Anthropology Begins, 1900–1935

When the Museum opened its doors to the public in 1908, anthropology had scarcely established itself as a distinct discipline; it was represented by formal departments in only a handful of American museums and universities. Thus it should come as little surprise that anthropology and archaeology played minor roles in the Colorado Museum of Natural History’s formative years. At the outset, the Museum’s greatest efforts were directed toward building geological and zoological collections and displays to attract visitors.

Although there was no anthropology or archaeology department at the Museum until 1936, objects representing past and living cultures were always within the Museum’s walls. Much of this material was housed in the Museum’s Art Gallery (Fig. 7.1), largely supported by the Museum’s first board president, art collector John F. Campion. William S. Ward, who enjoyed the unlikely title of curator of mineralogy and art, oversaw the Art Gallery until 1914. Ward had attended Princeton, fought in the U.S. Navy during the Civil War (and was taken prisoner twice), worked as a chemist, studied metallurgy at Oxford, and served as the field director of the Department of Mines and Metallurgy for the 1904 World’s Fair in Saint Louis. All of these diverse experiences led to Ward’s role as one of the founding curators at the Museum.

The Art Gallery featured an eclectic collection of artistic pieces from the United States and beyond, including traditional crafts (Japanese embroidery, Navajo blankets, and Indian baskets), and antiquities from Asia (Chinese and Japanese porcelains, lacquerware, and bronzes) and Europe (Greek sculpture, oil paintings). The exhibition included both donations and long-term loans from many of Denver’s wealthiest...
denizens. Ward’s background in materials science may help explain his affinity for Asian ceramics, bronzes, and copper antiquities. These items were displayed in cases alongside paintings in a gallery bathed in natural light that streamed in from a large skylight.

Soon after Jesse D. Figgins was named director of the Museum in 1910, he locked horns with Ward, whom he considered to be incompetent, intrinsigent, unprofessional, and lazy (Cain 2006: 109–114). Indeed, Ward had little support from the Museum board, and Figgins finally fired him in 1914. Figgins did not appoint a new curator to the Art Gallery, nor did he seem to invest many resources in this area, having much greater interest in the Museum’s scientific pursuits. In an era when museums were hard pressed to distinguish themselves from the commercial and the carnivalesque, it seems that Figgins made an effort to purge the Museum’s collections of objects he deemed nonscientific (Cain 2006: 93–95). Eventually, in 1932, the Museum’s art collection was dissolved and all of the objects were either returned to their lenders or transferred to the Denver Art Museum.

Apart from the aforementioned cultural objects treated as high art, less celebrated archaeological and ethnographic items from Native American and other world cultures were also donated to the Museum. The first donations of archaeological and ethnological material are reported in the Museum’s 1912 annual report. Highlights include an “Indian olla [jar],” “Samoa Tappa [sic] Cloth,” and the “Feet and Hands of an Egyptian Mummy.” Cultural material appears to have been accessioned into the collections of the Department of Paleontology (e.g., human remains) or into the more nondescript Miscellaneous category (e.g., Native American arrowheads, ground stone, ceramics). In these early decades, there seems to have been a consensus that cultural material belonged in the Museum, but less consensus concerning where it belonged.

**Folsom Man**

The Museum’s history of archaeological research began quite accidentally in 1924 with the discovery of a bison skeleton with artifacts at the Lone Wolf Creek Site in Texas. Over the next decade the Museum, led by Figgins, would begin to play a key role in the scientific search for the earliest humans in the Americas. During this period no trained archaeologist was on the staff of the Museum, but it did have a professional paleontologist, Harold Cook, curator of paleontology, who assisted with many of these discoveries. The Museum would also come to work closely with E. B. Renaud, a French archaeology professor and director of the Archaeological Survey at the University of Denver. The Museum did not hire its first professional archaeologists until 1934, when John Cotter was employed for summer fieldwork.

In 1924 Figgins hired H. D. Boyes, a local rancher with no professional training, to salvage some bones of a large extinct form of bison eroding from
a cut bank on Lone Wolf Creek near Colorado City, Texas. Nelson Vaughan, a local avocational archaeologist, assisted Boyes in this excavation. Three projectile points associated with the bison bones were discovered within three separate casts of bison bone removed from the cut bank; each was found when the underside of the cast was being cleaned of excess matrix before being transported to the Museum. The find was reported to Figgins who in turn asked Cook to investigate the locality in May 1925. Cook found additional late Pleistocene fauna at the locality and produced a general stratigraphic map of the discovery. Cook (1925) reported the discovery in Science, and the site was described in subsequent publications (Cook 1926, 1927a; Figgins 1927), but the discovery was not well received by the professional community because the site was not excavated by a professional researcher, the artifacts were not left in place, and the evidence was not well recorded when discovered (Holmes 1925; Meltzer 1993).

Although the Lone Wolf Creek find was not generally accepted as evidence of early humans associated with extinct fauna in North America, the Museum soon had another site to explore, near Folsom, New Mexico. The site was originally discovered in 1908 by an African-American cowboy by the name of George McJunkin who reported it to a local amateur naturalist, Carl Schwachheim. In January 1926, after McJunkin’s death, Fred Howarth (a banker and avocational archaeologist living in Raton, New Mexico) and Schwachheim visited Figgins and Cook at the Museum in Denver and told them about the site. They later sent some bison bones from the site to the Museum, and Cook identified them as a previously unknown and extinct species of bison (Meltzer 2006: 4). Cook and Figgins visited the site in March. Figgins hired Schwachheim to excavate the site and sent his son, Frank Figgins, to assist with the excavation. A broken point was found, but not in place, in July. One other point was found that summer, but again not in place. Soon another ancient site was identified in a gravel pit near Frederick, Oklahoma (Cook 1927a, 1928, 1931; Figgins 1927). Although the Museum’s scientists argued for its deep antiquity, the site was never accepted as evidence of humans associated with extinct fauna (Spier 1928a, 1928b).

The excavation near Folsom resumed in 1927, with strict orders from Figgins, based on his conversations with Aleš Hrdlička, one of the nation’s leading anthropologists and a curator at the National Museum of Natural History, to excavate more carefully and leave any artifacts in place so they could be viewed by other scientists. In late August a spear point was found in situ between the ribs of a bison. Figgins was contacted, and he invited scientists to view the find (Fig. 7.2). On September 4, 1927, Figgins arrived at the site and was joined by paleontologist Barnum Brown, of the American Museum of Natural History, and Frank H. H. Roberts, of the Smithsonian Institution. The famous archaeologist A. V. Kidder, of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, arrived on September 8. All agreed the Folsom points and the
bison were contemporaneous and that humans had hunted this extinct form of bison (Cook 1927a, 1928; Figgins 1927). This discovery revolutionized North American archaeology by pushing the known occupation of North America back by thousands of years, to the end of the last ice age, which was then believed to have ended about 10,000 years ago.

In 1928 the American Museum of Natural History joined the Museum’s excavation as a partner; Brown directed the excavation (Brown 1929). Again, spear points were found with extinct bison bones. Several scientists visited the site, among them Kirk Bryan, a geologist with Harvard and the U.S. Geological Survey who was highly regarded in the scientific community. Bryan accepted the association and interpreted the age of the site as “late Pleistocene or perhaps early Recent” (1929: 129). The opinions of Bryan and Brown solidified the support for the Folsom discovery, and thus the site became the most famous scientific discovery yet made by the Museum.

Spurred on by these discoveries, in 1929 the Museum began to offer financial and institutional support to E. B. Renaud to conduct an archaeological survey of the Cimarron River in New Mexico and Oklahoma and to
look specifically for skeletal evidence of what was now being called Folsom Man. Renaud surveyed several archaeological sites and excavated a few rock shelters (Renaud 1930). The Museum again sponsored Renaud's survey work in 1930, in eastern Colorado, and in 1932 in Colorado's North Platte River Valley (Renaud 1931, 1932). The connection between Renaud and the Museum ended by 1933, and Renaud subsequently worked on his own. Renaud's efforts identified many Paleoindian and later prehistoric sites and artifacts, but did not lead to the hoped-for discovery of Folsom Man.

**Homo novusmundus**

Perhaps encouraged by their great discovery, Figgins and Cook would eventually make even grander, though far more dubious, claims. Cook was raised on a ranch in northwest Nebraska, and in this vicinity he and W. D. Matthew, a paleontologist with the American Museum of Natural History, found what appeared to be hominid teeth in Miocene deposits along Snake Creek, Nebraska (Matthew & Cook 1909). In 1922 Cook found another tooth and sent it to H. F. Osborn, another paleontologist at the American Museum of Natural History, who published an article naming a new North American hominid species, *Hesperopithecus haroldcookii* (Osborn 1922). This was before Cook's curatorial association with the Museum, which began in 1925, but while at the Museum Cook continued to advocate for the view that very early hominids were present in North America (Cook 1927b). Unfortunately for him, in the same year his colleague W. K. Gregory (1927) demonstrated conclusively that the hominid teeth were actually from an extinct peccary, *Prosthennops* (Meltzer 2006: 28). Cook (1927b) had also published on Pliocene artifacts from the Snake Creek deposits consisting of cut, shaped, and drilled bone. They were from the same beds where *Hesperopithecus* was found. These “artifacts” are now known to be naturally broken and shaped bone fragments (Meltzer 2006: 28).

Figgins was also drawn into claims of a new human species in the New World. Figgins's last major site of importance to the study of early humans in the Americas concerns a human skeleton found by J. C. McKinley more than 13 feet deep in a cut bank of the Cimarron River eight miles east of Folsom, New Mexico; it was sent to the Museum in early 1935 (Figgins 1935a). Figgins thought this skeleton was quite old and compared the morphology of the skull with Paleolithic examples from Europe. He thus defined this specimen as a new species called *Homo novusmundus*. The publication of this new American species of *Homo* was met with derision from the physical anthropologists of the day, and for good reason: recent radiocarbon dating of the specimen places it as less than 3,000 years old. It is rumored that Figgins’s scientific blunder may have been part of the reason that he stepped down from the position of director of the Museum in 1935, although this story is unsubstantiated by documentary evidence.
Mammoths, Lindenmeier, and Projectile Points

In 1931 a mammoth was discovered near the village of Angus, Nebraska; it was excavated by A. M. Brooking of the Hastings Museum. Brooking at this time was trading fossils with the Museum in return for mounted large mammals for his institution in Nebraska. Brooking reported to Figgins that he had found a fluted point with the mammoth, and Figgins visited the site and sent a professional crew to complete the excavation, but no additional artifacts were found with the mammoth. Figgins (1931) published a short article concerning the discovery and claimed that the association between the artifact and the mammoth was authentic. However, geologists from the University of Nebraska studied the geological deposits and determined that they were mid-Pleistocene in age—far older than the known human occupation of the Americas. Steven Holen and his colleagues finally resolved the controversy when they returned to the site and dated the deposits above the mammoth by the optically stimulated luminescence method (Holen et al. 2011). The mammoth was more than 75,000 years old; the fluted artifact could not have been associated with the mammoth.

