



THE INDIAN CRAFT SHOP

Department of the Interior • 1849 C Street, NW • Washington, DC 20240 • (202) 208-4056
Open Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR!

March of 1999 marks the 150th anniversary of the Department of the Interior and in recognition of the anniversary, The Indian Craft Shop will highlight the buffalo as depicted in Indian art today.

THE BUFFALO DEPICTED IN INDIAN ART: MARCH 3 – 26

With late hours on Thursday, March 11 until 8:00pm

“The Buffalo Are Coming”*

Listen, he said, yonder the buffalo are coming.
These are his sayings, yonder the buffalo are coming,
They walk, they stand, they are coming,
Yonder the buffalo are coming.

**Lyric, Bureau of American Ethnology Collection*

With the respect and history of the buffalo integral to many American Indian tribes, the buffalo has become a prominent figure in American Indian art and can be seen in both historical and contemporary artwork. ***The Buffalo Depicted in Indian Art*** is our second “design theme” show. As with *The Horse Depicted in Indian Art*, we plan to have a variety of craft mediums by artists from diverse tribal areas. Among the crafts we expect to feature are: parfleche made of buffalo hide by **Ina Espinosa** (Oglala Lakota), stone sculpture by **Eddie Morrison** (Cherokee), **Cliff Fragua** (Jemez Pueblo) and **Ray Todacheenie** (Navajo), bronze and metal sculpture by **Charlie Pratt** (Cheyenne-Arapaho), pottery by **Forest Naranjo** (Santa Clara Pueblo), jewelry by **Clarence and Russell Lee** (Navajo), **George Willis** (Choctaw), **Bruce and Adam Caesar** (Pawnee), rawhide accessories by **Arlene Caesar** (Kiowa), original artwork by **Anthony Emerson** (Navajo) and **Duane Dishta** (Zuni Pueblo), and folk art by **Delbert Buck** (Navajo). We also expect a large selection of fetish carvings from the Zuni Pueblo, sandpaintings from the Navajo, kachina dolls from the Hopi and Zuni Pueblo, and small painted hides from the Oglala Lakota. Be sure to come in to see ***The Buffalo Depicted in Indian Art*** **March 3 – 26**. We will have extended hours on Thursday March 11th until 8:00 p.m.

While many people think of the buffalo as being associated with the Plains Indians, the buffalo touched the lives of numerous groups outside the Plains. An estimated 60-75 million buffaloes once roamed the American land from the Great Basin to Pennsylvania, and from Canada to Mexico (approximately 10% were located in the Eastern Woodlands).

Hunters from pueblos as far west as the Hopi mesas made the long journey across the mountains to the Great Plains to hunt the buffalo. The Pueblo ceremonial calendars of today reflect

the continued importance of the buffalo as they are honored in ceremonies, dances and art. The Hopi Buffalo Kachina, Mosairu, appears in early winter ceremonies and is believed to bring on the cold of winter with prayers for good health and good crops and harvest.



*Buffalo Hunt mural - on wall of Indian Craft Shop
by Allan Houser, 1938*

The buffalo west of the Mississippi were creatures of the seasons, migrating thousands of miles in search of prairie and high-plains grasses, and the seasonal movement of Native Americans of the plains were in direct response to that of the buffalo. The introduction of the horse revolutionized the Indians' way of life. The horse allowed them to hunt with greater success and was an inspiration in creating accessories adapted for use with this new mode of transportation.

BUFFALO—Bison, bison

The Lakota named the buffalo “Ta Tanka”, meaning “great or large beast.” Ta Tanka is the spirit of the Buffalo Bull, patron of health, ceremonies and provisions. The Europeans called the buffalo many names, Piskiou (of Algonquin origin), le beouf, le bison, prairie beeves, and shaggy haired oxen, to name a few. The Spaniards thought of the great herds they encountered as

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The Buffalo Depicted in Indian Art

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Indian cattle, but de Soto is attributed with naming the magnificent beast *Buffalo* in 1544.

Scientifically classified as *Bison, bison*, the American bison is one of two humpbacked, shaggy haired oxen of the genus *Bison* native to North America. The largest land mammal of the continent weighs up to 2,000 pounds, stands up to six feet at its hump and can be twelve feet in length to include a foot of tufted tail.

The buffalo's importance to the Plains Indian cannot be understated. The Native American's relationship with their environment was efficient as they had a great understanding of elements of the natural world. The buffalo fed them, clothed them, provided fuel and shelter and was vital in their spiritual life. The Plains Indians followed the herds, lived with the buffalo, were one with the buffalo, and were great stewards of the buffalo.

Women prepared the rewards of the hunt. The meat was dried and packed in rawhide parfleche; pemmican was made when dried berries and fat were added to meat; packed in parfleche, meat products would last an indefinite time. The hide was stretched, scraped and, for articles of clothing and bedding, softened using a mixture of the animal's liver, brain and fat. The hide could then be made into many useful and beautiful objects; parfleche, medicine bags and bundles, shields, ceremonial masks, drums, cooking pots, rawhide bags and rope. Cradles and boats were made of willow frames covered with rawhide. The bones became knives, sled runners, needles, awls, hide scrapers and paint brushes. The sinew was thread for beading and quillwork and bowstrings. Horns were made into ladles, cups, spoons, bowls, and accessories for headdresses. The hooves were made into rattles. Buffalo hair was woven into belts, halters and bags. Dried dung or buffalo chips provided fuel when wood was scarce.

