One
Introduction

Native Americans and Museums

Museums can be very painful sites for Native peoples, as they are intimately tied to the colonization process. The study of the relationship between Indigenous peoples and museums—the tragic stories of the past as well as examples of successful Native activism and leadership within the museum profession today—has preoccupied my professional life both inside and outside the academy. Museums have changed significantly from the days when they were considered "ivory towers of exclusivity."[1] Today, Indigenous people are actively involved in making museums more open and community-relevant sites.

We certainly see this new development reflected in exhibitions, which are the most prominent, public face of a museum.[2] Native Americans have witnessed a shift from curator-controlled presentations of the American Indian past to a more inclusive or collaborative process, with Native people often actively involved in determining exhibition content. It is now commonplace and expected that museum professionals will seek the input of contemporary communities when developing exhibitions focusing on American Indian content.[3] This new relationship of "shared authority" between Native people and museum curators has changed the way Indigenous history and culture are represented and has redefined our relationship with museums. The efforts today by tribal communities to be involved in developing exhibitions point to the recognition that controlling the representation of their cultures is linked to the larger movements of self-determination and cultural sovereignty.

In this book, I seek to understand the role museums play within contemporary Indigenous communities as part of the self-determination and cultural sovereignty movement. It is a comparative study of the representation of Native Americans in museum exhibitions at the Mille Lacs Indian Museum in Minnesota (a collaborative project with the Minnesota Historical Society and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe), the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), and the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways in Michigan. Through an analysis of the dynamic and complex process of determining exhibition content at these institutions, I explore the changing representations of Indigenous history and memory in a diverse group of museums that hold significant Native American collections. This study of both national and tribal museums examines the complexities of this new relationship between Native Americans and museums as reflected in the exhibitions produced at all three sites—both the positive outcomes as well as the challenges that remain.

SETTING THE STAGE: DEVELOPMENTS IN MUSEUM PRACTICES

The three museums featured in this book embody important ideological shifts in contemporary museum practices. As a museum practitioner and a scholar of Native American history and museum studies, I witnessed firsthand how curators, staff, and communities negotiated the new terrain of collaborative and tribal museums. I worked for two of the museums highlighted in the book, as I will describe in detail in later chapters, and I conducted extensive research (interviewing, archival research, and participant observation) at all three sites. The questions framing the study include the following: How have representations of Native American history and culture changed over time, and what role did Indigenous activism and new museum theory play in the process? How effective are these new representations in challenging the public's understanding of the Native American past and present? Are the new exhibits successful in their educational efforts? What does a decolonizing museum practice involve, and are these museums sites for decolonization?

In order to address these questions, I have relied on archival materials relating to the development of the exhibitions, interviews with key staff members involved in the development process, and a close visual analysis of the texts, objects, and images in the exhibitions themselves. I follow the lead of Patricia Pierce Erikson, who, in her scholarship on the Makah Cultural and Research Center, claims that she is doing more than just engaging in travel writing. By employing ethnographic methodology, her critical analysis offers a far more nuanced and complicated understanding of the Makah museum. As she argues, "One needs to know the history of the surrounding community, the collections, the staff, and the mission statement in order to understand how the museum sees itself and is seen by others."[4]

When I first embarked on this comparative study of the changing representation of Native American history and culture in both national and tribal museums, few scholarly monographs existed on the subject. Then, in 2002, Erikson's important study on the Makah was published,[5] a book with superb insight and rich analysis. The text explores a range of highly relevant and interconnected issues: the genealogy and development of the Makah Cultural and Research Center (one of the first large-scale tribal museums in the nation), Makah history and memory as embodied in the exhibitions, the Makah communities' relationship with anthropologists, and ethical research practices in Indigenous communities. Drawing upon the theoretical concept of "contact zones" advanced by Mary Louise Pratt and applied to museums by James Clifford, Erikson argues that "Native American museums/cultural centers are hybrid embodiments of Native and non-Native perspectives. As a synthesis of cultural forms, they reveal a process of collaboration between diverse peoples amid conditions of unequal empowerment. Native American museums/cultural centers are both translators and translations, agents of social change and products of accommodation."[6] I have found Erikson's work invaluable in shaping

my understanding of the complex subjectivity of tribal museums and in recognizing their role in changing mainstream museum practices.

In the years since, a few more published works have been added to the monographs that focus on specific Indigenous museums. John J. Bodinger de Uriarte has produced a book on the Mashantucket Pequot Museum, and Gwyneira Isaac's study of the Zuni Museum was published in 2007.[7] These two books have made significant contributions to our understanding of the complex subjectivity presented at tribal museums, which have been growing in numbers since the late twentieth century. In addition to these monographs, several articles explore the process of collaboration between mainstream museums and Indigenous people and the influence of new museum theory and practice in the late twentieth century.[8]

These texts have added considerable insight to the field and shed much light on changing museum practices. However, these works focus mostly on case studies. This book is unique in that it includes but also goes beyond the case-study format. As I tell the stories of one tribal museum and two collaborative partnerships between mainstream institutions and Native American communities, I examine the museums and their genesis as part of a broader historical development. The cases reveal the changing relations not only between Indigenous people and museums in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries but also within the museum world and in society.

In the context of changing museum practices, I focus on three key developments that pertain to Native Americans. First, collaborative partnerships between Native Americans and mainstream museums have increased over the last thirty years. A few collaborative projects did exist before this period; however, most scholars would agree that we have witnessed a significant rise in the number of collaborations during this time as well as significant changes in how these collaborations have been negotiated. Second, the number of tribal museums has grown since the self-determination era of the 1970s. Third, Native cultural centers and museums that are exclusively tribally owned have emerged, too, and these tribally determined spaces are having a significant impact both on their communities and on museum practices. They are changing the fundamental stance of Native representations through museums as well as the accountability that these centers have to their communities. This book explores three case studies that shed light on these trends.

DECOLONIZING MUSEUMS IN THE SERVICE OF TRUTH TELLING AND HEALING

While I have been working on this project over the last several years, I have thought critically about how museum sites can assist in tribal nation building, empowerment, and healing. Concurrently, museum studies scholars have been exploring the possibilities for expanding the

role of museums in what scholar Ruth Phillips has referred to as the "second museum age."[9] This emerging vision makes museums more open and community-relevant sites, and a new museum theory and practice is developing alongside this work.

One can see signs of this shift in many places: the emergence of tribally owned and operated museums across the United States; the transition of many mainstream museums from a "temple" to a "forum"; the collaborative partnerships between museums and so-called source communities and interested publics; a more responsive museum practice that seeks to "share authority," influenced by postmodernism and broader human rights issues; the increase of scholarship that engages how museums can serve as social service agencies; and the establishment of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience project.[10] All of these developments are significant and have dramatically changed the museum landscape.

