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NOW SHOWING:
GREAT LAKES INDIANS
AT YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC HISTORY MUSEUM

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Mary Alice Smith

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Master's degree in Anthropology

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**NOW SHOWING:
GREAT LAKES INDIANS
AT YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC HISTORY MUSEUM**

By

Mary Alice Smith

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

**NOW SHOWING:
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By

Mary Alice Smith

Local or state public history museums share similar goals to present the shared history of a particular region whether it is city, county, state or nationally drawn boundaries. In the context of Great Lakes history museums, Native Americans are often used as an introductory chapter. Unfortunately, they are often represented as part of the national historic past, keeping museum visitors distant from contemporary Native American people. There has been critique about the way museums portray Native Americans because they reinforce a stereotype known as the mythical Indian. There have been adjustments within the core narratives in museums, and temporary exhibits that address the stereotype, but the mythical Indian is alive and well in museum exhibits. Therefore, what are the benefits of preserving and presenting the mythical Indian for museums?

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For my husband Bob,
thank you for giving me a great idea
and mission for this project!

And for Emily our toddler,
thank you for being a good girl
while mommy wrote her paper.

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CHAPTER ONE: **INTRODUCTION**

This research will identify how Native Americans are portrayed in local or state history museums, and how museum exhibits reinforce the image of the mythical Indian, keeping museum visitors distant from contemporary Native American people. The mythical Indian is a non-threatening, generalized, incompetent, historic Native American in a state of nature, presented opposite to Euro-Americans, and part of the national historic past. The mythical Indian serves an important purpose within the national narrative as an introductory chapter to the common history of the region; consequently, the mythical Indian becomes a necessary component of national identity. For many local or state public history museums, it seems impossible to tell regional narratives without this introductory chapter. Museums have been critiqued for presenting Native Americans in this manner because it reinforces a stereotype. As a result, many museums have made adjustments. However, the mythical Indian is alive and well in museum exhibits. For that reason, I propose the following question: Although adjustments have been made to address the critique, how do local or state public history museums continue to preserve and present the mythical Indian?

Since the late 1970's Native American representation has been a major topic of discussion in both anthropology and museum studies. Given this, I used the perspective of a museum anthropologist to study institutions that use Native American material culture to express ideas through visual display. Previous research has identified the role of the mythical Indian in the national narrative, recognized the characteristics of the mythical Indian, critiqued the use of the mythical Indian in literature, movies, media, and

museums, and discussed the challenge of changing this stereotype. In addition, there is a body of literature that discusses how representation is improving.

Despite the vast amount of literature on this topic, a regional study of Native American representation in museums has not been done. Therefore, I chose six museums in Michigan, some with multiple site locations, for comparison. All of them are public museums that discuss social history (some also discuss natural history), serve communities of 100,000 or more, and have both temporary and permanent exhibits. I examined them visually, researched archival information, and conducted interviews in an effort to construct a history of Native American representation for each museum for analysis. I looked at how museums have represented Native Americans over time, if representation has changed like the literature suggests, and if museum efforts remove the stereotype or perpetuate it further. I evaluated each museum based on the measures taken to address the stereotype of the mythical Indian and evaluated how certain philosophies that govern the museums may inhibit an accurate portrayal of Native Americans.

The Public Museum of Grand Rapids represents its community through collaboration with its members. It is both historic and contemporary. The museum is flexible in its philosophy allowing them to be contemporary, and flexible in their themes and policies allowing Native Americans to represent themselves. The permanent exhibits focus on the community, while the temporary exhibits bring the outside world to the community (Carron 2005). Given that Native Americans have been a consistent presence in the region, it makes sense that a Native American exhibit has a permanent place in the museum. Creating a collaborative exhibit with the Native American community, giving it a separate and permanent space, and allowing the theme to be more flexible exemplifies

an alternate model of Native American representation that is culturally appropriate to contemporary Indian people.

The Detroit Historical Museum makes an effort to present a shared past through its permanent exhibits (Zembala 2006). It is flexible and regularly creates collaborative exhibits about marginal groups with historical and contemporary aspects through temporary displays. In 2001, they produced the collaborative exhibit *Lands, Lives, and Legends* that mirrored Grand Rapids permanent exhibit, *Anishnabek*, but unlike Grand Rapids, this exhibit was temporary. I did not visit the museum during the 2001 exhibit, therefore I learned about the mythical Indian presented in the permanent exhibit *Frontiers to Factories* that focuses on the progress of the city of Detroit.

The Michigan Historical Museum tells the history of an entire state in a broad way through selective discussions of the people and the region's resources. They are flexible in their philosophy, themes, and policies and address controversy and contemporary topics in their temporary space. The museum organized one long chronological permanent exhibit from Michigan's prehistory up to the latter part of the 20th century. Great Lakes Native America is given a substantial portion of this exhibit in the beginning. Several minimal and understated statements introduce the controversial post-contact period but other statements relieve most accountability. The museum dedicated a large portion of the exhibit to Native American history as seen through archaeology and, unlike other linear exhibits, in this study Indians are mentioned periodically throughout. However, I found that the mythical Indian described above made an appearance, as needed.

Cranbrook Institute of Science primarily covers topics associated with the natural sciences. Interestingly, the museum also experiments with social history. This is evident in two separate exhibits about Native Americans. One includes statements from a contemporary Native American man, while the other shows huge pictures of historic Native American people, out of context, while discussing their material culture scientifically. While the museum demonstrates contemporarity, collaboration, and flexibility, it fails to take advantage of the different opportunities a *natural* history museum has by introducing Native American social history outside the context of the national narrative.

The Monroe County Historical Museum operates with the smallest staff and budget of all six museums. Understandably, the museum makes the General A. Custer exhibit its priority because the exhibit is their biggest attraction and Custer's presence has made Monroe famous (Naveaux 2005). In addition, Monroe is famous for being the location of one of the more significant battles in the War of 1812, and a visitor center with exhibits is operated by the museum. Ironically, Native Americans played a controversial role in both Custer's life and the Battle of the River Raisin. The Monroe County Historical Museum operates under somewhat stricter philosophy than the previous museums. They are a traditional historical museum that does not cover contemporary topics. The museum has attempted to form relationships with the Native American community and get them involved in some of their projects, but given the non-flexible philosophy of this traditional museum, collaborative projects with Native American people are difficult if not impossible. In addition, they shy away from controversy and present passive versions of Custer's life, the War of 1812, and Native

American history. In the absence of contemporarity, collaboration, and flexibility in their themes, I found only the mythical Indian at this museum.

The Henry Ford prides itself on being “America’s Greatest History Attraction” with an emphasis on material progress and invention. This version of history is based on Henry Ford’s view of history as progressive, optimistic, and technological (The Henry Ford n.d.). They adhere strictly to Ford’s philosophy, and like Monroe are a more traditional history museum that does not address contemporary topics, again making collaborative efforts with Native Americans difficult. The village focuses primarily on the time frame between the mid-eighteenth century up to about 1945. The museum planned to include an earlier chapter to the village narrative by adding an eighteenth century Native village within the compound but their philosophy restricted a consensus with the Native community. Historically and currently, Native Americans’ representation has been limited. However, the museum sector of The Henry Ford uses Native American material culture to contrast American progress and ingenuity making Indian contributions to this alternate telling of history minimal.

My study illustrates how six museums incorporated or attempted to incorporate Native Americans into their museums and how their individual philosophies dictated the finished product. Regardless of how good or bad the representation of Native Americans are in each of the museums, I have come to the conclusion that the reason the stereotype persists is because in many ways the image of the mythical Indian benefits museums more than accurate portrayals of Native Americans. In view of the fact that the mythical Indian supports the progressive themes of the national narrative, excuses accountability from the past injustices, encourages patriotism, makes a compelling display, has box

office appeal, provides entertainment, supports limited museum collections, and encourages instructional lessons, it is not surprising that I found the presence of the mythical Indian in all of the museums at some point with most of them currently utilizing this stereotype.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Presentation of the National Narrative in Museums

Trouillot (1995) suggests that the nature of history is one-sided because most theories of history are built without much attention to the process of production of specific historical narratives. "At best, history is a story about power, a story about those who won." (Trouillot 1995:5). Power and the production of history suggest a Euro-American perspective for the national narrative that is reproduced in public museums. King (1996) supplies a concrete example of the national narrative hiding the realities of a complex history through historical presentation with his study of the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. He argues that the positioning of Native Americans relative to Euro-Americans presents the experiences of both groups asymmetrically, illustrating hierarchy, dominance, and difference. For the purposes of this paper, I applied Trouillot's theory to local or state public museums that present a regional version of the national narrative that highlights the success of Euro-settlers. King provided a way to evaluate how Euro-American success stories found in museums make it impossible to represent Native Americans impartially in the same museum exhibit. So, museums present the mythical Indian.

Native Americans serve as an introductory chapter in the national narrative that is visible through museum displays. How did they get this introductory role? Handler (1985) states that nationalists must make claim to and specify the nation's possessions, and construct an account of the unique culture history in order to meet the challenge of an outsider's denial of national existence. In other words, America had to claim something

exclusively “American” to demonstrate its independence and distinguish itself from Europe. Therefore, attaching a Native American identity to the beginning of the Euro-American narrative helped create a bond with the land and generate a new, and more importantly, separate identity.

Huhndorf (2001) provides an exhibition example from the past. She argues that the use of Native objects at the world’s fairs of the nineteenth century reinforced the progress that America had achieved by placing Native objects in an evolutionary sequence. The sharp *contrast* between Native people in natural settings with raw materials and Americans with industrially advanced objects, served to glorify American success, distinguish them from their European rivals, and reinforce a separate American identity. I looked for this kind of arrangement and found the idea of contrast through more subtle practices like a display of objects ordered in a museum display on an evolutionary scale.

Deloria (1998) discusses how the events of the Boston Tea Party also served to define Americans as something other than British. “Mohawk disguises allowed Bostonians not only to articulate ideologically useful Indian identities but also to perform and experience them” (Deloria 1998:6). He gives a number of other examples including fraternal organizations and the Boy Scouts that use idealized or mythical Indians as role models. Not only does the mythical Indian solidify a separate identity, Deloria (1998) states that playing one has become a persistent American tradition. In a similar fashion, Huhndorf (2001) describes how going native is an integral performance of national identity. Museum exhibits that invite the visitor to share in an Indian experience and engage in Native activities and reenact Native history allows non-Native visitors to

absorb Native America, forget about conquest, and protect our image as historical innocents. I looked for museum exhibits that offer a chance for non-natives to play Indian or go Native, and if the opportunity reinforces the stereotype.

The evolutionary organization continues to be a popular mode of display in museums, not because Americans are trying to prove their nationhood to Europe anymore, but perhaps rationalize it for themselves. Bennett (1995) identifies a relationship between the museum, the state, and the public, and reveals how present day exhibits alter and systematize meaning by significant technical or economic structures, while disregarding political and social realism. He goes on to state that this mode of representation constructs for the visitor a position of achieved humanity of which the region is a part. Huhndorf (2001) explains that the denial of the horrors of the past and their omission in historical narratives is obvious because acknowledging them contradicts the imaginary unity of the nation, and damages the idea of a free and democratic nation, thereby, challenging the legitimacy of Euro-American presence on the landscape. “Moreover, the conquest of Native America, which took hundreds of years to complete, cannot be dismissed as an anomaly. Rather, it is the foundational event in American history. As such, it has been built into the nation’s narratives though in distorted and obfuscatory ways” (Huhndorf 2001:11). Bird (1996) describes how the mythic Pocahontas is used to explain to whites their right to be here, which helps cope with lingering guilt about the displacement of the Native people. “...after all, the ‘good’ Indians helped us out and recognized the inevitability of White conquest” (Bird 1996:2).

A nationalistic aspect of Native American museum representation is evident through the patriotic appropriation of Native American identities and imagery during

national anniversary years. For example, there was the 1975 exhibition The American Indian//The American Flag. In 1976, Art of the First Americans and Sacred Circles commemorated the American Bicentennial. In 1983, Patterns of Power opened in Canada to commemorate the bicentennial of the province of Ontario. Simpson (1999) discusses a number of short-term exhibits that marked the 500th anniversary of Columbus' landing and the precautions taken in an anticipation of protest. Through the eyes of many Native Americans 1992 was not a time for celebration, but rather a time for grief and sorrow. Nonetheless, Native Americans were the top box office draw for a number of nationwide exhibits during this anniversary. For example in 1992, Art of the American Indian Frontier opened during the quincentenary celebration of the Columbus "discovery". The above examples come from art museums, nonetheless these examples are relevant because they advertised Native material culture to promote and celebrate regional history, and reinforced National identity by utilizing the box office draw of an appropriated patriotic symbol described here as the mythical Indian. I looked for this pattern in the museums studied in this paper.

Native American Representation

"The misrepresentation, commodification, and distortion of indigenous identities have existed from the moment of first contact" (Bataille 2001:1). This quotation synthesizes Native American representation in all its forms. The mythical Indian found in history textbooks, film and television, artistic images, and museum exhibits across the region is a stereotype produced by an outsider. Bataille states, "The backdrop of centuries of misrepresentation has taken its toll. Woodcuts, paintings, explorers' journals, and

missionary accounts provided early images to Europeans, and movies, western novels, and cartoons have perpetuated the myths and stereotypes” (2001: 4). She also argues that the tourist industry (of which museums are a part), art and literature, anthropologists and ethnographers have also mythologized Native Americans.

Early Native American ethnographies of the 19th century were filtered through an evolutionary worldview, which created a portrait of a primitive form of the human race absent of civilization and fixed in time. For example, Morgan (1851) established a theoretical framework to compare Native Americans to Euro-Americans. He measured the kinship patterns of Native Americans on an evolutionary scale based on the assumption that Euro-Americans represented the most advanced form. In other words, the barbaric kinship patterns of Native Americans represented civilized Euro-Americans in an *ancestral* state, making Native Americans inferior. In a similar fashion, Schoolcraft (1851-1857) compares what he interpreted as a pagan belief system to that of his own monotheistic religion, rendering Native American people as morally inferior and in need of guidance. These early published descriptions of Native Americans created a picture of Indian people as primitive, childlike, silent characters without reaction to the power, politics, and events that surrounded them.

Berkhofer (1978) offers insight into the white interpretation of Native Americans. He identified three persistent practices that whites use to interpret Indian people. First, they generalize, using one tribal culture to explain all Native Americans. This helps to validate popular images and keep museum descriptions simple. Second, they use white ideals rather than Indian ideals to point out deficiencies in Indian culture to accentuate western progress. In other words, Native inadequacy is due to a lack of western ways. For

example, I found that museums often compare metal to stone technology. And third, whites have used a moral evaluation as a description of Indians. For example, Schoolcraft's (1851-1857) descriptions are based on his own religious ideology.

Dressing in Feathers (Bird 1996) is a general collection of essays about the historical and contemporary fabrication of the Indian by white culture. In the introduction, Bird discusses how specific Indian characters in white literature, for example Pocahontas, are those who sided with the invaders and are not heroic figures to their own people. In fact, the entire story of Pocahontas was created from two brief episodes in Captain John Smith's writings. The components of the mythical Indian are introduced throughout the seventeen essays within the book. Taken together, the authors create a list of ways whites have imagined and represented Native Americans.

The various authors identify prominent traits through their individual studies of Native Americans and I used this list during my evaluation. Merskin (1996) gives the Native physical characteristics as straight black hair, ruddy complexion, high cheekbones, and a pronounced nose. They wear loincloths, buckskins, feathers, and beads. Behavioral characteristics represent Indian people as friendly, peaceful, childlike or innocent (Bird 1996). The mystical qualities present Indian people as having an affinity with nature (Bird 1996; Steele 1996;), and noble (Bird 1996; Jones 1996; Goodyear 1996; Bloom 1996; Baird 1996; Bloom 1996). They are portrayed as silent or indifferent to white progress (Jones 1996; Goodyear 1996), impersonal, anonymous or generic (King 1996; Taylor 1996; Bird 1996), often drunken (Duran 1996; Merskin 1996), opposite of white (Martin 1996), non-threatening (Mechling 1996), and frozen in time (Bird 1996; Steele 1996; Geller 1996; King 1996). Generally speaking, the mythical

Indian is a non-threatening, generalized, incompetent, historic Native American in a state of nature, presented physically and culturally opposite of Euro-Americans, and part of the national historic past.

Criticisms

Early ethnographic descriptions of Native Americans have been reevaluated and museum exhibits have been reinterpreted. Bieder (1986) provides a contextual interpretation of Morgan and Schoolcraft, which exposes their motives. He argues that Morgan wrote with ethnological and biological assumptions while Schoolcraft drew largely from personal experience, religious subjectivity, and pressures to encourage assimilation. We might expect that the representations of Morgan, Schoolcraft, and the world's fairs would be similar, given the nineteenth century evolutionary frame of mind. What is somewhat of a surprise, are that Bennett's (1995) observations about progressive structures, and King's (1996) example about the Little Bighorn Battlefield's asymmetrical representation suggest that not much has changed in the way displays are organized. People and their objects continue to be organized in an evolutionary order. For example, Indian people often disappear from the national or local narrative without reason following the technological and economic success of Euro-American settlers.

Nason (2000) explains how even few exhibitions on Native Americans specifically have anything to do with the contemporary world. These exhibits disconnect continuity while disembodiment Indian presence. For example, he argues that archaeological exhibitions end at contact period and do not link the present to the past. Open storage displays negate the educational or historical mission of museums entirely

creating an interpretive void within which Native American objects are reduced to a cultural anonymity. “Never in the history of museums have so many displays like this conveyed so little for so long” (Nason, 2000: 38).

With the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990, the museum community was forced to face its past as far as objects were concerned. The ownership and appropriation of the collections claimed by museums and viewed as part of the collective national identity were challenged. It was time to address the suspicious and questionable collection methods employed in their histories. In order to continue their goals to protect their treasures, new relationships had to be formed and some power had to be sacrificed. Haas (1991) and Roth (1991) addressed positive changes with the practice of compromise and new methods of collaboration concerning collections and exhibition. However, is collaboration and compromise the norm or the exception? There are an endless number of papers that explain how to improve Native American representation but is it worth giving up the benefits the mythical Indian provides for museums?

Native American people have also added their opinions to the discussion. Horse Capture (1991) argues that once an object has been kept for an extended period of time it becomes part of the national heritage. The former methods of collection and the current displays of these objects create a loss of Indian pride. He also states that Indian people have never been part of the great American melting pot and it is important for them to represent their own heritage. Wedll (2000) provides an example of Indian people presenting their own heritage. She identifies the goals of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe museum to represent Indian people as not just part of the nation’s past and to correct

current stereotypes. The museum exhibits illustrate survival and continuity as opposed to showcasing an extinct and primitive form of Americans. As discussed above, this is something that public history museums have often failed to do. Art museums are particularly vulnerable to scrutiny, primarily because of complex issues involving the treatment, definition, and display of Indian art. Hill (2000) addresses many of these issues, including a critique of the ever-popular use of the diorama. He states that dioramas can provide an important context for learning how art functions in society but also “tend to keep Indians in the natural history arena, next to the stuffed animals and frozen specimens” (Hill 2000:41) In addition, he states that museums still organize exhibitions around the categories Morgan (discussed above) created despite the problems associated with his interpretations of Indian people. I found that history museums also use dioramas with Indian art arranged around Morgan’s categories, but art museums give the objects context in the utilitarian sense. In the context of the national narrative found in many museum narratives, contrast is the more likely message.

