



'ROUND ROBBINS

Newsletter of the Friends of the Robbins Museum /MAS

Fall 2006

MAS Adopts New Policy Regarding NAGPRA

Curtiss Hoffman

In 1989, after years of negotiation, Congress passed a new law regarding the treatment of Native American and Native Hawaiian burials and sacred objects. This law, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA, PL-101-601), defines five categories of cultural materials:

- human remains;
- associated funerary objects (objects that are known to have been placed with individual human remains either at the time of death or later, as part of the death rite or ceremony of a culture);
- unassociated funerary objects (objects which are no longer associated with human remains, but are identified by a preponderance of the evidence to have been so associated at the time of the burial);
- sacred objects (specific ceremonial objects which are needed by traditional Native American religious leaders for the practice of traditional Native Americans by their present day adherents); and
- cultural patrimony (objects having ongoing historical, traditional, or cultural importance central to a Native American group or culture, rather than being owned by any individual Native American).

Federally recognized Native tribes are provided with the authority to request the repatriation of their objects from museums, which are defined as "any institution . . . that receives Federal funds and has possession of, or control over, Native American cultural items." Receiving Federal funds is defined as "receipt of funds by a museum after November 16, 1990. from a Federal agency through any grant, loan, contract, or other arrangement . . . Federal funds provided for any purpose that are received by a larger entity of which the museum is a part are considered Federal funds for the purposes of these regulations."

Over the past 16 years, the MAS Board has undergone an evolution of its views on the issue of repatriation. We agreed:

- That the skeletal remains of Native Americans in the Society's custody be returned to the Native Americans (via MHC), with the provision to take photographs of the skulls for research purposes (this was done in 1992);
- That the Society go on record as recommending to its members and sister organizations to return human remains to the appropriate Native groups.
- That the Society will make a good faith effort to abide by and comply with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). This policy includes the following steps:
 - To adhere to all future Federal regulations that are developed for NAGPRA that apply to the Massachusetts Archaeological Society and the Robbins Museum of Archaeology;
 - To conduct a collections inventory of the Robbins Museum of Archaeology holdings and to prepare a NAGPRA summary. This inventory began, with paid and volunteer staff, within six months of March 22, 1997.
 - Once a NAGPRA summary for the Robbins Museum is complete, to submit it to the NAGPRA office in Washington for their approval and for notification to appropriate tribes.
 - To maintain a separate storage "place of respect" for funerary objects or other items potentially subject to the NAGPRA act.
 - 5) To notify the Museum's Native Advisors and Wampanoag Repatriation Confederacy of the above Repatriation Policy and Implementation Plan for their review and comment and to notify them that any

claims should be put into writing and to share with them any information we have available to help them with their request. (March 22, 1997)

Since we repatriated the human remains 14 years ago, almost all of the NAGPRA-sensitive objects we have in the Museum fall into the last 3 categories of cul-tural material. Only two items, a pot and a spoon from a Contact period burial from Wapanucket, are associated funerary objects. The Board has voted to return these items to the Native community.

For a long time, the Board considered that we were not subject to the provisions of NAGPRA because we had not received any Federal funds. The steps de-tailed above were undertaken 2222 been informed by the Wampanoag Repatriation Con-federacy that because we accepted money from the Massachusetts Cultural Council subsequent to November 16, 1990, we are subject to NAGPRA, due to the fact that Massachusetts Cultural Council money is in part Federal money. We have investi-gated this and we find that indeed the Mass. Cultural Council is partly funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, a Federal agency. For this reason, the Board acknowledged at its meeting on September 9, 2006, that by accepting moneys from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Society has accepted Federal funds and is therefore legally bound by the provisions of NAGPRA. The Board has com-mitted the Society to a good faith effort to complete its responsibilities under NAGPRA. We have in-2formed the Native committee of our decision, and we look forward to working with them in the future.

What we need in order to complete the inventory is a combination of funding and volunteer hours. About 90% of the collections in the Museum have been recorded in longhand on inventory forms, including an indication as to whether or not they meet the NAGPRA criteria. We need some experienced members, or archaeology students, to help with the recording of about 20 boxes plus the collections received since 1993 and some of the items currently on display. Less than half of the longhand forms have been entered into our computer database, and for this we need funding to pay someone to keypunch them in. Once these two jobs are complete, we can move on to the next stage of the NAGPRA process, which is to publish the inventory. We are currently seeking funding for these two projects.

An Appeal to the Friends of the Robbins Museum ***Ted Ballard, MAS Treasurer***

The Robbins Museum of Archaeology needs your support!