For Native peoples, the question around museums has been, How can we begin to decolonize a very Western institution that has been so intimately linked to the colonization process? A decolonizing museum practice must involve assisting our communities in addressing the legacies of historical unresolved grief. Doing this necessarily cuts through the veil of silence around colonialism and its consequences for Native families and communities. Tribal museums serve many functions, of course, and they have done a decent job of challenging the many stereotypical representations of Native history produced in the past. They have served as sites of "knowledge-making [and] remembering"[11] for our communities, and they have educated the general public on the many silences that exist regarding the Indigenous experience.

But one of the most important goals, I believe, is to assist communities in their efforts to address the legacies of historical unresolved grief by speaking the hard truths of colonialism and thereby creating spaces for healing and understanding. I draw upon the theory advanced by Lakota scholar and social worker Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, who, along with her colleagues Lemyra DeBruyn and others, is involved in the Takini Network, a nonprofit organization. These leading Native scholars in the field of historical unresolved grief and trauma have not only defined these concepts but also offered workshops to assist Indigenous communities in the healing process. Brave Heart defines historical trauma as a "cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences."[12] Historical unresolved grief is "the impaired or delayed mourning" that occurs as a result of the many traumas that Indigenous people have suffered, including genocidal warfare and forced removals, the deliberate spread of disease, assimilation programs such as the boarding schools and the termination and relocation programs of the 1950s, land loss, desecration of sacred sites, racism, and ongoing crushing poverty.[13] This psychological pain leads to the "historical trauma response," which gives rise to the many social problems that continue to plague Indian Country.

Given that the Native American holocaust, which spanned centuries, remains unaddressed in both Native and non-Native communities, truth telling is perhaps the most important aspect of a decolonizing museum practice of the twenty-first century, however painful it may be. The process assists in healing and promotes community well-being, empowerment, and nation building. It opens the door to transformation on all sides of harm. As Brave Heart and DeBruyn write: "The connectedness of the past to present to future remains a circle of lessons and insights that can give us both the consciousness and the conscience to heal ourselves. Understanding the interrelationship with our past and how it shapes our present world will also give us the courage to initiate healing."[14]

This decolonizing project involves more than moving museums away from being elitist temples of esoteric learning and even more than moving museums toward providing forums for community engagement. A decolonizing museum practice must be in the service of speaking the hard truths of colonialism. The purpose is to generate the critical awareness that is necessary to heal from historical unresolved grief on all the levels and in all the ways that it continues to harm Native people today. As Ojibwe scholar Lisa Poupart writes, "Culturally and individually we must recognize our past and present traumas and grieve our losses on a new path of healing."[15] Tribal museums bear the responsibility to assist in telling the difficult stories—honestly and rigorously—in our twenty-first-century museums, so that future generations can know the past and find the means to heal.

During the review process for this book, one of the reviewers raised the issue, which I have observed as well, that some communities do not want to address the legacies of colonialism in their exhibits. They suggest that these topics have been covered and that they want to emphasize Indigenous survival instead. This statement falls in line with other critiques I have heard over the years against speaking the hard truths of Native history in exhibitions. We have all heard these critiques: we do not want to offend visitors (many of whom are non-Natives); we do not want to "hang out our dirty laundry" by discussing painful aspects of either our history or our contemporary social problems; we do not want to "subscribe to the language of victimization"; people have heard these stories already; and museums are not social service agencies.[16] I respect those who voice these concerns, but I do not agree with them.

It is time for us as communities to acknowledge the painful aspects of our history along with our stories of survivance, so that we can move toward healing, well-being, and true self-determination. Some may argue that discussing this history keeps Indigenous people mired in the horror of victimization and hence entrenched in the victimhood narrative. In my experience, this statement could not be further from the truth. Emphasizing Indigenous survivance is critical, of course. It concerns me, however, when we fail to provide the context that makes our survival one of the greatest untold stories. Americans—and most of the world—seem somehow stubbornly unaware of what Indigenous peoples on this continent have actually

faced. Telling the full story of the Native American holocaust proves a testament not to Native victimhood but to Native skill, adaptability, courage, tenacity, and countless other qualities that made our survival a reality against all odds. Our survival is more than remarkable. It is proof of the power of our cultures, traditions, and peoples, proven in the face of the ultimate test.

We know these challenges, and our children need to know them to fully appreciate their forebears and how we came to where we are today—our survival and our strengths. The history of genocide is, after all, a documented and obvious reality. What always surprises me, then, is how unwilling many of our communities have become to present a hard-hitting analysis of colonialism in our exhibitions within museums.

Dakota scholar Waziyatawin explains how important it is to understand Indigenous survival within its colonial context and what is at stake if we fail to do so. She writes: "An analysis of colonialism allows us to make sense of our current condition, strategically develop more effective means of resistance, recover the pre-colonial traditions that strengthen us as Indigenous Peoples, and connect with the struggles of colonized peoples throughout the world to transform the world. When colonialism is removed from the analysis, we have little alternative other than to simply blame ourselves for the current social ills. This blaming the victim strategy only increases violence against our own people."[17]

This call for museums to address colonialism and to address the legacies of historical unresolved grief fits squarely within a broader intellectual project in the Indigenous studies field, namely, to work from a decolonizing paradigm. To trace the genealogy of the decolonization literature and its impact on the field of Indigenous history over the last several decades, I draw upon the excellent work of Seminole historian Susan Miller. In her article "Native America Writes Back: The Origin of the Indigenous Paradigm in Historiography," she asserts that a cadre of Native American historians are working to change the field. They are advancing a new "Indigenous paradigm" within their writing that includes four central concepts: Indigenousness, sovereignty, colonization, and decolonization.[18] This new turn in historical scholarship draws heavily upon the work of Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith and her seminal volume, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, published in 1999.[19]

Whereas previous generations of historians have tended to shy away from using the term "colonialism" when they write about Native Americans within the United States, naming colonialism and its ongoing effects is a central project of Indigenous historians who are part of the decolonization paradigm, and I have witnessed this transformation firsthand within the field. The writings of these Indigenous studies scholars over the last decade have greatly changed the discourse as they no longer shy away from using colonialism as an analytical framework. This group of historians moves beyond speaking euphemistically about the colonial relationship between the United States and tribes, instead asserting in clear terms that

the relationship has been, and remains, colonial.[20]

Miller acknowledges that American historians no longer claim that the contest over control of North America had to do with Indigenous people impeding "Progress," nor do they persist in offering the simplistic "conflict of cultures" argument. However, many American historians still "characterize U.S. violations of the nation-to-nation relationship with tribes as 'tragic' or . . . 'ironic'; and historians often take shelter in passive voice, which permits one to say that 'a wrong was done' without naming the culprit."[21] Scholars writing from the Indigenous paradigm employ more powerful and precise terms to describe what happened, including "genocide" and "atrocity," and they do not shy away from naming the perpetrators of the violence in our history.

