGPRA also

> Mandated that organizations prepare collection summaries and inventories to aid tribes in their research. And it created a Review committee, comprised of seven representatives from the museum, academic, and tribal communities, to monitor and review the implementation of the law (Lomawaima et al. 2000: 42).

An exhibit at the Denver Museum of Natural History (DMNH) is an example of the need for NAGPRA. In the 1980's the museum displayed a sacred medicine mask of the Tuscarora. Although the museum had a Native American advisory committee it refused to remove the medicine mask from public display, until the enactment of NAGPRA when the museum removed those sacred objects (Hill Sr. 2000b: 44).

Merrill and Ahlborn (1997) investigated the controversial repatriation from the Smithsonian to Zuni Pueblo of New Mexico of two saint statues from the mission period. The tension between the Zuni and the Smithsonian, that maintained the sculptures, provoked a reconsideration of how Zuni identity and Zuni religious objects were being defined, and who was defining them. According to Merrill and Ahlborn laws such as NAGPRA and others established that American Indian societies have legitimate claims to certain kinds of objects housed in museum collections. Without such laws there would

not be guidelines through which these societies could exercise their claims. It was necessary that public institutions accept their responsibilities and respect American Indian people. The pressure of such impositions may eventually "set the stage for transforming museum relationships with all the people whose cultures are represented through their collections" (Merrill and Alhorn 1997: 177).

In fact in 1989, previous to NAGPRA, the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) act was created. NMAI included in its bylaws a provision that addressed the same repatriation issues as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. Because the NMAI belongs to the Smithsonian Institution, a federal agency, it does not have to comply with the same repatriation obligations as other museums. In including such points in its bylaws the Smithsonian asserted their position as to the concerns of their Native constituency. This evidences the pressures for the transformation not only of how cultural material ownership and their significance for Native peoples is understood but also for the acknowledgement of Native Americans as important constituents of museum audience. The NMAI act was an exemplary action that set the tone for other museums.

Arts and Crafts Act

Another important law is the Indian Arts and Crafts Act, enacted in 1990. It promoted the economic development of American Indians and Alaska Natives through the expansion of the Indian arts and crafts market (United States Congress 1990). Most importantly, this law prohibits misrepresentation in selling Indian arts and crafts within the United States. It is illegal to display, or sell any art or craft in a manner that falsely

suggests it is Indian produced, an Indian product, or the product of a particular Indian or Indian tribe or Indian arts and crafts organization, resident within the United States. Under this law, an Indian is defined as a member of any federally or State recognized Indian tribe, or an individual certified as an Indian artisan by an Indian tribe (United States Congress 1990).

The Arts and Crafts act addresses a different aspect of the representation of Native peoples, it validates authority in the production of cultural material. It is meant to protect Indian artists from misunderstandings about what objects of cultural value should represent, how those objects express Native identities, and especially, who can produce those objects.

Since the passing of such policies as a result of demands from the Native community, many museums have reformulated some aspects of the way they work. Some have revised their mission statements, others have revamped their exhibit development procedures, and others have torn down old exhibits and replaced them with more sensitive material. Museums have been more sensitive and aware of their multiple audiences and are able to identify Native communities as important in developing an exhibitions' final form. These changes were driven by internal and external forces that brought attention to marginalized groups in our society.

Collaboration

Because representation in museum exhibits is the primary means by which knowledge and identities are established, as such, exhibits define things and peoples, legitimizing narratives of racial, economic, and cultural difference. When discussing the

recent changes in museums, it is important to understand as well the series of political moves that motivated those changes. In an evaluation meeting of the first ten years of NAGPRA, Barbara Isaac, assistant director at the Peabody Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, discussed the need for museums to break their isolation from communities from whom the collections had been taken. Isaac reinforced museums' obligation to be in touch with people and begin to see things "through other peoples eyes" (Lomawaima et al. 2000: 45). Not only was inclusion of different perspectives discussed but also the fact that consultation should actually become co-authority. Such decisions involve the negotiation of goals and interests in partnership between museums and Native communities. Can museum professionals simply give up control over representation in museums?

Currently, museums have been struggling to represent the changing aspects of past and contemporary Native traditions. Native communities are contributing to recent work in museum exhibitions and demanding that their concerns be addressed. There is no one formula for success; each museum is seeking solutions to address their audiences. Native peoples are concerned about having messages that are sensitive to the diversity of tribal groups and the contemporaneity of Native way of life and traditions. And museums are more sensitive to American Indian voices and are struggling with how best to present more holistic exhibits that show the changing aspects of American Indian cultures. Policies of collaboration and participation in the planning, organizing and display of cultural material have a promising future.

A combination of all the factors that influenced the changes in how museums are addressing the representation of Native peoples is important in the discussion of the

future of Native people and museums. It is clear that beginning with the civil rights movement, through protests and demonstrations and the creation of new museum policies and federal laws, Native American communities demanded that museums be more sensitive about the diversity and contemporaneity of their existence. Native voices are fighting to tell stories of their individuality, their experiences, their histories, and their ever-changing traditions. Therefore, museums' collaborative work with Native communities must reflect the negotiations in the control over what exhibit narratives present and who speaks through them.

The procedures regarding the inclusion of Native perspectives will be the subject of the next chapter, where I present my research data. Chapter 4 looks at how three museums, at the local, regional, and national/international levels, have organized the way that they work with Native communities. I describe each museum's criteria and methods for their partnerships with Native communities. Additionally, I describe the themes that resulted from the collaborative work between each of the museums and selected Native committees.

CHAPTER 4

Methods and museum histories

In this chapter I first describe the methods I used for this research and then describe three museum histories and the processes of decision making of each. The museums I selected are the National Museum of the American Indian, the Grand Rapids Public Museum-Van Andel, and the Ziibiwing Cultural Society. This chapter will provide information about the planning, organization and definition of the process of collaboration with Native communities. My interest in examining the interaction between museums and their Native constituency through exhibit development is rooted in my concern about the different narratives on identities, their mediation, and their impact on social interactions. With that in mind, I set out to interview museum staff and, when available, members of the Native communities involved in the process of exhibit design.

Because of my interest in the representation of Native communities in museums, I wanted to observe how collaborations with the Native community or communities would influence museum representation of these groups. How do museums define inclusion of Native voices, and what are the narratives of the exhibits resulting from that inclusion?

To answer this question, I look at the processes through which Native peoples are consulted and made partners in the inclusion of Native perspectives and at the exhibits that result from the partnership.

This three-level data collection, from national to local, provides information about how different museums and Native communities negotiate authority in the process of developing exhibits. The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) is a museum that represents national/international communities; the Grand Rapids Public Museum

represents regional Native communities (west Michigan); and the Ziibiwing Cultural Center (ZCS) represents their local tribal communities.

Methods

This research resulted from my fieldwork during the summer of 2000. In each museum I interviewed staff members who were involved in the process of developing exhibits that represented Native peoples. I analyzed the museum's Native target communities, the museum's history, their mission statement, steps taken in including Native voices, and the themes resulting from such processes. I chose to work with three museums, each with different levels of involvement with Native communities, those being national, regional, and local.

A national museum tends to represent a broad range of communities and develop a short-term relationship with the communities with which they collaborate. In contrast, a museum that represents regional communities has a less broad constituency. The types of programs and work that regional museums develop with their Native communities are also likely to be of short term because they tend to work with groups of a wide geographic spread. A museum that develops programs and works mainly with its local communities tends to consult their immediate communities as opposed to consulting with outside communities. These types of museums may also develop a long-term relationship in their work with their local communities.

I interviewed three employees of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) regarding the museum history and procedures for their collaborative work with Native communities' representatives of the exhibit "All Roads Are Good: Native Voices

on Life and Culture." Because NMAI had invited artists from various states in the United States and countries of Latin America I did not interview the artists involved in the planning and selecting of the materials for the exhibit.

I interviewed one person who worked at the Van Andel Museum and one Native person who participated in the exhibit planning as a paid consultant. The museum did not maintain addresses or contact information of other participants of the Native committee for follow up on the exhibit.

At the Ziibiwing Cultural Society I interviewed two employees from this institution. This is a locally based facility and their collaborative work revolved around the local tribal members. Because Ziibiwing did not consult with any one "representative" of the community but rather with various tribal members living in and outside the reservation, and did not keep records of who the participants were, I did not interview any participants of the developing committee.

To collect data I traveled to Mount Pleasant, one hour north of my research base, then to Grand Rapids, two hours west, and flew to Manhattan to interview, at each museum, the museum staff and the Native participants of the collaborative team. Due to various constraints I was unable to interview all the Native people who contributed to the Native exhibits. Rather, I decided to interview museum staff involved in a Native exhibit project and only the Native advisors who were available at the time of my interviews.

The names of all those I interviewed will not be disclosed, as agreed to by my informants. I opted to include, in the final product of my research, quotations from the interviews which represent as much as possible of the voices of the interviewees so that their perspectives are included and not overpowered through my own manipulation of the

text. All of the persons interviewed were directly involved in the development of a Native American exhibit and were either curators or members of an advisory committee.

The museums were selected based on the dates of the initial exhibit planning so that they would reflect similar changes in the museum field. The NMAI and Van Andel museums both began planning their exhibits in 1990, and Ziibiwing in 1993. Both NMAI and Van Andel planned new exhibits to inaugurate a new building. Because the staff in all three museums was aware of the changing trends in the museum field all decided to create exhibits that responded to such changes conceiving and conceptualizing new procedures for exhibits making. Each museum devised a particular set of procedures in order to work with their Native constituents.

I was not able to obtain written information, audiotapes or videotapes about the process of exhibit development from either NMAI or Van Andel. I did obtain a copy of the final exhibit plan from Ziibiwing that hired an exhibit design company to document and work with the community participants.

Museum staff names are referred to by a code number (see Appendix B) and for contexts' sake I at times refer to the individual by the title held at the museum, in other words describing general characteristics of the person's responsibilities. All interviewee descriptions were done in the same manner. Most of the museum staff whom I interviewed were professionals, some were anthropologists, others educators, or had a degree in art. Very few did not have a museum background.

Museum Histories

National Museum of the American Indian in Manhattan, New York

Before the creation of the National Museum of the American Indian most of the museum's collection belonged to a New York charitable trust, the Museum of the American Indian (MAI) Heye Foundation. The idea of the NMAI was born around the late 1980's in great part to comply with the regulations of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and have a museum that addressed Native American communities' concerns. NMAI resulted also from the efforts of the then Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, Senator Daniel K. Inouye of Hawaii (Harjo 1996: 29).

With the creation of the NMAI Inouye sought to create a law that addressed Native American religious, burial rights, and human remains in museum collections nationwide, and to salvage the world's largest collection of Indian art and artifacts housed at the Museum of American Indian Heye Foundation (MAI) (Harjo 1996: 30). Both goals were attained in 1989 and 1990.

The MAI Heye Foundation's artifact collection, which amounted to about 800,000 objects, was transferred to the Smithsonian after President George Bush signed the National Museum of the American Indian Act, on November 28, 1989. Because the NMAI resulted from a federal law, it did not have any obligations to abide by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) to repatriate human remains. However, the Smithsonian, the MAI, New York State, and other federal agencies formulated guidelines regarding the inventory, identification and return of Indian

human remains and funerary objects of all the tribes represented at NMAI's collection (Harjo 1996: 30).

Three facilities are part of the National Museum of the American Indian. One of the houses, is in the historic Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House, at the tip of Manhattan in the Wall Street area, New York. The new facility, called George Gustav Heye Center, is ironically located near the site of the "Wall" erected three centuries earlier as protection against the Indians (Harjo 1996: 30). In October 30,1994, the George Gustav Heye Center (GGHC), replaced the old MAI Heye Center and became the new permanent exhibition and education building opened to the public (West 1995: 67). The second facility, the Cultural Resources Center (CRC) was built for research and storage of collections, in Suitland, Maryland (Harjo 1996: 30). The third facility, a museum for travelling exhibits will be housed at the National Mall in Washington D.C.

The groundbreaking for the construction of the building was held on September 28, 1999; the museum is planned to open to the public late in 2002 (West 1999: 64).

The Grand Rapids Public Museum-Van Andel Museum Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan

Founded in 1854, the Grand Rapids Public Museum - Van Andel Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan defines itself as a museum "common in the Midwest, that does natural history and human history but doesn't do science" (Interviewee 4, Appendix B). The museum has been in the Grand Rapids area for almost 150 years. It first started as a club and after rounding up enough funds for the construction of the museum, it became the

institution it is now. It is owned and operated by the City of Grand Rapids. Most of their exhibits represent the people, history, and environment of Michigan, and only a few of their are from outside the area. One of the permanent exhibits presents the furniture-making period of Grand Rapids, with a replica of one of the main streets of the city around the nineteenth century.

In 1990, the Board of Trustees decided it was time to build a new facility. In planning the exhibits for the new building, the museum restructured the way they presented their material. Much of the museum's collection had come from other countries, and their exhibits represented a variety of cultures and regions around the world. But in the midst of rethinking the types of exhibits to be displayed in the new facility, the idea of representing and presenting material that spoke to and of the local community became their priority. Thus, the museum redefined its mission statement and set out to organize new exhibits. Among them, they planned an exhibit about the Native peoples of western Michigan. The exhibit was called "Anishnabek: The People of This Place." The opening was held in November 1994, and dedicated to representing the western Michigan American Indian communities, collectively known as Anishnabek (Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Chippewa).

The Ziibiwing Cultural Society at the Saginaw Chippewa Reservation in Mount Pleasant, Michigan

In 1993, two women decided to create Ziibiwing Cultural Society (ZCS). Gradually others also became interested in preserving the cultural material of the Saginaw Chippewa tribe and in the repatriation of human remains and other objects that belonged

to their tribe. They too joined the organization. Its first step was to issue a mission statement. Because this cultural center is located on the grounds of a reservation, the group had to report their ideas to the tribal council. After meeting with the tribal council, it was decided that the group needed to legitimize the cultural center.

In 1995, the ZCS received $3.5 million from the tribe to plan the cultural center. Prior to 1995, they had borrowed $120,000 from the tribe to lease the casino/hotel gift shop. This was when the casino was becoming very popular and expanding rapidly. As the casino was setting up a gift shop store and when the Ziibiwing Center's staff "saw some of the things that the architects and the designers were putting in the casino," they decided the place needed to be "indianized" (Interviewee 6, Appendix B). Therefore, ZCS identified local Native artists and commissioned work to decorate the casino and the hotel, and to sell sourvernir in the gift shop.

The Ziibiwing Cultural Society does not have a building to display their exhibits yet. Nevertheless, Ziibiwing has three different buildings. One houses mainly the collection and serves as office for the curatorial staff; the administrative staff, director and heads of office have offices in a second building. The third facility is where the NAGPRA officers work on repatriation issues. Ninety percent of Ziibiwing's staff is Native American, in part because it is located in the reservation, as well as because, by decision of the tribal council, priority of employment is given to tribal members. Additionally, everyone I interviewed at the ZCS were members of the Saginaw Chippewa tribe, mostly with a wide range of professional backgrounds.

ZCS is a not-for-profit organization that plans to present historically relevant objects of the Saginaw Chippewa tribal members and the Great Lakes Anishnabe people.

The collection materials include historical and contemporary artifacts and photographs, written document, and art objects. Tribal members and private collectors donated much of the Ziibiwing's artifact collection. ZCS has also been successful in recovering some human remains and other objects from other museums. The ZCS plans to inaugurate the opening of the museum building on the Saginaw Chippewa Indian reservation in Isabella County, Michigan in 2003 (Interviewee 6, appendix B).

One of the plans for Ziibiwing's future is a multifaceted center offering interactive exhibits designed to increase the cultural knowledge about the Saginaw Chippewa people (Interviewee 6, appendix B). Additionally, the museum building will be laid out to be architecturally and culturally rooted in the history and heritage of the Great Lakes Anishnabe culture. The center's design will incorporate state of the art technology that will be accessible to all people. The museum will be situated in a woodland area reminiscent of Native Michigan (Interviewee , appendix B).

CHAPTER 5

Museums' audiences, mission, processes of collaboration, and themes

National Museum of the American Indian

Audience

The NMAI represents Native American cultures and works in collaboration with Native peoples from North, Central and South America. The process of planning, organizing, developing, and setting up exhibits is a result of collaborative relationships with people from various tribes from many areas of the Americas.

Statement of Purpose

In 1990, the NMAI trustees, one half selected by the NMAI staff and the other half by the Smithsonian board, announced their mission statement.

> The National Museum of the American Indian shall recognize and affirm to Native communities and the non-native public the historical and contemporary culture and cultural achievements of the Natives of the Western Hemisphere by advancing-in consultation, collaboration, and cooperation with Natives- knowledge and understanding of Native cultures including art, history, and language, and by recognizing the museum's special responsibility, through innovative public programming, research and collections, to protect, support and enhance the development, maintenance, and perpetuation of Native culture and community (NMAI Statement of Purpose, Appendix A).

Processes of Collaboration

To explain the steps that the NMAI museum took in collaboration with Native communities I collected information on the process of the exhibit design, development,

choice of objects and message from "All Roads Are Good: Native Voices on Life and Culture" exhibit. I chose this exhibit because it inaugurated the opening of the Heye Center to the public.

When the George Gustav Heye Center was in its planning stages and NMAI's staff was defining what kind of museum NMAI was going to be and what kind of exhibits it would have, the museum organized a team of consultants. This group, formed by a few curators and the museum's director, set out to talk to tribal groups throughout the hemisphere. For about two years, the Smithsonian staff traveled to consult with many indigenous groups. Interested in learning their opinions about having a national museum of American Indians the curators asked: "what should the building be, what should the museum be, what is important to you" (Interviewee 2, appendix B). During this period of consultation the consulting team was also contacting artists interested in working with the Smithsonian on the opening exhibit. After the consultation period NMAI's curators invited twenty-three artists to participate in the organization of the exhibit that celebrated the opening of the George Gustave Heye Center (GGHC), at the Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House, in 1994.

In choosing the collaborators, a curator at the NMAI explained that "some of the people, sort of logical, were people who had had a lot of museum experience and understood what is involved in producing an exhibition" (Interviewee 1, Appendix B) but that others did not really have museum experience. Therefore, some were museum professionals (Gerald McMaster, Tom Hill) and others cultural specialists (Richard Milanovich) and some were widely known within their tribe as people who knew about their culture and were articulate in explaining it. The twenty-three selectors chosen to

help assemble artifacts for the exhibition represented various tribes. The representatives were Apache, Seneca, Navajo, Crow, Haida, Inuit, Ojibway, Cahuilla, Cherokee, Mohawk, Aymara, Shuar, Maya, Taquile, Zapotec, and Pomo.

The artists were flown to New York to help with the beginning stages of the exhibition. The artists spent many hours examining hundreds of artifacts, assisted by NMAI's curators. Native artists received complete access to the collections throughout the summer of 1991, and selected what objects they thought should be displayed at the "All Roads Are Good" exhibition (West 1994: 27). The artists were to select objects from the collection, determine how those objects would be presented, and the types of messages they were interested in developing. Each artist was paired with an NMAI curator, who oriented them and helped them to look through the museum collection and verify the availability of objects and if such objects supported the artists' ideas. In essence they were "made the curators of the exhibition, and it reflected what they wanted to say" (Barrat 1991: 6).

The curators, rather than asking each artist if the "wall should be red" asked "should there be a wall?" (Interviewee 1, Appendix B). In other words the decision on what objects should be part of the exhibition came from the Native artists. In one of my interviews a curator explained that this collaborative process brought in people who had been selected by their own communities as representatives to develop a story line about "what they think is important to say" (Interviewee 1, Appendix B).

The museum's views regarding Native audience's accessibility to the artifacts of this extensive collection is that

> Museums have a responsibility to care for the collections and to enable the peoples whose families, whose tradition made those collections, that they should have the right to interpret them and they should have the right to see them and they should have access to them and that is part of what we are all about (Interviewee 1, Appendix B).

It is difficult, says interviewee 1 (Appendix B) to say "whose final decision it was, or how it was going to get organized, it kind of came out of a group consensus." In one instance, in the display developed by Joe Medicine Crow, two Crow shields could not face each other. The curator accepted the artist's authority over the message the display should have, noting "nobody knows that except Joe, but the appropriateness of things are important as part of how you think of exhibitions. Whether if anybody knows about it, that is not important but for those people for whom that matters like Joe, it should be right" (Interviewee 2, Appendix B).

At the end of the process of selecting the artifacts for the exhibit the museum decided, along with the artists, that the exhibition should be called "All Roads Are Good: Native Voices on Life and Culture" and not "Pathways of Tradition" as curators had previously planned.

Exhibit themes

The exhibit had nineteen different displays and each one was the expression of an artist. I supplemented the information from the exhibit itself with that from the published book on the exhibit. Some of the themes discussed Native culture and their relationship with the environment, or their history, others preferred to discuss the sacredness of Native objects, and yet others decided to talk about revitalization of Indian identity. Each artist expressed thoughts and views through the objects of the collection using "words (that)

evoke the mental images of when and how things were used and what they mean to people in their own cultural contexts" (All Roads Are Good 1994: 5). To illustrate the types of messages that were portrayed in this exhibit I will describe a few of the themes.