However, an authentic mammoth site was indeed soon found. In 1932 Father Conrad Bilgery of Regis College in Denver received a message from Albert Garner (often named as Frank Garner in the documentary record), a railroad section foreman for the Union Pacific Railroad, that a flood had exposed very large bones along the railroad tracks near Dent, Colorado. Bilgery and his students excavated some of the bones and identified them (Fig. 7.3) as mammoth. Associated with the bones they found a spear point.
This discovery was reported to Figgins, and in 1933 Bilgery kindly turned over the excavation to the Museum. Figgins sent a professional crew of paleontologists to excavate the site, and they found and documented another fluted spear point with the mammoth bones (Figgins 1933). This discovery is the first well-documented association of a spear point with mammoths in North America. Unfortunately, Figgins did not publish the findings in a major national journal, so this discovery was not widely recognized, and a few years later similar fluted points were found at the Blackwater Draw Site near Clovis, New Mexico. This later discovery received wide attention and publication in major journals—and so today the spear points are known as Clovis points and not Dent points.

In 1935 Figgins hired two bright young archaeologists to work for the Museum: Hannah Marie Wormington and John Cotter. Both were University of Denver graduates in anthropology, specializing in archaeology and studying under Renaud’s supervision. Cotter had recently completed his master’s degree and Wormington had completed her bachelor’s degree. Cotter, who had been temporarily employed by the Museum the previous year, was hired again for the summer of 1935 to excavate at the Lindenmeier Site north of Fort Collins, Colorado, near the Wyoming state line, alongside but separate from the Smithsonian Institution archaeological crew (Fig. 7.4) under the direction of Frank Roberts. The site’s discoverers suggested that the Denver Museum be allowed to work the site, and the Smithsonian...
agreed. Figgins had a long-standing interest in Folsom sites and was pleased for the opportunity. The Museum’s excavation focused on “Hole 13,” a major concentration of Folsom and somewhat later Paleoindian artifacts (Cotter 1978). Research on the Museum’s Lindenmeier collection continues today (LaBelle & Holen 2008; LaBelle & Newton 2010).

The 1926 discovery of fluted projectile points associated with bison at the Folsom Site and later the definition of unfluted lanceolate Yuma points by Renaud (1931, 1932) brought about a controversy concerning which point type was older. This discussion was primarily held by Renaud, who named the unfluted lanceolate type “Yuma” based on numerous specimens found by Perry and Harold Anderson in blowouts near Yuma, Colorado. Renaud thought that the Folsom point and Yuma point were technologically similar and that Folsom points were the most advanced stage of the development of the Yuma lanceolate variety. Therefore, he hypothesized that Folsom points were younger than Yuma points. Figgins (1934, 1935b) strongly disagreed and thought that Folsom and Yuma point technologies were distinct and different; he also interpreted the Folsom points to be older than the Yuma points. With the advent of radiocarbon dating in the early 1950s, nearly a decade after Figgins’s death, it became evident that the Folsom point is indeed older than the Yuma point.

Apparently there was friction between Figgins and Cook, and also between Figgins and Renaud, beginning as far back as the Folsom Site announcement. Even with their great collective work—and with their combined blunders—in the 1930s the men seemingly did not entirely coalesce as a team. Cook and Renaud each felt that they should have been the one to announce and publish the Folsom discovery instead of Figgins, who was not a formally trained scientist. These tensions seemed to grow over the years: Cook left the Museum in 1930 and Renaud’s association with the Museum apparently ended by 1933. Renaud and Figgins’s disagreement over the age of the Folsom versus the Yuma point types appears to have been the final act that caused the two men to part company. Neither Cook nor Renaud was involved in the Dent Site excavation in 1933 or the Lindenmeier Site excavation in 1935. Figgins’s own relationship with the Museum finally ended in 1935, with his departure from the position of Museum director. Although his exit meant the end of one era, it also marked the beginning of a new one.
The Wormington Years, 1935–1968

Precocious. Audacious. Gifted. Prolific. Ambitious. Connected. Cavalier. Regal. All of these adjectives might be used to describe the fiery, intelligent, generous, and opinionated archaeologist Hannah Marie Wormington (Fig. 7.5). Posthumously described as “one of the great human landmarks of Denver” by noted Colorado historian Tom Noel, Wormington was by all accounts a remarkable scholar.

A pioneering woman working in a man’s archaeological world, she carved a niche for herself on the edges, or perhaps more appropriately said, on the frontiers of southwestern archaeology, actively embracing those research areas and time periods ignored, if not shunned, by her male colleagues. Wormington essentially spent her entire career at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, where she popularized, through publication, lectures, and exhibitions, North American archaeology in general and Paleoindian archaeology in particular. She published three popular textbooks, Ancient Man in North America, Prehistoric Indians of the Southwest, and The Story of Pueblo Pottery (Wormington 1939, 1947, 1951), each of which ran through multiple editions. They became standard textbooks in both undergraduate- and graduate-level archaeology courses across North America. She did so while hiding her gendered identity, publishing only her initials, “H. M.,” rather than her full names, as so many women scholars did in the middle 20th century in order to be taken more seriously by the establishment. In spite of these challenges—and insults—she became a highly respected and sought-after consultant on thorny archaeological matters, particularly Paleoindian studies, worldwide.

Biographic and Academic Chronicle

Wormington was born in Denver, Colorado, on September 5, 1914. Her mother, Adrienne Roucolle, was a 40-year-old French national born in Toulouse in 1873. Her father, Charles Watkins Wormington (1853–1923), was a 60-year-old British national born in Worcester. The Wormington household was thus bilingual and steeped in both French and English culture, cuisine, and custom. As we shall see, the French connection in particular would help Wormington jump-start her career in 1935 (Knudson 2004).

A lifelong resident of Denver, Wormington graduated in 1931 from East High School, just across City Park from the Colorado Museum of Natural History. She attended the University of Denver, located only six miles south of the Museum, and earned her bachelor’s degree in anthropology there in 1935. Wormington gained her first exposure to archaeology during her sophomore year (1932–1933) at the University of Denver through coursework with self-trained archaeologist E. B. Renaud. Having lived in Denver since 1914, Renaud was familiar with the strengths and weaknesses
of the Colorado Museum of Natural History, which at the time did not have a department of archaeology, much less an archaeologist on staff. Given the lack of professional archaeological expertise at the Museum, it is not surprising that Museum administrators ultimately turned to a local university for help; it was Renaud who suggested that Wormington and her University of Denver classmate Betty Holmes volunteer at the Museum during the winter of 1934–1935 (Knudson 2004). Both eager young students followed his advice. Whereas Holmes’s Museum association lasted only until 1942, when she joined the war effort, Wormington’s service set in motion a productive if tumultuous relationship with the Museum spanning six decades.

Wormington began graduate studies at Radcliff College in 1937, taking a ten-month leave of absence from the Museum to do so. Despite intensive work during another extended leave through the war years, from 1942 to 1944, she did not obtain her master’s degree until 1950. She defended her dissertation, “The Archaeology of the Upper Colorado Plateau Area in the Northern Periphery of the Southwestern United States,” in 1954, becoming the second woman to receive a PhD in anthropology from Harvard University. It remains unclear why it took Wormington so long to obtain the advanced degrees. Having published her first book, Ancient Man in North America, at age 24, and her second, Prehistoric Indians of the Southwest, at 33, perhaps she did not feel the need to prove herself academically.

Wormington married petroleum geologist and fellow Denver resident George Volk in 1940. His career made it difficult for Wormington to take positions elsewhere. Married for 40 years, until Volk’s death in 1980, the couple never had children. Wormington met her own tragic end in a fire, set by a stray cigarette, in her Denver home on May 31, 1994.

A Grand Tour of Europe

In the fall of 1935, Jesse D. Figgins hired Wormington and Holmes in paid positions to continue their work cataloging the Folsom and Yuma projectile point collections (Figgins 1934; Figgins 1935b; Renaud 1932; Wormington 1948). Wormington was hired as the senior member of the team, for she was about to graduate from the University of Denver; Holmes was just entering her junior year (Fig. 7.6).

It is worthwhile to emphasize the economic and social context within which Wormington and Holmes found themselves in 1935. It was the height of the Great Depression. Unemployment had risen from 3 percent to roughly 25 percent (McElvaine 1993). Fair or not, many Americans felt that working women were taking money directly out of the hands of male breadwinners. In Figgins, Wormington and Holmes had found a useful ally, particularly when contrasted with the next Museum director, Alfred M. Bailey. It is unclear whether Wormington and Holmes faced gender discrimination
during their first years at the Museum; it is notable that Wormington never complained about discrimination, at least in any documents that can be found in the archives. Their situation may have been ameliorated because both were doing collections-based work, traditionally perceived as women’s work (see Gero 1985).8

With regard to the broader disciplinary context, American archaeology in 1935 was still dominated by men: of the 38 signatories to the original charter of the Society for American Archaeology, only four were women (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2009: 161–163). Given Wormington’s personality, productivity, and fortitude, any discrimination or comparative anonymity she might have suffered at the Museum during these early years simply was not going to hold her back.

In addition to being the first year that Wormington earned a salary at the Museum, 1935 is notable because of her grand tour of Europe, which had significant implications for both her career and the Museum. Long before graduation, Wormington and her mother, who by then had been a single parent for more than a decade, embraced the idea of conducting a grand tour in the Victorian tradition that so many American students had come to enjoy, if not expect, after graduation.9 The formal tour on which they were booked was canceled at the last minute, but the unrelenting mother-daughter team was not about to let such a minor inconvenience disrupt their plans to visit the homeland. On the contrary, the younger Wormington had already audaciously set her own plan to acquire Paleolithic artifacts for the Museum while on tour. It is here that Wormington’s unparalleled networking capabilities first become clear, for she took advantage of Renaud’s professional acquaintances and French identity, not to mention her own French fluency, to enhance her career goals while serving, if not setting, her institution’s research and exhibition agenda (Cordell 1993).10

At some point in the early or mid-1930s, European archaeologists and museums had made formal requests of the Museum for Folsom points and artifacts, or at least photographs thereof, so that they might have firsthand evidence of the Museum’s recently discovered Paleoindian materials from Folsom, New Mexico, and elsewhere. Probably in the spring of 1935, Wormington approached the Museum’s trustees with a formal and brilliant proposal: she would serve as the Museum’s agent while traveling in Europe. If empowered to act on behalf of the Museum, Wormington would negotiate trades of European Paleolithic artifacts, photographs, and line drawings for casts of Folsom and other Paleoindian artifacts from the Museum’s collections. The trustees enthusiastically approved her request, and the 20-year-old Wormington and her mother set sail for England, France, and Spain.

