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Collecting Myaamiaki: An Exploration of Indigenous Space through Things[1]

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Europeans and newly fashioned Americans have expressed a variety of emotions toward Native Americans: curiosity, rage, fear, apathy, bewitchment, and intrigue. Their actions toward Indians have submitted to a similar evolution: cooperation, aggression, attempted eradication, neglect, inaction, and possession. Understanding the relationship between Native peoples and non-Natives requires a thorough examination of bitter historical truths. A means of gaining insight into this tortuous and enigmatic relationship is through the study of the exchange and collection of Native cultural objects and the meanings these objects now hold for some Indian peoples today.

Much of our experience of the world is mediated through *things*—the material manifestations of our existence.[2] On the most basic level, things provide us with the material necessary for life itself—food, clothing and shelter. The rest of our material world is made up of things that mark our social status, religious identity, and regional affiliation. In other words, things can communicate, and even embody, identity. It is in this symbolic relationship between people and their self-created material world that we find the means to gain insight into their minds and behavior (Cleland xii). Correspondingly, much can be learned through the relationship between individuals and things of different cultures. The attitudes and actions enacted upon things from one culture by an individual or group from another culture is fraught with implications on how that group or individual actually views the peoples who made those things. I hope through this case study I can show how artifacts can provide a window into the

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1 This article is a revised version of a talk given at Hacettepe University, Ankara, November 8, 2007.

2 On Native American material culture studies, see for example: Michaels S. Nassaney and Eric S. Johnson, eds., *Interpretations of Native North American Life: Material Contributions to Ethnohistory*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000; Arnold J. Bauer, *Goods, Power, History: Latin America's Material Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; Ruth Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998; and Barbara A. Babcock, "Mudwomen and Whitemen: A Meditation on Pueblo Potteries and the Politics of Representation," *The Material Culture of Gender, The Gender of Material Culture*, eds. Katharine Martinez and Kenneth L. Ames, Hanover: University Press of New England, 1997, pp. 253-280. For more on material culture, please see: Christopher Tilley, eds. et. al., *The Handbook of Material Culture*, London: Sage Publications, 2006; Carl Knappett, *Thinking through Material Culture: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005; Victor Buchli, *The Material Culture Reader*, London: Berg Publishers, 2002; Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994; Steven Lubar and W. David Kingery, eds., *History from Things*: *Essays on Material Culture*, Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993; Daphne Spain, *Gendered Spaces*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.

Miami culture and people, and our relationship—both historic and contemporary—with the dominant American culture.

What I would like to do here, is to follow the life of some of these *things—Miami things*. The reason for this is that an object has a life of its own. The biographical life of an object is ultimately a narrative of the evolution of meaning and of the relationships between people and things within the same culture and between cultures (Gosden and Marshall 169-78). The objects' identities transform and evolve over time; a transformation affected by the objects' purpose within a given culture. By the time an object comes to be in a museum collection, it has gone through many different identities, from cultural object intended for a particular use to a scholarly object intended for a very different kind of use (Lippert 432). Native objects are highly politicized and contentious in today's society—which is but the latest saga of the historical narrative of war, broken promises, forced removal, and cultural atrophy, so the cultural stakes are often quite high.

As objects transform, so do people. An early focus of ethnohistory as well as the study of Native Americans in historical archaeology was an examination of the process by which indigenous peoples became acculturated to European ways of life. This was often done by examining changes in artifacts. Many anthropologists believed that the adoption of elements from Euro-American culture marked a process by which Native cultures became transformed. In this case, the artifacts embody cultural transformation. Simple "acculturation" is no longer adequate to explain this process. In their encounters with colonial powers, Native Americans often created new societies that were similar to, yet different from, their parent cultures (Nassaney and Johnson 8-9). Population decrease, forced assimilation, forced migration, and amalgamation of the remnants of what was left of the Miami people caused a loss of cultural identity, language, and religion (Nassaney and Johnson 9-10). What we have now is something culturally distinct from the culture practiced by our ancestors. We have had to create and recreate parts of our ethnic and tribal identity. Our past is part of our present and the tangible pieces of our past—such as a pipe or a bowl or an ancestor's remains—help to define our present. The search for and reconstitution of our cultural identity is partially accomplished through material culture. These objects have taken on new meanings, yet the meanings are still Miami meanings.