Lloyd Kiva New (Cherokee) designer, entrepreneur, and arts educator, produced "Translating the Past." The materials of his choice were Haida and Tonta/Tinglit hats. In explaining his choice of subject and message, New said that "people and cultures-like any living organisms-have to adapt to environmental changes; those that don't, die. The relationship of the past to the future has been stated in many ways-I like the declaration that 'the future lies in the future, not in the past' " (All Roads Are Good 1994: 39). Contrasting with this statement, D.Y. Begay (Navajo) talks about preservation of traditional art as she questions

> Is Navajo weaving a dying art? I don't think so, because I work and talk with a lot of young women who are interested in weaving, and they want to learn... I don't have any daughters but there are many Navajo women who want to learn and I want to share all the information that I have. I want to help preserve the art of Navajo weaving (All Roads Are Good 1994: 81).

Begay is a Navajo weaver who chose rugs and weaving tools from the NMAI collection and titled her display "A Weaver's Point of View." Professor Manuel Rios Morales (Zapotec from Mexico), who works at the Center for Research and Higher Studies in social anthropology addresses change in Native culture in the display "Community as Identity." Similarly, Alejandro Flores Huatta and Paula Quispe Cruz (Quechua), weavers from Peru, also present the continuity of their Native identity in "Preserving Our Culture".

The Grand Rapids Public Museum- Van Andel Museum Center

Audience

This is a municipal museum that serves not only the local inhabitants of Grand Rapids but also the neighboring communities. This museum works with and for a regional community. Throughout the facility I observed exhibits that speak of different cultural groups that have contributed to the population that makes up Grand Rapids. The permanent Native exhibit represents tribes from western Michigan.

Statement of Purpose

In 1990, the Van Andel Public Museum reformulated their mission statement to reflect an institution aware of the diversity of its audience and the educational responsibility of museums towards their visitors. Their statement is as follows:

> This is an educational institution whose mission is to collect, preserve, and present the natural cultural, and social history of the region. This mission is carried out to the following purposes: To enrich and delight the general public through interpretation and dissemination of knowledge regarding its collections; to encourage visitors to explore the historical, present, and potential relationships between the natural environment and human culture; and to enhance the quality of life in West Michigan. (Van Andel, Statement of Purpose, Appendix A).

Processes of Collaboration

One of the first steps in planning for the Native exhibit was to decide on a subject for the exhibit. The museum had decided to consult with the Native American community in a different manner than previously done. The idea of a consulting

committee was not new in the field of museums but the manner in which it was conceptualized differed from that of previous consulting committees. First, the museum hired consultants who recommended names of community leaders to form a Native advisory committee. The first consultant, a local historian, suggested some concepts and advised on the politics of the Native communities. Then an archaeologist joined the team followed by an art consultant, a Native American artist, and a media specialist to videotape the interviews.

The team of paid consultants was also in charge of meeting with the different Indian communities, acting as facilitators in explaining the museum's ideas and contacting interviewees. The consulting committee made the initial contacts asking community leaders for advice about whom to interview. Next, the interviewees were asked, "What does it mean to be Anishnabe?" That was the departing point of the exhibit planning. The museum also hired an exhibit design company to design the layout for the exhibit. The team of consultants, museum staff, and the exhibit design staff met with various Indian communities of Michigan.

One of the requests made by some of interviewees was that the exhibit was not to present an image of Native peoples in the past tense but to speak of the future of Native traditions. The only Native consultant on the team helped to organize a Native advisory committee. The criteria of selection was to invite persons with interest in cultural preservation, and some museum work experience, and to include Native people from different regions, gendered representation, and people from different tribes. The advisory committee was created after the museum staff had decided on the main theme of the exhibit. After having decided on the advisory committee, the consulting committee

started working on the concepts of the exhibit, which then were taken to the advisory committee for input. In discussing the exchange of ideas, the museum's paid consultant explained that "it started at the top then down and worked its way back up" (Interviewee 5, Appendix B).

As the process continued, the Van Andel consultants worked with people from different tribes and regions throughout west Michigan in the exhibit planning. The advisory team was comprised of six people. From Traverse City, a tribal judge from the Grand Traverse band of Ottawa and Chippewa who worked at the college in Traverse City was invited to participate. Also invited was a member from the Little Traverse Bay Band Ottawa who had been a long time member of a cultural organization in town, the Grand River Lodge. An artist member of the Pokagon Potawatomi band who was involved in that community became part of the team.

In addition to the group, another member of Pokagon Potawatomi band joined (also the executive director for the Confederated Historic Tribes). One participant had been involved in the American Indian Movement for many years. The last person was a well-educated, school principal, pipe carrier, active in education as well in Indian traditions, and a member of the Pokagon Potawatomi band. Advisors came from various areas; from the north to the southwest of Michigan, many were members of the Chippewa and Potawatomi tribes. Consultants and museum staff expressly told advisors not just to tell the museum what they think but rather that they should go to their community and tell them what the museum was doing and "ask others for advice and bring it back." The curatorial voice, it was decided, would be small, coming up sporadically; "most of the voices were of the people" (Interviewee 5, see Appendix B).

Exhibit Themes

This permanent exhibit called "Anishnabek: The People of This Place" uses a small area of the museum, but the exhibit presents many messages. It talks about who the Anishnabe people of Grand Rapids and Western Michigan were, their history, where they lived and their contemporary traditions. At the end of the planning process, there are ten small display cases representing different themes, namely "living off the land", "traditional arts", "how are we different", "gatherings", "old ways and new ways", and "service to the community".

The themes sprang from an idea of presenting education, armed services, arts, natural resources, politics, fishing and hunting, and themes overlapped from one case to the next and were used to present an overarching idea. Change was the main topic of the exhibit. This was done mostly by showcasing old and contemporary objects and presenting interviews with Native people, social gatherings, and past and present Native contribution to the community of Grand Rapids. An antique beaded eagle, for example, was placed next to an abstract painting of a bird, an 1800's porcupine quill-box placed next to a contemporary sculpture. A collection of old and new black ash baskets were also part of the exhibit. Another display presented contemporary pow wow regalia, how gatherings have changed through time, and how pow wows are important for the Anishnabek.

The exhibit also showed the different types of jobs that were performed by Anishnabe people at different periods in the history of Grand Rapids. Jobs ranged from harvesting, working at a factory, cooking, picking fruit, foresting, carpentry work and also

making traditional artwork. Under the topic of "how we are different" the exhibit presented a display on sovereignty, which showed not only that Anishnabe people have different governmental policies but also how important it is to attain the recognition of their rights from the federal government.

Because the museum did not produce any publications on this exhibit, I focused on the labels to obtain a context to the material on the display cases. Some of the labels read: "we adapt our traditional skills to new materials and new economies", or "here is how we do quill work", "our rich and decorative traditions change and grow" (this label was used repeatedly in different displays), "we gather to maintain ties that strengthen and unite us." Other labels read "we had to change in response to pressures from non-Indian settlement" and " our people learned new ways to make a living." There is a hands-on area at the center of one of the rooms where four monitors with interactive word matching and sound repetition games in Ojibway language are offered.

The Ziibiwing Cultural Society

Audience

The Ziibiwing Cultural Center of the Saginaw Chippewa reservation represents the Chippewa community of the Great Lakes and of Michigan in particular. Therefore this is a museum that focuses on working with the local community and developing a long-term relationship with the community members. The Ziibiwing Cultural Society has defined their primary audience as consisting of tribal members and, in order of importance, school groups, tourists/tour groups, members of other tribes,

college/university (local and distant students), researchers, casino visitors and families, local non-Indians, and government officials/legislators (Design Craftsmen 1999). The director of Ziibiwing explains that the museum's primary audience is the tribal members. All tribal members are "welcome to know their own history, the true history of their identity and who they are; the ZCS also welcomes non-native audience whom this type of information will also be of interest" (Interviewee 9, Appendix B).

Statement of Purpose

The mission of the Ziibiwing Cultural Society is to:

> Enlighten and educate tribal and community members, and all other people of the world to the culture, heritage, history and goals of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe. The Ziibiwing Cultural Society will use its resources to create and maintain a state of the art Ziibiwing Cultural Resource and Learning center that provides an enriched, diversified and culturally relevant educational experience. The center will promote the society's belief that the culture and history of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe and the Great Lakes Anishnabe must be recognized, perpetuated, communicated and supported (Ziibiwing Cultural Society, Statement of Purpose, Appendix A).

Processes of Collaboration

To make their decisions regarding the construction of the building and in developing exhibits' contents the cultural center consulted with the community at large. Yet collaboration process between the museum and its community was different from that of other museums. According to Interviewee 7 (Appendix B), the ZCS worked on a consensus basis with participation of the local Indian community. Ziibiwing's staff had to be flexible and to others' agendas, and deal with the politics of the community where

"traditionalists, activists, middle of the roaders, all have their ideas" (Interviewee 6, Appendix B). Community collaboration was then sought in a way that people's opinions influenced the decisions on how to use the collection and helped design the types of information Ziibiwing would include in the exhibitions for example, museum staff and community participants regarded the representation of tribal member's beliefs, along with information and objects in a contemporary context.

The process through which the Ziibiwing Cultural Society (ZCS) defined the themes for their exhibits included various meetings with the community participants. These meetings developed in the course of years, starting around 1995 (Interviewee 6, Appendix B) until about 1998 (Design Craftsmen 1999: 1). Overall, thirty-five to forty people attended the meetings, and there were about five meetings in total. All meetings were open to tribal members. Tribal members from the three districts "came to the meetings and said what they wanted to have and what they wanted people to know, this is the people's place" (Interviewee 7, Appendix B).

Invitations to tribal members were sent out through the local newspaper, *The Tribal Observer* and members were notified through a mailing list of all the tribal members. The tribe has their membership divided into three districts. District 1, which constitutes the tribal members who reside in the reservation land; District 2, whose members live in Midland; and District 3, whose members live in areas other than the reservation (urban areas) (Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan 1986).

The meetings for the planning of the exhibit were held in different areas throughout the state to make participation as convenient as possible and to offer an opportunity for as many tribal members to attend them. Directors of different

organizations, as well as political figures and elders in the reservation were also invited to participate of the planning meetings.

Ziibiwing's staff facilitated brainstorming sessions for the planning of the exhibit themes. During the sessions, the staff members asked all the community participants to think "if (they) wanted the public to know something about (them) as a Anishnabe what would you want them to know, what would be the most important thing for them to learn" (Interviewee 7, Appendix B). An informant explains that during the brainstorming meetings, "people would come up with their own life experiences which is what other people don't know about" (Interviewee 7, Appendix B). Through these sessions, the staff and collaborating participants wrote on pieces of paper what they saw and felt very passionate about. The ideas were then sorted out in clusters of ideas that then became themes. A cultural center planning committee was in charge of developing the organization and the concepts for the exhibits. Usually, a member of the tribal council also participates in the planning committee meetings as well.

The ZCS hired an exhibit development company to help in designing the exhibits with the staff and community participants. Ziibiwing wants "to be stinging but we don't want to run a guilt trip on anybody, we want to tell the truth. The compromise is to be factual and to pick out those meaningful things we want to share" (Interviewee 6, Appendix B). Ziibiwing, community members, and exhibit design produced an exhibit pre-design plan, entitled "Our Story." It listed concepts and ideas that resulted from answering, "What do you want the exhibits to be or to accomplish?" (Design Craftsmen 1999: 3). The list also included objectives as to the kind of experience the visitor should have while going through the museum.

The museum was to have a quiet entrance, offer hands-on activities, use the Native language, convey Native ties to the land, try to break stereotypes, and provide healing through education. The museum staff also asked to the community, "What one message do you want the visitor to walk away with-What's the most important thing they should remember?" (Design Craftsmen 1999: 3). Several topics were identified in the answers to this question: respect for the Anishnabe people, that tribal history is alive and progressive, a truthful understanding of the spirit, hearts and minds of the Saginaw, Swan Creek, Black River Anishnabe, a sense of learning something new (Design Craftsmen 1999: 3). The collaborative process that Ziibiwing chose, according to them, "modifies some ideas about exhibits to fit what (they) need to work on in a tribal government situation, to work with family, respecting individuals because they are whom we represent so it is formal and informal in its organization" (Interviewee 7, Appendix B).

Exhibit Themes

The resulting report from the meetings organized by the Ziibiwing staff, community participants, and exhibit design staff determined that the initial major themes needed to reflect a Native perspective rather than a strictly chronological, historical perspective. As a result of many brainstorming workshops, a document was created, the "exhibit theme structure," which shows the main themes and subthemes to be presented at Ziibiwing's future exhibits. The document sketched the main ideas agreed upon by the participants. The focus of the main themes and the sequence in which they were to be viewed were seen as critical for the experience in this museum.

Therefore, the horizontal themes "Anishnabemowin" (Anishnabe language), and "Creative lifeways" are the main themes and cut across all the exhibits. The vertical themes, "Anishnabe Beliefs", "From Those Before Us", "Effects of Colonization", "Anishnabe Strengths" and "Retaining Sovereignty" have their own separate messages. In the first horizontal theme, Anishnabemowin, language is the key element in defining the uniqueness of the Anishnabe people. Through the use of Ojibwe words, it is the intention that people understand how the language influences and evidences the philosophy and lifeways of Native peoples. The second horizontal theme, Creative Lifeways, conveys the many ways Anishnabe people have used creative arts to survive and express their culture.

The vertical theme, Anishnabe Beliefs, will present the foundations of Spirituality and convey Anishnabek ties to the land and God's creatures. From Those Before Us will offer visitors an understanding of the close relationship of people to their environment and the ingenuity and their ways of life. Effects of Colonization will present stories to evoke intense emotions and provide an understanding of impacts, which are carried in the community through today. Family and community values will be discussed in Anishnabe Strengths and instill a sense of belonging. The last exhibit, Retaining Sovereignty, is to evoke emotions of pride and understanding in visitors (Design Craftsmen 1999).

In this chapter I have presented the processes that each museum devised for the different levels of collaborative work with Native communities and the exhibit themes from that collaboration. The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) represents various Native communities and has developed methods and criteria to work with such a broad audience, while the Grand Rapids Public Museum and Ziibiwing Cultural Society

represents a smaller range of Native communities, identified, and worked closely with their local Native communities. The data shows that each museum define the audiences with whom they partner differently and that they present exhibit themes according to their goals and interests.

However, if museums want to be more responsible and responsive to their communities and to the native communities in voicing the diversity and contemporaneity of their experiences, then how are those two sets of agendas negotiated in "collaborative" work? The steps of collaboration and creation of the exhibit narratives by museums and native communities show how different types of concerns are negotiated, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

Analysis of Data, Collaborative process, and Collaborative narratives

This chapter looks at how museums define inclusion of Native voices and at how their narratives reflect that inclusion. Whose decisions are prevailing in the process of collaboration? I will first describe my methodology and then analyze the collaborative process and collaborative narratives of each museum. The collaborative process refers to the selection of artists, advisory committees, or planning meeting and to the priorities and criteria agreed upon at each of the museums in working with Native communities. The collaborative narrative looks at the themes/stories produced in the exhibits and at the types of ideologies that prevail in such stories.

Museums have changed the way in which they present objects and have been taking steps towards representing multicultural voices and concerns. However museums have identities and goals that museum professionals are struggling to maintain. Both curators and communities have different interests and goals. It is "utopian to imagine museums as public spaces of collaboration, shared control, complex translation, and honest disagreement" (Clifford 1997: 208), and because "exhibits carry the weight and implicit authority of an entire museum behind them rather than that of the curators immediately responsible for them" (McC. Adams 1999: 973) there will always be tension within and from outside of museums.

On the one hand, curators and representatives of living American Indian communities address a third agent, the "object" of the exhibition, and on the other, in the effort to include "Native voices," museums are often not sure how to respond to what that "voice" may say (Penney 2000). Similarly, Native American consultants, advisory

boards, and community representatives are confused about the intentions of museums when they are asked to participate (Penney 2000). The contradiction lies in the museum's narratives of the past and the "here-and-now meaningfulness where objects are evaluated with criteria tied to personal and community experience" (Penney 2000: 48). To answer Michael Ames' question, "What happens to museums when their object becomes a speaking subject?" (Ames 1993: 26), the objectives of museums and those of the collaborative "speaking subject" collide. Karl Mannheim (1953) identified two types of ideologies: "situationally congruent" which support the way things are, and those that are "situationally transcendent" which advocate change. David Penney (2000) applied that view to museums and articulated that some "museums tend to promote situationally congruent ideologies and that Native people involved with museums advocate ideologies of change" (48).

National, regional, and local museums have different audience size, and they define the Native community with whom they partner differently. Knowing that the National Museum of the American Indian is one of the leading museums in collaborative work with Native communities, I am interested in learning how inclusiveness of Native perspectives was defined at the global level. The Grand Rapids Public Museum-Van Andel, as a regional museum, worked with and represented the Native community of western Michigan. Considering that the Native audience at Van Andel is not as large as at Ziibiwing, I sought to explore the concerns addressed through the inclusion of the Native community's voices at this level. At the local level, I am interested in how the Ziibiwing Cultural Society, a tribal museum, on a reservation, which works with its local community, mediated its institutional goals with those of the Native community they

represent. Local community at this museum is defined as all tribal members, some who reside in the reservation and others who do not.

Additionally, I investigated the exhibits' narratives that were produced from the process of collaboration and the types of concerns that such narratives addressed. All three museums have different percentages of Native and non-native audiences. Although Ziibiwing is a reservation museum and therefore its Native audience is larger, the tribal casino attracts non-Native visitors as well. On the other hand, at the NMAI and Van Andel museums, the non-Native audience is much greater than that of the Native audience. As we will see, such differences in ideologies and narratives affected the way in which each museum responded.

Analysis of Data

Participatory work with museums usually involves choosing objects, giving advice about the theme and narrative of the exhibit. However, not much is known about how themes and ideas are transferred to the labels and overall narrative and focus of the exhibit (Kahn 2000). This analysis concentrates on how authority is negotiated in the collaboration between museums and Native communities at the national, regional, and local levels, and the types of ideologies expressed in the exhibits' narratives.

Museum professionals are struggling with the shifting of control over the museums' collections as well as over the types of messages that those objects convey. The way in which authority has been defined is key to understanding the types of concessions that museum professionals are giving to the communities with which they collaborate. Center to the negotiations of authority is museums' concern with authentic

objects, which once removed from their everyday uses become commodities (Crew and Sims 1991). However, authenticity of objects relates to the control over their meaning because authenticity is not about factuality or reality. It is about authority. Objects have no authority; people do. It is people on the exhibition team who must make a judgement about how to tell about the past. Authority enforces the social contract between the audience and the museum, a socially agreed-upon reality that exists only as long as confidence in the voice of the exhibition holds (Crew and Sims 1991: 163).

After curators' control over the interpretation of objects was challenged, the control over objects' social, political, and cultural meaning began to be redefined. Nevertheless, the exhibits' narratives that museum professionals are responsible for creating embody the institutions' image and reason of existing. If museums are the stakeholders of the exhibits they create, can Native American communities also be included as stakeholders in the stories told in collaborative exhibits? It is through the analysis of the steps that each museum takes in their partnership with Native communities (Collaborative Processes), and the narratives that result in the creation of labels and text (Collaborative Messages), that negotiations between ideologies and narratives are made visible.

Collaborative Process

Museums have always presented their voice or point of view in their own exhibits. However, the rise of social history-history from the bottom up-reshaped museums' work (Crew and Sims 1991: 163). Being a national museum such as the NMAI, or a "hemispheric museum" as director Richard West defines it, involves the brave task of

representing and working with the Native communities from this and many other countries. In 1990, the museum embarked on a journey to find representatives from Native communities to work on the first exhibit of the museum. Most of the interviews indicate that the most important criterion for selecting artists was finding "representatives" of tribes, people chosen for their knowledge of the cultural significance of the objects in NMAI's collection. Joe Medicine Crow was selected because he is widely known within his tribe and knows a lot about their culture (Interviewee 1, Appendix B).

NMAI selected the artists who "would be most appropriate and most knowledgeable" (Interviewee 1, appendix B); such criteria reflects a concern with a type of knowledge common in museum discourse. Museum staff members with training in the field dominated at NMAI and Van Andel Museum; however, Ziibiwing's staff lacked museum training. Ziibiwing was the only organization completely staffed with Native professionals while the Van Andel museum temporarily hired one Native artist as a consultant. Part of NMAI's full time staff were Native, although few held higher-ranking positions.

Similarly, NMAI's advisory committee was made up of people with all types of background although museum staff preferred that participants have museum knowledge. The Van Andel museum worked with Native advisors who had some appreciation of or knowledge about museums. However, many of the decisions on whom to contact in the community were made by a museum professional. Unlike the other museums, Ziibiwing opted to work with all the community members independently of their background.

Ziibiwing invited, at the planning meetings, all tribal members who were interested and willing to participate in the exhibit planning process.

It is clear that the types of priorities in professional training and personal background, at the national, regional, and local levels, were reflected in the choices of community partners at each of the museums. In other words, each museum valued a type of knowledge that reflected their views about their educational role and not necessarily according to people's experiences (Roberts 1997, Freire 1998, Falk 2000). The types of knowledge and authority valued reflected museums' situationally congruent and transcendent ideologies of the museum world. Some museums can work actively to change the public's view about Native people's image. However, other museums, either for their audience, resources or bureaucratic structure, still perpetuate stereotypical Native images.