Not long after she returned from Europe in 1935, the Museum formally created a Department of Archaeology. Although she was not formally appointed curator until 1936, circumstantial evidence suggests
a cause-and-effect relationship between Wormington’s grand tour, the creation of the Department of Archaeology, and her establishment as curator in that department a year later.

**Research, Collections, Exhibits**

Wormington was an impressively energetic field researcher, particularly in the first several decades of her career at the Museum (Table 7.1) (Fig. 7.7). By the mid- to late 1950s, after completing her fieldwork in Alberta, Wormington became less engaged in archaeological fieldwork and more engaged in attending professional meetings, visiting excavations at internationally important sites, revising her many books, and supervising ongoing exhibitions-related work in Denver. One particularly active period in this regard was 1960–1961. In 1960 she visited Mesoamerican sites including Palenque, Uxmal, and Chichén Itzá; attended the Society for American Archaeology meetings in New Haven, Connecticut; and studied Old Copper culture collections at the Milwaukee Public Museum. In 1961 she attended the International Association of Quaternary Research meeting in Warsaw, visited Hallam Movius’s excavations at Abri Pataud and François Bordes’s excavations at Combe Grenal in southwestern France, and visited museum collections in Barcelona, Rome, Vienna, Prague, and Budapest.

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Figure 7.7. H. Marie Wormington at the Turner Site, ca. 1940.
### Table 7.1: Wormington’s Archaeological Fieldwork.
(Source: Curriculum vitae, Hannah H. Wormington and DMNS annual reports)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Site</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Paleolithic sites, France, with Henri Martin; Moore Rockshelter, near Montrose, CO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Johnson Folsom Site, La Porte, CO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Casebier and Moore Rockshelters near Montrose, CO; Folsom sites in northwest Texas; Visit to E. B. Howard’s excavation at Clovis Site, NM; Pinto Basin Site north of Fort Collins, CO (one mile from the Johnson Site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Casebier and Moore Rockshelters near Montrose, CO; Four Basketmaker sites near Grand Junction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Turner-Look Fremont Site in Grand County, UT; Stratified site along Lower Gunnison River, CO; Cave site near Gypsum, CO, recorded probable Ute petroglyphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Turner-Look Fremont Site in Grand County, UT; Huscher’s hogan sites; Stratified site near Denver; Stratified site in Tracy Canyon, La Garita, CO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Turner-Look Fremont Site in Grand County, UT; Stratified site in Tracy Canyon, La Garita, CO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Turner-Look Fremont Site in Grand County, UT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Cherry Creek Reservoir salvage archaeology, Denver, CO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Woodland double burial excavated near Cornish, CO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Taylor and Alva Rockshelters in Mesa County, CO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Taylor and Alva Rockshelters in Mesa County, CO; Consultant, Texcoco mammoth, Valley of Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Consultant, human remains near Turin, IA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Survey, Alberta, Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Survey, Alberta, Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Site near Fort Morgan, CO, by George Agogino for Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Advisory Committee, Tule Springs, NV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Advisory Committee, Onion Portage, AK; Alaska (with Jack Putnam); Surface survey of early man site near Greeley, CO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Frazier Site, Weld County, CO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Frazier Site, Weld County, CO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Jurgens Site, Weld County, CO (with Joe Ben Wheat)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1970 Consultant, Jurgens Site, Weld County, CO
1971 Consultant, Hudson-Meng Site, Chadron, NE (with Larry Agenbroad)
1972 Consultant, Hudson-Meng Site, Chadron, NE (with Larry Agenbroad)
1973 Consultant, Hudson-Meng Site, Chadron, NE (with Larry Agenbroad)
1977 Consultant, Hot Springs Mammoth Site, SD

It is clear that in these travels Wormington put a lot of time and effort into establishing and maintaining professional networks, and that she made attendance at scholarly meetings and international symposia a priority. Indeed, the opening line of Wormington’s Department of Archaeology report in 1962 begins, “The Curator’s travels began in March … ” implying that her travels were the most important events to occur in the department that year. Wormington attended scores of regional, national, and international meetings, including some of the most important archaeological meetings of the middle 20th century (e.g., the International Symposium on Early Man, held in Philadelphia in 1937, and the Lithic Technology Conference in Les Eyzies, France in 1964).

Building the Museum’s archaeology collections was of equally great importance to Wormington. Virtually all of the Museum’s annual reports from 1935 to 1968 list a handful, and sometimes more than a dozen, separate donations to the collections. Most of these are piecemeal donations of individual objects that people had inherited, collected while hiking or working the land, or purchased while traveling. Although not necessarily representative of all years and collections, the list for 1939 offers a glimpse into the kinds of material the department accepted under Wormington (Table 7.2).
Table 7.2: Donations to the Department of Archaeology in 1939. (Source: Colorado Museum of Natural History Annual Report, 1939)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact Type</th>
<th>Donor</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figurines from Mexico</td>
<td>Mrs. Almeda Boundy, Denver, CO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figurines from Mexico</td>
<td>Mrs. Gilbert Neiman, Denver, CO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone and bone artifacts from Sheep Mountain, NE</td>
<td>Jim Browne, Denver, CO; Chief Meyers, Al Moore, Matt Brennan, Charles Simmons, Scottsbluff, NE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two skeletons and grave offerings</td>
<td>Forest L. Power, Greeley, CO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Inca hafted hammers and wooden shovel from Chile</td>
<td>J. H. East Jr., Denver, CO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone axe</td>
<td>John W. Taylor, St. Joseph, MO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs of Maya petroglyphs</td>
<td>F. L. Titsworth, Denver, CO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuman point basal fragment</td>
<td>Nelson Vaughn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metate</td>
<td>P. M. Lockwood, George Ziegler, Springfield, CO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuma [point] fragment</td>
<td>Joseph Rogers, Los Animas, CO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mano and metate</td>
<td>Charles H. Martin, Denver, CO</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Indeed, exhibits were a central focus for Wormington since her first days at the Museum. In 1935, when Wormington was hired, efforts were already under way to display Lindenmeier artifacts being excavated by Cotter and others near Fort Collins. In 1936 five new cases were put on display, one containing the Folsom and Yuma artifacts on which Wormington had been working and another containing some of the European artifacts she had just acquired for the Museum. First mention of a large, synoptic archaeological exhibition was made in 1938, the outline of which called for six exhibits, one each for Folsom Man, the Basketmakers, the Pueblo Indians, Cheyennes, Utes, and Jicarilla-Apaches. The theory behind the exhibition was firmly grounded in culture history and culture evolution, such that the cases would show man’s place in nature, his evolutionary development from a creature capable of using stones casually picked up to one able to make and utilize the microscope and X-Ray tube. The Indian would be shown not just as a racial group but as an integral part of an ancient and world-wide pattern.
No further mention of a new, large archaeological exhibition would be made until 1948, although a small exhibit of Folsom materials was installed in the Fossil Hall in 1946, “adjacent to exhibits of fossil mammals which were hunted by these primitive people.”

In 1949 Wormington reported that “plans for the Hall of Man are progressing nicely.” By this time, plans were in place for displays of both Old World and New World cultures, expanding greatly on the 1938 proposal, which emphasized only the archaeology of Colorado. Arminta “Skip” Neal and Mary Chilton Gray were added to the department staff in 1950 as preparator and artist, respectively, and were expected to focus their energies on development of the new Hall of Man.

Their work was slow but steady. Gray spent 1951 conducting research to ensure the accuracy of her murals; Neal completed the Neanderthal miniature diorama, the first of 18 planned exhibits (Fig. 7.9). Wormington’s description of the diorama demonstrates the resonating power of the 1950s’ *Ozzie and Harriet*, Cold War–era domestic American trope: man the protector:

It shows a Neanderthal family of the Old Stone Age defending its cave home against a cave bear. A man with upraised spear stands silhouetted against the cave entrance; to the left a woman and children are frantically assembling torches at a fire. An adolescent boy, carrying
a flaming torch, runs toward a man who has just sprung up from a corner of the cave where he has been at work chipping stone tools, and a young child, unaware of the danger, moves toward the bear.20

Such a scene shows a presumed nuclear family, the woman attending the children, the man responsible for defense. The presentation of such a family organization for Neanderthals reflects as much about American cultural norms of family as it does any kind of scientific understanding of how Neanderthals organized themselves or lived.

In 1952 Wormington lamented the “smallness of our collections,” which made “acquisition of specimens suitable for display an urgent matter.”21 Given the lack of tradable collections at the Museum, Wormington enlisted Neal to prepare casts of the early projectile points in the collections, which were in great demand and remain so, if to a lesser degree, even today. Wormington’s efforts to secure exhibition-quality material enjoyed a boost in 1953. In addition to the acquisition of the Arizona State Museum material mentioned above, the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology sold the Museum five casts of Maya stelae from their collections, a loan of three more with the future possibility of passing of title, and an original fragment of Stela 3 from Caracol, all for a total of $1,500 ($12,100 in 2010 dollars). Even better, on April 20, 1953, while conducting excavations, the University of Pennsylvania Museum staff discovered the other half of Stela 3 and then brokered it as a gift to the Museum from the government of British Honduras (now Belize). Stela 3 is still in the collections.

Wormington also successfully brokered an exchange of Museum objects with the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge, in England. Unfortunately, she did not keep good records of what she traded, but in all likelihood Folsom and Yuma artifacts, or at best casts thereof, were involved.22

The annual reports for 1954 and 1955 mention Wormington’s ongoing efforts to secure exhibition-quality material for the Museum. In 1956 Wormington was finally able to celebrate the opening of the section of the Hall of Man devoted to the prehistoric peoples of the Americas, which included the display of “Theodora,” the mummy of a Pueblo woman, which
apparently attracted particular, if macabre, attention. Over the next three years, new murals were added to the exhibition as Gray finished them (Fig. 7.10). Small temporary exhibits were added periodically, but no substantive revisions or changes were made. The Hall of Man remained a part of the Museum for 44 years.

