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# A History of Anthropology at the California Academy of Sciences

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**Anthropology, as a field of study, has always been part of the California Academy of Sciences, although its level of visibility fluctuated widely over the years. The following pages trace the history of this field at the Academy from its beginnings in the second half of the 1800s, when it was loosely directed by a series of well-intentioned but untrained honorary curators, to its attainment of official status in 1900 with the appointment of Alfred L. Kroeber as the first curator. A series of events, most notably the 1906 earthquake, sent the fledgling department into a 70-year hiatus, although the Academy continued to acquire anthropological materials. The Department was reinstituted in the mid-1970s with the endowment of a curatorial chair and the hiring of a professional staff. Since then, Anthropology has acquired a number of important collections and it has played a vital role at the Academy, particularly in the area of exhibits and other public programs. More recently, original research undertaken by the Irvine Chair of Anthropology has followed more closely the avenues of research by curators in other Academy departments, and the Academy's anthropological collection of primarily ethnographic materials has gained increasing recognition and use by outside researchers and museums. As the Academy prepares to move into a new facility in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, Anthropology is well poised to continue helping Academy visitors to study and understand themselves.**

Anthropology at the California Academy of Sciences has had a checkered yet remarkable history, even though it has existed for only a small fraction of the Academy's history as an official Department of Anthropology. Despite this, anthropologists have been affiliated with the Academy, anthropological collections have been made for the Academy, and anthropological exhibits have been produced in the Academy during most of the institution's 150-years of Academy history. In this paper, we review what is known of the major events and personalities in the history of anthropology as a discipline at the California Academy of Sciences and survey its current collections and activities. As will become readily apparent, the Academy played a major role in the development of the science of anthropology in the United States in the early twentieth century. Although the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906 were a disastrous disruption to the pursuit of anthropology at the Academy, interest in the scientific study of humanity at the institution proved unquenchable. The department was eventually reconstituted in 1976, and continues to make many and varied contributions to science and the community.

## Early Beginnings

The Academy began to acquire anthropological materials from around the world very soon

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after its founding in 1853. The minutes of the Academy for 25 April 1853 record that one of the first donations made to the institution came from Samuel A. Hastings, who presented "an otter-skin, bows, arrows and quiver, small baskets, a bone drinking-cup, a mountain squirrel skin and a gray-fox skin, obtained by him from the Rogue River Indians" (Leviton and Aldrich 1997:13). Lectures on anthropological topics were also popular in the early days of the Academy, such as that by William Dall in 1868 on the natural history of Alaska and the nature of the "Esquimaux" resident there (Leviton and Aldrich 1997:103). Following the Hastings donation, many materials were given to the Academy in its early days, including the Indian totem pole brought by the Harriman Expedition from Alaska, and dolls dressed in the traditional tribal dress of Yuma Indian women, given to the Academy in 1899 (Leviton and Aldrich 1997:389–390). Others were purchased, such as a collection of bow, arrows and spears of the Macabbe Tribe of the Philippines accessioned in 1899 (Leviton and Aldrich 1997:389–390). Loans of "ethnological specimens" for exhibits outside of the Academy began as early as 1876 (Leviton and Aldrich 1997:194). It is worth noting that the aforementioned Yuma dolls remain in the Academy's collection today, despite having lost their hair and clothes, which were consumed in the 1906 fire.

One of the most significant aspects of the Academy's early anthropological collections is that the majority of materials acquired between 1853 and 1900 were items that represented the material culture of California's rapidly dwindling native populations. According to an inventory of accessions dated 5 December 1896, a great variety and large number of these materials were purchased for Academy collections, from grinding stones and pestles for acorn pounding, to a deer snare, a necklace of pine nuts, and numerous elk horn tools and eating utensils. The collection of baskets in this inventory alone is impressive, comprising baskets for acorn meal, conical carrying baskets, acorn storage baskets, "soup cooking baskets," "soup eating baskets," and women's basket caps. The building of the collection of material culture representing native Californians was to become the major focus of collection-building activity after the official founding of the Academy's Department of Anthropology in 1900.

One of the problems encountered in assembling any wide-ranging history of anthropology is that, prior to 1900, the field was not known by that name. Rather, it was known by the names of some of its constituent fields — ethnology, osteology, and archaeology. It is also important to note that the earliest appointments made by the Academy in the field that was later to be called anthropology were, for the most part, self-taught naturalists who lacked scientific training in any aspect of the field. George Hewston was the Academy's first official appointment in this area, having been named curator of ethnology in 1872 (Leviton and Aldrich 1997:140). Hewston was a man of broad interests: he was also a curator of general zoology and had served as second vice president of the Academy several times. After a short hiatus, Arthur B. Stout was appointed curator of ethnology and osteology in 1876, and again from 1881–1884, and finally, in 1886 (Leviton and Aldrich 1997). Under Stout's stewardship, collections of ethnographic materials grew, and papers on ethnology were read (Leviton and Aldrich 1997). Stout's own interest in ethnology led him to pursue research on the Aleutian Islands and ultimately to write the treatise, "Contributions for the History of the Aleutian Islands" (Leviton and Aldrich 1997:379–380). In 1887, David Wooster began a one-year appointment as curator of ethnology and osteology. In the same year, the famous ethnologist Frank Cushing gave a lecture on his life with the Zuni of New Mexico.