Those following the Indigenous paradigm adhere to a research methodology that includes producing scholarship that serves Native communities; following Indigenous communities' protocols when conducting research; rigorously interrogating existing scholarship and calling out the "anti-Indigenous concept and language" embedded in existing literature; incorporating Indigenous languages, such as place-names, names of people, and proper nouns; and, finally, privileging Indigenous sources and perspectives over non-Indigenous ones.[22] Miller clearly and forcefully states that the United States has not come to terms with or fully reckoned with its colonial past and writings from this paradigm are challenging these silences.

One of the strengths of Miller's extensive historiographical essay is the attention she gives to the central tenet of decolonizing scholarship, namely, service to Indigenous communities as the primary goal. Service should be the goal of our museums as well. They should assist communities in understanding colonization as the origin of historical and ongoing harms. This understanding is key to creating the critical consciousness among Native people that is necessary to do the important work of decolonizing. Decolonization is not a "futile effort to return to the past," Miller and others argue, but a process that allows Native people to move toward healing from the devastating effects of colonization. As Cree scholar Winona Wheeler states:

Decolonization entails developing a critical consciousness about the cause(s) of our oppression, the distortion of history, our own collaboration, and the degree to which we have internalized colonialist ideas and practices. Decolonization requires auto-criticism, self-reflection, and a rejection of victimage. Decolonization is about empowerment—a belief that situations can be transformed, a belief and trust in our own peoples' values and abilities and a willingness to make change. It is about transforming negative reactionary energy into the more positive rebuilding energy needed in our communities.[23]

One of the central components of the movement is to revive tribal languages and cultural ceremonies that were previously persecuted by the government, revive institutions and

technologies, and continue participation in activities and cultural practices that never lapsed.[24]

For those writing and representing the Indigenous experience, employing colonialism as an overarching interpretative framework does not automatically give Native people victimhood status. Historian Jeffrey Shepherd contends that "colonization and persistence can exist in the same geographical and interpretative space."[25] I would argue that, if we aim to create moving exhibitions that honor the history, memory, and collective experience of our relatives for future generations, we must work toward the goal of decolonization in museums.

What a great irony that places inextricably linked to the colonization process are also the sites where the difficult aspects of our history can and must be most clearly and forcefully told. Only by doing so can we address the legacies of historical unresolved grief. But before exploring further how museums can employ decolonizing methodologies, we must first take a look at their history. Museums have played a major role in dispossessing and misrepresenting Native Americans, and this has been a critical part of the identity of Euro-American museums.

NATIVE AMERICANS ON DISPLAY: EARLY COLLECTING AND EXHIBITIONS

The history of museum representation of Native peoples begins with the development of anthropology as an academic field. While earlier forms of exhibition existed, such as the cabinets of curiosities, this is when we witness large-scale exhibitions seen by a broader public and in a diversity of places. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many anthropologists made their careers on systematically collecting American Indian material culture. These collecting practices clearly influenced the types of exhibitions that curators developed, which in turn influenced the public's understanding of Native culture through the way that museums presented the objects. A majority of these objects were collected during the period when Indians were supposed to vanish from the American landscape—"the Dark Ages of Native history," as scholars of the period have referred to it.[26] This fact alone speaks volumes about the types of presentations that tribes oppose and are moving away from in their current exhibition practices. As art historian Janet Berlo writes, "For the past 100 years these bits and pieces, facts and objects, have been arranged and rearranged in a changing mosaic in which we have constructed an image that we claim represents Native American art and culture."[27] She goes on to argue that these exhibitions convey as much about the collectors themselves as the cultures they propose to represent.

The great collections in America were assembled during this period and were housed in several important museums. The key institutions established at this time include the Smithsonian in 1846, the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard in 1866, New York's American Museum of Natural History in 1869, and Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History in 1893.[28] These museums aggressively pursued the collecting of Native

American ethnographic and archaeological material. During this period, the Smithsonian's collection grew dramatically "from 550 items in 1860 to more than 13,000 in 1873."[29]

The time period in which many important museums in the United States were formed and collecting began coincides with what many view as the nadir of Native existence on this continent. As a result of European colonization of the Americas, tribal nations across the Western Hemisphere experienced great population declines. By the turn of the twentieth century, it is estimated that only 250,000 Indians were alive in the United States. The number is staggering when you consider that the estimated precontact population was 5 million within U.S. borders. The dramatic demographic decline resulted from disease and the genocidal policies enforced throughout the Americas. Scholars have referred to it as the American Indian holocaust.[30] Native people were believed to be "vanishing," and anthropologists at the turn of the twentieth century thought they were in a race against time. They saw themselves as engaged in "salvage anthropology" to collect the so-called last vestiges of a dying race.

Paradoxically, at the same time that these collectors were in search of the "most authentic" or oldest type of tribal artifacts for their collections, Native communities were experiencing extreme pressures to assimilate into American society—to give up the very ways of life that produced these objects and that the objects reflect. The U.S. government enacted a series of assimilation policies during this period. For example, from a desire to disrupt tribal communal ownership of land and to transform Indians into landowners, the United States passed the Dawes Act in 1887, forcing a model of individual land ownership on Native peoples by dividing Indian lands into separate allotments. Each Indian family received 160 acres, and leftover lands were then sold to the highest bidder. Tragically, tribal communities lost a significant portion of their reservations through this policy. Before the passage of the Dawes Act, 138 million acres of land were held in trust—land that tribes were guaranteed under federal treaties. By 1934, however, only 52 million acres of land remained in tribal hands.[31]

At the same time, government-funded boarding schools subjected American Indian children to an educational program aimed at destroying Indigenous culture and kinship relationships. Children suffered enormously at these schools, which were designed to assimilate them and prepare them for positions at the lower rungs of American society. Federal officials were also "determined to eradicate Native religious practice and impose Christianity on Indian people."[32] Violating the American principle of freedom of religion, government agents arrested Native people who participated in their traditional religious ceremonies.

