

STEWARDSHIP, PARTNERSHIPS, AND TECHNOLOGY:

Dakota Material Culture *in the* Minnesota Historical Society

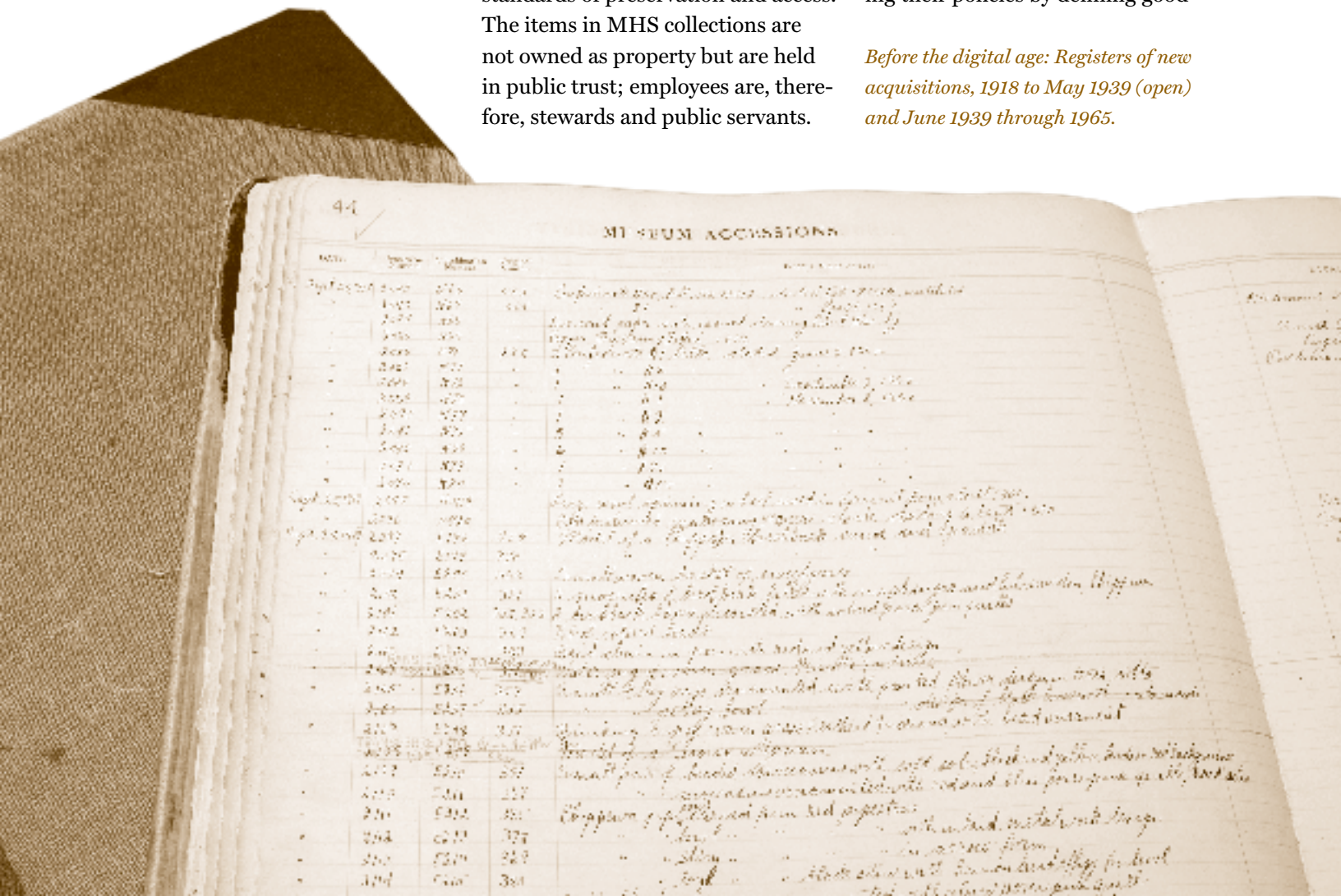
Benjamin Gessner

ABOVE ALL ELSE, A HISTORICAL society values its commitment to the public, and a collections department honors the responsibility of managing the items entrusted to it. It is the professional obligation of the Min-

nesota Historical Society to collect, preserve, and provide access to items that tell the stories of Minnesota's people. We are charged by charter and by mission to do so, and we are held to the highest professional standards of preservation and access. The items in MHS collections are not owned as property but are held in public trust; employees are, therefore, stewards and public servants.

