

Cultural Crossroads

Leah Davis Witherow, Curator of History



Colorado Springs
PIONEERS MUSEUM

For millennia, the vast stretch of land between the Platte and Arkansas Rivers and east of the Rocky Mountains has been a **Cultural Crossroads**. Award winning Historian Elliot West has written, *“White Pioneers who moved onto the plains east to west believed they were leaving the old country for the new. They had it exactly backward. Before the first human habitation on the eastern seaboard... plainsmen had fashioned flourishing economies... Different peoples lived with shifting resources – sometimes abundant, often scarce...reaching much farther to trade for more. The region’s deep history was a continuing, dazzling improvisation... ”*



Many native people have called this area home, among them: Ute, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache. Although the Ute claimed the mountains to the west, for generations they joined their Plains Indian neighbors in hunting bison and game on the wild grasses of the plains. From the south came the Spanish who founded settlements in present day New Mexico in the sixteenth century. From the coasts came Russian, British, French and American fur traders, eager to profit from ancient trade routes and a preexisting system of intertribal trade.

With extensive contact and occasional conflict over shared resources, American Indians absorbed and transmitted the cultural influences of their neighbors. As a result, Plains, Plateau, Great Basin, and Southwestern tribes transferred traditions and technologies as they traded goods. The striking examples of American Indian beadwork, clothing, baskets, and other materials in this exhibit provide evidence of the ongoing creative innovation and adaptation of native peoples in a region noted for being – a **Cultural Crossroads**.

Networks of Trade

Long before Europeans arrived in North America, a well established system of robust trade existed among American Indians. Evidence of extensive intertribal trade includes seashells, copper, colorful Macaw feathers and cotton found in the ruins of Ancestral Pueblo Peoples in the southwestern corner of Colorado. Ancient trade routes crisscrossed the continent linking millions of native peoples through a rich system of trade that disseminated ideas and traditions as well as trade goods.

While Europeans did not establish trade on this continent, they certainly influenced it. As early as the seventeenth century, Spanish colonists in present day New Mexico actively carried on complex trading and raiding relationships with their Pueblo, Ute and Apache neighbors. During a period of fierce competition for territory and military alliances, the vigorous exchange of goods grew to include more trading partners and more trade objects including: horses, guns, food, cloth and a variety of metal objects.

Additionally, by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Plains Indians were engaged in trade with Russians, British, French and American traders for furs and skins. As a result, new trading centers sprang up alongside ancient trade routes and American Indians participated as both producers and consumers in a truly global economy.

Living Cultures

Many tribes have called Colorado home — and they still do. Members of the Southern Ute and the Ute Mountain Ute live on two reservations in the southwest corner of the state.

Native people also live in rural communities throughout Colorado and in urban centers like Denver and Colorado Springs. American Indians are teachers, doctors, artists, attorneys, politicians, bankers. They are your neighbors.

American Indians are a part of **living** cultures. Native people in Colorado are actively preserving their languages, traditions and history. Ute elders like historian Alden Naranjo (pictured here pointing to ancient *Rock Art* in the Garden of the Gods) work to pass on Ute culture to the tribe's youth through *culture camps* and other programs. Audio tapes and written texts ensure the preservation and awareness of the Ute language.

All cultures balance continuity and change – and American Indians are no exception. As historian Will Wroth describes, *“Innovation and change occur in Native American cultures just as they do in popular American culture... As part of an evolving contemporary culture, they make choices based on personal aesthetic preferences and use a combination of natural and traditional materials with contemporary and trade materials...”*

The objects in this case embody both deep-rooted beliefs and modern adaptation. Just as their ancestors did in past centuries – American Indian artists today create products that reflect contemporary styles and culture. The tennis shoes seen here evoke a symbolic Cherokee beadwork pattern. They are part of a clothing line designed by Jay Red Eagle, Cherokee, who specializes in Hip-Hop clothing inspired by traditional American Indian designs.

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Ouray

Ouray was born the year the stars fell. In 1833, North Americans watched in wonder as a Leonid meteor shower lit up the skies. Many native people thought the world was coming to an end — but Ouray’s journey was just beginning. By the time he died in 1880, the famous Ute Chief had crossed international boundaries, held counsel with American Presidents, and worked tirelessly to achieve peace for his people.

