“The Art of Civilization”

America on Display in Peale’s Museum

by

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I examine the inclusion of American Indians as museum subjects and participants in Charles Willson Peale's Philadelphia Museum. To determine the forces that informed Peale's curatorship, I analyze Peale's experiences, personal views on education and scientific influences, specifically Carl Linnaeus, George-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon and Thomas Jefferson. Peale created a polarized natural history narrative divided between Anglo-Americans and races that existed in a "natural state." Within the museum's historical narrative, Peale presented Native individuals as either hostile enemies of the state or enlightened peacekeepers who accepted the supremacy of Americans. Peale's embrace of Native visitors demonstrated a mixture of racial tolerance and belief in racial hierarchy that also characterized democratic pedagogy. I derive the results by examining Peale's correspondence, diaries and public addresses, as well as administrative documents from the museum such as accession records, guidebooks, lectures and museum labels. I conclude that although Peale believed his museum succeeded in promoting tolerance and harmony among all cultures, his message nevertheless promoted prejudice through the exaltation of "civilized men." By studying the social and intellectual constraints under which Peale operated, it is possible to see the extent to which observation of and commentary on ethnic and racial groups existed in America's earliest public culture and shaped early American museum history. Contemporary museums strive for cultural preservation and tolerance, therefore analysis of Peale's intentions and effects may increase the self-awareness of today's museum professionals.

To my mother, Becky Keller, who always dreamed my dreams with me.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

On January 13, 1792, American artist and naturalist Charles Willson Peale called upon the American people to help him create a national museum. "Animated by the generous support he had already received," Peale fervently asked for the patronage of the people "to promote a design that is truly worthy of American patriots and citizens of the world."[1] In this public address, written characteristically by Peale in the third person, Peale reminded his audience of his accomplishments in species preservation, of his wondrous objects on display from around the world and of the museum's wide variety of "beasts, birds, fishes, insects reptiles, vegetables, minerals, shells, fossils, medals, old coins…" and more.[2]

The museum opened to the public six years earlier, filled with Peale's art and zoological artifacts donated by the scientists, inventors and military men of his day. But now Peale was revealing a greater plan for his museum to his audience, and in order to fulfill it, he needed the public's active participation as not only spectators but also curators. In Peale's mind, what would set his American Museum apart from European institutions—and thus set America culturally apart from Europe—was the collection and exhibition of objects from America's expanding western frontier. Apart from European museums, "America has in this a conspicuous advantage over all other countries, *from the novelty of its vast territories*."[3] What Peale believed would make his museum as great

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[1] Peale, "To the Citizens of the United States of America," in *Dunlap's American Daily Advertiser*, 12 January 1792, in *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family*, ed. Lillian B. Miller, Sidney Hart, and David C. Ward, vol. 2, bk. 1, *Charles Willson Peale: The Artist as Museum Keeper, 1791-1810* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1991), 10.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid. Emphasis is original to source.

as the celebrated museums of Europe were artifacts from west of the Missouri River. To display America's West was for Peale to display America, and few things were more unique or mysterious to the world than American Indians.

Charles Willson Peale's Philadelphia Museum was not the first in America. It was, however, the first to operate in many ways that American museums still do. Were we to travel back in time to visit, we would enter knowing exactly how we were expected to conduct ourselves as participants. In turn, the museum would fulfill our expectations of charging an admission cost, staging exhibits of rare objects, presenting peer-reviewed scientific theory and offering engaging opportunities for learning. Unlike its contemporaries, Peale's museum was open to the public at their leisure, offered free admission at its outset, used a universal, scientific order for catalogue and display and attempted to gain state sponsorship. Peale's museum held public lectures, served as a venue for university classes, published a catalogue and a short-lived popular magazine, extended its hours to accommodate the working-class and held entertaining programs such as a concerts and scientific and mechanical demonstrations. Peale's expansive vision for his museum was as continuous as his work to improve it. Yet the Philadelphia Museum failed for multiple reasons, and in 1846, the same year as the Smithsonian's establishment, the Peales were forced to close their doors. Around the same time, Peale's sons' museums in Baltimore and New York also closed, and all three collections were sold at auction to Phineas T. Barnum and Moses Kimball.[4]

As the first public museum in America, the museum offered a constructed but unrestricted interaction between people and the nation state. Though Peale presented a

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[4] Toby A. Appel, "Science, Popular Culture and Profit: Peale's Philadelphia Museum," *Journal of the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History* 9, no. 4 (1980): 629.

heavily biased and idealized notion of his American narrative, the museum setting was groundbreaking because it gave visitors the tools to experience cultural self-discovery through their acceptance or rejection of the museum's message. For Peale, the museum experience equalized his visitors, including Indians, and embodied his vision of American democracy.