In regard to the care of American Indian material culture, a spirit of collaboration between museums and native communities has begun to emerge. Over the past 20-plus years, museums have been adapting their policies by defining good

Before the digital age: Registers of new acquisitions, 1918 to May 1939 (open) and June 1939 through 1965.



stewardship of American Indian material culture in terms of good partnerships with American Indians. These partnerships often address the divergent definitions of access, use, and preservation most frequently accepted by either group. At all policy, programming, and employee levels, the Minnesota Historical Society has been—and remains—committed to working with American Indian communities.

Nevertheless, the academic disciplines of archaeology, anthropology, and history, as well as the term “museum collections,” have come to be almost dirty words for some American Indian people. This is because throughout the history of these specializations, until the past few decades, practitioners have considered themselves the sole authorities in examining, theorizing about, and teaching American Indian history and prehistory. While academics are, indeed, experts in their fields, especially in examining archaeological and historical records in order to better understand the past, they have, until relatively recently, guarded closely this self-defined authority—often to the detriment of their disciplines.

This is not to say that they never sought the input of American Indians in interpreting their past. However, academics most often considered oral tradition to be supplemental, relying upon it only to support prevailing theories. Oral

Many American Indian people consider physical items to be relatives, ancestors, or powerful ceremonial objects.

history was not accorded nearly as much credence as the academic disciplines. Yet the opportunities for educating the general public are diminished when these voices are ignored. Not only is oral history an expertise in its own right but, when employed in tandem with other methods of examining the past, it often provides a much more holistic and accurate understanding.¹

The most exciting changes in these academic and professional fields are the collaborations that are emerging as American Indian communities have begun regaining public control over the interpretation of their past.² Today, as American Indian people have entered these fields and challenged the assumed authority, many historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, and museum professionals understand it to be their duty to actively seek and include the voices of contemporary members of the communities whose culture and history they examine. These academic fields are strengthened exponentially as partnerships become more common.

Museums have an important role

to play in educating the public by helping to create platforms where members of American Indian communities can tell the stories that they are willing to share. Many museums have begun using technology not only as a tool to disseminate information and achieve transparency—openness and accountability for collection items—but also as a means of encouraging interaction. For the past decade, one way in which the Minnesota Historical Society has begun fostering conversations is through digitizing catalog records and images and posting them to free online databases, the most recent being *Collections Online*.

A catalog record for an object contains information on provenance (life history), the date it was made, how it was constructed, with what materials, and how and by whom it was used. Digitized records can serve as a surrogate for “the real thing,” and anyone can access them at any time from any place with an internet connection. The Society began digitizing 3D objects more than five years ago; a more concentrated effort began in 2010, funded primarily through the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (ACHF). Digitization can be laborious and time consuming; to date, roughly ten percent of the 3D objects are available online.

Beyond merely sharing collections information, digital technology provides a mechanism for the pub-

Benjamin Gessner, a collections assistant at the Minnesota Historical Society, has an academic background in art history, nonprofit management, and cultural resource management. For the better part of a decade, he has worked professionally with museum collections. He says, “I am personally and professionally indebted to my Dakota teachers and friends and have done my best to listen to them carefully. This article relies heavily on my personal opinions and perspectives. It does not necessarily represent their views or those of my colleagues or supervisors.”

lie to comment directly on a given site. By its very nature, this function decentralizes authority on interpretation. And thus, *Collections Online* provided the platform for a new collaborative venture. Responding to requests from Dakota people to improve access to information about their material culture in its holdings, the MHS collections department in 2011 began to digitize and present these items in an easily accessible portion of *Collections Online*. Digitizing Dakota material culture is one of the Society's efforts to address the anniversary of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 by building relationships with contemporary Dakota individuals and communities.³ The project was based on nearly 150 years of evolving practices in handling and identifying material culture in general as well as the more recent decades of advances in working with American Indian communities.