For more information about this fascinating history we recommend reading:
[The Ute Indians of Utah, Colorado and New Mexico](#) by Virginia McConnell Simmons
and [Utes: The Mountain People](#) by Jan Pettit

Highlights From the Collection: Collectors and Collecting

Drawn from the collections of the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum, ***Cultural Crossroads*** features an amazing array of over 125 artifacts and photographs illustrating the rich depth of American Indian history and culture in the Pikes Peak Region. Visitors are encouraged to compare and contrast the styles, patterns and traditions of the over 30 American Indian Nations represented in the exhibit.

Historians believe that humans have been collecting ever since our prehistoric ancestors gathered groups of interesting rocks together. According to author Susan Pearce, *“Individuals collect objects as either souvenirs or fetishes. Souvenirs memorialize a person’s life and adventures. They become the real things that connect us with the past. Fetishes, on the other hand, are objects of attraction that often have no connection with a person, place or event that we have experienced...but are pretty, rare or valuable.”*

Most of the artifacts in this exhibit came from a handful of collectors. Have you ever wondered how and why objects end up in Museums? The reasons are as varied as the collectors themselves: the J.D. Clark Collection was purchased under unusual circumstances, the Spencer Penrose Collection was donated during his lifetime, and the Vida Ellison Collection was willed to the Museum after her death.

More information regarding specific donors in this exhibit can be found on the label copy throughout the gallery. The Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum strives to assemble these diverse collections into a meaningful whole that is more than the sum of its parts. The goal of ***Cultural Crossroads: Highlights of the Museum Collection*** is to foster a deeper appreciation and understanding for American Indian history and culture.

Baskets

Baskets have been indispensable to native North Americans for many centuries as they are both functional and decorative. The Museum has an impressive collection of American Indian baskets from over 40 tribes, bands and nations representing a variety of uses and an array of stunning designs.

According to anthropologists Sarah Peabody Turnbaugh and William A. Turnbaugh, the Papago are perhaps the most prolific American Indian basket makers today. They continue to make baskets for their own use and for sale to tourists. The shapes are as varied as: shallow coiled bowls, deep jars, trays, mats and storage baskets with and without lids. According to the Turnbaughs,

“Contrary to Pima baskets with designs that emphasize dynamic, whirling patterns, Papago have preferred static horizontal or vertical design compositions. The Papago have favored a heavier usage of black *devil's claw*, as well, and often have created bowls and trays with especially large black centers.”

The Papago basket above shows the use of *devil's claw* to depict a lizard or animal shape woven into the bear grass and yucca basket. The Pima basket seen above is a reversed swastika shape with concentric circles in the bottom of the basket which illustrates their use of “dynamic whirling patterns.” The rim is finished with *devil's claw* and blue beads.

The whirling log symbol or swastika (either in reverse or not) is a timeless design used by people on many continents to illustrate the four directions, four winds or other symbolic meanings. Swastika is Sanskrit meaning “well-being”. Throughout most of history, it has been associated with order and stability. The unfortunate association of the swastika with Adolf Hitler has led many to misunderstand the use of this positive symbol for millennia prior to its negative use in Nazi Germany during the twentieth century.

Collector Highlights:

Vida Gregory was born in Wyoming Territory, the grand-daughter of a pioneer of that area. Her grandfather traded for items of Sioux beadwork that sparked her interest in American Indian materials, and that she later inherited. After moving to the Colorado Springs area with her parents around 1900, she married local attorney Robert S. Ellison in 1907. Robert enjoyed a long and prosperous career as an attorney for Midwest Refining. After living throughout the west, the couple retired to Manitou Springs in 1940 and purchased the Briarhurst Estate, the former home of Dr. William A. Bell.

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During their travels, Vida Ellison amassed a collection of over 1,500 items of pottery, baskets, silver and textiles. The 23 rooms at the Briarhurst were filled with Vida's collection and Robert's library of several thousand volumes of Western Americana. Vida Ellison died in Colorado Springs in 1967 and gave her collection of American Indian items to the Pioneers Museum in her will. The collection contained over 300 items, most of which were baskets.

Blankets & Weaving Traditions

Historians believe that the Navajo (also known as Diné) learned to weave from their Pueblo Indian neighbors. The Navajo and Pueblo peoples had extensive contact through both friendly trading and antagonistic raiding expeditions. Pueblo influence on the Navajo increased after the Spanish moved north into Pueblo lands beginning in the late sixteenth century. As a result, many Pueblo families fled into Navajo territory. By the middle of the seventeenth century the Navajo were highly skilled as weavers.