As a curator, Peale consciously attempted to influence how people saw their place in the new nation through his museum. A son of the American Enlightenment, he believed that all people are naturally equipped with self-awareness and an equal capacity to learn by observing their environment. Consequently, he believed that all people regardless of culture, ethnicity or race could be made equal through popular education. By revealing a natural order and harmony that existed within nature, Peale believed people would understand the order of the world and their place within it. For humans, this order was presented as a hierarchy of civilization based on geography and society, with the American political state at the top. Indians could join the new America, Peale's message said, but only if they conformed to American ways of life.

The types of American Indian ethnographic objects that Peale displayed are still popular features in cultural history museums and are considered emblems of "traditional" cultures. Yet under the roof of Peale's Philadelphia Museum, they represented contemporaneous Native lifeways, physical tokens that stemmed from very recent interactions between Euro-Americans and Indigenous peoples. Peale displayed American Indians culture in the "natural history approach," however, which is typified by placing Native people as "parts of nature like the flora and fauna, and therefore their arts and crafts were to be classified and presented according to similarity of form, evolutionary

stage of development, or geographical origin."[5] Over the half century of its life, the museum treated Native cultures as though they existed in a vacuum—an inherent and perpetual state of being that was a hallmark of a society that had not yet conquered nature through agriculture and animal husbandry.[6] By placing Indigenous objects in the controlled, static environment of the museum without a contextual narrative, visitors were shown that regardless of tribe, homeland, or alliance to the United States, Indianism, like the cultures of other races, was inherently out of place in American culture, both physically and figuratively.[7]

It was also a motive of Peale's to debunk the prevalent theories of French naturalist Comte de Buffon who argued that American indigenous species, including people, were physically and mentally inferior to Europeans. Peale combatted Buffon's theories through the lens of the American Enlightenment, which promoted self-improvement through the agency of individuals. When Peale applied these values to American Indians, Peale in turn promoted Native humanity by exhibiting specific anecdotes of American acculturation. Overall, however, Peale's interpretation implied that "authentic" Indian culture was unsustainable in the face of American progress but able to be preserved within the museum for the education of posterity.

In this thesis, I argue that Peale attempted to distinguish Americanism as superior to the Other, inferior cultures of North America through separate methods of exhibition. Peale simultaneously portrayed American Indians as racially equal through instances of

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), 67.

[7] Ellen Fernandez-Sacco, "Framing 'The Indian': The Visual Culture of Conquest in the Museums of Pierre Eugene Du Simitière and Charles Willson Peale, 1779-96," *Social Identities* 8, no. 4 (2002): 599.

Native individuals who demonstrated willing deference to Americanism. As the principles of the Enlightenment gave way to unabashed Indian-hating in American politics, Peale's successors moved away from egalitarian pedagogy toward reinforcing a Native declension narrative and the romantic stereotype of the vanishing noble savage, a motif that is still all too present in today's museums. Nevertheless, Peale demonstrated atypical racial tolerance in his democratic museum administration that warrants a closer examination of ethnographic exhibitions at the height of the Philadelphia Museum.

Peale's Museum is an important case study in the history of American museums because its displays of Indian culture were wrought with contradictions and nuanced complexities. Today's museums have inherited these problems, brought increasingly to the forefront as American society has grappled with the meaning and consequence of its history with the continent's Native population. In order to better understand how contemporary societal attitudes shape and are shaped by public museums, I ask the following questions: How did Peale's cultural and political environment affect his museum directorship? How did Peale's interactions with Native Americans affect his museum displays? In what ways did the prevailing European and American scientific theories affect Peale's treatment in his museum? What national attitudes about Western expansion and American exceptionalism did Peale promote as the self-designated voice of American identity? To answer these questions, I will address Peale's own beliefs about American Indians based on his experiences with Native Americans, his contemporary scientific environment and his collection and display methodologies. I focus on the time between when the museum opened to the public in 1786 to Peale's first retirement in

1810, followed by a brief critique of Native ethnography under Rubens Peale's directorship.

My theoretical basis is drawn from Tony Bennett's *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (1995). According to Bennett's groundbreaking work, museums "played a pivotal role in the formation of the modern state and are fundamental to its conception as, among other things, a set of educative and civilizing agencies."[8] Bennett argues that early modern museums in the eighteenth century were a manifestation of the ruling classes' values, put on display in a quasi-permanent exhibition of a rational "order of things"—a constant touchstone upon which the public could gaze to find their place in Creation and society. Rational order, according to Peale, was synonymous with useful knowledge: Every person "should particularly be acquainted with *some kind of system*…for it is only by method in collecting and storing our ideas, when a multiplicity is presented to us, that the knowledge of them is retained and rendered of service."[9] For colonial nations, Bennett argues, the ordering of humanity was particularly crucial; by creating an explicit distinction between citizen/gazer and the uncivilized, inferior Other/gazed-upon, museums reinforced the national rhetoric that attempted to justify power and conquest over any culture that did not fit within the state's vision for itself.[10] For the individuals that aligned itself with the collective American audience, this was an indirect reinforcement of society's collective power within the state. Unlike the British Museum that still restricted access to those with "proper" credentials, the Philadelphia

[8] Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 66.
[9] Peale, "Introduction to a Course of Lectures," 1799, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:270.
[10] Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 67.