Challenging the Mythical Indian

All of the above criticisms are valid, however, the proper portrayal of ethnic objects is not the only dilemma public history museum professionals face. The organization of an exhibit in a gallery presents the curator with a number of complicated choices that may compromise Native history in favor of the more popular version of American history. Museums must consider the success of their institutions, financial limitations, education, accuracy and loyalty to an object, and the positive experience for their visitors. Nason’s (2000) article also identifies the dilemma that museum

professionals face when presenting Native culture to the museum public. Nason explains that if the exhibits do not meet the expectations of their visitors then repeat attendance is unlikely.

Every Historian delivers a narrative with a certificate of authenticity, however qualified. From the viewpoint of its audience, the historical narrative must pass a test of acceptance, which reinforces the claim to knowledge: that which is said to have happened is believed to have happened. (Trouillot 1995:158)

In the above quotation, Trouillot discusses the audience for whom the narrative is created. Historians, or museums, follow the established guidelines accepted by their audience, or visitors. It is this firmly planted public memory that most challenges historians and museums. Lubar (1994) argues that memory is how we connect with our individual pasts and that it serves our own purposes. It guides and inhibits the communication of new information and dictates what is deemed appropriate. Like Nason's argument above, contemporary Native Americans are not seen as "real" Indians because the organization of museum exhibits fails to make a connection between the past and the present, further encouraging the stereotype.

However, as stated in the introduction, it seems that the national narrative cannot be told without the earliest chapter starring the mythical Indian. For example, Huhndorf (2001) describes how the stereotype served in the past as a point of contrast to emphasize the progress of America, to authenticate a unique culture history, and preserve an identity. It is often necessary to identify something by comparing it to what it is not. The exotic mythical American Indian is what separates America from the rest of the globe and symbolizes a region. As a result, attempts to deconstruct the stereotype are often met with resistance. Therefore, integrating new perspectives into the representation of Indian

people may question our identity, bring a sense of guilt or feelings of disbelief, and ultimately undermine the positive museum experience.

Nevertheless, historical memory is reinforced, in part, by museums. Handler (1985,1997) states that the creation of cultural property is dictated by and packaged in museums to create and provide a unique regional culture history, and secure an identity. In other words, Americans believe that the objects manufactured by Native Americans are part of the collective national heritage. Horse Capture (1991) briefly talks about how even though Native people have never been part of the melting pot, Indian objects have come to be considered part of the national heritage because it is often believed that once an object has been kept for long periods of time, it becomes part of the keeper's cultural heritage. Mythical Indians, and not Native Americans, provide a foundation for American culture history, protect the belief in historical innocence, and preserve memory, thus securing a positive visitor experience.

Studies have revealed many of the problems with public history museum interpretations of Native Americans. Emmison and Smith (2000) suggest that museums are rich research sites for visual researchers interested in exploring power, ideology, and discourses through the analysis of displays, pictures, and texts. They propose a framework to investigate the three dimensional visual data found in museums based, on Lidchi's (1997) theory. She argues that museum displays are about ideas, not so much in the societies represented as much as the society doing the representing. She identifies four significant features to museums. First is representation, which refers to the way museums claim to present some episode in time in microcosm. Second is classification, which deals with the way museums organize themes, topics, and objects. Third is

motivation or purpose, which is often educational. Fourth is interpretation, or the function of museums to provide an understanding of the purpose of their exhibits in a broader framework of meaning.

As already discussed, museums are aware of the criticisms that Native American representation contain hidden or blatant bias and privilege the views of powerful groups.

Emmison and Smith list ways museums have dealt with these criticisms through:

- (1) Displays and exhibitions seeking to record and validate the material culture and life experience of forgotten groups (e.g. display on women's lives)
- (2) Attempts to foreground the process of constructing an exhibit (e.g. a panel in which the curator explains the process of selecting items for display)
- (3) Greater attention to the political contexts (e.g. discussions of the detrimental impacts of colonialism, multinationals, genocide on a particular tribal people)
- (4) Efforts at cultural relativism (e.g. Coca-Cola cans displayed next to a traditional drinking vessel. Accompanying description draws parallels between them: 'Both are powerful symbols in their own society')
- (5) Pointing out the positive role of the museum in preserving cultural heritage (e.g. photos of museum staff working alongside indigenous people) rather than appropriating it (Emmison and Smith 2000:122).

The mythical Indian grounds the national narrative and therefore national identity, however distorted it may be (Bird 1996; Huhndorf 2001). Museums create a regional identity through museum collections (Handler 1985,1997), and Indian objects have become part of the national heritage (Horse Capture 1991). Museums attempt to convey a common history (Lidchi 1997). However, that common history (a.k.a. popular history) still has a perspective because history is manufactured (Trouillot 1995; Handler 1985), and this manufactured history serves our own purposes (Lubar 1997; Bird 1996). Spatial and thematic decisions within an exhibit can preserve the mythical Indian by ignoring

realistic renditions of the past (Nason 2000; Bennett 1995). Manifestations of the mythical Indian in existing museums exhibits (Huhndorf 2001), or temporary Native American exhibits created for the primary purpose to commemorate local or national anniversary celebrations (Simpson 1999) encourage a distorted national identity.

Museums are aware of these critiques and have addressed them in various ways (Smith and Emmison 2000), but although attempts have been made to address the critique, I argue that local or state public history museums continue to preserve and present the mythical Indian.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Data Collection

Although museums make attempts to address critique, I argue that local or state public history museums continue to preserve and present the mythical Indian. In order to support make my argument I began data collection with a survey of websites to establish a comparable sample (See Appendices A and B). I looked for public history museums in Michigan that discussed social history, served communities of 100,000 or more, and consisted of permanent and temporary exhibits. From there I devised a plan to collect information about six museums. In order to answer the proposed question and address the persistence of the mythical Indian despite critique, I had to establish a pattern of representation. Therefore, I needed a history of Native American representation for each museum. I conducted interviews, viewed current exhibits, and researched available archives.

I did the interviews first, because I needed the informants to help me find additional sources of information that would help me make more contacts if needed. I chose my informants based on their job descriptions. I wanted people who were familiar with the general aspects of the museum, particularly exhibition procedures, and who had something to do with the exhibition process. My initial call for interviews requested time with the directors, but because I sent them a summary and questionnaire, many of them suggested others that would be more helpful. I used their advice and contacted those who were suggested. My informants, familiar with my questions, saved me some work by bringing copies of various leaflets, flyers, and procedure documents that they felt would be helpful.

I used a set of questions (See Appendix C) with my informants based on my original ideas about the placement and importance of Native Americans in the context of a generalized historical narrative. My informants answered questions about challenges, exhibition strategies, and goals. They discussed the different policies on how they determined topics for permanent and temporary exhibits. We talked about Native American representation specifically and how Native Americans fit into each museum's philosophy. In general, the interviews allowed museum staff an opportunity to explain the way each museum interprets history, their feelings about Native American representation specifically, their limitations, and their goals for the future. The interviews averaged about one hour in length. I taped the interviews and coded their responses on worksheets. The worksheets included the question or topic, the informant's response, and a column for key terms and thoughts.

Next, I viewed all of the exhibits in each museum. I collected leaflets, self guided tour maps, and took photographs of anything, regardless of how minute, that contained images or made mention of Native Americans. I kept track of the photographs with a chart I made. I assigned a number to the photograph, documented the location within the museum, the caption associated with an image, context or topic of the exhibit, a detailed description, and key terms or thoughts.

I also tape-recorded myself during my visit as I progressed through the exhibits. I read all of the relevant labels into the recorder, described what I saw, and made comments on my initial reactions to the exhibits. I created a worksheet for the exhibits, with spaces for the title, plans, marketing, the people involved in the process, a description of the exhibit, any public response, and key terms and thoughts. However, I

needed to consult the archives to complete the chart and add all of the relevant past exhibits.

Given the successes of the Civil Rights movement in raising awareness, the later 1970's were the logical place to start collecting archival data about exhibits because museums were probably feeling their first real pressures to address primarily emphasizing the national narrative. My strategy was to seek out anything that provided visual descriptions of exhibits, spatial arrangements, planning and collaboration, photographs, and any potential problems. The curatorial files and exhibit files contained leaflets, advertisements, exhibit guidebooks, newspaper clippings, design sketches, collection lists and loans, label documents, special event guest lists and plans, and correspondence. These provided the logic and goals of the exhibit as well as the visuals. The education files included guides for docents which provided great detail about how the exhibits looked. Public libraries had files that contained newspaper clippings with more visual data and information about public response to the museums.

I also looked into the general history of each museum and I created a chart for these sources. I provided space for the source, the relevance, theme of the source (for example newspaper or research proposal), and notes. These charts helped fill in the spaces of the exhibition charts. If I still had holes in my data charts, I used email correspondence to ask additional questions of my informants. In general, I collected everything I could find about Native American representation in these museums from a variety of sources. After conducting interviews, viewing the current exhibits, researching archival sources, and completing my charts, I converted the data for each museum into a history of Native American representation for analysis.

Analysis

After the data was condensed into a narrative, I then examined the narratives for specific qualities of the mythical Indian that were identified in Dressing in Feathers (Bird 1996). I created a checklist that I used for each museum exhibit that had space for the stereotype, and how it was expressed. For example in the exhibits, the stereotypes were conveyed in visuals, implied through labels or spatial organization, and used to support certain themes.

For the exhibits about what I describe as localized versions of the national narrative, I looked for interpretations of Native Americans described by Berkhofer (1978) that emphasized contrast, deficiencies in their culture, and moral evaluations. This offered clues to who was doing the interpreting and the subsequent underlying themes. Did it have a technical or economic structure discussed by Bennett (1995), was it evolutionary or progressive (Huhndorf 2001), did Native American representation end at contact (Nason 2000), or did it have historic and contemporary elements of Native American self interpretation (Wedll 2000)? Lidchi (1997) argues that museum displays are about the ideas of the society doing the representing, not necessarily about those being represented. Depending on the theme or themes of the exhibit, I could identify the major differences between Native American exhibits that were done with and without collaboration. In addition, I specifically looked for occasions that used Native American images to generate interest in the museum and compel the visitor through elaborate displays in the exhibit.

Haas (1991) and Roth (1991) discussed how representation was changing so I looked for change or improvement. I moved forward in time with each museum narrative

looking for any reasons why museums continue to preserve and present the mythical Indian. What were the benefits? I kept track of these on index cards and taped them on the wall. If an exhibit contained qualities of the mythical Indian, than I either assigned it to the appropriate categories or created a new one. Eventually, I came up with eight consistent categories of representation in these six museums: (1) the mythical Indian supports the progressive themes of the national narrative, (2) excuses accountability for the past injustices, (3) encourages patriotism, (4) makes a compelling display, (5) has box office appeal, (6) is entertaining, (7) supports limited museum collections, and (8) encourages instructional lessons. At the end of the analysis process I had filled these categories with examples.

Throughout the process of examination I also looked for the ways museums have dealt with criticisms by using the list provided by Emmison and Smith (presented on page 16). I looked for displays about Indian people specifically, labels discussing collaboration with the Indian community, labels that offer political context, or exhibits dedicated to cross cultural comparison. I kept track of these in my descriptions on the exhibition chart.

Organization

The data from these museums revealed differences in Native American representation that led me through the initial analysis. I evaluated the museums according to the improvement and the contemporary quality of Native American representation. Some museums produced an alternate telling of history allowing Indian people to tell their own story, and some tell a more traditional tale inserting the mythical Indian as needed, and some do both at the same time. The next six chapters discuss each museums'

history of Native American representation and an analysis of each. Each museum had different kinds of informants, different levels of archival resources available, and different quantities of exhibits portraying Native Americans in some way. For these reasons, individual museum narratives are more detailed than others. Also, all six of the museums have, will have, or did have adjunct locations relevant to this study that represent Native Americans, so I included some here.

Because of the length and detail given for each museum, I assigned one chapter for each museum that begins with the mission statement and a short description, followed by the data section or narrative, and finishes with the analysis. The final concluding chapter looks at the museums collectively. The chapter discusses these categories I compiled that illustrate the benefits the image of the mythical Indian has to offer to a museum, as opposed to a realistic portrayal of Native Americans.

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE PUBLIC MUSEUM OF GRAND RAPIDS

Founded in 1854, our Museum is dedicated to collecting, preserving, and teaching about the natural and cultural history of West Michigan. It is owned and operated by the City of Grand Rapids. Museum sites include Van Andel Museum Center and Voigt House Victorian Museum. The Community Archives and Research Center houses curatorial offices and the Museum's Research Collection. (Mission Statement, Public Museum of Grand Rapids 2006)

Introduction

In 1854, a group of civic leaders interested in collecting formed the Lyceum of Natural History, and in 1865, the Grand Rapids Science Club formed. In 1868, they merged to form The Kent Scientific Institute, and in 1904, the first museum building opened to the public. In 1940, the Kent Scientific Museum was moved to a new location and given a new name, Grand Rapids Public Museum. It was renamed again in 1988, to The Public Museum of Grand Rapids, and in 1994, was moved to its current location, the Van Andel Museum Center. Soon, The Norton Mounds will become the third museum site operated by the city of Grand Rapids.

The museum is a public institution that houses and exhibits both the social and natural history of western Michigan and serves 50,000 school children annually (Public Museum of Grand Rapids 2006). It has always been very prominent and a source of pride in the community, a main tourist attraction, and regarded well in the museum world (Muller 2005). The collections represent the community as the community developed (Carron 2005). For a local museum, it is way out of scale. The size, collections, and attendance rival a large state museum. It has a long history of collecting and exhibiting Native American objects.

The Public Museum of Grand Rapids celebrated its sesquicentennial in 2004. For most of its 150 years it has been associated with schools, even being run by them for a short time. It is Michigan's first and oldest general museum. It is different from, and superior to, the other museums in this sample because it is contemporary, flexible, and collaborative in both its permanent and temporary exhibits.

I interviewed two informants for this museum together. Chris G. Carron is the Curator of Collections or Chief Curator, and has worked at the museum for 18 years. Debra Muller is the Project Manager of the Norton Mounds. In addition Muller is a member of the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi, and Little River and Grand River Ottawa. She describes herself as a Grand Rapids native, and a full blood Native American. In addition to her primary responsibility with the Norton Mounds, museum staff from other divisions consult Muller concerning Native American issues.

Data

The property of The Public Museum of Grand Rapids since 1970, The Norton Mounds, a Hopwellian site located on the banks of the Grand River, is the largest remaining mound group in Michigan, and was made a National Historic Landmark in 1965. Initial plans for the site included a visitor center, parking, exhibitions, and pathways. Interpretive signs were erected and an advocacy group of both Natives and non-Natives was formed to assist in the interpretation of this site. However, in the thick of the civil rights movement, the 1970's proved to be a controversial time and the American Indian Movement had an impact on the plans for the Norton Mounds. In addition to the protests concerning the mounds, local Native Americans were disturbed

by the main museum's display of human remains, and artifacts from early excavations (Strivers 2004). This delayed the plans for the mounds and the idea was shelved for 25 years. Following this failure, a Native American Advisory committee was put into place to design a new Native American exhibit for the main museum.

Man in the Lower Grand River Valley was the working title and planned as a permanent exhibit at the main museum covering prehistory to first contact in 1826. The original opening of the exhibit was to coincide with the Nation's bicentennial; however, the project became overwhelming and was delayed (Striver 2004). Nonetheless, five years of planning and research resulted in a traveling exhibit, *Beads: Their Use by Upper Great Lakes Indians*. The Public Museum of Grand Rapids and Cranbrook Art Museum jointly led the project. A catalogue of the exhibit and a film on beadmaking and beadworking was published. The research ultimately established a sequential typology of trade beads and in 1979, three exhibit cases were put on display at the first annual Homecoming of the Three Fires Powwow in the city park (Strivers 2004).

A later date was chosen for the opening of the new permanent exhibit at the museum and a preview was offered during the 125th anniversary of the museum and the city of Grand Rapids. The unfinished exhibit, *The People of the Grand* opened during the gala in November 1979, and was opened to the public a year later in November 1980. The exhibit was located in the west gallery amidst dioramas of wild animals. Tangelder (1994) described the exhibit as open-air style. In a linear fashion, the exhibit began with the diorama of ice age mammals followed by tools of antiquity fashioned from bone and stone. It continued by introducing archaic peoples' adaptation to the environment followed by a diorama of woodland peoples. Real trees, dirt, and tools were used as props

for the fixed moment of contact with the first white man. This scene showed the trade of furs for metal objects. Additional cases illustrated how tools, clothing, and religion were affected by the arrival of the white man. Another topic covered in the exhibit was the effect of alcohol on Indian people. An additional scene was of Indian children in school without mention of the goals of these kinds of schools to assimilate the populations or the hardships that the students had to endure (Tangelder 1993).

Throughout the 1980's a new plan was being made. The master plan was devised to redesign exhibits for the new riverfront building, the Van Andel Museum Center. In 1989, the plan for the Native American exhibit was to show a chronology of change and continuity in human society over the last 1000 years. However, that idea was abandoned for a more modern approach to the museum presentation of Native Americans (Stivers 2003).

Anishnabek: The People of this Place was an example of this fresh approach to museum exhibition. The museum got the community involved. A Native American advisory committee was created to help develop the exhibit. This new relationship between the community and the museum was termed "audience advocacy" (Strivers 2004). Native Americans advised curators that the narrative should be told from the viewpoint of those represented, the Anishnabek, in a non-linear fashion with stories of individuals from the past and the present. Two hundred interviews followed with contemporary Anishnabek covering experiences growing up, politics, spirituality, art, social issues, and any other topics individuals wanted to discuss (Striver 2004). From these interviews, the exhibit content was formed and museum personal used staff expertise to design an exhibit that could communicate their messages to the public

(Carron 2005). One of the strong messages conveyed was that the Anishnabek are a contemporary people, and part of the community. *The Anishnabek: The People of this Place* opened in 1995.

Currently, scattered throughout the open corridors of the museum, is a mixture of large objects on display, for example a carousel, a plane, a whale skeleton and *Collecting A-Z*, (a 26 case exhibit that covers various topics). Except for *Collecting A-Z* six major permanent exhibits at The Public Museum of Grand Rapids have separate rooms. The first floor consists of the *Streets of Old Grand Rapids*, and the first installment of *Collecting A-Z*. The second floor is the location for *Furniture City*, and the middle portion of *Collecting A-Z*. The third floor is home to *Anishnabek: The People of this Place*, *West Michigan Habitats*, and the *Egyptian Gallery*, and the last section of *Collecting A-Z*.