Objects, as well as space, can embody more than one meaning depending on their relational context. This fact can sometimes spark vicious legal battles and provoke the ire of some members of the dominant culture because within these material objects and landscapes a multitude of contexts and meanings exist. An object may be at once a catlinite pipe, but also an object worthy of respect because of its meaning within a certain Native culture. Prior to the passage of Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), objects in museum collections could be unequivocally labeled as artifacts. Following the repatriation

laws, however, material that was previously legally defined as "objects of antiquity" was re-identified by Native Americans as sacred objects, cultural vessels or loved and revered ancestors who deserved respect and proper burial (Lippert 435). These objects have been defined by archaeologists and collectors as Miami artifacts, but to the Miami people they maintain their cultural context, their history, and often function synecdochically for the Miami people themselves. As such, collectors are not just collecting mere objects, but collecting the essence of the people themselves embodied in these physical objects. They are, in fact, collecting Myaamiaki.

One of the most publicized disputes regarding the multiple identities of a physical landscape is the case of Devil's Tower National Monument (WY).[3] It was both a sacred location for many Native American tribes in the area as well as a favorite rock climbing spot. The Miamis also have a sacred place called Seven Pillars. Seven Pillars, located on a riverbank in Indiana, is a physical space that embodies so much psychological meaning for the Miami. At Seven Pillars our great chief Little Turtle held council. Miamis engaged in trade and mediation with other tribes. It is a place that embodies the heart of Miami life as it once was. We purchased the land across the river from it, but could not purchase Seven Pillars itself. The state of Indiana had important plans for Seven Pillars. On top of our most sacred geography, thousands of cars zoom by on their way to here or there. Seven Pillars is part of the infrastructure of a county road system. Specific locations in a landscape may have competing identity claims on it. It may be an ideal place to practice rock climbing or put a road on *and* a sacred location for Indians. At Devil's Tower National Monument, the National Park Service has had to mediate between groups who seek to impose differing identities on the same location. In the end, the Park requested that climbers voluntarily refrain from climbing during the month of June, which is when many tribes hold cultural activities involving the site (Lippert 434). Unfortunately for the Miami, Seven Pillars is not a national park, but instead part of a vital transportation network in Indiana. Subsequently, the transportation benefits take precedence over the cultural and spiritual meaning the place holds for Miami people.

Physical space is profoundly important to most Native cultural and spiritual life—to the very sense of cultural identity of Native peoples.[4] Take for example, the Miami. Our traditional homelands include what is now the state of Indiana, the western portion of Ohio, the eastern portion of Illinois and the lower portions of

[3] Devil's Tower. U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Rocky Mountain Region. Final Climbing Management Plan / Finding of No Significant Impact February 1995 Devils Tower National Monument Crook County, Wyoming, 1995.

[4] For a detailed discussion, please see Paul Robertson, *The Power of the Land: Identity, Ethnicity, and Class Among the Oglala Lakota*, New York: Routledge, 2002; Brian Brown, *Religion, Law, and the Land*: *Native Americans and the Judicial Interpretation of Sacred Land*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999; and Vine Deloria, Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*, Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1992.

Wisconsin and Michigan.[5] In 1846 a segment of the tribe relocated to Kansas and eventually down to what is now Miami, Oklahoma where we are federally recognized as a sovereign nation. The Miami people became dispersed after the dissolution of our land base and a portion of the culture "went to sleep." We do not believe it is lost; it is just sleeping and waiting to be awakened. Much of our culture is tied to our homeland. Those few Miamis who rejected removal and accepted a deal with the US government to remain in our homeland, had to give up federal recognition of their ethnicity—and therefore recognition of any rights protected under US-Miami treaties. Ironically, though they officially surrendered their "identities" as Miamis, they were able to retain portions of our culture and language due to their remaining on tribal homelands—where the culture lived. The stories of our ancestors, of our origins, of our morality tales were tied to specific trees, rocks, streams, and animals of our homeland. The physical landscape acted as mnemonic devices for our cultural memory.