Over the past 6 years, we have expanded to occupy most almost all of the first floor of the Read Building. We have constructed a library; a lecture hall; a major exhibit entitled “A Walk Through Time” which allows visitors to view the progression of Native cultures in this area from Paleo-Indian times through the present; and several exhibits including the Wapanucket site, the Middleboro Little League site, the *mishoon* (dugout canoe), snowshoes, and pottery; a “place of respect” for culturally sensitive items; an archive room, and several storage and work areas. In addition, we have undertaken major and minor building repairs to our roof, our heating system, the exterior of the building, our electrical system, and our foundation. The Museum has been able to host many

visits from school groups and individuals, with over 300 visitors in the past 12 months. If you haven't been to the Museum lately, we invite you to come and see how your contributions have been put to use. We are currently open on Wednesdays from 9 - 4 and Saturdays from 10 - 2.

Up to this point, our funding sources for all of these efforts have included local grants, donations from local businesses and the Friends of the Robbins Museum, and sales at our Museum store. However, these sources are not sufficient for us to be able to expand our display space and to be open to the public for additional hours. In addition, maintenance costs for the building have continued to rise, due to increases in fuel costs, etc. We have attempted to adjust to the situation by cutting back on the number of paid hours for our one staff person, the Museum Administrator, as well as other economies. However, this curtails the availability of the Museum to the public, and it restricts us from applying for some outside grants which require a paid staff person who works for more hours per week.

Much of the regular support upon which we rely comes from the annual contributions of the Friends of the Robbins Museum. The Friends receive invitations to lectures and other programs at the Museum, as well as *'Round Robbins*. Friends also have the satisfaction of knowing that they are making an ongoing contribution to support the development of the Robbins Museum, a truly unique institution in our Commonwealth.

Won't you consider making a substantial contribution to the Friends of the Robbins Museum? Special benefits for large donations are available. As always, your contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. We thank you for your past support of the Museum, and we sincerely hope that you will continue to support our efforts!

Museum Coordinator's Report

Eugene Winter

Many projects keep us busy! It's a good thing we have hard-working men and women to accomplish what needs to be done. I wish we had more volunteers to help with the work. If you are inclined to help, give us a call at the Museum (508-947-9005) on Wednesdays when we can be sure there will be someone present to answer your questions.

We recently had a meeting of the Museum Policy Committee to consider policies necessary to the Society and the Robbins Museum. Our intention is to refine our procedures on accessions and deaccessioning to help improve the quality of our collections and record-keeping. I want to thank members of the committee, who include:

Tonya Largy

Curtiss Hoffman

John Rempelakis

Frederica Dimmick

Craig Chartier

Barbara Brown

We wish to thank Kevin Quackenbush for arranging with the Foxboro Company to donate the following office equipment to the Museum:

<i>1 table</i>	<i>18 chairs</i>
<i>8 bookcases</i>	<i>9 filing cabinets</i>
<i>1 chalkboard</i>	<i>3 dry-easel boards</i>
<i>1 computer</i>	<i>1 Extographic</i>
<i>1 overhead projector</i>	<i>projector</i>

Tom Lux donated a dozen boxes of books for our library. This includes whole sets of periodicals as well as books on archaeology and anthropology. Kathy Fairbanks, our librarian, will therefore be kept busy for months to come. It has become obvious that we have to expand our library space. Plans have been made to move one wall five feet and to create a new entrance near our lecture hall.

Our exhibits are being developed slowly. Even so, artifacts laid out in exhibit cases in preparation for mounting with labels and illustrations are of interest to students and visitors. Hopefully we will complete all of the new exhibits by this Fall.

MAS Welcomes Judith Scott as Development Coordinator

Frederica Dimmick

In the last issue of *'Round Robbins*, the Librarian of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society, Kathryn Fairbanks, was highlighted as one of the "jewels" of the Society's many volunteers. This issue will highlight another "jewel," Judith Scott of Wayland, who has assumed the role of Volunteer Development Coordinator for the Society. Working as a member of the Board-appointed Development Committee to research initiatives for fund raising, Judith will serve as both consultant and grants writer.

Judith comes to us with 30 years of solid experience in the computer industry, most at Digital Corporation where she was first a technical editor and writer, and later assumed positions as Senior Documentation Manager, Engineering Operations Manager, and Engineering Services Manager. In 1999 her Digital business unit became part of Force Computers, which two years later closed down on September 11, 2001. Judith refers to this coincidence of happenings as "a life-altering confluence of events for all of us."