The *Anishnabek* exhibit has two separate rooms. The entrance shows a contemporary photograph of five generations of related females, and all of their names are given. The first room is best described as a semi-circular space that has a large movie screen as the focal point, similar to the shape of an amphitheatre. The picture of the five females is repeated and followed by seven panels against the back of the room that describe the culture and beliefs of the Anishnabek. Each panel shows a simple motif that represents an aspect of their culture and belief system. A label explains each motif, and two objects, one historic and one contemporary, illustrate past and present material manifestations of these symbols. For example a human stick figure hovers above a label entitled “Anishnabek: The Human Beings”. Examples of this motif are shown on an 1897

beaded shoulder bag with generic human designs, and a 1994 ceramic artwork entitled “Dreamcatcher” with a sculpted human figure along one side.

The front of the room is an enormous screen that plays a short video. The sound consists of singing and drumming while flashing still photographs of contemporary Anishnabek people. This is followed by a variety of individuals answering the question: “What does it mean to be Anishnabek?” The entire room is absent of chronology. A panel hangs nearby that discusses the collaborative effort of the museum and the Anishnabek of West Michigan in the design and content of this exhibit. The second section of this panel reads: “*THESE ARE OUR VOICES, THIS IS OUR STORY.*”

In the beginning of the second room there is a chronological timeline that highlights important dates associated with the fur trade to the present. It is the only place that I found a linear sequence of events. The remainder of the exhibit is arranged in a topical manner. One of these topics is entitled “Indians as Entertainment” and discusses the context of the Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Shows. It addresses the visual stereotype of Indian people, and reasons why they might participate in such a spectacle. Other topics include the powwow, and traditional arts. In the center of all of these cases is an area where one can sit in front of screens and hear longer versions of the interviews conducted during research for the exhibit.

Anishnabek is not the only place one finds Native objects on display. One of the permanent exhibits at The Public Museum of Grand Rapids is *Collecting A-Z*. Part of the original master plan for the new building, this exhibit was completed in 2004. According to Carron (2005), the exhibit was designed to make the best use of the collections to tell the story of Grand Rapids in an entertaining way without long narratives. It is curriculum

based with something for everyone. Each letter introduces a topic that utilizes a few pieces of the collection to tell an aspect of history. Although there are 26 small exhibits, they are “meaty enough to satisfy” (Carron 2005). Nine of the letters include Native American objects.

For example, *U is for USA* uses two Native American objects: an 1890-1925 tobacco bag, and an 1860 child’s beaded vest. Both objects are Sioux and were chosen because they have American flag motifs. The label discusses the incorporation of patriotic motifs into otherwise traditional Native American art and personal artifacts, and the positive and negative meanings they may have had for Native Americans. Possible reasons for using these motifs are given, including American pride, Buffalo Bill costumes, powwows, Fourth of July celebrations, or tourist trade.

According to Muller (2005), *Anishnabek: The People of this Place* was the first step in healing old wounds created through prior presentation practices. Because of the success of *Anishnabek*, and the new support of the Native American community, “audience advocacy” will continue to be the format.

Another collaborative effort, *Tribes of the Buffalo: Karl Bodmer’s Images of the American West, 1832-34* opened on October 17, 2003. Part of a informational leaflet about the exhibit reads “Bodmer is one of three most prominent and prolific painters of the early American West, the other two being American artists George Catlin and Alfred Jacob Miller. The consensus among ethnologists today is that Bodmer’s work is the most accurate and precise in detail—the best existing representation of the what the Plains Indians actually looked like before their free, nomadic way of life ended” (Daly 2003:4). The exhibit consisted of 81 hand-colored 175-year-old prints done by Bodmer. Included

alongside the prints was Plains clothing, jewelry, pipes, knives, and tomahawks from the Bodmer and museum collections.

Project Manager of the Norton Mounds Project and Native American, Muller (2005) describes the exhibit as well done. She was in charge of bringing in speakers. Nationally renowned Native American public speakers were scheduled to discuss various topics including visual stereotypes, oral traditions and women's studies. She also solicited volunteers from the local Native American community to give workshops in painting and doll making. In addition, she organized the first museum sponsored powwow on November 22, 2003. It is now an annual event, and between 2004 and 2005 the number of dancers doubled. She attributes this to an acceptance of the museum by the Native American community (Muller 2005). During the life of the exhibit, extensive educational programming tied themes into *Anishnabek: The People of this Place*, and *D is for Dolls*. An artist was present on the weekends inside the *Anishnabek* exhibit, and younger audiences could make a cornhusk doll (The Public Museum of Grand Rapids 2003).

A new plan for a city park produced an opportunity to revisit the plans for the 17 mounds that was abandoned in the 1970's. Millennium Park, a 1500-acre space, surrounded the mounds location and upon completion will offer a way in to this otherwise inaccessible site. In September 2002, The Norton Mounds Cultural Research Project got underway. The plan included key goals to heighten public awareness, preserve the site, and educate the public in a culturally appropriate way (Muller 2005). Given that it will not harm the preservation of the mounds, and that it will provide

adequate education, the interpretation of the site will be based on what the public wants to learn (Muller 2005).

In 2003-2004, project manager Muller led a series of “community conversations” (Muller 2005 and The Public Museum of Grand Rapids 2003). She feels that she has a different relationship with the site because she is a Native American. She believes that it takes someone who has a link to indigenous people to ensure that the site is interpreted in a culturally appropriate and sensitive way. Muller’s supervisor Carron (2005) declares that Debra does a great job of facilitating these conversations. “The museum hired me to talk, and that is what I do,” says Muller (2005). The Norton Mounds: A Description of a Prominent Cultural National Historic Landmark (The Public Museum of Grand Rapids n.d.) resulted. The publication includes the physical and cultural background of the site, a survey of the cultural resources nearby, and the history of the archaeology collections, the context and significance of the mound group, and Anishnabek perspectives and recommendations.

The final exhibit in the master plan for the Van Andel Museum Center is meant to be a direct companion to the *Anishnabek* exhibit entitled *Newcomers* (Carron 2005) “If that (*Anishnabek*) is about the first people of Michigan, *Newcomers* is about everyone who has come since. It is about all the layers of people who arrived as immigrants, and migrants, and refugees, and continue to arrive that make Grand Rapids and West Michigan home” (Carron 2005). Carron (2005) explains that even though there is another whole exhibit giving Native American history (*Anishnabek*), Native Americans are a part of the *Newcomers* story and need to be included. “The fact is that there was interaction and that story needs to be told” (Carron 2005).

Analysis

The mission of the Public Museum of Grand Rapids covers both the natural and cultural history of western Michigan. In the early 1970's, Native America was placed in the arena of natural history. In general, using Native American products to illustrate scientific methods was not uncommon, or arguably inappropriate, for themes of natural history. However by the late 1970's, Native American identities were making a transition into social history at the Public Museum of Grand Rapids. Although the exhibit itself was still in the natural history section of the museum, now the same principles behind the displays were organized into a social history theme. Unfortunately, it resulted in looking like an introductory chapter to the social history of western Michigan illustrating the success of the region.

The People of the Grand was a classic example of the use of Indian imagery and products to showcase American ideals and achievements (see Lidchi 1997), while sidestepping the reality of those achievements (see Huhndorf 2001). The exhibit was supposedly about Native Americans but the first part was really a lesson in the *study* of Native Americans using archaeological methods. In addition, the second part of the exhibit illustrated Euro-American progress using Native American visuals to represent a primitive form of Americans (see Huhndorf 2001). For instance, there was a visual display backed up by a label that emphasized the improvement in the manufacturing of technology immediately after contact. Furthermore, the positioning of two Indian males with a beaver pelt in the woods surrounded by real natural elements, locked in a moment

of trade with a French fur trader with numerous European goods, clearly established contrast more than contact (see Berkhofer 1978 and Bird 1996).

The exhibit offered some information about the political context and the effects of Euro-American settlement. (See Emmison and Smith 2000). They chose examples that were indirect consequences of culture contact, and not the fault of any group in particular. For example, they included a topic about how white contact forever changed Indian culture (including a panel on alcoholism), but this attempt to address critique (see Emmison and Smith 2000) did not help eliminate the stereotype. Instead, in the context of this exhibit, Indian culture appeared to be diluted, insinuating that “real” Indians were part of the historic past, and only drunken Indians remain. Therefore, even though it was supposed to be a Native American exhibit, *The People of the Grand* was really only the introductory chapter to the national narrative. Interestingly, it would have been a fitting tribute to the U.S. Bicentennial had this exhibit made the deadline, because the mythical Indian, the image found in this exhibit, supports these kinds of nationalistic celebrations.

In addition, *Beads and Their Use by Upper Great Lakes People* was a kind of early spin-off of *The People of the Grand*, which ultimately showcased scientific methods at work. Visitors had to purchase a video if they wanted to see Native women actually working with the beads. Therefore, the beads exhibit was about historical or archaeological methods, yet was marketed as Native American.

The Public Museum of Grand Rapids learned from their mistakes in the *People of the Grand*. The mythical Indian is not present in the contemporary exhibit *Anishnabek: The People of this Place*, because the narrative is about Native American people and their history as opposed to a history about Euro-American progress, science, or curiosities.

For instance, a contemporary photograph of a family of five generations of women introduces the exhibit, immediately giving the impression of the continuity and modernity of Native people. In addition, the coupling of historic and contemporary objects establishes a continuity and contemporarity of traditions (See Figure 1). Instead of using a linear organization, a kind of topical arrangement is used in essence answering the question, what the Anishnabek of western Michigan have been doing since the fur trade? For example, an Indian country-singing duo is shown. Unfortunately, this kind of topical organization results in a lack of time depth. Most of the artifacts chosen for this exhibit were post-contact and do not represent a very long period of time.

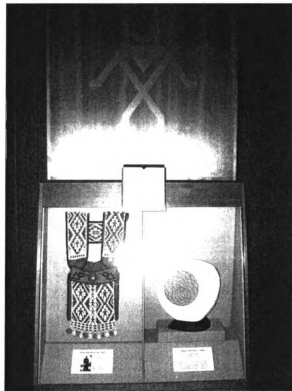


FIGURE 1: The Public Museum of Grand Rapids;
Anishnabek: The People of this Place. The historic bag is on the left and the ceramic artwork is on the right. Both show images of humans.

There are also cases dedicated to illustrating the continuity of traditions specifically. For example, powwow outfits and traditional arts are shown. In addition to breaking down the stereotypes, the exhibit addresses them. For example, it discusses how the Buffalo Bill's Wild West Shows created and promoted a kind of singular identity for all Native Americans. Another case addresses how industry uses Native American identities to develop marketing strategies that appeal to white consumers.

Tribes of the Buffalo complimented *Anishnabek* through its presence and an array of public programming. However, it can be problematic to create an exhibit based on a collection instead of an idea and using images created by an outsider. I discuss this further with Michigan Historical Museum, Cranbrook, Monroe, and The Henry Ford. Fortunately, the museum chose to use their collections to supplement Bodmer's collection. On the other hand, it is interesting to use *Anishnabek* as an example of how Indian people represent themselves and how an outsider (Bodmer) represents them. For the museum visitor, the presence of this exhibit offered a way to contrast between Indian tribes and cultures in a more appropriate way instead of the common contrasts made between Indian people and Euro-Americans. Visitors could see a contrast between the Plains Indians and the *Anishnabek* breaking down the generic stereotype. The number of Native people who participated as speakers and volunteers added to the message of continuity found in the *Anishnabek* exhibit.

Collecting A to Z compliments *Anishnabek* also because of its didactic quality. However, in the absence of the *Anishnabek* exhibit, the items would only serve as a point of contrast to American culture. I discuss this further with Cranbrook below. *Newcomers* will certainly compliment the *Anishnabek* exhibit as well, because together they show

two different historical perspectives resulting in a more realistic interpretation of history. Unfortunately, the mythical Indian will probably make an appearance through general contact narratives, therefore placing Native Americans in the historic past of the newcomers. I am curious to see if Grand Rapids deals with the controversial contact period in the same way other museums is this study do by inserting the mythical Indian as needed to keep the community free from any direct accountability. Nevertheless, as long as *Anishnabek* remains, then there is a sense of balance in the perspective of the museum and Euro American history is not favored at the expense of Native American history. The future interpretation of the Norton Mounds is not yet clear; however if The Public Museum of Grand Rapids continues to be open to various ways to present history, then Native American perspectives can continue to increase public awareness.

CHAPTER FIVE: **THE DETROIT HISTORICAL MUSEUM**

The Detroit Historical Museums preserve and present the history of our region in tangible, real, and vibrant ways that recognize and explain our shared past as the foundation for our future. (Mission Statement, Detroit Historical Museum 2006)

Introduction

In 1914, Clarence M. Burton donated his collection of historical papers to the Detroit Public Library, and in 1921, he formed the Detroit Historical Society. On November 19, 1928, the society opened a one-room suite on the twenty-third floor of Barlum Tower, now the Cadillac Tower. In 1949, Historic Fort Wayne (built in 1845), and the Belle Isle Maritime Museum of Detroit were opened to the public. On July 24, 1951, the 250th anniversary of Detroit's founding by Cadillac, a new museum was dedicated in its present location. The three museum sites are collectively known as The Detroit Historical Museum System. The main museum receives around 35,000 annual visitors (Detroit Historical Museum 2006).

From the late 1940s to the 1960s, the Detroit Historical Society was the largest local history organization in the U.S. with some 3,300 members. It has operated as the financial arm of the museum for many years. The museum became one of the leading cultural institutions of the Midwest with changing exhibits, tours, special events, and educational programs. In 1979, the Great Lakes Indian Museum was opened at Historic Fort Wayne, adjacent to the last surviving Indian burial mound in the Detroit area. However, Detroit's economic difficulties in the early 1990s, resulted in the closing of Historic Fort Wayne to the public. Currently, there is building restoration underway to reopen the site to the public, and some tours are being given.

The Detroit Historical Museum System is currently under another budget crisis. The city of Detroit is cutting funding to many of its museums. The Detroit Zoo is in danger of closing and The Belle Isle Aquarium, the oldest in North America, has already been closed. The Detroit Historical Society is trying to save The Detroit Historical Museum System from the same fate. The society and the city of Detroit are currently under negotiations to transfer financial control of the Detroit museums to the society but maintain city ownership of the collections.

I interviewed two people at this museum on two separate occasions. Jim Conway has worked at the museum for 35 years. His experience at the museum includes both work at Historic Fort Wayne and the main museum in the curatorial and design departments. He was on staff during the formative and active years of the Great Lakes Indian Museum, and the installation of the permanent exhibits at the main museum. He retired as a curator in June of 2005 and is currently the Project Manager of Historic Fort Wayne. Dr. Dennis Zembala has been the director of the Detroit Historical Museum for five and a half years and was involved in the exhibit *Lands, Lives, and Legends*. He has been involved in the budget negotiations and plans for an expansion of the museum.

Data

Historic Fort Wayne, an 1845 military fort, was in use as a training and induction site into the military until the late 1960's. In 1971 preliminary planning for the restoration of Historic Fort Wayne included a plan to create an Indian museum. The proposal for the museum included plans to make one of the existing buildings into an Indian museum, connect it to the interpretation of the mound on the property, and eventually include the

construction of an Indian village. All of these items were carried out except for the construction of a village. The intention of this project was to interpret Indian people not by their objects, but their role in shaping the nation in order to educate and remove the stereotype. This would be done through a sequential history, topics on their way of life, conflict with European settlers, their roles in the development of the region, and their roles today. Indian leaders would also be highlighted (Detroit Historical Museums and Society 1974).

The chief preparator and conservator in the 1970's was of Ojibwe heritage and acted as the liaison to the Native American community. He was the leader in the Great Lakes Indian Museum's development but died shortly before the opening in 1979 (Detroit Historical Museums and Society 1980). His connections helped facilitate the formation of a committee of Native American advisors from the Detroit American Indian Center to consult and help finish the project (Detroit Historical Museums and Society 1980). The museum opened on July 21, 1979, in barracks building number 117. The exhibit included origin stories followed by technological developments, subsistence, historic roles of women in tribal politics, religious topics, contact, the fur trade, treaties, removal, and Indian leaders past and present (Detroit Historical Museums and Society 1979).

The museum was in use for about 18 years until the condition of the building became unstable and hazardous to visitors and the objects. The objects were returned to storage where they remain today (Conway 2005). Historic Fort Wayne was successful living history museum until funding problems forced it to close in the 1990's. The current condition looks like a ghost town of a living history museum. All the signs are intact and

the murals on the walls of the Indian museum are faded and peeling. The fort recently received funding to restore some of the buildings to reopen it to the public, but at present, there are no plans to restore the Indian museum.

Since the 1970's, a core exhibit in the main museum tells the story of Detroit's founding up to circa 1900, just before the auto industry redefines the city. It was named *Upwards to Industry* and was upgraded and renamed *First to Factories* in 1992. In 1998, multi-media was added and its title changed to *Frontiers to Factories* (Conway 2005).

Frontiers to Factories is one of three main permanent exhibits currently at the Detroit Historical Museum. The basement level contains the *Streets of Old Detroit*. The First Floor of the museum includes a large open space where miniature versions of past temporary exhibits are displayed. To the left is *Frontiers to Factories*. To the right is another open space with a gift shop in the center, with the entrance to Stark Hall (a temporary exhibit space) to the right, and the entrance to *Motor City* to the left. The *Motor City* narrative picks up where *Frontiers to Factories* ends. The landing between the first and second floors is *Doorway to Freedom*, which discusses the location and significance of Detroit in the Underground Railroad. The second floor has two more galleries for temporary exhibits and additional information on the walls between about media personalities from Detroit.

Frontiers to Factories is the only place in the museum that discusses Native Americans. It begins with an interactive map that shows the different paths that the early explorers took, including a Native American footpath. A sharp right brings one to a small screen that allows the visitor to choose individuals that talk dramatically about life

in Detroit by pressing a button that has the name of the person and a short description of him or her. An actor representing each demographic from the fur trade era in Detroit including Cadillac and his wife, are the choices. The Ottawa Chief Pontiac is the Indian representative and discusses his disgust with the British while standing outside the walls of the fort he plans to attack in 1763.

The case to the left discusses the fur trade further. It is complete with a timeline, and some Native American artifacts that include a tomahawk that supposedly belonged to Pontiac. There are also trade silvers and a powder horn that belonged to Joseph Brant, an influential Mohawk chief who fought on the side of the British against the Americans in the Revolutionary War.

