



# The Pathfinder

The newsletter of the Midwest Institute for Native American Studies

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Month of  
*Mko Gises* –  
Month of the  
Bear Moon

## Filling in the Missing Pieces About Traditional Native Culture

By Linda Bechtle

**T**EACHERS IN ILLINOIS aren't mandated to teach about Native people, unlike some other states with large visible Indian populations. Therefore, there's no set curriculum and very few materials or textbooks available that provide teachers with enough appropriate background information. As a result, some students will come away with a hodgepodge of misinformation about traditional Native cultures in general—and little or no knowledge about their local Native history or contemporary life.

Here are some ways that parents and teachers can help their children fill in the missing pieces, and extend and enrich their classroom experience:

- **Read.** Whenever possible, choose books by Native authors! If your local or school library does not have a good selection, check out [www.oyate.org](http://www.oyate.org) for good books to order. Make sure you check out their "Books to Avoid" section, as well.
- **The Web.** There are a number of good, Native-run Websites that will provide you with a lot of accurate information and resources. Google your local tribal sites, or try [www.nativeweb.org](http://www.nativeweb.org) to get you started.
- **Powwows and Presentations.** There may not be too many wintertime powwows to attend, but there are usually programs and presentations at local museums, Indian Centers and colleges or universities to take advantage of. Wintertime is the best time for authentic Native storytelling; in Chicago, watch the Newberry Library's Website for their next event. Work with your child's teacher or school PTA to sponsor

an **American Indian cultural presenter**. Make sure their program includes time in street clothes to avoid the stereotype that all Native people wear buckskin and feathers.

- **Museums** sometime offer great exhibits of traditional culture, and some also offer educational programs and materials for teachers. Be aware that children may leave some older museum exhibits with the misunderstanding that Native cultures are things of the past, so please be prepared to discuss contemporary issues, music and art so your children know that American Indians are very much alive! When possible, visit specific Native-themed museums such as Evanston's Mitchell Museum of the American Indian, Aurora University's Schingoethe Center for Native American Cultures, or the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians in Indianapolis. ●

**I**N THIS ISSUE of the *Pathfinder*, we are happy to provide you with Part I of our look at some local museums' Native American exhibit offerings. After your visit, we'd love to hear your impression—both of your visit, and of our reviews. Please drop us a line, give us a call or send an e-mail to [linda.b@minasillinois.org](mailto:linda.b@minasillinois.org).

**It Starts Inside  
On Page 4!**

## MINAS Material Reveals "Fundamental Needs" Of Native People to Area Students

By Mark Dolnick

**A**SK MOST children to tell you about Native Americans and they'll probably tell you that they lived in tipis, rode horses, carved totem poles, wore buckskin clothing and spoke in grunts or sign language. Oh, and that they all died out.

Most parents and teachers have no clue where their children get these ideas, but casual research shows that they persist in most areas of Illinois and among different age groups.

"We're not mandated to teach about American Indians, but we know children enjoy learning about them," said one third grade teacher. "We don't have a set curriculum to use, but most teachers like to start with a broad look at all cultural areas and then get more specific. We usually study the Woodlands and Plains, but I guess the children have a pretty selective memory when asked to recall specific information."

These ideas even persist in some Montessori schools, where teachers often can spend more time

on their American Indian studies unit than most public schools. "We just don't have the background knowledge we need," lamented another teacher. "There's very few materials to use, so we generally just have to do

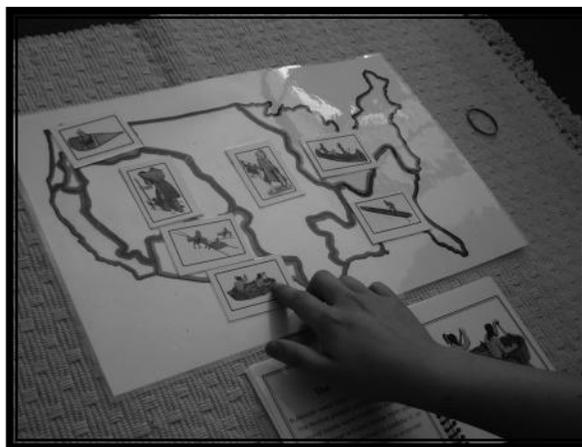
the teachers as well as the students."

While her first materials focused on the Potawatomi people who call the Chicagoland area their homeland, Bechtle quickly realized the need to devise some materials

to introduce young students to the similarities and differences of traditional Native people across America in how they met their needs. She purchased a wooden puzzle map of the Native cultural areas as of 1492 from a company called "Hello Wood" in Tennessee and went from there.

"We have Montessori materials that discuss the Fundamental Needs of People from a very Eurocentric point of view," Bechtle says, "which makes sense because Maria was Italian. But we need to approach this

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*An elementary student places cards from the "Transportation" book into their corresponding places on the Cultural Areas map.*

the best we can. And we might be unknowingly passing along some misinformation."