Our cultural memory is an heterotopic place, blending the psychic spaces of past and present (Foucault 22-27). The past is as real to us as being here right now. We are all connected to the things that happened at the beginning of our existence. And those things live on as they are handed down to us.[6] This is most easily understood in terms of our connection to our ancestor's remains.

NAGPRA is the overarching principle dictating the relationship between *some* Native things and all Native human remains and the institutions that contain them.[7] NAGPRA became law November 16, 1990 and has had a far-reaching affect on Native American communities, museums, archaeology and federal agencies. The act established two main requirements. First, federal agencies and museums receiving federal funds were required to inventory Native American human remains and associated funerary objects in their possession. Also required was a written summary for unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony that are in the collections they own or control. As part of the inventorying process, these institutions were to establish, to the best of their ability, the likely lineal descendants or cultural affiliation of the items with modern Native American individuals or tribes, or make the determination that descendancy or affiliation is impossible to establish.[8] Once those procedures were established, the institution was required to notify the descendent or tribe and offer them the opportunity to claim the

5 For a general introduction to the history of the Miami people, please see Bert Anson, *The Miami Indians*, Norman, OK: U of Oklahoma P, 1970.

6 This statement, made by an elder from the Fort Mohave Reservation in California, appears in the National Park Service's report titled Keepers of the Treasures: Protecting Historic Properties and Cultural Traditions on Indian Lands.

7 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 25 U.S.C. 3001 et seq. [Nov. 16, 1990].

8 NAGPRA, 25 U.S.C. 3001 (2) and 43 C.F.R. 10.14: Lineal Descent and Cultural Affiliation.

remains and/or items. If the tribes so wish, they may request the repatriation (return) of these cultural items. The second requirement or intention of the law was to protect the graves and their contents still within archaeological sites located on federal or tribal lands and to find tribal affiliation.[9]

NAGPRA has returned the humanity to our ancestor's remains. These remains had heretofore been stripped of their humanity, viewed solely as items at which to gawk, or as "confirmation" of the correctness of pseudo-scientific racial hierarchies, and later, as collectors of dust in a bin stuck in the back of a museum storage area. We now had the opportunity to bring our ancestors home. For so long we had been without the legal means to fulfill our cultural responsibilities and claim what is rightfully ours. As Jack Trope points out, "NAGPRA recognizes that Native American human remains and cultural items are the remnants and products of living people, and that descendants have a cultural and spiritual relationship with the deceased. For the first time, the federal government and non-Indian institutions must consider what is 'sacred' from an Indian perspective" (18).

So, the Miamis leaped at the chance to fulfill our responsibility to our people. We submitted a NAGPRA claim for certain human remains and burial objects held in the National Museum of the American Indian (part of the Smithsonian Museum) in Washington, DC. The remains are prehistoric and therefore are labeled as "culturally unidentifiable." They are Adena Culture and the grave origin is southern Ohio. We submitted our claim in June, 2002. The claim followed NAGPRA guidelines and therefore was published in the Federal Register to allow other Tribes the opportunity to comment or make equal claim. In this situation the other Tribes to be contacted were the three Federally Recognized Shawnee Nations in Oklahoma.[10] These Tribes deferred repatriation in this case to the Miamis. We decided to locate a burial ground somewhere within our homeland in Indiana for the burying of culturally unidentifiable remains due to the nature of these prehistoric remains themselves. Prehistoric remains are not the ancestors of any one particular modern Indian Nation but are in fact the ancestors to many Nations. Because of this fact, it is almost impossible to reclaim remains labeled as culturally unidentifiable (because many Nations can claim them). [11]

We have also repatriated identifiable Miami remains. In November of 2003, we repatriated from the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Anthropology and

[9] NAGPRA, 1990; Francis P. McManamon, Department consulting Archeologist for the U.S. Department of the Interior and Chief Archaeological Assistance Division, National Park Service, Washington, DC.