THE MINNESOTA HISTORICAL Society acquires, cares for, provides access to, and holds in public trust many physical manifestations of the past. Its collections contain large numbers of manuscripts, government records, photographs, works of art, maps, and books as well as 3D objects, commonly called historical artifacts but more appropriately known as material culture. Even so, all of these terms are applied by the dominant culture; many American Indian people consider physical

Online Resources

These links lead to sites mentioned throughout this article in connection with material culture and Dakota history.

- *Collections Online*:
www.mnhs.org/searchcollections
- *In Honor of the People* (Bishop Whipple collections):
www.inhonorofthepeople.org
- *Oceti Šakowin—The Seven Council Fires*:
<http://collections.mnhs.org/sevencouncilfires>
- *Researching Dakota Family History*:
www.mnhs.org/genealogy/dakotafamily/resources.htm
- *U.S.-Dakota War of 1862*:
www.usdakotawar.org

items to be relatives, ancestors, or powerful ceremonial objects.⁴

Out of the roughly 250,000 items of material culture in the 3D objects collection, approximately 5,500, acquired between 1855 and the present, are American Indian in origin. They have come to the Society through donations by archaeologists, ethnographers, collectors, and individuals (or their descendants) whose military or civilian careers brought them to this region during the nineteenth or twentieth century. Over the last few decades, especially, the Society

has purchased objects directly from American Indian artists and makers. The collections include items used for fishing, hunting, agriculture, hide working, travel and transportation, clothing, art, adornments, exchange (wampum), music, recreation, ceremonies, toys, and weapons.

Today, museums are accredited by a professional organization, the American Association of Museums. They operate within federal laws and state statutes that dictate proper stewardship, and they are guided both by professional best practices

Parfleche (rawhide, pigment), 1911
Unknown maker, Lakota

Box-shaped rawhide storage container made from a single piece of leather, given by Chief Red Fox, a Hunkpapa Lakota, to ethnographer Frances Densmore during her time at Standing Rock Reservation, South Dakota



and internal documents such as collection policies and collecting plans. Accessioning is the process whereby an item enters into a museum collection and, therefore, the public trust. For all potential accessions, MHS staff members examine provenance, make a judgment regarding how—or if—the item can be best cared for, and determine whether or not the object fits within current collecting plans.

This process, however, has not always guided acquisitions; over the past 50 years, collecting practices have evolved. An examination of old museum registers or annual reports

cultures. Many of these earlier methods and objectives are understood today as unethical, immoral, and even abhorrent.⁵

People in power tend to hold onto it very tightly. In terms of museum acquisitions, this has often perpetuated an adversarial “collector” versus “the collected” relationship between museums and American Indian communities. Additionally, many American Indian people see museums, including the Minnesota Historical Society’s, as impassive institutions: manifestations of a dominant society indifferent to their

An examination of accession files, field notes, and personal accounts reveals how very inaccurate it is to think of American Indians as powerless. By assuming that their material culture was *always* acquired forcibly or through unfair practices, one dehumanizes these people and relegates them to perpetual victimhood. The idea that they were powerless is far from the truth.

Oral tradition, ethnographic accounts, archaeological evidence, and historic documents illustrate that all people are in constant states of decision-making in which they weigh the benefits of adaptation and retention of cultural elements and negotiate their current identity. American Indians, especially Dakota people, have navigated through some of the most complicated economic, environmental, and sociopolitical changes that any group has ever experienced. Certainly, these changes were thrust upon them but, nevertheless, they held more power and agency than passive victims to whom history happened.