MINAS Executive Director Linda Bechtle understands completely where these two teachers are coming from. "That's where I started, too," she said. "I'm embarrassed to admit some of the stereotypical mistakes I made when I started out making materials. Thankfully, my Native friends didn't hold them against me," she laughs. "But I did make it a goal to make materials to educate

"We just don't have the background knowledge we need," lamented another teacher.

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Design & Layout - Mark Dolnick

## Fundamental Needs

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broad topic from an American point of view so it makes more sense to our children.”

So Bechtle crafted small books on Clothing, Foods, Transportation, Tools and Weapons, Crafts, Communication, Housing, Environment and Games. For her trial materials, she borrowed some black and white artwork from other books and painstakingly colored them, creating a set of illustrations for each book as well as much smaller cards with the same pictures. So after students read the

“House” book, they find the smaller pictures and match them to the appropriate cultural area on the map. “When they’re done, they have a map of American Indian cultural areas with all of the types of housing represented,” Bechtle explains. “Students can plainly see that not all Native people lived in tipis.”

While many of the books have one correct answer for each cultural area, there are some books that are open to interpretation. “In the “Foods” book, students

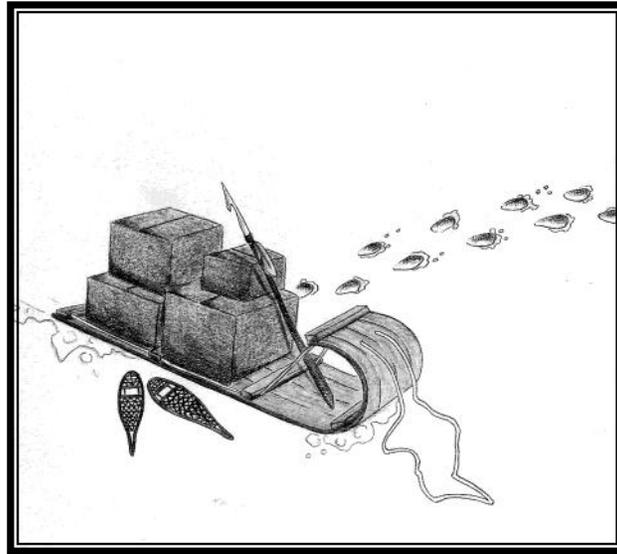
learn that many Native people made use of deer,” Bechtle explains, “So the deer card can be placed in Woodlands, Southeast, Plains, Basin, California... pretty much anywhere. Same with corn, buffalo and some other foods. But alligators are pretty specific to the Southeast.” After students read the

with a professional curriculum consultant to introduce the concepts and vocabulary at a third-grade reading level. And I can’t risk getting into any copyright trouble, so I’m working with some Native artists in Michigan to create original art.”

For her on-going project of mini-ethnographies about the Potawatomi people, Bechtle is working with renowned Potawatomi artist Candi Wesaw from Grand Rapids to create the books’ magnificent art. Now, she is tapping Candi’s talents again, along with Candi’s son, brother and nephew, for this Fundamental Needs material.

“It’s going to be another beautiful material that will provide a unique learning experience for students and teachers alike,” Bechtle said. “I can’t wait until we’ve got all the changes made and can get it into classrooms!”

Brochures listing all of MINAS’s materials soon will be sent to all Illinois Montessori elementary programs. Please contact MINAS if you’re interested in a brochure for yourself or to pass along to a teaching friend! 🌟



*Potawatomi artist Heath Wilcox drafted this toboggan picture for the “Tools” book.*

book and place their cards on the map, they check themselves on a “Control of Error” sheet and then choose two topics from each book to draw and write about.

The material has been a big hit in all of the Chicagoland Montessori classrooms that have field-tested it, but Bechtle is not quite ready to market it. “Some of the topics are pretty difficult to present in a very simple way,” she admits. “So I’m working

“...I’m working with some Native artists in Michigan to create original art.”

## A Survey of Native American Exhibits at Our Local Museums, Part I

By Linda Bechtle

### Ancient Americas

The Field Museum  
1400 South Lake Shore Drive, Chicago  
312-922-9410  
[www.fieldmuseum.org](http://www.fieldmuseum.org)

Daily 9 AM- 4 PM

See Web site for admission pricing and free day schedule

Students of early North American cultures will certainly not be disappointed with this exhibit...

**W**HO KNEW? Certainly not me,

and I'd venture to guess that perhaps 90% of the general population would have no clue, either, of the amazing cultures represented in the Field Museum's "Ancient Americas" exhibit. Developed with the help of contemporary indigenous people, this exhibit boggles the mind with the creativity and contributions of the great civilizations of the Western Hemisphere during the past 14,000+ years.

More than 2200 artifacts and replicas, precise maps, video presentations, powerful graphics and interactive displays trace the journeys of these civilizations as they develop from farming communities. The exhibits trace how powerful leadership emerged and transformed

some societies through trade, warfare, religion and stratification into far-flung empires. The "First Contacts" gallery hauntingly touches on the



*Some of the incredible designs created from thick copper and paper-thin mica by Hopewell Period artisans.*

disastrous changes brought upon these indigenous cultures by European arrival. The final gallery investigates cultural continuity and change through the contemporary Native people who honor the traditions of their ancestors.