[10] Letter to Julie L. Olds, Cultural Preservation Officer, Miami Tribe, From James Pepper Henry, Repatriation Program Manger. Henry, James Pepper. Letter to Julie L. Olds. 12 July 2002. Personal Collection.

[11] Letter to Language and Culture Committee—Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, From Julie L. Olds, Cultural Preservation Officer, Miami Tribe, July 17, 2002. Personal Collection.

Archaeology twelve craniums culturally identified as those of Miami and having been obtained in various locations in Indiana. They were transferred back to Miami, Oklahoma for burial. I was unable to take part in this repatriation because only those people who are beyond child bearing age can handle the dead. My mother and father were among the respected elders chosen for this sacred duty. With mixed feelings of joy and sorrow, my mother helped prepare the Myaamiaki women for reburial and took part in the sacred ceremony. She said she hoped that with repatriation our ancestors will finally have the peace and dignity they deserve. She and my father accompanied the remains for 1300 miles to the reburial site in Oklahoma. "We never left them alone," she said. Not even for one moment, she said—because they had been left alone for so, so long.[12]

In this repatriation were two male craniums, both chiefs of the Miami. Though such a find is rare, I do have the story on these two chiefs—it is both chilling and sad, but emblematic of the historical circumstance that tore my people apart. Samuel George Morton (1799-1851), a physician and ardent supporter of "racial science" and a member of the American Philosophical Society, presented a paper to the society in 1844. His paper was called "Crania Americana: Or, a Comparative View of the Skulls of Various Aboriginal Nations of North and South America." In this monograph, Morton argued that his research demonstrated the presence of significant differences in cranial capacity—and therefore intelligence—among the races, with "Caucasians" heading the list, and "Americans" (i.e. Native Americans) and "Ethiopians" bringing up the rear. In this paper, he reveals the story of one of the "American" craniums in his possession. I will quote it at length.

He received this particular skull from Dr. J.W. Davis of Thorntown, Indiana who revealed the history of this chief to him:

> The man to whom this cranium belonged was a Miami chief of the Eel river village. This fraction of the tribe . . . had a beautiful section of country known as the "Thorntown Reserve." They acknowledged the authority of two individuals as their chiefs, one of whom had received from the whites the name of *Captain Jim*. This man had acquired a great ascendancy over his people by his bravery, his success in the chase, and his uncompromising hostility to the *white faces* [homosexuals . . . generally refers to men]. By his cunning and eloquence he several times defeated the project of his colleague and rival, who was as anxious to sell the *reservation* as the whites were to purchase it. In the year 1830 a general council was called once more to deliberate on the propriety of selling their land. The *Captain* again

[12] Personal correspondence with Sharon S. Prescott.

> opposed the sale, and in a long and forcible speech depicted the beauty and fertility of the country they then held, and the folly of parting with it for any consideration. No sooner had he ceased, than his rival denounced him as the enemy of his tribe, and wishing its destruction. The *Captain* then sprung upon his feet, retorted the charges, and called his colleague *a white man's dog*, upon which the latter seized a knife in each hand, and rushed furiously upon his opponent, who, with a single weapon of the same kind, willingly joined combat. The tragedy was short and bloody. Each belligerent received the stab of his adversary, and both fell dead on the spot. They were buried side by side, with a pole bearing a flag placed between them. The *Captain*, at the time of his death, was forty-five years of age, of a commanding appearance and unconquerable spirit. (182-183)

Reading about the cavalier way that "man of science" and position held in his hand a skull of an ancestor and in front of a congregation of "learned men," made pronouncements upon it as though it were a particularly interesting plant specimen, leaves one . . . uneasy. Math is not my strong point, but it does not take much mathematical ability to do the calculations in this case. Captain Jim was killed in 1830. Morton was in front of the American Philosophical Society in 1844. This means that Captain Jim was buried, dug up, somehow fell into the hands of a doctor in Thorntown, who then gave or sold the cranium to Morton in a short 14 years.

