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National Archives of Canada

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The Acquisition of Visual Records Relating to Native Life in North America

Jim Burant

In 1991, the National Archives of Canada made its first deliberate acquisition of art works by an Indian artist, the Kwaguitl David Neel, who had produced a series of serigraphs relating to events concerning native-white relations in Canada. The first work, *Life on the 18th Hole* (figure 1), was inspired by the events at Oka, Quebec, where Mohawk warriors had blockaded a provincial highway and defied first Quebec provincial police and then Canadian federal troops for more than two months in 1990.¹ The second work, *Just Say No* (figure 2), was a commentary on the stand taken by Elijah Harper, a Manitoba Indian and

¹ For further information about David Neel, consult Ed Tompkins, *"To Speak for Ourselves": Portraits of Chiefs and Elders by David Neel* (Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, 1991), a brochure published to accompany an exhibition of the same name.

member of Parliament, whose no vote in a crucial provincial legislature debate resulted in the collapse of a national



Fig. 1 David Neel, *Life on the 18th Hole*, 1991. Serigraph: 71.0 x 55.4 cm. National Archives of Canada (hereafter NA), Acc. No. 1991-344-1 (C-138081)

constitutional accord which had been several years in the making. In 1992, two additional Neel prints were acquired: *Trial of Tears*, a reaction to an adverse judgement in the Supreme Court of British Columbia to a land claim by the



Fig. 2 David Neel, *Just Say No.* 1991. Serigraph: 66.1. x 55.4 cm. NA, Acc No. 1991-344-2 (C138082)

G'tsaan Witsoa'tin, and the more personal *Kwagiutl Family Portrait*, a portrait of the artist and his family in traditional motif.

The acquisition of these works was not made without serious consideration on the part of the National Archives. Both in policy and in practice, the purchase of individual art works by contemporary artists, whether native or white, has not been encouraged because there are so many unanswered or unanswerable questions about whether such acquisitions should be made. What about historical perspective? Shouldn't archives attempt to acquire fonds rather than items? Are such items documentary in the sense that they document not an activity or event but an individual reaction to an event? Aren't such items, either artist's prints or even photographer's portfolios, available in multiple versions and therefore likely to be acquired by a number of different institutions, including art galleries, museums and other archives? Why aren't archives acquiring the original artwork? All of these are legitimate questions, and should be included when one is drawing up institutional acquisition criteria or guidelines.

There is an alternate view to the problems being asked about acquiring contemporary works that can be described by stating a number of points. Such works, while not of an activity or event, may have an impact on or reflect contemporary societal attitudes, as do political or editorial cartoons, and can therefore already be considered historically significant. Sometimes prints or portfolios vary from copy to copy (no two are alike). The artist may not be considerate enough to maintain his or her fonds intact. There may not actually be an original artwork or photographic negative to which the print corresponds; and if there is, it may not be available for acquisition either as a

donation or a purchase at a reasonable cost. Even with firm acquisition and appraisal guidelines in place, it is difficult to make sweeping judgments about the acquisition of contemporary print productions or photographic portfolios. In the National Archives at least, every case is examined on its own merits. In fact, subsequent offers of limited edition prints by David Neel to the National Archives of Canada have been rejected because an Art Acquisition Committee felt that they had not had the same public impact and significance as the previous four.

The larger question which an interested observer might ask is: why was this the first conscious acquisition of a work by a native artist by the National Archives of Canada? The simple response is that it has not been institutional policy, because two other arms of the Canadian federal government have historically been responsible for such acquisitions. The Canadian Museum of Civilization has a contemporary Indian art section, coincidentally headed by a native who also happens to be an artist (Gerald McMaster) as well as an Inuit art section, both of which are part of the Canadian Ethnology Service; and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs has both an Indian Art Centre and an Inuit art section within its Information Resources Division. Recently, most of the artwork held by the Indian Affairs Department has been transferred, some of it to various regional museums in the north and west, and some to the National Gallery of Canada, where there is also a separate Inuit art section. For art produced by native artists, there seems to be a wide variety of locations for such works within the national heritage structure.