**Administration and Service**

In 1936 Wormington was named curator of archaeology and Holmes was named associate in archaeology. Although Wormington began graduate studies at Radcliffe College in the fall of 1937, she maintained her full standing as curator of archaeology until 1940, shifting to honorary curator from 1940 to 1945. In 1945 she again became curator of archaeology and held that title until she was dismissed from the Museum in 1968. Betty Holmes was hired as associate in archaeology in 1936 and was promoted to associate curator in 1939, a position she held until she joined the war effort in 1942. In 1938 Charles A. Mantz was added as curator of Asiatic anthropology, and he immediately spent six months excavating five sites in Japan. As a result of that effort, he returned significant collections to Denver, some of which went on display in 1939, and completed at least four publications. Thereafter, Mantz’s trail goes cold in the annual reports, although he remains listed as curator of Asiatic anthropology through 1943. In the ensuing three decades, only two other people joined the department’s roster (at least as

![Figure 7.10. A Mary Chilton Gray mural from the Ancient Peoples Hall.](image-url)
they are recorded in the annual reports): Arminta “Skip” Neal and Mary Chilton Gray. Both maintained long relationships with the Museum after transferring out of the Department of Archaeology and into the new Department of Exhibitions in 1956.

It is indeed curious that despite the stability inherent in having a single individual in charge of the department from 1935 to 1968, only five other Department of Archaeology employees were deemed worthy of inclusion in the administrative lists published in the annual reports during that period. The archives are unclear about the reasons for this situation, and it may simply be that Wormington was not an empire builder. That said, she supported, and indeed mentored, dozens of individuals who are not listed in the annual reports. Despite this, the Department of Archaeology remained relatively small for decades.

The Department of Archaeology was thus effectively synonymous with Wormington for 33 years. Aside from Mantz’s brief tenure from 1938 to 1943, during much of which he was away, and the Holmes years from 1936 to 1942 and the Neal/Gray years from 1950 to 1955, Wormington was the lone employee in the department. As such, a great deal of internal service activity fell to her but is not recorded in the annual reports (Fig. 7.11). Wormington served as editor of the museum section of *American Anthropologist* and also regularly reviewed grant proposals for the National Science Foundation and National Geographic Society, but perhaps her most noteworthy service work was through the Society for American Archaeology, the preeminent organization for professional archaeologists. Wormington was the first female vice president of the SAA, from 1950 to 1951, and again from 1955 to 1956. Then she was elected president and served from 1968 to 1969, the first female archaeologist to hold this esteemed post.

“She Talked Herself Out of a Job”

In the summer of 1968, Wormington was on a leave of absence from the Museum and conducting fieldwork with Joe Ben Wheat of the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History at the Jurgens Site, a stone’s throw away from the Frazier Site, which she had recently finished digging. During the
academic year of 1968–1969, her plan was to be a visiting professor in the Department of Anthropology at Arizona State University as a change from the Museum. On July 22, 1968, however, Bailey wrote to Wormington informing her that he had eliminated the Department of Archaeology and that there would be no job for her at the Museum when she returned from leave.

The full story behind Wormington’s 1968 departure from the Museum may never be known. Theories abound. In one account, Bailey dismissed Wormington because the Museum’s trustees recognized a discernible conflict of interest in her serving as a consultant to Wheat’s excavations. By another, the lack of attention Wormington gave to curatorial matters, particularly late in her career, finally caught up to her and the administration demanded accountability. In another, Wormington was developing her own plan to leave the Museum. As she wrote to Wheat, “I am going to get out of here”; it remains unclear, however, whether she was referring to her pending leave of absence or a full-fledged departure from the Museum. It might be noted, too, that the Museum had acquired the Crane Collection and had plans to exhibit it, but since Wormington was not an ethnologist, the collection would require additional resources. Wormington’s own account documents that she was caught working behind-the-scenes with the Cranes on the Museum’s attempts to acquire their collection from their Museum of the American Indian in Marathon, Florida. In so doing, she clearly undermined Bailey’s authority as Museum director and gave him the justification needed to end a long and tumultuous relationship. As she wrote the Cranes:

> When I last wrote to you, I was still following the advice of [Museum Assistant Director] Roy Coy, and not telling you that I had been dismissed from the Denver Museum of Natural History. This was undoubtedly a great mistake, for the cause of the dismissal was a copy of a letter I had written [on April 21] to Doug Byers [of the Peabody Museum], suggesting that he warn you about possible dangers to your collection [if it came to the Denver Museum]. Whether it was Coy or [Museum trustee] Richard Davis who gave a copy of the letter to Bailey, I do not know. Certainly, Doug did not, and neither did [Museum trustee] Ned Grant, who died two weeks before I was dismissed.

As Wormington’s long-term volunteer Robert Akerley stated, “She talked herself out of a job.”

An anonymous source who wrote one of the most detailed reactions to Wormington’s dismissal pulled no punches in so doing. The passage merits quoting at length, as it communicates, rightly or wrongly, the political and emotional damage done:
A Catastrophe: Dr. H.M. Wormington is no longer connected with the Denver Museum of Natural History which, actually, was only of importance because of her contributions to it. Dr. Wormington took a year's leave of absence June 1 after 33 years with the Museum. On July 22, Alfred Bailey, director of the museum, decided to eliminate the Department of Anthropology [sic — Archaeology] of which Dr. Wormington was head. She is currently teaching at the University of Arizona [sic — Arizona State University] at Tempe. Of course, this fiasco will immediately lead to the discredit of Bailey (and what has he done for Anthropology?), Dr. Wormington is in a bad situation. Naturally, she is in demand as a professor all over the world. We have several spots for employment ourselves. The difficulty, which many happily married couples have, is that each partner has a profession and usually they cannot find employment in the same place at the same time. Dr. Wormington is also Mrs. George (Pete) Volk and her husband is a petroleum engineer based in Denver. We do not need to tell any of our readers about Dr. Marie's distinguished career but maybe you did not know that the royalties from her books went to the Museum and not to her. This seems to us to be a disgraceful situation from which only Dr. Marie can emerge with honor. As all who know them will attest, the Volks are warm, outgoing and extremely intelligent people. We predict a considerable hassle over this situation. Dr. Wormington will soon have a new book on the market and this time she will get the royalties and not Bailey and his devalued Museum. With stuff like this going on, no wonder the students want to wreck Academia. Students are not readily self-seeking; they are idealistic.31

George Agogino, an archaeologist at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales and one of Wormington’s many protégés, was direct in his scorn for Bailey. He also expressed his concern for the future of the archaeological collections at the Museum and demonstrated his sensitivity to Wormington’s long-term situation at the Museum and for her future as a scholar. As such his comments are also worth quoting in detail:

Suffice to say, the actions of Bailey show his typical ingratitude, biased, and thoroughly irresponsible actions. How could he possibly have had the nerve, the gall, and the ability to send you a letter such as he did, after it was
clearly understood that you were on sabbatical [Note: This term had no formal meaning at the Museum], is beyond me. I really fear for the vast archaeology collections now in the museum. A man with that type of irresponsible mind,—those collections are probably in danger. He might actually trade them for a fish head or a rare bird or something. Here is the Denver Museum of Natural History, which has a historic role in the development of Early Man [studies] suddenly divorcing itself from the archaeological picture entirely because of the diabolical actions of a man of monstrous intrigue and apparently little understanding of the role of that the Denver Museum has done in the formation of Early Man. I am just sick.

Marie, if there is anything at all which I can do, please let me know. Certainly, with your position and background and knowledge, there is no question you will be able to re-locate at a larger sum of money and under certainly better working conditions. I could not even imagine worse, but I’m sure that you do not want to permanently leave the Denver area where Pete has his own established relationship with the oil companies, and this may force trying and difficult decisions in the future for both you and Pete. I just cannot conceive, however, after all you’ve done for the Museum that they could treat you as they have. Rest assured that you have all our sympathies here, our understanding, certainly, over the years, my gratitude for the many things you’ve done for me to aid me in my anthropological career. About the only thing that Bailey could do now to add insult to injury would be to appoint Wheeler as your eventual successor.32

In the aforementioned letter to the Cranes, Wormington noted that if she were to live to see her 65th birthday, 11 years hence, she would garner a pension from the City of Denver of $81 per month. Adjusted for inflation to 2010 dollars, that is equivalent to $6,023 per annum, an amazingly small sum of money for such a long career at a single institution. As she wrote, “It’s a shabby return for some thirty years of work, and it would have been possible to fight it; but there is much to be said for escaping from an administrative pattern of nepotism, favoritism, and opportunism that is in the tradition of the Borgias,” the latter in reference to rule by the corrupt Spanish family of 15th and 16th century Europe.33 In a posting to Teocentli, the semiformal biennial archaeological newsletter, she offered detail but was
circumspect about causes: “[My] leave began June 1, and on July 22 I got a letter from the Director stating that the Department of Archaeology had been closed and that there would be no job for me when I returned at the end of the academic year. So ends a saga that has gone on like Beowulf.” She went on, and in so doing alluded to the working preferences of many scholars while forlornly hinting that she finally recognized the tremendous academic, working, and logistical freedom she enjoyed while at the Museum as well as the challenges she now faced:

The job at Tempe is going well—very pleasant and able people in the Department and good students. Nevertheless, I’d rather write than teach, and [husband] Pete [Volk]’s commuting to Arizona and mine to Denver is rather strenuous. I’m going to try to find a way to spend the next year doing an up-to-date summary of what has happened since 1957, and is happening, in the Early Man field in the Americas, South as well as North.34

Whatever the proximal and distal causes may have been, Bailey’s elimination of the Department of Archaeology and summary dismissal of Wormington left bad feelings all around. Given that Wormington lived the remaining 26 years of her life in her home less than a mile from the Museum, these bad feelings persisted for a very long time, and the repercussions are still notable today, particularly in fundraising efforts. Wormington admitted that she was not “psychologically able” to reenter the Museum building for a full 12 years, until 1980, when a lecture by Mary Leakey, as well as kindness extended by then curator of anthropology Joyce Herold, induced her to return.35 She never again enjoyed employment stability, serving only in temporary positions as research associate or adjunct faculty at various colleges and universities around the American West.

In 1988 the Museum belatedly granted Wormington emeritus status and created a lecture series in her name that continues to this day (Fig. 7.12). She died of smoke inhalation in a fire in her home on the early morning of May 31, 1994, apparently after having left a lit cigarette smoldering overnight in the cushions of her living room couch.36


In 1968 four semi-tractor trailers arrived at the Museum’s loading dock. The trucks were stuffed with nearly 12,000 Native American artifacts from the singular Crane Collection. These objects, ranging from Hopi ceramics to Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) wampum, were a gift to the Denver Museum. Their arrival marked the dawn of a new era for anthropology at the Museum.
Mary Winslow Allen and Francis Valentine Crane (Fig. 7.13) were each born and raised in Massachusetts. Both came from wealthy, prominent families. They married in 1927, and Francis became a manager at the Allen family leather-production company and also served on bank boards. In the absence of children, they occupied themselves with myriad pursuits, including bird-watching, farming, and stamp collecting. They turned to dog breeding, becoming famous for introducing Great Pyrenees to America (Jones 1934). Following World War II, Francis suffered heart problems, and so they began an early retirement, summering in New England and wintering in Florida.