The very existence of this situation begs the question: how and why did these objects come to reside in museums or institutions in the first place? Collectors.

One reason for collecting Native American objects is what I call "hyper-assimilation." In this case, hyper-assimilation manifests as the longing to become a *genuine* Indian—a transferring of "Indianness" by contact with Indian things. Indians have fascinated non-Indians since Columbus encountered the Tainos, the indigenous peoples living on the island of Hispaniola when Columbus landed in 1492.[13] That island is now called Haiti and the Dominican Republic and all of the Tainos are thought to be extinct.[14] In 1516, in the great University of Salamanca in Spain, under orders by the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain Charles V,

[13] On the politics of indigenous representations by non-Natives, please see: Shari M. Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination,* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001; and Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999.

[14] For a good overview of this population, see: Noble David Cook, "Disease and the Depopulation of Hispaniola, 1492-1518," *Colonial Latin American Review* 2(1-1), 1993: 213-245. Many contemporary Dominicans claim Taino ancestry and so vehemently deny the myth of the Taino extinction. Nevertheless, the myth persists.

two distinguished orators stood face-to-face to debate "the Indian problem."[15] Of utmost concern was: do Indians have a soul? The answer to this question would have serious implications with what the Spanish, as good Christians, could and could not do to the indigenous peoples. Bartolome de las Casas, the Dominican advocate of native peoples, successfully argued that, yes indeed we have a soul. That Indian soul, however, generally thought to reside somewhere within the body, has seemingly been displaced from the Indian body and placed anew within the objects created by the Indian hand and heart. These items are a powerful connection to the peoples who created them. It is not uncommon to see pictures of collectors wearing "traditional" Indian clothes and adopting, at least on a part-time basis, an Indian identity. The object is a means of connecting with the culture—as much for non-natives as for Natives.

The answer to the question of why it is that so many non-natives want to be Indian, has a long history and in many ways deals with the Indian way of life. The desire to be Indian is partly due to the myth of the vanishing race of Indians and the romanticizing of the West. Most indigenous collections date to the mid- to late-nineteenth century and accompany the 1830 Indian Removal Act signed by Andrew Jackson, and closely follow on the heels of the seemingly never-ending military defeats of the Indians. Many feared that the Indian race was coming to an end. In the late nineteenth century non-Indians attempted to possess the Indian through the medium of photography, through art, and through artifact. Often collectors of the period seem to have viewed Indians as "noble savages," "first Americans," "the only Americans."[16] They commodified Indian culture and sold pieces of this "almost-extinct Indian civilization." Get a piece of this dying race while you can!

This vanishing myth leads to a second impetus for the collection of native cultural objects—the search for knowledge and the preservation of culture. This category is in many ways the most slippery. Many collectors have justified their amassing of indigenous artifacts by claiming they are in fact, rescuing these objects from the ravages of time, natural disasters, and neglect. Scholars argue that many cultural items have artistic, scholarly, and educational value, which constitutes the cultural heritage not of one group of peoples, but of all of human society. Further, scholars maintain that they must have access to these items and be permitted to transmit the knowledge derived from the study of these objects (Warren 3-7). The argument that indigenous people's knowledge and culture must be documented and collected to prevent its loss is certainly not a new argument.

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[15] For an in-depth analysis of this debate, see: Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1982.

[16] On this issue, please see Florence Curtis Graybill, et al., *Visions of a Vanishing Race*, North Hollywood, CA: Galahad, 1994; Joseph K. Dixon, *The Vanishing Race*, New York: Doubleday, 1913; David R.M. Beck, "The Myth of the Vanishing Race" in Edward S. Curtis' *North American Indian*.