Not surprisingly, social scientists and historians view the late nineteenth century and early twentieth as a time of great loss. During this time, Native peoples faced enormous upheavals and suffering, and this is precisely when most of the collecting took place. Native Americans were told that there was no place for them as tribal people in contemporary society, yet the material culture identifying their tribal uniqueness was highly valued. In his book *Captured*

Heritage, historian Douglas Cole traces the history of collecting on the Northwest Coast and describes the staggering quantity of materials collected by, in many instances, questionable means: “By the time it ended there was more Kwakiutl material in Milwaukee than in Mamalillikulla; more Salish pieces in Cambridge than in Comox. The city of Washington contained more Northwest Coast material than the state of Washington, and New York City probably housed more British Columbia material than British Columbia herself.”[33]

Disease played a critical role in this wholesale collecting. Not only did its devastating impact lead to the notion of Indians as a vanishing race, but disease also played a role in dispossessing tribal peoples of their material culture by disrupting traditional ownership patterns. In her work on the Makah Nation entitled *Drawing Back Culture*, Ann Tweedie examines the disruptions that separated objects from tribal members within this particular Northwest Coast tribal nation. Disease decimated the community, and by 1860, the Makah lost half of their population to smallpox. Like other Northwest Coast societies, the Makah had highly developed patterns of personal ownership of both tangible and intangible heritage, and the population loss disrupted these ownership patterns within the community. One of the tribal members explains:

A lot of people died of smallpox. And they’d find these objects [that had been put away] and they’d say “Well. Jees.” You know. “Nobody owns these. Let’s go sell them.” And some families . . . entire clans died from the smallpox epidemic so a lot of these objects got to other places and they really had no ownership. It was really hard to tell when you lost all those linkages to the past.[34]

It is important to point out that not all objects left Native hands under duress during this period. Native art pieces developed for the tourist industry are an example of objects that tribal communities either sold or voluntarily parted with. Across the country, creating tourist art on reservations became a method for Indigenous people to carve out ways of making a living during extremely difficult economic times. For instance, women from my tribe made baskets for sale in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, and tribal people throughout the United States made a living selling their artwork. However, even when objects were sold voluntarily, we must remember the deeper historical context.[35] Extreme poverty and ongoing colonial oppression permeated tribal life at the time, as it does for many Native people today. These brutal realities should never go unacknowledged, especially since questions over the ownership of cultural objects have not ended. The ongoing struggles over repatriation are a case in point.

COLLECTING HUMAN REMAINS

Museums were also interested in collecting human remains during this period. There has always been a fascination with collecting remains and funerary objects.[36] Scholars can date this practice to the Pilgrims in 1620, and even to one of the Founding Fathers of the United States, Thomas Jefferson.

Collecting Native American skeletal remains dramatically increased in the early nineteenth century, because scholars began using human remains to explain physical and cultural differences between peoples. Scholars such as Samuel G. Morton—often recognized as the father of physical anthropology —actively collected human remains for their studies. The collecting of human crania in particular increased, as "scholars attempted to relate intelligence, personality, and character to skull and brain size."[37] Morton believed that a person's intelligence directly correlated to the size of his or her brain, and he and others conducted "experiments" measuring several hundred skulls belonging to members of different races. The measurements of cranial capacity and skull shape were really a way to racialize ethnic groups and "to validate theories of white supremacy."[38] Morton quickly discovered that there were few skulls available for study, and he provided economic incentives to soldiers, settlers, and government agents to enter Native American graves in order to collect the remains. The high numbers of Native American deaths due to disease and other forces of colonization made the collectors' task easier.[39]

The desire for Native American skulls and bodies for scientific research continued throughout the nineteenth century. In 1867, George A. Otis, curator of the Army Medical Museum (AMM), urged field doctors to send Native American human remains to the AMM. Otis later entered into an agreement with the Smithsonian: the AMM would receive osteological remains and would send the burial and cultural items associated with the deceased to the Smithsonian. In 1868, U.S. Army Surgeon General Joseph Barnes also issued a request to medical officers and field surgeons to collect human remains for scientific research. Because of these orders, roughly forty-five hundred Native American crania ended up in the collections of the AMM, many of which were transferred to the Smithsonian Institution in the 1890s.[40] Numerous other remains of Native Americans ended up in European collections.

Anthropologists certainly played a role in the early collecting of Native American human remains. Franz Boas, who made his reputation in part by gathering the oral traditions of the Native American cultures of the Northwest Coast, also collected Native people's physical bodies. While conducting ethnographic work with the Kwakwaka'wakw, Boas robbed graves after dark, noting that "it is most unpleasant work to steal bones from a grave, but what is the use, someone has to do it."[41] During his early research on the Northwest Coast, Boas collected roughly one hundred complete skeletons and two hundred skulls belonging to Kwakwaka'wakw and Coast Salish peoples. Boas mostly sold these human remains to the Field Museum in Chicago, but he also sold some later remains to parties in Berlin, Germany.[42]

Numerous other celebrated figures of anthropology, such as Aleš Hrdlička and George Dorsey, voraciously collected Native American human remains during this time.

The passage of the Antiquities Act of 1906 had ramifications for the relationship between anthropology and Native Americans—both living and dead. The Antiquities Act was supposed to protect the cultural resources of the United States by creating a permitting process for archaeological excavation and by establishing punishments for looting. But in practice, it further reified the authority that anthropologists held over Native American material culture, including human remains. The act failed to directly consider the interests that Native Americans might have in their own material culture, and it legislated the appropriation of that culture by anthropologists. In effect, the act turned Native American human remains into archaeological resources and made them the property of the federal government.[43] As Clayton Dumont notes, "The legislation made no distinction between graves that were thousands of years old and the interment of one's mother at a tribal cemetery a week or even day prior."[44] By the time the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act passed in 1990, scholars estimate that museums, federal agencies, and private collectors held anywhere between 300,000 to 2.5 million Native American bodies and untold millions of cultural objects.[45]

EARLY MUSEUM DISPLAYS

The exhibitions developed in the late nineteenth century and well into the twentieth clearly reflect the mind-set of the period. The notion of Indians as a vanishing or dying race was prevalent in most of the exhibitions that were developed well into the twentieth century. Exhibitions also tended to reinforce the view of static, unchanging cultures. Certainly, the diorama—a popular display technique used in natural history museums—tended to do this by depicting Indians as frozen in time and by displaying them near dinosaurs and other extinct animals. Additionally, objects were presented and defined by Western scientific categories—anthropological categories of manufacture and use—and not by Indigenous categories of culture, worldview, and meaning. Native societies were often defined by functional technology: we are only what we made. Exhibitions also obscured the great historical, cultural, and linguistic diversity of tribal nations by dividing Native people into cultural groups, giving a sense that all tribes are the same or at least the same in one particular region. At a time when Indians were believed to be on the road to extinction, exhibit techniques showed no desire on the part of curators to make connections with living Indians or to address an object's cultural relevance.