One then crosses the room and past a model of the British Fort Lenoult to stand in front of a diorama. An Indian man stands amongst trees against a mural of the distant French Fort Ponchartrain. He is dressed in a French shirt holding a gun. He also wears parts of his traditional dress including a porcupine quilled buckskin bag, leggings, garters, moccasins, and jewelry. The brief labels associated with this scene discuss the succession of cultures from the Hopewell or “moundbuilders” to the Algonquin speaking peoples, and the later settlement of the Wyandotte Huron. There is a case of artifacts that includes a discussion of the materials used to make tools and other objects, prior to the introduction of metal by the missionaries and fur traders.

The next stop is a French trading post. Inside, the label emphasizes the space as a necessary part of life to both the French and the Native Americans. A number of Native trade items including various furs, tobacco, a porcupine quilled box, basketry, beaded jewelry, and snowshoes are mixed in with numerous European products including various

metal products, ceramics, and blankets. The French storekeeper leans against the fireplace smoking a pipe. He is dressed very much like the Indian man wearing a French shirt, leggings, moccasins, and garters.

The next section of the exhibit discusses the opening of the Erie Canal and the availability of land for settlement that opened up in the 1930's. Treaties or Indian removal are not addressed. Instead, the labels discuss Michigan's growing population and earning the title of "#1 in land sales" in the 1930's. There is a touch screen that discusses a great immigration into the city of Detroit that lists different groups including Native Americans. The exhibit progresses into the industrial era and another screen provides an opportunity for visitors to choose an actor to reenact an immigrant and talk about life and the opportunities in the city of Detroit in the 1890s. This time the visitor can choose from a larger representation of people to listen to, but there is no longer a Native American choice. A video at the end reiterates the narrative *Frontiers to Factories*. It begins by discussing Native Americans trading along the banks of the Detroit River thousands of years earlier, but does not mention Native Americans again after the French and Indian War.

The summer of 2001, marked the 300th anniversary of the founding of Detroit. The Polish community and the Native American community pitched ideas to the museum to do exhibits about their cultures during the anniversary year (Zembala 2006). Former curator and current project manager at Fort Wayne, Conway (2005) described how the Tricentennial was really an anniversary of the interaction between the Europeans and the Native Americans and how this exhibit was fitting. Also, while it was important to tell the earliest history of Detroit, the Native American groups were able to bring the story

right up to the present reinforcing their presence today (Conway 2005). The goals of the museum and the Native American community were realized.

Planning for the exhibit included hiring a curator with both knowledge of the topic and ties to the community. The guest curator formed a Native American Advisory Council in 1999, to discuss possible themes. The museum wanted to incorporate didactic lessons about oral traditions in the telling of history. Various advisory committees were proposed to cover the many aspects of the exhibit and public programming (Detroit Historical Museums and Society 1999). *Lands Lives and Legends: People of the Three Fires* ran from March of 2001 to February 2003.

Upon entering the exhibit visitors were greeted with these words

We have been here long before others and remain active today. The most important way to keep our traditions alive is by telling our stories verbally, and through art and dance. This knowledge is a gift that empowers those who here it. Come listen to the gift of our ancestors (Dahlstrom 2001).

The rest of the exhibit was divided into nine parts: “Ways of Telling Stories”, “Legend of Creation”, an Interactive Map” (migration routes), “Legends of Migration”, “Legends of Pimadaziwan”, a time line with artifacts, “Linguistics”, “The Powwow”, and “Yesterday Today and Tomorrow”. The exhibit had supplemental labels and photographs throughout of contemporary people and quotes from elders (Detroit Historical Museums and Society n.d.). In addition, there was a replica of a *nasoagan*, a lightweight portable house made of birchbark and cloth, used by Native Americans throughout Michigan in the nineteenth century that visitors could enter and sit inside. A birchbark canoe was mounted over the entrance of the exhibit (Detroit Historical Museums and Society 2006).

The museum’s current director Zembala (2006) described plans for expansion of the museum that would include additions to the *Streets of Old Detroit* but they have been

shelved due to the budget problems in the city. (Zembala 2006). Currently, there are no plans for any Native American exhibits.

Analysis

The 1980 Native American museum at Historic Fort Wayne in many ways was like an experimental version of the Tricentennial exhibit at the main location in 2001. This exhibit reduced the presence of the mythical Indian very well in its design and content, beginning with the placement of the exhibit near the mound. This illustrated a long lasting presence of Native people in the Detroit area for over 1000 years. While this is not something most museums have the opportunity to do, in this case the museum recognized the opportunity to make a very real connection between the mound and contemporary Indian people, eliminating the historic and static aspects of the stereotype. While the exhibit followed a linear theme, the arrangement was topical. I am not sure it achieved the goal of the proposal to describe how Indian people shaped the nation. However, utilizing the main theme of continuity and the effects of culture contact, it did illustrate how both Indian traditions and the consequences of contact shaped contemporary Native American culture by including discussions of continuity and survival.

The museum has been closed for many years and Historic Fort Wayne is like a ghost town of a living history museum. All of the signage is still in place and on occasion visitors, including school groups, still tour the grounds. The recent effort to revitalize the site is admirable, but part of those efforts includes marketing the mound on the website as part of the attraction to draw the support of visitors. Ironically, the current

mound is a recreation because the original was excavated many years ago by Wayne State University, but it is marketed as the only surviving mound of its kind in the county. There is signage that says “Indian Mound” but without the interpretation of the former museum it has been reduced to a curiosity, and negates the goals of the former museum. The signs for the former museum are still in place, attracting attention, and another sign simply states that the building is closed. During a flea market on the grounds, I overheard a visitor express excitement about how he had to return when it was open.

Since the early 1990’s, at the main museum’s *Frontiers to Factories*, the primary visual inside the large open space in the beginning of the exhibit has been a diorama with a Native American man (See Figure 2). This diorama draws people into the exhibit. Part of the background is glass so visitors can see it from the outside of the space. However, the exhibit is not about Native Americans. *Frontiers to Factories* presents the humble, yet proud beginnings that enabled the city to succeed in the industrial market, and to prepare them to take the title as the motor city.

Like many scenarios of achievement, it ignores many of the uncomfortable realities of those achievements. The museum makes many references to Indian people in the beginning of this exhibit, but it does not address the injustices associated with that success. For example, the effects of disease are mentioned but not the loss of land. Like Grand Rapids 1980’s *People of the Grand*, *Frontiers to Factories* sticks to the effects of contact on Indian people that do not assign any direct accountability. Inevitably, the only way one can tell this version of the early history of Detroit without upsetting the pride in its accomplishment is to use a mythical Indian character, and that is what they did.

The Native American presence in Detroit is only discussed in the beginning of this exhibit and nowhere else in the museum. This supports the idea of the mythical Indian, as part of Detroit's historic past. In fact, it seems that the French occupation swallowed them up. For example there is an emphasis on the French influence through the use of the cranberry colored French shirt the Indian in the diorama wears, and the traditional Indian tools made of metal displayed in the case in front of him. There are a couple of examples of Indian influence on French culture, but they are subtle and not as prominent and therefore ineffective. For example the Frenchman is positioned inside the trading post that is relatively dark except for the well-lit display of trade items (See Figure 3). His light colored French shirt also detracts attention from the black Indian attire on his lower half making the Indian influence on the French much less noticeable. If the museum is interested in illustrating reciprocal influence, like the label in the trading post describes, than it would be beneficial to view the Indian and Frenchmen together outside the trading post in the open, since they both wore elements of the other's costume (See Figures 2 and 3) and both lived and hunted in the same challenging natural elements. This would allow a visitor to draw comparisons between two culture groups and understand reciprocity on the frontier more effectively.



FIGURE 2: Detroit Historical Museum; *Frontiers to Factories*, Indian Man; Notice the ability to see behind the mannequin and the French shirt.



FIGURE 3: Detroit Historical Museum; *Frontiers to Factories*, Frenchman; This photo was brightened to show the detail of his dress.

Returning to the visual of the Indian man, it is interesting to point out again that he is in the woods under a tree standing still, doing nothing. There is no label that tells us who he is, what he is doing, or where he comes from except in a general way. The Frenchman is not given this courtesy either, but the implications of this type of representation does not affect contemporary French people and encourage a stereotype the same way as the generalized mythical Indian affects contemporary Native Americans.

The case in front of the diorama is a display of a variety of tools with a discussion of the introduction of metal by the Europeans. It implies that Indian tools and methods were ineffective and primitive until European innovation fell upon them. Indian ingenuity is reduced to a primitive form of American technology. An alternate way to describe the introduction of metal and the transformation of Indian technology is to

address how metal tools met the commercial needs of the French to produce excessive amounts of furs for Europe for mass manufacture. I discuss the idea of using Indian technology to contrast Euro-American ingenuity further in chapter nine with The Henry Ford.

The individuals portrayed by actors on the screen in the exhibit are worth discussing, as well as the nearby case of artifacts. Cadillac's portrayer describes Indians as friendly and peaceful allies of the French. Pontiac's portrayer discusses how much he dislikes the British but he does not talk about how the French betrayed Indian people. Joseph Brant, an ally of the British and an enemy of the American regime is introduced on a label in the adjacent case including items belonging to Brant and Pontiac. A discussion about the changing relationship between Indian people and the three groups who controlled Detroit would connect these three individuals together giving a sense of time depth to the presence of Native Americans in the early history of Detroit. Furthermore, there is an opportunity here to give details of Native Americans being worthy opponents in the struggles to control the Nation as well as Detroit. So like the Indian man in the diorama, mention of Pontiac and Brant only attract the attention of visitors and say little about the consistent presence of Native people in the history of Detroit instead.

The museum avoids some of the uncomfortable realities of the past by emphasizing the progress of Detroit. Not surprisingly, the museum avoided discussion of treaties, and Indian removal that may make visitors feel uncomfortable. However, they describe Native Americans as immigrants on the touch screen accompanying the label about the opening of the Erie Canal. The major tribes that were in Michigan during the

fur trade were listed in the beginning of the exhibit, but now the general term Native Americans is used in the transitional area between the fur trade and the industrial era. Instead of using a general term here, specific tribe names would be more appropriate because there were other Native Americans already present in the area. The lesson about the expanded diversity in Detroit due to immigration is reiterated by the multiple choices for the next screen. This screen gives these new immigrants who represent many ethnic groups the opportunity describe the unique opportunities in Detroit, but there is no longer a Native American representative. Perhaps, a Native person from a distant tribe could be added to exemplify the new extended diversity. Discussions about Native American presence disappear completely from the rest of Detroit history. The success of Detroit does not have to be the only message drawn from *Frontiers to Factories*. Some simple adjustments would greatly improve Native American representation while teaching a profound lesson about continuity and persistence.

The Tricentennial exhibit *Lands, Lives, and Legends* was very much like *Anishnabek* in Grand Rapids. It exemplified Detroit's flexible and responsive nature to the community and true collaboration. It is an example of Detroit's ability to be open to exhibiting historical perspectives that may include contemporarity. As one might expect, the theme of *Lands Lives and Legends* was continuity and the labels were in the first person. However, there was one element that was particularly interesting to me and stood out. The design of the nasoagan, a lightweight portable house made of birchbark and cloth used by Native Americans throughout Michigan in the nineteenth century, allowed people to sit inside. Unlike *Anishnabek*, this exhibit gave visitors the opportunity to *Go Native* (see Huhndorf 2001). Huhndorf critiqued this practice, but in this case I argue that

it is appropriate. The exhibit does not talk exclusively about the past, making connections to the present throughout, and allowing the visitor to experience the dwelling first hand has the potential to make the entire exhibit more memorable.

For nearly two years the mythical Indian, despite his presence in *Frontiers to Factories*, was mitigate due to the presence of *Lands, Lives, and Legends*. Unfortunately, Detroit did not decide to make this exhibit permanent, perhaps due to future plans for renovation of the entire museum. As a result, the mythical Indian in *Frontiers to Factories* is back to being the only representation of Native America at the Detroit Historical Museum.

CHAPTER SIX: THE MICHIGAN HISTORICAL MUSEUM

With the people of Michigan, the Michigan Historical Museum system values the physical evidence and a collective memory of our past by collecting, preserving and managing this evidence, by educating the public, by creating exhibits, and by collaborating with other organizations to accomplish our mission. (Mission Statement, Michigan Historical Museum 2006)

Introduction

The Pioneer Society of the State of Michigan, later renamed the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, was organized on April 22, 1874. The collections were housed on the fourth floor of the state Capitol. By 1913, the society's quarters were overcrowded with collections and visitors who came to see them. Until 1989, the Michigan Historical Museum was in a variety of temporary locations, none specifically designed to be a museum. However on March 7, 1989, a new cultural facility was dedicated specifically for public use. The building houses the Library of Michigan in the west wing and the Michigan Historical Museum in the east wing. The Michigan Historical Museum opened with the permanent exhibit the *First People to 1900*, and in 1995 *Michigan in the Twentieth Century* completed the narrative (Michigan Historical Museum System 2006).

The Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing receives 138,000 annual visitors (Kwiatkowski 2006) and presents a broad overview of the state's history in one long linear exhibit that spans two floors. On the main floor, there is a space dedicated to temporary exhibits and some additional cases on the second floor that change objects periodically. In the mid-1970s, the museum expanded to provide historical interpretation at several state historic sites. Today the museum's collections are exhibited at ten field museums and sites in the upper and lower peninsula (Michigan Historical Museum System 2006).

Maria Quinian Leiby currently holds the title of Museum Historian. She has worked at the museum since 1974, and has held a number of positions including curator of collections, and curator of exhibits. These two jobs are now merged and Eve Weipert holds this position. She is in charge of the exhibits and collections at all 12 sites. I interviewed them together.

Data

From about 1964 to the mid 1970's, Leiby (2005) described Native American representation as a series of dioramas of uncivilized savages. She attributes this in part to the lack of professional museum staff. An influx of professionally trained individuals was slowly able to change the portrayal. Photographs of these dioramas including one that portrayed the River Raisin massacre. Leiby (2005) explained that these were changed to support a less opinionated telling of history. As a result the new representation included a more objective and scientific portrayal through archaeological displays with a neutral tone.

In 1982, a temporary exhibit entitled *Michigan's Upper Peninsula: Unique People in an Unhurried Place* (Michigan Historical Museum n.d.) discussed a number of topics including Indian heritage, Schoolcraft, the Hiawatha tradition, the people, mining, logging, and the future. The Native American component was constant throughout most of the topics including their knowledge of the land, the invention of the snowshoe, and basket making for the Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the Great Depression (Michigan Historical Museum n.d.).

Michigan's sesquicentennial inspired a number of exhibits from 1985 to 1987, (Michigan Historical Museum n.d.). However, they did not cover topics about people

prior to European settlement. There were references to treaties, the political process of becoming a state, and the great immigration, but nothing about Indian removal.

In 1989, the new museum opened with a new exhibit about Michigan up to 1900. This is the current exhibit, and aside from replacing peeling labels and changing out artifacts for conservation concerns, it has not changed (Leiby 2005). Leiby (2005) describes the theme as people and their use of natural resources.

As one exits the elevators, a profile view of two Paleo-Indian hunters commanded my attention and began the narrative. They are positioned outside of a very large open exhibition area focused on Native Americans that proceeds in a linear fashion through archaeological interpretation. However, this part of the exhibit has many informative layers, quite literally, that cover many topics in one space. These include the environment, social structure, religion, economy, material culture, and trade from the paleo-era to the proto-historic. The text proceeds to the left in a semi-circle fashion between cases of artifacts built into the wall. There is also a curved case in front of the area that gives more specific information on technology and pottery.

The other side of the open space incorporates a series of labeled panels in front of a nature diorama with an empty canoe on shore. The first panel discusses the Indian groups that occupied the area around the time of contact. It lists nine groups, shows their location on a map, and a representative (mostly male) from each tribe in an illustrated image. All of the images are given different dates primarily from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The next two panels describe contact, missionaries, the fur trade, the St. Ignace Huron village, and Fort Ponchartrain in Detroit.

The room narrows from there and progresses into a more in-depth discussion of contact and conflict between the Euro-settlers. The first panel “Cultures Struggle”, discusses how at first Native Americans welcomed trade and sought European products, but by the 1700s, problems like disease and being drawn into conflict associated with the fur trade threatened their way of life. It makes the point that the Americans were feared the most because their intentions were not to trade, but to settle and farm Native lands.

The idea of culture clash is carried on to describe British control of the region. An image and short description of Tecumseh and the War of 1812 are covered in this area. In addition, there is a print of the battle along the River Raisin with an accompanying label about the famous war cry “Remember the Raisin.” The image is reminiscent of the diorama from the 1970’s, but the last sentence explains that this rendition is inaccurate, but is the only illustration that exists. Other topics covered are the European influence and how trade goods were attractive because they made life easier for Indian people.

The last panel discusses treaties and formation of reservations. It lists the treaties, one of which is enlarged with the distinctive pictographic signatures Indian people. There is a color-coded map to accompany the list. The label explains the conditions of the treaties including the formation of reservations and the retention of hunting and fishing rights in the ceded lands. In addition, it explains how Indians exchanged their land for payment, free education, the services of farmers and blacksmiths in some cases, and that they were expected to build permanent homes and farm. The last sentence explains how their old way of life had to be abandoned because it required large territories.

The last major reference to Native Americans in the exhibit is about cultural survival. It notes that despite a decline in population, Indian people are prominent today in Michigan because unlike many Eastern tribes, as many were not forced to leave Michigan. It explains how those who remained found new ways to live without losing their cultural identity, and today are found in all walks of life. An accompanying side panel is a quote by Chief Ogemaw with comments about the disappointing results and the culpability associated with the land cessions.

For the remainder of the exhibit, Indian people are mentioned generally five more times. There is a photograph of four Indian girls in an area about education. There is a map that shows a comparison between Native American trails and the major freeways today. There is mention in both the iron and copper sections about how Native American individuals showed prospectors where to find the materials. Finally, on the third floor of the museum, which discusses the twentieth century, the WPA is mentioned and there are a number of baskets and a photo of Ottawa women making crafts at Cross Village.

There has been one temporary exhibit concerning Native Americans since the opening of the new museum building in 1989. *Michigan Relics* was an exhibit that ran from November of 2003 to August of 2004. It was an assemblage of fraudulent slate, copper, and clay artifacts that were found mostly in the greater Detroit area in the 1890's, by two men with questionable intentions, James Scotford and Daniel Soper. According to Halsey (2003), the center's interest in the relics was because they represented a significant episode in the development of Midwestern archaeology, popular attitudes concerning Native American cultural development, and the possibility of Old World cultural intervention in the New World. In addition to presenting the story of the relics,

their manufacture, and the intentions of their makers, a glass case demonstrating archaeological field methods, and other well-known archaeological hoaxes were parts of the exhibit.

The Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing presents a general overview of the state's popular history. The other ten sites and museums throughout the state focus on specific themes in Michigan history. At present, the Sanilac Petroglyphs located in the thumb is the only exclusively Native American site under the control of the museum. However, past archaeological research revealed Native American occupations at Fort Wilkins in the Keewenaw peninsula, Fayette Historic Townsite on Lake Michigan's northern shore, and Walker Tavern 34 miles west of Ann Arbor. Museum historian, Maria Leiby and curator of collections and exhibits Eve Weipert (2005) discussed how the museum would like to see this information incorporated into the present exhibits at these sites, but that more research needs to be completed and funding is scarce. However, Weipert (2005) revealed that at the top of the museum's wide-ranging agenda is to conduct archaeological research and incorporate the Native American occupation into the interpretation of Fayette, an early iron industry town established in 1867.

Analysis

Changes to the grossly inaccurate dioramas of savages in the 1970s, resulted in a more modern representation of Indian people. By modern, I mean a more impartial method of interpretation of objects and the many violent historical events in Michigan's past. The 1982 Upper Peninsula (UP) exhibit showed Indian people to be part of the charming quality of the area, but not necessarily independent or a valuable asset. They

also were portrayed as an adaptable and compliant people. The biggest improvement was establishing continuity although it was probably only a byproduct of making the UP appear extraordinary. Showing contemporary aspects of Native people in this exhibit exemplifies Michigan Historical Museum's ability to be flexible with their exhibits.

A Native American voice was not found in the museum's series of exhibits commemorating the sesquicentennial of Michigan exhibits. This was surprising given their major part in the previous UP exhibit. I speculate that Native American defiance against American control does not fit into the subject of pride in becoming an independent state but the mythical Indian does. As a result, there were minimal references to Indian presence.

The new presentation of Michigan history in 1989, included some of the topics that had been avoided just two years earlier. Unfortunately, it has not been updated to address any new critique or scholarship. Weipert (2005) explains that it is easier to get funding for a new project than to update old exhibits. This is an ongoing challenge. Nevertheless it introduces, however inadequately, many more controversial topics than for example Detroit's *Frontiers to Factories*. The Michigan Historical museum is essentially one long linear exhibit that gives a broad all-inclusive version of history from the earliest people up through the twentieth century.

Not unexpectedly, the narrative begins with an archaeological display of Native American objects. It is a multi-layered interpretation giving much life to the open storage displays, allowing one to learn more about Native Americans and less about the methods of archaeology using Native American objects. On the other hand, the poor contrast of the white text on a light background and the overwhelming amount of information

presented in this relatively small space quite possibly intimidates visitors keeping them from reading any portion of it. Nonetheless, the wealth of information offered here far exceeds any other museum in this study that deals with pre-contact Native America giving a sense of extraordinary time depth to the presence of Native Americans in Michigan.

Some of the more interesting visual ways Michigan Historical Museum has encouraged stereotypes is through the use of the two Indian men at the beginning of the exhibit (See Figures 4 and 5) and the haunting image of the nature diorama. The two fellows are dressed in stunning white furs complete with the heads and antlers positioned atop a majestic cliff high above the visitor. I cannot put enough emphasis on the mystical impression given by this spectacle. Furthermore, the scene behind the panels about the tribes of Michigan at the time of contact includes an empty canoe. The omission of people in this scene seems symbolic of the lingering reminder that the classical Indian visitors see in the beginning of the exhibit would soon be a memory. Like the Indian man in Detroit's *Frontiers to Factories*, both of these large-scale representations of Indian people make a compelling vision but reinforce the idea that there are no "real" Indians anymore. Adding a label to the two fellows in the beginning and a pre-contact period Indian person to the canoe scene would be a simple way to eliminate the impression of a vanishing race and potentially illustrate culture change over an extended period of time eliminating the static aspect of the stereotype.

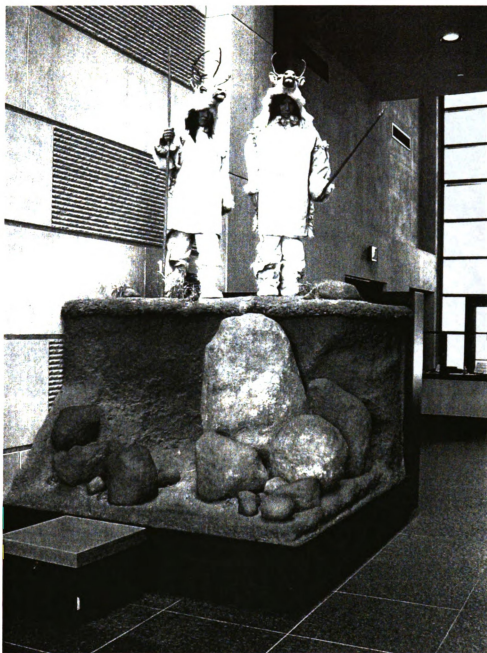


FIGURE 4: Michigan Historical Museum; *Michigan up to 1900*, Paleo-Indians. Front view, to the left is the entrance to the large open space in the beginning of the exhibit.

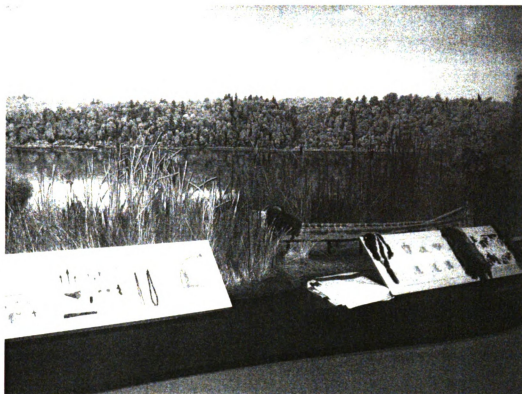


FIGURE 5: The Michigan Historical Museum; *Michigan up to 1900*, Diorama with empty canoe on shore.

The remainder of the narrative illustrates the loss of control over the lives of Indian people and the downfall of some aspects of their material culture. Throughout this part of the narrative, some previously ignored uncomfortable issues are minimally addressed through a series of short statements in labels. For example, a statement about the uneasy feelings of Indian people towards the Americans is slipped into the very end of the label about culture struggle. The battle of the River Raisin is the only highlighted example of Indian rebellion against the American regime. The already inaccurate image used to illustrate the rebellion is debunked in the very last sentence of the label in small print by stating bluntly that it is an inaccurate portrayal. Removing this image would be the most inexpensive way to discourage the stereotype of the savage Indian. A new label

showing all *three* sides of the conflict would also give a more accurate version of events that unfolded at the River Raisin in 1813. I revisit the problems of misrepresenting this event further in chapter eight with Monroe.

Many labels and displays emphasize the benefits of white settlement for Indian people, and sidestep the disadvantages. For example, there is an entire case and label dedicated to how European trade goods made life easier for Indian people, but at what expense? In addition, payments to Indian people for their land is presented as if the conditions set forth by the Americans were of no consequence and would only result in little less space to move around. There is one statement given by Ogemaw that discusses the consequences of land loss but it is presented in reference to contemporary populations residing in Michigan due to moderate removal policies (problematic also). Ogemaw's statement could be used in better contexts, for example, presented next to the discussion of treaties adding a dual perspective to the consequences of these negotiations. An alternative would be to include something about the outcomes of these negotiations on the current status of Michigan's natural resources. The point being, that these negotiators did not foresee many of the problems that would arise after the exchange of land. A more balanced understanding for visitors of the consequences of Native American—Euro-American culture relations would result.

The museum does make a brief reference to contemporary Indian people in Michigan, even though through visual statements like the empty canoe, they are only a fraction of their former status. The wording in the label excuses the state of Michigan almost entirely from the atrocities of removal by stating that unlike other states, Michigan did not make all of the Indians leave. The museum fails to mention why the government

only removed those with farmable land. To make matters worse, the quote chosen from Chief Ogemaw makes Indian people look seem pathetic and inadequate decision makers. I discuss above how this quote could be used in better contexts.

The remainder of this long exhibit mentions Indian people periodically illustrating their constant yet submissive presence. Indian school children are pictured, but like the label discussing education as partial payment for lands, it does not address this as a way to assimilate the population. Euro-Americans are given credit for utilizing copper and iron deposits and Indian individuals are given credit for showing them where to find the materials. On the other hand there are a few interesting representations given that illustrate a capable people. The map showing the present freeways compared to the former foot trails makes an impressive statement about the mobility of Indian people. The baskets made during the Depression illustrate the intricate detail and quality of Native American artistry. It is challenging to represent an entire state's history in one exhibit and include all of its demographics, so I must applaud Michigan Historical Museum for not forgetting the presence of Indian people mentioning them periodically throughout the expansion of the narrative.

The museum has one space dedicated to temporary exhibits without doubt making it difficult to do many presentations on Native people. *Michigan Relics* was not about Native American people but it was the closest this space has come to addressing attitudes about them. This exhibit accomplished something that even the exhibits in Grand Rapids and Detroit could not do. It showed a concrete example of how for many years Native American people were made to look inferior by their Euro-American successors in a desperate effort to justify their presence. Adding more weight to the argument, additional

hoaxes discussed in the exhibit offered more examples of how narrow-mindedness can manifest itself and alter future opinions, forcing visitors to rethink the origin of their attitudes and confront their own prejudices. *Michigan Relics* has since become a traveling exhibit, currently on view at Wayne State University's museum.

The permanent exhibit does of incorporate something about Native Americans throughout (at least up to the Depression). However, it inserts the image of the mythical Indian as needed, to excuse accountability and maintain a sense of pride in the formation and success of the State of Michigan. Only a few minor changes to this exhibit could greatly improve the representation of Native Americans. *Michigan Relics* tackled popular opinions of ancient Native America and did not shy away from this controversial topic setting a significant example for other museums to follow.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CRANBROOK INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE

Cranbrook Institute of Science is a natural history and science museum that fosters in its audiences a passion for understanding the world around them and a lifelong love of learning. Through its broadly based educational programs, its permanent and changing exhibits and its collections and research, the Institute develops a scientifically literate public able to cope with today's knowledge-based society. Moreover, Cranbrook Institute of Science generates the enthusiasm for learning about the natural world that will produce the scientists of tomorrow. (Mission Statement, Cranbrook Institute of Science 2006)

Introduction

Detroit philanthropists George and Ellen Booth founded Cranbrook in 1904. Cranbrook is an internationally renowned center for art, education, and science located in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Cranbrook Institute of Science is an integral part of that community, having served area schoolchildren and families since its creation in 1930 (Cranbrook 2006). Cranbrook currently receives 200,000 annual visitors (Cranbrook Institute of Science 2006). Cranbrook has an extensive collection of Native American artifacts, some of which are used in *Anishnabek* in Grand Rapids.

I interviewed Dr. David Brose, the director of Cranbrook Institute of Science since September of 2004. He coordinates all of the activities in the museum from education, exhibit planning and development, to funding. For many years Dr. Brose was a practicing archaeologist, but he decided to move to a more public venue. Most of his museum career has been spent in natural history museums.

Data

The Urschel family donated a large collection of Native American artifacts to the museum in 1974. The museum chose the most exceptional items for an exhibit to

commemorate the upcoming bicentennial celebration. It was a joint project between the art and science museums. In 1976, 107 objects from six different culture groups from the Urschel collection joined the 900 artifacts already displayed in the Hall of Man and Culture. The emphasis of the exhibit was on recent ethnographic materials over the past 200 years and included photomurals and lithographs. It ran until May 1976.

Unfortunately, the only records of the permanent display in the Hall of Man and Culture are from 1945. It is not clear if the display was different in the 1970s so I cannot include it in my study. However, there was at least one temporary exhibit from the 1980's entitled *Inua: Spiritworld of the Bering Sea Eskimo*. It ran from November 1984 through February 1985. The exhibit was taken from the Edward W. Nelson collection.

In the 1990's the Hall of Man and Culture was redesigned. According to the plans (Cranbrook Institute of Science 1989), the new wing was entitled *The Human Experience*. The proposed theme was how humans shape the land, and how the land shapes us. A three-part diorama included Paleo-Indian, Woodland, and contemporary Indian cultures. Other nearby cases talked about Archaic and Mississippian cultures. There was discussion about artifact deposit and dating techniques, social structures, subsistence patterns, fur trade, and population pressure.

The Woodland space included a longhouse, sound effects, nature scents, and a canoe one could sit in. The longhouse illustrated pre and post-contact displays, but there are no details about this in the records. Another component of the exhibit was the impact of white settlement on materials, beliefs, environments, populations, and treaties. The last element of the exhibit was about contemporary people that included artifacts, political topics, powwows, and resource management.

Once again, documentation is minimal and those I talked with were unable to confirm very much, so it is unclear if these plans were carried out in their entirety. The museum does not have curatorial files concerning exhibits prior to 1996. This exhibit was dismantled due to renovations to the building around 1999 and the Native American exhibit was redone to fit the new space.

Typical of a natural history museum, Cranbrook's exhibits include a narrative about the early natural history of southeast Michigan. Towards the end of this exhibit is an introduction of the impact of the Paleo-Indians on the big game that once inhabited the area. The theme is how scientists can tell that the recovered skeletons of mastodons were hunted and butchered for food. Different theories are also discussed including scavenging, refrigeration of meat in ponds, and eating of brains. Theories on the extinction of mastodon are also explored that included the impact of hunting and climate. The last section introduces the first people of the area more specifically. Stone technologies are displayed suspended in the air behind glass against a yellow background. The label makes a point of mentioning that the first Native Americans were not primitive in their skills.

The horizontal corridor that follows has exhibits at either end. To the right is the exhibit *People of the Woodlands: Objects of Great Lakes Native America*. There are three cases in the center of the corridor surrounded by very large photographs from the 1800's to the 1940's of Native people, primarily Ho-Chunk. The three cases represent wood, fiber, and bark, three raw materials that were used to create the objects. A label discusses how archaeological methods use historic objects to learn about the more distant

past. There is one case that contains a Ho-Chunk medicine bag. The label describes the bag and discusses its image on a recent series of U.S. stamps on Native American Art.

There is a didactic exhibit *Reading Objects*, similar to Grand Rapids *Collecting A to Z*, to the left of the corridor that discusses how people read objects based on their own cultural rules. There are a number of Native American objects that are used to compare different properties of objects. For example there is a hammer stone next to an 8-ball that discusses the meaning of shapes, and a Northwest Coast woman's dress next to a Barbie dress. After one passes by this exhibit, one reaches the end of the corridor and three cases dedicated to another Native American exhibit.

When Worlds Collide: The Great Lakes Fur Trade is a set of three cases that discusses the impact of the fur trade on Native people and culture. The introductory signage describes the exhibit. In addition to a short explanation of the fur trade, the label states that cultures thousands of years old began to disappear as a result of European influence.

The first case has three separate labels. One label is the opinion of Nathan Lambert, a contemporary local Native American man, who gives his interpretation of the fur trade and its impact on Native American people. He discusses the temptation of goods that would make life easier and how the first time the beaver was sold for commercial reasons, part of his culture died. There are two labels displayed on the bottom of the case like a picture frame might sit. One label discusses different opinions about the fur trade by Native people, while introducing Lambert. The rest of this case shows how Native American objects changed as a result of the fur trade. Iron and stone axes, and metal and stone points, and basketry with copper kettles are displayed together. The last label

discusses how new materials eventually replaced the need for flint knapping and pottery making.

The middle case discusses the impact of one trade item, specifically guns. The last case discussed general facts about the fur trade continuing with the theme of influence and catastrophe. The background is a painting of Fort Ponchartrain with a few scattered objects recovered in the ruins. There is a picture of people doing archaeology at an Oakland county site, which directs people to another part of the museum to learn more about the process. The sign immediately to the left of the case encourages one to learn more about the fur trade and lists a number of sources. In addition, there is a time line running over the top of the cases illustrating key points and figures in the fur trade.

There is a new plan in the works for the design and flow of the museum. The Native American exhibit will be expanded to fit the theme of ecology. Brose (2005) described how it is impossible to talk about the early ecology of the land and not include Native American people since they were instrumental in changing the natural history. He attributed their presence in natural history museums due to this reason. Cranbrook is adding more and more cultural histories to their exhibits. For this reason, Brose (2005) hopes to include more objects from their collection to illustrate cultural achievements.

Analysis

The museum chose to do a special exhibit with the Urschel collection on Native Americans for the Bicentennial. However, it was object driven. Object driven exhibits work well in many cases. Grand Rapids *Collecting A to Z* and Cranbrook's *Reading Objects* are good examples of using a collection to teach a broader concept. In other

cases, using a private collection to drive an exhibit may say more about the collector and less about the collection. In other words, the collection will reflect the filter of the collector.

Many collections of Native American artifacts from the turn of the twentieth century were collected in haste because of the belief that Indian people were members of a vanishing race. The Urschel collection was collected under special circumstances by three generations of family members while serving at various frontier forts. As a result the collection was diverse, but not a complete representation of any one Indian group. That would not be practical or expected by any one collector. While the Urschel collection and exhibit represented a three-generation time period, it did not make the necessary connection to the present keeping Native people in the historic past, thus encouraging the stereotype. The point is that an outstanding collection does not automatically justify an exhibit. In addition, the timing of the Urschel exhibit was an example of patriotic appropriation discussed in chapter two. The *Inua* exhibit, also object driven, presented an even more narrow view. Native American people were represented through the eyes and aesthetics of one photographer and collector and lacked the time depth of the Urschel exhibit.

In the 1990's, Cranbrook incorporated a number of new ideas about Native American representation. The proposed exhibit *The Human Experience* used a number of themes that worked together to educate visitors about natural history, scientific methods, and contemporary societies. Native Americans were presented as the earliest people to benefit from the natural resources of southeast Michigan. Their materials were used to illustrate archaeological methods and contact influences, and as an example of a present

day society and their ideas about resource management. Arguably, there was nothing inherently wrong with this exhibit because it established continuity and was educational on many levels. However, the last section used the inherent environmentalist aspect of the mythical Indian to bring awareness to natural resource management. This is reminiscent of the 1970's commercial about pollution that showed a traditionally dressed Indian man in his canoe looking at the littered riverbanks while crying (see Berkhofer 1978).

The inclusion of early Native American people in the current section about natural history of southeast Michigan is arguably appropriate. It is not about Native people. Their presence is in the context of how as human beings their actions impacted the environment, and how the deposit of early materials can be used in scientific methods that seek to explain the past. However, the last part of this section shifts into a social history theme by showing a variety of stone tools arranged artistically and less scientifically suspended in the air. The accompanying label makes a point to mention that these objects were not primitive, but without more details this statement goes unsubstantiated. The floating arrangement on the vertical glass with the yellow background made this display look like abstract art. While it provides great contrast for the tools, it says little about function and offers no context. The accompanying label makes a point to mention that the tools were not primitive, but does not substantiate this statement with this display.