Individuals and groups of individuals make decisions within their circumstances. Certainly, decisions to trade, sell, or give away material culture were made within an asymmetrical power relationship, sometimes with no other alternatives and sometimes under coercion. However, it is inaccurate to state

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from any institution will verify that young museums in the past collected somewhat indiscriminately—and not always in accordance with the ethical standards of today. Professional practices often reflect the values of their times.

In the past, people and institutions that held power collected from those with less power. American Indian cultural items, and even skeletal remains, were gathered by professionals and amateurs in the name of science (as it was then practiced and understood), as well as to document what were considered “vanishing”

concerns.⁶ Several have argued that, because *all* American Indian material culture was acquired within a power imbalance, it should be considered stolen and turned over to contemporary American Indian people.

Although certain museum collecting in the past, at MHS and elsewhere, would not meet contemporary standards, much of it would.

Dakota spelling cards (cardstock), 1960s
Seventy-seven white flashcards bearing words and phrases in the Dakota language, used for educational purposes in the 1960s



No culture, in any time or place, has ever existed exactly as it did a moment earlier.

that every piece of American Indian material culture at every museum was acquired through unfair means. While many individuals were forced to trade or give up material culture, others adapted some elements for new economies and still others willingly presented cultural objects to ethnographers, clergy, and other collectors.

Some American Indian people have asserted that museums, including MHS, hoard items or view them as trophies of dominance. If this was ever true, it is not true today. The following analogy, though imperfect, makes the point: One of the persistent stereotypes that many American Indian people face daily is that they somehow are not real Indians; to many people in the dominant culture, real Indians exist at some arbitrary point in the past. They wear buckskins and live in tipis; their culture is unchanging, unmoving, monolithic. This, of course, is a romanticized version of one culture fabricated by another. No culture, in any time or place, has ever existed exactly as it did a moment earlier. Cultures are dynamic. They consist of individuals making choices.

Organizations, too, are made up of individuals guided by structure but also making choices. Museums are not monolithic or unchanging. Many of the criticisms of museum collecting are criticisms of the way museums operated in the past. They are criticisms of our forebears, but they are ours to address and the relationships are ours to repair.

OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES, American Indians have been regaining the public management of their cultural resources—specifically, sacred items and sacred places. This control is manifested in a number of ways but especially through law and policy. Most of these laws, amendments, and policies rest on the foundation that federally recognized Indian tribes have the status of sovereign nations; the United States government negotiates with each at a government-to-government level.⁷

In 1966 the U.S. Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act, which declared that the country's historical and cultural foundations should be preserved, as they were in danger of being lost to increasing land development. This act authorized the creation of the National Register of Historic Places and created State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) to oversee activities in each state. Almost 30 years later, in the early 1990s, amendments to this act created Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), allowing federally recognized Indian tribes to assume the function of SHPOs on their lands.⁸

Around the same time—in 1990—guidelines were developed for evaluating Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) for inclusion in the National Register. These guidelines, which expand upon language used in the original preservation act, encourage early consultation with affected communities and respect for community members' often-felt need



Beaded scissoring case
(tanned hide, glass beads), ca. 1900
Unknown maker, Lakota

Carrying case from the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation, South Dakota, probably made to be sold as a tourist souvenir

for spiritual privacy. Because TCPs are often difficult for outsiders to recognize (compared to archaeological sites or historic structures), they must be identified in consultation with those who find them important.⁹ With the creation of these guidelines and THPO offices, American Indian communities gained more control of preservation on tribal lands and a larger role in these processes on other public lands. In both cases, they are able to have a voice in managing or protecting places.