While I had certainly been aware of the empires of the Inca, Maya and Aztec, I was shocked at my lack of edification concerning such other

major societies as the Moche and Wari of the Andes Mountains or the Olmec, Zapotec and the society of Teotihuacan in Mexico. I also learned much more about the massive system of roads that connected the Incan empire to its capital city of Cuzco, the incredible Mayan calendar, and how the Aztec incorporated the gods of conquered people into their own religious beliefs. And much, much more!

Students of early North American cultures will certainly not be disappointed with this exhibit, either. The Puebloan culture of the southwest comes alive as you walk through life-size

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## Ancient Americas

(Continued from page 4)

reproductions of early adobe houses and grind corn with a mano and metate. The extensive trade network and deep belief system of the Hopewell people of the Midwest are made clear through an amazing assortment of artifacts, including beads made from Gulf Coast shell, finely crafted blades of Montana obsidian, animal-shaped pendants made from Michigan copper, and breathtakingly thin carvings of Appalachian mica. Photos and representations of some of the many geometric and animal-shaped mounds created by the people of this time also leave you in awe of the societal organization and work ethic of the time!

And then there's the Mississippian exhibit, with its roots right here in Illinois. Did you know that our state was the home to the largest city in North America at one time? Cahokia, in what is now Collinsville, right across the river from St. Louis, was the ceremonial and commercial center of the Mississippian culture one thousand years ago. The exhibit's vast diorama

shows Cahokia's many features as determined by archaeological digs: the tall platform mounds upon which the priests and city officials lived; "Woodhenge," a circular astronomical calendar made from huge wooden posts; and Monk's Mound, an immense, four-tiered platform mound upon which the "Sun God" resided.

A wide assortment of artifacts from Cahokia and other large Mississippian cities are also on display. The shell-tempered pottery, clay and pipestone pipe bowls and statues,

chronologically, beginning with Ice Age Americans and then moving through Hunter/Gatherers, Farming Villages, Leaders, Rulers and Citizens, Empire Builders and winding up with Living Descendants. There are often three to five different cultures represented within each gallery. Because I often had difficulty determining which culture I was dealing with, I wish there would have been a particular design element, or display case color, to identify each culture within that time frame.

With the way my brain works, it would have been fine with me for each particular culture to have its own gallery.

Enter "Ancient Americas" from Stanley Field Hall; you

will egress into the Northwest Coast and Arctic People exhibit. Make sure you take the time to wander through the rest of the Native American exhibits by cultural area and don't miss the Great Lakes region! 🌟



*The exhibit features an assortment of Mississippian pottery, tools and jewelry, many from the Cahokia site in Illinois.*

finely-crafted jewelry, carved whelk shells and gorgets, and wide assortment of tools and blades attest to the craftsmanship and spirituality of the time before the culture's ultimate disruption and demise.

One caveat: read the signage carefully. The galleries are arranged

Did you know that our state was the home to the largest city in North America at one time?

## The Chicago History Museum

1601 Clark Street

Chicago, IL

312-642-4600

[www.chicagohistory.org](http://www.chicagohistory.org)

Open daily—call for times. Admission \$14 for adults with audio tours; children under 12 years free.

The area pertinent to very early Chicago contains a few memorable experiences,

**C**HICAGO certainly has a fascinating past—the great Chicago fire, the stockyards, the Columbian Exposition and World's Fair, Al Capone—the list of seminal topics could go on for a while! So I guess on the one hand I could see why curators might believe they might not have the space or artifacts to do justice to Checagou's Native history. But on the other hand, if the Chicago History Museum isn't going to tell this city's complete story, where will schoolchildren (and their parents) get it?

The Museum's second-floor gallery, "Chicago: Crossroads of America," is a multisensory extravaganza for young and old. Since the Museum was remodeled a few years ago (and the name changed from the Chicago Historical Society), their revamped exhibits in this space are both child-friendly and

adult-involving. The area pertinent to very early Chicago contains a few memorable experiences, such as an olfactory interpretation of the area's springtime stench due to the wild onion from whence the city derived its



*Replica model of the first Fort Dearborn.*

name. Model fanciers will relish a representation of the first Fort Dearborn, built in 1803 and subsequently burned, which is situated on a pedestal in front of some of the actual timbers from the rebuilt fort of 1816. There are also some silver Fur Trade items, some portraits of early settlers and Native leaders, and Mark Beaubien's fiddle from the first hotel in town. But there's very little else up here to satisfy our curiosity about area

Native people or early history. Children who come here will most certainly remember climbing about on an early El car and taking the mock controls of the Pioneer, an early steam locomotive—but not much else about earlier times.