Although Mary and Francis had each inherited substantial natural history collections that belonged to their respective families, 24 years into their marriage, in 1951, the couple took a road trip to New Mexico, Arizona, and California that would permanently hook them on collecting. They returned home with 2,864 Native American objects. The couple had found, in some measure, their lives’ true calling.

Over the next 17 years, the Cranes amassed thousands of Native American objects. What motivated them cannot be reduced to one answer, but as Joyce Herold (1999: 265–270) has suggested, their collecting fever was born largely from a desire to make a contribution to educational pursuits, a deep appreciation for Native American objects, a zeal for negotiation and deal-making, and a class outlook that demanded that their money be used to better themselves and benefit society. They initially collected locally, mainly Seminole Indian objects in Florida. But they traveled frequently, making time to pick through the storerooms at the Grand Canyon’s Hopi House souvenir shop and buying directly from Native families and artists. Soon the Cranes had a vast network of eager antiquity dealers providing them fine pieces from cultures throughout the Americas. With time, the pair became parsimonious and savvy collectors.

In 1958 the Cranes opened the Southeast Museum of the North American Indian in Marathon, Florida, to share their growing collection. However, the museum never attracted many visitors because, as Mary later recalled, people went to the Florida Keys for fun and fishing, not to learn about American Indian culture. After nearly a decade of running the
museum, the Cranes sought out a new home for their treasured collection. By chance, they met a curator named Roy E. Coy, who then worked at the Saint Joseph Municipal Museum in Missouri and took an interest in adopting the collection. Soon thereafter, Coy became the assistant director at the Denver Museum of Natural History. Alfred M. Bailey showed an immediate interest because the Museum had just built a new wing that stood empty and because although Denver is situated in “Plains country,” as he called it, the Museum did not have an exhibit of historic Indians.38

Coy, Robert Akerley (chief preparator in the Graphic Design Department), and Arminta “Skip” Neal (then the Museum’s curator of graphic design) went to Florida and packed the collection into more than 500 shipping crates. Once safely in Denver, a small, temporary exhibit was put on display, which included Northwest Coast potlatch materials, Hopi tihu (kachina doll carvings), clothing, religious items, and two scalps, “one of which was taken from an Indian by a white man” (Marsh 1969).

The Crane American Indian Hall

This new collection launched the Museum into a frenetic decade of nearly nonstop work. First, in 1968, after Wormington’s dismissal and the elimination of the Department of Archaeology, a new department, the Department of American Ethnology, was organized, with Francis and Mary Crane as honorary curators and Christine A. Bonney as assistant (Fig. 7.14). The next year the name was changed again to the Department of Anthropology,39 and the department took more definite shape with five staff members: Susan Grant Raymond (curator), Mary Crane (honorary curator; Frances died in 1968), University of Denver professor Kate Peck Kent (honorary research associate), Joyce Herold (honorary research associate), and Bonney (assistant).40 The new department dedicated itself to exhibits, collections growth and care, research, public outreach, and building a positive relationship with Denver’s Native American community.

The department’s central activity was planning for the Museum’s new permanent exhibition in the Crane American Indian Hall (Fig. 7.15). For the next several years, the goal of erecting the exhibition became so entwined with the department’s purpose that between 1971 and 1974 Museum administrators fused the Department of Anthropology with the Graphic Design Department, which was headed by Neal, an exhibit designer who obtained a master’s degree in anthropology after she became responsible for the exhibition of the Crane

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Figure 7.14. Christine Bonney helping with Crane Hall construction, 1968.
material, rather than a curatorial-level anthropologist with a PhD. The central idea behind *North American Indian Cultures* was to emphasize the relationship between culture and environment. The exhibition was designed so that the visitor would tour the cultures of North America, visiting different geographic areas and learning about how Native Americans had adapted to different ecosystems. For example, the Northwest Coast section, presenting tribes stretching along the coast of Washington State up through southern Alaska, would spotlight both a cedar plank house and a large canoe to emphasize the cultural adaptations to both land and sea (Fig. 7.16). The exhibition designers were so focused on creating authentic environments that they even worried about having authentic rocks in the Arctic exhibit’s foreground. They went so far as asking the U.S. Navy and Air Force to transport real stones from Alaska to Denver!
In 1974 the first phase of Crane Hall opened, featuring the Eskimos (as they were called then), Northwest Coast nations, and Seminoles. Neal was credited with designing the hall, but eight others were recognized for their contributions: Robert Akerley (assistant curator), David Hartman (preparator), Christine Bonney (registrar), Joyce Herold (assistant curator), Leonard McCann (assistant curator), Norma Castro (hairdresser), Katherine Dines (student assistant), and Patty Harjo (conservator and liaison to the Museum’s Native American Advisory Council) (Fig. 7.17). In phases over the next few years, subsequent sections were opened including the Plains, California and Great Basin, and Southwest culture areas. In 1978, to great fanfare, Crane Hall was completed when the final sections opened: Cheyenne and Ute, and tribes from Prairie, Woodlands, Southeast, and Northeast.
A highlight of this final opening was the Cheyenne camp diorama, which was set in the early 1860s along Sand Creek, 20 miles east of Denver.\textsuperscript{45} The photo-realistic background was painted by John Boone and Carlotta Espinoza over the course of two years. The foreground featured an extended family, represented by mannequins and using authentic objects of the period; the mannequins were sculpted by Susan Raymond, who modeled them on Cheyenne living in the Denver area. Ethnographic details were supplied by local Cheyenne leader Richard Tall Bull (Fig. 7.18), who also posed as the grandfather in the scene, and other tribal members (Fig. 7.19).

**Moccasins on Pavement**

Impressively, during this hyperactive period the Department of Anthropology team also regularly turned out temporary exhibits, averaging more than three temporary exhibits a year between 1968 and 1981. These exhibits ranged from single archaeology cases, such as one featuring Mesa Verde, put on display in 1976, to substantial exhibits celebrating contemporary Native peoples, such as an exhibit on Denver-area Native artists presented in 1979.\textsuperscript{46}

Although the Crane Collection gave the Museum a clear mandate to focus on the Americas, the Museum still strengthened its focus on other parts of the world, including Africa, Europe, and Asia.\textsuperscript{47} In 1976 the first phase of the Helen K. and Arthur E. Johnson Botswana Africa Hall was opened. The exhibition in this space has a strong anthropology component (Fig. 7.20), which was a result of Neal’s influence. As the Museum’s Africa Hall project manager, Kent Ullberg, explained, using racial and gendered language suited to an earlier generation, “In addition to its three Negroid pastoral tribes,
Botswana contains some of the almost extinct Bushmen hunter-gatherers. They’re among the last vestiges of a completely different race, probably Africa’s oldest, that once roamed all over that continent.”

The exhibition used ethnographic objects to help demonstrate “man as an integral part of his environment … Here for the first time we fuse the two, an approach particularly appropriate for such a primitive country where man lives with and utilizes nature directly.”

In addition to contributing to the Africa Hall, another permanent exhibition space, the Ancient Cultures of the Old World Hall, was completed in 1971. Later, in spite of her duties organizing the Crane Collection, Joyce Herold, by then curator of anthropology, was sent to the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe in 1976 and China in 1979. When the Hmong refugee community emigrated from Southeast Asia to Denver in the late 1970s, Herold was among the first to collect cultural objects from them. In 1981 Herold also spent six weeks in Zimbabwe as part of an international museum exchange program. Every year, the annual reports demonstrate that the Museum was accepting scores of new collections, many from areas outside the Americas.

Throughout the 1970s, upwards of 50 volunteers were working for the Department of Anthropology at any given time. They worked on processing the collections and putting up the exhibits. When the first phase of Crane Hall opened, Neal explained, likely devoid of exaggeration, “Without the
The Department of Anthropology staff also regularly led tours to cultural sites (mainly in the American Southwest) and hosted internationally celebrated speakers such as Donald C. Johanson and Richard Leaky. Scholarly publications and service were undertaken, mainly by Herold, with a series of articles in *American Indian Art Magazine* and her coauthored book *Havasupai Baskets and Their Makers: 1930–1940* (Herold 1977, 1978, 1979; McKee et al. 1975). In 1979 Herold was elected director of the Council for Museum Anthropology.51

Although visitor surveys suggest that by the exhibit’s 30th anniversary most guests thought that Crane Hall presented Native American cultures as stuck in the past, when the exhibition first opened, it clearly functioned as a vehicle to acknowledge and celebrate present-day living tribal communities.52 This perspective was important because of Denver’s increasingly prominent place for Native peoples across the American West. In 1950 only 280 Native Americans lived in Denver, but a flood of Native Americans started to arrive in the coming decades, and by 2000 more than 23,000 Native Americans called the Mile High City home (Ono 2008: 233).

The Museum was a pioneer in establishing a formal panel of community advisors, called the Native American Advisory Council (and later the Native American Resource Group), which convened for the first time in 1973 and was made up of local Native American elders, leaders, and assistance of the volunteers it would not have been possible to open any portion of the exhibit on time.”50

Figure 7.20. A Bushman home, documented during the Museum’s Botswana expedition in 1974.
representatives. The council was started by Neal, with support from Museum trustee Allan R. Phipps and the Museum’s board, to advise on the care of collections and the design of exhibits. Building on the Museum’s long tradition of collaborating with indigenous peoples, the council was then a unique approach, as it formalized as partners the urban Denver Indian community, “who wanted the exhibits to display the continuity between their ancestors and themselves with dignity and respect” (Archambault 2011: 18).

The council directly participated in the creation of Crane Hall and other exhibits and outreach activities. The council was coordinated by Patty Harjo (Seneca-Seminole), who worked as a conservator and was a key resource in the exhibit designs. Between 1978 and 1983, the Kachina Shop—a store in the Museum specializing in Indian arts—held an annual fair called Indian Images, a tribute to living Native artists, which typically involved craft demonstrations in Crane Hall, tipi raisings, classes, puppet shows, discussions on Indian lore, slide shows, movies, and a crafts sale. Native peoples from across the country came to Denver to participate.