What is missing in such institutions, however, is the aspect of historical content and narrative. Works created by

native artists are treated as works of art rather than as "visual narratives," and are considered primarily for their aesthetic sensibilities, while their importance as visual documents of an historical nature and within an historical rather than aesthetic context has been a secondary issue. This is where the art holdings of the National Archives of Canada are strongest, since they have been acquired primarily as historical rather than as art historical documents. Perhaps in this context the National Archives should have in the past considered works by native artists more seriously within the historical framework of maintaining "the collective memory" of the nation. What in fact has been done to serve the idea of maintaining the "collective memory" of native life? Before further addressing the question of acquiring native artists' works, it is useful briefly to review the history of the National Archives' acquisition policies relating to the native North American experience.

This experience is peculiarly eurocentric. Possibly the first art work acquired by the then Public Archives of Canada was purchased in 1888, sixteen years after the founding of the institution. Perhaps not surprisingly, it was about the indigenous peoples, and it was a contemporary work of art. An oil painting by a Canadian army officer, Robert W. Rutherford, it was entitled *The Surrender of Poundmaker to Major-General Middleton at Battleford, Saskatchewan, May 26, 1885* (figure 3). Rutherford, who had been trained as an artist as part of his military training, and as an on-the-spot observer, produced a work both rich in detail and severe in its presentation of conquerors and conquered. Of the sixty or seventy Indians assembled in the painting, eleven would eventually be condemned to death by Canadian courts, and eight eventually hanged, while a further forty-four would be imprisoned for various

offenses. The Indian chief Poundmaker, the leader of the native uprising, was released from prison after serving ten months of a three year sentence, and died less than a month after.² Perhaps, given the history of native-white

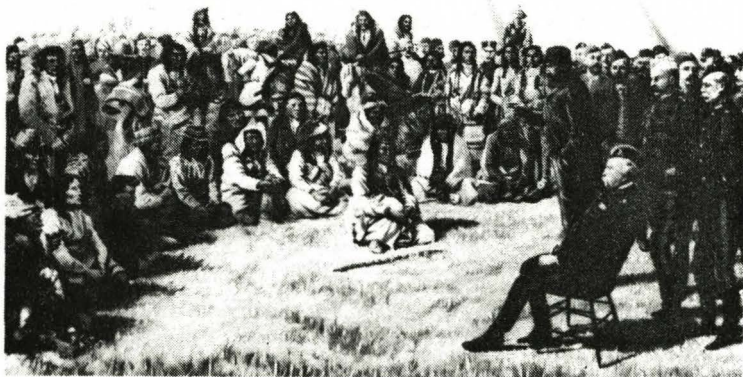


Fig. 3 Robert W. Rutherford, *The Surrender of Poundmaker to Major-General Middleton at Battleford, Saskatchewan, May 26, 1885*. 1888. Oil on canvas: 91.7 x 122.5 cm. NA, Acc. No. 1991-274-2 (C-2769)

² See Douglas Shoenherr, ed., *The Painted Past: Selected Paintings from the Picture Division of the Public Archives of Canada* (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1984), catalogue entry no. 39 by Martha Marleau, 72-75. See also Hugh A. Dempsey, "Pitikwahanapiwiyn (Poundmaker)", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, (Volume: 1881-1890)* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 695-697.

relations in North America, and late nineteenth century societal attitudes towards the indigenous peoples, this work was a peculiarly appropriate first acquisition in developing the nation's "collective memory."