Downstairs in the Diorama Room, Museum staff recently spent much time and effort cleaning and

renovating these famed moments of Chicago history frozen in time. To their credit, the staff also added some graphics and pictures in the alcove of the room's entranceway to provide an introduction to our early history. Here are mentions of the Miami and Potawatomi Nations, the Chicago Portage and its importance, and Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, our first non-Native settler who inhabited what was

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## Chicago History Museum

(Continued from page 6)

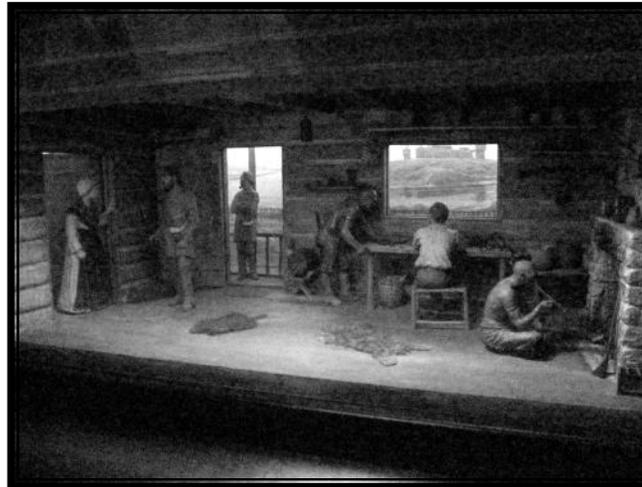
to become John Kinzie's trading post in the first diorama.

Early elementary students have a difficult time processing dates, since the concept of time is still pretty abstract. They need images and objects, something sensorial and manipulative to which to relate. Though they're still dated in comparison to other, more interactive Museum exhibits, some of these dioramas still evoke interesting responses. The Chicago fire window is one, for sure, as the children spot the victims fleeing down the streets and into the water. They also enjoy the diorama of the first Kinzie Street bridge over the Chicago River, since they get to manipulate the span (when it decides to work.)

But I find the students' reactions to the Kinzie Trading Post diorama especially interesting. By the time my students visit the Museum, they're usually in third grade and have a decent knowledge of Native people in general, and local Native people in particular. We've

done a lot of work to erase some of the stereotypes they have picked up from who-knows-where and have met some modern Native people who are friendly, personable and just like the folks next door because they *are* the folks next door.

And yet, when my students crowd about the Trading Post diorama, they revert back to the mentality that probably existed when the dioramas were first built.



*Diorama of the Kinzie Trading Post, 1808*

Looking at the Native men who are trading for goods inside the cross-sectioned cabin overlooking Fort Dearborn, the children shudder, point and whisper: "They look so scary." "Wonder if somebody's gonna get scalped?"

Obviously, I'm not down there observing reactions every day, and in the times I have been down in the Diorama room with other school groups present, most of the students barely give that

window a second glance and instead rush over to the fire. But as soon as my group verbalized their concerns or discomfort with the menace these Native people were portraying, other students rushed over to see, and added their own unknowingly racist comments.

So I have to ask: What's up with that diorama and why is it allowed to remain on display? (I'd be interested to hear what

your child has to say when s/he sees that particular window, and what comments you might hear from others.)

But I also have a question: Why is there not more appropriate information about Chicago's

Native history and continued presence in the city at the Chicago History Museum? This wonderful resource would be made so much better by telling this area's complete story, and not just from the settlers' point of view.



What's up with that diorama and why is it allowed to remain on display?

## Forest Park Public Library

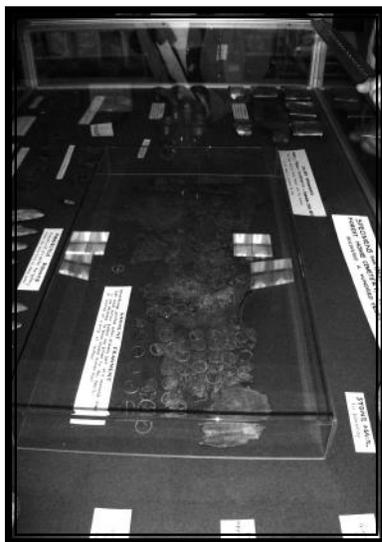
7555 Jackson Boulevard  
Forest Park, IL  
708-366-7171

## Forest Home Cemetery

863 South Des Plaines Avenue  
Forest Park, IL

...you'll discover much more than books and magazines.

**D**URING YOUR visit to the Forest Park Public Library on the corner of Jackson Boulevard and Des Plaines Avenue, you'll discover much more than books and magazines. Inside a number of display cases maintained by the Historical Society of Forest Park are some unusual items unearthed by one of the area's first non-Indian settlers that speak to the area's fascinating past.