In the years between 1888 and 1896, curatorial appointments in "ethnology," "archaeology, ethnology and lower animals," "osteology," and "archaeology" were variously filled by Adley H. Cummins, Theodore Hittell, Gustav Eisen, Charles Keeler, and J.C. Merriam (Leviton and Aldrich 1997). The polymath Hittell must be singled out for particular attention here, as his keen interest in the ethnology and material culture of native Californians inspired him to read papers at the

Academy such as "Indian Pictographs at Soda Springs, Placer County" in 1890 (Leviton and Aldrich 1997:315.)

## Alfred L. Kroeber and the Birth of the Discipline of Anthropology

In 1899, the president of the Academy, David Starr Jordan, began the search for a curator of the newly christened discipline of anthropology. Although it is not clear why Jordan initiated the search at this time, he was no doubt aware of the emergence of anthropology as a comprehensive academic discipline, for instance, at Columbia University under the leadership of Franz Boas. Jordan asked Boas to recommend a suitable candidate for this position, and he first suggested his student and experienced museum collector, Roland Dixon (Jacknis 2002). When Dixon turned down Jordan's invitation, Boas recommended another student, Alfred L. Kroeber, who was then in the late stages of completing his Ph.D. degree at Columbia (Jacknis 2002). Kroeber accepted Jordan's invitation and came to San Francisco in August 1900 (Kroeber 1970). Excerpts from Kroeber's letter of 7 January 1901[1] to the California Academy of Sciences, recorded in the California Academy of Sciences' Officer and Curator Reports for 1900**,** are relevant here:

> To the California Academy of Sciences:
>
> A department of Anthropology was instituted by your council in the year just past. I was placed in charge September 1.
>
> Obviously, at the outset of a new department, organization was called for, to be succeeded by efforts at development.
>
> In the four months elapsed, the standard scientific system of cataloguing, labeling, and arrangement has been adopted, and applied to the anthropological collection of the Academy. The collection in the Museum was divided into two sections, one devoted to archaeology, the other to ethnology; …. It is believed that the exhibit it is now as well displayed as possible with the present limited equipment. New cases are the first requirement if the anthropological portion of the Academy's Museum is to grow….
>
> While organization and preparation required primary attention, there has been considerable growth in the collections. Some specimens have been presented to the Academy, and some obtained by exchange. Field work was carried on both in the North and the South of the State, resulting in a collection of Indian implements and regalia from the Klamath river; a unique collection of baskets; and a miscellaneous collection, largely of pottery, from the Colorado river. Through the cooperation of the American Museum of Natural History, the Academy also secures a series of casts of the [heads and hands] Indians of Middle California….
>
> The results of the year may be summed up in the statement that the department of Anthropology has been put on a satisfactory basis for future work and expansion.
>
> Respectfully,
> A.L. Kroeber,
> Curator of Anthropology

This letter clearly establishes the fact that a Department of Anthropology was formally in place at the Academy in 1900, making it the oldest such department in the western United States. This preceded the founding of the department and museum of anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley in September 1901, the institution recently touted as having the oldest department of anthropology west of the Mississippi (Calpestri 2002; Jacknis 2002).

Kroeber was a paid curator at the California Academy of Sciences from September 1900 throughout most or all 1901. He also received, in 1901, financial support to carry out field research on the lower Klamath River, which he did in the summer of 1901 (Moratto 1976). It appears that

[1] Kroeber's letter is actually dated 7 January 1900. This date is almost certainly in error, as Kroeber had nothing to do with Academy collections before August 1900. At the turn of a new year, it is common for a writer to mistakenly write the previous year when recording a date.

near the end of 1901, Kroeber approached Jordan and the Academy's Board of Directors for further funding for field research. Although initially approved by Jordan, the Board turned down Kroeber's request because it was decided that the Academy would not allocate money to curators for purposes of field research (Moratto 1976). Further, Kroeber was informed that his position would not be renewed for the year 1902 (Moratto 1976), possibly because Jordan felt that Kroeber was too immature to do a proper job. In a letter dated 18 January 1901 from Jordan to Boas, Jordan complained that, "Mr. Kroeber does not have the initiative which will enable him to accomplish here anything of importance outside of purely scientific investigation. He is too young and boyish to produce much impression on men who might be interested in his work, and it seems to be necessary to tell him what to do in order to get anything in particular done, while none of us know what he ought to do" (quoted in Jacknis 2002:530). Kroeber's wife later commented that, "It seems a quaint episode at this distance. There was nothing quaint or amusing about it close up. It is never pleasant to be fired, however pleasantly" (Kroeber 1970:57).

This turn of events did not appear to be a problem for Kroeber himself, as he had by then already secured a position as Instructor at the University of California Museum of Anthropology (Jacknis, 2002). Despite the fact that Kroeber's paid position with the Academy was not renewed after 1901, he continued to serve as honorary curator of anthropology from 1902 through 1905. During this time, he gave "directions in reference to [the collection of] anthropological specimens" to collectors such as Rollo Beck (Leviton and Aldrich 1997:414–415), supervised the accession of collections and duly filed annual reports of the department's activities. In his report for 1905 (dated 20 December 1905), he states, "During this year the Department has experienced an uneventful steady growth…. The total number of specimens in the Department is now above three thousand. As the work of cataloguing the collection was completed a year ago…, the information relating to all of these three thousand specimens, with the exception of a few of the most recent accessions, is now fully recorded."