Cranbrook has a long history of mixing in social history exhibits amongst their primary natural history exhibits, for example the Urschel and *Inua* exhibits above and the current freestanding Native American exhibit. *People of the Woodlands: Objects of Great*

Lakes Native America (See Figure 6) accomplishes something much like the previous exhibit, *The Human Experience*. It utilizes historic Native American objects to talk about natural resources and archaeological methods. Unlike its predecessor, it says little else about Native Americans specifically. The large hanging historic photographs include only short captions and have nothing to do with the objects on display. In the absence of context or any educational meaning, they only replicate and therefore reinforce the popular visual image of the mythical Indian, which is historic and singular. What they do accomplish with these photographs is drawing attention. So like Detroit Historical Museum's Indian man in the woods and the Michigan Historical Museum's two majestic fellows on a big rock, these large photographs compel the visitor into the exhibit that is more about natural resources than Native Americans. I would remove these large photographs and incorporate some large scale objects made of the materials discussed in the cases (i.e. birchbark canoe), or use smaller scale images of contemporary Indian people using these materials to produce either traditional or modern forms of these artifacts. This would make a connection from the past to the present, give purpose to the photographs aside from drawing attention, and not interrupt the lessons and theme of the three cases.

My biggest criticism is the title because a museum visitor may interpret the taxonomic term "woodlands" literally. For example, it may not be viewed as a particular era, but rather a place where the photographed people lived. In the context of a natural history museum and the theme of the exhibit, this makes Native Americans blend in with the natural world, negating the previous lesson about how humans impacted the environment. Given the time of the photos, *People of the Reservation* would have been

more appropriate title and would have said something about the political historical context of the images.



FIGURE 6: Cranbrook Institute of Science; *People of the Woodlands: Objects of Great Lakes Native America*. Notice the large pictures yet it is the three cases in the center that are the topic of the exhibit.

The didactic exhibit *Reading Objects* between the two Native American exhibits is very similar to the Grand Rapids exhibit *Collecting A to Z*, because it shows a number of Native American objects in different contexts. In addition, it addresses how different cultures interpret objects but misses the opportunity address how museums use objects to teach lessons by challenging the visitor to compare the two Native American exhibits at either sides of the corridor. The Woodlands exhibit focuses more on natural history and

the fur trade exhibit is about social history. Adding a label at the end would be a great way to get visitors to compare the use of Native objects used in this museum, and give additional meaning to all three of these exhibits.

The fur trade exhibit sets out to show the impact of white contact and settlement of Native people, and it accomplishes that goal. However, this narrow focus makes historic Native American people look like fragile endangered species instead of dynamic survivors. While this exhibit makes an important point, in the absence of a broader narrative it makes contemporary Indian people seem like a watered down version of their former selves, and “real” Indians part of the past.

In addition, the exhibit provides an example of museums responding to critique described by Emmison and Smith (2000) in chapter two. First, a label introduces the idea of many opinions about historical events and Lambert, the author of the Native opinion of the fur trade. This statement could have been left out, but it provides the visitor with vital information about the perspective behind the exhibit. Secondly, the attention given to Lambert, a contemporary Native American, illustrates collaboration. They do place Lambert’s picture next to his opinion, which establishes some continuity. Unfortunately, it is difficult to read his opinion given the poor contrast of the text against the mural of Pontiac. Again, my biggest criticism is of the title, *When Worlds Collide: The Great Lakes Fur Trade*. It makes a general statement, yet the exhibit is specific to Native Americans and particularly Lambert’s opinion. Given the habit of whites generalizing Native people (see Berkhofer 1977), non-native visitors may believe this is the common opinion. In order to make the exhibit match the title, it would have had to reveal a more

realistic picture of the past and the impact of the fur trade on two cultures, therefore carrying on with the theme of the didactic exhibit.

Cranbrook proves to be collaborative, flexible, and not afraid to include contemporary perspectives on history. I anticipate that the new exhibit will improve the representation of Native America and the inclusion of culture groups outside of Native America in their floor plan is a fresh idea and long overdue in a natural history museum.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE MONROE COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

The Monroe County Historical Commission shall further the interest of the people in all matters relating to the history of Monroe County and its environs. To that end it may acquire and maintain appropriate exhibit materials, design displays, provide educational and archival programs, issue publications, encourage tourism, and engage in activities, which promote historical awareness. (Mission Statement, Monroe County Historical Museum 2006)

Introduction

The Monroe County Historical Society founded the museum in 1938. The society, made up of local women, curated exhibits on the first floor of the historic Sawyer house. In 1972, the Monroe County Historical Museum was relocated to an empty postal building that was built in 1910, on the site of General and Mrs. George Armstrong Custer's former home. The Monroe County Historical Commission presently operates the museum, The Navarre-Anderson Trading Post Complex, and the River Raisin Battlefield Visitor Center, which collectively serve around 21,000 visitors annually.

The main museum is home to the famous General Custer exhibit. In addition, the museum has permanent exhibits that span two floors on the Victorian era, a didactic exhibit about collections called *Aunt Bett's Attic*, *The First People*, the French, local celebrities, and Monroe's veterans. Located along the River Raisin, the trading post complex includes the Navarre-Anderson Trading Post and the Martha Barker Country Store. There are currently plans to build a wigwam in the complex. The River Raisin Battlefield Visitor Center is located on the site of a significant battle of the War of 1812, fought on January 22, 1813. The center contains exhibits associated with the War of 1812, including life size vignettes of the participants. For a county operation the main museum is large, and the historical elements of the city, particularly those associated with

Custer, attract as many outside visitors as local school children receiving 21,000 annual visitors (Naveaux 2005).

I interviewed Ralph Naveaux who has worked at the museum since 1990. He held the position of assistant director until a year and a half ago when he became the director. He is also involved in the Monroe and state archaeological organizations. John Gibney, the assistant director, gave me a detailed tour of the Custer exhibit, and talked about other aspects of the museum. I had email correspondence with Lynn Reaume from education and archives who gave me details about the Native American vignette at the battlefield site, and John Gibney answered additional questions about the Lantern Tours that he directs and oversees.

Data

Having no formal records for past exhibits, Ralph Naveaux (2005) informed me that the permanent exhibits are from 1972, however they have been renovated from time to time. The Custer exhibit, the museum's biggest attraction, has been a permanent fixture since the museum's founding in 1938. In addition, a permanent Native American exhibit has been present since before 1972 with one case still in its original state. Changes were made to accommodate space or when repairs were needed. For example, more space became available in 1972, due to a new location so the exhibit was expanded; in 1990, many of the components of the display were in a state of decay so it was redone; and in 2000, it was reduced to make room for other exhibits.

According to an education outline from 1980, the Native American exhibit (no title is given) was arranged in a chronological sequence with six maps illustrating culture

change from the crossing of the Bering Land Bridge to about A.D. 1700. Cases of artifacts from each time period were also arranged in stages. Case A was the Paleo-Indian age, followed by Case B with Archaic tools, and fire pit remains. Case C described the Woodland Indian culture 1500 years ago through advanced tools, and the first basketry and pottery. There was a dugout canoe and 1968 recreation of a birchbark canoe in the exhibit. Case D talked about Dr. Charles Eastman (1858-1939) a Minnesota Native who moved west. It is explained that he could not read or write until he was 17. However, he went to the reservation school from there to Dartmouth College and Boston Medical School. He returned to the Sioux reservation as a doctor. Supposedly, the people were so proud they made him a ceremonial suit. There was a photograph of him wearing the suit.

Case E was an Indian campsite near the River Raisin. A local artist named Edwin Long painted the background. The painting showed pumpkin fields, and deer hides stretched and drying. The three dimensional elements were the side of a bark house, a bark table filled with corn, beans, pumpkin rings, berries, baskets filled with rice, and wild grapes. An Indian woman wearing a buckskin dress was grinding corn with a mortar and pestle. There was a baby carrier in the center. An individual from the education department informed me that this case was on display at the pre-1972 Sawyer house location. Case F was filled with artifacts that included a Potawatomi baby carrier, sweet grass bag and baskets, parched corn, snowshoes, a fish net, and quill baskets. Case G discussed Indian-White contact through trade items. The artifacts included a baby carrier, a toy bird, a shoulder bag, leggings, moccasins, copper cook pot, and arrows with metal tips.

In 1990, the Native American exhibit was redesigned. Navaeux (2005) explained that the objects on display did not change since they are the finest ones in the collection. *The First People* exhibit was the first exhibit upon entering the building. A drawing for the exhibit showed a title panel followed by Paleo-Indian and Archaic cases on the right side. The left side talked about natural resources in Monroe County. The room then opened up into a kind of circular display. To the right was a replica of a birch bark canoe suspended over the Woodland case. This appeared to be the same as Case E described above. Next was a case is described as tribal period and pre-contact, but there are no details. To the left of the entrance to the room was the dugout canoe followed by a case about post contact that is described as the changing way of life, trade influence, and the reservation period. The middle of the room had a circular case that showed archaeological methods. Immediately following was the exhibit on French Culture in the Monroe area.

Currently, *The First People* is no longer the first exhibit one encounters upon entering the building. It is now located in the center of the first floor. There are five separate cases. Upon entering the area there is one small case that has pottery on one side and simply says "Earthen Expressions". To the right of the pottery is "Form with Function" that is filled with large stone technologies. One other small label informs the reader where the artifacts were found.

The dugout canoe is suspended over the first case to the left entitled "The Paleo-Hunters (11,500-10,000 BP)". It has labels that discuss flint knapping with stone artifacts. The bottom of the case is littered with the debris one would have after producing these tools. The second half of the case is entitled "The Archaic Tradition (10,000-3,000)" and

continues with the theme of manufacturing stone technology. However, the Red-Ocre Culture is mentioned near reproductions of a birdstone and copper gorget. Nothing further is explained. The second case is of the women against the painting mural. It is the same case that was described above as Case E. It does not have any labels. The items on the table may be fewer than before, but all of the other elements are present. A sturgeon hangs on the outside and the 1968 birchbark canoe reproduction is above this case.

Continuing right is the next case entitled “The Woodland People I (3,000-800 BP).” Pottery is the new theme and labels discuss how it is made. The next case is entitled “The Woodland People II (800-350 BP).” Basketry is introduced and a label discussing how one can make tribal connections through the materials left behind. It uses pipe styles and ceramic styles as examples. The last case is called the “Historic Period 350 BP- (?)” There is no finishing date; that space is simply left blank. There is a baby carrier, a pair of leggings, trade silver, Michigan tribes listed, Tecumseh is introduced, pictographic signatures of Indian treaty signers with a map, and a fur trade discussion about the French and Fort Ponchartrain. Naveaux (2005) describes the exhibit as a limited history because of the objects fit for display. Apparently, the other objects in the collection are not in good condition. Immediately following *The First People* is the French exhibit. This section does not mention Native Americans.

Throughout the museum one sees a number of paintings associated with General Custer and the Little Big Horn Battlefield or the War of 1812. The second floor is where one will find the Custer exhibit. Interestingly, there are labels that discuss Custer’s feelings about Native American people. One of them talks about how if he were an Indian

he would not be happy being confined to a reservation. He collected Lakota clothing (beaded trousers and a coat displayed) and sent them to Detroit. One photograph shows Indian people at his grave. A video discusses how in 1876, he testified on behalf of the Native Americans about corruption in the Indian Department. There is a plaque with an 1884 picture of Sitting Bull and his nephew above a quote about the disgust Sitting Bull felt towards the Americans. Nowhere in the exhibit does it make derogatory statements about Custer or Native Americans. Naveaux (2005) informs me that the exhibit is meant to have a neutral tone; this way they can let people have their opinions. In fact much of the exhibit is about his wife, and her impact on the city of Monroe.

The River Raisin Battlefield Visitor Center began operation in July of 1990. A recent leaflet (Monroe County Historical Museum n.d.) describes what one encounters upon entering the building. The centerpiece of the visitor center is a fourteen-minute fiber optic map presentation. Two wall-sized maps tell the story of the Battle of the River Raisin, fought on January 13, 1813, as colorfully lighted American, British, Canadian, and Native American forces take position and maneuver around the map. In the west wing is a collection of original military firearms and accoutrements, and an additional diorama to accompany the map. The East wing has hand crafted miniature dioramas depicting scenes for the River Raisin Massacre, the Battle of Lake Erie, and the Battle of the Thames. The main gallery has full size vignettes of the American and British sides. They include Kentucky militiamen, U.S. regular infantry, British infantry and artillerymen, a sailor from the Canadian Provincial Marine, and a Native American warrior.

Lynn Reaume from the archives forwarded questions about the vignette to the former director. He informed her that the face of the Native American figure was cast from a full blood Chippewa model and that the model's summer tan shows through on the vignette. The former director explains that they were always the first to admit that the exhibit should have had many more Native figures, since they were the largest single armed group at the battle, but they could not afford more. The Native American figure was the most expensive of all due to the high cost of jewelry and other adornment items. In addition, the space was limited and reliable documentation about dress was hard to find.

Each January, on the anniversary of the battle, a memorial service is held on the battlefield. This event commemorates the service of the Americans, French, British, Canadians, and Native Americans who fought at the River Raisin. Uniformed reenactors represent the participants in this battle. They place a wreath on the ground and fire ceremonial salutes in honor of those who died here.

Although to date there has never been any collaboration with Native Americans about exhibits, there have been some short-term connections. In 2004, a Native American Veterans group participated (2005 was snowed out and they did participate in 2006) in the ceremony at the battlefield. They provided an honor guard and a ceremonial drum (Naveaux 2005). Naveaux (2005) is in favor of collaboration, but discusses some of the problems associated with this relationship. He stated that the Native American groups are not trying to recreate the past like museums do, but rather present their traditions in a modern way. Assistant director of the museum, Gibney (2006) informed me that he has made many attempts to make connections with the local Native community. He sent

various emails to tribal organizations to participate in the reenactments for the Lantern Tours discussed below. At present his efforts have been unsuccessful, but he plans to continue to try and establish contacts with individual Native people.

The Lantern Tours, the most successful of all museum programs, selling out each year (Gibney 2006), have been going on since 1985. Each fall a different theme is chosen, and acted out for visitors who purchase tickets. The museum is already planning special events for the 200th anniversary of the Battle of the River Raisin. So, the each year the Lantern Tours will present the corresponding year, leading up to this historical event. For example in Fall 2005, 300 visitors were taken back to 1806, the year Michigan became a territory, Detroit burned, and six years before the War of 1812.

The tour guides led the visitors as if they were the refugees following the burning of Detroit through a series of different camps with different scenarios that illustrated how different groups of people lived during this time. One scenario was about Indian people struggling with the effects of white settlement like disease, disappearing game, and loss of agricultural habitat. Gibney (2006), after weeks of searching, finally found two women who were part Cherokee to be reenactors for this scenario. The reenactors discussed these problems, Tecumseh, and hinted at future issues around the campfire. The refugees (the visitors) were taken through a number of other scenarios that offered other perspectives of the time period, for example a British soldiers camp.

This Indian part of the tour was very popular and has inspired ideas for next year. The plan is to construct one or more wigwams in the secluded woods along the river near the trading post complex. In addition to materials to build the structure, grant money is being sought to incorporate the proper interpretation. In addition, they would like to

plant a traditional Native American garden referred to as the three sisters with maize, squash, and beans. The mound style planting will show a sharp contrast to the more familiar European row planting.

Analysis

Given the static nature of the Native American exhibit at the main museum, it is not surprising to find many elements of the mythical Indian here at Monroe with one surprising exception. The original version and first renovation of the exhibit (1972-2000) was positioned by the entrance and followed by the French exhibit. This reinforced the idea of the Indian as an introductory chapter and part of the historic past. The latest renovation in 2000, reduced the exhibit so extensively that the beginning is now located in the center of the first floor. However, the Native American exhibit is still positioned like an introductory chapter because the French exhibit follows it. In addition, throughout the existence of the exhibit, the theme has been about archaeological methods and models even though it is marketed as a Native American exhibit. For example, the Paleo-Indian and Archaic cases are about flint knapping, and the Woodland cases illustrate style methods using pottery and pipes. This exhibit is yet another example of how museums use Native American identities to illustrate another lesson, this time archaeology.

The most interesting part of the exhibit is that instead of a figure of a man like Detroit and the state museum, a woman working is the focus of the diorama and the background shows additional women growing crops. There are so many baby carriers on display in such a small space, that in some ways, the exhibit succeeds in highlighting

female roles that are often given less attention in archaeological exhibits. Interestingly, the case itself is like a relic (See Figure 7). The women, who once made up the historical society more than 40 years ago, designed this case. Was this female-focus intentional? Does it symbolize the old attitudes about Indian men being lazy? Or was it the product of the objects the museum had to display? This old display has little historical meaning in its present context, sandwiched between displays about archaeological methods. On the other hand, it makes Indian people seem more real than the archaeological displays here, and more realistic than stereotypical roles of Indian woman in general doing only household chores found in the diorama in Grand Rapids' 1980s exhibit *The People of the Grand*.



FIGURE 7: Monroe County Historical Museum; *The First People*, Case E

Like Grand Rapids' *The People of the Grand* the last part of this exhibit abandons the archaeological theme and minimally discusses contact in an unorganized and

incomprehensible way. They mix together a baby carrier, a pair of leggings, trade silver, a list of Michigan tribes, a short description of Tecumseh, pictographic signatures of Indian treaty signers with a map, and a fur trade discussion about the French and Fort Ponchartrain. It seems that this case was probably the result of a reduction of the former version from the 1990's about the changing way of life, trade influence, and the reservation period. Once again the issues of contact and the aftermath are sidestepped and avoid presenting the reality of conquest. Interestingly, there is a caption that goes with the baby carrier that discusses briefly generations of use and the number of children used this carrier. The carrier is in good condition showing little wear and I found this to be the most interesting part of the exhibit.

Overall, Native American representation at Monroe's main museum is dated, lacks detail, and the collection, instead of a concept, inspired the design and content. I discussed this problem of basing an exhibit on a collection in the preceding chapter. As a traditional museum, Monroe's narrative is linear, but changing the linear organization at Monroe to a topical one in the Native American exhibit would breathe life into this exhibit. The collection does include a number of quality beaded baby carriers and the existing case with the women has potential. Grouping together these carriers adjacent to this case and adding a label that explains the role of women domestically and artistically, could really give visitors an alternate impression of Indian women. Talking about design motifs and the significance of beadworking could be a secondary label. Since we have discussed women, the stone tools could be used to discuss the role of men, hunting and fishing. A secondary label might discuss innovation or the use of Michigan's natural resources incorporating the sturgeon and the canoes. Taken as a whole, the exhibit needs

to move objects around and incorporate more relevant topics. The existing framework does not reflect recent developments in history or science, and making inexpensive but important changes could minimize the mythical Indian's presence enormously.

Given the controversy surrounding his life and his relationship with Indian people, I cannot discuss this museum without addressing the Custer exhibit. Custer buffs or Custer protestors cannot accuse the museum of promoting him as a military giant or a murderer of Indians because the exhibit is very neutral. More or less, he is depicted as being a capable, somewhat unconventional, soldier who had respect for Indian culture and disgust with the government policies concerning them. The museum does include Sitting Bull's opinion of the American government, but no Native opinions about Custer. Instead, there is a photograph of a few Indian men standing near his memorial, which could be interpreted either way. This is where the museum seems to be (perhaps subconsciously), taking sides.

