

The National Museum of the American Indian

1: What is the history of this museum, and what was the reason it was placed in this community?

The national museum of the American Indian was built in 1916 and was open to public in 1994 in New York. When George Gustav Heye start traveling through North and South America he starts collecting native objects that his collection was assembled over 54 years, and then he decides to show those collection to the public and that is how he started the national museum of the American Indian. This is one the most extensive collection of the native American arts and artifacts in the world that reach to 12000 years of history and over 1200 indigenous cultures through the America.

The national museum of the American Indian has three locations that are in the Washington DC, in New York and in Maryland State. The one located in the New York state in the lower Manhattan has a two-story building with different brunches. In this building permanent and temporary exhibition and other public programs are being held. This museum is in the lower Manhattan because this part of the New York city is one of the financial districts. Also, I think because New York state is one of the most touristic places and this museum represent the native exhibitions from North, South and central America. It also can be, that the location is very important as the museum is near to the Staten Island Ferry, Wall Street, 9/11, memorial, statues of liberty and Ellies Island. The NMAI's current holdings have their foundation in the collection of the former Museum of the American Indian (MAI), Heye Foundation, of New York City, assembled largely by George Gustav Heye (1874–1957). From his first acquisition, the 1897 purchase of a Navajo hide shirt in Arizona, Heye's collecting quickly expanded into archaeological material. By 1903, he was buying large archaeological collections from around the hemisphere, and by 1906, he had accumulated more than 10,000 objects. Based in New York, Heye bought

collections and documentary photographs, sponsored expeditions, and traveled and collected items himself. The collection's rapid growth—and the directions it took were directly influenced by those he called upon to help him, including Marshall Saville at Columbia University and George Pepper of New York's American Museum of Natural History. In 1904, Heye initiated a collections catalog on 3- by 5-inch cards, marking the beginnings of his museum idea and systematic collecting and documentation for that purpose. (Although Heye and others founded the museum in 1916, he began soliciting support from affluent friends at least ten years before.) With his mother's support, Heye funded important excavations in Mexico and Ecuador in 1906, the beginning of a long-term Latin American research plan laid out by Marshall Saville and undertaken long before the museum became reality. Here, Heye's support for systematic Latin American research predated the American Anthropological Association's 1907 identification of the region as a priority. By 1908, having filled his New York apartment and a nearby warehouse, he planned with the University of Pennsylvania's University Museum to exhibit his collection and assembled his own staff to continue to build and care for it.

In 1960, Fredrick J. Dockstader, who had joined the staff in 1955, became the MAI's director. Following trends begun during Heye's lifetime, Dockstader acquired significant materials that represented the blending of Native and non-Native worlds, including works made for sale but still representing traditional cultural values. Through purchases and exchanges, Dockstader also acquired important ethnographic and archaeological pieces, reorganized the exhibits, and published a series of books on the collections. Despite this, Dockstader's later tenure was marked by questions about his efforts to "refine" the collections through deaccessions and collections sales, many of which supported acquisitions between 1960 and 1975, totaling approximately 25,000 objects. Through NMAI research, exhibit preparation, visiting artists' programs, and other work,

the museum constantly hosts Native and non-Native scholars and researchers whose continued responses to the collections contribute to their better understanding. These and other contacts, as well as the NMAI's increasing public visibility, have also brought about expanded opportunities for building and diversifying the collections in line with the NMAI's mission as well as new directions for interpretive uses of the collections by the NMAI and others. Since the MAI's transfer to the Smithsonian in 1989 and the inculcation of different attitudes about the collections, the NMAI has made great strides in continuing to build the collection through donations, purchases, and commissions, and emphasizing modern and contemporary arts.

2. What stood out as most prominent among the museum's exhibits? What made this the case for you?

The way the museum was designed, it was wonderful they used modern and antique together. The visitor feels like they are in a time machine, and it looks like a movie scene. Everything was unique, the clothes that they used to use, the art, statues, show and all in there is wonderful and different.

3: Do the staff represent the topic or group of people exhibited in the museum? why or why not?

The day I visit the museum I saw there were staff in everywhere, but they were not represented any topic to anyone. But they were kind and helpful people who were willing to answer or direct you if there was any problem.

4: What is something you learned or was challenging to you about the visit?

It was the first time that I visit a place that felt alive, I learned that every country, culture is different even the way they mixed modern and old art was attractive. I learned about history of native Americans that was way different from my imagination. The reality of tradition, and custom from different points.