Kroeber's experiences in working on collections of native Californian materials and conducting field research in northern California in 1900–1901 for the Academy were to be of momentous importance in shaping his career, and the direction of anthropology as a discipline in the United States. It was on the basis of this work that Kroeber developed what was to be a lifelong interest in the material culture and languages of native Californians. He realized that he was living at a unique time in history, when a once highly diverse group of indigenous peoples — the native Califor-nians — was rapidly vanishing. Kroeber's efforts to record the life ways and languages of the groups ultimately resulted, in 1925, in his possibly most influential publication, the monumental *Handbook of the Indians of California*, published by the Smithsonian Institution.

Sometime after Kroeber joined the University of California Museum of Anthropology (Fig. 1), in about 1910, he hired his first assistant (Moratto 1976). This appointment is relevant to the history of the Academy and to the history of anthropology in the United States because the person appointed was Edward W. Gifford. Gifford was hired as a curator of conchology at the Academy at the age of 15, and soon developed an expertise in ornithology as well (Moratto 1976). After leaving the Academy and joining Kroeber in 1910, Gifford went on to become an accomplished anthropologist, distinguishing himself in the study of the natives of the California interior (Moratto 1976). His book, *Miwok Material Culture* (1933), co-authored with Samuel A. Barrett, remains a standard reference for all students of California Native American culture.

By the 1930s, A.L. Kroeber had established himself as the dean of American anthropologists. Kroeber's oeuvre included theoretical and descriptive studies, numbering nearly 500 published works, which covered the breadth of anthropology, from ethnology, linguistics, and folklore to archaeology (Moratto, 1976). His interests even extended to the early evolution of culture and the

nature of culture in nonhuman animals. Kroeber was eventually elected a Fellow of the California Academy of Sciences and, in his letter of acceptance, expressed his warm feelings and esteem for the Academy as the institution that had first attracted him to California and had first ignited his lifelong fascination with its native peoples.

FIGURE 1. Alfred L. Kroeber ca. 1911. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Call number 1978.128 Box 2.

## THE EARTHQUAKE OF 1906 AND ANTHROPOLOGY AT THE ACADEMY

The earthquake and fire of April 1906 were catastrophic to the Academy, and resulted in the loss of most of the institution's collections and records. This included all of the Academy's anthropology collections, except for a small assemblage of items that was salvaged, boxed and stored after the fire.

The annals of Academy history record that the only silver lining to the dark cloud of the earthquake disaster was the fact that, at the time of the temblor, the schooner *Academy* was sailing back to San Francisco from its expedition to the Galápagos Islands (with E.W. Gifford, among others, on board), laden with specimens that would catalyze the revitalization of the Academy. As luck or bad luck would have it, the Galápagos were rich in plant and animal life, but were bereft of people or materials of anthropological interest. (The Galápagos Islands lacked an indigenous human population and were first colonized from Ecuador in the seventeenth century. The lack of human influence on the Islands certainly enhanced their biological diversity and richness, but left little for anthropologists.) Although the institution rejoiced at the return of the schooner *Academy* from the Galápagos in November 1906, no anthropological materials were among the thousands of specimens on board. Lacking any material catalyst for the resuscitation of the Department of Anthropology, and with A.L. Kroeber by this time well ensconced at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of California, the Academy in 1906 entered a 70-year long period of quiescence in anthropology, during which no curatorial appointments in the discipline were made. Despite the fact that the Department of Anthropology did not officially exist at the Academy after 1906, collections of ethnographic materials continued to be donated and accessioned. (See section on Significant Collections below.)

The small collection of anthropological artifacts salvaged from the 1906 earthquake had an interesting history. In April 1969, a member of the staff of the Academy's Exhibits Department, Herb Pruett, was exploring the basement of the North American Bird and Mammal Halls in the Academy's premises in Golden Gate Park. There he discovered, in a dimly lit area, a stack of fifteen wooden boxes, most of which were nailed shut. In a few of the open boxes, he discovered a cache of ceramic pots and figurines, wrapped in 1906 newspapers (Richardson 1970). When it was realized that this group of boxes contained the remains of the Academy's pre-1906 anthropology collections, a flurry of activity ensued. A specially devised area near the Exhibits Department was

FIGURE 2. Anthropological collections salvaged from the 1906 earthquake and fire, as they were rediscovered at the Academy in 1969. Photograph courtesy of the Archives of the California Academy of Sciences.

dedicated to the operation of unpacking and cataloguing the materials, and many eager staff and volunteers came forward to assist in the work (Richardson 1970) (Fig. 2). The boxes ultimately yielded several distinct collections: a heterogeneous group of Polynesian artifacts, a group of about 30 artifacts collected by Kroeber made by the Mojave Indians of the American Southwest, and 185 pre- and post-Columbian pots and figurines, plus some tools and jewelry (Richardson 1970). Perhaps the most important of the salvaged materials were those constituting the Elgueta Collection of nearly 1100 Mayan ceramic and stone artifacts. These materials were acquired in 1894 after their display at the Mid-Winter Fair in San Francisco, and made up the bulk of the salvaged items from 1906. To this day it is still not known who was responsible for salvaging the collections from the ruins of the Academy's Market Street premises in June or July 1906. Moratto (1976) speculated that it may have been A.L. Kroeber himself, but this is probably not the case because he later referred to his 1901 collection of Mojave pottery in an appendix entitled, "Memoranda on the Destroyed Academy Collection" (Kroeber and Harner 1955:12). In this appendix, he never indicated that he was aware that any of the Academy's anthropology collections had been salvaged.