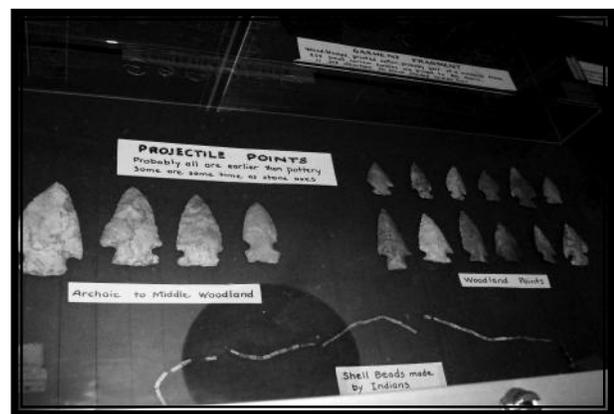


*Clothing is rarely found at sites. This woman's shirt is held together with silver brooches.*

Back in 1851, Prussian immigrant Ferdinand Haase purchased 55 acres of land divided by the Des Plaines River near what was to be known as the

town of Harlem (later renamed Forest Park). The property was previously owned by fur trader Leon Bourassa, who had purchased the land for his

Haase's sons were mining the glacial gravel to sell. Some of these mounds, dating back thousands of years to the Woodland Period when hundreds of



*The wide array of flint points on display attests to the thousands of years the Cemetery site was used by indigenous people.*

Potawatomi wife Margaret so she could stay near the village in which she had been raised while the rest of the Potawatomi were forced to move to reservation lands out west after the 1833 Treaty of Chicago.

The village people apparently took advantage of the glacial ridges that ran through the property to create burial mounds near the river. Haase excavated some of these mounds while he was tilling the soil in preparation for farming; other burials were unearthed later while

effigy and burial mounds dotted the landscape of Illinois, contained copper nuggets and artifacts of stone -- axes, celts, spearheads, arrowheads and pipes. But at least two of these mounds were built after the French fur traders came here, because found in them were small brass kettles, iron tomahawks, steel knives and silver jewelry stamped "Montreal". Some of these relics are displayed in the Forest Park Library, along with some teeth, bones and tusk of a large mastodon found on the property. 🌿

## Grand Rapids Public Museum

272 Pearl Street NW

Grand Rapids, MI

616-456-3977

[www.grmuseum.org](http://www.grmuseum.org)

Admission: adults \$8, children 3-17 \$3

**F**ROM THE TIME you first enter the circular, dramatically-lit entranceway of “Anishinabek-- The People of This Place” in this third-floor permanent exhibit at the Grand Rapids Public Museum, you know you’re in a very special place. Native representatives from the Ottawa, Potawatomi and Ojibwe (Chippewa) nations collaborated with Museum curators in the early 1990s to create a much more complete picture of the Michigan Native experience than many other traditional venues. While the exhibit is a little long in the tooth these days, it’s still well worth the trip to Grand Rapids to check it out.

History has it that the Anishinabek (literally, “the people” or simply “human beings”) have lived in Michigan for 350 years, but their own oral history places them there for more than 1000. During this

time, they developed a deep sense of their responsibility to walk in balance with the Universe and Mother Earth, as expressed in a video presentation featuring local children, adults and elders from the three nations.

The exhibit offers wonderful examples of the traditional skills developed by the people to live successfully in their wooded homelands. There are gorgeous black ash and sweetgrass baskets, items decorated with intricate porcupine

quillwork and beads (this exhibit also previously featured a mind-blowing 20’ by 5’ beaded rendition of the “Last Supper”!), and a case full of carefully crafted but utilitarian wood and stone tools and utensils.

The exhibit also offers cases of artifacts that illustrate the many material changes that occurred as a result of the fur trade, which marked the beginning of the decline of traditional crafts. There are cases that reflect the many geographic and societal changes that came with the arrival of settlers, the eventual treaties that were signed, and the formation of reservations or efforts to remove the Anishinabek to lands out West.

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...it's well worth the trip to Grand Rapids to check it out.



*A close-up view of the amazing porcupine-quillwork on the top of a birchbark basket by Ottawa/Ojibwe artist Yvonne Walker Keshick*



*Some of the magnificent birchbark and sweetgrass baskets on display*

## Grand Rapids

(Continued from page 9)

There are also poignant mementos from the Mt. Pleasant Indian Industrial School, which operated from 1893 to 1933. During this attempt to force Natives to assimilate to “the white man’s ways,” Anishinabek children were taken from their families and boarded at the school, where they learned vocational skills, Christianity and the Three R’s. Unfortunately, they were also forced to wear military uniforms, cut their hair and never speak their own language or practice their own religion. During the nine-year program that

began at kindergarten, there was no privacy and punishment was harsh. For some students, it was a chance to escape the poverty and hunger of reservation life; others remember their time there with revulsion.

Despite the government’s attempts, Michigan’s Anishinabek community has remained loyal to their warrior ethic, as shown in the case highlighting their military service. They have also remained as a strong presence in the state, as maps, flags and photos from Chippewa, Ottawa and Potawatomi reservations attest.

While this is a strong, thought-provoking exhibit full of magnificent artifacts, it was disappointing to find that many of the videos no longer played and the once-interactive computer kiosks were no longer functional. Even the wonderful video that greets visitors was marred by a misaligned projector and bad audio. Hopefully, the Museum will restore “The People of This Place” to its rightful place as a well-rounded, inspiring look at the history and culture of the proud people who still call the Great Lakes states their home. 🌟

Michigan’s Anishinabek community has remained loyal to their warrior ethic, as shown in the case highlighting their military service.