Concurrently, significant legislation was also passed governing material culture: the National Museum of American Indian Act of 1989 and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990. These acts use

legal mandates to foster dialogue and collaboration between museums and American Indian communities; NAGPRA can be seen, essentially, as human rights legislation veiled as property law. Internationally, similar collaborations have happened more organically. Critics now wonder whether legal mandates have promoted the most positive discourse.¹⁰

Despite these criticisms, NAGPRA distributes power more evenly between museums and American Indian communities. It requires all institutions that receive any form of federal funding to complete an inventory of skeletal remains and associated funerary objects in their collections as well as a summary of all unassociated funerary objects, sacred/ceremonial objects, and

objects of cultural patrimony. Any American Indian tribe thought to be affiliated with these items must be notified of them through direct correspondence and the publication of Notices of Completion in the *Federal Register*. In the early 1990s, MHS sent nearly 350 letters to tribes.

Since then, consultation with tribes has continued, in part to determine cultural affiliation—the relationship between contemporary communities and the historic group from which the item was separated. If the affiliated group determines that an object meets the criteria for repatriation, it files a repatriation claim. The museum then conducts additional research to determine the strength of the claim. (Lineal descendants can also participate in



these processes.) If repatriation is agreed upon, the museum publishes a Notice of Intent to Repatriate and, within its abilities, contacts all other tribes and/or lineal descendants that may have an interest in the item, allowing time for counter-claims. If the museum and claimant disagree

regarding the claim, disputes can be resolved through the National NAGPRA Review Committee. For successful claims, the parties collaborate to determine the disposition of the items.

At MHS, items that consultation has determined may meet NAGPRA

definitions for repatriation have been moved to their own storage units. There, they are minimally handled by staff but are readily available to American Indian elders, NAGPRA officers, or others engaged in the consultation. These visitors often leave tobacco and other ceremonial plant

Bone-and-pin game (leather, deer bone, pigment, metal), ca. 1900

Unknown maker, Dakota or Lakota

Game of dexterity: The six bone targets, all tinted red, have different point values. Holding the long, dark-gray metal pin at its circular end, the player swings the leather strip out and upward, trying to land one of the bones on the pointed end of the pin. This game, donated by a private collector, is part of a larger group of early-twentieth-century items from the Lower Brule and Crow Creek Indian Reservations, South Dakota.

Woman's mixed lace vest

(linen thread), early 1900s

Unknown maker, Dakota (possibly)

This vest was made at the Episcopal Indian missions in Minnesota. Bishop Henry Whipple and Sybil Carter began developing the church's lace-manufacturing work with American Indians in Minnesota in 1890; the program continued until 1926.

Quillwork vest (tanned hide, porcupine quills, fabric), ca. 1890s

Unknown maker, Dakota or Lakota

This vest, among other items, was donated by a medical doctor who received them after successfully treating a smallpox epidemic at Lower Brule Agency, South Dakota, in the early 1890s. The plants represented in quillwork designs often carry specific meanings for the maker and wearer and may also serve to pass on plant knowledge.



materials for the items. It is MHS's role to foster access to these items for ceremonial purposes, and ceremonies often do take place in these storage areas, with accommodations such as temporarily suppressing the building's smoke alarms.

A museum must always balance preservation of its collections with use and access. Policies for American Indians' use and access are developed in consultation with American Indian partners. These policies also cover items that may not meet the strict definitions of NAGPRA but are still considered to be sacred or ceremonial. In terms of physical preservation, MHS storage facilities are state of the art: temperature and humidity control and safe-handling practices ensure that physical degradation is slowed.

Such preservation, however, is sometimes in direct opposition to traditional American Indian values.¹¹ Some items are meant to have a short life history, to be destroyed or allowed to degrade naturally. Certain other items need to be stored in a particular manner, such as wrapped in cloth or in direct contact with plant materials—storage that conflicts with standard museum practices. Currently, institutions, led by tribal museums, are beginning to seek a balance between the physical and cultural care of items. A few institutions are developing loan policies for cultural reuse and adapting care plans in consultation with American Indian communities. At present, some of the Dakota items in MHS collections are stored in culturally appropriate ways.