I am not opposed to the museum's perceived neutrality, but avoiding a discussion of the two contrasting Custer camps is disappointing, because it has the potential to offer perspective to at least one point in history, giving the Battle at Little Bighorn a broader significance. Even so, the mythical Indian is not detectable in the Custer exhibit because there is no real position taken, no overarching theme, and the tone is neither proud nor remorseful. Visitors are not influenced by either camp, which keeps them from understanding (or introducing) the controversy surrounding Custer's life.

Monroe's only claim to fame is not General Custer. It is also home to one of the battlefields of the War of 1812. However, the visitor center exhibit is more like a commemorative monument to the battle than a museum. So, like King's (1996) study of

the Little Bighorn National Monument, the theme is asymmetrical. However in this case, one side of the battle is not favored as much as the conduct and strategies of the soldiers. Euro-American and British soldiers are given more attention than Native American forces. For example, there are two American and two British vignettes but there is only one Indian person represented, even though they were the single largest group in the battle. This extra attention somewhat reduces the role of Indian soldiers to unruly pawns of the British. In fact the website for the visitor center describes them over and over as “the British and hostile Indians” as if the British were pleasant opponents. The Indian vignette was generalized to avoid criticisms from any one tribe about accuracy, which diminished the fact that there were a number of tribes involved. Generalization is a major component of the mythical Indian, and this vignette in its current state represents an Indian identity that never existed. If only one vignette is affordable, than one of the tribes should be depicted and changes could be made to his appearance as information arises. A label should clearly state all of the participating tribes and point out which one this vignette represents.

This past year there was a Native American scenario during the Lantern Tours. The theme was inspired by the rising tensions that led to the War of 1812. Instead of showing a sugarcoated tale of American triumph, it revealed a more realistic version through personal encounters. According to the feedback of the visitors, it seems that this tour resulted in an effective lesson about the Indian presence, and the challenges arising for Indian people six years before the war of 1812, stimulating interest in their motives for siding with the British and joining in the war of 1812. From what I understand, this part was so well received, it has inspired the museum to add more to the outdoor

interpretive area and become a permanent aspect of the tour. Unfortunately given the traditional philosophy of the museum, putting a permanent fixture representing Native Americans in a historical context without a contemporary example will continue to promote Indian people as part of the national historic past.

Monroe is not like Grand Rapids, Detroit, Michigan Historical Museum, or Cranbrook museums because it is a more traditional history museum that does not create exhibits that reflect contemporary topics. Even so, reorganizing and rewriting labels would greatly improve the main museum. And, giving the same courtesy to the Indian vignette at the battlefield visitor center as the British and American soldiers would greatly improve the representation of Native Americans and their role in the history of Monroe.

CHAPTER NINE: THE HENRY FORD

The Henry Ford provides unique educational experiences based on authentic objects, stories, and lives from America's traditions of ingenuity, resourcefulness and innovation. Our purpose is to inspire people to learn from these traditions to help shape a better future. (Mission Statement, The Henry Ford 2006)

Introduction

The Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village collectively known, as The Henry Ford, is a 254-acre property that describes itself as “America’s Greatest History Attraction” (The Henry Ford 2006). In 1927, Ford settled on a plan for his museum; construction began in 1928, and on October 21, 1933 The Edison Institute opened to the public. It included the museum, village, and the Greenfield Village Schools. The museum and village originally served as a laboratory for the school, which included practical work in the machine shops. The last original school inside the compound closed in 1969. However, community education, public programming, and school field trips continued. In 1997, The Henry Ford Academy opened to 400 county residents through lottery only.

Henry Ford's began collecting as far back as 1906. Today, the 12-acre site is primarily a collection of antique machinery, popular culture relics, automobiles, trains, and aircrafts. Greenfield Village is considered the original American outdoor museum. Close to one hundred historical buildings from the eighteenth century to about 1945, were relocated and arranged in a "village". Costumed interpreters perform period tasks like farming, sewing, and cooking. A number of working craft shops manufacture pottery and glass-blown objects, which are sold in the gift shops. Of the 240 acres of land allotted to the Village, only 90 are utilized. The rest is a wooded area, a river, and an extra pasture

for the sheep and horses. Future development plans for the village will expand the site, and perhaps add a new historical demographic in the village, Native Americans.

I interviewed Christian Overland, the director of The Henry Ford Museum, Ford Rouge Factory Tour, and Greenfield Village. He is in charge of strategic planning and execution for all three venues, from program development, restoration, retail, and anything that coordinates to the visitor experience.

Data

There is a small collection of Native American objects at The Henry Ford. A 1999 inventory included a number of stone tools, a few decorative stone objects, two pairs of moccasins, and two tobacco bags (Chontos 1999). Archive staff members informed me that a fire in 1970 destroyed many Native American objects, which may account for the limited collection.

According to Christian Overland (2005), there has never been an exhibit at The Henry Ford that focuses on Native American people. However, there has been public programming in the village on craftwork and cooking, and mini exhibits in the town hall, but there are no records of these. He mentioned a mini powwow, but did not recall the date. I found some photographs of one exhibit in the museum dating from 1954. It was called *American Indian Cultures: The Robert Hall Sheedy and John M. Sheedy Jr. Collection*. Photos of the exhibit revealed a black and white decorated room with cases of basketry with blankets hanging on the walls. There were no photos that offered a context for the objects in the exhibit gallery and few labels. In addition, a 1967 guidebook for the museum implied that there were some agricultural technologies on

display illustrating the evolution of American agricultural equipment (The Henry Ford 1967: 40). In general, Native American representation has been minimal.

Unlike the other museums in this study that are more local or regional, The Henry Ford is committed to telling the stories of the overall American experience, emphasizing material progress and invention (The Henry Ford, 2003). However, the Bicentennial exhibit was not about material progress or invention. It was designed around a recently acquired collection of 2000 documents, manuscripts, and artifacts from 1755-1763 that illustrated the struggle for power of the United States. A selection of these was organized to form *The Struggle and the Glory: A Special Bicentennial Exhibition*. The Vice President of Collections and Preservation described the exhibit as “the telling being in the actual words of the participants” (Wheeler 1976:3). The exhibit as divided into four sections: France and England in America 1755-1763, Colonial Life 1763-1775, The War 1775-1781, and the New Nation 1781-1789.

Most of the documents were correspondence between military personnel. There were eight letters that discussed the presence and behavior of Native American people during this time. Native Americans did not write any of the letters. Joseph Brant served as a liaison between the British and Indian people, and was actively involved in the conflicts. He wrote none of the letters, but was mentioned in two of them. In fact, one author marveled at his commitment to the British and the unrestrained measures he took to secure the British rule.

As of January 2006, Native Americans were mentioned in four different exhibits at the Henry Ford. *Clockwork: American Time and Timepieces* uses more than 100 artifacts to show Americans’ perception of time through the evolution of timepieces over

four centuries. “Sunwatch Village” an 800-year-old Native American settlement is used to show an American origin of the idea of time and timepieces. An artist’s recreation of Sunwatch Village is positioned next to a label about the inheritance of ideas from other cultures. The instrument of time in the picture is a tall central post that casts a shadow. The perception of time to the residents of this village is described in the label as relating to the best times to plant and harvest crops.

The jewelry exhibit is a collection of what is described as “American-made” and “American-worn” jewelry over the last 300 years. There is one piece of jewelry that makes reference to Native Americans on display. It is a trade necklace made of beads, and metal beavers produced by Hudson’s Bay Company 175 years ago. The label describes how the necklace was made for trade with Native people based on their belief that evil spirits could enter the body, and how the wearing of reflective silver jewelry could prevent the evil spirits from possessing them.

Made in America is another exhibit where I found a reference to Native Americans. One case is dedicated to Knives and Tomahawks. A central label discusses the popularity of these bladed tools. The right side of the label is an image of a frontiersman with a gun, and the left side contains an image of a traditionally dressed Native American man with a tomahawk. The label mentions the association of Native Americans with tomahawks. This weaponry is part of the theme of the area that illustrates distinct American personal weaponry.

With Liberty & Justice for All is a new permanent addition to The Henry Ford. It was fully installed on January 16, 2006. It explores the evolution of America freedom from the Revolutionary War through the struggle for civil rights using objects from the

collection. It is broken up into four parts: Independence; Freedom and Union; Votes for Women; and The Civil Rights Movement.

There are timelines throughout pointing to important dates associated with freedoms. Native Americans are mentioned several times throughout the timeline. These refer to:

- December 16, 1773 The Boston Tea Party.
- July 13, 1787 Northwest Ordinance.
- May 26, 1830 Indian Removal Act.
- March 3, 1871 Indian Appropriation Act.
- February 8, 1887 Dawes Act splitting Indian lands into private sectors.
- November 20, 1969 Native American seize of Alcatraz.
- February 27, through May 6th 1973 Protests at Wounded Knee.
- January 24, 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Education Act.

Although many references are made to Native Americans' loss of freedoms and their struggles for civil rights on the timeline, it is colonial peoples, African Americans, and women who are highlighted through artifact displays.

In 1994, an idea to restore the original flow of the Rouge River was in the works. In 1972, the river was redirected and its former path through The Henry Ford grounds was reduced to swamplands. The reinstatement would restore Oxbow Island creating a new space to interpret history. Overland (2005) explained that the museum decided that this would be the perfect place to build a late 1700's Native American village. Staff met with many Native American groups, leaders, and colleagues to develop their idea to tell this story. Some of these included the Pokagan Band of Potawatomi, the American Indian Center in Detroit, and George Cornell from Michigan State University. The museum felt that the Native American story should be told, because it was inspiring (Overland 2005). However, Overland (2005) explained that through eight years of discussions it became clear that if they were to present Native Americans, the exhibit would have to be a

collaborative effort because the museum operates “In Partnership With Others”, and would need to illustrate a “continuum of the land” (Overland 2005). In other words, it would not tell the history of Native Americans but rather the history of the land that Native Americans first occupied.

Meanwhile, a strategic plan was solidified to tell the stewardship of the oxbow area. Prior to 1868, Native Americans occupied the oxbow before the first ribbon farmers who farmed strips of land adjacent to the river. Overland (2005) explains that in order to tell the stewardship of the land, and not just be an Anglo-Saxon American story, the Native American chapter was essential. The plan for a village was abandoned and ideas for a modern representation were rejected since the historic cutoff date is 1945. To date, after eleven years of planning and discussions a consensus has not been reached. The new plan now is to “...restore the oxbow, create the space, do the research, and start to interpret what we know is solid absolute correct history, and see what happens and move from there. Rather, than jumping into a living history village when we really don’t have the expertise for doing that” (Overland 2005). As a result, the Native American story has been reduced to signage along an interpretive trail that discusses the facts about Oxbow Island.

Oxbow Island will be open in the spring of 2006 to Scouts. However, village visitors will not be able to access the area for at least three more years. Girl and Boy Scouts will be able to enjoy an additional 14 acres to earn badges, fish, bird watch, camp, and hike the interpretive trail. The subjects discussed at present follow the plan to tell the story of the land and the signs are entitled, The Oxbow and its Inhabitants, Using the

River, Back to Nature with John Burroughs, Bird Watching, Burroughs Glen, The Potawatomi, Going Fishing, The Ever Changing Forest, and Creatures of the Woods.

Analysis

The Henry Ford's strict adherence to a progressive interpretation of history has not left much room for Native Americans except as introductory chapters or examples of contrast with American success. Only one exhibit about Native Americans specifically has ever been done at The Henry Ford. It was in the 1950's, and another was not proposed for another 40 years. Not surprisingly for the time, it was arranged like a set of curios reminiscent of the exhibits from the turn of the twentieth century. This collection was available so they created an exhibit. This is one example of The Henry Ford using a collection as opposed to a concept to decide the content of an exhibit. I discussed the problems with this strategy in chapters seven and eight.

The Henry Ford's mission is to tell the story of the American experience with an emphasis on material progress and invention. However, there is no place to show Native American innovation, but plenty of room for the mythical Indian. The way resourceful Native American people developed, produced, and improved stone technologies could be described as an example of American innovation. However, a display in the 1960's, negated this early innovation by comparing it to the advancements of more modern farm equipment. This is another example of how museums use Indian innovation to contrast with and accentuate western progress. This forced contrast makes Native American innovators look inferior and incompetent.

The Bicentennial exhibit that discussed the struggle for power over the United States was interesting, because it strayed from the Henry Ford's regular theme of innovation to address the conquest of Native America. But like Grand Rapids' 1980's exhibition *The People of the Grand*, and the current exhibits *Frontiers to Factories* in Detroit, and Michigan Historical Museum's Native American chapter in *The First People to 1900*, the discussion of the political context did not include the realities of the achievement of conquest. The choice to use a collection of documents from the French, British, and American regimes, and no Indian produced documents (which were not part of the collection) kept Indian voices silent. Furthermore, presenting the tale "as told by the participants" made Indian roles in the struggle seem minimal and unimportant. General comments are made in many documents about Indian loyalty and their bothersome presence, making it clear that various individuals described in the letters felt differently about Indian people. However, one Indian individual seemed to impress the soldiers as well as the museum. Letters referring to Joseph Brant made it into the exhibit twice. It described his loyalty to the British and how he killed women and children to further his cause. This is reminiscent of how Monroe's battlefield visitor center makes Indian participants in the war of 1812 look like the unruly pawns of the British.

This exhibit never claimed to be about Native Americans, and I am not trying to say that it should have been. My criticism is that it claimed to be in the voice of the actual participants but no efforts were made to give voice to the one constant group throughout the struggle, Native Americans. (I revisit this critique in the current exhibit on Civil Rights.) Reducing Indian presence during the struggle to the degree of

bothersome onlookers helped the museum maintain the pride they were trying to promote during this anniversary milestone.

The arrangement of the timepieces is a contemporary example of how the Henry Ford appropriates depictions of Native America (with no objects) to illustrate American innovation and progress. For example, the exhibit is based on a collection of objects from the past 400 years, but they use Sunwatch Village's sundial, an 800-year-old technology, to demonstrate outside influences. Is it because this example of "other cultures" is American or because it happens to be in America? Or, does a contrast between Sunwatch Village and more modern American timepieces emphasize the achievement of America more effectively than using European timepieces that are more similar. American timepieces might not have looked as innovative if they were compared to Europe. If they use an 800-year-old European timepiece to show influence, then it would have made our timepieces look un-American and more European, but it would be a more appropriate comparison that does not make Native American technology look primitive.

In another section of the museum that focuses on American made products, there is a Native American with a tomahawk pictured opposite a frontiersman with a gun on a label about Knives and Tomahawks (See Figure 8). It makes no sense to show someone with a gun, when the case is talking about bladed weapons. The images positioned side by side makes frontiersmen seem much more capable and more technologically advanced than the Native American, illustrating American ingenuity. In addition, the label does not give credit for the tomahawk to Native people, it only discusses their association. So for the second time, The Henry Ford makes use of depictions of Native America (without objects) to showcase American ingenuity and progress. Either the frontiersman

photograph should be changed to one that shows a bladed weapon, or both of the photographs should be changed to include only frontiersmen, since this is what this case is about.



FIGURE 8: The Henry Ford; *Made in America*, Bowie Knives and Tomahawks

There is no Native American made jewelry on display in the jewelry exhibit.

What I found was a necklace that was made for Native people. The style is noticeably different and stands out amongst the other pieces of jewelry. While the other pieces are less flashy or elaborate, the trade necklace has red, green, and white beads in between six sets of silver beavers, and a huge central silver medallion with an engraved eagle adorned with a stars and stripes breastplate. It is a compelling sight, set amongst the other pieces. The information presented on the label for this piece reveals how these necklaces

appealed to the Native people because of their beliefs in the repelling of spirits with silver. This necklace makes a persuasive statement about how goods are manufactured to appeal to a Native American consumer, but there is no jewelry in the exhibit that was manufactured by Native Americans for the Euro-American consumer. This would compliment the existing necklace, and illustrate a relationship between two distinct groups of consumers from the point of view of the manufacturers. If nothing in the collection is available, than an image could be chosen from exhibit guidebooks published by art museums that focus on tourist art.

The newest exhibit *With Liberty and Justice for All* diminishes the struggles of Native American people generally, by focusing on the hardships of colonists, women, and African American people. The artifacts in the Henry Ford's collection dictated which groups would be given the most attention. This is another example of a collection driven exhibit making a narrative incomplete. (See chapters seven and eight). Given the minimal representation once again in a relevant topic, visitors most definitely fail to appreciate Native American hardships and the years they fought, and continue to fight, to survive U.S. governmental control in their own nation. This would have been a great exhibit to incorporate Indian people into the narratives at The Henry Ford while illustrating continuity and survival, two topics stressed in the Grand Rapids and Detroit collaborative exhibits. Where objects were scarce, images could have been used. Furthermore, Indians are generalized in this exhibit, and until the era of the civil rights movement, any rebellion to foreign control (for example Pontiac's Uprising) is not mentioned. Like other mentions of Native Americans inside the museum, their past is marginalized and their role in history, compared to others, seems less significant.

Up to this point I have given examples of the mythical Indian throughout the museum. The village offers visitors opportunities to make objects the way they were done in the past for a small charge. For example, visitors can make homemade candles. These hands-on activities reinforce and compliment the mission of the village by illustrating everyday life of people in American history. The Henry Ford's director, Christian Overland (2005), recalled that the village, through its public programming, has made use of Indian inspired crafts and cooking for additional activities for visitors, but details are not available. It is not clear if Native people were facilitating the activity, or the context for this activity. According to Huhndorf (2001), this is another example of museums offering visitors the chance to "Go Native" without having to confront the past. Unlike my discussion of this in chapter five with Detroit's, *Land, Lives, and Legends'* visitor accessible *nasoagon*, in this case, I have to agree with her. There is no Native American representation in the village, therefore, no context for this activity. The act of making something Indian must be very attractive to visitors, given it is a favored American tradition (see Huhndorf 2001, Deloria 1998). Special events, like a powwow, would probably be the most appropriate time to make these crafts.

The future of Native American representation at The Henry Ford looks bleak and fixed. In the early 1990's, the idea to build a Native American village was inspired by the new wooded space of the oxbow. Once again, Native American people would be presented as part of the natural world and distant from American progress. Collaborative efforts failed and the idea has been reduced to a single label about the earliest inhabitants of that piece of land, the Potawatomi. Indians have been placed in the historic past and presented as non-threatening people who gave up their lands without consequence. This

is an obvious inaccuracy, because during discussions the Potawatomi consultants made it clear that they were still grappling with the aftermath of their displacement (Overland 2005).