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## The Mitchell Museum of the American Indian

3001 Central Street, Evanston

847-475-1030

[www.mitchellmuseum.org](http://www.mitchellmuseum.org)

Closed Mondays

Suggested donation: \$5 adults/ \$2.50 children

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**N**ESTLED AMONG the retail stores, upper-middle class houses and three-story condos along Evanston’s Central Street is an unusual sight for a modern suburban city. Here, in the front yard of a weathered, tan brick building, a garden full of spiky milkweed, nodding Joe Pye Weed, tasseled corn and other Native plants and grasses provides a rustic welcome to the only Native-themed museum close to Chicago. It’s fitting that the Mitchell Museum of the

American Indian (MMAI) resides but a mile west of an



Stations such as this invite hands-on exploration.

historic Potawatomi village site (now the Evanston Hospital) and half a mile south of the former Ouilmette Reservation (now the Village of Wilmette).

This gem of a local resource features an extensive collection of artifacts and artwork from the collection of John and Betty Mitchell, as well as from a number of other benefactors. The first floor permanent exhibits showcase items of traditional material culture from all over

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## Mitchell Museum

(Continued from page 10)

North America. Grouped by geographical region, examples of clothing, baskets, tools, jewelry, pottery and textiles make it easy for even the youngest guest to grasp the similarities and differences among cultural groups as they move through the rooms. A well-stocked gift shop, extensive research library and variety of child-friendly interactive stations round out the nicely designed first floor space.

But it is the second floor that houses what really makes this place special. Nestled in the corner of the temporary exhibit space is the Teaching Lodge, a handmade wigwam inviting children to come explore inside. Snowshoes, a toboggan, stretched animal pelts and cattail mats leaning against a Woodland mural complete the illusion of a native encampment from long ago.

This is where MMAI Executive Director John Low chooses to invite the many schoolchildren who frequent the Museum each year on field trips. For many students (and even their adult teachers and chaperones), this is their first exposure to a real live Native American, and John intends to make a memorable first impression.

Dealing with the misconceptions and misinformation many people have about Native Americans is of prime importance to John, who is a mixed-blood Irish and Pokagon Band Potawatomi and the first Native director of MMAI. Despite his many

other management and curatorial responsibilities since taking over the reins this past spring, John's daily interactions with students keep the Museum's mission foremost in his mind.

"Some children don't believe I'm an Indian because I'm not wearing buckskin and feathers," John says. "They've even asked me, in all seriousness, where I parked my horse."

Wearing his ribbon shirt and moccasins, John's student programs incorporate traditional stories, drumming and singing and a welcoming and closing flute serenade.

While his oratory skills are well known (John's a lawyer and college professor), John expertly paces his presentations to keep his young audience engaged. After a tour of the downstairs exhibits and a craft project with Museum volunteers, the students return to their buses empowered with a unique glimpse into past and present Native culture and beliefs.

While casual visitors will not benefit from John's presentations unless they happen to arrive during a school visit, any adult or older child can help make the visit to the Learning Lodge a valuable experience for a younger one. Shared inquiry and exploration is a wonderful thing, but a

volunteer or docent is always available for questions outside your ken.

The temporary exhibits on the second floor are definitely also points of interest, often featuring newly donated private collections or showcasing contemporary Native art. One exhibit particularly fascinating to me brought together an assortment of lithics—stone tools—from a variety of local museums.

From huge grooved granite axes to tiny chipped flint bird points, the collection represented the past 12,000+ years of human habitation in this area and showed

a level of patience and craftsmanship that boggled my mind.

John and Curator of Education Penny Berlet schedule a wide variety of evening and weekend presentations to showcase artists, musicians, historians and authors. Families can also participate in Saturday craft mornings to try their hand at dreamcatchers, pottery, God's Eyes, button blankets and other interesting projects. Check the Museum's quarterly newsletter or website for the upcoming schedule, and make sure to put a visit to this special place on your list of things to do! 🍄



*A view of the Learning Lodge.*

**"Some children don't believe I'm an Indian because I'm not wearing buckskin and feathers," John says.**

## The Schingoethe Center for Native American Cultures

Dunham Hall—Aurora University  
347 South Gladstone Avenue, Aurora, IL  
630-844-5402

[www.aurora.edu/museum](http://www.aurora.edu/museum)

Closed Saturdays, Mondays and university holidays. Call for hours

...I was impressed before I even made it to the basement space where the Museum is located.

**I** DON'T USUALLY get all hot and bothered by rocks. I mean, emeralds or diamonds—that's another story. But rocks? So I was completely surprised at my reaction to the rocks (more specifically, the *lithics*) I saw at the Schingoethe Center when I visited there.

First off, I was impressed before I even made it to the basement space where the Museum is located. The whole building that is Dunham Hall is named for the couple whose collections are the basis for this place, Martha and Herbert Schingoethe. They started the Museum in 1989, and over the years the focus of their mission has changed to focus now on providing a teaching and learning service for the students and faculty of the University. The Museum still offers a number of public programs, though, and has some good hands-on experiences for the school and scout groups who visit during the year to

take advantage of their permanent and temporary exhibits.