Although, "choosing to place greater emphasis on ideas over objects does not undermine the importance of authentic objects in the exhibition" (Crew and Sims 1991: 169), most museums are interested in the identification of the objects in their collection and in salvaging a dying culture (Hill Sr. 2000b). The artists at the NMAI first chose the objects that were to be used in the "All Roads Are Good" exhibit and developed the themes later. Community representatives first identified the object, then its cultural meaning that reflected and perpetuated past museum practices. Such practices do not necessarily address diversity and contemporaneity of Native peoples' experiences or concerns (Freire 1998).

However, objects were not the departing points in the development of the exhibit at the Van Andel Museum. The museum carried out a series of interviews asking, "What

does it mean to be Anishnabe" (Interviewee 4, Appendix B) which gave a context to the exhibit. Similarly, the Ziibiwing Cultural Society developed ideas before choosing the objects for the exhibit. During the brainstorm sessions, Ziibiwing staff asked the community to think

> If you wanted the public to know something about (them) as a Anishnabe, what would you want them to know, what would be the most important thing for them to learn...People would come up with their own life experiences which is what other people don't know about" (Interviewee 7, Appendix B).

Although the Van Andel museum reached out to the Native community exploring themes about identity, ultimately the museum decided what ideas to include or exclude in the exhibit.

On the other hand, the Ziibiwing organized meetings with the community members, and used the information gathered in each meeting session for the outline of the major topics and messages of the exhibit. The community organized all the main ideas while the museum acted as a facilitator rather than as an organizer. The way in which Ziibiwing has defined the priorities in the organization of its exhibits contrasts with NMAI's, and to some extent, with Van Andel museums' priorities. The Van Andel museum negotiated the priorities for "Anishnabek" when it

> Came up with an idea voted by the consultants then from there they would pass it to the advisory committee for input. So it started at the top then down and worked its way back up (Interviewee 5, Appendix B).

In contrast, Ziibiwing worked under the assumption that people had different expectations and knowledge. Therefore, Ziibiwing staff went out at the "at-large districts and people came and said what they wanted to have, what they want people to know.

This is the people's place. We work for the (Indian) community" (Interviewee 7, Appendix B).

This shows that Ziibiwing's situationally transcendent ideology, where professional training comes from different experiences and backgrounds and is conducive to address topics about diversity and contemporaneity of the community it represents. It is important to notice that although narratives at Ziibiwing seem to represent the concerns of the community and that messages were centered on diversity and contemporaneity, the museum still had the authority to make the final decisions on what to include or exclude as much as did the NMAI and Van Andel museums. Thus, the tensions between museum' ideologies and museums' responsibility in including community's different perspectives are the paradox of collaborative work.

While the exhibit, "All Roads Are Good" presented artifacts chosen by Native peoples of many tribal groups, and Native artists had the freedom to choose any objects from the museum's collection, the artist's knowledge was validated, although contingent on a specific knowledge. Turning objects into the hands of their constituents is a large step for museum professionals who have been used to maintaining complete power over their collections. Museums try to balance between what their constituents expect to obtain from their collaboration with what an educational institution is responsible for presenting.

Nonetheless, museums define inclusion differently and the way in which each audience affects museums also varies. NMAI, for example, is aware of their responsibility towards their audience and defines their constituents as "the Native people whether they come to the museum or not and the audiences as multiple and many, Native or non-Native" (Interviewee 2, Appendix B). Their staff strives to respond to the Native

communities in a manner which "in all that it does whether it is what it holds, what are the exhibits, needs to be right by the Native people" (Interviewee 2, Appendix B). This mirrors the new trends in museums regarding community participation. In contrast, the Van Andel museum and Ziibiwing Cultural Society respond to their audiences differently.

However, a museum such as the NMAI, responds to a broad audience, and its accountability is spread over many regions and different communities. Therefore, the Native community is not always seen as a stakeholder of the types of narratives that their exhibits address. In contrast, Van Andel's accountability towards its regional Native communities is clear because of its work with the relatively local audience. The staff at Van Andel has been sensitive towards the political interconnections within the Indian communities and has been aware of the diversity of their local Indian community. Van Andel's curator acknowledged that

> There were personalities within the Indian community that were sort of polarized, they were high profile people, that if you involved them and they alienated any portion of the community and that not only the river bands but people from Ottawa, Pokagon, Potawatomi, Little river and Grand Traverse and Little Traverse are all living here with the Grand River people (Interviewee 4, Appendix B).

The Van Andel Museum also saw as part of their responsibility

> To be the audience's advocate, and to make sure that the questions of what we want people to learn is being asked, and how are we going to teach them that, how are we going to present these artifacts and these ideas in a way that is most accessible how do we rewrite the labels (Interviewee 4, Appendix B).

If the museum is to be responsive to its audiences' educational needs, the question then is: Which audience do they tend to? In planning the Anishnabek exhibit, Van Andel's curators wrote and rewrote the labels so they were

> Easier to understand and simplified it and shortened it, then we would show it to the advisors and to the historian and get their input, get another draft, and bring it back and get their input and do another draft (Interviewee 4, Appendix B).

The curator pondered "How can I arrange, how can I present this material in a way that reflects this viewpoint ?" (Interviewee 4, Appendix B). The curators did still hold the authority over what is being said in exhibits but was responsive to the Native community's members in that they attempted to obtain "extensive information about what they think it is important" (Interviewee 4, appendix B). Such a process of negotiation depended on the involvement of the local Native community and the power of such an audience.

Comparing the Ziibiwing cultural society with NMAI and Van Andel, Ziibiwing was created to educate primarily "tribal and community members" of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe. Therefore, the target audience for this institution differed from that of other museums. Native communities make up the majority of Ziibiwing's audience and, therefore, this institution needs to address its local community because it has more at stake when organizing their future exhibits. The political power of the local Native communities outweighed that of other communities. Casino visitors and tourists are potentially a powerful audience in the financial support they can bring to this future museum.

However, currently the tribe finances the construction of the museum, contributing to ZCS's seeing the local community as stakeholder of the museum exhibits. It is difficult to assess the audience's reaction to ZCS's exhibits since they are as yet non-existent. Nonetheless, ZCS is sensitive to their responsibility to their tribal audience. Consequently, more than at NMAI and Van Andel, Ziibiwing is pressured to respond to the Native community. Ninety percent of Ziibiwing's staff is Native, and most live on the reservation and are also participants in the community. The local community holds Ziibiwing curators accountable for decisions regarding the construction of the building, and especially what, how and who is portrayed in the exhibits. Community collaboration, in this case, has influenced the museum's decisions directly because their participation validates the museums' existence.

Collaborative Narratives

There are many interpretations of objects, and objects may also represent different ideas, interests, and concerns. Most museums silently reaffirm "how most non-Indians have become accustomed to thinking of Indian objects" (Penney 2000: 55). However some museums have formulated steps for collaboration, consultation, and inclusion of Native perspectives in the context of how authority is perceived, how community responsibility is perceived, and what types of messages are presented. The type of audience a museum responds to influences the messages presented in exhibits.

It is actually difficult to know about the conflicts, conversations, negotiations and resolutions regarding the processes through which exhibits reach their last stage. Miriam Kahn (2000) argues that museums should make public the antagonistic process that is

involved in the inclusion of different perspectives. However, the collaborative messages that local, regional, and hemispheric museums present in their exhibits shed light about the types of concerns and agendas that reach their audiences. Whose voice do we hear when the museum staff decides "to use quotations to give audience *the feel* [my emphasis] that Native voices were speaking" (Interviewee 4, Appendix B)? Were those decisions made using as basis the type of knowledge museum professionals have and which then are propagated and perpetuated through the exhibit? Do such decisions make the messages representative of Native voices? Obviously, the text used in exhibits gives insights on which audience museums address. Are the Native communities included in the museums' audience as well as the other communities that visit museums?

For years museums have reflected western perceptions about the social and political identity of Native peoples. However, in the past ten years, museums have been taking steps to add other perspectives to counterbalance previous practices. They have been striving to express stories of Native experiences seen and understood through their particular place in society by working with their communities. Can then the inclusion of Native voices reflect stories about diversity and contemporaneity that Native activism, urged?

The type of messages that result from the collaboration between museums and Native peoples portray the tensions between museum's efforts to fulfill their commitment towards a multicultural audience and to allow the expression of distinct points of view. The transmission of different perspectives to exhibits is important because it sets the tone and story line of the entire exhibit. All the exhibits I analyzed celebrated the beginning of a new era in museum work, and all three museums have set out to recognize the value in

listening to the communities they represent. The National Museum of the American Indian, the Grand Rapids Public Museum Van Andel, and Ziibiwing Cultural Society have worked with Native communities in the planning of their Native exhibits. However, each one of the museums has defined its audience differently. The importance in collaborative work between museums and their constituencies is in expressing messages that voice the diversity of backgrounds and experiences. I believe, that museums are still in the process of recognizing Native peoples as stakeholders in what is being said, how it is being said and who is doing the saying.

Many studies have presented Native communities' voices speaking either of the past cultural significance of Native objects or of the need to salvage Native traditions and heritage (Merrill and Ahlborn 1997, Hill Sr. 2000b, Maurer 2000). However, such simplistic views of cultural preservation are outdated. It is necessary to address the shifting of curatorial authority in terms of the social and political relevance of what has affected the lives of peoples, in this case the lives of Native peoples. Not all Native peoples are interested in talking about their miseries and losses, but should it not be the museums' responsibility to address untold stories? Studies have shown the misconceptions that misinformation provided to museum visitors (Doering et al. 1999). The new agenda of collaborative work should be to inform museum audiences (including Native peoples) about diversity and contemporaneity of Native practices, experiences, and lives.

The narratives at each one of the museums' exhibits are contrasting not only in the material in exhibit but specifically on the target audience. The "All Roads Are Good" exhibit at the NMAI discussed topics ranging from Native culture and their relationship

with the environment, to Native history, to the sacredness of Native objects, to the revitalization of Indian identity. The artists who were selected to organize the exhibit used objects as the starting point to make "words (that) evoke the mental images of when and how things were used and what they mean to people in their own cultural contexts" (All Roads Are Good 1994: 15). The connections between past and present, and homogeneity and diversity are not clear in these labels.

Unlike the NMAI exhibit, the titles at the Van Andel Museum exhibit, "Anishnabek" spoke of some "traditional" topics commonly presented in museums (such as traditional basketry); however, it also discussed contemporary traditions, including change in the community, and diversity. Although museum staff in fact wrote the labels, they reflect the museum's concern with representing the regional Native communities in various ways. The use of the Native language (Ojibwe) in the title speaks of the museum's responsiveness towards the Native community in west Michigan and interested in telling their story.

The Ziibiwing Cultural Society's exhibit "Anishnabemowin" also uses the Ojibwe language and speaks about survival, past and present histories, colonization and sovereignty. This exhibit is informed from a specific point of view that reflects the museums own interests as well. The exhibit addresses subjects at the heart of Native interests and intends to be controversial and "stinging but we [Ziibiwing] don't want to run a guilt trip on anybody, we want to tell the truth" (Interviewee 6, Appendix B).

The objective of this exhibit is to challenge ideas about who Native peoples are and to offer new ways of understanding Native perspectives. The exhibit will discuss losses, oppression, but it will also speak of pride of belonging to a diverse society. It

talks about the past, the present and the future of the Ojibwe people. This outcome is due in part because this museum worked at the local level while NMAI and Van Andel had to deal with greater scale of communities. The community's involvement in the decision-making process for the Ziibiwing's exhibits was more readily available than a regional or hemispheric audience. Authority and knowledge were also defined differently at the local level than at the regional and hemispheric levels because the power relations at these different levels of audience also change.

Collaborative processes and narratives reflect the conflict between museums and communities' ideologies. The museum's ideologies dictate their responses and define the inclusiveness of community's perspectives. Therefore, the politics of representation in museums has reached a paradox which can only be resolved through a reformulation of museums' policies to include rather than co-opt communities' voices.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

This thesis explored the current politics of representation of Native American voices in museums and showed that museums have responded to internal and external forces in the representation of multicultural audiences. However, the divergence of ideologies between museums and the communities with whom they collaborate mitigates the inclusion of the communities' voices. Museums are educational institutions that influence people's perceptions and therefore cultural exhibits can and do influence perceptions about people's identities. The use of old exhibit techniques perpetuates values and concepts that do not reflect those of the cultures they represent. Part of the problem lies in the particularly hierarchical background from which museums have been created, as well as the particular audiences for whom exhibits have been created as well.

Nonetheless, museums, in the past decade, have been responding to their broadened constituencies and are relating to them more responsively. Museum professionals are collaborating with communities to include their voices in the interpretation of museum collections and they are sharing authority with their constituents over the objects that are presented in exhibits. Museums such as the National Museum of the American Indian, the Grand Rapids Public Museum-Van Andel, and the Ziibiwing Cultural Society, work respectively at the hemispheric, regional, and local levels and have created different definitions to inclusiveness of Native voices. Each museum defines the audiences with whom they partner and which they represent according to their institutions' goals and interests. It is clear that museums are interested in being more

responsible and responsive to the communities they serve and represent at the same time as they try to preserve their identities, missions, and goals.

Conversely, Native communities are concerned in voicing the diversity and contemporaneity of their experiences. Native American activism, and federal laws have pressured museums to address the diversity of tribal groups, their changing way of life and traditions, their individuality, and their histories. Nevertheless, collaboration is not a simple process, museums and communities have different background and ways of interpreting what exhibits should have and what they should be about. Many museums have been shown to support the *status quo* as well as some of the participants of collaborative work, and other museums and community members advocate change. The adoption of practices that address both end of the spectrum can aid the negotiation of this conundrum.

However, museums are not going to give up complete control over what their exhibits convey. On the one hand, we may say that museums in fact co-opt Natives voices into validating museums' own goals and interests, on the other hand, "What does or should a museum do, if anything, when Native people perpetuate their own stereotypes?" (Interviewee 2, Appendix B). The question is a difficult one to answer. If museums propose to let Native voices speak and take part in the decision-making process of exhibits these are the choices that museums today need to address.

Museums are caught between being situationally congruent and situationally transcendent. They struggle with ideologies of representation that perpetuate, directly or indirectly, western views about other cultural societies, at the same time as they are

responsible in breaking misconceptions on identities running the risk of violating the principles of collaborative work.

The recognition that the inclusion of Native perspectives involves knowing who was talking "whether it was Native or non-Native" (Interviewee 2, Appendix B) is but one part of the process in creating exhibits that are more responsible and that truly represent Native voices. Breaking cultural misconceptions should be one of the main educational responsibilities of cultural museums. How else can museums allow different stories or versions of history to be told?

To address cultural diversity and contemporaneity museums need to identify Native communities as stakeholders in the exhibit's stories while addressing misconceptions about Native identity. Museums and Native peoples are negotiating not only what to include in exhibits, who makes the decisions, how to develop narrative, but also who those narratives are intended to inform. It has been shown that museums reflect the communities that created them, which in turn, serve to create that community; and exhibition objects and texts "mirror the attitudes, values, and perspectives that exist within the community" (Nason 2000: 40). So far few museums have been able to shift their target audience; however, local museums may teach us a few lessons. A museum like the Ziibiwing Cultural Society selected community participants under the assumption that people had different expectations and different knowledge to contribute to the creation of exhibits based on themes rather than objects, while at the same time conserving the goals of the institution they represent.

My research indicates that museums need to reformulate their policies in a way that exhibitions can be less "about western ways of seeing" (Lavine and Karp 1991: 155)

or spaces of "timeless and universal function" but can be spaces for "confrontation, experimentation and debate" (Lavine and Karp 1991). The articulation and presentation of cultural diversity and continuity are important tools for museums. Museums can use these parameters to influence the messages that are displayed in exhibits and not, as one of the interviewee's question states, still hold minority audiences at arm's length (Interviewee 3, Appendix B).

Then ideological critiques, such as revisionist exhibits that challenge museum audiences to see deeply embedded social and cultural complexities will find space to change the "eternal image of the past" (Wallach 1998: 106) of museums. Exhibits will more often engage in confrontational politics, take issue with built-in assumptions and biases, and expose pervasive sexism and elitism. Giving the public what it wants "abdicates responsibility, since museums are supposed to be in the business of shaping, not reflecting, tastes. A steady diet of commodified culture can only dull the public's critical capacities" (Wallach 1998: 121).

Museums will be expected to represent messages that regard personal stories and accounts that challenge pre-established views of identities. Fitzhugh has pointed out that issues such as "the devastation brought down upon Indian peoples by the advancing wave of European peoples and cultures by disease, military defeat, loss of land, confinement and impoverishment" are yet to be discussed in museums (1997: 236). The changes in museum may also open space for exhibits about Native women's changing roles in society. It would be an exhibit that speaks primarily to a Native female audience, from their own way of seeing the world, through their own voices, and in that way communicates with and represents a diverse audience.

Museums may currently still embody a utopian place, as Clifford (1997) discusses; however, museums, through the embracing ideologies of diversity and contemporaneity more effectively become public spaces of collaboration, shared control, complex translation, and honest disagreement. Museums should be forums, not temples, to encourage a widened dialogue; otherwise, museums will always be the embodiments of a single point of view and speak of a single ideology.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

National Museum of the American Indian

Mission Statement

The National Museum of the American Indian shall recognize and affirm to Native communities and the non-Native public the historical and contemporary culture and cultural achievements of the Natives of the Western Hemisphere by advancing—in consultation, collaboration and cooperation with Natives—knowledge and understanding of Native cultures, including art, history and language, and by recognizing the museum's special responsibility, through innovative public programming, research and collections, to protect, support and enhance the development, maintenance and perpetuation of Native culture and community.

Statement of Goals

- Acknowledge the diversity of cultures among the indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere.
- Acknowledge the continuity of cultural knowledge among the Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere.
- Acknowledge and incorporate indigenous methodologies for conservation, documentation, and collections care.
- Acknowledge the importance of interpretation of culture within the context of indigenous worldviews.
- Acknowledge and respect that some indigenous communities have restricted cultural knowledge.
- Acknowledge and incorporate Native-based knowledge—such as oral histories and cosmologies—into exhibition- and program-related research.

Exhibition Guiding Principles

Community: ***Our tribes are sovereign nations.***

Stress that Native rights and issues are community-based, and that tribal communities possess unique rights and inherent powers. The focus is on Native nations that are indigenous to the Western Hemisphere.

Locality: ***This is Indian land.***

Show the interrelationship between geographical landscape, spiritual tradition and community identity. The focus is on particular geographical places and their inextricable relationships to indigenous spiritual traditions of the Western Hemisphere.

Vitality: ***We are here now.***

Present Native cultures as living cultures that continue through time and across space. The focus is on the continuities within Native communities today.

Viewpoint: ***We know the world differently.***

Develop interpretations from interdisciplinary viewpoints, but with indigenous worldviews always central. The focus is on Native philosophical systems, the distinct worldview of each and the Native languages that transmit this information.

Voice: ***These are our stories.***

Include stories from multiple and divergent perspectives, but with Native voices always central. The focus is on Native individuals and their personal stories.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

MISSION STATEMENT

The Public Museum of Grand Rapids is an educational institution whose mission is to collect, preserve, and present the natural, cultural, and social history of the region.

PURPOSES

This mission is carried out to the following purposes:

- **To enrich and delight the general public through interpretation and dissemination of knowledge regarding its collections;**

- **To encourage visitors to explore the historical, present and potential relationships between the natural environment and human culture; and**

- **To enhance the quality of life in West Michigan.**

ROLES

These purposes are accomplished through fulfillment of each of the Museum's primary roles:

- **Collection and preservation. The Museum collects and preserves objects, specimens (living and non-living), habitats and properties in its areas of interest for study or use in its education and exhibition programs.**

- **Research. The Museum studies its collections and related materials in order to provide accurate information for use in its exhibition, education, and publication programs. The Museum makes historical and scientific materials in its collection available to qualified persons for research under circumstances which ensure the materials' preservation and the appropriate dissemination of the resulting information.**

- **Presentation. The Museum presents information about the region's natural, cultural and social history through exhibitions, special programs, publications, and outreach activities in a manner accessible to all audiences without discrimination. Objects and information from outside the region is presented primarily for the purpose of placing the region in a larger context, describing persons or groups from the region, or illustrating the history of the Museum itself.**

- **Community enrichment. The Museum contributes to the richness of life in the region by providing exceptional museum experiences and by encouraging the pursuit of learning as a lifelong activity for individuals and avocational, ethnic, historical and amateur scientific organizations whose purposes are related to those of the Museum. For individuals this encouragement is provided through a wide variety of interactive and engaging exhibitions and programs. For groups this encouragement takes the form of professional assistance by the staff and access to meeting, exhibition, and performance space.**

Adopted by the Board of Art and Museum Commissioners
City of Grand Rapids, Michigan
December 21, 1988
Excerpt taken from the Minutes of Regular Monthly Meeting

Our Mission:

The mission of the Ziibiwing Cultural Society is to enlighten and educate tribal and community members, and all other people of the world to the culture, heritage, history and goals of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe. The Ziibiwing Cultural Society will use its resources to create an maintain a state of the art Ziibiwing Cultural Resource and Learning Center that provides an enriched diversified and culturally relevant educational experience. The center will promote the society's belief that the culture and history of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe and the Great Lakes Anishnabe must be recognized, perpetuated, communicated and supported.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEWS

National Museum of the American Indian-NMAI

Interviewee 1

I have been working here for twenty-five years so I was here during the transition from the old Heye Foundation to the Smithsonian. The collection was transferred from the Heye Foundation to the Smithsonian in an act of congress (1989) so the Heye Foundation was dissolved, it was a New York charitable trust. However they kept the George Gustav Center in New York as a kind of a New York presence so it allowed the trust to continue. It will remain there forever, that is the permanent New York exhibition facility.