Traditional blankets were known as *mantas*. Meant to be worn, blankets were either wrapped around the shoulders or functioned as wrap-around dresses secured with a belt. The now highly collectible *Navajo Rug* was an invention of the late nineteenth century. It proved extremely popular among devotees of the Arts & Crafts Design movement who prized them for their bold, colorful designs and natural materials. Today, the tradition of *Navajo Weaving* continues to flourish as new generations of artists interpret this traditional craft.

Fobs & Fetishes

Traditionally, fetishes or amulets were made to hold the umbilical cord of a newborn baby. They conferred spiritual protection upon the child and helped to ensure them a long life. The Ute fetish seen here has a netted peyote-stitch technique with an elaborate design that shows a Southern Plains influence. Beaded umbilical cord bags were attached to the front of cradleboards as an infant's first toy.

The beaded watch fobs seen here were created by Navajo (also known as Diné) residents of local Cragmor Sanitarium. During the 1950s the Bureau of Indian Affairs launched a massive health program that eventually sent hundreds of American Indians with tuberculosis to fifteen institutions around the country.

While receiving treatment for their tuberculosis at Cragmor, female Navajo patients were encouraged to do beadwork as a form of occupational therapy. According to historian Douglas R. McKay, "The patients worked day in and day out to make beaded belts, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, badges, purses etc..." Over time the Navajo women at Cragmor received a tremendous amount of publicity for their fine beadwork and profited from mail order sales across the country.

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Moccasins

American Indian moccasins vary greatly in design and construction and generally reflect the pattern and beading preferences of a tribe or nation. Originally, American Indian beads were carved from natural materials such as shells, turquoise, amber, wood, animal bones, horns, and teeth. Glass beads were not used until after trade with European colonists began. Initially, most beads traded to tribes were made in Italy, and later the European region that became the country of Czechoslovakia.

The increasing availability and affordability of trade beads made beadwork a popular design style. Even though small in size, beads proved to be a tremendous labor-saving device. By utilizing a *Lazy Stitch* pattern, American Indian women pulled a thread or sinew through a number of beads before stitching them down. Beadwork did not require the time-consuming process of sorting, dyeing, washing, softening and flattening of porcupine quills for elaborate quillwork designs.

The first glass beads introduced to the Northern Plains by European traders in the 1800s were called *Pony Beads* because they were transported by pony (horse) pack trains.

Blue beads were popular because the color was rare in Indian dye sources. Around 1850, a smaller bead known as a “seed bead” was introduced. The smaller sized beads allowed artists to do more elaborate and intricate work. Seed beads from prior to 1930 tend to be more muted in color while those produced after 1930 are generally brighter in hue.

Pottery

Pottery is both extremely useful and an expression of artistry. Shapes, styles and sizes of pottery developed according to need and the region in which they were produced. Archaeologists believe that the earliest pots were created to gather water and to store grains and seeds. As the varied uses for pots became more specialized — regional traditions, techniques and design elements developed. Native peoples from throughout North America became known for their unique pottery shapes and styles. American Indian pottery continues to be beautiful, functional, and highly collectible.

Collector Highlights:

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Spencer Penrose was born to wealthy parents in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on November 2, 1865. After graduating from Harvard in 1886, Spencer followed his brother Richard Alexander, a geologist to the southwest. In 1892 he arrived in Colorado Springs and teamed up with an old friend, Charles Tutt. The two formed a real estate and investment firm in the nearby mining boom town of Cripple Creek. Through some shrewd investments, by 1896, the firm of Tutt & Penrose had earned \$200,000.

Further investments in a copper mine in Utah made the young Penrose into a millionaire. In 1906 Penrose married a wealthy widow, Julie McMillan and began a life of philanthropy and collecting. Sometime around 1910, Penrose purchased a collection of 91 pieces of Ancestral Pueblo (formerly known as Anasazi) pottery from the Mesa Verde and Chaco Canyon areas. The Penroses subsequently donated this collection of pottery to the Pioneers Museum in about 1911.

Adornment

Victoria Standing Bear Conroy, Oglala Lakota, created this spectacular fully beaded dress which weighs approximately 50 lbs. Conroy traded the dress to a family in South Dakota for \$1,000 worth of horses. Eventually the dress was sold to the Spotted Weasel family who frequently appeared in *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show*. While it is unknown if the dress was ever worn in performances, it remains a remarkably beautiful example of Victoria Conroy's artistic ability and the rich tradition of Sioux beadwork.