In connection with the discovery of the "basement collection" in 1969, the work of one particularly noteworthy volunteer must be singled-out for special mention. Verdi Miller (Fig. 3) volunteered for the Academy for nearly 50 years and — more than any other single individual — kept track of the many anthropological collections in the years before the department was officially reconstituted. Under Verdi's watchful eye and astute direction, the 1906 collection was diligently unpacked, catalogued and conserved, and an important chapter of Academy history partly restored.

## ANTHROPOLOGY REDUX

During the early 1960s, staff from the Exhibits Department and volunteers began to catalog the backlog of anthropological collections that had been stored for decades as well as tackle a series of

FIGURE 3. The salvage team at work in the Academy's Exhibits Department on the rediscovered collections of anthropological materials. Verdi Miller pictured second from left. Photograph courtesy of the Archives of the California Academy of Sciences.

new and significant donations of anthropological materials. In the early 1970s the staff of the Exhibits Department was expanded to include specialists in anthropology, namely Christine Russell (now an Academy Trustee), Joan Bacharach, and Nancy Bronstein. By 1975, plans for a major anthropological exhibit were underway. George Lindsay, Director of the Academy from 1963 through 1982, must be credited for seeing the need to revitalize Anthropology as a discipline at the Academy at this time and for formulating the idea for a "Hall of Man." This inspiration was to be made a reality by the generosity of San Francisco philanthropist Phyllis Wattis, a lifelong contributor to the Academy and special patron of its anthropology programs. Lindsay designated Ernest R. Rook, curator of the Exhibits Department, as the coordinator of anthropological exhibits in what was to become the Wattis Hall of Man (Fig. 4). In July 1976, the hall opened, with installations of several of the Academy's most significant anthropological collections, including the Charles and Ruth C. Elkus collection of Southwestern Indian artifacts (Fig. 5) (Lindsay 1976).


FIGURE 4. (A) Groundbreaking for Wattis Hall, 1975. Second from left Mrs. Phyllis Wattis with her son, Paul Jr. on her left; second from right Dr. George Lindsay; (B) The Wattis Hall of Man, ca. 1978. Photographs courtesy of the Archives of the California Academy of Sciences.

George Lindsay realized that the health of anthropology as a discipline at the Academy could only be maintained by a committed scientific staff. Therefore, on 1 July 1975 the Department of Anthropology was officially reinstated, with Joan Bacharach (who had been serving as Curatorial Assistant for anthropological collections in the Exhibits Department) as Acting Chairman. In the

FIGURE 5. Selected items from the Elkus Collection of Native American art. Photograph by Dong Lin, California Academy of Sciences.

same year, Lindsay was instrumental in securing a grant from the James Irvine Foundation of $250,000 for the establishment of an endowed chair of anthropology. This amount was matched by the Academy, thus making possible the Irvine Curatorial Chair of Anthropology (*California Academy of Sciences Annual Report for 1975–1976*, p. 13). At that time, the principle activity of the Department was described as "the proper conservation of its collections, and continuing service to the Exhibits Department in their shared responsibility for anthropological exhibit development" (*California Academy of Sciences Annual Report for 1975–1976*, p. 14).

The Department of Anthropology was officially reorganized under Dorothy K. Washburn as Chairman and Assistant Curator in 1978. Washburn was, thus, the first official holder of the Irvine Chair of Anthropology. She was instrumental in developing further exhibits for the Wattis Hall of Man, and was primarily responsible for developing and producing the catalog for one of the Academy's most successful anthropological exhibits, "Hopi Kachina: Spirit of Life" (*California Academy of Sciences Annual Report for 1979–1980*, p. 11). Washburn's primary research was design structure or symmetry analysis of cultures, including Southwest Indian ceramics. This interest led her to publish many scholarly papers and books, including the edited volume, *Structure and Cognition in Art*, released by Cambridge University Press in 1983 (*California Academy of Sciences Annual Report for 1981–1982*, p. 11). Her 1988 publication, in collaboration with D.W. Crowe, *Symmetries of Culture: Theory and Practice of Plane Pattern Analysis* (University of Washington Press), features illustrations of many items from the Academy's collection. Washburn was also the driving force behind the book, *The Elkus Collection: Southwestern Indian Art*, published by the California Academy of Sciences in 1984, although it was completed by Robert Sayers. Among all the holders of the Irvine Chair of Anthropology since 1978, Washburn is the individual whose research was most closely tied to the collections of the Anthropology Department.

In 1982, Robert Sayers joined the Department of Anthropology as a Visiting Assistant Curator and Acting Chairman while Washburn was on research leave. Sayers, an expert on East Asian material culture, in particular Korean pottery, then took on the administrative duties of the department and the teaching of the docent course for the Wattis Hall of Man (*California Academy of Sciences Annual Report for 1982–1983*, p. 14). The Smithsonian Institution published his monograph, *The Korean Onggi Potter* in 1985. Diane Lee Carroll joined the Department as a Research Archaeolo-

gist in 1982 and completed her analysis of the department's valuable collection of Coptic textiles (*California Academy of Sciences Annual Report for 1982–1983*, p. 14). This research led to her publication of the widely cited catalog, *Looms and Textiles of the Copts*, in 1988.