IN 2011, WITH ALL OF THESE developments in its recent past, the Minnesota Historical Society

launched two important projects involving American Indians and their material culture. The Dakota digitization project was based on the success of a slightly earlier collaboration with the Science Museum of Minnesota. Together, the two institutions produced *In Honor of the People*, an interactive website drawn from their collections as well as those in several other, smaller organizations. Funded by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, this project digitized and presented approximately 500 pieces of American Indian material culture collected by nineteenth-century Episcopal Bishop Henry B. Whipple. Its website identifies the project as a "critical first step toward a virtual reunification of Whipple objects held in multiple institutions."¹² Beyond that, an important feature is the site's *Voices*

page, a forum where contemporary American Indian artists and makers of material culture can engage the collections, each other, and a wider audience. Others have provided commentary and opinions on topics ranging from beadwork to Whipple's perhaps well-meaning support of detrimental policies that still affect American Indians today. These public conversations, fostered by technology, remove absolute authority in interpretation from any one source. Visitors to this website can learn directly from American Indians about their culture and history.

This function is a vital part of the MHS's newly available Dakota material culture site, *Oceti Šakowin—The Seven Council Fires*. Melvin Houston of the Santee Sioux Nation of Nebraska was among those who urged MHS to make this project a

On Names: Oceti Šakowin

The name "Sioux" originated in neighboring indigenous languages; in various interpretations, it may mean snake (with positive or negative connotations) or it may be derived from a phrase that means "those that speak another language." Today, many people reject the term as being negative; others, especially tribal governments, use and officially embrace it.

There are seven major divisions of the Sioux, historically and today: Mdewakȟwǎŋ (Mdewakanton), Wahpekute (Wahpekute), Wahpetonwǎŋ (Wahpeton), and Sisitonwǎŋ (Sisseton) are referred to as the Santee or Eastern Dakota; Ihȟȟktonwǎŋ (Yankton) and Ihȟȟktonwǎŋna (Yanktonai), as the Western Dakota or Nakota; and Titonwǎŋ (Teton) as Lakota.

Today, the historic alliance of these divisions is variously known as the Sioux, the Great Sioux Nation, or Oceti Šakowin, the Seven Council Fires. In the past, academics sometimes used "Dakota" as synonymous with this alliance, encompassing all seven divisions. Because of this, "Dakota" in museum records may or may not refer to one or all of the divisions. In keeping with its goals of transparency and inclusivity, this project presents Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota material culture.

The Assiniboiné, a Siouan-language-speaking people, share many historical similarities with these groups and are also referred to as Nakota. As they represent an earlier split and are not part of the Seven Council Fires, they were not included in this project.

A museum must always balance preservation of its collections with use and access.

priority. Living in Nebraska, he rarely has the chance to visit MHS but, like many Dakota people, wanted to know what material culture the collections hold: “Having access to our history is so important; important to not only our people, but the whole world. When we all know our history, we can make things better. When we understand this history, we all benefit.”¹³

Along with making the Society’s collections accessible, especially to people who cannot visit the History Center, this project’s explicit goals were to be completely transparent; to share with the public, in an easily understood way, all information about the Dakota material culture in MHS collections; and to solicit feedback from knowledgeable community members in order to present the material in the most accurate way. Approximately 400 records for Dakota material culture were already available on *Collections Online*; this project digitized and added nearly 600 more. Because of earlier usage of the term “Dakota,” these records actually relate to Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota (all formerly, and sometimes still, identified as Sioux) material culture. Online, they are linked so that all may be accessed in one easy-to-find location: *Oceti Šakowin—The Seven Council Fires*.¹⁴

This project cast a wide net in the interests of inclusiveness and in hopes of gathering more information. Among the items posted are some that may not initially be recognized as American Indian, such as objects

of European or Euro-American origin that were used by Dakota people. For example, John Other Day’s shotgun is there along with a continuum of traditional material culture ranging from samples of Dakota-made lace from the Minnesota Lace Schools established by Whipple to powwow buttons associated with specific Dakota communities. In addition, the project included items made and/or used as well as *possibly* made and/or used by Dakota individuals or communities.