One reason the collaborative efforts failed was because Native people wanted to represent their perspective of history, which is both historic and contemporary. The Henry Ford does not exhibit contemporary topics in the village. Collaboration at the Henry Ford is different than at the Grand Rapids, or Detroit museums. Instead, The Henry Ford wanted Native people that could act as experts to provide specific details like dress and everyday living in the 1700s. This kind of information only adds details to the interpretation of Indian people as marginal or early characters in American history. Furthermore, The Henry Ford was interested in facts that would contribute to the already established story that focused on the linear history of the land.

If this exhibit were to be carried out in the manner The Henry Ford originally intended, than they would not need Indian people involved at all. The story would be about the stewardship of the land and not about Native American history. Therefore, the best source of the facts might be found in primary written documents of subsequent settlers, and the many books written about Native American dress and subsistence in the area prior to Euro-settlement. An intern did this kind of research (see Chontos 1999). So why was an advisory board consulted when the answers were accessible in other ways? Like the mistakes of the Public Museum of Grand Rapids' 1980s *People of the Grand*, this is a contemporary example of a museum recognizing a problem and attempting to make adjustments within existing frameworks.

The Henry Ford advertises, etched in stone on the entrance to the village, that they work in partnership with others, but in reality compromise is not part of the proceedings. Agreement between the Henry Ford and the Native community and advisors will never happen as long as the policy of the Henry Ford remains to talk only about the facts in a linear way and from the perspective of mainstream culture. Eleven years produced no results, and eleven more probably will not either. Given the very early cutoff date for the village (c.1945), the museum might be a better place to incorporate Native America because there is more flexibility in the museum. I discussed some simple improvements above. The Henry Ford does a good job bringing awareness to important topics like the struggle for civil rights and incorporated marginal groups maintaining Ford's philosophy of history so I think that they have the potential to do the same for Native America. It is particularly important that The Henry Ford incorporate Native America in a more culturally appropriate way because it receives the most visitors of all six museums, even combined. In addition, they do not serve a single city, county, or state, but rather the entire nation *entertaining* 1.5 million visitors per year.

CHAPTER TEN: CONCLUSIONS

In the previous six chapters, I discussed how these six museums have used the image of the mythical Indian in various ways, at various times, and in varying degrees. Figuring out exactly how and when museums used the image of the mythical Indian revealed a pattern that explained possible reasons why this practice persists. In general, the mythical Indian benefits museums more than a realistic portrayal of Native Americans because common museum themes and goals support a manufactured history and identity (see Trouillot 1994 and Handler 1985, 1997)

In the beginning of this paper, I emphasized the role of the mythical Indian in the national narrative and provided examples of its presence in all six museums at one time or another. The national narrative is a progressive narrative that illustrates achievement while disregarding political and social realism (see Bennett 1995). For example, three of the six museums use a comparable narrative in one or more of their current exhibits. Detroit's *Frontiers to Factories* discusses the progress of the city, Michigan Historical Museum illustrates to a lesser degree the progress of the state, and The Henry Ford discusses the progress of the Nation. The mythical Indian is found in all of these museums' narratives, because as an introductory chapter it "supports progressive themes."

The mythical Indian "excuses accountability." The national narrative limits the reality of achievement by taking minimal responsibility for its causalities, relieving guilt about the contemporary consequences. Huhndorf (2001) makes reference to this practice. Detroit's *Frontiers to Factories*, The Michigan Historical Museum's current permanent exhibit, Monroe's *The First People*, the Custer and the battlefield exhibits, and every

exhibit in the Henry Ford all relieve any concerns about the conquest of Native America by never directly assigning blame. Finally, many of the exhibits listed above from the past ignored these types of issues completely, relieving museum visitors of uncomfortable and embarrassing confrontations with their pasts. In addition, these omissions help present a positive image to tourists and maintain a sense of pride in the community.

The mythical Indian “makes a compelling display.” Detroit’s *Frontiers to Factories*, Michigan Historical Museum’s *First People to 1900*, Cranbrook’s *People of the Woodlands*, and The Henry Ford’s *Jewelry and Timepieces* exhibits all make use of Native American imagery that draws attention to the exhibits.

The mythical Indian has “box office appeal.” For example, Detroit’s Historic Fort Wayne advertises the mound as an additional attraction. In addition, Native American images were chosen as images for the websites for Detroit, Michigan Historical Museum, and Monroe and their exhibits are not exclusively about Native Americans. This is also evident in the choice of merchandise in the gift shops of five of the six museums. With the exception of The Henry Ford, all of the museums sell some kind of merchandise associated with Native America and not necessarily Indian-made products or scholarly literature.

The mythical Indian “provides entertainment.” The most blatant example of this comes from The Henry Ford. The museum as a place of entertainment and education is the new general marketing and operational trend. However, The Henry Ford highlights aspects of history in part for its potential to entertain. Not to say that The Henry Ford is non-educational quite the contrary, but like many other places of its kind, they have to

live up to certain expectations. Being “America’s Greatest History Attraction” does not leave much room for an unconventional portrayal of Native Americans like Grand Rapids current installment, because it would interrupt the adventure.

The mythical Indian “supports limited museum collections.” Michigan Historical Museum used an inaccurate image of the River Raisin Massacre instead of creating a new one. Monroe has not updated their Native American exhibit because the best of the collection is already on display, and the single Indian vignette at the battlefield center was due to a lack of Indian adornment in the collection. The Henry Ford’s limited collection of Native American artifacts kept them from sharing space with colonists, women, and African Americans in the current Civil Rights exhibit.

The mythical Indian supports “instructional lessons.” Cranbrook uses Native American objects in their *Woodland’s* exhibit to discuss natural resources. The Henry Ford has, on occasion, demonstrated the making of Indian crafts for visitors to take part even though the everyday life of Indian people is not part of the experience. Monroe’s primary lesson in their exhibit is about flint knapping and archaeological methods.

Fortunately, not every exhibit presents Native Americans in the same way. Grand Rapids’ *Anishnabek* and Detroit’s *Lands Lives and Legends* are unconventional exhibits for history museums and should be used as models for others. In addition, Michigan Historical Museums’ *Michigan Relics* was also a step forward. Furthermore, Cranbrook’s discussion of their impact on the Natural History of Michigan is also a valid interpretation. Monroe’s inclusion of the Native Americans in the Lantern Tours is also a move in a positive direction. And finally, Henry Ford’s 11-year effort to make Native

Americans part of their attraction was an admirable effort, and at the very least illustrates how museums are a catalyst for discussion between the community and museums.

Nearly everyone interviewed talked about future plans or desires to improve the representation of Native Americans at their museums. Some of these improvements included utilizing more of the collection, discussing for example the art or the technology in a positive way, including more pre-history, or soliciting help from the Native community. However, none of the museum employees (Grand Rapids is the exception here) suggested changes to the structures or themes of the core narratives. With the exception of the Grand Rapids museum, none of the other museums provide more than one (permanent) perspective. Whatever the case, many of them discuss financial constraints that prohibit them from making changes. However given the results of this study that illustrate the benefits the mythical Indian has to offer, I am not convinced that financial constraints is the reason that the stereotype remains.

Local or state public history museums are not always sensitive to contemporary Native American feelings about the past, often due to the limitations introduced in chapter two, but best discussed in another paper. Nonetheless, the museums chosen affect large numbers of people. In fact, an estimated 1,944,000 people are affected by all six museums annually (see Appendix A), and the Henry Ford affects 1.5 million of them alone and does a poor job of representing Native Americans.

These museums have a responsibility to the public to present historical information in an accessible and educational manner to the best of their ability primarily because schools use them as an educational tool. The websites for all six museums market themselves as meeting the benchmarks designed by The Michigan Department of

Education, particularly in the realm of social studies (see Michigan Department of Education 2006). Every informant told me that most exhibits are designed around these benchmarks. For studies about Native Americans, museums are particularly important because the larger educational bodies (first and secondary schools that subsequently make up the majority of these museums' visitors) cannot and do not cover these topics adequately. It is in museums where, in many cases, people (often as children) experience the history and culture of Native American people for the first and only time.

This project can serve as a starting point to research this topic further. If I were to start all over again, I would make a point to take the guided tours offered by the museums. Many of my informants discussed how guided tours are more effective ways to educate their visitors and can offer supplemental information when the museums cannot make changes to exhibits. These may offer further insight into the actual quality of Native American representation. For example, do the tours introduce and discuss what the exhibits leave out? Do the tour guides give their own interpretation of history, or are they scripted? If they are scripted, where did the information come from? In addition to tours, I would have liked to look more in depth at the public programming offered as well and attend events that might include Native American topics.

If the previous literature established the basis for my discussion about the presence of the mythical Indian in historical narratives, then this study could motivate a study of the representation of other marginalized groups in museums. For example, I noticed that there was little said about slavery in these museums. It is true that slavery was illegal in the state of Michigan. However, there were slaves in many of the fur trading forts established in the region that became the state of Michigan. In fact, after

American conquest British subjects were allowed to keep their slaves and it was not until the 1830s that the last of the slaves died. Except for Detroit, this was not addressed at all in any of the museums that I visited, even though they talked about the success of the fur trade in all of them and the history of Michigan prior to becoming a state. Even in Detroit the topic is glossed over. For example, the same video that gave the short reenactments of Cadillac and Pontiac, had a man talking about how his life as a slave improved since coming to the territory.

In general museums have proved to be a rich source of data to explore themes of power, ideology, education, public memory, society, philosophy, and discourse (See Emmison and Smith 2001). Handler (1985) described how museums reflect mainstream society. In the afterthoughts of this study, Grand Rapids is the only museum of six that mainstream society includes the perspective of actual Indian people on a permanent basis. Grand Rapids is a successful museum, despite the absence of the mythical Indian. Museums can be rich resources to each other. Grand Rapids *Anishnabek* and Detroit's *Land, Lives, and Legends* exemplify an alternate way to teach history and could be used as a guide or information bank for other museums. While not all of the museums have the ability to do an exhibit like *Anishnabek*, nor should they have to, making even minor changes to existing exhibits would greatly improve Native American representation and enhance the public's education of Native Americans in museums significantly.

APPENDIX A

MUSEUM	<p style="text-align: center;">THE PUBLIC MUSEUM OF GRAND RAPIDS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">VAN ANDEL MUSEUM CENTER 272 PEARL STREET NW GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49504-5371 (616) 456-3977</p> <p style="text-align: center;">http://www.grmuseum.org/vamc/museum.shtml</p>
RELEVANT ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS	<p style="text-align: center;">(1) The Norton Mound Grand Rapids, MI</p>
MISSION	<p>Founded in 1854, our Museum is dedicated to collecting, preserving, and teaching about the natural and cultural history of West Michigan. It is owned and operated by the City of Grand Rapids. Museum sites include Van Andel Museum Center and Voigt House Victorian Museum. The Community Archives and Research Center houses curatorial offices and the Museum's Research Collection.</p>
INFORMANTS	<p style="text-align: center;">Chris G. Carron (Curator of Collections) ccarron@ci.grand-rapids.mi.us</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Debra Muller (Project Manager, Norton Mounds) dmuller@ci.grand-rapids.mi.us</p>
DEMOGRAPHICS	<p style="text-align: center;">50,000 annual visiting school children</p>

MUSEUM	THE DETROIT HISTORICAL MUSEUM 5401 WOODWARD AVENUE DETROIT, MI 48202 (313) 833-1805 http://www.detroithistorical.org/ .	
RELEVANT ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS	(1) Historic Fort Wayne 6325 West Jefferson Avenue Detroit, MI 48209 (313) 297-0332	
MISSION	The Detroit Historical Museums preserve and present the history of our region in tangible, real, and vibrant ways that recognize and explain our shared past as the foundation for our future.	
INFORMANTS	James Conway (Project Manager, Historic Fort Wayne) ConwayJ@HIST.ci.detroit.mi.us Dr. Dennis M. Zambala (Director DHM) ZembalaD@HIST.ci.detroit.mi.us	
DEMOGRAPHICS	An estimated 35,000 annual visitors	

MUSEUM	<p align="center">MICHIGAN HISTORICAL MUSEUM</p> <p align="center">702 W. KALAMOOZOO STREET LANSING, MI 48900-8240 (517) 373-3559</p> <p align="center">http://www.michigan.gov/hal/0,1607,7-160-17447_18595---.00.html</p>	
RELEVANT ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS	<p align="center">(1) Sanilac Petroglyphs Bad Axe, MI</p> <p align="center">(2) Fort Wilkins Historic Complex Fort Wilkins Historic State Park Copper Harbor, MI 49918 (906) 289-4215</p> <p align="center">(3) Fayette Historic Townsite Fayette Historic State Park 13700 13.25 Lane Garden, MI 49835 (906) 644-2603</p> <p align="center">(4) Walker Tavern Brooklyn, MI (517) 467-4401</p>	
MISSION	<p>With the people of Michigan, the Michigan Historical Museum system values the physical evidence and a collective memory of our past by collecting, preserving and managing this evidence, by educating the public, by creating exhibits, and by collaborating with other organizations to accomplish our mission.</p>	
INFORMANTS	<p align="center">Maria Leiby (Museum Historian) liebym@michigan.gov</p> <p align="center">Eve Weipert (Curator of Collections and Exhibits) weiperte@michigan.gov</p>	
DEMOGRAPHICS	<p align="center">Main museum: 138,000 annual visitors Others combined: 438,000 annual visitors Total: 576,000 annual visitors</p>	

MUSEUM	CRANBROOK INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE 39221 WOODWARD AVENUE P.O. BOX 801 BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MI 48303-0801 (877) 462-4262 http://science.cranbrook.edu/	
RELEVANT ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS	N/A	
MISSION	<p>Cranbrook Institute of Science is a natural history and science museum that fosters in its audiences a passion for understanding the world around them and a lifelong love of learning. Through its broadly based educational programs, its permanent and changing exhibits and its collections and research, the Institute develops a scientifically literate public able to cope with today's knowledge-based society. Moreover, Cranbrook Institute of Science generates the enthusiasm for learning about the natural world that will produce the scientists of tomorrow.</p>	
INFORMANTS	Dr. David S. Brose (Director CIS) dbrose@cranbrook.edu	
DEMOGRAPHICS	An estimated 200,000 annual visitors	

MUSEUM	THE MONROE COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM 126 SOUTH MONROE STREET MONTGOMERY, MI 48161 (734) 240 7780 http://www.co.monroe.mi.us/monroe/default.aspx?Pageid=42	
RELEVANT ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS	(1) The River Raisin Battlefield Visitor Center 1403 East Elm Avenue Monroe, MI 48161 (2) The Navarre-Anderson Trading Post (Lantern Tours) 3775 North Custer Road Monroe, MI 48161	
MISSION	The Monroe County Historical Commission shall further the interest of the people in all matters relating to the history of Monroe County and its environs. To that end it may acquire and maintain appropriate exhibit materials, design displays, provide educational and archival programs, issue publications, encourage tourism, and engage in activities, which promote historical awareness.	
INFORMANTS	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Interview</i> Ralph Naveaux (Director) ralph_naveaux@monroemi.org</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Email Correspondence</i> John Gibney (Assistant Director) john_gibney@monroemi.org</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lynn Reaume (Assistant Archivist) Lynn_reaume@monroemi.org</p>	
DEMOGRAPHICS	More than 21,000 annual visitors in 2004	

MUSEUM	<p>THE HENRY FORD</p> <p>20900 Oakwood Blvd. Dearborn, MI 48124-4088 (313) 271-2455</p> <p>http://www.hfmgv.org/.</p>	
RELEVANT ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS	<p>(1) The Henry Ford Museum 20900 Oakwood Blvd. Dearborn, MI 48124-4088</p> <p>(2) Greenfield Village 20900 Oakwood Blvd. Dearborn, MI 48124-4088</p>	
MISSION	<p>The Henry Ford provides unique educational experiences based on authentic objects, stories, and lives from America's traditions of ingenuity, resourcefulness and innovation. Our purpose is to inspire people to learn from these traditions to help shape a better future.</p>	
INFORMANTS	<p>Christian Overland (Director) (No direct contact information available)</p>	
DEMOGRAPHICS	<p>An estimated 1,500,000 annual visitors</p>	

APPENDIX B

Michigan Statistics: Census Information
<http://fisher.libvirginia.edu/collections/stats/census/>

County And Museum	Kent County <i>Public Museum of Grand Rapids</i>	Wayne County <i>The Henry Ford The Detroit Historical Museum</i>	INGHAM COUNTY <i>The Michigan Historical Museum</i>	Oakland County <i>Cranbrook Institute of Science</i>	Monroe County <i>The Monroe County Historical Museum</i>	State of Michigan
Population	580,331	2,045,473	278,398	1,198,593	147,946	9,990,810
Area/square mile	856	614	559	873	551	56,804
White	477,421	1,065,604	221,935	988,194	139,264	7,966,053
%	83.10	51.07	79.50	82.80	95.40	80.20
Black or African American	51,287	868,992	30,340	120,720	2,766	1,412,742
%	8.9	42.02	10.90	10.10	1.9	14.20
Am Indian or Alaskan Native	2,999	7,627	1,528	3,270	405	58,479
%	.50	.04	.50	.30	.30	.60
Asian	10,667	35,141	10,273	49,402	679	176,510
%	1.9	1.70	3.70	4.10	.50	1.80
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	349	506	143	295	13	2,692
%	.10	< .01	.10	< .01	< .01	< .01
Hispanic or Latino	40,183	77,207	16,190	28,999	3,110	323,877
%	7.0	3.7	2.4	2.4	2.10	3.3
Other	19,200	32,020	6,746	10,164	907	129,552
%	3.3	1.6	2.40	.80	.60	1.30
Two or more Races	12,412	51,269	8,355	22,211	1,911	192,416
%	2.2	2.5	3.00	1.9	1.3	1.9

APPENDIX C

Proposed Interview Questions

General Questions

1. What is this museum's role in the community?
2. What is your position at this museum and what do your responsibilities include?
3. Would you describe some of the difficulties presenting local and state history to the public?
4. What is the museum's policy for exhibition planning and development?
5. Who is in attendance during the decision process?

Long Term versus Short Term Exhibits

1. What is the nature/function of long-term exhibits?
2. How are long-term exhibits maintained?
3. What kinds of changes have been made to long-term exhibits since their initial installation? Do you keep records?
4. What is the nature/function of short-term exhibits?
5. What are the topics of short-term exhibits? How are these determined?
6. Is there an additional charge to see these exhibits?
7. Have short-term exhibits ever been planned to open during a particular holiday, event, or any other significant occasion?
8. What is the difference between long-term and short-term exhibits?

Ethnic Representation

1. Do you represent ethnic groups? If so, how (e.g. photographs, models of men or women, specific setting or context, media methods, through the use of objects long-term and/or short-term exhibits)?
2. If you do represent ethnic groups or would like to, how would ethnic people be portrayed in the context American History?
3. Have you ever dealt with controversial issues (e.g. struggles, resistance, gender, religion)?
4. Have you done any exhibits on Native Americans? If so could you tell me about it? If not, has there been discussion about a Native American exhibit in this museum?

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