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Fonds **Marius Barbeau**

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Report on work
in European Museums and Libraries
in the spring of 1931
by Marius Barbeau

- On ethnography
- Data on French and English renaissance as
had a bearing on our native handicrafts
- Comparative data for the Pacific and Asia
- Folk-lore data
- Information on large ancient collections of
N.Amer. materials

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European Museums, 1931

This is a brief summary of my recent studies in France and England of materials that have a bearing on Canadian ethnography and folk-lore. on ethnography:

I studied important collections of northern American Indian handicrafts at the Trocadero Museum of Paris, at the Louvre (Musée de la Marine), at the Municipal Museum of Versailles, the Jardin-des-Plantes of Paris, the British Museum in London, the p. 2:

Pitt Rivers in Oxford, and two local Museums, (the Municipal and the W. Castle) at Warrick. The most important of these are the Trocadero and Versailles collections in France; and those of the British Museum and the Pitt-Rivers. I spent considerable time over them and derived considerable benefit from their study. By request I sorted out the whole American collections of the Trocadero and Versailles Museums and recatalogued them. The work in the Trocadero alone required more than a fortnight as the collection is important.

p. 3: I was promised a large set of photographs of specimens of significance which will be taken for us at our request.

The two French collections (Trocadero and Versailles) contain a large number of the oldest specimens of North American handicrafts that we know. The bulk of these collections comes from New France and Louisiana. They were made for the Dauphin of France (under Louis XV) about the middle of the eighteenth century. Another p.4:

part consists of the Recollet Collection (during the French period) and the Fonds des Emigrés

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These consist of relics confiscated from the nobles at the time of the Revolution. The Collection of the King of France, at the Palais of Versailles, was split into two parts after the Revolution; one part--the most important--was given to the Bibliotheque Nationale (National Library) of Paris; and the other, to the Municipal Museum of Versailles. Collection of the Bibliothèque nationale with other adjuncts, was transferred to p. 5:

the Trocadero in 1880. This is the collection I have studied. To this collection were added specimens before 1850, in particular the Scouler collection for the N.W. Coast, and a considerable Eskimo collection.

The Pitt Rivers and the British Museum contain large collections of ancient materials from the French colonies in North America. Much of these is fairly ancient and goes back to various collectors from the time of Captain Cook and other circumnavigators. I have taken notes on the most important things, and photographs p. 6:
should be taken and made available for study. The British Museum, for instance, has much material of interest for the North Pacific Coast --also some for the Eastern Woodlands and the Prairies. The Pitt Rivers, at Oxford, possesses a variety of very valuable specimens that go back to the early nineteenth century or even before. So does, I hear, the museum of the University of Cambridge.

In brief, the early stages of Indian handicrafts in North America can be studied to advantage in those European collections.

p. 7:

The older objects illustrate in the development of native manual arts at a time otherwise little known. The stone-age culture of North American was ^{deeply altered,} if not wholly transformed, from the start, under the influence of Europeans

The natives almost p. 8:

abandoned their native crafts--their pottery, their tools and weapons. They adapted themselves to European styles, costumes, embroidery and decoration, tools and weapons and trade goods. When they could not procure them ready made, they began to imitate them as best they could.

In its earliest period of transformation (the 18th Century), the objects made by the natives under European influence resemble their foreign models more than they did later, after a period of assimilation. The floral and geometric p. 9:

designs painted on tanned leather of about 1740-50 were fairly uniform in style from Labrador to Louisiana (a French colony of the time) and they were similar to those produced by the early colonists under the influence of French models. The technique later was restricted to the Labrador coast and parts of the Prairies, particularly in Nascapi robes, in buffalo robes in parflèches.

Later this technique gave way on the Prairies to porcupine quill decoration, which aimed at reproducing the silk and bend embroidery

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on costumes of the French. Failing the silk, the Indians substituted quills. The first specimens of quill work show that the quills were not "appliquées" as they were later, but ran through the leather, as a silk does with the help of the needle.

The birch and quill work on birch bark was first produced, for a least 150 years, and the Quebec nuns, especially in the Ursuline convents of Quebec, Three Rivers, and Louisiana; also by the Hôtel-Dieu and the Congregation nuns of Three Rivers and Montreal. It is mostly after the nuns had ceased to be interested, after 1800, that the Indians took over imitatively, using the same patterns, tools and materials.

The moosehair decoration of the Hurons goes back no farther than the beginning of the 19th century; and it went p. 11:

through at least two later periods. Other native handicrafts of the post-colonial period are also well represented in the European museums and several interesting dates and instances of early occurrences are to be found: for instance, in connection with looms and weaving, sashes and garters, leggings, pouches, wood-carving, bead work, boxes and cases; etc.

2. On French and English Features which had a bearing on native American crafts.

Costumes, shoes, iron and silver work, tools, utensils, looms and weaving, can be studied extensively in the p. 12: collections of the Trocadero (Musée de l'Homme) the Louvre, the Cluny Museum, in Paris, the British Museum and the Lexington museum, and

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also three museums in Warrickhire (that of Warrick, of Stratford and of Coventry).