By 1906, the Public Archives, under Dominion Archivist Arthur Doughty, had been given the mandate to create a picture division, the reasons for this being recorded by Doughty in 1925, in a preface to the Archives' first *Catalogue of Paintings, Drawings and Prints...*:

We are so accustomed to Canada as we see it now, and as we move in it, that we are hardly conscious of the fact that what are to us to-day thriving cities and familiar scenes, formed, only a few years ago, part of a vast wilderness untrodden by the foot of the white man. It is here that illustrations associated with the beginnings and the advance of our civilization prove such valuable aids, since they permit one to obtain a connected and systematized view of our development.³

Archivist James F. Kenney noted in the introductory essay that up to 25,000 images had been accumulated in only twenty years, and he boasted that:

In subjects treated the collection has been built up on broad lines. The aim of the department has been to

³ James F. Kenney, *Catalogue of Pictures Including Paintings, Drawings, and Prints in the Public Archives of Canada* (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1925), preface.

meet the legitimate needs of all *bona fide* investigators of Canadian history.... Noteworthy also is the large group of pictures relating to the aborigines—Indians and Eskimos—their personal appearance, customs and manner of living.⁴

Kenney discussed the acquisition of original works of art, and of two classes of prints—those issued as single-sheets or in print sets—and those published as illustrations to books and periodicals. Although he noted that the separate print possessed a certain intrinsic distinction, usually artistic, "from the historian's point of view the illustration is as important as the separate print."⁵ This spirit or philosophy is one which drove acquisition in the division until the late 1960s, a Jenkinsonian approach which developed quickly into the peculiarly Canadian concept of "total archives."

During this period, great efforts were made to acquire works which were authentic documents about indigenous life by observers contemporary to the publication of the prints. Thus, among the more important single-sheet prints or print sets acquired were works by Cornelius Krieghoff (1815-1872), Peter Rindisbacher (1806-1834), Robert Petley (1812-1869), George Heriot (ca. 1759-1839), Edward Chatfield (1802-1839), and George Catlin (1796-1872). The acquisition of original works of art taken by artists on the spot was also pursued, which resulted in a superb collection of documentary art by 1925, including watercolours of northern and western native life by the

⁴ Kenney, ii.

⁵ Kenney, iv.

aforementioned Peter Rindisbacher (figure 4, cover), George Back (1796-1878), John Hames (active 1799-1812), as well as perhaps the earliest documented acquisition of a watercolour, in 1911. This anonymous work was entitled *View of Lake of Two Mountains with Indian Village, 1800* (the village was otherwise known as Oka).

As well as pursuing art works through dealers and auction houses, the National Archives of Canada also acquired collections from historians and other academics during this period. Included among these acquisitions was a major collection of Northwest Coast Indian views and Henry James Warre's printed set of *Sketches of North America and the Oregon Territory*, published as lithographs in 1848. As well as views of native life and customs, the National Archives acquired portrait prints of prominent and important native leaders, including an engraving of Brant, one of the four Iroquois sachems or "Kings" who travelled to London, England, in 1710 to meet the Queen.⁶ In 1977, the National Archives acquired the original painting on which this print and three others were based. Not all native portraits were as well-documented or authentic; the archives continues to supply to researchers with portraits of such leaders as Pontiac and Tecumseh, although with a proviso that such works were not done from life.

While most of the National Archives of Canada's holdings of art works about the life, customs, and appearance of North America's indigenous peoples can be

⁶ See John G. Garratt, *The Four Indian Kings* (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1982) for a fuller treatment of this print as well as of other similar eighteenth-century representations of native North American leaders.

seen to have a ring of authenticity and 'documentaryness' about them because of the context of their creation and use, there are also many prints in which fanciful artistry, resulting in imaginary images, has been acquired. These include the earliest print in the holdings, a view of *Hochelaga* 1565, based on Jacques Cartier's written account of an Iroquois village (figure 5). Many seventeenth and early eighteenth century images were based on classical antiquity, and presented a vision of "the noble savage." Many were featured in the 1975 exhibition and

