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Fonds **Marius Barbeau**

Dossier: « *Collections of Indian Specimens in  
European Museums, 1953* »

Boîte B355 f.5

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Ottawa, September 13, 1952.

Dr. William E. Lingelbach,  
Librarian,  
American Philosophical Society,  
Library, 222 Drexel Building,  
PHILADELPHIA 6, Pa., U.S.A.

Dear Dr. Lingelbach,

Next year in June, I intend to be present at the reunion of the Rhodes Scholars at Oxford. While on this trip, why not resume the Museum research I began in 1931? I am enclosing a copy of the plan I would like to pursue in France and England, in the course of about three months, from April to August. I also include the photostat negatives of my notes taken in the museums of England and France in 1931. Although the script is hard to decipher because of the difficulties of writing when standing, the drawings at least will give you an idea of the interesting materials that passed under my eyes. Of such things I would like now to take full control, because they would be invaluable in our present studies of materials and aesthetic culture of Indians in the past two or three centuries. And the best source materials for these studies are in Europe.

Would the American Philosophical Society be willing to make available for me a grant-in-aid for the period of two or three months at the rate of, say, \$400. per month? Naturally, I would not ask for such a grant if it were to remove the Library grant which I receive as a Research Associate.

Very sincerely yours,

Marius Barbeau

P.S. Would you please let me have the photostat negatives when they are no longer useful?

Marius BarbeauNORTH AMERICAN INDIAN MATERIALS, MOSTLY OF THE COLONIAL PERIOD,  
IN THE MUSEUMS OF FRANCE AND ENGLAND

(Request for a grant-in-aid to enable me to carry out research into these during 1953, from the end of April to the end of August - about four months.)

Such materials may be found scattered in not a few European museums. They are abundant, and especially significant as many of them form part of ancient collections, for instance: the Dauphin de France (Louis XV) Collection at the Museum <sup>de</sup> de l'Homme, Paris, and Musée Municipal de Versailles; the collections of Captain Cook, etc.

The knowledge of these collections is necessary to unravel the drastic changes in the material culture or acculturation of the Indians since prehistorical times. No systematic research so far seems to have been made in this field. A catalogue should be undertaken, with all available information as to the source, the measurements, photographs of each piece. And the results should eventually be made available, if not wholly in print, at least in a few copies for important institutions in leading centres, or whoever gave support to the enterprise.

In 1931, during a vacation I took privately in France and England, I examined several Museum collections and made notes of interesting contents. At the Musée de l'Homme in Paris, I accepted the invitation from M. Rivière, the director, to re-catalogue the mixed collections there, the materials in good part having come down

from the Dauphin de France cabinet of curios and from the Fonds des Emigrants, after the French Revolution. This work required a few weeks.

Appended here are photostat copies of my notes - in all 197 pp. of scribbled notes, taken while standing in the museums or châteaux, without the auxiliary of photos. or the facilities or time to take measurements.

The plan I propose now is to prepare a full and explicit catalogue, accompanied by photographs, of the Indian and comparative French or English materials of the same period which are needed to show how the natives were influenced by the Europeans.

The leading museums that are indicated for their materials are: The Musée de l'Homme, (palais Chaillot), Paris; the Musée ~~de~~ municipal de Versailles, the Musée de Saint-Germain-en-Laye<sup>(salle de Mars)</sup>; the British Museum, London, the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford; the Cambridge University Museum; the museum at Whitby (England) where part of Captain Cook's collections are preserved (it was his home town); at Epinal, and elsewhere in France and England.

Information I received at the time, partly from Prof. Marcel  
<sup>1</sup> Mauss, of La Sorbonne and Institut de France, indicate that I should endeavour to have access fully to the Bougainville, Marchand and

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1)

See below, pp. 81, 82.

La Pérouse, d'Urville, <sup>Collections</sup> / etc. (South Seas during the period of discovery from 1785 to 1830), which used to be at Musée de la Marine, in Paris, but were removed, for lack of space, to the storage rooms of Musée du Trocadero (now Musée de l'Homme). They are "very considerable", "in a large number of boxes".

As for Captain Cook's collections for the North Pacific Coast, they were in part given for transmittal to London, to Count Palenne, a Russian at Kamch<sup>a</sup>estka, Siberia, <sup>(1779)</sup> to be sent mostly overland to London. But the materials, instead, <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ sent to Catherine of Russia, and were kept at St. Petersburg.

It is in the course of such studies that it was learned that the ancient (dynastic) ivory carved in China was from walrus tusks obtained in North West America from the natives via Bering Sea. It was part of the prehistoric trade with America.

Prof. Mauss has written on Old American Collections in La Revue de Paris (article to be retraced).

The thoroughness and fullness of this research would depend upon the Grant-in-Aid and the length of time given to the work. Similar work in U.S. cities usually means an expense of a little over \$400. per month.