Primary responsibility is orchestrating the objects for all the exhibitions at the mall and else. The three big exhibitions, one of them is called "Our universes" about tribal philosophies, the other is called "Our peoples" and is about tribal histories, and "Our lives" that is about identity. In addition to that and one that I have primary responsibility for curatorially speaking is something called "the study collections" which is going to be a whole series of objects that are going to be displayed throughout the museum in various study areas where people can come and look at a large variety of pottery, dolls or gold or something that people are particularly interested in. We are hoping to provide information through an interactive computer system if you see

something you are particularly interested in you can find out more about it. It will not be in an exhibit setting, it will be objects on shelves.

I worked in the "Creations Journey" exhibition and I worked with particular selectors in the "All Roads are Good" exhibition. I worked Abe Conklin, Earl Niholm, Teofila and Juan (Oaxaca) working with an Italian anthropologist.

I have done exhibits in the past but that was with the old museum, and I guess the focus was a little different and in these cases with these exhibitions it is kind of hard to say whose final decision it was who they would, or how it was going to get organized it kind of came out of a group consensus.

Idea behind 23 planners "All Roads are Good"

When the museum was beginning when it was doing its planning about what kind of museum it wanted to be and what kind of exhibits they wanted to have they sent out a team of consultants for a year and half to two year talking to tribal groups throughout the hemisphere and this was spear headed actually by the architectural team, the original architectural team that was developing the master plan. In the course of that they met a lot of very articulate very dedicated people from everywhere who had very good ideas and they developed a document called "the way of the people" which was like the mission statement from what people wanted their exhibits in that museums to be like. So when it came time to do the selection the original choices for people who were going to be participants in "All roads are good", some of these people, sort of logical, came to mind some of them were people who had had a lot of museum experience and understood what is involved in producing an exhibition. Like Gerald McMaster for instance has done a great many exhibits and has been a curator up in auto worker and some people like Tom

Hill who is Seneca he is actually a museum director up in Brandford, Ontario and he has a wonderful eye for choosing objects and very interesting ideas about what is called tourist art, you know art that is made for sale and how that can tell you about people who made it and people who bought it. Some of the people who came didn't really have museum experience like the guave people but they had come to Washington D.C. to be participants in the folklife festival and they were Oaxaca was an area no one else was from so we asked them to come speak about that part of the world. So some people were museum professionals some people were cultural specialists and very interested in traditions, but not necessarily objects, some people like Richard Milanovich who is Cahuia from California, was very interesting, and was part of the tribal politics, I don't know if he was a tribal chair person but that was his particular focus. And some people like Conklin were widely respected and Joe Medicine Crow widely known within his tribe as people who knew a lot about their culture, who is very articulate in explaining it and we had collections to support that. So there were a variety of reasons. We did try to get some geographic distribution because we did not want to have two people that lived too close together. The collection covers such a huge area that it is always hard. Many people (like the guave) were already in Washington so it was much easier to be able to bring them up to New York than try to go down and try to find somebody else. Actually Juan did not speak English but we had an interpreter.

Why 23 artists

There are different regions, it was just an arbitrary number, some people did not work out and it seem to be a comfortable number to fill out the gallery

Collection:

All of the material until Gustav Heye died in 1957 everything that was in this collection passed through his hands in one way or another, it began as his personal collection, as the years went on, because he continued to collect until his 80's he would buy other collections so that he would sometimes acquire a large chunk from somebody else. But it was all his personal collection; I mean his personal fortune he married a very rich woman. Eight hundred thousand objects in the collection now, it is amazing, it runs all the way from the arctic circle to Tierra del Fuego and it runs in time from 8,000 B.C. to a couple of years ago we now had contemporary material which is good because Heye did not particularly want contemporary things but the mission of the museum changed. Part of what we want to get across in our exhibitions and our programs is the idea that Indian people are very much alive and very much participating in American life and come and see us.

Change in mission:

The museum's mission changed perhaps when it became the Smithsonian and we acquired a founding director who is Richard West who is Cheyenne and Arapaho an attorney and who is really dedicated to the idea that people need to understand that Indian people are part of life today. But he is the best person to articulate this idea, which he does in a very eloquent way, but everyone that is on staff is dedicated to the same idea there is a lot of enthusiasm to get that message across.

When:

I think it began when we actually became Smithsonian, which was in 1990. And the work began almost immediately for the 1994 exhibitions. I mean it was, three years,

but it was very little time to get all those exhibits together so we were working on a tight schedule.

Representation:

The curators for each section of that exhibit were the people who were presenting that section. For example Reyna Swanson was the curator for her section they were all native people, Suzy a basket weaver, Pomo from California I don't know who she consulted with, I mean she *is* American Indian and I know she relied very heavily on the presentation and her work on the things that she has been taught by a wonderful Pomo basketweaver L.C. Alen who was her, either her grandmother or her great-aunt. L.C. Alen had come to the old Heye museum research branch years ago she was a wonderful woman, quite frail because she was on a wheel chair, but when we showed her the basket collection her eyes sparkled. Did I consult... you would have to ask Suzy. I think some people did consult, I think Milanovich did, I didn't work with him so I don't have any transcripts of what he was saying but I think that he was quite aware that he had a responsibility to his community to tell the right kind of story and I know that when he chose his themes, if you listen to what he says on the tape up there, I think he wanted to talk about how it represents the desert and what you see here all the wonderful things the people made out of the things that are in the desert. I did look at some of the old interviews and the transcripts from the people that I worked with what I thought were the main themes that Earl Niholm for example decided. It seemed to me that major themes for him was first he was interested in canoes but we did not have a lot of canoes in the collection so he settled for bags and he wanted to express Ojibwe life and art through a selection of bags he talked about woodlands environment with its flowers and fruit. He

talked about the importance of family life, these bags are made by women, he talked about the pride in craftsmanship the patience required to create those bags he chose actually 26 bags and that was deliberate choice because there are thirteen moons in the Ojibwe year and normally the bags are worn in pairs. He talked about the importance of doing things the "proper" way with (that is the word that he used it is a word that many people consider traditional) and then he talked about the importance of passing this knowledge to young people so that was sort of Earl's .... But he had a different approach. (Transcripts of the interviews with artists are as said "of internal use" I was not able to make copies but quickly read them at her office)

Who from staff worked with which artist:

We kind of divided people up it was a very busy month because we had three groups or four people there in the same week looking at different collections and the logistics of getting all this material made available to people was just mind boggling. It was almost arbitrary the people we worked with. Each of us worked with a few of them. All of that information was transcribed and video taped and they did their selections. The video tapes are still archived in New York, they may be available for people to listen to but they are not ready to go out anywhere because this was very early on they were doing things like release forms there is a whole lot of feeling because this is sort of like off the cuff kinds of conversations that it wouldn't be right to put them out anywhere at least until the participants had a chance to review them. The person head of the film and video department is Elizabeth Weatherfort is her name.

Policies:

There is a museum policy which is, it is kind of like the old approach of doing this Indian exhibitions I don't want to go beyond that because I don't have any experience with other kinds of exhibitions but we had a conference a couple of years ago called the "changing presentation of the American Indian" which had actually just been published, it was talked about, historically a curator would just go and develop a story and choose objects and would present it with labels and that was like the curatorial voice and then somewhere along the way probably in the 60's and 70's when sensibilities began to change a little bit it began to be a good thing to consult with native people about what was being said so that would happen at different levels and the greatest level you would take a finished exhibit and you would call an Indian person who might or might not be from that area and say "Would you read this, is this ok? Thanks a lot" and then you would say, "Well we had our Indian consultant". So then you might go on or beyond and bring in Indian group of people and have them all say "is this ok?" kind of like "Should we paint the wall red?" and they would say "yes it looks all right to me" and then you would paint the wall red and you would say, see we had an Indian consultant. What Bruce has been explaining and I think this is a really good way to do it, he just finished before he came here doing a major exhibition in Santa Fe an what they did and what we are trying to do is "you don't ask should the wall be red" you bring people on and you say "should there be a wall?" and that is what we have been trying to do with the mall exhibitions. Bring in a group of people who have been selected by the community themselves as the people that would be most appropriate and most knowledgeable and then showing them the collection and asking them to develop the story line, I mean, what they think is

important to say and they've been varying levels, I mean some people aren't comfortable with it they really would like to have somebody else make those decisions so one you begin to get into it then you get a wonderful response so anyway what this museum is doing, I think, it is really at the cutting edge of what is happening. I think most museums have now gotten the picture, and most museums really are making a very sincere effort to involve local communities. It will be interesting to see I know the Grand Rapids museum have done that.

I think there is a feeling that museums have a responsibility to care for the collections and to enable the peoples whose families, whose tradition made those collections that they should have the right to interpret them and they should have the right to see them and they should have access to them and that is part of what we are all about.

Change in museums

Yes I could see, it's absolutely been a profound change certainly with Indian collections but I think it may be true for other collections I am not sure.

When changed

I think it started in the 60's and 70's, I think it started with, George talks about Alcatraz and what happened there you know the city of Alcatraz and when he had been a little kid you know being Indian was a bad thing, something to be ashamed of, people poked fun of you being an Indian and then after that happened all of a sudden it was a matter of pride. I think that a lot of people know who always concealed their Indian ancestry are now very proud of it. I think it is very visible, you know that was a profound change in American society. It is also a feeling of reaching out and grasping for power in saying we are the ones who are the best qualified to tell our own story. So I think that the

museum is functioning in that kind of environment, which is actually where we want to be.

NAGPRA influence

You know the NAGPRA that is actually the act that created this museum (101-89). I think that even the fact that act came into existence was a reflection of, a recognition of the rights of the Native people and a recognition that there had been injustices which needed to be rectified. There is a huge amount of literature on that. Museum anthropology has a lot of articles on representation. Book- "trading identities", and James Cook, George Stocking book/article "objects and others (pre-Columbian art in Picadero, France).

Interviewee 2

Started working in 1990 with the creation of the museum. I supervised the making of the exhibitions of that museum as well as the gallery here in Washington D.C. I did that for five years and did lots of exhibitions on a whole variety of things and that was my first contact with at all with things native really in that sense it was a true American art history catalog paintings things like that you know art. In trying to understand what was going on because an exhibition is a process of translation you take information, ideas and things and you translate that into some physical form that allows other people to understand it and so I had to be able to understand it, ask questions to get to that point. So this was how we started out and we started with asking questions like "where do things come from and where do ideas come from and how do we know it is a good idea" these sort of things we started out doing a couple of things first there were only four of us senior staff at the time. Rick, Dave Worn, Lynn Glen, and myself (??) we went to visit a lot of museums first part of it was to get Rick to see things, 'cause he hadn't grown up in museums and the rest of us had so we went to Chicago. (At that time there were no native people on staff yet?) No there were some but some of the staff was probably at that point 10 to 15 people, it is probably 250 now. Clearly Dave Warner, the director and the deputy director and there were others on staff. And there was also the staff from the Heye foundation in New York, which we started to work with there although there wasn't a great representation of native peoples there was some. So that advocacy formed itself as some political questions asked about policy. The first couple of years were all about making policy with the enabling legislation of 89 dictating these three facilities, the one in New York and two in D.C., the constitution of the board half of

which must be native, the board of trustees is part of the legislation so actually more than half are native now, two thirds are native people from across the hemisphere, it has always been more than half right from the very beginning and. That's is part of the policy so we began drafting the mission statement, drafting various policies, of, it was the time that repatriation became a public issue so on the one hand really doing three things. On the one hand it was about developing policies, procedures, what does educational policy mean, what does exhibition policy mean so on and so forth. So those are written statements, certainly the mission statement, the policies the number of different ones. The second thing we were doing at that point was going out and having, for two years, consulted, met with a variety of groups partly about the architecture partly about the nature of the museum. At that point that we made this decision the audiences of the museum and the constituencies of the museum. So unlike any of the museums that I know we think both of the constituents and the audiences. The constituents are the native people whether they come to the museum or not and the audiences are multiple and many native or non-native. So that the belief within the museum is that the museum in all that it does whether it is what it holds, what it does, what are the exhibits, needs to be right by the native people. And that is as broadly as it can be defined whether they come to the museum or not. It is not about people that just come in the door. Some will be native and some that probably won't be. So those kinds of things, you will see this distinction in the policies between constituents and audiences and the way it plays itself out for example when we were doing those shows in New York which you have seen, in "creations journey", I will talk about the other shows, but in "creation's journey" the question was raised legitimately "can these objects be shown?" or "Should these objects

be shown" and there was lots of sort of internal museum discussions and about yes or no or what was the real objects, we can never show burial with the objects, grave on and on...all legitimate conversations. My simple minded attitude was "why don't we ask them?" so we sent hundreds and hundreds of letters for all of the objects, for every object in the show a letter went out to the community saying what we were and what we planned to do "what do you think?" (These went to tribal officers or a museum in the community?). Primarily, it depended in some cases the tribal historian in other cases the tribal council, in central and South America it varies, it is harder, you know but we did pretty well. It is all about conversations rather than standing on procedure, it is all about talking to people and saying, "So what do you think?" (So you had a pretty good response?) Yeah everybody responded at least for the objects in creations journey with a couple of exceptions which is fine that is ok, "thanks for asking" that kind of things. Especially for people from South America it is interesting there are also stereotypes to consult that are sometimes imposed even by North American Indians. For example some of the objects let's say from Peru or Guatemala have come from burial sites, the peoples there say it is fine, we would have not shown them it they had said no, there is different attitude, there is a certain cultural pride that extends to these objects so that it is important that people see them because it demonstrates who they are. Were it, I am generalizing greatly, but if it were in North America, in my opinion in my stand point objects like that sit much closer to home in a more personal way so that it has to do with family therefore it is not ok. So that was the distinction with native people sometimes in North American would say you can't show these things from Peru. And which was a stereotypical projection, on the other hand people from Peru have these crazy conceptions about North

American Indians really as bad or worse than the stereotypes that you find in North America from non-Indians that everybody lives in tepees, everybody is on horses. So part of what this museum is doing is trying to break some of this down. Now we have an exhibition traveling in south America "Navajo weavings" that my project manager says, we will take it through six south American cities, it was great, it was wonderful, it is now in Guatemala city and then it does on to La Paz, you should go and see it, you should talk to Andrea....

So we went around with these consultations and asked these people "what should the building be" "what should the museum be" "what is important to you" and it came back some of the things were specifically about the building, or the entrance it should be on the east side, things like that which was then incorporated in the architecture. Other things were sort of like "we will never come to the museum, why don't you do something useful" and so there was a whole variety of conversations out of which grew these three buildings one in N.Y. two in D.C. and then what we called the fourth museum which is much more of an idea than it is, it is not a real building, we have an office, a division within the museum called community services. They're job, like my job is to deal with exhibitions, they're job is to work with communities and keep the museum connected. How do you make decisions on the exhibitions:

The exhibition "all roads are good" was the first exhibition, there were three exhibitions there when we opened, all roads are good, reservation X, creations journey. We had conversation, it was really Elaine green and I that had this conversation, and we said "doesn't it make a difference who gets to pick the objects when you do an exhibition?" because I could tell by that time in the history of this museum and most

museums it was the curatorial staff that picked the objects and that is what happens in museums curators pick the objects and we make an exhibition. Well we decided to change those rules and so we asked the question, "does it make a difference?" of course the answer is yes and so we changed the rules and that is why we ended up inviting those 23 people that we called selectors of the collection. They were pretty flipped out, the knives I pulled out of my back .... After those meetings it was really incredible because we were threatening the structure of the museum. So and the questions that came either from our curatorial staff were amazing at any rate we got through that and invited the selectors to the collections and it was important that they were from all walks of life not native curators but just from all walks, so there were writers, painters, just a variety of people. People like you saw. And the metaphor that we used was that it need to be as much as possible like you had when you were meeting these people, and listening to them it was sort of like they were giving a tour through the collections. So they came to the collections and they could look at it and talk about whatever that interested them whether it was of their people or not it did matter. So they identified all this objects and we worked with them individually on how they wanted them exhibited and that is why you see a wide variety on how things are exhibited. It was important that you saw what they were that you felt that all the commentary was first person that these were their words not ours, that everybody's work was signed by the author whether it was native or non native we needed to know who was talking so these rules had become exhibitions policies, exhibitions in the first person, they were authored, you know who the author is, and that the people involved in the exhibition were transparent you could find the people in the exhibition....

How decided on themes of exhibit

So then from the selectors keen to look at the objects, we made drawings, sketches like this on how things could look and worked directly with the people themselves and we then also worked with their communities out of that came a variety of approaches to the exhibition design itself for example: there is a section selection by a fellow named Joe Medicine crow. And he selected three shields as part of what he wanted to talk about and then so I asked Joe... cause he was talking about how power of these shields, tat these were extraordinarily powerful objects "so Joe if these shields are so powerful can people look at them literally we should no show them because they are so powerful and he said no it's ok to show them but the shield can't see each other, in fact I have the slides here, but if you look at the way they are installed there are these dividers between the shields, now it looks like that is a aesthetic decision but that has nothing to do with it, the shield can't see each other. Now nobody knows that except Joe, and the shields I suppose know that too, but Joe so the appropriateness of things is important you know as part of how you think of exhibitions whether if anybody know about that is not important as long as but for those people for who that matters like Joe that is what I mean about being right by the constituents. And that is sort of how we operate now, it is not unusual.

Availability of those informations to people that go to the museum:

I don't know the answer to that I guess it would be sometimes, you know either for some people. Even in that example of the shields I asked Joe whether should we tell people about that because and he goes no, no, no. So I said fine, so there isn't anything about it, sometimes in the other sections like Tom Hill or some of the other sections of that show, he himself explains his part of the media pieces and so forth but other example

of that show is the piece that most people react very positively to is the moccasins of the center. That circle of moccasins, that was working with a fellow named Joe MacMaster who is plains Cree Indian from Canada. And originally what he wanted to do was to pick five thousand two hundred and eighty moccasins and he wanted to do a literal translation of the metaphor you know "walk a mile in my moccasins so a moccasin for every foot of a mile is five thousand two hundred and eighty and we had more than that in the collection. And he wanted them all end to end to end so I said "Joe that is a mile I don't have much of plaxy glass but I actually sat down with him to try to figure out how you could put a mile of moccasins throughout the building but that was not going to work so I sat and talked with him and we moved towards a different direction and became this sort of a circle bend just like you saw. So to go back to the issue of translation is about finding methods that allow visitors to the museum to be able to interpret by themselves the translation so you can look at the moccasins and see that it is about diversity and see that it is a bout human presence, see that the extraordinary objects and you don't need any words to say that everybody gets it everybody gets it right away even if they don't get the same thing so that's another thing about museums that not everybody needs to get everything. So it's ok to have some people understand parts of it this is not school, to line up all the information up. So now we have done quite a number of exhibitions in New York and we are getting ready to start changing them all now this is an exhibition on plains Indians shirts and this board is about how we are going to do some of the media overhead screens similar to this (shows sketches). This is one of George Horse Capture's work, that he is working on with his son, here is a chance to have father and son to have a

conversation of the importance of these shirts and so to hear that is wonderful, how can you have the visitor with us in that conversation in a way that carries all the power.

(Is this going to be set up only by father and son and will not consult the community?)

Well we already have actually, what happened was one of the first things we did was George and Joe and members of the exhibit team went out to Montana for a week and talked with Crow and Blackfeet and all these people about, they took pictures of these shirts with them, so they were talking about the shirts and these are all George's old friends and what came out of that then is a much richer sense of what the shirts mean for example it's George medicine Crow the same guy we worked with the shields he is a crow Indian and there are four deeds that one must accomplish before they have the power to wear, they had the right to wear one of those shirts. They had to touch an enemy, take the weapons, steal horses, there is a fourth one that I can't remember. You accomplish those then you have the honor to wear one of these beaded shirts. Joe Medicine Crow's grandfather accomplished those deeds 22 times, so he is a very honored man. Joe who is now probably eighty accomplished those deeds also but he accomplished them in WWII in Germany, so he touched an enemy, he stole 43 German horses, I mean those very same four deeds but in a totally different context so now what begins to talk about is what stays the same about tradition and what changes about tradition, he did the same deeds his grandfather, he had the same honor that his grandfather has but the circumstances around it are entirely different, that does not matter. So how do native communities adapt, what is tradition....