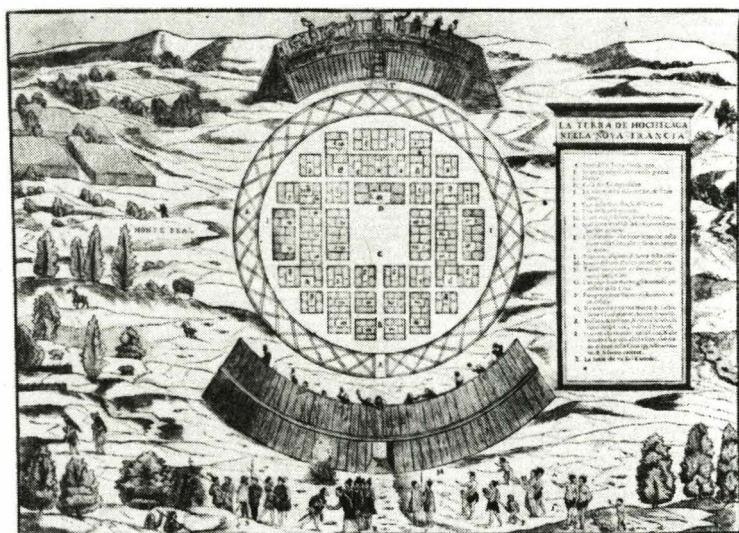


Fig. 5 Attributed to Giacomo Gastaldi, *La Terra de Hochelaga nelle Nova Francia*, published in Giovanni Batista Ramusio, *Terzo Volume delle Navigazioni et Viaggi...* (Venice, 1565), pp. 446-447. This copy removed and acquired as a separate sheet. Coloured woodcut: 26.7 x 36.7 cm. NA, (C-10489)

catalogue produced by the scholar Hugh Honour.⁷ The National Archives of Canada acquired a great deal of this imaginary imagery during the early years of its picture division, but fortunately did not venture deeply into the acquisition of ephemeral imagery from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thus, the holdings are not particularly strong in those kinds of images in which the "red man" is all too often stereotyped or made "imaginary," although some of the trade card and poster holdings include several such images.

From the 1970s onwards, there has been an increasing effort made by the National Archives of Canada to acquire more "documentary" visual imagery of indigenous peoples. Among the more celebrated acquisitions have been the purchases of the Four Indian Kings portraits (previously mentioned) from a private family in England; a miniature portrait (figure 6) of Demasduit or Mary March, one of the last of the now-extinct Beothuck Indians, taken in 1818, after her capture by a group of white hunters in the Newfoundland interior; and original works by Peter Rindisbacher, Paul Kane, Thomas Mower Martin, and other Canadian artists. To emphasize the intensity of this effort, a recent National Archives exhibition and related catalogue,

⁷ Hugh Honour, *The European Vision of America* (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1976). This seminal catalogue was produced in honour of the American Bicentennial and did much to examine the origins and fallacies of European imagery about native North Americans.

A Place in History: Twenty Years of Acquiring Paintings, Drawings and Prints at the National Archives of Canada⁸,



Fig. 6 Lady Henrietta Martha Hamilton, *Demasduit or Mary March*, 1819. Watercolour on ivory: 7.5 x 6.5 cm. NA, Acc. No. 1977-14-1 (C-87698)

⁸ Jim Burant, *et al.*, *A Place in History: Twenty Years of Acquiring Paintings, Drawings, and Prints at the National Archives of Canada*, Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, 1991.

includes "The First Nations" as one of its four sections, stresses the uses of such documentation for the study of native peoples, and pleads for a better understanding of Canada's past. In August 1993, many of the images included in that exhibition were consulted and used by a researcher from the Assembly of First Nations, an organization representing native communities from across Canada, as part of its presentation to the Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs. This type of use is encouraging to archivists within the institution, since such documentation should be used not only by non-native researchers to study indigenous peoples, but by native researchers to better understand themselves.

Far from being self-congratulatory, however, staff at the National Archives of Canada continues to be critical in examining the institution's acquisition criteria and guidelines. One of the massive gaps in its holdings are works by native artists done after European contact, particularly such works as ledger books and sketchbooks. There is a great pictorial tradition in indigenous societies, but most of what survives is artifactual in nature. Post-European contact, however, did provide natives with the opportunity to express themselves in western idioms. Mainly western plains in origin, such visual documents derive from the painted hides which are held in such institutions as the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, the Heyl Foundation in New York, or the Museum of the American Indian in Washington. After the reduction of the buffalo herds, and with the availability of paper and crayons, many natives turned to recording their personal histories in ledger books instead, these being readily available through traders and other commercial sources. No examples of such ledger books are held in the National Archives of Canada, although one finds examples

in most museums of the American Indian or of western life, as well as in historical societies and archives throughout the United States (figure 7). Much has been written about this