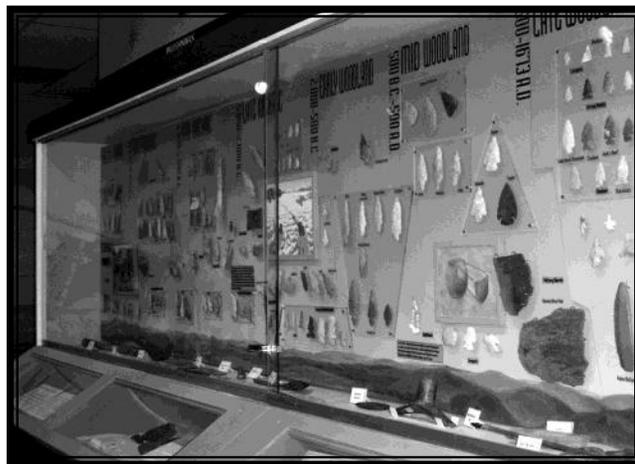
But back to those rocks. I entered, like all visitors, through the gift shop and into the main gallery and glanced with some

Mounds Museum and the Illinois State Museum downstate (see their reviews in the next *Pathfinder*). I've spent years researching early cultures to develop MINAS's "Timeline of Illinois Cultures." I've been totally entranced and awed by the "Hero, Hawk and Open Hand" exhibit when that came to the Art Institute years ago and I finally got to see the actual artifacts I had only gaped at before in books. So it wasn't like I had never seen these kinds of artifacts

before; they were pretty darn familiar, in fact.

But this time I actually felt myself going back a state of mind very much like the first time I had encountered these rocks. First of all, they were beautiful. They weren't all just mundane greys or browns—they came in a broad spectrum of colors, shapes and sizes. Some were marbled, or banded. They were attractively grouped, symmetrical and pleasing to the eye. And they were nicely lit, and well-described.

*(Continued on page 13)*



*The magical Timeline of Illinois lithics.*

interest at a display of pipes, pipe bags, bowls and peyote in a "Native American Church" exhibit. And then I turned past a Plains horse and family diorama to find the object of my attention for the next half hour. It was a large display and drawers of Illinois artifacts representing life from the last Ice Age.

Now, I've spent untold hours perusing the amazing displays of artifacts at the Dickson

## Schingoethe

(Continued from page 12)

This time I was also better able to drink in the patience and craftsmanship these rocks represented. Sure, they were tools, created for survival by hunting. Having once tried my hand at flintknapping (failing miserably and painfully), I was acutely aware of the steady hand and the whole skill set that would have been necessary to create each point. I found myself wondering how many went cracked or shattered before each one was produced. I wondered if those relatively huge Clovis-type points had ever seen the inside of a Woolly Mammoth or mastodon, or if it had just dropped out of a hunter's toolkit. Had that Archaic point been directed to its goal with the help of an atl-atl? I wondered if those Woodland points were knapped while the maker's wife and children were building some animal effigy mound. And those gorgeous Mississippian bird points—were they maybe traded within the palisaded walls of the largest city of its time, Cahokia? What did the Oneota hunter look like who used this one, and why did so many of his ancestors vanish from the archaeological record?

I wasn't just standing there agape, slack-jawed and motionless, mind you. As these thoughts tripped all over each other as they bounced around in my head, I was reverently examining the collections in the drawers under the sequenced display. How had all these points come to the Schingoethes? How many had been buried with their maker to provide good hunting in the afterlife? Had they been located in a professional dig, their coordinates carefully

Native children, with an assortment of toys, cradleboards, moccasins and poignant pieces from Indian boarding schools. The Nizhoni Room presents a large collection of Hopi katchina dolls and Southwestern jewelry. The Center also has an award-winning exhibit on the Native people of Illinois, with a realistic wigwam model (and an excellent miniature longhouse model created by a local Montessori school!) In addition to the nicely-stocked gift shop, there is a 2,000+-volume reference library available by appointment.

Throughout my visit, though, I kept mentally coming back to that lithics exhibit. Sure, I've made connections with certain exhibits, and I have my favorite artifacts among

Museums that I check in on every time I visit. But for whatever reason, I made a very personal connection to this particular collection of, well, rocks. For me, these usually inanimate objects came alive and stimulated a flurry of questions, and even some strong emotions. I hope everyone reading this has the experience of connecting with an exhibit in this way, and I hope you find that magic at the Schingoethe Center as I did. 🌟

The Center also has an award-winning exhibit on the Native people of Illinois...



*The wigwam from the Illinois exhibit.*

taken, then cleaned and identified by some archaeologist many years ago? Had they been found in a corn field and been part of a family's collection in a downstate basement? Maybe the Schingoethes found them at antique stores, as I have found some artifacts.

I finally forced myself to move on and check out some of the other very interesting exhibits. The Center has a great one on

## Recommended Websites about Chicago Area Indigenous Cultures

We're building  
our own website!  
Bookmark  
[minasillinois.org](http://minasillinois.org)  
and check often  
for new  
additions.