It was under Sayers' direction that famed primatologist Jane Goodall joined the staff of the Anthropology Department as Honorary Curator of Anthropology, first in 1983–1984 (*California Academy of Sciences Annual Report for 1983–1984*, p. 33), then as Curator of Primatology from 1985 through 1987 (*California Academy of Sciences Annual Report for 1985–1986*, p. 27; *Ibid*. for 1986–1987, p. 19; *Ibid.* for 1987–1988, p. 22).

Washburn held the Irvine Chair of Anthropology until her retirement in 1983. Sayers remained Acting Chairman until July 1984, when Norman Hammond was appointed as the department's second Irvine Chair of Anthropology. Hammond, a Mesoamerican archaeologist and Maya scholar, remained in the department for only one year, during which he mapped large portions of an ancient Maya city in Belize and excavated major structures there. The Irvine Chair was vacant for a short time after Hammond's departure, until the appointment of Linda Cordell as the third Irvine Chair of Anthropology in 1986. Cordell, an archaeologist with a specialty in prehistoric Pueblo cultures of the American Southwest, remained in the position until 1993. During her tenure, she continued to offer training in anthropology for docents guiding the Wattis Hall of Man, and energetically pursued archaeological fieldwork in the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico. Her research was (and continues to be) concerned with reconstructing the economic, social and political organizations of the late prehistoric Pueblo period from about 1275 to just before the Spanish entered the Southwest in 1540. Cordell left the department in June 1993, at the same time that the decision was taken to dismantle the Wattis Hall of Man in order to create a large venue for temporary or traveling exhibits.

In 1994, the vacant Irvine Chair was advertised with the specific goal of attracting to the position a physical anthropologist, who would be well-suited to communicate and collaborate with other curators in various fields of systematic biology who comprised the growing scientific staff of the California Academy of Sciences. Nina Jablonski was appointed the fourth Irvine Chair of Anthropology in that year, and joined the Academy's staff in December 1994. During her tenure, Jablonski maintained a wide-ranging research program in primatology and human evolution and worked diligently to maintain the presence of anthropology on the public floor of the Academy following the closing of the Wattis Hall of Man.

## Anthropological Collections at the Academy

Through thick and thin, including the comings and goings of curators in the last twenty years, anthropology has maintained its integrity and its public visibility because of its collections. Despite being nearly completely destroyed by the 1906 earthquake and fire, anthropological collections literally rose from the ashes and slowly grew at the Academy during the twentieth century. The absence of a formally constituted department for nearly three-fourths of the century meant, however, that — for the most part — Academy staff were not actively engaged in making collections of anthropological materials, as they were, for instance, in botany and herpetology. Rather, the collections grew fairly randomly as the result of donations. When these post-1906 collections were reviewed and catalogued in the 1960s and 1970s, the eclectic nature of the collection and the parlous condition of the documentation for many objects became apparent. Since the late 1980s, the staff of the Department of Anthropology has been engaged in a process of improving the documentation on selected collections, and of paring down others by de-accessioning materials clearly unrelated to anthropology (e.g., a bedspread purported to have belonged to Napoleon's wife, Josephine; and a collection of old electric light bulbs) to other museums and institutions. There has also been an increased focus on computerization of information on the Academy's anthropology collections.

This has resulted in the entire collection database (complete with images), along with many "online only" exhibits, now being available on the internet (*www.calacademy.org/research/anthropology*).

At present, the collections of the Department of Anthropology comprise approximately 17,000 items. The main focus of the collections is on ethnographic materials from the western United States, mostly the American Southwest, California, and Alaska. The secondary focus is the material culture of the islands of the Pacific and of the Pacific Rim. It is appropriate here to summarize the major collections that support these foci.

**Allen Lamp Collection**: Donated in 1952 by Maude Rex Allen, this international collection of lamps and other lighting devices numbers nearly 300 items, spanning several millennia and representing nearly every continent. It was exhibited at the Academy in 1952–1953.

**Liebes Native Alaskan Collection:** Donated in 1960 by Grace Liebes, this collection of nearly 1000 Native Alaskan objects was assembled by her husband, Arnold Liebes, whose family had long operated a fleet of merchant ships between San Francisco and Alaska, as well as a number of frontier trading posts in the Alaskan Territory. In addition to two full-sized kayaks, two baleen baskets, items of native clothing and household items, and souvenir ivory items, the collection is especially rich in bone and stone tools (Fig. 6).

**Elkus Native American Collection:** Donated in 1972 by the children of Ruth and Charles de Young Elkus, in accordance with their parents' wishes, the Elkus Collection is the largest and most important anthropological collection ever given to the Academy (Fig. 5). It is without question the core of the department's Native American holdings, and comprises nearly 1700 objects, including textiles, jewelry, baskets, pottery, works of art on paper, katsina carvings, and beadwork. The cultural focus is the U.S. Southwest, but California, Alaska, the Northwest Coast, and Plains regions are also represented. The collection is especially important because it was assembled during the formative years of the modern Native American art market, and includes early works by artists who eventually earned international acclaim and have influenced succeeding generations of Native American artists. This collection was published in 1984 in *The Elkus Collection: Southwestern Indian Art*, edited by Dorothy Washburn and Robert Sayers; it has been used in numerous exhibits at the Academy and at many other venues. A large portion of the collection was shown in the exhibit, "The Elkus Collection: Changing Traditions in Native American Art," from 1999 until 2003 (Fig. 7).

FIGURE 6. Selected items from the Liebes Collection of Native Alaskan art. Photograph by Dong Lin, California Academy of Sciences.