Many of the temporary exhibitions in this period emphasized the concept that Native Americans were not gone and dead, but alive and thriving. In 1974 the Museum presented *Colorado Indians—Then and Now.* Four years later, *Moccasins on Pavement* opened, addressing the urban Indian experience by featuring the work of Ernie Ricehill, an American Indian photographer, and the voices of Denver’s Indian community (Ryan 1978; Taylor 1978). This innovative collaborative exhibition started in Denver and then toured Colorado for six months; it also included a forum series featuring important Indian leaders from the National Congress of American Indians, Native American Rights Fund, and other organizations addressing serious “legal, political, social, economic, religious, artistic, and humanistic affairs.” The exhibition was only a modest success in terms of popular attention, however. This is likely because “the exhibition did not abide by the then popular assumptions about the nature of Indian people” because it “portrayed [Indians] as modern citizens, not romantic, heroic figures but clerks, secretaries, teachers, the same as a next door neighbor” (Archambault 2011: 18, 19). As Crane Hall aged and such activities ended, the hall became increasingly staid. But when it was completed in 1978, Crane Hall was an epicenter of public dialogue about Indians past, present, and future.

The successes of this period across all areas—exhibits, collections, scholarship, outreach—made this heady time a true florescence of anthropology at the Museum. Still, there were some trade-offs and hidden problems. Although the Museum suddenly had a large staff focused on ethnography, with Wormington’s departure no one was there to carry on the Museum’s long tradition of Paleoindian research and archaeological study. Whereas other major natural history museums at this time had
flourishing anthropology departments that worked across ethnography and archaeology, throughout the 1970s and early 1980s there was no strong curatorial-driven archaeology program at the Denver Museum. On top of it all, filling the colossal shoes of Wormington—an internationally renowned scholar—would be difficult for any successor.

Also, despite the Museum’s genuine public engagements with the Native community, in the private spaces of offices and labs staff did not adequately grapple with some key Native concerns. Most notably, the Museum actively worked against Native unease about human remains and sacred objects (Cooper 2008; Fine-Dare 2002). For example, although the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) had publicly asked for the return of wampum belts and false face masks since the late 1960s, these items were proudly displayed when the Woodlands section opened in Crane Hall in 1978.56 The War Gods, made by the Zuni of New Mexico, are another example. In 1978 Zuni religious leaders asked for the return of these sacred items from museums and institutions across the country.57 In 1980 the Museum’s sister institution, the Denver Art Museum, returned three War Gods to the tribe (Merrill et al. 1993: 527). Even with this knowledge and the Museum’s putative commitment to Native concerns, in 1983 the Museum still accepted three stolen War Gods and prayer sticks into its collections and did not notify the Pueblo of Zuni.58 These contradictions foreshadowed the dramatic changes that would eventually come to the Museum’s Department of Anthropology in the waning days of the 20th century.

Birth of the Blockbuster, 1982–1994

The 1980s signaled an important shift for the Anthropology Department at the Museum. After the completion of Crane Hall, the department struggled somewhat to find its footing within the institution. In 1981 the Old World exhibition was permanently deinstalled in order to make room for the Museum’s new admission fee kiosk. In 1982 Mary Crane, the department’s primary patron and promoter, passed away. After 1983 the Kachina Shop no longer held its annual Indian arts show, and then the store was incorporated into the main shop.

Having proven herself with the successes of Crane Hall, Herold was promoted to chief curator in 1983, a position she herself proposed, to oversee a new Museum branch she titled the Collections and Research Division, a part of a larger Museum-wide reorganization that year.59 Herold’s duties as chief curator, while in some measure positioning her to advocate for the department, also required her to focus more on pan-division concerns and issues. Throughout the 1980s the department’s academic publications dropped precipitously, and academic contributions focused mainly on presenting papers at conferences. For example, in the 1989 Museum annual
report’s publications and presentations section, only one anthropology curator (Jane Day) is noted, with two conference papers listed.60

In a way, Crane Hall was the result of a singular mix of history and personalities. Compared to later permanent exhibitions such as Prehistoric Journey, Space Odyssey, and Exhibition Health, Crane Hall can be seen as a unique product of an inherited collection, with strong donor participation and exhibit designers taking on a curatorial role and authority. Hence, after Crane Hall was completed, the department found itself without PhD curators and without an institutional structure to smoothly and quickly transition from a focus on exhibits to a focus on science-based research and curation.

Ramses, Nomads, and Aztecs

Less attention was given to temporary exhibits as the Museum shifted toward hosting major traveling exhibitions. Temporary anthropology exhibits gradually decreased throughout the 1980s from five to six a year in the first part of the decade to several a year by the decade’s close. Crane Hall did not remain entirely stagnant through this period, but the adjustments were minor: another mannequin was added to the Cheyenne diorama and the Navajo section was renovated in 1989 to include the innovative use of audio devices.61

The smash blockbuster hits of the late 1980s, Ramses and Nomads, completely transformed the Museum, drawing more internal resources and attention to support this new revenue stream. Most of these new traveling exhibitions were now anthropology-based. Although these exhibitions were grounded in anthropological study, they were produced by outside organizations with little internal input from the Department of Anthropology. Thus, even as these exhibitions highlighted anthropology as a core focus of the Museum, at the same time they failed to enhance the institutional capacity or prestige of the Department of Anthropology. Paradoxically, these traveling exhibitions both enhanced and diminished anthropology at the Museum.

The one exception during this period was the blockbuster exhibition Aztec: The World of Moctezuma, which opened in 1992. Organized by Jane Day, a curator of Mesoamerican archaeology who had also become the Museum’s chief curator in 1988 (Fig. 7.21), this was among the most comprehensive exhibitions on the Aztecs ever presented outside of Mexico (Day 1994). Assembled in partnership with the Templo Mayor Museum and the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City, Aztec told the story of this civilization through artifacts, murals, and dioramas showcased in 40,000 square feet of exhibit space. More than 721,000 visitors passed through the exhibition, establishing Day’s lasting reputation in the Museum and the larger Denver community.62 Only in 2014, with Maya, Hidden Worlds Revealed, did a Museum anthropology curator develop a major traveling exhibition again.
Notably, a larger trend throughout the entire Museum during this period was a subtle de-emphasis on original research and collecting as central institutional values. From the Museum’s founding, collections and research had always constituted a major portion of the Museum’s annual reports. However, in the 1986 annual report research and collections were reduced to a single paragraph, and by the next year the annual report began to no longer include individual statements from the research and collections departments. By 1991, for the first year in the Museum’s history, the annual report did not include a list of new acquisitions; however, the annual report did continue to list scientific publications by Museum staff, indicating a subtle though important shift in the Museum’s values: away from acquiring things and toward interpreting those things through scholarly analysis. The Department of Anthropology nevertheless seemingly continued to give more attention to the collections and less toward academic publishing.

Much of the Department of Anthropology’s work during this time focused on managing the collections (particularly inventorying and photographing them). Curators continued to add new pieces to the collection; throughout the 1980s, hundreds of artifacts were acquired. By 1982 more than 20,000 photographs of anthropology objects were on file, the work completed almost entirely by volunteers. By 1984 an inventory was completed of the entire collection, then at 27,808 objects. And in 1985, the Museum received an Institute of Museum Services—later the Institute of Museum and Library Services—grant of $25,000 to conserve and photo-document the Museum’s art collections.

The Rise of Repatriation
The biggest challenge for the department during this period was the rising tide of Native American activism that called for the return of human remains and sacred and communally owned objects from museums. This movement eventually led to the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990, which among other things established a process called repatriation by which museums could return cultural items and human remains to lineal descendants, Native American tribes, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiian organizations (Fig. 7.22).

Prior to federal legislation, the Museum in fact had already facilitated one repatriation. In 1986 the Museum returned to Canadian authorities a 3,000-year-old stone bowl that had been illegally brought to the United

Figure 7.21. Jane Day, a curator of Mesoamerican archaeology and chief curator, examines pottery from the Museum’s collection.
States by Bob Flagle of Idaho Springs, Colorado. Flagle had reportedly been on vacation in 1984 on Meares Island when he stole the bowl, and subsequently donated it to the Museum. Locals reported the theft to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who quickly traced the object to Denver. The Museum spun this sordid tale into a story of good luck. The Museum’s newsletter, Bear Pause, happily related, “Canadian authorities were delighted to ascertain the whereabouts of the bowl and immediately requested its return.” The article continued on to explain that after the object was returned it was displayed at the Royal BC Museum, even though it was an object of Indian patrimony:

The bowl is being held in trust by the archaeological division of that museum for the Nuu-chah-nulth people, a major British Columbian Indian group. It is the only known stone bowl from traditional Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootkan) territory on the west coast of Vancouver Island and, as such, is a highly significant artifact. In addition it holds the honor of being the only archaeological artifact ever returned to British Columbia after illegal export.

Similarly, the Museum took a somewhat discordantly positive tone when it returned other stolen objects in the midst of the repatriation controversy. In March 1991, four months after NAGPRA became law, the Museum returned six War Gods to Zuni tribal and religious representatives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The press release offered by the Museum claimed that the Museum had “initiated the voluntary return of the sacred artifacts,” and it emphasized that “the War Gods were stored in a secluded collection facility within the museum, and were never placed on public display” (see also Herold 1993). In fact, the Museum refrained from displaying these items because of promises made to sellers; one condition of purchase of the three War Gods from the Taos Book Shop was that they would not be displayed for ten years, until 1978, coincidentally the same year that the Pueblo of Zuni began publicly seeking repatriations.
Various newspapers nonetheless emphasized the “voluntary” nature of the return, and so this became the story of the Museum’s repatriation. An editorial in the Denver Post concluded, “The decision by the Denver Museum of Natural History to voluntarily return the war gods to the Zuni is laudable not only because it demonstrated proper professional conduct. It simply was the right thing to do, by any civilized standard.” The voluntary claim stands out given that the repatriation took place after the passage of NAGPRA. Since the War Gods were cited in the law as a prime example of the kind of objects to be repatriated, their return in fact was inevitable.

A few years later a less sanguine tone was struck in the pages of Museum Quarterly, in a 1994 article about NAGPRA. The piece was titled “Crane’s Last Stand,” parodying the idea of Custer’s Last Stand against hostile Indian forces. The article’s emphasis was not on the Museum’s willingness to return stolen objects but on how the law might signal a loss for the institution. The piece’s subtitle was “A new law may cause the DMNH to lose some of its American Indian collections.” The article itself is rather straightforward, but it elides a straight answer to the question it asks: “Why were these objects taken in the first place?” The response summarizes the benefits that have come to society from museums. “Were they stolen?” the writer probes further. “No” is the answer, though we know today some objects were indeed taken illegally.