In 1799, the American Philosophical Society established a seven member committee led by Thomas Jefferson, whose duties included "[t]o inquire into the Customs, Manners, Languages and Characters of the Indian nations, ancient and modern, and their migrations" (xxxviii). Begun by Benjamin Franklin in 1743, the APS was the United States' first learned society, which counted among its select all-male members, the crème de la crème of American society, as well as a few chosen Europeans. At this time, the Society was particularly interested in natural philosophy. Indians were included in this category. One of the committee members and a fairly prolific collector of indigenous things was a territorial judge of the Northwest Territory named Judge George Turner. He was a dubious figure with a rather controversial relationship with the Indians over which he ruled.[17] The Northwest Territory encompassed Miami homelands and so they fell under his jurisdiction.

Despite his committee membership, Turner seemed to have only a peripheral interest in the indigenous inhabitants in his jurisdiction. Based on the historical record, Turner was more interested in collecting indigenous things than relating to contemporary indigenous people. The meaning he attributed to these objects was much the same as one would give to a butterfly collection. Little is known of the methods of Turner's collecting, but if his gubernatorial record is any indication (he was almost impeached for oppression and gross violations of office), then he most likely collected by coercion or confiscation.[18] Of the Miami-related items collected by Turner is a collection of catlinite pipes and calumets, or pipe stems.[19] The highlight of the collection, however, is undoubtedly the carved beaver bowl. The bowl was collected around 1790 in the Illinois region and is likely made of Ash wood. Ash wood was universally used by Native Americans to make pipe stems. It was also used for making bows and the shafts of arrows (Gilmore 78). Ash wood was also thought by many indigenous groups to have mystical properties, particularly as a charm to ward off snakes to ensure strength and protection from harm. According to Judge Turner, the bowl was used as a tureen.[20]

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[17] For example, Turner became embroiled in a somewhat lengthy inquest into "oppressions and gross violations of private property, under colour of his office." Word of these violations of office reached the president of the United States who then instructed the secretary of state to give orders to Governor St. Clair to take the "necessary measures for bringing that officer to a fair trial respecting those charges." The "necessary measures" taken by St. Clair were to begin impeachment proceedings. However, Turner resigned his position before being impeached. See: "Letter from the Attorney General, Accompanying his report on the petition of sundry inhabitants of the county of St. Clair in the Territory North-West of the River Ohio." May 10, 1796, p. 6. In *Early American Imprints*, 1st series, no. 3142.

[18] "Letter from the Attorney General, Accompanying his report on the petition of sundry inhabitants of the country of St. Clair in the Territory North-West of the River Ohio." May 10, 1796, p. 6. In *Early American Imprints*, 1st series, no. 3142.

[19] The approximate date of collection is apparently offered in American Philosophical Society Proc. XXII, 3; 1937 Minutes p. 251, though I have been unable to corroborate. The APS citation is given in the acquisition records of the Anthropology Museum at the University of Pennsylvania.

[20] Proc. Amer. Phil. Soc. 1797, p. 253 as stated in the acquisition records.

The bowl was carved with great skill out of a single piece of wood. The beaver's tail is crosshatched and just behind a set of carved teeth is a protruding snout with a hole running from one side of the snout to the other, indicating the opening of the mouth. Its eyes are brass tacks, probably a trade item.[21]

In 1937, these items were lent to the museum by the Society, still headquartered in Philadelphia. Turner most likely donated his collection to the Society, as it was common for members to donate objects, books, specimens, and manuscripts that fell within the interests of the Society. He valued his collection, but not the peoples who created his prized objects.

A second and more prolific collector of Miami art and artifacts was Milford Chandler. He is also the collector on which the most information about his life, motivations, and collecting habits is available. Chandler was not a man of means or training in archaeology or ethnology. He was by trade, an automotive engineer. He was by passion, a collector of ethnographical items. Chandler was romantically drawn to the American Indian since boyhood: tales, legends and his own mother's fascination of all things Indian. His imagination was fired by the stories read to him by his mother about Indians (Penney 300). As a boy, he attempted to run away to the St. Louis World's Fair because he had heard that there were "a good many Indians there" (Penney 2). A romanticized view of the Native past and that of the western frontier drove Chandler's early collecting. He wanted to be "Indian."