Collector Highlights:

Maude McFerran was born in Gallatin, Missouri on February 8, 1864. Her family moved to Colorado Springs nine years later and settled into a house at 215 S. Nevada. Maude married a stockbroker, William Wells Price in 1893, and the couple resided in Maude's childhood home. Mrs. Price was a composer, socialite, and collector of china, silver and glassware. Typical of her high social standing she belonged to many organizations including: the *Daughters of the American Revolution*, the *Pen Women's League of America*, and the *El Paso County Pioneers' Association* (EPCPA.)

Local interest in prehistoric Native culture was fueled by the creation of Mesa Verde National Park in 1906 and the Manitou Cliff Dwellings in 1907. Consequently, in 1911 Mrs. Price was instrumental in appropriating funds from the EPCPA to conduct an excavation of a prehistoric site in northern New Mexico and subsequently adding the artifacts to the collection. In 1938 she purchased the J. D. Clark Collection of American Indian beadwork, clothing, pipes and weapons and donated them to the Museum in honor of her husband, W.W. Price.

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Beaded Blanket Strip

American Flags were incorporated in the design of many beaded items. After American Indians were forcibly removed to reservations in the nineteenth century, sacred ceremonies such as the Sun Dance and the Bear Dance were banned by the Federal Government in an effort to strip American Indians of their language, culture and traditions. However, reservation officials encouraged large celebrations on the Fourth of July and other patriotic holidays. As a result, American Indian women made elaborate dresses and decorative elements that featured the American Flag. American Indian peoples worked within these restricted parameters to continue their traditions under the cloak of “patriotic celebration.”

American Flags had long been distributed at treaty negotiations as tokens of friendship between the United States Government and American Indians. American Indians who appeared in the popular Wild West Shows frequently adorned their elaborate show costumes with flags and other patriotic emblems. The decorative beaded strip seen here was meant to be sewn onto a blanket or other large surface. Many objects containing beaded flags were made specifically for the tourist trade. Today, the use of the flag on American Indian ceremonial clothing usually indicates military service of close family members.

Collector Highlights:

A significant portion of the Museum’s collection of Plains beadwork, war bonnets, moccasins and pipes came from the collection of J. D. Clark. Calling himself Sanke Gwanaf, (meaning White Feather,) Clark claimed that his Chippewa mother was the daughter of Chief White Horse. She died shortly after his birth and he was raised by an aunt who was married to a Kiowa man. His boyhood was spent on the Kiowa Reservation in Oklahoma. He served as a member of the Indian police and was sent west in 1879 to deal with the Ute uprising at White River.

In later years the Museum conducted an interview with his daughter who revealed that not a word of his story was true. Clark was born in Iowa in 1863, and obtained his collection in trades with the Sioux 1922. Regardless of his true identity, Clark was living in Colorado Springs in the 1930s and possessed a fabulous collection of American Indian material that the Pioneers Association wanted for their Museum.

On November 19, 1937, J. D. Clark requested \$268 in cash to pay for an eye operation, and thirty dollars a month for the rest of his life in exchange for over 70 items including a fully beaded Sioux dress, a fully beaded vest, other clothing and weapons. Maude McFerran Price (the Museum’s first Curator) negotiated a unique purchase arrangement. Price agreed to pay Clark one dollar a day until the sum of \$1,000 had been paid. She subsequently donated the collection to the Museum as the W.W. Price Memorial Collection, in honor of her late husband William Wells. Receipts show that she paid J.D. Clark every month until he died in April 1941. Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum, Leah Davis Witherow

Cradleboards

Ute Children spent most of their first year snugly laced inside a cradleboard. Although the construction and design of cradles changed over time and was greatly influenced by the traditions of neighboring tribes, by the 1870s the Ute adopted a board-backed cradle covered with hide and embellished with beadwork.

The high back on these cradleboards provided room for a sun shade made of willow basketry and a broad surface for elaborate decoration. The hide cover on cradleboards was often painted with white clay to indicate the child was a boy and yellow ochre for a girl. Additionally, many cradleboards were ornamented with tiny moccasins, umbilical cord fetishes, bells, and beads.