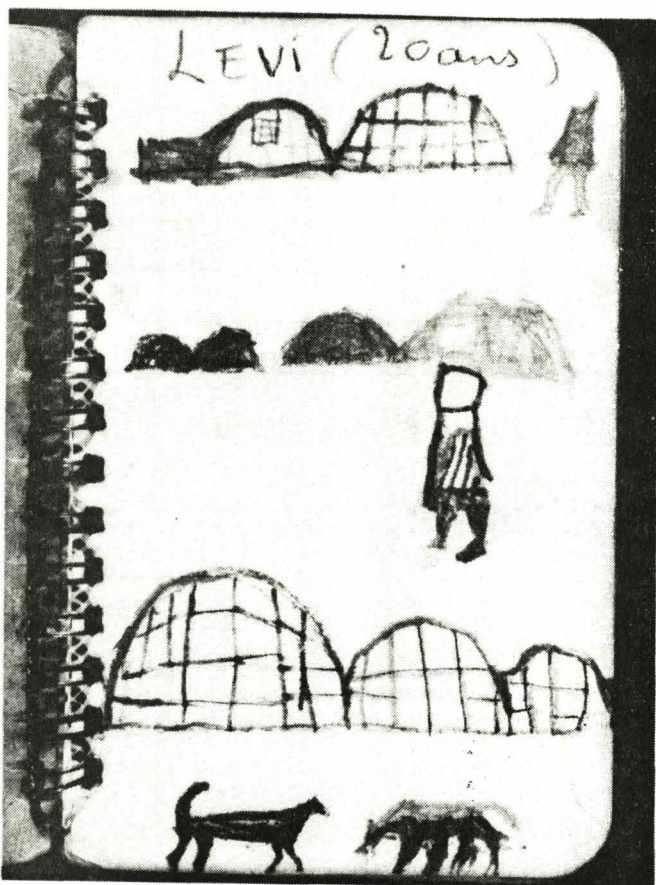


Fig. 7 Levi, *Levi: 20 ans [Twenty Years old: Igloos and Dogs]*, 1948. Coloured crayons and pencil: 10.8 x 6.8 cm. NA, Acc. No. 1992-497-1.2 (C-139809)

tradition over the past thirty years.⁹ Even in 1991, however, the Hungarian scholar Imre Nagy, in writing about the avalanche of publications concerning the white impact on the pictographic art of the Plains Indians, complained about "these drawings, which have been languishing in numerous museum archives for nearly a hundred years."¹⁰ One cannot be sure whether this is a compliment (that the material was actually in an archives), or an insult (that it had been languishing there, implying some neglect on the part of its keepers) to archives and archivists.

Research for this article, uncovered the fact that the National Archives of Canada did possess documents of this kind, but they had come into the holdings by serendipity rather than by choice. The first was a small sketchbook, dated 1948, which included a number of pictorial representations by an Inuit artist named Levi (figure 7).¹¹ These works are of great interest in the context of the introduction of printmaking techniques to the Inuit of Nunavut in the mid-1950s, but what is missing is the context of the record itself, because this document, like so many which have come to the National Archives of Canada,

⁹ Gloria Young, "Aesthetic Archives: The Visual Language of Plains Ledger Art," in E. L. Wade, ed., *The Arts of the North American Indian: Native Traditions in Evolution* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1986), 45-62.

¹⁰ Imre J. Nagy, "Progress or Decline? White Impact on the Pictographic Art of the Plains Indians" in *European Review of Native American Studies*, 5 (1991), 29.