And once you begin understanding those sort of things you can then begin to break down stereotypes. ('Cause then you are talking about personal experience and then talk about it at the community level) yeah both of those are important because identity and I am sure Bruce talked to you about the three exhibitions on the mall because identity is wrapped up with that. Not just you know personal experience but family, community, tribe, on and on. So what Joe medicine crow said is absolutely true and for George it is true and so going home for is important and that is what is drawn to native communities is non native communities I think, and for me not being native I can begin to see that. How does the museum see their responsibility in breaking up these stereotypes?

I think the museum is a conduit through which native people can break down those stereotypes I don't think it is our responsibility, or any museum's responsibility to tell people what to think. I think we become a kind of forum where a number of native people can come in direct contact with primarily non native people and say what they want to say whether it is about stereotypes or whatever and I think in doing that stereotypes get broken down that is why it is so important in "All roads" for you to see who those people were, and hear them and feel that you were having a conversation with them and maybe it is even better if you can have a conversation with them maybe there should have been telephones in there where you could call Rick Hill you know. And maybe we would look at the museum the direct links between the community and the gallery floor become much stronger because now that is possible it was not possible in 1994 it is possible now to have real time connections to the native communities so in doing that then I think yes you can move the conversation along about things like stereotypes and sovereignty and all those kinds of things. I think those stereotypes are

changing, in many ways it is changing. If you only look at sports teams, you say well it is not, it is stereotype as ever but that is not true because the various visitors studies we have done on the museum, a very large number of our visitors to our museum in new York have had some contact with native people and in doing that the rigidity of the stereotype is broken down. So increasingly there is a strong desire to understand things native on the part of non native so on the one hand there is a perception you know that stereotypes are strong on the other hand I think it is changing. That in some ways this museum poses a lot of interesting questions for example what does or should this museum do if anything when native people perpetuate their own stereotypes. Well think about a guy he is Cherokee and Cherokee North Carolina dressed just like that as a Plains Indian so you can take a picture with him. Here is a native person out of his community choosing to do that now is that right is that wrong it is not for me to say. And he may say that he is just making a living. It is a conversation I guess that needs to occur around this issue of identity. There are right now about a third of the staff or a little more are native people that is another things that is important, that throughout the staff at all level of the institution there are native people working and that is important and that means that in the day to day work how you think about things is different from top to the bottom.

Public response:

He wants to give me a copy of their visitor's studies, not just what you like what you don't like but also demographics. (Idea of how many native people come to the museum) it is a small percentage in new York as we expect to be in Washington because of the number of people, half a million people a year go to the museum in New York and

on the other hand this museum's contacts with native people is very high and throughout the hemisphere.

Policies that enforce the way museums have changed?

Yeah but it is not the question that you are asking the federal policies that influence how we make exhibits, I am a federal employee this is a federal institution have more to do the same federal policies that affect the dept of transportation or any other agency that really is how difficult it is to buy things to make things because of it being federal money. So it really is about being part of the federal government and not of federal policies from BIA. For example we had a blessing for the Navajo weavings before it went to south America because we knew the weavings themselves would come in contact with a variety of situations and it was important from a Navajo perspective that they be protected when they go to south America so they had a blessing before the tour start. And we brought a Navajo medicine man out from Arizona, that is hard to do with federal money because it is not like you can get competitive bids for a medicine man. Which we often have to do with federal money is get three bids and get the lowest bid and that kind of thing. So that is not good from other federal policies stand point if you look at repatriation in fact more proactive than federal policies and repatriation is. Arts and Crafts act- it does have to do with museum in the sense of who is an Indian, authenticity and in that sense we do have policy and do follow much of the same guidelines because normally we will say tribal affiliation long with a person's name. We do that and ask for tribal registration and we are actually quite specific for example someone that says they are Choctaw we ask them to say their number because of the same reasons why the arts and crafts act was drafted. We won't even work with someone who

is, and some native people will choose not to do that even though they are. And that is fine so this museum will never be away from controversy it will never be just a museum with things in it, almost all we do is in the gray area, and people have different opinions, it will always be that way we are just used to it now. You deal with it in a way that is comfortable and is inclusive of conversations with other folks Indian or non and we can find a solution so then the museum really is it in some ways becomes this kind of meeting ground for these kinds of conversations a kind of forum for this whether it is exhibitions or programs or whatever.

Audience:

The audience that physically comes to the museum is non-native. We are also looking very much at technologic, two things, making the information of the museum available through technology globally through the community service dept. and through exhibitions themselves one of the things we are doing is moving the collection from New York to Washington. While we are doing that we are taking picture images of all the objects that is useful visual information for every community that is represented in this collection so there is no reason that valid information can't be available to every community. So when they say, "so what of our stuff do you have?" here is 10,000 pictures here is the information that we have that is the kind of thing that is easily done now. So the idea of who visits in the next few years you are going to have to make the distinction of physically come to the museum of visits the museum through electronic means or other means. Because that is going to be what happens for most museums people will visit the museum electronically rather then physically. If it is useful, it is not the same thing as walking in the door but if you are after the information not the

experience then you can do it electronically. People learn in different ways other than just words....

Other museums working the same way as this:

I think increasingly yes, I think there is a change that is happening in museums yea, I think a lot of it is because there are so many tribal museums going, spring up that are tribally centered that allows all of us that are not tribal museums to see a lot more things. I think museums are changing and I think that old stereotype of the natural history museum is going away even in natural history museums. Again it is about bringing the people first it is not about the things but about the people involved. (But their policies would be different from this museum- yes). All museums set their own policies. I think there is interest, there is money there are new buildings that are going up, there are new tribal museums, there is this sort of awareness among communities about the importance of this, about what they need to do to preserve their own cultures and how museums can help with that, there is a whole lot going on right now that makes it a pretty good time.

Interviewee 3

Generally here at the museum I am in charge of the dept. of a hundred and twenty people who are native and non native and in all our job is the same our job is to be facilitators for native people whether it is to care for the objects that are here or stewards for the collection of arts. To curate an exhibit with native people for native people. So it is really not, it is an issue but not an issue, there are things that I cannot do as a non-native person because I can't fully understand.

And then I have been here at the NMAI since September of 1997 and my official title is assistant director for cultural resources what does that mean is that anything having to do with collections and/or content research at the museum is my purview in the dept. as I said about 120 positions in this dept. are actively now moving the collections and creating exhibitions that are going to the mall.

On repatriation:

Many museums are still upset about that because they don't see it as a greater sharing of knowledge and being responsible. NMAI has a very active repatriation program and it is in the dept I chair and we do have some human remains and we don't see it is our responsibility to have those so they were collected in a very wrong way and we are in the process of returning all those, there are no remains in this building. And the other piece of our return of objects program repatriation is we get letters of request of certain objects we got twelve communities we are repatriating to in six months or so. They say "we understand you have such and such a bundle" or "we came and visited you and spotted this bundle in your collection, that belongs to us we would like to have it back" one of the interesting things for the museum right now is the fact that the remains

are we don't know exactly where they are from we might know just the general region so we do regional reburials a good percentage of the cases for reburials now are non United States so we have, I think in September we will actually repatriate to Cuba and Jamaica and we will repatriate some remains to Peru (laws there: they act surprised even in our legislation there isn't anything saying we have to do that but we feel a responsibility to do those things, basically broadly speaking about the repatriation it really puts the onus on to the tribes because there may be ceremonies to send these people away but there are no ceremonies to bring them back who are these people (the bones) we are bringing back, are they good people or are they bad people, who are their families, how did they die, when did they die, those are things that may be important to the community to know... so for us to come and say ok we have something here, some bones and we would like to return them to you. It is not that simple. It is a huge obligation that goes with it. People have also been removed perhaps from their original, their indigenous areas, so we need to also look at those types of things, so we are creating opportunities through our work we are basically creating opportunities, putting together alliances of people so we can rebury looking at autonomous sites to rebury instead of specific sites. All the easy reburials were done in the sense that we knew which cemetery they came out of and so on, so that's all done. Now it is sort of the harder part, what you find out at communities then is that people are more concerned about cultural objects being here then remains, I mean that is wrongly stated, that they are more prepared now to take home their cultural objects then the remains, they are equally concerned with the remains I don't mean to state that.

Exhibits:

I am working on out exhibits but personally I am not acting as a curator right now.

All roads are good- did not work on that at all has been here for only a few years Themes- how are chosen- for exhibits:

For the inaugural exhibitions before I came, there was a lot of work we then took that work and we tried to understand central issues of native peoples what have kept native peoples as native peoples throughout contact and so forth and we came up with some very central things...or philosophical systems, the underpinnings for society, why you do things, why you do them in a certain way. This philosophical or cosmological systems that define time and space there is something, the second set of things was about how you talk about who you are which is about history and it also tells you about place and how you define place and third set of things is about identity, how it is that a Navajo is still a Navajo person after all this time they are driving a truck perhaps not living in a Hogan but living in a city even and wearing blue jeans instead of their cotton pants and on and on and on... but so if you look at those three themes then they become central issues about cultural sovereignty which is absolutely "the" factor in the exhibition in the sense that, how have native people survive how have they maintained themselves and how have they projected themselves into the future. And we talked about native peoples in the continent we talked about issues of place this is a native place, so what does that mean, so we are looking at investigating that. We are looking to develop basically a way of looking at the mission of the museum in relation to the exhibitions so the mission of the museum you know "the museum shall recognize and affirm to native communities the historical and contemporary culture and cultural achievements of natives of the west world by advancing in consultation, collaboration, and cooperation of knowledge and understanding native cultures. So it is what you expect I don't think. It is... it is a good

mission statement, I am very happy of being part of that, so the guiding principles then out of that so is then community, you know tribes are sovereign nations, you know native rights are community based and tribal communities possess unique rights to inherit power that are separate from, they don't need the US government or any other nation's government. Secondly, locality, this is Indian land as I just talked about and the interrelationship of landscape and people, you always hear about Indian people being one with the land this way sort of to express to really get to know what that means and there is ways to talk about that that is not as sappy not as stereotyped in a way but get to the core to the meaning of Indian people relationships to the land. A lot of Americans say you know Americans will say "my relatives have been here four hundred years" they came on the Mayflower, well big deal what does that mean to an Indian person to have thousands and thousands of years of death to their ancestors in the same place, not only that but if you philosophically at the different worlds the Judeo, Christian and Islamic worlds tells us about the act of creation being at a specific place at a specific time, and it is some place far away from here and that people we created, from that day if creation time has moved forward. But if you listen to what native people tell us, they tell us about emerging or being placed on the earth right here and that the creation is on going so that difference in understanding of place is immense and it's the immense gulf between native and non native people that and so we're trying to bridge a little bit of that with the exhibitions and that vitality that the native people are here now, they are not something in the past and didn't die out.

View point:

The native view point is different that it does not sound like Anglo history like if you write about Anglo history it starts about 1492 and there is a whole series of events that happened that caused the United States army to go into a village and slaughter the village. The army goes in, destroys the village the history is then done. In the native side of telling that story their history starts at the point where people come to that village and then move on from there, so the history does not even start in the same place.

(I told him about my observation at the national history museum when I saw the exhibit on the contact display between Europeans and native people's and the reactions of people looking at the exhibit and how they could identify the European person by the name and the native person not, people with history meet the people without history)

His comment on that:

That is really and essential aspect of everything we are doing and then it gets to narrative of voice and native voice is important so that these don't become generalized Indians but rather are people I think too in these exhibits then the importance of voice and the incidence of voices is critical.

Next exhibits-Who will consult with?

There are many people involved, each exhibit is about nine thousand feet they are very complicated and large. We have a lead person for each one of the exhibits so the first exhibit is called "our universes", that is the one on native philosophies and it is about time and space and the lead person on that is Emil Her Many Horses. Emil is, seventy percent of "our universes" is native community curated so what Emil is doing is going around eight different communities and we are working with them to basically show what

their cosmology looks like. Philosophy way of seeing things, visualization. Cosmology is the way things look like. Their universe is sort of big and sort of organized, and tied space and universe then you put the philosophical system in. All indigenous peoples of the Americas stand under the same sky you see the same things at certain times of the year but the way they organize their philosophical system is unique so we want to teach our visitors uniqueness of groups, the way they live in the world and walk and saw the world and so on. The visual form of that philosophical world is cosmology and it is something that we see all the time if you go to a dance and if you certain objects that philosophy or that cosmology is in every one of those things it is not acted out it is not recreated but it is part of the on going creation. So Emil is going around and we picked eight communities there are spread out throughout the atmosphere, don't work only with the US population, twenty five percent is below US borders so, for universes below US borders we are working with Maya, Quiche Maya, working with Quechua people in Peru and Mapuche, we are also working with Yupec, Hupa, Anishnabe, Lakota, pueblo. The Anishnabe are from hollow water near Lake Manitoba north of here. So the selection of the eight groups had to do with try to spread ourselves throughout the hemisphere because we had a contracted time to get these ready and to get them all into public view we wanted to go someplace we were familiar with people we didn't want just cast ourselves a now looking for things to do, each of these groups are organized along a star quadrant in here we realized that if you are a quechuan person and it is June and if you look in the sky you see something different because of your placement in the globe itself, you might be cold because it is winter time but if you are a Lakota person and you look in the sky it is different and you are warm because it is summertime but there are a set of stars in the

horizon in the early morning that are exactly the same. Whether you are standing in the southern or the northern part of the hemisphere you can see those diacal stars. Therefore we pair Lakota with Quechua for example along that June summer solstice period of time, and the question back to the community is tell us something about your cosmology or your philosophy looks like during this time of the year and there are very specific things about that. It is a very different exhibit and it goes back to all those issues of native voice and so forth because we are not interpreting what their cosmology is, we are not telling them what it is, we are not guessing it, we are not studying, we are asking people to come in and tell us what they want other people to know about their cosmology. It is a bottom line totally different look at the exhibition the trust involved, and Emil working with people and getting that together is enormous it is a great job.

The second exhibit is called "our peoples" it is about native histories it is about place and it is the idea that in a single place there is multiple histories multiple stories, what we did in the exhibit we looked at the hemisphere so we had to spread ourselves around so we picked six mooring, actual places, and attached those moorings and we were going to talk about two groups who lived on or near, or past to those places. So one was in British Columbia, and another one in the Yellow Stone in Montana, Porcupine creek in Georgia, Tukun springs in Arizona, Mexico City a lake there, and one in the amazon. The groups we were working with, we realized that their histories are defining events, they define place they give substance to people. So we are asking people then to work with us and widling down their histories to ten events, ten epitomizing events, ten most important historical events, (I asked if it was legends or myths- to what he replied that legends are outsiders words there is no difference, there is no outsider perspective

here this is a native history from native view point) and in fact this histories exhibit start with the telling of the origin of the Choctaw people. Now is that mythological, is it religious, is it historic, we are using it as histories to show out visitor to demonstrate our visitors that the native histories start with the native people not with the outside world giving meaning to people. So we get ten events and two events will be more highlighted than the other eight and Cecil Ganton the principal curator for "our peoples" she is doing an incredible job, go around talking to people. What happens is, particularly in the histories is so important, is we go and we make a presentation to the council and we ask people seeking their permission to work with them and promising all sort of things of course. And then we also working with them in the initial visit we say we got this thirty or fifty historical events we want to know which ones are more important one to the community here and that is how we wind down to fifteen or so get closer to ten. Then we asked the delegation, the tribe appoints a delegation to here and then the delegation, we go with them to pick the objects and things they expect to see in the exhibit and then will down to ten then they pick the best two. They begin to tell what the ten are about, what the two are about. We have done all the background research that we can, whatever other mean that we have to do it and then up there for four days working with us, doing collections, just sitting down and then when they leave we put together a book and we take those books back to the communities and go "this is what your delegation worked with us, this is what they believed was right, is this ok, can we proceed should we proceed along. There are twelve groups of peoples and we are just finishing the fifth presentation back. It is intensive and we really want these exhibits to belong to native people we have all sort of things to work on our disadvantage the Smithsonian,

Washington D.C. you name it working to our disadvantage so we are trying to salvage know those things not see them as obstacles but as stairways to greater things. The third exhibit is called our lives – native identities so if you think about the world, so you have time and space, then you have the sky between time and space right so you have these two half spheres mixing together, so the identity is what you got inside those things it is what is in between those half spheres. It is divided into four sections and you enter the first section is what we talked a lot about, it is united nations of Indian peoples, these are sovereign nations, the separateness of the nations and the stateliness, separate but equal. And these are tribal governments presenting themselves, talking about who they are, why they are and so on, we work with communities to get that done, we work all over the hemisphere working with communities we hope that the map of places that when we put the map together that we are not too heavily in one area but we spread ourselves out (shows me the map indicating all the areas in the world represented in the museum's collection).

So tribal governments first, then you step through the tribal Gov. then you go into a room, there is two halves, there is intertribal organizations and then there is people, individual, family, clans those types of things. So that is what those identities mean and then after that it is about educational systems they also try to change peoples identity. Community consultation:

We have different patterns of partnering or consultation, different things, activities that are involved.

(because for all roads are good, you basically brought 23 people from outside but for future ones you will be using curators that are already working for the museum?) His answer:

I am not sure the answers for either of those things quite frankly I think "all roads" is an interesting way of doing things I think there is a lot of validity, I think that for us in museums we have struggled for a long time to put native voice in. the other thing that we have taken out the museum voice and replaced it with native voice so we haven't ascended it to a place that has the same importance as the museum voice we just, it does not have a context we need to contextualized native voices so people understand them. So a lot of the work in the mall exhibits have been about how we find a contextualization. In "all roads" too the way it is set up it is about individuals so you go in there, actually Emil her many horses now that I think about it, he is Dakota he is the one man he has a priest collar. So we brought those people in and they are just individuals so you get a sense of individuals, and Emil is Lakota, what is about Lakota, so these exhibits were trying to get at what is it about cultural sovereignty and what is it about Lakota. There were some flaws the way the trust relationships with peoples built that they see what you are going to do and there are no surprises when the exhibit opens. So many people that we work with still are still taken by surprise what their voices and what their photos or objects look like on the museum floor so we need to get around that again the Indian people are not dealt with as consultants which is a one shot deal rather they are dealt as partnerships. So in these exhibits we were just adamant that we were going to set up exhibits that were fully partnered, we served as facilitators and that people understand native voices in the context of native lives. So that is very different, consultation then is, I will describe real

briefly again about the "our peoples exhibit", we do all work before we go out in the community, we go in the community and we hired helpful, a cultural liaison, someone that knows the community, then we have the key in the community things like that, then a second person, a cultural expert who knows, who is trusted by the community, who knows and understands the community's histories and then we go.. Ok so we get those people, we have a little understanding before we go there, we have this community meeting, we have this community meeting we asked permission to talk about our ideas, then we looked and we sit down and we listen. The community then decides who will come here and we listen more and with them, they tell us which of the epitomizing events which two we should emphasize how we should do that. We listen, and then to make sure we listened carefully we go back to the community to verify that we listened, that we understood, that we wrote down right, or photographed it right or whatever it is that we are doing. The other thing that we are doing is we are going back and we are contextualizing those peoples comments what I mean by that is that we are going back to the community and saying your community membership count here, they told us these things, do we have your permission that these are the right things they should be telling us, that they are the right people to be saying these things. And that provides a context that these aren't done, that this isn't just Emil over here talking but Pine Ridge or wherever he is from talking has said yes he represents our voice, it put a very different weight on that person to know they are speaking for the community that these are epitomizing, or important historic events if you go "oh you have to talk to john bla..He is the one that knows about that" we are then getting permission to talk to knowledge carriers about these epitomizing events because one of the great qualdrums that scholars

in museum still have is you have an Indian person in and Indians are supposed to know everything about Indians so you can ask them many questions. So you go to a chorocaw people and somehow a person from chorocawa is supposed to know everything about choorocaw. Well it is rare a person in our country who can sing every beach boy song although it is part of American culture you know. On top of that while American culture or United States culture we think of knowledge as everybody's right you can get any knowledge you want that is what the Internet is about. Whereas in native cultures you are born into or you earn the right to have access to certain types of knowledge so you might be living your whole life never knowing what something is and it might dawn on you that it isn't your right to know that someone else is doing that for you. So that is sort of the context that we are providing so that when Emil's voice comes into the exhibit here it is a Lakota voice, it is Emil speaking as a Lakota person not Emil speaking how it is to be Lakota. Very huge shift for the exhibitions, obviously they are very excited about of course they are challenged by it, it is a lot of work and it is a lot of apparatus you know we are just we are about twenty five percent of the whole crew we are very worried of course that we are, that these voice will be maintained as we are telling people we are going to maintain.

When did shift start in museums?