Traditionally, American Indian children were given positive attention and rarely received physical punishment. As Lone Wolf, Blackfeet, remembered, *“Among our people, children were never punished by striking them...kind words and good examples were much better.”*

Adults gave children a great amount of freedom and encouraged them to learn lessons through play. As a result, boys learned hunting and warrior skills by working with horses and going on pretend hunts. Girls played with dolls and learned to sew and cook. All children were taught to listen respectfully to elders reciting important stories, traditions and tribal histories.

Headdresses & Bows and Arrows

Bows and arrows were used for both hunting and warfare. The manufacture of both bows and arrows was done by men and was a laborious process with exacting standards. Crooked arrows proved worthless. According to historian Paul H. Carlson, the Plains Indians preferred to use Osage orange wood for their bows but they also used: ash, elm, cedar, willow, or mulberry wood. Bowstrings were made of rawhide strips, bison sinew, vegetable fibers or bear intestines.

Images of American Indians wearing war bonnets have appeared frequently in movies and television shows. However, in reality they were worn by only a small number of American Indian tribes in the Great Plains and western region of the country. Although Arapaho Chief Roman Nose famously wore his headdress into battle against federal troops, most American Indians reserved them for ceremonial occasions.

War bonnet headdresses had single or double rows of eagle feathers descending in a long 'tail' all the way to the ground. The feathers used were the tail feathers of the golden eagle, and typically each feather was earned through an act of bravery. Plains Indian war bonnets were also decorated with animal skins and beadwork.

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The acquisition of horses and guns by Plains Indians in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries intensified competition for the rich buffalo hunting grounds between the Platte and Arkansas Rivers in present day eastern Colorado. Tribes launched seasonal raids to acquire horses, expand trade opportunities and to protect or capture territory. Historian Paul H. Carlson states,

For the individual, capturing horses meant wealth and influence. Successful warfare brought prestige, honor and leadership, for men with enviable war honors advised headmen on tribal matters and gained influence among the political leaders. Moreover, war honors led to chieftancy...because war was a path to status...to denote their successful exploits [warriors] put feathers in their hair or in horned war bonnets...

By the 1850s, growing pressure from the seemingly endless rush of western settlers posed new challenges and responses from Plains Indians. Alliances were formed among tribes and military societies made up of the bravest warriors increasingly gained prominence in Plains culture.

The series of conflicts between western settlers or federal troops and native peoples is called the Indian Wars. Ultimately, the nineteenth-century American policy of *Indian Removal* resulted in the forced relocation of thousands of native peoples to American Indian reservations in the southwestern corner of the Colorado or outside the state altogether.

Pipes & Pipe Bags

Historically, tobacco was prized among American Indians and associated with ceremonies, oaths and sacred acts. Pipe smoking was reserved for men and was preceded by a set of rituals that varied by tribe and region. Tobacco was often mixed with local herbs and carried in small decorative pouches as can be seen here. Pipe bowls were often made of Catlinite, a type of stone named for explorer and artist George Catlin, who famously painted portraits of over 50 American Indian tribes in the 1830s. The distinctive red soapstone is found primarily in southwestern Minnesota but traveled west through an extensive American Indian trade network.

Historically, American Indian women were responsible for maintaining the home, and providing clothing and baskets for her family. Excellent sewing, quillwork and beading skills were matters of pride. As stated by Mourning Dove, Okanogan (1888-1936): "Decoration was highly prized on adults' clothing, children's gear, and a baby's cradleboard. A wife with a decorative knack was much regarded by the community and brought fame to her husband and family."

Quillwork was a highly specialized decorative art form and only women with special training had the right to do it. Cheyenne and Lakota women had to earn entry into *quillwork* societies in

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which the art was taught and supervised. Traditionally, women sorted, washed, and dyed the porcupine quills before softening them in their mouth and flattened them with their teeth. The quills were then painstakingly sewn onto hide or cloth.

Collector Highlights:

James Lee Dick began collecting pipes as a teenager. He obtained his first pipe in 1898 and continued collecting until his death in 1946. As the inventor of the metal pour spout used on the *Morton* salt box lid, James became quite wealthy. This allowed him to travel the world to pursue his passion for collecting pipes. Mr. Dick and his wife lived in Hutchinson Kansas but spent their summers in Cascade, Colorado. After visiting the Pioneers Museum they were impressed with the exhibits and staff. Before his death in 1946, he made it known that he wanted his collection to go to the Pioneers Museum. Numbering over 600 items, the James Lee Dick Pipe Collection was transferred to the Museum in 1948 and is considered one of the largest collections in existence.