Designs--floral and geometric--and other decorations such as prevailed during the colonial period were noted and sketched in a number of parallels and originals. It is obvious from all of this, p. 13:

that the Indians borrowed wholesale the decorative system of the French and English colonists, from the early XVIIth century on.

In a search for more data on decorative arts, such as have a bearing directly on the handicrafts School of Mgr. de Laval in Quebec, founded in 1675, indirectly on the Indians that came under its influence, I visited several museums, churches and castles, where the art of the period can be observed, among others: the St. Germain-en-Laye castle and Museum, the Versailles Palace, the Malmaison, p. 14: the Chartres cathedral and museum, the Museum of Dives (in Normandy), the churches of Notre-Dame, St. Denis, The Ste.-Chapelle, in France. In England, the Tower of London and its museum the Warrick castle and museum, the Museum of Stratford, the Churches of Warrick, of Coventry of Leamington, and the Oxford Ashmolean Museum. p. 15:

Comparative data for the Pacific and Asia. The Arts of the North Pacific Coasts in North America have many features in common with the South Seas and the eastern parts of Asia particularly Siberia. Contacts through the sea trade from 1760 on, particularly after 1785, and the association of the west natives with the whalers

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after 1792, have been prolonged and positive by productive, either across the seas or over Bering Strait or the Aleutian Islands.

The south sea and Melanesian collections of the Trocadero p. 16: Museum (Musée de l'Homme) in Paris, are worth studying carefully. Also the British Museum in London, and the Pitt-Rivers at Oxford Kanaka influence on the North-West coast art, and Siberian analogies with Eskimo and Northwest coast handicrafts cannot fail repeatedly to draw attention.

4. Folklore.

I spent considerable time studying and noting parallels in the Ampère Collection of folk songs for France, at the Bibliotheque nationale, in Paris. It consists of six large volumes of ms. songs collected about 1850-55 under the direction of Ampère for the French Government. Very many of those folk songs are parallels or variants of those I have collected in French Canada, and it is important to indicate such variants in the study and publication of our songs, as this indicates their age, origin and diffusion.

These French variants have been noted in abbreviated form, as the time was limited. But it would be useful to have more complete transcriptions of some of the principal songs and melodies. I have made a separate list of these selected items, with numbers and titles. A member of the Paris Branch of the Canadian Archives suggested that these copies may be

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made for our Museum in the course of the coming year, if the request was forwarded in appropriate way. Mr Beauchesne, the head of the Bureau, stated that ~~he~~ would have the work done if the request and the list were sent to him via our Director's office and with the approval of his Dep. Minister, Dr. A.G. Doughty, of the Public Archives. I would suggest that the formalities for this undertaking soon be under way.

4. Ancient collections of North American materials:

The Bougainville, the Perouse and Marchand collections, formerly at the Musée de la Marine are now contained in 42 cases at, I have been told, the Musée de l'Homme.

The Cook Collection has been scattered in several places in Europe, particularly at Leningrad, in Florence, in London, at Oxford, and at Whitby.

Old collections in England, France, Denmark, etc.

Collection Marius Barbeau
(manuscript from material)

EUROPEAN MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES
WITH ETHNOGRAPHIC AND HANDICRAFT MATERIALS
OF THE COLONIAL PERIOD OF NORTH AMERICA

A brief and incomplete survey of
some French and English museums and libraries
in 1931, by Marius Barbeau

Topics: 1. On ethnography
2. On French and English features
which had a bearing on native Amer. crafts
3. Comparative data for the
Pacific and Asia
4. Ancient collections of N.Am.
materials.

1. On Ethnography:

The most important collection of North American handicrafts under observation were those of the Trodadero Museum in Paris (now Le Musée de l'Homme). Second in importance and with similar but different materials is the Municipal Museum at Versailles. Other museums with important features are the Jardin-des-Plantes Paris p. 2:

The British Museum, London; the Pitt-Rivers and Ashmolean Museums, Oxford; two local museums at Warrick (the Municipal and the Warrick Castle). Le Musée de la Marine, Paris, is said to possess important and considerable materials from the early exploration period. But these were packed up because of lack of space, some years ago; and an effort would have to be made to have access to them. The Whitby Museum, in England, also has significant materials, dating

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back to Captain Cook, of the South Seas--whose home town this was. Copenhagen, in Denmark, also possesses important collections, particularly of the far north, etc.

The most valuable and significant Collection of the Trocadero (Musée de l'Homme) Paris, was still on exhibition in cases arranged and catalogues by Hamy in the early 1880's. By request of its Director, M. Rivière, I took all these dusty objects out of the cases, sorted them out, recatalogued them; took notes and measurements, made many sketches; and they were packed up for removal. This work with an assistant --often with M. Rivière himself- required more than two weeks. It would have been advisable to take photos of the specimens, but the lack of equipment and time precluded it.

The two French , copy
pp. 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16.
4. Ancient Collections of North American materials.

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