¹¹ This sketchbook is accessioned as DAP Acc. No. 1992-497.

arrived as part of a miscellaneous collection of papers and manuscripts from a private dealer. No amount of research has revealed how this interesting work came into the dealer's hand, or even why. Accepting the internal evidence of the document itself, the works can be placed in some context, but it would have been far more valuable to have more complete documentation. The second group of documents was a series of fifty-one drawings by an Inuit artist named Joe Tuglavine of Davis Inlet, Labrador,¹² which arrived as part of a much larger fonds of more than 2500 drawings, prints, reproductions and plates of art works by the Canadian illustrator Lloyd C. Scott.¹³ In this case, the context of these records is much better-defined, since Scott was in Davis Inlet in 1964, where he met Tuglavine, and they corresponded and exchanged drawings over a period of five years. One of Tuglavine's drawings, *This Man is Having Fun*, 1965, (figure 8) is typical of the genre of work produced.

¹² This community has become widely known in the Canadian media recently, with the horrifying discovery that Inuit teenagers in Davis Inlet had attempted a mass suicide in the winter of 1992-1993, an incident which was captured on videotape. National attention was drawn to the miserable living conditions and general hopelessness of the youth in this community. Since then, a number of federal and provincial government initiatives have been made to improve both the living conditions and quality of life in this community, although a tremendous amount of work remains to be done.

¹³ The Lloyd Scott Collection (DAP Accession No. 1973-8) was acquired from the artist's family.

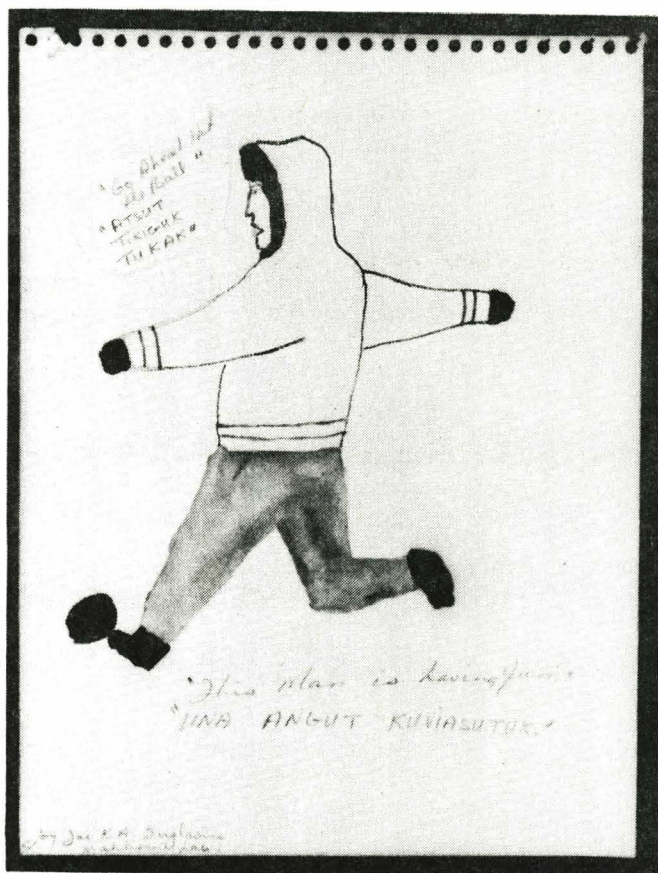


Fig. 8 Joe K. A. Tuglavine, *This Man is Having Fun*, January 18, 1966. Pencil and watercolour: 30.2 x 22.2 cm. NA, Acc. No. 1973-8-2528 (C-139931)

The question of acquiring this type of art does have a more general meaning for the archival community. The National Archives of Canada is not alone in having to re-examine its acquisition policies in order to face the dilemma of "exclusion" versus "inclusion." As society changes, and societal attitudes towards the various communities existing within the society change as well, a greater sensitivity to

these communities must be developed. Nor is it only a one-way street. For native artists, and within native communities, there has been an intense debate about what kinds of records to include in archival repositories, whether those repositories are controlled by natives or not.¹⁴ Even a brief review of the literature about indigenous artists in North America reveals the dichotomies which exist.