Judith chose to go into "semi-retirement" at this point, and to "pursue a life-long interest in museums, art, and history." She has since attended four courses in the Museum Studies Program at Harvard University Extension School, and one as well in Grant Proposal writing. She has served as volunteer docent at the Danforth Museum of Art, and presently is Volunteer Guide at the DeCordova Art Museum and Sculpture Park following a 9-month training program. She was employed as Lead Guide at the Gropius House in Lincoln for 14 months, and has also

been a paid Development Assistant periodically at the Danforth Museum. Judith says that, “in that capacity I gained useful fundraising and membership experience.”

Since coming on board at the MAS in January, Judith has met with the Development Committee several times, and “under its authority (she) subscribed to the Foundation Center Online Directory and researched dozens of foundation grant makers.” Further, she “wrote and submitted two grant proposals and seven Letters of Inquiry,” and as well reviewed hundreds of pages of grant application guidelines and carried out correspondence and phone conversations when necessary. Although one of the grants she submitted for us was rejected, we were invited by the Fund to reapply next year. Competition for non-profit grant money is even more keen than usual today and grantors may have less to share. The status of our second application is not yet known.

Judith notes that she was eager to try out her newly minted grant writing skills when she encountered her neighbor, Tonya Largy, MAS president, at a neighborhood gathering last fall. Once Tonya explained that the MAS was seeking to raise funds, both women felt “that this might be serendipitous.” Serendipitous, indeed, for us both, and Society members wish the best for Judith in her use of new skills... and for us in reaping funds for the Society.

Welcome Back the Herring Program

By Craig Chartier

On May 19th and 21st, 2006, the Massachusetts Archaeological Society and the Robbins Museum of Archaeology sponsored a Welcome Back Herring program. People have collected herring each spring in Middleboro for thousands of years. Unfortunately, due to a variety of factors, the spring runs of herring up the Nemasket River are threatened today. The days of fun and education included a tour of the museum, a walking tour of the Wareham Street Fish Run on the Nemasket River led by archaeologist Craig S. Chartier and a conservation person, and ongoing activities that emphasized conservation. The museum visit highlighted the Native fishing exhibit, which includes a display of tools used in fishing along the Nemasket. Activities at the Museum included building a model of a Native fishing weir, making a hat in the shape of a favorite anadromous fish and making their own fishing net to take home.

The Wareham Street Dam and Fishway, located on the Nemasket River in Middleborough, Massachusetts, is the site of the largest fish run in the State.

Over 1 million fish per year travel up this river to utilize the 5000 acres of spawning ground located up river. The site of the present fish weir, built in

1996, is believed to be in the same location that native people have fished at for thousands of years. A weir likely existed at this site for much of that time, until 1687 when all weirs in Middleborough were ordered removed, except the one on East Main Street. Following the removal of the weir, this site became the location of a dam in 1762 that was used to power a forge, gristmill and shovel works with a cotton mill, sawmill and box factory also being located at this site at various times before 1900.

Herring can achieve a maximum size of 44 centimeters and a weight of 1 kilogram. Beginning in April and continuing to early June, they move from the open ocean into fresh water rivers and streams to ponds in order to spawn. Many of the seventeenth century reports on their occurrences may pertain to either herring or alewives, as these names appear to have been somewhat interchangeable. These fish are best known as having been the fish of choice to

manure fields of Native corn. Winslow stated that when the herring and alewives travel into the Town Brook in downtown Plymouth in April and May "The inhabitants during the said two months take them up every day in hogsheads. And with those they eat not they manure the ground, burying two or three in each

hill of corn and may, when they are able, if they see cause, lade whole ships with them." This practice was also noted by Thomas Morton who stated that

"Inhabitants dung their ground with them every acre taking 1000 fish. This practice is only for Indian maize, not for English grains." The settlers at

Plymouth constructed a simple weir in this brook with which to catch the fish. They had it "shut in with planks, and in the middle with a little door, which slides up and down, and at the sides with trellice work, through which water has its course, but which they can also close with slides." This would have been similar to the Native practice of shutting the river with a few stones to direct the fishes course. They then would have scooped the fish out of the water in front of the rocks with a " net like a purse net put upon a round hooped stick with a handle".

Fish such as herring, alewives and menhaden were called

munnowhatteaug, which comes from *munnowquoh-teau*'which means 'he who enriches the earth'

The Wampanoag employed three techniques to catch fish. These were hook and line; traps and nets; and spears and arrows. The use of these three techniques

varied by season and by the types of fish that were being sought. The first method, hook and line, is the simplest.