FIGURE 7. A view of the exhibit, "Elkus Collection: Changing Traditions in Native American Art", 1999. Photograph by Dong Lin, California Academy of Sciences.

**Rietz Food Technology Collection:** Placed on loan to the Academy in 1974 and officially donated in 1989, this collection of food-related items was assembled by Carl Austin Rietz, a lifelong leader in the food industry and inventor of many twentieth Century food devices, not least of which is the industrial food processor. Some 1300 objects illustrate methods of producing, processing, storing, preparing, and serving food among cultures from around the world (Fig. 8). The collection is particularly strong in European and American cutlery and other utensils, Japanese tea kettles, and Persian and other Middle Eastern ceramic wares. (See also Evans 2007 [this volume].)

**Rietz Coptic and pre-Columbian Textile Collection:** Also among Carl Austin Rietz's interests were early textiles. Accordingly, he collected and eventually donated (along with the food technology collection) approximately 75 fragmentary Coptic textiles from the first millennium Egypt. As mentioned above, a complete study of this collection was published in 1988 by Diane Lee Carroll. Rietz also collected and donated approximately 30 complete or nearly complete pre-Columbian Inca clothing items from Peru. The collection was exhibited in the Academy's Patricia Price Peterson Gallery in 1978.

**Ostheimer Hawaiian Collection:** Donated in 1976 by Alfred and Jacquenette Ostheimer, this collection of nearly 500 Hawaiian objects is reportedly the largest collection of early Hawaiiana on the U.S. mainland (Fig. 9). It includes stone woodworking and food-processing tools, wooden bowls, fishing equipment, feather leis, a fragmentary warrior's helmet, kapa (bark cloth) fragments, and many other utilitarian items. The Ostheimer Collection was exhibited in Lovell White Hall in 1977 (*California Academy of Sciences Annual Report for 1976–1977*, p. 6).

**Torry Gabra Collection:** In 1977, the Academy sponsored a field collecting expedition, headed by William I. Torry, among the Gabra people of Kenya, in order to develop an exhibit for the newly opened Wattis Hall of Man. Torry collected some 500 household and other utilitarian objects that reflected daily life of the Gabra people. An almost identical collection was also made for the National Museums of Kenya.

**Owings Katsina Collection:** Nathaniel Owings donated his extensive collection of more than 100 Hopi and Zuni katsina carvings to the Academy in 1978 (Fig. 10). The collection was the impe-

FIGURE 8. Selected items from the Rietz Food Technology Collection. Photograph by Dong Lin, California Academy of Sciences.

FIGURE 9. Selected items from the Ostheimer Collection of Hawai'iana. Photograph by Dong Lin, California Academy of Sciences.

tus for a major traveling exhibit, "Hopi Kachina: Spirit of Life", mentioned above, which was produced by the Academy in 1980 and later shown in Chicago, Pittsburgh, New York, and Washington, DC.

**Beck South Pacific Collection:** In the late 1920s, Ida and Rollo Beck were members of the American Museum of Natural History's Whitney Expedition to the South Seas, whose purpose was the collection of natural history specimens for the AMNH collections. Beck was a trained ornithologist with a long association with the California Academy of Sciences, and he and his wife were also avocational anthropologists. In their spare time during the expedition, they assembled a personal collection of ethnographic materials and photographed the native people on the islands they visited (Fig. 11). Part of their collection was later sold to the Burke Museum at the University of Washington, but the Becks retained nearly 400 objects from at least 14 distinct South Pacific island

FIGURE 9. Selected items from the Owings Katsina Collection. Photograph by Dong Lin, California Academy of Sciences.

FIGURE 11. Selected items from the Beck Collection of ethnographic artifacts from the Pacific Islands. Photograph by Dong Lin, California Academy of Sciences.

groups. Many of the objects are well documented as to time and place of collection. The collection, along with thousands of photos and original field journals, was donated to the Academy in 1984 by Beck family heirs.

**Elgueta Mayan Collection**: The Mid-Winter Fair held in San Francisco in 1894 included a large display of pre-Columbian Mayan ceramics, owned by Manuel Garcia Elgueta. The collection had previously been shown at the Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1892. Following the San Francisco fair, the Academy acquired the collection, possibly through purchase. The collection holds some of the only documented pieces from Pichikil and Chalchitan, two pre-Columbian sites in Highland Guatemala that have been heavily looted over the years. Although the Elgueta Collection was very heavily damaged during the 1906 earthquake, more than 1100 items survived, including ceramics and jade earspools, beads, and pendants.

**Kadota Mingei Folk Toys:** Hiroyuki Kadota grew up in Kyoto and shortly after his marriage in the late 1950s, began collecting examples of traditional handmade folk toys, because he recognized that many toy makers were abandoning age-old traditions in favor of mass produced materials or labor-saving techniques. Visiting shrines and festivals in every prefecture, Kadota collected more than 600 whimsical objects that function on many levels in Japanese society. He donated the entire collection to the Academy, beginning in 1992. The collection was displayed in Wattis Gallery (adjacent to Wattis Hall) from 1996–2000.

**Stephens Horological Collection:** Donated in 1946 by Dr. William Barclay Stephens, founder of the Bay Area chapter of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors (NAWCC), the collection includes nearly 500 watches and clocks of all kinds. The collection is especially strong in pocket watches by early American watchmakers, and was on public display at the Academy from the 1940s until the 1970s. In 1997, an agreement was reached between the Academy and the NAWCC Museum in Columbia, Pennsylvania, that permitted the long-term loan of the collection to the latter museum. Since 1998, the Stephens Collection has been housed in its entirety at that facility, with some of it now on display.