The *Proceedings from the National Native Indian Artists' Symposium IV*, held in 1987, included a number of controversial and contradictory sessions about various aspects of native art. One reviewer, Vanessa Vogel, noted that the predominant self-designation used by most participants during this symposium was "Indian," for example. There also appeared to be no consensus about an approach for native artists towards mainstream cultural institutions.¹⁵ An entire issue of the *European Review of Native Studies* focused on the question of "Native American

¹⁴ At the 1993 Society of American Archivists' Annual Meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, archivist Sheree Bonaparte of the Akwesasne Council Archives outlined some of her problems in maintaining an archival repository with respect to varying attitudes within a native community in session 22: "Starting from Scratch: Establishing an Archives/Research Facility."

¹⁵ M. L. Vanessa Vogel, "Vociferous Native Artists" in *European Review of Native American Studies* 6 (1992), 62. This is a book review of Alfred Young Man, ed., *Networking: Proceedings from the National Native American Indian Artists' Symposium IV: July 14-18, 1987* (Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada: University of Lethbridge, 1988).

Art and the Problem of the Other."¹⁶ In an introductory essay, scholar Armin Geertz divided the issues relating to the collecting of native American art in three major categories: first, the struggle for history; second, the construction of the "other"; and third, the problem of intercultural understanding.¹⁷ The same journal contained articles on "Art and Native American Self-Assertion," "Token and Taboo: Academia vs. Native Art," "How the West Was Lost: An Artist's Perspective," "Glimpses of Eden: Iconographic Themes in Huron Pictorial Tourist Art," "Representations of Women in Native American Museum Exhibitions: A Kwakiutl Example," "Northern Plains and Plateau Indian Pictographs from the Sir Benjamin Stone Collection," and various other reviews and brief notes, including one on collecting postcards.

An important point was also made by the British ethnologist and museum curator Jonathan King, in a review of Jane Berlo's book *The Early Years of Native American Art History: The Politics of Scholarship and Collecting*.¹⁸ In his review, King complimented the author's ability to explain "in some detail the way in which collecting often reflects more of the society collecting than the society lucky enough to be

¹⁶ *European Review of Native American Studies* 5 (1991).

¹⁷ Armin W. Geertz, "Native American Art and the Problem of the Other: An Introduction to the Issues," in *European Review of Native American Studies* 5 (1991), 1.

¹⁸ Jonathan King, "The Making of Native American Art (History)," in *European Review of Native American Studies* 7 (1993), 55.

the subject of such attention." Archivists should note this point: while they can lament the mistakes or attitudes of the past, they must also always be aware of the present when they make decisions about archival acquisitions.

Where does this leave an archivist when it comes to embracing or understanding a different point of view? In many ways, archivists, particularly in the non-institutional setting, are still being driven by a Jenkinsonian approach to archives, that is, meeting researchers' needs, not just to acquire, but also in determining what to select and arrange, catalogue, and copy for access purposes, rather than attempting to take a more all-embracing approach to documenting and reflecting society. In Canada, most of the researcher demands on access to the holdings of the National Archives relating to native life is now being brought to bear by native communities trying to achieve self-discovery, primarily for the purposes of asserting land claims, but also to develop a sense of self-worth, to rediscover their own past, or for such private purposes as genealogy, and personal and medical histories.

In the past two years, for example, the National Archives of Canada has participated with the Canadian Department of Indian and Northern Affairs in giving training sessions for native land claim researchers from the Assembly of First Nations. The mutual suspicion and hostility between the Assembly of First Nations' representatives and the federal government has on occasion made such sessions lively if not downright ill-tempered encounters. One of the more recently-hired art archivists working at the National Archives participated in such a session in February 1993, and bore the brunt of a series of verbal attacks because of past acquisition decisions. The incident, when it was later reviewed with archives' staff, may have been exacerbated

by the fact that a speaker from the Department of Indian Affairs had delivered a fairly provocative and paternalistic presentation just prior to those made by archives staff, and had left before anyone could respond to him. The hostility which was expressed by the Indians during this meeting may have been directed at all federal public servants, but it serves to illustrate the problems which archivists sometimes have to feel in specific instances because of the sins of their predecessors. From the National Archives' point of view, such hostility was both unfortunate and futile. Researchers and archivists can and should learn from each other. Becoming angry with an individual archivist won't change the past, or make the archival records already acquired magically more comprehensive or extensive.