In the Plains area, because of the nomadic existence necessitated by following bison migrations, material possessions were few with skin clothing and accessories most predominant. Elaborate quillwork and later beadwork was used to decorate clothing and accessories, with many artists continuing these traditions today.

Painted buffalo robes for the Sioux women were typically designed with the "box-and-border" pattern (representing the internal structure of the buffalo) while men's robes could be painted with sunburst designs. The women did the geometric designs on hides and parfleche. Pictographs recounting battles, hunts and other important events were painted on buffalo robes and teepees by men.

Parfleche, naturally associated by the Plains people with the buffalo, was used as containers for food and other life essentials. At first glance parfleche designs could appear only as pleasing combinations of geometric patterns, there is symbolism in both

the color and design. Colors often represent the four directions, the seasons, or other important aspects of life. In designs, the buffalo has been represented in parfleche similar to the box-and-border design on the woman's robe. This can be seen with hourglass designs within the shape of the rectangular box or envelope. Sometimes the buffalo could simply be represented by the rectangle shape or by a triangle-diamond-triangle design.

It is important to note that symbolism is not universal but based on tribal traditions and individual preferences. The diamond shape for instance, symbolized the turtle to the Sioux but the sand lizard to the Crow. And with numerous artists within the same group, individual interpretations of similar motifs could vary. The diamond shape could also represent a person, an eye, a star, interior of a tent, life or the navel.

Art was the by-product of the necessities of life — tools and materials in the development of arts and crafts were available from the environment, traditions were shared and passed down, and skills were learned and refined over generations. Art reflects a way of life and has developed and evolved over the years. Native Americans developed cultures based on the use of available materials and thus fulfilled artistic, physical, economic and spiritual needs. Today many artists are connecting the past to the present, fulfilling similar needs and contributing to the continuing evolution of American Indian art.

ARTIST STATEMENTS ON THE BUFFALO

"The buffalo is a symbol of the original indigenous people and animals. It is representative of the free spirit of the animal and is to be respected." (George Willis/Choctaw)

"In my family's work, the symbol is related to the spiritual being. The buffalo was the staff of life — a gift of God both spiritually and physically. The buffalo is a wonderful, powerful, beautiful creature. Today I see it being renewed and rejuvenated." (Bruce Caesar/Pawnee)

"The buffalo is a symbol of my heritage. It sustained my ancestors. I use it in my artwork to honor my ancestors as well as the majestic beast it is." (Charlie Pratt/Cheyenne-Arapaho)

"I feel the buffalo are a kindred spirit with all native peoples because we have both been brought to the brink of extinction, but we have survived and our spirits are still strong." (Eddie Morrison/Cherokee)

"The buffalo were great stewards of the land. The flying buffalo and white buffalo in my art represent the control of destiny and a better life. They are about forgive-ness for past mistakes and looking forward and ahead to a better destiny." (Anthony Emerson/Navajo)

TIPS ON COLLECTING NATIVE AMERICAN ARTS & CRAFTS

American Indian art, in all forms, has never been more alive and ever-changing — and continues to be one of the most gratifying and exciting to collect. American Indian art combines age old tradition, innovation and talent, and results in a variety of art forms for all levels of collecting — whether you are beginning with a first-time purchase or have been collecting for a number of years. And at all levels of collecting, you are helping to support the continuation of the expression and livelihood of American Indian artists, while at the same time adding an object of beauty to your life!

These art forms, many with centuries old influences, incorporate a natural spirit with timeless appeal. Whether it is basketry, in which artists are using the techniques and materials their ancestors did thousands of years ago, or silversmithing, which has evolved into classic as well as contemporary wearable art, there is always a place for authentic, handmade arts and crafts.

Becoming an educated buyer and purchasing authentic arts and crafts helps to preserve the integrity and commitment of today's Native American artists. The following tips should be helpful in either beginning or continuing your collection.

Become Educated:

- a) Read books on craft areas you are interested in. Learning more about American Indian arts and crafts is often one of the most enjoyable parts of collecting and results in a strong foundation from which you can begin to buy with more confidence. As you learn more, your areas of interest may change, with each discovery leading you to another! You may not feel the learning process, but it will become evident when you realize you have the knowledge and confidence when making your purchase.
- b) Ask questions! Established and knowledgeable dealers and artists are a great source of information and enjoy sharing it. They can direct you to publications and can point out what to look for when purchasing.
- c) There are rewarding opportunities through exhibits, presentations and demonstrations — take advantage of these as you see them made available.