In his book *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes*, the late Michael Ames, former director of the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology, describes the manner in which

ethnographic collections were displayed. He outlines four styles that evolved over the years. The first type, cabinets of curiosities, preceded the development of professional anthropology collections in North America. The style developed in Europe beginning in the sixteenth century. The cabinets were private collections assembled by rich merchants and world travelers who desired to own natural history pieces along with "artificial curiosities," objects made by people from distant, exotic places.[46] Objects in the cabinets were crammed together and overflowing. The intent was to "select objects that would stimulate admiration and wonder and reflect upon the daring exploits, special knowledge, or privileged status of the collector."[47] Placing Native American cultural objects with flora and fauna was a common display technique used in the cabinets. It is important to note that the cabinets of curiosities formed the basis of many museum collections in Europe, including the Musée de l'Homme in France and the British Museum.[48]

The second type of exhibition practice, according to Ames, was the "natural history approach" used in early anthropology museums. This approach is linked to the development of the field of anthropology, and it ushered in the professionalization of museum staff. The displays presented material culture as "specimens" and Native people as "parts of nature like the flora and fauna, and therefore their arts and crafts were to be classified and presented according to similarity of form, evolutionary stage of development, or geographical origin."[49] These evolution-oriented and typology-organized display strategies are still practiced today in museums throughout the world, most notably at the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford University.

Ames refers to the third type of display technique as "contextualism," which he associates with modern anthropology. This mode of presentation was heavily influenced by the work of anthropologist Franz Boas, who sought to display objects in "fabricated settings that simulated the original cultural contexts from which they came."[50] Through this contextualized interpretative strategy, Boas believed that objects could be viewed "from the Native point of view," and he employed this approach at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, where he began his museum career. The exhibits or dioramas placed objects in a simulated environment of a particular culture or time period.[51] Several important institutions still featured exhibits reflective of this interpretative strategy into the late twentieth century, including the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., and the Field Museum in Chicago.

Ames characterizes the fourth type of exhibition presentation as the "formalist perspective." This exhibit technique differed from the contextualist style developed by Boas, because it favored an emphasis on form in presenting particular objects, rather than on the context from which they came. Formalist presentations sought to identify the material culture of so-called primitive societies and portrayed the pieces as fine art.

Both formalists and contextualists were critical of each other's approach. Formalists have

argued that the contextualist approach "is no less an arbitrary arrangement than the old curiosity cabinet, because the simulated context of the exhibition represents the mental reconstruction of the anthropologist further elaborated by the technical artistry of the exhibit designer."[52] The contextualists, on the other hand, reject the presentation of art objects that are not placed within their proper anthropological context. Ames argues that as long as the contextualists remain in anthropology or natural history museums and the formalists remain in art museums, tensions between the two could stay at a minimum.

The four approaches that Ames outlines are all outsider approaches to interpreting Indigenous people and cultures—and all are incomplete. He recognized the importance of a fifth approach, the "insider's point of view," which includes the perspectives of Native peoples themselves in the presentation of their material culture. According to Ames, what is key is "how the insider and outsider perspectives might interact and build upon one another in the process of truth-seeking and understanding."[53] During his tenure as director of the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology (1974–97, 2002–4), Ames initiated collaborative exhibition projects with First Nations communities. This site is now viewed by many as the international leader in moving the museum world forward with efforts to share curatorial authority and collaborate with Indigenous communities in all aspects of museum practice. Today collaboration is becoming more the norm than the exception, and institutions across the country seek to work closely with "source communities" on exhibitions focusing on their history and culture.

NATIVE ACTIVISM AND ACADEMIC EPIPHANIES: THE MOVE TO COLLABORATION

The move to collaboration in all facets of the museum world, including exhibitions, is gaining ground and is now considered a "best practice" within the field by many. As Robin Boast states, "Dialogue and collaboration [are] the name of the game these days and there are few museums with anthropological, or even archaeological, collections that would consider an exhibition that did not include some form of consultation."[54] What led to this new commitment to collaboration within the museum world?

Many scholars have emphasized the roles that both postmodernism and the international discourse on human rights have played in this new direction in museums. They have argued that postmodernism has led to self-reflection among anthropologists and museum curators on "the ways in which earlier, objectifying traditions of material culture display have supported colonial and neo-colonial power relations";[55] and the "evolving discourse of human rights has, in the years since its broad codification in the 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, been vigorously argued to extend to cultural property and the protection of traditional

indigenous knowledge."[56]

Fair enough. However, it is equally important to keep in mind that American Indian activism, which includes a wide range of activism, played no small role in this shift. In both the United States and Canada, Native activism was on the forefront of asserting Indigenous participation in developing exhibitions and in deciding what should be done with collections. Scholars have argued that the Native American challenge to museums began in the 1960s and was linked to the larger American Indian self-determination movement. Anthropologist Patricia Pierce Erikson argues that this movement inspired a range of Indigenous activism on issues involving museums. Native activists have worked to change museum practices by (1) protesting stereotypical displays of Native American history and culture at mainstream institutions; (2) protesting the collecting, display, and holding of American Indian human remains; (3) seeking to change museums from the inside by having Native people enter into the profession; (4) challenging the authority of Western museums to represent Native American communities without including the Native perspective; and (5) pressuring for the repatriation of Native American cultural objects, human remains, funerary objects, and objects of cultural patrimony.[57]

A change in Canadian exhibition practices also began during this period. In the 1970s, the Cranmer potlatch collection was returned to the Kwakwaka'wakw—a well-publicized event—and two tribal museums were established in the community. These positive steps reflected a change in the relationship between museums and Native people. Additionally, the Canadian Museums Association and the Assembly of First Nations Task Force on Museums, which was established in 1988, published a report, *Turning the Page: Forging New Partnerships between Museums and First Peoples,* following the 1988 successful boycott of the exhibition *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples* by First Nations communities. The report recognized that Native groups "own or have moral claim to their heritage and therefore should participate equally in its preservation and presentation."[58] The report went on to recommend that First Peoples should be equal partners with museums in all presentations of their history and culture.