**Pre-1906 Collections**: As discussed above, most of the Academy's anthropological collections were destroyed as a result of the 1906 earthquake and fire. However, several hundred items, including textiles, baskets, stone tools, pottery, and other objects, were ultimately salvaged (Fig. 12). Some of these were heavily damaged, while others were inexplicably spared. Although all catalog records were lost, the histories of some of these objects have been pieced together as clues occasionally come to light. In addition to the previously described Elgueta Mayan Collection, notable pre-1906 objects that survived include the following:

Some 30 pieces of Mojave Indian pottery, the only extant Academy collection known to have been collected by A.L. Kroeber during his short tenure as Curator of Anthropology;

A small collection of Maori stone tools collected by C.D. Voy, who apparently assembled collections for a number of early museums, especially the University Museum at the University of Pennsylvania;

A very, very large kava bowl, a tortoise shell sacrificial hook, and a carved gaming implement, all early pieces from Marquesas and all illustrated by line drawings in a rare 1896 publication highlighting South

FIGURE 12. Selected "survivors" of the pre-1906 collection of anthropological materials rediscovered at the Academy in 1969. Photograph by Dong Lin, California Academy of Sciences.

Pacific collections in museums around the world;

Several very early pieces of tapa cloth;

Several hundred northern California Indian "charmstones";

Numerous California Indian and Alaskan baskets;

A rare full-sized human funerary effigy from Vanuatu (which was displayed along with other objects and photographs by David Becker in the temporary exhibit, "At Home in Vanuatu: Tradition in the Western Pacific," in 2000; and

A suit of Samurai armor with a rare *kaware kabuto* or "spectacular helmet."

## Anthropology and the Community: the Traditional Arts Program

The rebirth of anthropology as an academic discipline and department at the Academy in the mid-1970s included a new element that was probably unique among anthropology departments at that time. The Living Arts Program, begun in 1976 and directed by ethnomusicologist Sandra McCosker, brought ethnic artists to the museum to present their traditions for the public. The program was supported from 1976–1980 by a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts. The popularity of this program led to an even more enduring and successful one, the Traditional Arts Program, which came into being in 1983.

The Traditional Arts Program (TAP) was initiated by the efforts of Robert Sayers, then Acting Chair of the Department of Anthropology. Sayers envisioned a weekly series of ethnic art presentations for museum visitors and successfully applied to the National Endowment for the Arts for start-up funding. June Anderson was hired in July 1983 to organize the fledgling program, which debuted on September 10, 1983, with a performance of African dance.

The goal of the TAP was to expand the Academy's outreach into local ethnic communities by offering artists the chance to participate in a variety of cultural heritage presentations — music and dance performances, craft and food demonstrations, storytelling, puppet shows, and other expressions of daily and ceremonial life.

By the end of its first year, the TAP was firmly established and had built up a regular audience of enthusiastic aficionados. Museum-goers welcomed the opportunity to learn about the artistic heritage of the many immigrant and Native American groups that make up the demographic profile of the San Francisco Bay Area, and participating artists appreciated having a public venue for interpreting their traditions. The ongoing Saturday afternoon programs proved to be both educational and entertaining. At times, the art programs tied in with themes of museum exhibits, or were scheduled to coincide with an annual celebration, such as Mexican Cinco de Mayo or Chinese New Year.

Initially, the format of the TAP was merely a series of ethnic art presentations for museum visitors (Fig. 13). It soon became obvious that members of the audience were eager to expand their understanding of each art form in its broader cultural context. Audience handouts were introduced to explain the social significance and function of the art, as well as its historical and geographical origin, and included biographies of the artists and general information on the ethnic group featured each week. In addition to the research required for each presentation, Anderson and her staff made a commitment to conduct ongoing fieldwork within local ethnic neighborhoods, and to augment our knowledge of cultural traditions by documenting every Saturday presentation, through tape recordings, transcripts, and slide photography. This was the beginning of the TAP archives, the foundation on which the ethnographic files of the Department of Anthropology have continued to grow over the years. Today the archives provide an invaluable resource to individuals or institutions seeking information on California's ethnic diversity.

In 1984, when the one-year trial period was over, the program's achievements were assessed and its future prospects evaluated. It was apparent that the program had contributed to the

FIGURE 13. Scenes from performances and demonstrations of the Traditional Arts Program. a) The Von Konsky Dancers perform a German maypole dance (July 1988); b) Luis Gervasi makes South American clay flutes (June 2001); c) The Sun Eagle Drum Group perform Plains Indian music and dance, including the hoop dance (March 1985); and d) Onye Onyemaechi performs Nigerian drumming (February 2002).

Academy's educational mission — "to explore and explain the natural world," including human cultures – and it was resolved to seek private funding to ensure the continuation of the TAP, since internal funds were not available and the NEA would not extend its grant for a second year. Local philanthropist Phyllis Wattis, a long-time patron of the Academy, offered to finance the TAP on a year-by-year basis, thus saving the program from extinction. From 1984 to 1988 Mrs. Wattis provided annual funding to the TAP and then, in a truly magnanimous gesture, decided to permanently fund the TAP with a one-million-dollar endowment, awarded in September 1988. The program was thus free to continue and expand in new directions, including the inauguration of a student internship program; this was the beginning of a very worthwhile and successful partnership with universities in California and across the country. The internship program has also attracted partici-

pants from around the globe, including students from Russia, England, Singapore, and Denmark. Over the years, the projects of student interns have contributed much to our knowledge of ethnic arts, while the interns themselves have gained practical experience in applied anthropology and museum studies, and obtained course credit towards their degrees.