At the same time, scholarly researchers are learning to return and re-examine already existing materials in various repositories to see if such archival records can be made to serve different purposes or to be useful in other contexts. For example, a research project on native American maps and mapping has recently been initiated by the department of geography at the University of Sheffield, England. It has three components: incorporating and expanding existing data sets; investigating the relationships between distance measures, directionality, spaciality, and environmental semantic categories; and finally, investigating the misunderstandings arising from the use of such maps in negotiating, implementing and contesting land treaties.¹⁹ It is increasingly important for archivists to keep track of research of this type. Often archivists are responsible for

¹⁹ *European Review of Native American Studies* 6 (1992), 65.

materials which they do not have the skills, time, energy, or knowledge to understand. Their patrons can help them do so in many cases, and, particularly in the case of both art works by natives and about natives, such help can go a long way in describing and giving access to the records in a meaningful way.

For many archivists, the question of acquiring works by native artists may not even be a concern, since acquisition mandates may derive from institutional requirements and sponsorship alone; for others, the acquisition of non-textual media may not be an issue at all; and finally, for another group, acquiring material which does not constitute a fonds will also exclude such collecting. But if an institution sees itself in a broader context of documenting the society in which it operates, or attempts, like the National Archives of Canada, to be a "total archives," the question of such acquisitions will have to be faced. It is not just a question of how broadly one's mandate, acquisition criteria, or appraisal guidelines are interpreted, it is also one of determining the institution's desire to achieve some measure of societal inclusiveness, and whether what cultural anthropologists refer to as "the Others" in Eurocentric western societies should be included.

As an archivist, as a native Algonquin, and as a human being, I feel that public institutional archives must reflect as broadly as possible the nature, fabric, and conflicts of the society from which they spring. For the National Archives of Canada, an institution whose legislative act (passed in 1987) states that "the objects and functions of the National Archives of Canada are to conserve private and public records of national significance," and whose acquisition policy (promulgated in 1988) defines "national significance" as being "those which document the Canadian

experience...record the efforts and experiences of individuals, groups, institutions corporate bodies, and other organizations, which have become nationally or internationally recognized...document the physical environment in Canada, as well as events and trends (cultural, political, economic, social, demographic, scientific, and religious) having a broad, national scope,"²⁰ the acquisition of the artist David Neel's individual prints relating to the failure of the Meech Lake constitutional accord, the events at Oka, the G'tsaan Witsoataan land claim, and even his own family, all met the criteria which had been outlined. Such acquisitions by the archives may not have been made had Neel not offered to make these prints available in the first place, which is an important point. Since the acquisition of the David Neel prints, for example, the archives has acquired the original cartoons published in various native newspapers and periodicals by the Blackfoot artist Everett Soop, and has considered, but not acquired, works by other native artists, for various reasons, the primary one usually being that they have not had the public impact or have not met the criterion of "national significance."

Mainstream archival institutions should be enhancing the scope of their collecting activities to be more inclusive and reflective of society as a whole. At the same time, individual communities and groups must also continue to be encouraged to create their own archives, in order to ensure

²⁰ 35-36 Elizabeth II, "An Act Respecting the National Archives of Canada and Records of Government of Government Institutions of Canada and to Amend other Acts in Relation Thereto," assented to 25 March 1987.

the survival of their collective memories for future generations. The Society of American Archivists' groundbreaking publication of John Fleckner's *Native American Archives: An Introduction*²¹ has no counterpart in Canada, and this is something which needs to be addressed by the Canadian archival community. That which has been done in the past is neither irrelevant or futile; rather, our past experiences in archival acquisitions, such as that of the National Archives of Canada, point out how archives must evolve to reflect the many different points of view which make up our society.

Jim Burant, an Algonquin Indian, is the Chief of Art Acquisitions and Research in the Visual and Sound Archives Division of the National Archives of Canada. This article was originally presented at the SAA Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2 September 1993.

²¹ John A. Fleckner, *Native American Archives: An Introduction* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1984).