Chandler began collecting when he was about 26 years old and by 1926, just 11 short years after he first began, his collection was almost complete.[22] His feverish collecting during this period coincides with his residence in Chicago, Illinois, a perfect base from which to take weekend trips into Indian territories. Chandler managed to amass an extensive collection of excellent variety and caliber. Characterizing his motivation for his collecting he asserted, "I've been criticized for taking these things from Indians, Indians have so little left, but by doing it I feel I have actually preserved vestiges of their old culture, and I think it's worthwhile, and Indians can come to these institutions and learn a lot if they want to, but most of them are not interested. They talk about exploitation, but I think, in a sense, it has been worthwhile" (qtd. in Penney 4). Chandler believed these objects were national treasures and that it was his mission in life to help preserve them (Penney 301). Chandler obtained indigenous artifacts through purchase from Indians and dealers, by sheer luck of the find, and through traditional gift-giving by Indian friends.

Chandler told a story about a Miami effigy pipe. Made out of Ohio pipestone, the bowl is a lifelike representation of a man's head, which faces the smoker. Beyond the exquisite craftsmanship, part of the value of the pipe is due to the survival of lore that is connected to

[21] University of Pennsylvania, Museum of Anthropology, Object #L-83-6.

[22] Pohrt estimates that by 1926, Chandler's collection was 95% complete (Penney 300).

the pipe. The lore connects three generations of Miami men. The story begins in the early 1920s during one of Chandler's trips to collect among the Miami peoples living in Indiana. During one of these visits he met Camillius Bundy, who was a descendant of famed white captive woman-turned Miami—Frances Slocum. Bundy told Chandler his coming-of-age story and how the pipe came to him through the tragedy of a fire that killed his mother and burned down their home. In the charred remains of his house, he unexpectedly found the pipe and knew that this was the last tangible connection he had to his ancestors. At that moment he felt himself become a man.

Bundy proceeded to tell Chandler the history that was associated with the pipe. The pipe was a ceremonial pipe that had belonged to an old Miami man who was known to have mystical powers. This old man gave the pipe to a young Miami warrior named Hard Strike because of the generosity the warrior had shown the old man when he shared some of his fresh kill. Before Hard Strike could take possession of the pipe, however, he had to show faith in its powers. Upon order of the old man, Hard Strike did this by allowing himself to fall off a cliff. As he fell, faith came to him and he surged upward as the power of the eagle filled him. He soared away from the rocks below and landed safely. The memory of the old man and Hard Strike and the power of the pipe were passed down generation to generation until Bundy's mother told the tale to him and he told it to Chandler. As Bundy said, this pipe was his only tangible connection to his ancestors (Penney 295-298).

Yet, Bundy sold the pipe to Chandler. To Bundy, this pipe was a family heirloom. To Chandler, the pipe was an item to possess. Chandler was not just buying the pipe; he was also buying the right to "possess" the history and culture that resided in the pipe. That history made the pipe more valuable to Chandler. The fact that Bundy sold the pipe to Chandler is a heartbreaking testament to the circumstances Indians have found themselves in modern times. What was once a tangible connection to ancestors became to Bundy a source of survival.