Another watershed moment for Native rights happened with the 1990 passing of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) after nearly two decades of Native activism and struggle. Its passage represents a significant achievement for American Indian people, and it has been critical in heightening Native involvement in the museum world. In a nutshell, the law requires "federal agencies (excluding the Smithsonian Institution) and museums . . . to return human remains and associated funerary objects upon request of a lineal descendant, Indian tribe, or Native Hawaiian organization."[59] NAGPRA is important human rights legislation. It was designed first and foremost to address the historical inequities created by a legacy of past collecting practices, the continual disregard for Native religious beliefs and

burial practices, and a clear contradiction between how the graves of white Americans and the graves of Native Americans were treated. As Walter Echo-Hawk, the Pawnee attorney involved in the fight to get this legislation passed, aptly put it: "If you desecrate a white grave, you wind up sitting in prison. But desecrate an Indian grave, and you get a Ph.D."[60] NAGPRA attempts to address these inequities by giving Native American communities greater control over the remains of their ancestors and the cultural objects held at museums. In the context of my analysis of the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways (chapter 4), I will address the ongoing efforts by tribal communities to decolonize NAGPRA.

Another major development that has changed the relationship between museums and Native peoples is the tribal museum movement. In an important act of self-determination, Native communities are controlling the representation of their cultures through these tribal institutions as well as challenging the representations of Native peoples at mainstream museums. Once again, Indigenous activism has been critical to changing the relationship between tribal nations and museums, and this needs to be acknowledged. Native involvement in the museum world did not happen because of academic epiphanies by non-Native academics or curators, but as result of prolonged and committed activism.

It is, of course, beyond the scope of this work to provide an in-depth history of tribal museums and how they have developed in the United States and Canada. However, some background on their development might be useful to help readers understand the broader context for the two tribal museum case studies featured here, the Mille Lacs Indian Museum in Minnesota and the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways in Michigan. (The former is considered a "hybrid tribal museum" and the latter is entirely Native controlled.) Both museums developed in tandem with broader movements within the United States and Canada, and in both cases, the impetus was to challenge how mainstream, Western institutions have consistently misrepresented Native history and culture.

While a few tribal museums emerged in the first part of the twentieth century, such as the Osage Tribal Museum in 1938, most scholars acknowledge that the first significant wave of tribal museum development occurred in the 1960s and 1970s as part of a broader movement of economic development. During this period, tribal communities began establishing museums to promote tourism, cultural preservation, and economic growth.[61] Some sought funding through a granting program with the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The EDA offered funding for federally recognized tribes to establish businesses for employment and to create other revenue-generating opportunities, and some tribes took the offer and opened museums, and in the years that followed, some museums prospered, while others failed.[62] In his report *Tribal Museums in America*, George Abrams comments on the uneven success rates of these early facilities: "While the earlier EDA projects provided money for bricks and mortar, oftentimes there was little consideration of how the museum or the tribe was to fund annual

budgets, staff, acquiring and maintaining collections, upkeep of the building, etc. It was to become apparent for those who were involved in the actual implementation of tribal museums that buildings are not museums, and museums are not buildings—a view commonly held by the profession at large."[63]

Over the last several decades, tribal museums and cultural centers have continued to be built throughout Indian Country, and they open on a regular basis. The exact number of tribal museums fluctuates, depending on the criteria used to determine eligibility, with most placing the number of tribal museums in North America around two hundred. A recent Smithsonian survey considers tribal museums to be "museums that retain Native authority through direct tribal ownership or majority presence, or that are located on tribally controlled lands, or that have a Native director or board members."[64] If we use a strict definition of exclusive Native control through Native governance, the number drops to between 120 and 175 tribal museums in North America.[65]

Generalizing about the types of exhibitions featured in tribal museums is difficult. As I often tell my students, we need to remember that each museum is as unique as the community it proposes to represent. Many tribal cultural centers and museums are very small places with only a few staff people and small exhibitions. In the last twenty years, however, several tribes have built large multimillion-dollar facilities, and their exhibitions exemplify the finest in contemporary exhibit development. Several sites that I have visited include the Museum at Warm Springs (Warm Springs, Oregon), the Tamástslikt Cultural Institute (Pendleton, Oregon), the Makah Cultural and Research Center (Neah Bay, Washington), and the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center (Mashantucket, Connecticut). These tribal museums have state-of-the-art exhibits that equal or surpass current exhibits at mainstream museums in terms of design and construction. While the exhibit content is unique, the overall feel of these spaces is contemporary, sophisticated, and beautiful.

Obviously, I do not have the space to describe in detail the content of these and other tribal museums. However, I would like to comment on an overall pattern that I, along with other scholars, have observed in museum content at many of the tribal museums and cultural centers in the United States. In their exhibitions, tribal museums often emphasize Native American survival and cultural continuance: the obvious, yet powerful reminder that "we are still here." JoAllyn Archambault summarizes this emphasis and the overarching exhibit philosophy behind it when she writes, "What binds it all together is a persuasive insistence on the importance of the present and the future, both of which are founded on ties to the past."[66]

Many of our tribal museums have indeed done an excellent job of conveying the ongoing presence of Native communities. They have also shown a desire to challenge the existing stereotypes of Native American history and culture that are prevalent in our society. However, I come back to the need to name colonialism and its impact on our history and our communities

today. To date, with the exception of the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways in Michigan, most of the tribal museums that I have visited do not provide visitors with a rigorous, critical discussion of colonialism and its ongoing effects.

In her survey of tribal museums in the Southwest conducted under the auspices of a National Endowment for the Humanities "Extending the Reach" grant, Apache scholar Rebecca Hernandez also observed a reluctance to discuss challenging or difficult topics within the exhibitions. She found that many tribal museums follow exhibition didactic practices that are comparable to those of mainstream institutions, particularly in a shared desire to avoid an extensive analysis of colonialism and its ongoing effects. She acknowledges the important educational role that tribal museums and cultural centers play and their many accomplishments in that capacity. However, she also noticed a tendency to "avoid discussion or delineation of controversial events, difficult historical facts and current political dilemmas" in the sites that she visited.[67] One could argue further that the many collaborative projects pursued by Native people and mainstream museums manifest a similar tendency to avoid tough and challenging topics.

THE EMERGENCE OF COLLABORATIONS AND FRAMEWORKS FOR UNDERSTANDING THEM

While several recent studies provide rich descriptive information on the process of developing collaborative exhibitions, the first scholar to offer a theoretical framework for this process is art historian and museum studies scholar Ruth Phillips. In her introduction to "Community Collaboration in Exhibitions: Toward a Dialogic Paradigm" in *Museums and Source Communities*, edited by Laura Peers and Alison Brown, Phillips asserts that there is "a spectrum of models . . . bracketed by two distinct types."[68] She is careful to acknowledge that there is no prototypical model or single collaborative process. Each project is firmly rooted in the institutional history of the particular museum and is dependent on the relationships that develop between individuals in the museums and on the community advisory boards. Still, even though each project is unique, Phillips proposes two models that most collaborative projects fall into: the multivocal model and the community-based model.