Well, in twenty years ago, I mean you still see exhibits that do it you know that they take out the text panel and they put an Indian writer the text panel and that is fine. The big thing is a talking panel, when you go to an exhibit and n the front end it is an exhibit as any other exhibit would be but in the front end of it two Indian people talk on a video about the exhibit. You don't want to have them mitigate your knowledge right you

want to dissolve sarcasm, you don't want get inside your knowledge, you don't want them play with real information with science so you put them on the outside of it, you let them write the introduction, you let them write a separate chapter, why would you want them involved in the day to day decision of creating an exhibit or the day to day scholarship, what could they possibly do, how can a non trained person or even a trained person sit and have a dialog and decide what the content the scholarly basis will be. Well obviously we are trying to change that here, that is so central to us I feel privileged when I go and talk to people about what they know. And now they know I am a person of knowledge I know things in a totally different way then we should be able to have a conversation about it. But there is a moment that I need to be absolutely quite and still so I can hear what people are telling me so I can understand what they are telling me and not filter back through my academic training from what I learned previously but understand what that person is telling me. So those are very new things so museums have devised twenty years ago twenty five years ago, and it corresponds with Indian rights I mean all the raising consciousness of Indian people in the late 60's mid 70's. So you just layered on top of it but you could just peel it off an exhibit hadn't changed. I am not sure so "all roads" and the next step after that "all roads" says we need Indian people to tell us what we have. So Indian people come in tell you what we have. But are they telling us anything different about those objects then what we already know in museums? Are they filling a pre conceived or pre determined idea of what those objects and their explanations should be? Does it mean that is not valid but are there other explanations for those objects how do we get to those other explanations. The problem with those approaches is in the inquiry or the questioning, the question has been, the museums have questioned "

do you think we ought to paint the wall red?" Anybody can say "o yeah" because the answer is "yeah you could paint the wall red" but the question is "what should we put there?" go back to the very root of what it is you are looking into not just window dressing –do we paint it red- but what is supposed to be that you are painting red or should you be painting it. I mean it is this goes to the very very basis and that is what we are trying to get in the communities, discuss what it is and we have a parameter of what are our histories but other than that this native history, this is your community history, and we are off it. And I described the same process in "universes" in the sense that if its about cosmology we are way out of the discussion so when people come here they are not and are discussing what cosmology looks to them, what their cosmology looks like. Rather they are discussing what they are going to tell the outside world about it. Very different then these other exhibits.

Other museums

They probably are, I hope so, I mean we are all moving along I have only been here for three years and I think "all roads" in a consensus is a time capsule sort of where we were in time – folk museums generally- we did things in Santa Fe that were astoundingly collaborative. But in order to do that we needed a permanent installation, then we opened a nine thousand square foot installation about the native peoples of the southwest. If I were to do that again there are things that I would just bring right forward other things I would try to work around a bit differently.

Policies that encouraged change in museums:

NAGPRA?- no I can't answer that question- because this museum.....It is the creation of this museum that created the environment to create these exhibits NAGPRA didn't do it.

Personally speaking NAGPRA didn't change my mind; NAGPRA didn't formulate my vision on how to include native people I was already doing that. It is for other museums. I do understand your question, but I refuse to answer that in the sense that I think it is a shame our legislature ....what is obvious I think too if you look at anthropology and the concerns of anthropology and Geertz, Marcus, etc if you look at the body of literature has evolved started in the 60's you see this strict interest in being more inclusive.

Grand Rapids Public Museum-Van Andel

Interviewee 4

When we opened it we decided that the sort of the Native American way of inviting everyone was to have a feast. We didn't have wine and cheese and crackers thing, we had lasagna. Hire a bus to bring people down and people came form all over the state and it was like a family reunion and these people recognized the people in the photos you know we had the slide show up above and people would go "hey look there is uncle Ned, o there is my mother in law, it's a funny thing I never saw her smiling but there she is smiling" and it was like this big family reunion and it was a family reunion. The Anishnabe will tell you that if any two of them talk together they will figure out how they are related. And when you go to visit in Indian gathering you get fed and so we decided that's what we are going to do, there weren't any caterers that would be able to provide as much fry bead and corn soup as we might need to do it traditionally so we just said let's just do something that's good food and people won't go away hungry so let's make lasagna and I was told afterwards by a number of Indian people that we really hit it on the nose with that, that that was a smart thing to do, and that we did it right and the people noticed and we had little tobacco bags for the people when they came in. So the opening party was a great quick and we had drumming group there and that was really nice and the women stood around the outside and sang and kind of bouncing up and down to the music it had a good feel to it. But the next thing that happened that made me feel good about the exhibit it was that the one of the local pow wows was looking for a give away gifts and they asked us for free passes, well I thought well hey, cause we had thought that the measure of this exhibit was going to be that Indian people instead of

avoiding the museum would bring their kids here to learn about themselves we thought if that would happened that would be perfect and that idea was challenged at one point well, why are you aiming at such a small audience when they are only a small percentage of the population. Well basically if they feel that it is good enough to teach their kids about themselves it is going to be great to teach non-Indians about themselves too. We wanted to be something that Indian people would be proud of not ashamed or angry about. Go something back from the community, letters and comments, we got a letter from the director of the North American Indian center, frank was very please with the way it went down. Frankly advisory committees don't expect to be listened to at one point we had that whole oval area that is oriented east west, well that design was turned in that space, it was a much bigger oval because that is the way the space is oriented, north south and at that point at the exhibit design there was no possibility of changing the orientation of the space, the footprint was set and the advisory committee said, well if you are going to use this space to represent a lodge it really need to be oriented east west. So we said oh, shit, the designers are going to bleed out the ears so we went to the designer and we said " oh you are going to hate this cause they had already designed it, the floor plan with the right number of those six areas and so they came back with the change and we drew it the other way and that surprised the advisory committee so much that that became the topic of conversation in the Indian community. I am told. We were proving that we are going to listen and that we were going to do what they said instead of what often happened with advisory committee is that the museum will do what they want to do and the advisory committee sort of rubber stamps it and doesn't say anything. I think one of the things we had to learn was that in the museum with my colleagues here if I think that something is a

bad idea I just say "it's a bad idea" but Indian people are less direct than that and they'll sometimes not saying yes is saying no but if you are in a different culture and you only say no when you say no, object and you put your foot down and you don't hear that silence as meaning maybe this is not the right way to go you are going to make a mistake you are going to think you are getting approval from people that are not approving. And that's just the place where cultural difference it doesn't mean that museum are trying to be mean or ignore the Indian community is just that they use language differently and that different body postures mean different things. We had to learn to listen to the stories, a lot of times they won't say that is bad idea they'll tell a story that is allegorical to the situation and you have to listen to that story and ask yourself "what are they telling me here they are telling me not to go that way they are telling me to go the other way". When you are dealing with people from another culture it is useful to learn some of those differences. I have the advantage of having some Native American friend over the years who were patient with me and would instruct me and say "look you have to pick up your cues he says". He taught me to be a little more observant and do more listening and less talking especially around older people.

Advisory committee:

Jeanette St. Claire (little traverse bay area) maybe moved, but has been teaching here forever one of the things about g. rapids is that, the reason the grand river bands have been able to slowly organize is that like Detroit is a place where people come from rural areas for jobs and education. So therefore the Indian community not only the river bands but people from Ottawa, Pokagon, Pottawatomi, little river and grand traverse and little traverse are all living here with the grand river people. That is why the social service

agency are not run by the grand river band, are run by the people from the intertribal council at the north American Indian center because in order to serve Indian people in this town you can't serve only the grand river band but you go to pochabi town there is very little people that are grand river band people unless they marry-in in which case they are anyway.

Community:

There is one neighborhood near the west side where there seems to be quite a few Indian people in fact I think there was a time in the past that is was called Indian town. Intertribal council used to have their office in that neighborhood and the north American Indian center when it started up had an office there and they moved over to the west side. That is where the Indian mission were but I don't know if there is a relationship.

Mike- attorney and tribal judge for the grand traverse bay band.

Lives in the Traverse City area, he is a tribal judge there that's where he works. He is also in the minority affairs office at the northwestern community college or was at that time.

Candy- now changed, don't know where she lives now. She is an artist.

Phil - director of the (agency that was the historic or Confederate tribe) on behalf of the unrecognized tribes. He would be in his sixties.

Tom - from bearing spring area at that time a school principal, when to Sault saint Marie to help them to get their school started but then went back to Pokagon area.

Frank- paid consultant

Brian - curator not Indian

We got fascinating information from the people we interviewed and in a way they were all advisors to us they are telling us what they think is important about being Indian

and before we selected and as we were designing the exhibit I went over the transcripts from a hundred hours on interviews and that gives extensive information about what they think it's important and it helps me as a non-Indian to try to think in terms of how can I arrange, how can I present this material in a way that reflects this viewpoint. If you think about all the people that we interviewed as advisors that is a pretty broad base.

First got consultants then they recommended the committee and they helped to talk to people into agreeing to the interview and went out into the Indian community and explained what we were trying to do. The advisory committee made the initial contacts and the initial contacts and recommendations and also went to the community and asked 'who do you think we should interview?" so we were getting advice on who to interview from a broad range of the community not just the advisors. We told the advisors and they agreed that this was a good idea that they shouldn't just tell us what they think but that they should go out to the community and tell them what we are doing and ask for advice and bring it back so they were like diplomats. I only ever heard one complaint about our exhibits and that was from someone that wished to be in the advisory committee but was not selected. His complaint was that he was not in the advisory committee (confidential name).

Educator's role:

It was source of some friction in the team. Traditionally the way exhibits got made was that the curators would pull out the material they thought needed to be on exhibit and they would write very scholarly labels that were too long and hard to read at a twelve grade reading level used obscure terminology and they would give all this to a designer who then designed the cases and how the objects were to be mounted and where the

labels go and then they would bring the educator and say "ok now teach people here." So we had adopted an idea that as and educator made sense to me which was that the first question you answer and ask is "what do you want people to learn". For that you really need to bring the educator in very early. In fact our exhibits were designed as teaching spaces if you go to the Anishnabe casinos benches there we can turn those monitors off, and the slide show off, and turn the lights up and it could be a classroom and the circular area too we can override the videos. It was a concept that our staff was trained before I came here and it was a model associated with a name Kellogg I think the foundation might have been giving seminars on it.

The idea was that you have a triangle, the shape of the design team, curator, educator and designer. The actuality of it was the educator's responsibility is to make sure those questions get answered. "What do we want people to learn and make sure this stuff gets presented in a way that is acceptable to the people the educator's job is audience advocate was to make sure the information was presented in ways where different money status would be acceptable not just people that can read. We wanted to place things in context so that if you came through it and you were dyslexic or pre-verbal or from another country and could not read English you would be able to get the information by the way the objects are oriented in other words you don't lay down a necklace straight but have a head form and put the necklace on and you don't need a sign that says necklace because anyone can tell what it is. Sometimes the context which you would present with graphics and so forth explains what the thing is.

The educator's responsibility was to be the audience's advocate and to make sure that the questions of what we want people to learn is being asked and how are we going

to teach them that how are we going to present these artifacts and these ideas in a way that is most accessible how do we rewrite the labels. Jim is very meticulous of his writing, but it tried to read his dissertation but there were words that were not in my unabridged dictionary I couldn't read it I had to stop. So you have to back that off to at least 5th grade level or 8th grade at the highest and that is very difficult because you kind of loose some of the precision, you can't be as precise you have to be a little bit more general. We classify animals are herbivores or carnivores, a mouse and a squirrel are Herbivores, right? But squirrels will eat bird's eggs and mice will eat insects technically yeah, but we don't know that at 5th grade level, we don't go to that level of detail. We don't teach college stuff to fifth graders and so it is ok to say that squirrels are herbivores that they eat plants even though there is a slight exception that is the way with historians too there is so much detail they understand that you to tell the big picture without telling everything because if you tell everything you will have college books on the wall and that is not good for visitors, they won't read it. We have to find ways of telling the story simply and not telling the story wrong because when a non-content specialist edits the content specialist's work there is a tendency to rework things in ways that are not correct.

So there is a lot of back and forth with the text between Jim and us before we can say in a simply way that what we agreed was not raw, that was a lot of work! We took what Jim wrote and rewrote so it was easier to understand and simplified it and shortened it because it has to be short. Then we would show it to the advisors and to Jim and get their input, get another draft, and bring it back and get their input and do another draft.....

There are many deadlines, we worked on that project for five years, we usually don't spend that much time on a exhibit but we started in 1990 in February and we didn't

open till 1995. But when you are building a 37million dollar museum with a seven million dollar fabrication budget you are also building three other huge major exhibitions at the same time we really have to take that much time.

Who to represent the Indian community:

I was not part of that decision, I don't know the degree to which Frank was consulted on that but I know that Jim had some strong ideas. He felt that there were personalities within the Indian community that were sort of polarized, they were high profile people, that if you involved them and they alienated any portion of the community and they are in the committee then that portion of the community is not interested. His advice was based in his understanding of the community and attempts to pick people that would be known and have the influence but not be those polar types of personalities that people either love or hate. People that if you take them you are taking sides.

Museum classification:

We are a general municipal museum of a type that is not uncommon in the Midwest in that we do natural history and human history but we don't do science and we are not a children's museum. There is a children's museum in town they don't have artifacts they are all brand new things that are built for kids to interact with play with and that is not at all what we have here. You can't play with the stuff here, not much is interactive but not like a children's museum. Children's museums everything is built from scratch and often science museums are the same way. Although the museum of science and industry in Chicago is not, other museums that are like us would be the Milwaukee public museum.

They are big, until recently were run by the local government, a county, it has a natural history area, anthropology area, local history component (Milwaukee). At the

same time we were doing the Anishnabek, we thought what we were doing was really ground breaking but I think what was really happening was that the will be a time in professions when everyone sort of comes to the point where they realize that a new way of doing things is better and I think this approach to involving the community is something that was happening across the country in many different museums because people were aware in the 1960's and 1970's how unhappy the Indian people were with the museum exhibits and wanting to bring that I think publicly funded institutions came to the realization in the 1980's that we need to represent the entire community and that we are largely white institutions, we need not be, we need not only our audience but our staff we need to reflect the diversity of the community that we are in. This was independent on the NAGPRA law. We felt the same way with the American's with disabilities act (ADA) we wanted, without the ADA, to make this museum accessible to all and we wanted to take steps that exceeded ADA's requirements so when we were trying to make this museum accessible was because we wanted to and we used ADA guidelines, but felt comfortable in exceeding those guidelines if we could think of better ways to make it accessible and comfortable preferably for people with disabilities or mobility impairments. AAM publication called "forces of change" that sort of was a trumpet call for museum to be more responsive and inclusive to the communities constituencies. It sounded to me like a lot of good liberal rhetoric. Part of it was which came first the chicken or the egg, is this thing a symptom of the fact that a lot of people al over the country were thinking this way. Conversations happened at conferences between people that snowballed into these other things. I think that it was a change that was happening culturally within the museum culture and that forces of changed documents is merely a

reflection of the fact that people begin to think differently, people are beginning to have those conversations about being responsive to the community. Our commitment to be inclusive to peoples with handicaps or peoples from different cultural background is not a policy of this museum it is simply something that we believe in and try to do. When I did the electricity exhibit we wanted to have of the inventors featured I specifically went out and looked for African American inventors so if you are African American and you come to the museum you will see some faces that look like you. The curators said that we wouldn't be able to include women and African Americans in the exhibit because they were excluded from the factories and it was gonna be a white men's story because the story of furniture in Grand Rapids was a white men's story. And the educator, bless his soul, did not let that stand and we found a piece of furniture made by guy who was the first black vice president of the furniture company and we found his portrait we put it in and we have a section of different people that worked in the factory and by god, women did work in the factory both as clerical workers and also as decorators of paintings. African Americans did work in the factory only as day labor and loggers and wheel drivers but they were there an so if you go to the furniture city exhibits you will see that room that has the cartoon figures and those cartoon figures were drawn by the educator.

That whole room was included so we can have African Americans and women, so that we could talk about their role, and in fact rich white people are also featured the owner's son of the salesman. Exhibit was in 1994 November. Another section on that exhibit.

Influence of NAGPRA in exhibits:

No influence. Museums have stopped putting bones on an exhibit a long time ago. Most of them, based on complaints on the 60's and 70's I seem to remember a lot, the local museum where I grew up took the bones off exhibits because of the Plains. There was a bag on exhibit and the fact that people didn't like it in exhibit we took it off exhibit. On eof our advisors said - for the Anishnabek exhibit- "I am just not comfortable with having drums place on exhibit" and he knew that other museums including that of Native Americans the blackbird museum in harbor springs have pipes on exhibits. That's the way that they justified that was that they took the pipe apart so that it wasn't in its ceremonial form. He said "I know that other native Americans disagree with this and that other museums run by native Americans do have pipes in their exhibits but for me personally to be comfortable with me being an advisor here this is how it has to be for me and if you want to put the pipes on exhibit that is ok but I can't be an advisor then". We said no we would like to keep you as advisor we will just put the pipes and drums out. And that I told you we like to exceed what ADA requires, NAGPRA does not require to remove drums and pipes from exhibits but we chose to take his advice in order to maintain that person's. Arts and crafts act:

I don't know what you are talking about. It is an authorship law, basically. You can't sell things that are not made by American Indians. I was aware of the concern but I did not know the law. How would you compare the previous American Indian exhibit to this recent one? I don't know. I was not here then. I know they had an advisory committee but I don't know what kind of advice they got and I don't know if they listened to that advice. The exhibit's name was "People of the Grand". Already we had gotten into a situation where instead of trying to tell the Native American story across the country we

were focusing in this area. That exhibit began in the ice age and ended in the fur trade era. I found out recently that they had plans to extend it beyond the fur trade era into the future but those plans never became real.

Connections between past and present:

I was not involved in selecting the people for the committees but I think that when we set up the advisory committee we were being careful to include diversity, over tribal affiliation, gender, and age. I think that was a conscious decision. We interviewed some very young people and very elderly people and we thought that was good.

Community involvement

When you involve the community it comes with a price and we found this out for the first time with the exhibit called "fields of factory" a traveling exhibition from the Smithsonian about the great migration of African Americans from the south to the north to during WWI and II. We approached the African American community with all these ideas about what they were going to do to help us with this project. They were going to collect oral traditions, they were going to find artifacts that we could put in the exhibition. When we invited them in it turned out that they did not have any interest in doing that. And they did not do that, they did what they wanted to do, they put together a fantastic bunch of programs, at the opening they had traditional foods and music. It was the first time in the museum when there was a group of people having a gathering and it was an emotional feeling thing these gospels singers were singing and everyone was into it and they had to stand up, it was beautiful. But our agenda was not fulfilled, in term of the particulars that we wanted but by letting them do what they wanted to do, we gave up control of the what the program was going to be and the result was what we really

wanted, community binding, now those people who remember the party they feel part of this museum, they feel welcome here. Which is what we wanted. When you give up control, museum curators and educators are used to say what the exhibit is going to be, and to give up control to an outside group, and they tell you that what you have in mind is not what they want to see.... In other words if you want people to take ownership you have to be able to give it away and that is scary when you used to control your own stuff. The metaphor I have for it is "there is this fear that if you give the steering wheel away they are going to crash and you have to get out of the driver's seat and get it over without slowing down and it is freaky. There is that kind of fear among museum staff, the reluctance to five up control and yet if you want the treasure you have to give it away because if you don't they will not take it.

Is that because certain museums focus more in their immediate community?

I just know that we do. I think it is all over the place our director does museum assessment and also AAM accreditation reviews and he went to a museum once and asked that curators what the collecting priorities were and they said that have to do with the research interests of the curators. If you have a curator of Asian ceramics from 17th century then that is your collecting priority. At this time we don't collect anything that we don't think will be put on exhibit and we don't do any research on anything unless it has to do with being in an exhibit or in our program. So if we are not presenting to the public we are not collecting it. Research institutions are different their audience is tertiary, collecting and researching is primary. There were times our museum did collect things strictly for research but at the same time we always have been very educationally driven. We didn't have a curator until the 1970's, but we had educators doing all these programs.

We have been here for almost a hundred and fifty years but we always have been very community oriented. The first place that our collections were even stored was in public schools, so it was in use by the public schools by the very beginning and we had these inexpensive lunch and movie programs on the weekend during the depression and it was something that kids did every Saturday. You can talk to senior citizens and they will tell you how their parents told them they would come to the museum every Saturday program. That on going service to the community has created a community that is willing to put the money and say the museum is good, the museum is something we want and that is why this museum is in this little town.

I think that the biggest the museum, or federal agency museum, the harder it is to be humane. I would not expect the Smithsonian to respond to a complaint. There needs to be native people working in the museum, the need to be able to see themselves represented. How do you break a cycle when you come to a museum and you see nothing but white people, when you can't get the qualified applicants? I have been talking to peoples from different tribes like Frank about interns and funding and getting some native peoples here to work. I talked to someone in the Smithsonian about working together and train native peoples but she was not at all interested.

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Who went to the meetings:

Rarely both groups would meet and museum staff, once or twice. Different people worked in different exhibits in the museum, sometimes one would be the leader of a team and others be in a team but not be the leader.