Possibly in the preceding sentence is of great importance. Given the goal of publishing records with all available information, staff made no judgments to exclude items based on aesthetics or stylistic techniques. Sometimes the records hold very little information, especially for items that have been in the collections for nearly 150 years. To standardize this material, the project team reviewed original accession files and brought each catalog record up to modern museum standards. New digital photographs, also meeting contemporary professional standards, were taken of many of the items. Not

all of these appear on the website, however, because of their culturally sensitive nature. For example, the digital records for *canupa* (pipestone pipes) that have been used do not contain an image.¹⁵

Simply put, then, *Oceti Šakowin—The Seven Council Fires* is a work in progress. The first step was sharing the provenance and our current



Blouse and skirt with jingle cones
(muslin, tin), ca. 1905

Made by Lucy Pair, Dakota (possibly)

Originating in Ojibwe culture, jingle dresses were traditionally worn for ceremonial healing purposes. Today, powwow dancers wear them for the Jingle Dress Dance.

understanding about these pieces of Dakota material culture. If a register entry, accession file, or former database description indicated that the item was Dakota, Sioux, or any other term specific to the cultures comprising the *Oceti Šakowiŋ*, it was digitized and included. As the site explains, “While every effort has been made to ensure that information . . . is accurate, information on this website must not be regarded

as definitive or published. Information provided is dynamic and will be continually updated.”¹⁶ The site also calls for participation: Comments can be entered on each record, and we expect to gather much feedback. We also expect to continue building relationships regarding the interpretation as well as the cultural care of this material.

Some of this work has already begun. Recently, MHS staff traveled to the Crow Creek Indian Reservation in South Dakota to meet with a coalition of THPOs that had formed to work collectively on repatriation and on developing culturally sensitive care plans for Dakota material culture in museum collections. Discussing the digitization project, Franky Jackson, coalition organizer and a cultural resource management consultant currently working with the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, stated, “We feel listened to. This project is extremely important to Dakota people living outside of the state of Minnesota. Knowing what material culture is in the collections will help facilitate meaningful dialogue in the management of these materials. That Dakota voices can contribute to the interpretation of this material is also essential.”¹⁷

Iyekiyapiwin Darlene St. Clair (Mdewakantonwanj Dakota), an associate professor and director of the Multicultural Resource Center at St. Cloud State University, has de-

veloped a research project that will both use *Oceti Šakowiŋ—The Seven Council Fires* and also contribute to its usefulness. She asks her students to utilize collections and research tools to consider Dakota materials in the larger context of Dakota experience. Encouraging further development of the site’s feedback system and outreach efforts, she asks, “How will American Indian people be encouraged to engage with this system, and what barriers might exist for its use?”¹⁸

MUSEUMS REPRESENT CIVIL

rights in that they embody free public education. Technology is advancing this public education exponentially by making content more accessible as well as by providing arenas for conversations and learning. The recent effort to digitize Dakota material culture is one early collaborative step that supports learning by removing authority from a single source. Decentralizing an absolute authority on interpretation gives a platform to speakers who have not been heard or—perhaps more appropriately stated—have not been listened to. As museums are committed to being good stewards, it is imperative that we define good stewardship of American Indian collections as synonymous with meaningful collaborations with American Indian communities. □

Quillwork bag (tanned leather, porcupine quills, glass beads, horsehair, metal), early 1900s

Unknown maker, Dakota

Deer-hide bag decorated with red, white, and blue quillwork, featuring two crossed American flags and several crosses. George and Alice Crooks presented it to Evangeline Whipple (the bishop’s wife) on a visit to Birch Coulee in October 1908.

Beaded gun case (tanned hide, glass beads, metal), 1860s

Unknown maker, probably Dakota

Col. John G. Clark, 50th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment, collected this case and many other items while stationed at Fort Rice, Dakota Territory, in 1865 and 1866.