According to Phillips, the multivocal exhibit model allows for multiple perspectives in the exhibitions. The voices of curators, scholars, and Indigenous people are all present in the interpretative space and offer their own interpretations on the significance of the pieces and themes presented from their respective disciplinary and personal backgrounds. An example of this model was *Creation's Journey: Masterworks of Native American Identity and Belief*, which opened in 1994 at the NMAI's George Gustav Heye Center in New York. I will discuss this exhibit and its genesis more fully in chapter 3.

Phillips characterizes the second of the two models as a community-based approach: "The role of the professional museum curator or staff member is defined as that of a facilitator who puts his or her disciplinary and museological expertise at the service of community members so that their messages can be disseminated as clearly and as effectively as possible."[69] The community is given final authority in all decisions related to the exhibition, from the themes and objects that will be featured to the design of the actual exhibition. The tribal perspective has primacy in interpretation in this model, and exhibition text is typically in the first person. The Minnesota Historical Society employed this approach for the Mille Lacs Indian Museum, which opened in 1996, and the NMAI used it for their Washington, D.C., site, which opened in September 2004.

One of the most significant features of these two new types of exhibitions, especially the community-based model, is the desire to move away from object-based presentations that focus on the functions and uses of objects according to ethnographic categories. Instead, the exhibits make stronger connections to the relationships that pieces have to contemporary communities. As scholar Trudy Nicks has acknowledged, "Museums now accept that many contemporary indigenous groups see objects as living entities. . . . [and] the significance of objects is no longer restricted to past contexts of manufacture, use, and collecting, but now takes into account the demonstrated meanings they may have for indigenous communities in the present and for the future."[70]

In these new interpretative strategies, the curators are less willing simply to showcase great objects. Instead, they allow concepts to lead the exhibition planning—concepts that have been developed in consultation with community advisory boards. Objects are still central to the exhibition, but they are selected to illustrate certain themes: the importance of family, elders, and Indigenous communities' relationship to the land; contemporary survival; sovereignty; education; and language, to name a few. Displaying objects in ways that convey both their historic and their contemporary resonances is central in these presentations.

With Phillips's framework and with the new interpretative methods that are the direct result of collaborations in developing museum exhibits, I want to discuss some of the ups and downs that I see in the museum practices that have followed. Scholars and communities recognize that the collaborative process is a welcome shift in power dynamics within museums. But ongoing issues remain. We must not allow these narratives of collaboration to become too tidy or celebratory, or we could become complacent. We now have many examples of both tribally controlled museums and collaborative partnerships that have evolved since the latter part of the twentieth century. In this book, I focus on three museums that I have studied over an extended period of time. But I also want to acknowledge other places where collaborative exhibitions as well as tribal museums have developed.

At the University of Arizona, for example, faculty and graduate students, including Shelby

Tisdale, assisted in developing the Cocopah Museum and Cultural Center, which opened in the mid-1990s on the Cocopah reservation in Arizona. In her doctoral dissertation, Tisdale describes the process of bringing this project to fruition. Individuals from the University of Arizona spent years working with members of the community to develop a center that would meet the community's stated goal of cultural preservation and education in a changing world. Community members also brought hopes for economic development—hopes that mirror the goals and objectives of other tribal museum projects and collaborative ventures. Most significantly, the museum's identity or subjectivity is not static or fixed. Tribal members continue to engage in conversations about how this particular new form of cultural preservation can assist them in addressing issues of critical importance. The result is a museum that is fluid and in flux, changing in response to changes in the community it serves.[71]

Other institutions have also played a role in shifting museums from being strictly curator-controlled sites to more inclusive and collaborative spaces. The Denver Art Museum, the Denver Museum of Natural History, the Arizona State Museum, the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture (and its affiliated Laboratory of Anthropology) in Santa Fe, New Mexico, all come to mind as having contributed significantly to changes in museum practices. Bruce Bernstein, for example, first developed community-collaborative types of exhibits in Santa Fe at the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture/Laboratory of Anthropology. He later served as the assistant director for cultural resources at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, where he provided vision for the NMAI's ambitious program of community-curated exhibition development. When he came on board with the NMAI in 1997, his commitment to community collaboration played a decisive role in determining the course that the NMAI would follow in developing its exhibits. I will discuss this collaborative project—its strengths and weaknesses, as I see them—more fully in chapter 3. Clearly, collaboration in exhibition development has greatly influenced contemporary museum practice as it relates to Native Americans, and the literature is replete with examples of positive new directions. However, I caution against moving too quickly to celebratory narratives of a "mission accomplished" variety that sometimes permeate the literature.

Cambridge University archaeologist Robin Boast recently wrote an article for *Museum Anthropology* in which he interrogates both the move to collaboration and the recent literature in the field that offers a generally positive picture of the collaborative process. Boast rigorously questions the current state of museum practices and our understanding of "museums as contact zones"—a widely accepted theoretical framing of the collaborative process. I quote from his point in its entirety, as I find his to be the most forceful statement yet on the need not to move so quickly to celebratory narratives. Doing so obscures the glaring power imbalances that remain and thereby reduces the real potential to dramatically shift museum policies and practices.

The key problem, as I see it, lies deeper—deep in the assumptions and practices that constitute the museum in the past and today. . . . The new museum, the museum as contact zone, is and continues to be used instrumentally as a means of masking far more fundamental asymmetries, appropriations, and biases. The museum, as a site of accumulation, as a gatekeeper of authority and expert accounts, as the ultimate caretaker of the object . . . as its documenter and even as the educator, has to be completely redrafted. Where the new museology saw the museum being transformed from a site of determined edification to one of educational engagement, museums of the 21st century must confront this deeper neocolonial legacy. This is not only possible but, I would argue, could renovate the museum into an institution that supported the enrichment, rather than authorization, of collections. To do this, however, requires museums to learn to let go of their resources, even at times of the objects, for the benefit and use of communities and agendas far beyond its knowledge and control.[72]

As Boast says, moving too soon to celebratory narratives runs the risk of obscuring "far more fundamental asymmetries, appropriations, and biases." Tidy stories of successful collaboration may mask persistent neocolonial relations within the museum world. We must be mindful of these dynamics, because they still hold sway. We have ample evidence of this type of masking from Native people's experiences with repatriation and museum noncompliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. Twenty years and counting after the passage of the law, Native Americans continue to struggle with many mainstream museums over the return of Native remains and cultural items. The scientific community seems preoccupied with emphasizing successful collaborations with Indigenous communities in many other areas, but this enthusiasm is disingenuous when it masks ongoing issues around academic, scientific, and museum noncompliance with the law. I will discuss these serious concerns in greater depth in chapter 4.[73]

In the chapters that follow, I will focus, then, on three different museums that have engaged the challenging work of collaborative exhibition development over the last few decades. The work is significant given its attention to the complex and ever-changing relationship between Indigenous people and museums, which many describe as a love-hate relationship. My main concern is to explore how museums can serve as sites of decolonization. I argue that they do this through honoring Indigenous knowledge and worldviews, challenging the stereotypical representations of Native people produced in the past, serving as sites of "knowledge making and remembering" for their own communities and the general public, and discussing the hard truths of colonization in exhibitions in an effort to promote healing and understanding.