It starts with the idea they will build a new museum then director and board of directors think about how they are going to do it, then how they are going to raise the money and then the idea on how they are going to form the teams, then they form teams on staff on how to deal with each of the different ways they decided they will redo the exhibits. Some were just moved others were totally redone, and there may have been some that were eliminated along the way and new ones that were started. I did not have anything to do with that, I came in later. They knew what they wanted to do. The (staff) team worked with Jim to come up with some concepts I think he probably was the first consultant hired and then they put together the rest of the consultants, which would be Lovis and myself. Then once we were on board then my job was to help pull the names together for the advisory committee. We had to go ahead and ask a number of people to be involved in the advisory committee. Once all that is put together then we started working on the concepts for how we'd put the exhibit together. The process as we worked on it was to come up with an idea voted by the consultants then from there they would pass it to the advisory committee for input. So it started at the top then down and worked its ways back up. It wasn't really up and down it was side ways in terms of the responsibilities moving back and forth. Another group you may have heard it was PRD (I forget what it stands for) it is a firm in Virginia that did the actual design work on that exhibit. They were the

ones that took all of it (all of us would come up with what we came up with) they would take that and put it in to drawings, to put that into bricks wood or glass, whatever. And so they were the actual designers, we were the idea people and they were the designers. And a guy named Rusty Russell was in charge of doing video, and they had another gentleman who did the photography, but I don't remember his name.

Deciding on who to be in the advisory committee:

The mission of the museum had been to tell the story of Grand Rapids originally. The museum is one of the oldest of the country actually. So from very early years there was a city of Grand Rapids and I forget because it was the, it may have been started by a group of people as a club of people in 1880's or something. Then it became an institution. When they did this capitol campaign it was a time when things were pretty tight although they managed to raise the money for the building, it took around 15 years but they finally pulled all the money. Particularly our exhibit received money from the National endowment of the humanities. Because of the antiquity of the museum the original idea was to bring the world to Grand Rapids so things were brought from everywhere for the museum's collections. But then when they re-did the museum about 30 to 35 years ago they did the exhibit called people of the Grand that related to native peoples in dioramas, but that became the story of Grand Rapids. So they began with bringing the world to Grand Rapids to then telling the story of Grand Rapids. Then the mission of the museum became broader as they worked over the years. At the time I was hired by the museum I had to learn all this stuff because I didn't work in museums. The next step was telling the story of west Michigan; it was basically everywhere west of middle of the state down from mackinaw to towards Chicago the whole stretch there. So when they told the story

of west Michigan they weren't telling the story only of grand rapids which meant that when we pulled the advisory team together we needed to truly represent gender, tribes and geography. There needed to be a geographic spread, a gender balance, and the idea that there would be different tribes. And so in recommending names of people we needed people that were known in the community, and people that had an interest in cultural preservation and museum work and things like that. We needed people from a variety of different areas throughout of west Michigan. I was the tribal chairman of little traverse, actually I was not yet, on the council and then chair, and I was living in the Traverse City area and representing the little traverse. Mike Petoskey who was the tribal judge of Grand traverse band of Ottawa and Chippewa and Grand traverse band member and worked at the college at the Traverse City. From Grand Rapids Jeanette saint Claire was a Little traverse member, had been long time member of an organization in town- Grand River lodge (?) Candy living in grand rapids but with family in the southwest, she is Pokagon Pottawatomi, and she is an artist, and was involved in there and she became a member, and Phil Alexis, he is Pokagon Pottawatomi but also a executive director for the confederated historic tribes and of which my tribe is a member and Phil was a long time Indian organizer, had been involved in Indian country for many years. With those folks we had a pretty good geographic spread all the way from harbor springs Petoskey to adowagiac, so we had Chippewa and Pottawatomi. So as we went through this that is how we went about picking the team. Tom is a principle at a school, educator, pipe carrier and is well-educated and active in education as well in Indian traditions and is Pokagon Pottawatomi.

Exhibit:

The first thing we did was taking the consultants Jim, Ruth and myself and the folks from PRD. It was possible to meet with the members of the committee they were in an advisory capacity therefore could not attend all the meetings, we had meetings in Grand Rapids with them on a day to day basis they weren't going around. Whereas consultants were actually out doing work with the staff, so we took the museum staff, PRD, and the consultants and took a trip. We went around and we visited some of the physical locations that they would need actually to be thinking about while doing the exhibit, we visited various Indian communities. We went to Lewanaw, Little Traverse, we sat around the fire, we sat around a table with just a lamp around the table, told stories about in one of the houses in Indian town in harbor springs. And we generally tried to give a feel of what was it that we were doing because the consultants were from out east really did not have a concept of what it was we were doing we were not talking so much a bout a place but of a region, that was a real important part of this. So that was an initial step and then we tried out several different ideas of how to set the exhibit.
We considered, in fact this was a very serious consideration to do six families, because if we did it right the six families even with the different tribal groups would overlap and we might be able to get everyone and that would represent everyone throughout the region.

There was a lot of work but I was skeptical from the beginning, about that, I tried the idea out to give it a fair chance, as was the committee (skeptical) each one of us knew six families in our own town that would need to be done. Then we would have to cut people out then we finally convinced the other folks that doing the family thing we would have to get six families and then tie the story of those families and telling the story of those families try to tell the whole story using artifacts from the museum and acquiring

artifacts. But well it just there was no way to work, it politically was not doable, so we abandoned that idea. But we still kept the number six in mind and the idea that we would have six different sections, later they became themes, one education, the other one armed services, the arts, I can't actually tell you all the six parts that we had but I can tell you that we took six different areas. The next thing we did was one of the things we told people that we had to do was not speak in the past tense, because too often Native Americans, or Indians, however you want to say are - what we are is- considered part of the- people consider us and part of the past. You go to the natural history museum for example, instead of the history museum it is a natural history museum and there we got fossil.

First we have rocks and minerals, then you got dinosaurs and then you have Indians. And that adds it all up and tells you that Indians are dead and gone and they are part of the past. We told them no. That this exhibit has to show an image of the past but showing that we are in the present and at the same time speak of the future. We are not bound by this past tense. The second thing that is special about this exhibit is that the curatorial voice is very small, it only comes up periodically (sporadically?) and very light, most of the voice of the exhibit is the voice of the people. And the way we went about doing that was by doing hundreds of dollars of video tape, that is where Rusty comes in he was hired to do the video we did hundreds of hours of video tape. The videotape, we took from the videotape and edited down to six thirty-minute sections so it's got a big videodisk. Then we created a touch screen programs in each of the six locations to play that particular portion of that big videodisk. Actually instead of being six independent disks all the way around. We just made one big one and made a bunch of copies of it and

played sections of it in each of the different stations. In each of theses stations what each would do was to be on one of these themes, such as natural resources, fishing and hunting, veterans, and politics. So the voice, the labels are most often quotes from the people speaking in the present tense. And the labels are, instead of "the Indians did this", it was "we did this and we did that". And so these are the unique things, another thing that we did, and this is something I did early on was that - part of the advice as a consultant was- that too often we are encapsulated, we are separate, and spoken in the past tense, so we talked about getting rid of the past tense, we also talked about the separation idea. What I wanted to do was not just talk about the lack of separation but also talk about integration of all the different things. For example in the Grand Rapids of 1890's they have a general store, and it is full of Indian baskets, they would acquire the baskets in trade and then sell them. I wanted to make sure there was a tie that would show between those two exhibits between the Annishnabek and the 1890's. And Habitats, there is sweet grass and there is bass wood, and there is all these things that are natural, we wanted to make sure that when the habitats exhibit did their thing that they did not put in sweet grass because if you put in sweet grass than they would tie it with the Anishnabek exhibit. In the educational program and in all the other things you could be able to show the tie. In the furniture city exhibit, they are talking about making the furniture, well, who cut most of the wood, those lumberjacks, who was working in the camps, Indians, and so what happened was that native loggers who were working to cut the hardwoods for the furniture that were being made in the furniture city. And so we wanted to make sure the tie showed up there. And so these are the kinds of things that happened in fact I caused them a great deal of consternation because I was hired this was

one of my conditions I said I really needed to do this and I hadn't seen anything for a long time finally I said "look I haven't seen it I want to see it" then they made every single team stop the work where they were and figure out the ties where they were right then. (Me:) so all those exhibits, the habitat etc, are there with these themes and ties into them? they are all permanent exhibits and in order to, during the development of these permanent exhibits were the time to make sure all the links were there, all the ties were there. The thing is that you don't see it unless to take the educational programming, you need to hear the people speaking and in those cases some of them haven't been fully developed yet but the ties are there they just need to be done. And so those are important part of it.

Working with community:

Personally, as a consultant what I needed to do was to help train the other people that were working on the exhibits who weren't used to working with Indians how to work with Indians. One of the things that had happened in the earlier project that had been done by another institutions in Grand Rapids, many native people had felt they had been betrayed by people who were doing the exhibit or working on a project, it wasn't an exhibit. They felt that the interviews that were taking with them in confidence had then been published verbatim and that there were things that they were not supposed to reveal or that they had revealed things in confidence that was supposed to help the book, but they didn't know it was going to be published. So there were a number of things that happened that ran rampant as a city and therefore any institution associated geographically were considered, around the state, was considered. Had a bad name. To say the museum was treated very negatively by a lot of people in the Indian community

because it was a museum and a lot of people did not like museums, the other one was they had this bad experience with this other institution. So when we started to do the videotapes once we gone through and we sort of made decision about how we were going to do certain things and while we were doing this,

Exhibit organization:

(I got to take a quick aside...) while we are doing this we had a general idea of what the space is, and first of all we just had this big space then you gradually becomes a little bit more concrete it just goes along and then after a number of months its set. And it sets pretty quick all of a sudden, but as you are working through all this time you can move this you can move that there is no real issue and so as we are doing that we have to come up with the ideas to match and make a work plan of how we are going to get there and we came up with this concept of having a initial circular room like a wigwam ok, where people would come in and we would have a representation of a fire in the middle which we accomplished with a flat carpeting with lighting from the ceiling, then we have a circular room and we have an opening video, that approaches the question "what does it mean to be Anishnabe" and then we recorded interviews. Within the circular room we approached the question and did a lots of interviews and the whole question of the interviews there and by this time we knew we were going to do video tapes and we knew we were going to do by areas of interest as opposed to specific families. When it came time to do this my job was to get permission to do some of the interviews and in order to do that I would take tobacco to various places that I would go visit and I would have to stay there for a considerable length of time several times some of the visits I went three or four times before I secured a permission for an interview and often I would have to

counter what had been previously done and say "that was then this is now" and I would talk about the advisors who would review everything and I would talk about how this process was giving voice to the people and I would have to work on this to get their trust and so. On several occasions it was only because I treated the people in this way with this respect that we were able to secure interviews. And particularly we wanted to interview elders first because the elders, we knew it was a long project and some of the elders would not survive the process as a matter of fact the first interview was with a gentleman, we did it in the hospital because we had gone in and was not expected to come out and I heard he was one of the key people that we wanted to interview and I knew that he was there so we went and did it and we did it in a way that we justified in the budget saying this is a dry run to make sure that it would work instead of scheduling all ahead and doing it all at once, because we did not have anybody else schedule so we went and did this one person. And he subsequently recovered and lived two of three more years which was nice but we got it that was our first interview. After we got a number of people on videotape then it became ok to do it so it became a bit easier that is why it was important to get some key people. The videotapes, the interviews would last a long time we would go and we did not know what we were going to get until we got it. And we did a lot of trips, I was in all of the trips on the north, Tom arranged all the interviews little traverse and grand traverse area and then a few of them in the south by Tom and Lovis and some of the others arranged interviews and Jeannette and stuff around Grand Rapids. And then we went to Pow Wows and did more interviews some of them just audio and some were video. And we would take photographs of people also, what I had to do was train people to deal with this whole idea of tobacco I told them that when we went for an interview

with someone you have to bring tobacco. In a typically non Indian way of thinking, it is sort of the thought they had, so I told them you know tobacco you make little tobacco ties in a little cloth. Instead the museum brought you know leaf tobacco, a bail is like 3x3x3, ok a leaf tobacco, then they made ties of several leaves together and they would tie that together with red yarn so they gave people a gift of tobacco they gave them this creeping leaves and you know that is what they would give away the deal was that people were amused by it because you know you don't need to do that, that is no the way you go about doing it, a little tobacco tie would have been sufficient or some other way but on the other hand people were sort of touched that they were trying so hard and so it was nice. What we do is go to Pow Wows and set up a little tent and they'd have the cameras there and did the interviews in the Pow Wows with different people and this is after we did the initial ones. And so all that was put together and the Rusty took all the video back and was editing and putting things together. But in the middle of all this Rusty died, and so his firm people who worked in his firm worked to continue it there was a lot of legal back and forth, it took a long time to get everything done, eventually it all got done and it was good. At first Rusty sort of disappeared he was sick and no body knew and we wondered why it was taking so long so there was a good deal of issue there but it worked. So we made those decisions and then after we made those decisions the design firm would say we need to do this and then we would say, " Well I don't know". In order to make this work it was very important that there was a commitment on the level of the director and I assume, the board, to do this way. There was a commitment to do it and often, I was in many Native American consulting committees for things where we were consulted and basically we were consulted so they could say we were consulted to their granting,

funding agencies or they can put up a list of names so they could say here is the people we consulted with. Well they don't often listen to what we say we would say something and then they would argue about it and tell us "this is why we can't do it". So what happened, just one example of what happened on this project was that there is a big oval room in the center of the exhibit and the oval room was to represent the meduanhogan, traditional lodge for ceremonies and that usually is oriented east-west.

(Another quick aside) We spent a lot of time trying to decide whether the attributes had actually been poles and bark and all that stuff in there and we came to the conclusion that we would do it represtationally accurate and not ...to do that so it was a museum so we weren't going to actually put things in there so because of that the medeuanhogan is actually a form, a shape as opposed to having the poles and so we had been working and the design team came with this great idea and each time we come for a meeting when we had the advisory teams we had one of these foam cut out things for the museum to show us the exact rooms and how the rooms fit together and we showed up and they had this thing and they had this room and the circular room that was off to one side which was right. And they had all this other stuff and this room was oriented south and we said "this does not feel right, stop right here, we have to re do this", and we heard "uau gee, god you know we should have you know, thought about this about six weeks ago or twelve weeks ago" at this point if we go back and tell the architects, the designers that this has to changed we will have a couple suicides, and a few in mental hospitals, and it would costs us probably around 10 to 15 thousand dollars to do this and all of a sudden the committee says "well, if its got to be that way its got to be that way but it shouldn't be that way it should beset up this other way because this is how it should be, this is, it would feel better

if its done this way this is just what it has to happen" but we left and it was not going to be changed, ten days later it was changed and to my knowledge nobody wants to die for it, and we have it the shape you see it today. Now in there the way we made that room also cause we really didn't do it in the ground we had to put some benches but mostly is in the ceiling, lowered ceiling throughout the whole exhibit but in that exhibit, one area there's this very long oval that is the shape of this ceremonial building that has like a.... All the way around there its where the screen all the pictures were shown so when you are sitting in there slides are been shown, all the different photographs those were, that's in the inside of that oval would have gone the other way had they not decided to change. In addition to that there is many other smaller instances where they definitely listened to what we had to say and the tobacco was one of them. For instance during the video, you are not supposed to video during the honor song and the people running the video camera they took the camera down and they went got a piece of fried bread and sat and ate and then they came back! And they started filming when everyone was dancing not realizing that an honor song can take a long time and that they were actually still filming the honor song and that they were now filming the honor dance. The head veteran came by and said " I want that video tape" and they did not know what to do because they had a lot other stuff in that tape there was a big ...trying to straighten that out. They came and asked me what to do, and I told them " this is what you do, you take them some tobacco and you apologize, and you better take tobacco for the people who the honor song was and you apologize and you tell them you had no intention of doing that and what could you do about that. And so they did and the woman who the honor song was being done consented to accepting a copy of the videotape but that would be ok, since they apologized. So that

is one of the other things that we had to do. The video tapes become people can come in and review it, it is 300 dollars, people can come in and see their grandpa who has been dead now for five to six years and see him for an hour talking about things. We haven't really published that there is this big archive but when they ask they tell them, I mean they are not encouraging because it would take, they would have to have special viewing rooms and set it all up, it is not a matter of discouraging it is a matter of meeting the demand when asked. But not publishing that they have an archive for studying they get asked by family members and researchers, eventually they would have transcripts. They have got, actually we already have transcripts of all the tapes so we could figure out how to organize the different parts. We took them all, we asked people about all the different aspects of their lives and when we did the school we took from all different things and found all the different things related to school and put together a school program that has more than one person involved in it.

1990 to 1994-Time he worked, from beginning to end and more on promotions. Did programs and experiences on how went about doing this project.

Policies of the museum:

Very little discussion about the museum's policies, I mean they didn't give us a policy book and say "this is what you can and what you can't do" basically most of that was handled by the museum staff. And what they would do is they would put together, based on their policy, they would put together what they thought and they would find out whether we like it or not. And we would tell them what would work and what would not work. They had to sort of balance that; we never actually have a policy book.

Examples: we had a real hard time, we had pieces that represented traditional designs that were in the circular room in the beginning, for example there was this thunderbird and the thunderbird is on the wall and then there is a case for it and in the case there is an old piece and next to it a new one that was commissioned piece of art that has a similar design to show this is still being done. So that you got old and new right there. So the pieces on the wall were designs we came up with, there was a good deal of discussion and controversy on those amongst the committee members and all of us. Every committee member would go to several other people other than themselves to help make the decision so we spread the decision very wide in the community. We had a lot of give and take, they would say we want this well, you can't do that because we have to do this, or you can't quite do this but you can't quite do that you have to do it this way, we went back and forth for months on the exact, how the pattern would be represented because there are cultural differences within the different regions and tribes and we eventually agreed on a pattern. It was a cooperative work, they listened. Partly because the museum actually let go and listened to the committee and gave the committee and if we said no, they did not do it. If we all said absolutely "no you can't do that" they wouldn't do it. And we knew we had that authority so we didn't use it very much, I mean we were careful, you don't abuse that kind of thing because that they had let go of that but that meant that we had a big responsibility. We worked back and forth and then Erik who was started working on educational ideas, and then how we would work into educational things and so we had to worry about nuts and bolts bricks, and plaster, and how can you actually make this, we also had to worry about the content about what actually was going to be seen, plus we had

to deal with how to work with that afterwards in the educational programming so we came up with educational themes while in the process of development.

What he likes the most about the exhibit:

It is hard to pick, but there is a picture of my son there is an eleven video at the beginning and he is in there, there are five or six pictures of me and there are pictures of my Dad. There are pictures, artifacts on the wall there that are of my family. To pick one single part of it would it be difficult. I think museums and Native American often have problems and there was a problem in Grand Rapids we overcame that problem to a large extent the problem being distrust of the institution. We gave people a voice thorough the exhibit so, we demanded a voice from the institution, the institution granted it to us. It was our responsibility to help figure out how to make that happen. One of the true test of the exhibit is that each year, as I understand, is the Pow Wow and one of the gifts that they ask for give away are free passes to the museum to see the exhibit. And that many people come back often and that many natives, there is a space that native community use for banquets and for other things and that native people use it for those things. So we have been successful there will always going to be detractors but this was done in a good way. There are less detractors.

Difference in museum-how they represent people

Museums twenty years ago, most of the museums that had Indian stuff were still in the old style the museum was a repository they had their entire collection on display in show cases there was virtually nothing in the back room it was all out and most museums have now taken the artifacts to interpret issues and history and so the displays are considerably different then they used to be. Now they have back rooms, archives with

artifacts, they choose certain artifacts for display to tell stories. That is certainly nothing new, nothing we invented it is been a trend of how things are being done. I would say this is a transcending exhibit in that it is a first person voice of the people, as opposed of the curatorial voice, it is also not speaking in the past tense it is speaking in the present tense and the future as well. It is certainly out of the norm. The other thing the awareness of the ties of all parts in the museum and that also in unique in that it pulls it together. To say that something is unique and never been done before is also dangerous because someone will come up and say "we have done this before ten years ago". But this is certainly unusual way to go about doing this it was all done in a good way. And it strengthens the ties of the museum with the community, because we weren't starting at a neutral place we were staring at a negative.

Ziibiwing Cultural Society

Interviewee 6

I had an opportunity to go out and start my own business and also began to become involved at the voluntary level at some of the committees for the tribe. One of those committees was for the cultural center planning committee and the tribal council accepted me to be on there along with ten other folks. Our role was to provide guidance in the development of the new cultural center at least to begin to plan how it would look like. And they already had a planner on board I am not sure why he left but he decided to leave and do something else, so I said "Shoot I could do that" so I have no museum experience per se I have worked with the state government, large private organization, so I had a pretty good feel of the management structure, to work with small community organizations, as the Indian center I worked with different native organizations. So I bring some skills in organizing for the job.