Bags & Pouches

American Indians created a variety of different styles and sizes of bags to accommodate their possessions. The bags seen here are typical of traditional patterns and materials while also demonstrating the artistry of their creators. According to historian Ralph Coe, the type of bandolier bags seen here evolved from shot pouch bags of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Highly decorative, this bag was especially popular with Cree and Ojibwa (also known as Chippewa) peoples and was worn on special occasions.

Constructed of saddle leather, the Ute beaded pouch seen above was meant to be worn on a belt. It has metal cones known as *Tinklers* on the flap and bottom. Tin cones or *Tinklers* were initially fashioned from metal trade objects. Today bells and cones frequently appear on American Indian clothing worn for dances and ceremonies. However, their original purpose was very different as Jodi Gillette, Hunkpapa Lakota describes:

People wore jingly things at the bottom of their dresses so that others could hear them when they were coming...We had strong protocols about being around our fathers-in-law or certain other members of the family – you weren't really supposed to talk with them or be alone with them. The noise signaled to other people that you were approaching so they could react properly, either by leaving or getting somebody like a grandmother to be in the room or in the same area.

Breastplates & Armbands

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Made of bone *hair pipes*, breastplates were traditionally used as a form of body armor. Over time, their use became more decorative and ceremonial. Because *hair pipes* were labor intensive to create and therefore expensive, the abundant use of them in a necklace or breastplate was often an indication of wealth. Personal adornment varied greatly by region, tribe and individual taste. Plains Indians often wore necklaces, earrings, arm bands, hair ornaments and body paint.

The large blue and white beads on the bottom of this breastplate are called *Russian or Siberian* beads, but were probably not made in Russia. Bead historian Lois Sherr Dubin believes these beads may have been acquired by Russians in China where they had been imported from Europe. Russian fur traders brought them to the Northwest Coast of America and they moved eastward via intertribal trade.

Clothing & Embellishment

American Indian clothing illustrates a complex set of cultural traditions while allowing a broad palette for personal expression and identity. As Rebecca Lyan, an Athabaskan/Alutic artist describes, “Nothing is as personal as the clothes we wear. Clothing can be seen as a vessel that holds the human spirit.”

American Indian clothing is also a powerful example of adaptation and resourcefulness. After its introduction by European traders, woolen fabric was highly sought after and quickly utilized by native women. Due to its initial expense, trade cloth was used only as bits of decoration. Eventually entire dresses were made from cloth as hides became less available after buffalo populations dwindled.

Most of the woolen cloth used in trade came from the Gloucestershire region of England. Known as “saved-list” or “Indian cloth,” it was typically scarlet red or dark blue as seen here but also came in green and yellow. The term “saved-list” refers to the cloth’s undyed edges (known as lists) that instead of discarding, American Indian dressmakers incorporated into the design of the dress.

The eyeteeth of elk were a prized decoration as each animal only has two. The use of elk teeth reflected the fine hunting skills of male relatives, or indicated wealth that allowed the family to trade for these items. As seen here, dresses were decorated with cowrie and dentalium shells, ribbons, brass or copper discs, bells and tinklers.

Over time, lighter-weight cotton cloth was introduced by traders and was distributed as treaty payments. In colder weather, cloth, wool and hide dresses were layered over each other to keep the wearer warm. Although most photographs depict American Indian women wearing elaborate dresses like those seen here, most wore simple cloth or unadorned hide dresses and
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kept their prized clothing for special occasions. Ironically, most everyday clothing of American Indians can rarely be found in museum collections today as it was often discarded after being worn out.

The Jicarilla Apache dress seen above is an example of a two-hide dress made by matching two hides of deer, elk or bighorn sheep. Sometimes called “tail dresses,” the tail of the animal was left intact on each hide, and along with a section of the hide of the hind legs would be folded over to form a yoke as seen here. The deer tail is hanging from the middle of the yoke.

Whether made of hide or wool – dresses, shirts and vests reflect the creativity of women who adhered to styles developed and passed down by past generations, but who over time incorporated both new trade materials and the traditions of neighboring societies.