One of the best descriptions of hook and line fishing for the Wampanoag comes from Samuel de Champlain "The natives came in a boat who had been fishing for cod, which are found in very large

numbers. These they catch with hooks made of a piece of wood to which they fasten a bone in the shape of a spear, and fasten it very securely. The whole has a fang shape, and the line made of the bark of trees. The bone is

fastened on with cordage, plant used is gathered, not cultivated and grew to a height of 4-5'." The hooks would

have been called *Hoquanun/Hoquanunash*, '*om (aum)*', or *Uhquan* in the Native language. Literally these words come from the adjective *uhquae* which means "at the point", therefore an *uhquan* would be "the thing at the end or

at the point of the line". There were also sizes to hooks just as we have today, larger hooks called *maumacocks*

(*Maumuhquanash* = (*m*) great + (*aum*)

fish + (*uhquaash*) hooks for larger fish and *peewasicks* (*Peawe*-small + *sohk*-prevailer) or small hooks for smaller fish. The lines used for fishing, the *Aumanep/Aumanapeash* (*aum*- fishhook + *anepna-peash*- line) or *peminneaht ome* (*peminneaht*- that which is twisted (line) + *ome*- fish) were probably made from the inner bark of the basswood tree as

Champlain says, and the cordage used to tie the two piece hooks together was made from milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) or dogbane (*Apocynum andro-saemifolium*). It is interesting to note that they did not appear to have made the lines out of milkweed or dogbane, possibly because the long strips of bass-wood would produced a stronger line. On the line would be a weight or sinker that causes the bait and hook to sink in the water and not to be blown by any current.

Probably the most labor saving method of catching fish for the Wampanoag was with the use of fish traps, nets and weirs. Each of these devices could and were used separately but often there was a combination of weirs and traps or nets and traps. Weirs were a common occurrence in rivers, bays and estuaries and they had been used by people in New England for at least 3-4000 years. Josselyn reported the English at Charlestown had built a weir" where they catch Bass, shad, alewives, frost fish and smelts, in 2 tides they have gotten 100,000 of these fish." The shapes and sizes of the weirs would vary depending on the nature of the river or bay in which the weir has been made, the amount and size of the fish which were hoped to be caught, and the amount of labor which was wished to be expended on the weir. Some may have been strait fences across the river to direct the fish and others may have had arches and loops similar to those from Virginia. Speck stated that temporary weirs could be constructed using nets which had stone sinkers attached to the bottom.

Weirs appear to have been used especially in the late spring and summer. Their use is noted when the alewives are running in April and when the bass are running in July. When the English of Plymouth journeyed to the sachem Massosoit's village of Pokanoket in 1621, they said that they found many natives fishing upon a weir set up in the Taunton River at a place called Titicut.

Nets were commonly made of some strong plant fiber such as what the English called 'hemp'. Most likely this fiber was milkweed or dogbane. The nets that the Natives made were of three types. The first were simple purse nets that were attached to a round hooped stick. Josselyn stated that these were used in fresh ponds, where they were used for catching herring and other anadromous fish that entered these ponds in the spring.

The final technique that was described for catching fish was the use of arrows or spears to impale the fish. This was especially noted for catching sturgeon.

Wood stated that the men would go out at night with torches and they would "carry a 40 fathom line with a sharp bearded dart fastened at one end." This was also noted by Williams who stated that they would use a 'harping iron' to do so. Flat fish such as flounder and possibly skate were caught from a canoe using a long spear, similar to the type used to catch lobster, two or three yards long. Alternately, they may have been speared in shallow water with a spear

make from a horseshoe crab tail. Fish were also shot with arrows when nets had been set in a little cove or river. Winslow noted a Native doing this in July of 1621 while journeying in Wampanoag territory .

All in all there was excellent turnout for both days with a total of 44 people arriving and participating in the program. The weather cooperated wonderfully, as did the herring.

The Ferguson Collection

By William B. Taylor

A new exhibit from central Massachusetts has been set up at the Robbins Museum. This collection high-lights choice artifacts found by Charles Chauncey Ferguson, who lived in Millbury, Massachusetts. He was an old-time collector, who surface-hunted central Massachusetts sites extensively. Some of his finest recoveries were pictured in *Antiquities of the New England Indians* by Charles G. Willoughby (1935). C.C. Ferguson also collected many fine artifacts from the excavation of the Heard Pond site in Wayland. The next time you are at the Robbins Museum, take a few minutes to view this fine collection!

A Note of a Passing

We have been informed that Patricia Robbins Smith, Doc Robbins' last daughter, passed away in early September. Pat was a regular contributor to our Museum efforts, and was always interested to find out about new developments at the Museum. She will be missed!

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