Despite such ambivalence—perhaps an attempt to make sense of a world that was rapidly changing—the Museum efficiently abided by the new law, unlike some other major museums. Department of Anthropology chair Robert Pickering (Fig. 7.23) led the effort to comply with the first portions of the law: to disseminate summaries of cultural items to tribes by 1993 and inventories of human remains and associated funerary objects by 1995.

Figure 7.23. Robert Pickering, a curator of archaeology, led the Department of Anthropology through 1990s.
Conservation Helping Anthropology

by Jude Southward

The Museum Conservation Department has provided much preventive conservation support to the Anthropology Department collections. The first major project involved renovation of the Crane American Indian Hall in the mid-1990s. For this project, the Conservation Department completed a condition examination for each object retired from exhibition and for all newly selected objects. Any object that had a detached element or loose beads received a stabilization treatment. To help protect the dioramas in the hall against pests, all materials that were attractive to pests, such as bark, were removed. Pests are still monitored monthly within the dioramas.

Conservator Jude Southward has worked with the Anthropology Department to write many grants to rehouse collections on upgraded storage mounts and within new cabinets. These mounts help protect against physical damage and are usually made up of a box, internal pallet, internal form customized to support the object, and smooth coverings that do not abrade the object. Mounts focus on pressure fittings with which the smooth covering is pressed into a slit in the foam.

Conservator Matthew Crawford cleaned a large potlatch bowl in situ so the public could observe the process. Conservator Gina Laurin examined and treated approximately 30 pottery vessels from Mesoamerica. Some of these vessels required plaster fills and in-painting with acrylic paints. Conservator Jessica Fletcher examined katsina dolls for an outgoing loan. She examined the friability of the paint, stabilized the feathers, and ensured that they were stable on their mounts. Currently, conservator Julie Parker is working to survey and stabilize the World Ethnology collection. She opens a storage drawer, examines each object, and records those that require stabilization treatment. Some recent treatments included backing the ermine skin on a headdress with very fine gut skin and adhesive, and

Figure 7.24. Conservator Jude Southward measures a Southeast Asian textile as she completes a condition report. Gloves are worn so that oils and salts in the hands do not transfer and damage the textile.
The Konovalenko Gem Sculptures
by Stephen E. Nash and Anna Konovalenko

On March 15, 1984, the Museum celebrated the opening of Stories in Stone: Russian Gem Carvings, featuring the artwork of Vasily Konovalenko. It marked the end of a long odyssey for the Konovalenko family, which had fled the former Soviet Union less than three years earlier, on April 16, 1981. Today, the Konovalenko sculptures remain a favorite attraction at the Museum.

Vasily Konovalenko was a talented young set designer at the Mariinsky Theatre in Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg) in the 1950s. While working on the Russian ballet The Stone Flower, Konovalenko was assigned to make a box out of malachite, a copper-rich gemstone that has beautiful greenish-black hues. It was then that Konovalenko fell in love with gem carving, and for the rest of his life he made dynamic, unique, and brilliantly colored gem carvings.

The first large public exhibition of Konovalenko carvings occurred in Saint Petersburg in 1973, but it quickly became entwined in Soviet politics. Whereas members of the public loved the sculptures and purchased 25,000 exhibition catalogs in three days, some members of the ruling party were not pleased. One man, a regional party boss, was particularly angry that he had not been more directly involved in the exhibition’s development. As a result, Konovalenko was strongly encouraged to donate the sculptures to the State Samotsvety (Gems) Museum in Moscow, where they reside today.

Between 1974 and 1981 the Ministry of Geology sponsored Konovalenko and he enjoyed a good work situation with a nice studio, a good salary, and lots of useful tools and raw materials to work with. But then he was

Figure 7.25. Bosom Pals was one of Konovalenko’s favorite sculptures, for it reflects a quintessentially Russian theme of happy times among three (never two, never four) best friends during a night of drinking and singing. Notice that the man in the middle wears leather shoes, a sign of affluence, whereas his best friends wear the standard peasant footwear of woolen socks and woven shoes. The cloisonné rooster brattina (loosely translated as “punch bowl”) demonstrates Konovalenko’s skill in rendering beauty from a wide variety of materials, including more than a dozen gemstones.

Figure 7.26. All of Konovalenko’s sculptures were meant to be viewed from all sides. The reverse side of Bosom Pals reveals additional musical instruments, including a cloisonné string instrument. Note that the woolen hat of the affluent man in the middle is much more ornate than those of his peasant friends, with a ruby feather emanating from the top. Note also that despite the men’s differences in social station, the converging tilt of their heads demonstrates their love for one other as they heartily sing perhaps the last song of the evening.

(Photographs by Rick Wicker)
asked to create a gem carving of Lenin, who represented so much of the oppression and control that Konovalenko had come to loathe in the Soviet state. It was at that point that he decided he and his family had to emigrate. Using his wife Anna’s Jewish heritage as a means to apply for an emigration visa, Konovalenko waited and waited. One day, a letter arrived granting their emigration visas. Konovalenko flew to Vienna the next day, then three days later took the train to Rome. His wife and two children followed two weeks later. They were soon in New York with only $200 to their name, unable to speak English. But Konovalenko was happier than he had ever been. According to his wife, he was so happy that the stylistic differences between his early sculptures, which can be seen only in Moscow, and his later sculptures, which can be seen only in Denver, are due to the incredible weight of Soviet oppression being lifted from his shoulders.

The Museum’s 20 Konovalenko sculptures contain versions of some of his most famous pieces, including Bosom Pals, three boisterous Russian best friends enjoying an intimate, song-filled night of drinking; In the Sultry Afternoon, in which wealthy Russians enjoy a day of leisure, sipping tea while soaking in a comfortable pool of water; and Ice Fishing, in which the lack of detail on the diminutive fish lying on the ice was offered by Konovalenko as a testament to his hunting and fishing philosophy—the process is more important than the product.

The Denver Museum of Nature & Science is the only place outside of Moscow where Konovalenko’s brilliant gem sculptures are on public display. They are aesthetic masterpieces, but their history within the context of Cold War politics makes them even more important to art history, anthropology, and geopolitics.

The Modern Mix, 1995–2006

The mid-1990s established the current model for anthropology at the Museum, with a focus on curator-driven research, improving curation care of the extant collection with minimal new additions, curating small temporary exhibits, and helping to host major traveling exhibitions with anthropology themes. Additional duties and responsibilities included administrative work for the Museum and service to the discipline through such contributions as editing journals and serving on the boards and committees of professional organizations.

The curator perhaps most successful on the research front during this period was James E. Dixon, who received major National Science Foundation grants as well as national media attention for his work on Paleoindian archaeology in Alaska. Dixon’s research on one of the earliest skeletons in North America was a model of civility and collaboration with local Tlingit and Haida community members, which strongly contrasted with the more controversial studies of similarly aged remains, namely the so-called Kennewick Man. During this period collections care was supported by a string of grants from the Institute for Museum and Library Services for rehousing different portions of the collections, ranging from Hopi tihu (kachina dolls) to Southeast Asian textiles.

Most major traveling temporary exhibitions during this period continued to have anthropology themes. In 1996 Imperial Tombs of China (Fig. 7.27) would be the last anthropology-based blockbuster (with 445,000 visitors) until Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition in 2007 (with 425,000 visitors). Other anthropology-based exhibitions remained popular, including Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga in 2001 and Unveiling the Mystery of the Incas in 2004, although they did not draw as large a number of visitors. The limited in-house temporary exhibitions continued; the most notable one of this period was Hmong Search for Freedom in 1996, which was collaboratively made with the local community to follow the journey of Southeast Asia’s Hmong people from war-ravaged Laos to new lives in America (Cha 1996). This Museum-produced exhibition won an award from the American Association of Museums.

Crane Hall also received small adjustments, including object rotations in 1995 and 1996, a renovation of the
Arctic section in 1996, label updates in 1999, new lights in 2000, and a new entrance and temporary exhibit space, completed in 2002. A revitalized Egyptian Mummies exhibit was completed in 1998, and in 2000 the Konvalenko sculptures were installed on the Museum’s third floor. However, the Museum’s only permanent archaeology exhibit space, the Hall of Ancient Peoples, was closed in 2000 to make room for Space Odyssey. Given that this closing came in the same year as the Museum’s name change from the Denver Museum of Natural History to the Denver Museum of Nature & Science—an awkward change for anthropology, which many see as merely science-like and relates to culture far more than nature—many felt that the institution was moving to marginalize, if not rid itself, of anthropology.

**Buffalo Feasts**

The relationship between the Museum and Native Americans grew more intimate after the passage of NAGPRA. The Museum had begun an event in 1997 called the Spring Buffalo Feast and Honoring Ceremony, which, as Joyce Herold explained, was based on “the American Indian tradition of bestowing honor with gifts, called giveaway by the Plains Indian people.”74 Timed to coincide with Denver’s annual March Powwow, typically the event was attended by 1,000 or more people, lasted up to five hours, and involved a grand entry; a banquet of buffalo stew, Indian fry bread, and blueberry compote; drummers and dancers; and the presentation of awards to recognize the good works of Native community members.

This kind of outreach effort, however, did not replace the Museum’s commitment to NAGPRA. By NAGPRA’s ten-year anniversary, Herold reflected that the Museum had positively fulfilled its legal obligations since the law’s inception.75 She suggested that “when NAGPRA emerged, the Museum already had made fundamental changes in basic attitudes toward Native peoples,” as indicated by the establishment of the Native American Resource Group and the hiring of Patty Harjo, both of whom guided the construction of Crane Hall, and also by the Museum “setting aside a sacred storage room for about 700 objects” and inviting “traditional spiritual leaders for blessing ceremonies.” She also noted the “voluntary” return of the six War Gods in 1991. A decade after the legislation’s birth, under the impressive leadership of Robert Pickering the Museum had hosted 53 Native American delegations.
and established policies to honor “ritual needs and restrictions, such as the smudging of objects or storage areas with smoke from burning sweet grass braids and the placement of corn or tobacco offerings.” The Museum had successfully received four NAGPRA grants between 1997 and 2001 for consultations, which provided the Museum direct benefits with “new information for Museum collection records and interpretations” (Fig. 7.28). The Museum had then repatriated 165 objects out of 33,000 deemed possible for return, including the Keet S’aaxw (Killer Whale Hat) in 1997 to a Tlingit clan in southeast Alaska and 164 sacred objects including katsina property, prayer feathers, and other ceremonial equipment to the Hopi in Arizona. Herold concluded that “implementation of NAGPRA has profoundly impacted the DMNS, yet the spirit of the law has changed us even more.”