In 1991, an Artists-in-Residence program was added to the TAP, thanks to a grant from the Institute of Museum Services. This made possible three-month series of residencies whereby guest artists demonstrated their crafts daily in the museum. Some of the first participants were the Turkish carpet-weavers, who have since returned to the museum nearly every year since. The residencies remain a popular attraction with museum visitors.

By the mid-1990s, the TAP had expanded rapidly and had embraced a host of new projects. Fieldwork and research intensified and extended beyond California to include studies in Ecuador, Turkey, Australia, and Guatemala. The workload demanded a permanent addition to the staff, and a new position was created in 1995. June Anderson became the new Traditional Arts Supervisor, to oversee the program and to produce publications on ethnic art, while a TAP Coordinator was appointed to be responsible for the weekly performance series. Since that time, Anderson has produced a series of engaging publications, which have brought particular areas of folk art to popular attention. These began with *Mayko's Story: A Hmong Textile Artist in California* (1996) and continued with *Honoring the Ancestors: The Woodcarvings of Claude Lockhart Clark* (1997) and *Return to Tradition: The Revitalization of Turkish Village Carpets* (1998).

The TAP celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 2003, the year of the Academy's sesquicentennial. Through its history, one continuous thread has bound the program together conceptually: A deep concern with people and their interactions. This has embraced the mission of people passing on their traditions to the next generation, people from diverse ethnic backgrounds co-existing in our multicultural society, and people visiting the museum and meeting the artists. Students, volunteers, donors, and staff, have worked together and contributed to the growth of the TAP, and this is the enduring strength of the program. Insulated by its endowment from the vicissitudes of budget fluctuations, the TAP is one of the most successful and the single longest-lived public program in the Academy's history.

## Anthropology at the Academy in the Twenty-first Century

The Department of Anthropology at the California Academy of Sciences is financially supported largely by endowments — that of the James Irvine Foundation supporting the curatorial chair and that of the former Wattis Foundation supporting the Traditional Arts Program. The security that this has imparted has been critical, especially considering the Department's small size (six salaried staff in 2002). The growth of these endowments and of other foundation income has also permitted the scope of the Department's activities to increase in recent years.

Symposia supported by the Rietz Food Technology Foundation and the Wattis Foundation have occurred on a regular basis at the Academy since the early 1980s. Past Rietz Symposia have included "Chilies to Chocolate" (1988), "Celebrating Spring" (1992), "Foods of the Future" (1994), "Bread, A Language of Life" (1996), and "Food: Health and Healing" (1998). These symposia have become popular with Bay Area audiences not only because of their interesting topics, but because the conclusion of each symposium featured an elaborate tasting party, featuring dishes related to the symposium theme. Although only one Rietz Symposium resulted in a publication, *Chilies to Chocolate: Food the Americas Gave the World* (Foster and Cordell 1992), it has been one of the best-selling anthropological publications ever produced by Academy staff.

The Wattis Symposia in Anthropology commenced in the mid-1990s and were established with the explicit goal of bringing "state of the art" anthropology to the general public. These symposia

have not only been popular successes, but have heightened the profile of academic publications of the Academy because each symposium has been published as an edited, peer-reviewed Memoir of the California Academy of Sciences, which together constitute the Wattis Series in Anthropology. These comprise *Contemporary Issues in Human Evolution* (Meikle et al. 1996), *Beyond Art: Pleistocene Image and Symbol* (Conkey et al. 1997), *The Origin and Diversification of Language* (Jablonski and Aiello, 1998), and *The First Americans: The Pleistocene Colonization of the New World* (Jablonski 2002).

The collections of the Department of Anthropology at the Academy may not be the institution's largest, nor its staff the most numerous, but the Department contributes greatly to the Academy's mission as a result of its vitality, high levels of productivity, and great diversity. This is brought about not only by the research of its curators, but also by bringing anthropology into peoples' lives through exhibits, the Traditional Arts Program, and its academic symposia. This is certainly a legacy befitting the oldest anthropology department in the American West.

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This chapter is dedicated to the late George Lindsay and late Phyllis Wattis, the staunchest supporters and friends of anthropology at the California Academy of Sciences during the twentieth century.

## Postscript

The preceding article was originally written in 2002 in anticipation of the Academy's 150th anniversary in 2003, but for various reasons it was not published at that time. In the intervening years, much has transpired. In 2004, the entire Academy temporarily relocated to downtown San Francisco while an entirely new facility is being built on its former site in Golden Gate Park. Staff will begin moving into that facility in early 2008, and it will open to the public later in the year. During the transition, no Academy department was spared from downsizing. Anthropology's *Traditional Arts Program* was suspended in 2006, but it will resume when the new facility opens. Nina Jablonski left the Academy in August 2006, and a new Irvine Chair of Anthropology is expected to be hired in the near future. Anticipation of the new Academy has spurred the promised donations of several important Native American collections. The Department of Anthropology is well poised for growth in the years ahead and expects to build upon the research, collections, and programs that have been described in this article.

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