<a href="http://www.aic-chicago.org">www.aic-chicago.org</a>	Site of Chicago's very own American Indian center
<a href="http://www.cahokiamounds.com">www.cahokiamounds.com</a>	Interpretive materials about Illinois' major Mississippian site
<a href="http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/native_voices/native_voices.cfm">www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/native_voices/native_voices.cfm</a>	A remarkable and engaging online textbook.
<a href="http://www.cr.nps.gov/archaeology/eam/index.htm">www.cr.nps.gov/archaeology/eam/index.htm</a>	The National Park Service archaeology program tells us how and when the earliest people arrived in the Midwest
<a href="http://www.fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas/">www.fieldmuseum.org/ancientamericas/</a>	Plenty of information about Illinois' early cultures
<a href="http://www.cr.nps.gov/mwac/index.htm">www.cr.nps.gov/mwac/index.htm</a>	Learn about current research in Midwest archaeology
<a href="http://www.glitc.org/events/pow-wows/default.php">www.glitc.org/events/pow-wows/default.php</a>	Great Lakes Intertribal Council event lists
<a href="http://www.great-lakes.net/teach/history/native/native_1.html">www.great-lakes.net/teach/history/native/native_1.html</a>	Information on Native peoples of this region
<a href="http://www.indians.org/Resource/natlit/natlit.html">www.indians.org/Resource/natlit/natlit.html</a>	Literature by indigenous peoples
<a href="http://www.mitchellmuseum.org">www.mitchellmuseum.org</a>	Site of Evanston's Mitchell Museum of the American Indian
<a href="http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/nat_amer/pre/htmls/paleo.html">www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/nat_amer/pre/htmls/paleo.html</a>	Information and activities about this state's prehistoric cultures
<a href="http://www.nativeculturelinks.com/indians.html">www.nativeculturelinks.com/indians.html</a>	Home of the American Indian Library Association web page with great info on appropriate literature
<a href="http://www.nativetech.org">www.nativetech.org</a>	Ethno-technology of the Eastern Woodland peoples
<a href="http://www.nativeweb.org">www.nativeweb.org</a>	Information from and about the indigenous nations around the world
<a href="http://www.nmai.si.edu">www.nmai.si.edu</a>	A wealth of information from the National Museum of the American Indian
<a href="http://www.nmnh.si.edu/anthro/outreach/stereotyp.html">www.nmnh.si.edu/anthro/outreach/stereotyp.html</a>	Erasing Native American stereotypes
<a href="http://www.saa.org">www.saa.org</a>	Links to educational tools from the Society for American Archaeology

## Your MINAS Guide to Upcoming Area Events!

<b><u>At the Mitchell Museum</u></b>	
3001 Central Street Evanston (847)475-1030	
February 14 Saturday, 10:30a.m.-12 p.m.	Kids' Crafts Morning-God's Eyes
February 15 Sunday, 1 p.m.	Haudensaunee Culture: Candace McCreary (Seneca)
February 19 Thursday, 4-6 p.m.	Educator/Student Teachers night
February 22 Sunday, 1-4 p.m.	Black/Indian Heritage experience
March 1 Sunday, 1 p.m.	Susan Sleeper-Smith: lecture on the fur trade and book signing, <i>Indian Women and French Men</i>
March 14-15 Saturday and Sunday	Native American Marketplace
March 22 Sunday, 1 p.m.	Video and commentary on <i>Lakota</i> by Patricia Locke
March 28 Saturday, 10:30 a.m.- 12p.m.	Kids' Craft Morning-NW Coast button blankets
March 29 Sunday, 1 p.m.	Teaching Lodge—Music and storytelling with Potawatomi John Low
<b><u>At the Field Museum</u></b>	
1400 S. Lake Shore Drive (312)922-9410 Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Last admission at 4 p.m	
ONLY UNTIL APRIL 19 Open daily	The Aztec World
Permanent exhibition	The Ancient Americas
<p><b><u>For additional Chicago-area events, please consult:</u></b>            The Chicago American Indian Center at <a href="http://www.aic-chicago.org">www.aic-chicago.org</a>            Evanston's Mitchell Museum of the American Indian at <a href="http://www.mitchellmuseum.org">www.mitchellmuseum.org</a>            Aurora University's Schingoethe Center for Native American Cultures            at <a href="http://www.aurora.edu/museum">www.aurora.edu/museum</a></p>	

Yes! I'm interested in helping MINAS educate young Great Lakes students about their native cultures. My tax-deductible donation is enclosed:

\$25                       \$50                       \$100                       other \_\_\_\_\_

Please direct my donation to the Blanche Bechtle Library Fund

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Know anyone else who would be interested in receiving our newsletter? Please share their information with us:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, state, zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

*Mi gwetth!* (Thank you in Potawatomi)

We would love to hear your comments and suggestions about MINAS' efforts and this newsletter.  
So give us a call at 847.328.5968, e-mail us at [PotawProj@aol.com](mailto:PotawProj@aol.com),  
or snail-mail us at the address below.

Midwest Institute for  
Native American Studies  
942 Maple  
Evanston, IL 60202

Address Correction Requested

Here's your next issue of  
The Pathfinder