Despite such progress, several stumbles followed. In 2002 three Tlingit objects were “loaned” to the tribe, although they should have been repatriated through NAGPRA (and finally were in 2007). Karen Wilde Rogers, then the executive secretary of the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs, lodged a formal grievance of noncompliance with the U.S. secretary of the interior in 2002 reproving the Museum for not completing its human

Figure 7.28. A NAGPRA consultation in collections storage.
remains inventory under NAGPRA. The Museum responded that it was actively working on updating its inventory, but indeed this process was still not completed for several more years, after Steven R. Holen began to direct these efforts.

Shifts in Staff
By the turn of the new century, new staff had begun to again reconfigure the department. Pickering left the Museum in 1999, and Dixon left in 2000; both carried on their successful careers at other Rocky Mountain museums. Ella Maria Ray became the Museum’s first (and to date only) African American curator in 2000. A decade earlier Ray had worked with the Museum, and she came to the Museum as a child growing up across the street in Park Hill. Ray received her PhD from Johns Hopkins University, and her research at the Museum involved experimental narratives crafted by “listening” to objects speak. Steven R. Holen joined the Museum staff as curator of archaeology in 2001, continuing the Museum’s long tradition of Paleoindian research. In 2005 Herold formally retired after more than three decades at the Museum. The next year Ray left the Museum. The department’s long-time collections manager Ryntha Johnson also left during this period, creating the opportunity for hiring an almost entirely new department staff. In 2006 Isabel Tovar, coming from the Field Museum, became the anthropology collections manager and NAGPRA coordinator. The next year, her former boss at the Field, Stephen E. Nash, with research specialties in southwestern archaeology, dendrochronology, collections care, and the history of anthropology, was hired as the Museum’s newest curator of archaeology and the department chair. In 2007 this period’s curatorial staff was completed when Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh, with specialties in southwestern ethnology and archaeology, heritage management, and research ethics, was hired.

Museum Anthropology in the New Millennium, 2007–present
In 2007, for the first time in the Museum’s history, all the curators in the Department of Anthropology held PhDs. Although a PhD by no means guarantees sound scholarship and curation, this shift nonetheless indicated the Museum’s institutional aspiration to ensure that its curatorial staff held the highest scholastic credentials to join the ranks of the nation’s top natural history museums with an academic-driven curator model. In most ways, the current model for anthropology at the Museum is typical of museum anthropology in the 21st century, with primary focuses on research and building strong partnerships with descendant and stakeholder communities.
With this change, the Department of Anthropology’s curators have become more focused on research, grants, and peer-reviewed publication. In the three-year period from 2007 to 2010, the anthropology curators published more peer-reviewed papers than the staff had published in the previous decade. For the first time in the department’s history, all of the curators have regularly published in the field’s leading journals, such as *American Anthropologist* and *American Antiquity*. Grants also became more prominent, with all three curators actively obtaining research funding from a variety of sources, including the Colorado Historical Society (now History Colorado), National Endowment for the Humanities, Wenner-Gren Foundation, and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. These curators also produced the first book ever published exclusively on the Museum’s anthropology collections (Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010).

**The Indigenous Inclusiveness Initiative**

The last Spring Buffalo Feast and Honoring Ceremony was held in 2009. Despite the goodwill this event fostered for some community members, by its 13th year Museum administrators felt that the event did not fit within the Museum’s mission, did not adequately convey the Museum’s purpose to the community, and was a major challenge to organize and smoothly engineer. Museum staff further acknowledged that the event was a poor use of precious resources: tens of thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours were spent on this one evening event, yet the Museum undertook no other educational or science-based programming with the Native American community.

In place of the Buffalo Feast, the Department of Anthropology launched the Indigenous Inclusiveness Initiative. Some of these efforts built off previous programs, such as a minority internship program successfully implemented in the 1990s. The Indigenous Inclusiveness Initiative has sought to build a museum and a discipline that combine Native American voices with the best of scientific research so that indigenous cultural treasures can be appreciated from every perspective: aesthetic, historical, scholarly, and cultural. A variety of initiatives developed since 2007 include:

- The Indigenous Fellowship program, which allows Native artists, elders, curators, and community members to work with the Museum’s collections
- Native American Science Career Day (Fig. 7.29), which introduces Native scientists to Native middle school students in the Denver area
- The Indigenous Film program, which partners with a local indigenous arts and film festival
- The Native American Science Internships program, which, with a generous donation, provides funding for three Native interns each year
The Native Science @ DMNS workshop, a focused two-week workshop organized by Native educators to introduce museums, technology, and Native culture to high school students

Native American Science Scholarships, which through a partnership with the Colorado Indian Education Foundation provide $2,000 scholarships to Native college students pursuing a career in the natural or social sciences.

The Department of Anthropology has also renewed its commitments to complying with the letter and spirit of NAGPRA (Fig. 7.30). Later curators were less coy about the source of some artifacts—indeed, some were stolen—and have taken a less administrative tone about the law, instead considering how NAGPRA relates to questions of human rights and social justice. In contrast to the 1994 *Bear Pause* article, for example, Nash wrote an article in 2007 in which he asks readers to imagine having their grandparents’ graves looted and bones sent to faraway museums.83 During this period the entire department has contributed to the incorporation of NAGPRA into the Museum’s everyday practices. Between 2008 and 2010, the Museum received three National Park Service NAGPRA grants totaling $186,000. These grants led to consultations with 142 tribes on the issue of culturally unidentifiable human remains (Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2011).
An American Treasure

The renewed focus on research in this period came somewhat at the cost of a curatorial concern with collections acquisition. Curators have worked on the collections, accessioning a handful of pieces each year, receiving collections care grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the National Park Service, and planning for the new Rocky Mountain Science Collection Center. However, none of the current curators have the kind of focused attention, intimate knowledge, and daily interactions with the collections that defined curators like Herold. Previous curators felt a close and personal affinity for the collections, as indicated by the fact that they themselves regularly donated objects, a practice foreign to the present curatorial staff. For the most part, the current curators have delegated the daily work of collections care to the Anthropology Department collections manager and her staff. In a similar vein, the current curators have not focused their energy on creating new temporary exhibits (although they continue to support major traveling exhibitions with anthropology themes), which curators like Herold and Day successfully pursued.

Still, the collections remain a vital part of the curatorial scope of work. In particular, as part of the Museum’s broader Science and Collections Initiative, Nash led the effort to secure a Save America’s Treasures grant—administered through the Institute of Museum and Library Services—that would provide the funds to garner complete intellectual and physical...
control over the collections before installing them in the Rocky Mountain Science Collection Center. The Save America’s Treasures grant allowed the department to hire a dedicated team of collections management assistants to conduct systematic inventories of the collections and rehouse them in archive-quality boxes. It also allowed Museum archivist Kris Haglund to hire an assistant to create finding aids (i.e., indexes) to the anthropology archives, in particular the papers of Ruth Underhill, among the 20th century’s leading anthropologists (Fig. 7.31) (see also Colwell-Chanthaphonh & Nash 2014). Finally, the grant allowed Museum conservators under Jude Southward’s direction to perform treatments on objects in most dire need of attention. Just as significant as the dollars and workers this grant provided was its symbolic value. After more than a century of near constant work to build and care for the collection, it is now recognized as an American treasure.

Figure 7.31. Ruth M. Underhill at her typewriter, ca. 1970.
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Endnotes

1 CMNH Annual Report, 1929.


3 Only one publication includes her full name on the title page (Wormington 1955).

4 H. Marie Wormington, oral history, January 27, 1987, DMNS Archives.

5 The annual report for 1932 lists a Division of Prehistoric Artifacts and gave it credit for displaying a single case of Yuma and Folsom projectile points. Although not formally trained as an archaeologist, Museum Director Jesse Dade Figgins (1867–1944) was called upon when and if archaeological matters arose in the pre-Wormington era (see Figgins 1927, 1931, 1933, 1934, 1935a, 1935b).


7 Alfred M. Bailey (1894–1978) succeeded Figgins as Museum director on May 1, 1936. By all accounts, Bailey lacked Figgins's interest in, if not empathy toward, both archaeology and women, and especially women archaeologists. Bailey tried to close the Department of Archaeology at least once during the early 1940s, using a World War II–induced budget crisis as justification, while Wormington was at
Radcliffe and listed as honorary curator. Apparently saved by a powerful trustee, Wormington was forced to establish détente with Bailey, if not a peaceful coexistence. They worked together for more than three decades before Bailey finally closed the Department of Archaeology in 1968 while Wormington was again on leave, this time as a visiting professor at Arizona State University in Tempe.

8 CMNH Annual Report, 1935.
9 Wormington’s father died in 1923, when she was nine years old.
14 CMNH Annual Report, 1935.
15 CMNH Annual Report, 1936.
16 CMNH Annual Report, 1938.
20 Ibid.
22 DMNH Annual Report, 1953.
24 There is some discrepancy here. Wormington is listed as curator of archaeology in the CMNH Annual Report for 1936; her C.V. suggests she was named curator in 1937.
26 Mantz apparently published four papers in 1938, which are listed in the annual report. However, we could not relocate these publications and the list does not provide complete information. The four papers are: Development and trend of archeological research in Japan in Japan Today; Distribution of shell mound cities in Bulletin of the Asiatic Society; Japanese neolithic corner Tang implements in Research; and Prehistoric Japan (no journal listed). See: CMNH Annual Reports 1938, 1939.
27 Neal, A. 1984. History of the Anthropology Department. IA.Neal.6, DMNS Archives.
28 Undated letter, National Anthropological Archives (NAAWP), Wormington Papers; see also Doug Byers, letter to Wormington, April 24, 1968, NAAWP.
29 Undated letter, NAAWP. See also Wormington, letter to Linton Satterthwaite, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, February 19, 1963, DMNS Archives. Therein, Wormington describes a plan to create molds of Stela 3 for Satterthwaite while Bailey was away on vacation, thereby circumventing his authority as director.
30 Robert L. Akerley, oral history, 1982, DMNS Archives.
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[1968] Report for Publication in Teocentli, NAAWP.

Wormington, letter to “friends,” March 29, 1980, NAAWP.


Ibid.


Ibid. Note the titles for the contributors are based on their roles during the exhibit preparations.

Bear Pause 6 (8), 1978.

Bear Pause 15 (10), 1986.

Bear Pause 4 (8), 1976; Bear Pause 7 (1), 1979.


Ibid.


Bear Pause 7 (2), 1979.


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The war gods are cited in the law's regulations: 43 CFR 10.2(d)(4).

All quotes in this paragraph are from Joyce Herold, Members Monthly 2 (5): 6.