Keep Records

It is extremely helpful (and very interesting over time!) to keep your receipts and certificates together for the purchases you make. You may want to include a photo and notes or additional information on the artist. Some people have made a journal or album for details, and include updated appraisals for their collection. Having the item description, where and when it was purchased and the purchase price is most important and each person can use the method they are comfortable with. Keeping records:

- a) is a good record of history
- b) is helpful if there is a problem or concern with an item, its condition or care
- c) helps in time of "the failing memory"!
- d) is good information for family members who may some day acquire the item(s)
- e) is good for insurance purposes
- f) you never know when the emerging artist you purchased a piece by becomes the next highly collectable, award-winning artist!

**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!**

**OUR ANNUAL SALE
APRIL 12 – 23, 1999**

With extended shop hours
until 8:00p.m.
Thursday, April 15th

BOOKS WORTH NOTING AT THE INDIAN CRAFT SHOP

Here are some new titles that have come into our book section:

Weaving a World: Textiles and the Navajo Way of Seeing, by Roseann S. Willink and Paul G. Zolbrod. The result of interviews with more than 60 elders and weavers interpreting weavings from the Museum of New Mexico collection. Museum of New Mexico Press, 1996. 120 pages, \$29.95.

Navajo Weaving Way: the Path from Fleece to Rug, by Noel Bennett and Tiana Bighorse. The result of 30 years of collaboration, this book brings together, updates and revises their earlier works – *Working with the Wool*, *Designing with the Wool* and *The Weaver's Pathway*. Interweave Press, Inc., 1997. 160 pages, \$19.95.

Pueblo Artists: Portraits, photographs by Toba Pato Tucker, with contributions by Alfred L. Bush, Rina Swentzell and Lonnie Vigil. Striking black and white portraits of generations of Pueblo artists taken in their homes and workspaces. Museum of New Mexico Press, 1998. 166 pages, \$55.00.

Hopi Silver: the History and Hallmarks of Hopi Silversmithing, by Margaret Nickelson Wright. An updated and revised edition of the classic reference on Hopi Jewelry, with over 100 new hallmarks and color photographs of contemporary pieces. Northland Publishing, 1998. 147 pages, \$14.95.

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Powerful Images: Protrayals of Native America. A look at the ways in which Indians have been portrayed by themselves and others from the early 1800s to the present. University of Washington Press, 1998. 144 pages, \$29.95.

The Telling of the World: Native American Stories and Art, edited by W. S. Penn. Legends and stories recounted by respected storytellers from many tribes and nations, beautifully illustrated with modern art and historically significant artifacts. Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 1996. 240 pages, \$45.00

Native Visions: Evolution in Northwest Coast Art from the Eighteenth through the Twentieth Century, by Steven C. Brown, with photographs by Paul Macapia. University of Washington Press, 1998. 216 pages, \$40.

Looking North: Art from the University of Alaska Museum, edited by Aldona Jonaitis. Color photographs of 19th and 20th century artworks by Alaska Natives and a dialogue among ten experts. University of Washington Press, 1998. 206 pages, \$35.00.

Down From the Shimmering Sky: Masks of the Northwest Coast, by Peter Macnair, Robert Joseph and Bruce Grenville. Presenting two centuries of Northwest Coast First Nations masks, with commentary by two museum curators, one of whom is a Kwakwaka'wakw chief. University of Washington Press, 1998. 192 pages, \$30.00.

Where There is No Name for Art: The Art of Tewa Pueblo Children, Art and Voices of the children of Santa Clara, San Ildefonso, San Juan, Pojoaque and Nambe Pueblos, text and photographs by Bruce Hucko. School of American Research, 1996. 119 pages, \$20.00.

SOME INTERESTING BOOKS FOR CHILDREN:

A Rainbow at Night – the World in Words and Pictures by Navajo Children, by Bruce Hucko. Chronicle Books, 1996. 44 pages, \$14.95.

Tending the Fire: The Story of Maria Martinez by Juddi Morris. Northland Publishing, 1997. 113 pages, \$6.95.

Spider Spins a Story: Fourteen Legends from Native America, edited by Jill Max, with illustrations by Robert Annesley, Benjamin Harjo, Michael Lacapa, D. Nelson, Redwing T. Nez and Baje Whitethorn. Northland Publishing, 1997. 63 pages, \$16.95.

Children of Clay: A Family of Pueblo Potters, by Rina Swentzell, photographs by Bill Steen. Lerner Publications, 1992. 40 pages, \$6.95.

Songs from the Loom: A Navajo Girl Learns to Weave, text and photographs by Monty Roessel. Lerner Publications, 1995. 48 pages, \$6.95.

Weaving a California Tradition: a Native American Basketmaker, text by Linda Yamane, photographs by Dugan Aguilar. Lerner Publications, 1997. 48 pages, \$6.95 (paper), \$18.95 (hardcover).

Helen Cordero and the Storytellers of Cochiti Pueblo by Nancy Shroyer Howard. Includes activities on two levels for children or adventurous adults. Davis Publication, Inc., 1995. 46 pages, \$14.95.

Coyote and Little Turtle: A Traditional Hopi Tale, based on a story told by Herschel Talashoema, translated and edited by Emory Sekaquaptewa and Barbara Pepper, and illustrated by Hopi children. Clear Light Publishers, 1994. 90 pages, \$9.95.

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Department of the Interior

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