Some of Chandler's collecting strategies proved a bit more dubious than the others. One instance is that of a wampum belt thought to belong to the Miami Chief Deaf Man, Chi-chi-BING-gway, husband of Frances Slocum. When asked if he had experienced any difficulty in getting this "particular specimen," Chandler replied, "I did, but not, the type of difficulty you might anticipate . . . I kept inquiring for more things and most of what I got from him was imported cutlery . . . from England, and I kept asking him, 'Don't you have anything of beads, especially those real coarse beads.' And he finally said, . . . on one occasion, 'I have a little hide-covered box, but it's in my daughter's room and when she went for a visit to Canada she locked her door and I hate to break that door down.'" He [Chandler] asked, "'How long will she be gone?' 'Oh,' he said, 'probably not more than a month.'" So, about a month later Chandler returned and asked if the daughter was back. She was. The Miami got the box out of a hide-covered trunks and Chandler peeked in it. He said he "[s]aw . . . a lot of trade silk, gorgeous armbands and so forth. I asked him his price, which I've forgotten, but I know it wasn't excessive and I paid it. And within a

quarter of a mile of his home, there was a lot of underbrush. Of course I hurried right over there and since I was out of sight of his cabin, I opened the box and feasted on the contents. Oh, my, what a treasure-trove that was." He found the wampum belt that was said to be a War Belt that belonged to Francis Slocum's husband who supposed to have been a War Chief of the Miami." Chandler "feasted" on a very valuable piece of Miami history which he bought for a relative pittance.

In this instance, Chandler comes across as a bit deceptive, devious, and heavy-handed. At various times Chandler has compared the nature or state of Indians to that of children. Knowing this and his collecting methods, what can one make of Chandler's relationship with Indians by means of his collecting? His attitude toward Indians was clearly ambivalent. He yearned to "be Indian" via Indian things, but somehow thought them lesser and in need of his guidance as well.

These objects and many of them are now in museums and viewable on the Miami NAGPRA database by virtue of his actions. But it is not these types of items—the detritus of everyday life—that tribes have the legal means to reclaim. Instead, tribes concern themselves with those items thought sacred. Sacred items are usually thought of by most tribes as belonging to the entire community, not an individual . . . and therefore could not be removed from the community without the agreement of all. The implication is that all communally owned objects must have been removed illegally as the elders never consented to their removal (Hill 82). Among this category of items are human remains and funerary objects.

Conclusion

Collecting Native American objects, whether one is simply a personal collector, a "reputable" dealer, or a "pot hunter" is fraught with ethical, moral and legal implications. These objects are physical manifestations, tangible evidence and reminders of the culture and the people that created them. In a way, these items are extensions of Native cultures—a record of our historical past; a past that has been obscured by violence, forced removal, and forced assimilation. As an academic, I recognize the importance of preserving and studying these objects. As a Miami, I am aware that many collectors value the item over the people or the culture that produced it—a dangerous attitude to adopt as Indians struggle with language reclamation, cultural continuity, poverty and political sovereignty.[23]

Myaamia artifacts are particularly important and meaningful to the removal

[23] For more information on the Miami Nation of Oklahoma and our efforts at cultural preservation and language reclamation, please see: <www.miamination.com> and <www.myaamiaproject.org>. As of 2003, Native Americans on average had the lowest per capita income, highest rate of unemployment, lowest levels of educational attainment, shortest lives than any other group, and the worst health and housing conditions in the United States. These statistical conclusions are found in "We the People: American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States," Census 2000 Special Reports, US Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce; and Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2003, Indian Population and Labor Force Report, all of which are easily found on-line.

of Miamis. These Miamis, of which my family is a part, have not had the opportunity to walk in the cultural footsteps of our forefathers in our original homeland. We have struggled to keep our culture alive. My mother said that our sleeping culture can be awakened by a touch of an object that has been crafted, carved, or sewn by our ancestors. Being so assimilated into the current culture of our country, we have been forced to put our unique culture into the back of our minds to some degree. But when we look and touch these uniquely Miami objects, we create a bridge with our past. We remember and feel our ancestors. They live again. Their presence makes us contemplate who they were as Miamis, what their world was like, and the culture they fought so hard for so long to ensure the survival of. Artifacts remind us that, despite the cultural violence perpetrated upon us, the chain is unbroken. In return we contemplate who we are and what of our culture actually remains. We are also reminded of our sacred duty as the inheritors and protectors of our culture, to ensure that a vibrant and meaningful culture survives for generations to come.

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