Unlike previous studies that focus on the relation between Native Americans and museums, this book is comparative and draws upon data collected from my ten-year, multisite museum project. My analysis rests not just on one museum but on three different sites of Indigenous self-representation. I recount the complex and dynamic story of how these projects have come

to fruition.

While one of the sites featured in this book, the National Museum of the American Indian, has received attention in the scholarly literature, the other two museums, the Mille Lacs Indian Museum and the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways, have not. While they are both Anishinabe museums, each museum's development is unique and exemplifies a significant temporal argument on the changing relationship between Indigenous people and museums. Both illustrate how new museum theory has been put into practice. The Mille Lacs Indian Museum, a "hybrid tribal museum" located in Minnesota, is an important collaborative partnership between the Minnesota Historical Society and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. The collaborative process followed at this site between a state historical society and an Ojibwe community helped pave the way for the type of large-scale collaborative project pursued by planners of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian with Native communities across the hemisphere.

In the case of the Ziibiwing Center, I am the first museum studies scholar who has conducted extensive research there. This fact is significant given that the Ziibiwing Center is perhaps the most innovative tribal museum in the country. The museum advances a decolonizing agenda by framing the entire exhibition within the context of the Anishinabe oral tradition, and it also presents the hard truths of colonization in its exhibitions to address the legacies of historical unresolved grief. The present tribal involvement in exhibit development demonstrates the links between self-representation and larger movements of Native American self-determination and cultural sovereignty.

IN ADDITION to this introductory chapter, the book includes four chapters. Chapter 2 focuses on the development of the Mille Lacs Indian Museum, an Ojibwe museum in Minnesota that has undergone significant changes in representation throughout its history since it opened in 1960. Closed for several years during major renovation and revision, the museum reopened in 1996 as a tribal museum. My examination of this museum addresses how one Native community constructed a collective public memory and history by developing a tribal museum—in this case, a "hybrid" tribal museum. In doing so, they took the lead in shaping the public's perception of their past. This is a significant site of Indigenous self-representation, and the site translates new museum theory into practice. I was fortunate to witness the process firsthand as an exhibit researcher in 1994–95.

My next chapter focuses on the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and explores the complexities of the new collaborative relationship between Native communities and museums on the national stage. I examine the NMAI's significance to the changing historical relationship between Indigenous people and museums. I also question the assessment of several scholars that the NMAI is a decolonizing museum. While the NMAI advances an

important collaborative methodology in its exhibitions, I argue that its historical exhibitions fail to present a clear and coherent understanding of colonialism and its ongoing effects. My critiques focus mostly on the institution's presentation of Native American history in the *Our Peoples* gallery. I argue, first, that the presentation conflates an Indigenous understanding of history with a postmodernist presentation of history, and, second, that it fails to tell the hard truths of colonization and the genocidal acts committed against Indigenous people. Given these silences, I contend that the museum fails to serve as a site of truth telling and remembering. Instead, it remains very much an institution of the nation-state. Thus, I caution against referring to this site as a "tribal museum writ large" or, even more problematically, as a "decolonizing museum," which several scholars have done.

Building on this discussion of how museums can serve as sites of decolonization through truth telling in exhibition spaces, I conclude my case studies with an examination of an Anishinabe tribal museum in Michigan, the Ziibiwing Center. This community-based museum on the Saginaw Chippewa reservation embodies, I believe, important decolonizing practices. In chapter 4, I explore how the Ziibiwing Center represents the hard truths of colonialism and genocide in its exhibitions. As one of the newest tribally owned and operated museums in the nation, the Ziibiwing Center both borrows from and builds upon the last thirty years of tribal museum development. The center reflects some of the most current and innovative exhibition strategies, including thematic rather than object-based exhibits, an effective use of multimedia, more storytelling and use of the first-person voice, and, most significantly, emphasis on Anishinabe survival within a colonial context.

Because of these critical components, I argue that the museum reflects a decolonizing agenda. How the Saginaw Chippewa represent their story as a people reflects more closely an Indigenous understanding of history and honors the oral tradition. Moreover, the people's courage and ability to speak the hard truths of colonization in their exhibitions has given the museum a vitality and community connectedness that energize their ongoing programming. Notwithstanding the inevitable bumps that arise, this museum is working closely with the community, and the Ziibiwing Center offers a compelling case study of what a vibrant tribal museum can achieve. I end the book with a concluding chapter that focuses on how to transform museums into "places that matter" for Native Americans. Key to this endeavor will be our readiness to extend our understanding of museums to embrace their potential to become "sites of conscience" and decolonization.

Finally, I hope this volume will add another angle to the important conversations about the changing relations between Indigenous people and museums. My research is deeply rooted in my own identity as a Ho-Chunk scholar and museum professional. For most Native people, what is inside tribal museums or any museum that contains Native representations is not a matter of detached, academic interest—something about which we debate as part of our

professional careers. We can do this, but the meaning of this work goes much deeper for us. The museum content involves life, ancestors, culture, our continued existence, and future generations.

Mindful of this, I hope that what comes through in my analysis of these institutions is the heartfelt emotion that these sites evoke for many Native people. In my attempt to honor the storytelling traditions of our communities, I have decided to include in the text many first-person testimonies by both Native and non-Native actors. These first-person accounts are rich in description, and they convey what I believe are interesting, thought-provoking commentaries. Moreover, while this work is theoretically informed and methodologically sound, I never want to lose sight of my Native sensibilities and forget to tell a story. For Native people, the story that follows is about our cultural survival and self-determination. There are many ways to tell this story. Here, I will tell it through the ever-changing, complex, contested, and dynamic process of representing Native peoples in both national and tribal museums in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. For all the theory that infuses this work, I hope that readers will also engage this work as a good story—one that continues beyond these pages.