People, Places, Projects

COLLECTIONS MOVE PROJECT

On August 31, 2003, the Penn Museum completed the transfer of more than 67,000 ethnographic objects from the African (7,000), American (30,000), Asian (11,000), and Oceanian (19,000) Sections into the new Mainwaring Wing. As part of this project that began on April 8, 2002, approximately 6,500 objects received custom-fitted mounts, boxes, or trays with standardized compartments for their safe move and long-term storage. In addition, 140,000 objects were relocated in other storage areas to accommodate construction work. This project, which makes these objects more accessible for research, exhibition, and educational programming, was possible only with the collaborative efforts of collections staff, interns, students, and volunteers.

CIVIC CENTER COLLECTIONS PROJECT

In November 2003, the Penn Museum and the City of Philadelphia completed the transfer of 5,000-6,000 ethnographic objects from the Civic Center Museum. By accepting this gift, the Museum ensured that a significant part of this collection would remain in Philadelphia for broad research and local community access. Assembled in the late 19th and early 20th centuries from world expositions, these objects fill some gaps and enhance the Museum’s pre-existing collections. This three year project is supported by a city grant from the William Penn Foundation.

TLINGIT VISITS

Also in November 2003, at the request of the Tlingit L'ooknax.ádi (Coho Salmon Clan) of Sitka, Alaska, Dr. Robert Preucel and Lucy Fowler Williams of the Penn Museum’s American Section hand-carried the Museum’s Raven-of-the-Roof hat to a potlatch at Sitka’s Centennial Hall. The memorial party was given in honor of Sarah Davis James, the sister of the current Coho clan leader, who had died two years earlier. The
hat was exhibited for two days prior to the ceremony and then worn and danced during part of the ceremony by Loretta Ness, a clan member. Funds to support this trip and loan were made available by the Museum Director and the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska.

Early in 2004, the American Section then hosted two NAGPRA consultation visits by the Tlingit Indian tribes. The first was in February and involved ten clan representatives from the Kootznoowoo Tlingit of Angoon, Alaska: Leonard John, Alan Zuboff, Garfield George, Jimmy George, Edwell John, Jr., Steve Henrikson, Harold Jacobs, and clan elders Mark Jacobs, Jr., Peter Jack, and Cyril George. The second visit in March involved four clan representatives from the Chilkat Tlingit of Kluckwan: Dave Berry, Chun Williamson, and clan elders Evelyn Hotch and Smitty Katzeek. During the first visit, Harold Jacobs, the Cultural Resource Specialist for the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, identified two braided hairpieces in the Museum’s collection as made by two of his distant grandmothers. Both women were named Seiltin and the hairpieces were made as gifts for their new husbands. While being interviewed by the Philadelphia Inquirer, Harold sang a song composed by one of the women’s fathers on the occasion of her wedding. The hairpieces were collected by Tlingit Associate Curator Louis Shotridge who worked for the Museum from 1915 to 1932.

ONCE AGAIN THE MUSEUM IS FIRST IN THE FIELD!

On October 9, 2004, an adventuresome group of Museum members will embark on a voyage of rediscovery aboard the 34-guest private yacht Callisto. They will travel to Libya, now open to American travelers for the first time in two decades. Led by Dr. Donald White, Emeritus Professor of Classics and former Curator in Chief of the Museum’s Mediterranean Section, the group will visit the 7th century BC Greek site of Cyrene (where Dr. White excavated for eight seasons for the Museum) and Leptis Magna, a Roman city of great splendor. There are plans for a repeat voyage in November 2005. Please call the Women’s Committee Office at 215-898-9202 for details.

FROM THE WOMEN’S COMMITTEE

Be prepared for the Silk Road coming to Penn Museum in October 2005!