How Ziibiwing was formed:

The name came after, first we had to develop a mission, Ziibiwing cultural society was already in existence and they were already dealing with repatriation issues and was evolving they made a report to the council and in that report they felt they needed a cultural center. You know the tribe was growing and the casino was up and running. Created in 1993. Their first grant was a NAGPRA grant from the national park and they were dealing only with repatriation issues. So and it continued to evolve until it made to the council and the council said ok we will give you 3.5 million to the plan it. In 1995 they got the money to begin to plan it. (check dates) so bill woosky (?) was hired to begin

the planning, meanwhile they borrowed money from the tribe to. The tribe was going to lease out the gift shop to the casino and the hotel. But Ziibiwing had come in early because they saw some of the things the architects and the designers were putting in the casino and said "That is not us" then they went in and indianized the whole thing and identified all the native artists that had been commissioned to do work so that is why you have what you have now because of Ziibiwing leadership. They really taking over the design process from the designers that they already had. From that recognition and commitment to indianize it they went to the council and said "we would like to take over, rather lease out, the gifts shops in the hotel and casino' so they borrowed a 120 thousand dollars next thing you know they are successful. They are making money. But they don't know what to do with the money because Ziibiwing is neither fish nor fawn, so the tribe was giving Ziibiwing money to the budget process but they have 600 hundred thousand dollars in the bank. So Meanwhile we are going along with the planning process and we hired an architect, an exhibit designer to begin the pre- design process, we give them what we think what it is going to cost but we also include marketing study to figure out how much money it will take for us to be self sustaining. We went around through memberships, endowments, whatever, the annual budget we can be pretty much self-sufficiency with the gift shops. We now opened the third gift shop so it looks like it will be pretty self-sufficient. When I came in I looked at organization, there weren't any formal by laws or charter, organized them, and organized the structure of the organization into three departments. I am working with bonnie on all this, of course, it is not just me, giving her ideas, giving her thoughts, doing graphs she fine tunes it and gets them in the way she sees the organization because she really has the history of the organization.

Because she is one of the original people that started, they started the 7th generation, in fact, she Sharmane (I thought that was separate) well it is because Beaver came in and they kicked the women out so the women went over and started Ziibiwing. So bonnie and, the rez sisters they are called, created Ziibiwing.

Exhibit – name?

We have not come up with the name of the exhibit yet, of the seven themes. The exhibits that they do have, they create the exhibits that are in the casino, the artwork, so if you go through there you will see all those exhibits. You will se exhibit cases of the families, those are at the casino Ziibiwing did those. They are responsible for the artwork, maintaining it and keeping track of it, how it is displayed. They have that kind of exhibits design experience. I was on staff at that point working with JJA (design company) in the process and also in the development of the seven themes.

Themes:

The process was simply to great big brainstorm sessions on ideas and thoughts about should be in the permanent exhibit. First of all JJA designing craftsman there is something they could have done better but they tried to explain what a permanent exhibit was but I had already gone out to Warner spring and they had this kind of concept in their facility, then I took the architects out and met with that the exhibit designer, JJA and Bonnie and went and looked at all of those. So bonnie had an idea what a permanent exhibit would look like, so we brought back what we wanted the exhibit to look like. I am not sure the committee fully understood what the exhibit is going to look like yet. Till closer to the end I think there should have been a way that JJA could have had something a video or something to explain what this concept is all about – interpretive exhibit

design. So it started out as a big brainstorm, so JJA began to categorize all of this and we would critique it, and it really fell into place. Everything was chronological, the flow is all lineal, and that was one of our dilemmas do we want to follow that chronological timeline or you want to take just a spatial, we could go anyway we wanted this one just tracks you. So they decided for chronological better? No....well after a while they kind of liked that idea. When you go in you are committed to go through it, however fast you want to do it, if you want to run through it or spend time to go through it will tell our story but kind of like in a story, so they liked that idea.

Process:

Prior to ccp being created Ziibiwing had a number of folks on the board taking care of the organization and working with the organization but with the CCPC (cultural center planning committee) in place they were in charge with developing the organization, developing concept so the board is gotten a little weaker. But it was open to the general public, the tribal public to participate. Invitations were sent out and we had maybe 35 to 40 peoples originally when we first started and they got into it and they saw it would work. Some of them had just certain things they wanted to get in, certain elements they wanted to make sure that their stories were included.

How did the center do outreach:

We had a mailing list and plus announcement in the tribal observer. That would go out to the three districts, in fact it had more people outside the reservation than we had on the reservation (Marclay, Ana, and there is a lady in Williamston, they came from all over.

Consulted:

With JJA. Right now the exhibit committee as far as ccpc, by the end of the process we had probably 20 people, 15 that would come, that followed it through and knew what it was at the end, we had two committee meetings, it was put up and they could meet with the architects and designing folks, they (the committee) critiqued and make comments. Ccpc is made up of ten people, but not all of them come, we got one that showed up at one meeting, he is the assistant of tribal administrator who showed up when we were interviewing the architect and that was all. I asked him if he would come to the meeting but he said "oh I know you are going to put it together so I don't need to be there" they don't recognize that we really need their input, it is not a matter if it is going to get done it is a matter of getting their knowledge, their ideas are included and stimulate other thoughts.

There is no exhibit design committee per se, we have an exhibit design theme development group within the staff made up of pat, willie, maypigo, alice (?) and sharmane. They are putting together looking at all the collection and putting it into strands. Willie is going to tell you about that. Then we have an exhibit design team from the staff which bonnie and I oversee which is really the group that will be doing the overall kinds of things and working directly with JJA. We have put together a second exhibit design team for the JJA's work. We will bring back the same group that was there and make the same invitations, is pretty fluid, you may get people that just pop their head in and say "oh yeah let me sit down and listen" because working in the Indian community is kind of different, you kind of have a roster that is solid and concrete, people pick and choose when they want to come. You got to be pretty flexible, you got to adjust your agendas and you got to deal with the politics in the community, traditionalists,

activists, middle of the roaders all have ideas and all want their ideas in it. So you got to be able to work, we try to do our thing at Ziibiwing in a consensus model. So there are no winners and losers in our program you want to make sure that ideas and thoughts of everybody are included. We are careful to make sure that it is done is such a way that whatever project we are working on or whatever concept we are working on is not watered down, so it does not mean anything. One thing about Ziibiwing is that it tries to do cutting edge kinds of things.

Do they know NMAI?

Bonnie, when they got into the idea of building a cultural center and repatriation issues and they went to new York and looked at all the material that they thought were related or affiliated to our tribe from what I understand it was a pretty compelling experience. We have not gotten the materials yet, one of the reasons for the new building is that we don't have the space you see we are in three different buildings now, the yellow house where all the artifacts are, the collection, or the majority of it is pretty well packed. So that is our dilemma. You want to take care of the artifact as much as you can, provide the appropriate environment. Once you receive the material you keep it.

Policies on consultation:

I think NAGPRA has those in there, sending letters and contacting you sending information. But for exhibit design, the only thing that we are looking at is the physical facilities themselves so that would be in compliance with accreditation standards so we were able to accept traveling exhibits and can assure that our environment is safe. Our goal is to work only with the Saginaw Chippewa, we probably won't go outside of the

great lakes areas because all the three tribes of Michigan are affiliated to some extent, language cultural nuances actually a lot of research has been done on the Ojibwe who due to migration came down and split off so. The exhibit will be about the Anishnabe people but we will put more emphasis on the Saginaw swamp little black river Ojibwe, odawas will be there, you see a lot of those tribes are beginning to work within their own communities so we are not necessarily unique, our structure may be unique but some of those folks have been in handling with NAGPRA for a long time. But in the museum some exhibits may be related to other tribal groups, we got to be able to rotate. The permanent exhibit will bring folks in but you need to have them come back again, so evolving an exhibit program may include some of the southwest, northwest, you know so that we can make it entertaining and informational and educational. The permanent one will always be our story. I think that would change the elements of it may evolve five six years after it is up, you may get feed back.

Policies- laws on how to:

We have no exhibit policies per se we have collections policies, archival policies, code of ethics, but for exhibits there is no policy. Pat Willie, will comes up with something, my roles is to draft these things, doing some research drafting, then let them look at it and work with it, they are living documents anyway they change in how to best fit to our situation I am sure it will change once we get to the new building as well. We have a mission statement, vision, guiding principals, all that. That was one of the first things that we worked on with the committee as well as with the staff because everybody has to be in the same page to know what they are doing. It took a while and some people, it is something you write, it is no big deal, but now as you get into the budget process and

along with this at the same time I began to work on the budget process, projects, you know there was a hodge podge of projects going on, some not getting done some people working only on their baby projects and not really designing the projects to meet the mission. So once we got the mission now we work project to mission. The first year was pretty rough this year it was better I am sure by next year it will be even better. They understand now that that is what we are working on and that's what the projects are. It isn't statement write up, forget about it, particularly staff. Bonnie spent a lot of time to try to get the staff to recognize the connection between mission and projects because if they don't see it then it is going to be tuff for us to tell the others in the community what it is. But they are getting there.

We changed the mission statement a little bit, about two to three sentences long it is better but when we were developing, you know I was in the committee when we were developing it, and I was trying to get everyone to narrow it down but everybody wanted to get their own. I said ok, go ahead because as we get toying into it you will see that it is pretty big. And part of the mission statement is generating resources for the development of the Ziibiwing center, which is really the main objective. So it is just an avenue to get where you want to go. So they shortened it down to one sentence which is good.

Change in museums

Look at the field museum and even around the MU museum, they have become more interactive then they were before when you just walked around and looking at things and reading. I like that aspect of it you become involved with the museum and not just kind of a strenuous feature just kind of walking around. To me that is what I want

ours to be, to be interactive so that you become part of the exhibit weather it is through a game interaction or anything else.

I look at the early seventies to now, how their educational program has been, kids get in there and do things and that to me has been classic. They will use what materials we have form the collection and create educational units from those, that is what happened at st. val they have curriculum guides for educators to use. They will begin to take what material we have from the collections we have and create educational units from those. We will also have an educational collection that they can put together and send down with curriculum guides for teachers to use. That is a bigger aspects of what we are going to do. Remember our mission is to enlighten and to educate. It is going to be pretty big. (are you going to offer tours for schools etc?). I eventually want to have an Anishnabe institute and we will bring in teachers to use our research center to through curriculum development they can create units to use in the classroom, talk to guest instructors about native culture. It is not only for non-Indian but our own community is building their own history. Give them a chance to come and visit to meet.

Museum for whom:

13000 people coming to the casino a day if we get 1% of them a day....and we have tours. We are already beginning to connect with the marketing dept. at the casino. Our indigenous art show is going to be at the casino, we already 30 artists, actually fine arts artists, so we have those kind of programs but eventually we are going to have it in the building or on the grounds of the building. It also becomes another fundraiser, also a way to connect with the casino, another offer for them so they can bring more people for the casino or offer different kinds of things so they stay longer.

If you go to the casino there is a big kids quest that has video games and all those kind of things so eventually Ziibiwing would take that over and have cultural educational programming four or five hours a day kids can come in there and get a cultural experience instead of just sitting and play these video games, or even so they come to the center to do it.

One of the things we have been fortunate is that I don't recall any real negativity towards us but I think it is because we are being pretty thorough with our planning, Bonnie is very good at plan b's, whenever a question comes up so far we have been able to say "Yeah we thought of that if that is the case then we will do this" plus I think the council likes the idea "alright we are giving you the shots what are going to do with it, now we are showing these are things we can do to generate revenue, you help us with this building then we can develop an endowment and we hope and eventually we hope they won't have to cover our expenses other than discretionary funds.

Interviewee 7

We don't think of ourselves as a museum, everyone wants to categorize us like that so we like to think of it as a cultural center that will offer things like language classes and all that not typical of a museum with galleries and exhibits. We want a component of that there is a need for that but there is also a need for more information so we propose to try to include and incorporate. I don't like to say I work for a museum. We work with the tribal communities for my whole career. I went to school in Washtenaw and graduated in political science with minor in Native American studies I have approximately 17 years working in tribal organizations I usually end up in administrative positions. I always want to work on hand on positions but I always end up organizing. Then work in community development. I am working on my masters on public administration.

Exhibit themes:

We are working on a broader concept I can't say specifically about any individual exhibit but we have done work on seven major themes. We are working with a design company to develop those. But we have a whole concept of exhibit developments. We have several years of community development of the themes. We went out at the at large districts and people came and said what they wanted to have what they want people to know. This is the people's place. We work for the community. The majority of my staff are native people that come from all walks of life. It is their story too

Who contacted/consulted:

Yes well we have a design firm we are working with but I felt like they were not doing a very good job, I guess that is the best way to put it, so we took it away from them and we redid it because what they were doing was putting us in their preconceived ideas

of what they thought it should be our story. No no that is not what we said where did you get those ideas. We have a technique that we use in the strategic planning process that you can acquire in many ways, you actually let people brainstorm ideas you write it in pieces of paper and then you put it up on the wall and what happens is that you start to see similar ideas similar themes that people see and feel real passionate about you can actually see what people are thinking because they have to write it up five words or less on sheets of paper and you pick the five best ideas if you have a big group you end up with all these pieces of paper on the wall and then everybody sits there and we have to categorize. Oh ok, there was a huge category on spiritual beliefs the people themselves were saying they have to know about our spirituality. The questions we asked were if you wanted the general public to know something about you as a Anishnabe what would you want them to know what would be the most important thing for them to learn what do you want them to walk away from in this place and to learn about. And usually people know from their own life experience what other people don't know about. We ended up with that one spiritual belief. But is was a touchy one because the history of our community we have a section of Christian people who are very fundamentalist and we have a group of young people and people who follow more a traditional road and are really very curious about their cultural heritage and they want to go back and learn those things and sometimes it does not always work together but what we have always said is it does not matter what road you choose it is theirs it is their spirituality who are we to judge them we can have two Anishnabe in from of us and we can have one traditionalist and another Christian, they both have a strong sense of spirituality and they are both right. It is not up to us to impose one or the other what is cool about it is strong either way it is

so strong. And that is an important thing to tell, because when you have been discriminated the way my people have there are things that kill you through and spirituality is part of it. So that came really clear. The other theme was "from those before us" is what we call it, we know and we respect that we would never be what we are without our ancestors, we have to recognize how important they are. So we know that not only in the spiritual sense, but in the basic science and geography of Michigan they left their signs, they left us signs in the names of places: Saginaw, Michigan, Ishpeming, these are all Anishnabe words. And a lot of the major roads, the major Indian trails, there was a major trade network that was established pre contact, so we need to connect to that, people try to disconnect us from that past the archaeologist always try do that but then my question is where do we come from, they can't answer that but they sure are adamant about oh no that is not your ancestor, on the other hand they can't say this is your ancestors, they don't have the scientific proof that we didn't descend from those archaeological finds that they try to classify all the time, where did we come from. We have been here for thousands and thousands of years. There are signs that tell us that, signs that were left on the earth.

On the "Those before us" we are talking about history, old traditions. The proof is in the earth itself, in the environment, in our language in the way it is spoken it is very descriptive it is not like English at all.

Themes:

Spirit of the people

From those before

Effects of colonization- trauma, pain, tragedy. There are various effects not only with the land but personally and socially all of those things that happened there are all kinds of materials and information in that realm. People always want to know, you have to tell them about the boarding schools, you got to tell them about this...how this happened, why this happened, why we are on a reservation so that is people want to know about who they are. That was out biggest list, people even on the daily basis still deal with the effects of colonization because the racism still exists.

Strengths in the community - Despite of all those effects of colonization there some strengths in the community and family that are very very strong.

Creative lifeways- there is an ability to adapt and be very creative to continue to know our identity and our heritage despite of all the policies and practices that were imposed upon us in all of the generations following the contact we are still here we still have that identity.

Retaining sovereignty- that was what the federal government did to us, they can't because we are still here, we have direct connection to the land, and being the original owners, the indigenous people, we are the original people of this land, I always try to tell the little children, little native children that that is the an absolutely unique status that they can claim, nobody else in this country can say. You are descendants of this very land right here and nobody else is. So the things that you create in art and the things that you have learned from your grandparents are extremely special but don't even appreciate them because we take it for granted but if we look at it in the global sense it is absolutely unique.

So that is how we did it we have district community members there and then we have gotten information from previous sessions, and we have ten to twenty five people from seven other sessions that we held around the state. We held around the state because there are tribal members who live like towards Oscoda, we held one in Saginaw and we try to make as convenient as possible for them to come. We literally set up and we did the same exercise with them so they can write it down with their own hand so they can see it. We modeled after the at large program because that is what they do, they know the distribution of the population of tribal members so they host their quarterly gathering at different locations and they base those divisions of locations on I think the number of people that reside in different areas. Amy Alberts is the person that organized the at large program.

We went to five communities. After a while you start to get the same things came up over and over people get pretty passionate about particular things and particular items even the way that we got those six that we listed and we sat there we would read through them and said "what would this be called" we had to agree upon that as a group "is this saying what we are trying to say right here" and then we bring back to the people and then if someone objects then we explain why "is this going to work, does this say what we mean? Is this going to be powerful enough?

At each meeting we had about ten to twenty five people at each meeting statewide community meetings. When we pulled them all together we had about fifty people consulted. Then we invited all directors of programs and tried to invite key people who we knew had lots of influence with large families in the community too. Because there is a whole that thing of strings of families there is still a home system that works in our

community, even when you go to another native communities in Michigan they always wan to know who is your family who are your parents because then maybe their grandparents will know our grandparents. There is this huge connection of our history and family ties for the indigenous people. Yes I made a call on the clan families, I call that but many people don't call them that but that is what they are. Because even when we have community meetings here on the reservation, all the families sit together because well it is a natural thing, you are familiar with your family and you go and sit by your sister by your aunts and uncles and then next thing you know you got a couple of tables full of people of your clan. It is kind of a cool thing to see. We had to network and we had to take the time to do that. We did mailing list and everybody got a mail. We wanted to give people equal opportunity to participate. Because this is their story not ours, this can drive people crazy but.

So we did a community outreach using the strategic process allowing them to visualize it, organize it, because actually take a piece of paper and move it, these clumps look like they belong together and then it becomes more of a clump you line them up in sequence and then you name it so the groupings kind of happen naturally, nobody's ideas get thrown out they just get grouped.

We gave a 10 to 15 minute blurb just so they know what our programs are about. Keep in mind the facility that we are building is a wider audience and we know this but in order to plan this we need to tap into the owners and the owners are the people so that is what we did.

I try not to do is put categories in boxes. If it is a truly an institution of education and learning then people should have the freedom to be as creative as possible otherwise you never discover anything new you just keep following the same routines.

I see museums as educational institutions. I think they have an important function even a lot of focus of museums is maybe a family orientation or a particular companies orientation but they are there for different reasons. Ziibiwing is similar to many museums, we try not to reinvent the wheel

The systems of collections, the systems of organizing we are not going to beat our head against the wall and try to think of a new one. However we modify to fit what we need to work on a tribal government situation to work with family respecting the individual families, because that is whom we are representing. So that has to be formal and informal.

Visit to NMAI:

They are very institutional. I think when you have millions and millions of objects they did what they needed to do. To me that was really heart breaking that whole acquisition process, me and Marclay and Kyle went to the Bronx when they had all that stuff stored there and that was very disturbing. We visited in 95, or 96. I left in tears; I could not take it. It was awful they told us that they had I don't even know how many human remains up there. That was it for me, it ruined it. Not only did he buy them but he got people up too. And some of the things they were showing us to me I it was clear that this is not in the appropriate place to have things. Those things were part of the living culture and you can feel the energy of it. We did communicate as well as we should. I just left in tears. It felt really wrong. I had a hard time with that. I was grateful that at

least those things exist otherwise we would not even have that. But it was still hurtful. We have not pushed with NMAI yet, to recover the material. We don't have a place yet, a lot of acquisitions within our own community are in houses, we are in houses, literally. We look forward to being more active in that, I can't open that door in good conscious and be purely emotional and then have all these things and then I will be doing the same thing they will be stacked.... We have to have a plan before even bringing them, we need to tap into our traditions, the people in our community and what shall we do. These things are important, and maybe we need to use these things in ceremonies and maybe we need to have copies of these here. So we know the things that exist we have to make them work for us here. The law required that all public institutions who received that public money had to notify every single federally recognized tribe so we have files of cabinets of institutions who have things that could possibly should come back to us or to an Ojibwe nation and that is Kyle's job. But you can only do what you can do. It took this long for things, since contact, for all those things to come into that state of where they are we certainly can't rectify it in one little generation of people.

For example the moccasin exhibit at NMAI, what some people may have a problem with is that they are used for different things, it depends on how they are used and who is or was using them. The lack of content is what can be disturbing. I may make a pair of moccasins and just wear it because I want to but I can also make a pair to wear with my jingle dress and do a dance for someone that is sick, that changes the meaning of the moccasin.

Consultation:

Anyone that wanted to participate just showed in. We have discussed a lot about that in staff, but I have been working in the native community long enough that generally you don't get an overwhelming response like so many people that you can't handle, oh what if we get two hundred people, we will never get that many unless we are giving away a car.....(laughs) that may get a full house. We get people who have a genuine interest and those are the ones we want to capture and their ideas. A lot of times we need to go and get them, the elders, and we go where they are at. "So what are you guys doing... do you want to come over" sometimes they can't but they will tell you what they think, so it becomes somewhat of a personal interview too. It does not mean that because they did not come to the meeting their ideas are not valuable.

Policies on consultation:

I think a lot of people, the NAGPRA forced a lot of institutions to do that. Change only happens when they are forced to do that.

I think that for us we only take so much, we don't have to, we have our resources now to do the things that need to be done and we will do that. People are more informed and people want to take action and this is a democracy so.

All roads are good:

It was a nice exhibit, the only thing I questioned when I was there, they are a very institutional organization, they have to be to a point because they are accountable to 500 indigenous nations

How else can you do that in one place. It was very generic, it showed it was good, but it felt just like another public museum. It was better done, if was more from the tribal people themselves, yes.

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