Notes

1. Roger Echo-Hawk, "Forging a New Ancient History for Native North America," in *Native Americans and Archaeologists: Stepping Stones to Common Ground*, ed. Nina Swindler et al. (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 1997), 88. For more on this subject, see the other essays in this volume.

2. I am not insinuating that American Indian oral tradition was lost within the cultures, only that cultural outsiders practicing these academic disciplines have not always been open to listening. Nor have cultures always been open to sharing with practitioners of these academic traditions.

3. Among other initiatives are books published by the Minnesota Historical Society Press, the consultation with Dakota community members during the Truth Recovery/1862 exhibit process, the U.S.–Dakota War website (www.usdakotawar.org), new interpretive signage at MHS sites, and the cell phone tour of the Minnesota River valley.

4. Here, "dominant culture" refers to the idea that modern societies are a collection of disparate cultures and subcultures. *The Dictionary of Sociology* explains that a dominant culture is one that attempts, through economic or political power, "to impose its values, language, and ways of behaving on a subordinate culture or cultures. . . . through legal or political suppression of other sets of values and patterns of behavior, or by monopolizing the media of communication."

5. For more on this subject, see David H. Thomas, *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity* (New York: Basic Books, 2001); Ken Harper, *Give Me My Father's Body: The Life of Minik, the New York Eskimo* (Hanover, NH: Steerforth Press, 2000).

6. Personal communications to the author, Nov. 5, Nov. 11, and Dec. 12—all 2011.

7. Three nineteenth-century Supreme Court decisions, the "Marshall trilogy," set legal precedents and established tribes as sovereign nations. *Johnson v. McIntosh* (1823) provided that tribes' rights to sovereignty are impaired but not disregarded by colonization and that the federal government alone has the right to negotiate for American Indian land. *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831) declared Indian tribes to be "domestic dependent nations." *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832) held that tribes do not lose their sovereign powers by becoming subject to the power of the United States. In the twentieth century, a number of legislative decisions furthered tribal sovereignty and rights, including the American Indian Education Reform Act of 1978, which established precedent for the federal government to deal, tribe by tribe, on a government-to-government level. For a concise overview, see Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, *American Indians, American Justice* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983).

8. 16 U.S.C. § 470(a)(d)(2)(1994).

9. Patricia L. Parker and Thomas F. King, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, National Register Bulletin 38, National Park Service, Dept of Interior. Although the bulletin focuses on physical places rather than intangibles such as beliefs or lifeways, it asserts that intangibles must be considered when making resource-management decisions.

10. The National Museum of American Indian Act is a repatriation law similar to NAGPRA but specific to the Smithsonian museums. Thomas F. King, "What's Really Wrong with NAGPRA," in his *Thinking About Cultural Resource Management: Essays from the Edge* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002), 103–11.

11. For more on this topic, see Miriam Clavir, *Preserving What is Valued: Muse-*

ums, Conservation, and First Nations (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002); Sheryl Ogden, ed., *Caring for American Indian Objects: A Practical and Cultural Guide* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2004).

12. www.inhonorofthepeople.org (accessed Apr. 13, 2012).

13. Personal communication to the author, Apr. 10, 2012.

14. Most of the American Indian material culture not included in this project is Ojibwe. Much of this has been digitized, and priorities have been set to finish this job, as well. *Oceti Šakowiy—The Seven Council Fires* also links to related pages on the Society's website, including *Researching Dakota Family History* and *U.S.–Dakota War of 1862*.

15. For these kinds of decisions, the Society operates under the advice of its Indian Advisory Committee, established in 1987. Composed of representatives from each of the 11 federally recognized bands in Minnesota, it offers guidance on American Indian collections and other program issues.

16. This type of disclaimer is common on collections databases at similar institutions.

17. Personal communication to author, Feb. 21, 2012.

18. Personal communication to the author, Apr. 7, 2012. She is also currently visiting associate professor of American Indian studies at the University of Minnesota.

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