Leggings & Moccasins

American Indian culture embodies a spectacular diversity of languages, traditions and history – while also remaining fluid and adaptive. The general term *Plains Indians* describes the large group of native peoples who made their home between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River.

Plains Indians moved seasonally to hunt and many regularly met in warfare as enemies or at other times met peaceably to trade. As a result their objects defy easy classification. Over time, tribes adopted the patterns and styles of their neighbors. A great example of this fluidity of design and culture are the leggings seen here.

According to art historian Will Wroth, Great Basin tribes such as the Ute began to adopt designs and objects from their eastern neighbors on the plains. Although the Ute sometimes altered their color combinations, their beadwork is difficult to distinguish from Plains Indians. By the 1890s, Ute beadwork began to look more like the work of Cheyenne, Sioux and Arapaho. As a result the provenance (history of ownership or source) and attributions for many American Indian objects in museum collections may be vague or even incorrect.

Traditional clothing for Plains Indian men depended upon the season and varied by tribe. Breechcloths (or breachclouts) were a long rectangular piece of buckskin or cloth worn between the legs. In addition to breechcloths men often wore leggings made of leather or trade cloth like those seen here. Leggings provided an opportunity for beading, fringes, quillwork or other embellishment. In winter, bison robes, buckskin shirts and pants, mittens and fur hats were layered for warmth.

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Under their dresses, some Plains women attached their leggings to their moccasins to form a kind of boot, while others had separate leggings that fit over their ankles and lower legs as women's leggings were generally shorter than men's. Ute women originally wore boot like moccasins with knee-length leggings attached. However, by the 1890s they adopted a style more typical of the Cheyenne or Sioux as seen here.

Parfleches

Although the ancestor of the modern horse originated on the North American continent, the animal became extinct during an Ice Age approximately 10,000 years ago. The Spanish were the first Europeans to bring horses back to North America in the sixteenth century. By 1597, Hispanic settlers brought them as far north as modern day New Mexico where the Ute acquired them by 1640.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the adoption of the horse by Plains Indians revolutionized their cultures. Originally used to transport belongings from place to place, horses quickly became essential to hunting, conducting warfare, and became symbols of status and wealth. It is estimated that by the mid-nineteenth century the Southern Cheyenne had approximately eight to twelve horses per person.

Painted rawhide containers known as parfleches were commonly used to carry possessions — particularly food. These bags were lightweight, durable and came in a variety of different shapes and sizes. When not in use, the flaps on a parflech could be folded closed, laced and then the bag was strapped to the side of a horse. Originally made of elk or buffalo hide, the women that created them later used cow and horse hides to fashion these beautiful and useful containers. Additionally, tanned leather bags were created to carry clothing, tools and other possessions.

According to historian Virginia McConnell Simmons, although Ute men made quivers for arrows and scabbards for knives, women were responsible for preparing animal skins. To create soft, pliable tanned hide was a laborious process. Animal skins were scraped clean of flesh and hair, rubbed with animal brains, staked to the ground to stretch and dry, and finally the hides were smoked if a yellow hue was desired.

What's In a Name? Throughout this exhibit you will see the term ***American Indian***. Although many people still use the term *Native American*, the name generally preferred today is *American Indian*. According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs: "*The term 'Native American' came into usage in the 1960s...*" and can seem dry and bureaucratic to some. By choosing to use the term *American Indian*, the CSPM is following the example set by the Smithsonian Institution when naming the *National Museum of the American Indian*.

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As Christina Berry, Cherokee, explains, “*In the end, the term you choose to use (as an Indian or non-Indian) is your own personal choice... The recommended method is to refer to a person by their tribe, if that information is known. The reason is that the Native peoples of North America are incredibly diverse. It would be like referring both a Romanian and an Irishman as European...*”

Where did the Term *Anasazi* Go? Following the lead of the National Park Service and many historians and archaeologists, we have chosen to use the term *Ancestral Puebloans* instead of *Anasazi* in this exhibit. *Anasazi* is a Navajo word that means “ancestral enemy or ancient enemy.” Many southwestern tribes who are descendents of *Ancestral Puebloans* prefer to call their ancestors by their own tribal name and in their own language. The Ancestral Puebloans lived in the four corners region of the Southwest (including parts of present day Colorado) until about seven hundred years ago.

For more information about this fascinating history we recommend reading:
[The Mesa Verde World: Explorations in Ancestral Puebloan Archaeology](#) by David Noble Grant.