Museum's unrestricted access to knowledge exemplified a progressively democratic notion of public education for that time.

Historiography

The study of American Indian representations in American public culture and public history has grown through the last few decades, in large part due to the United States's passing of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and perpetuated by the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. in 2004. Yet the study of American Indian representations in the early American republic is usually given a passing mention in museum studies literature, which makes the work of David Brigham and Ellen Fernandez-Sacco that much more prominent. By broadening the contextual scope of Peale's world to include the representations of Indians in early American culture, we see that Peale's Museum was just one player in much more nuanced discourse on the role and identity of Indians in American society, and that Peale's exhibits say as much about the curator as the cultures they connected.

Robert J. Berkhofer's *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (1978) is a foundational work in American Indian studies. The historian argues that historical representations of Native Americans have been polarized by the dominant society into the familiar stereotypes of the noble savage (honorable, prelapsarian, stoic, one with nature) and the bloodthirsty or scientifically inferior savage (violent, uncouth, emotionless, stupid).[11] This truism is especially present

[11] Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Knopf : Distributed by Random House, 1978), 28.

in Peale's own work as he continuously fought the degenerative theories about Indians put forth by European naturalists. Peale's motives for portraying Indians as noble savages is further complicated when viewed in light of the arguments presented in Philip J. Deloria's *Playing Indian* (1998). Deloria argues that early Americans assumed and manipulated the identity of Indians in order to define what Americanism is and is not. During Peale's lifetime, Americans used Indian personifications to step outside social and legal protocol and invoke the primal rights of individualism and the laws of nature while resisting authority—whether it be from the British or municipal government.[12] After the Revolution, Americans created fraternal orders that used American Indian caricatures to create a tribe-like society, much like the American Philosophical Society (APS). Likewise, some of these groups firmly invested themselves in this discourse of American Indian history and culture, such as the Tammany Society's Museum and Lewis Henry Morgan's New Confederacy of the Iroquois. Both organizations worked to conserve Native history and language through preservation spurred by the rapid depletion of Native populations and the popularization of the Rousseauian "noble-yet-vanishing" Indian stereotype in literature.[13] Yet this kind of work framed Indians as anachronisms, "simply predead Indians who, upon dying, would become historical, locked in a grand narrative of inevitable American progress."[14] Peale followed a similar logic in his own work.

Peale's endeavors, prolific writing and centrality as a figure in early American public culture have cast him in innumerable histories. According to art historian Lillian

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[12] Philip Joseph Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 22.
[13] Ibid., 39.
[14] Ibid., 58.

B. Miller, "Peale was so intrinsically American in his experiences, that his countrymen's response to him at different times has inevitably paralleled their response to their culture in general."[15] Works not discussed in depth here include the body of scholarship that surround Peale's artistic career, including Miller's edited volumes, *Charles Willson Peale and His World* (1982), co-edited by Edgar P. Richardson and Brooke Hindle, and *The Peale Family: The Creation of a Legacy 1770-1870* (1996). Dozens of essays have been published about Peale, and for the sake of brevity I have mentioned only those that demonstrate the greatest amount of original scholarship in my historiography. I have also declined to mention early essays by Peale historians adapted from their work for longer monographs, including David C. Ward and David Bingham. Too numerous to be named are the museology texts that reference Peale's Museum as the most consequential originating point for scholarly museums in America, yet they are a testament to Peale's unique place in American history.

To begin a historiography on the Peale Philadelphia Museum, one must begin with Charles Coleman Sellers, a historian of Early America. Before the publication of his 1969 biography *Charles Willson Peale*, art historians acknowledged Peale as one of early America's few distinguished artists and an early museum director, but his varied yet influential pursuits as a patriot, public figure, soldier and scientist were overshadowed by his more well-known Revolutionary compatriots. Sellers, who was none other than Peale's great-grandson, brought his ancestor's life out of obscurity from the Peale-Sellers Family Collection at the APS. Sellers was the first to extensively research Peale's life and

[15] Lillian B. Miller, introduction in *New Perspectives on Charles Willson Peale: A 250th Anniversary Celebration*, eds. Lillian B. Miller and David C. Ward (Pittsburgh: Published for the Smithsonian Institution by the University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 4.

he produced two monographs: the Bancroft-prize winning *Charles Willson Peale* (1969) and *Mr. Peale's Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Popular Museum of Natural Science and Art* (1980). Seller's warm, sympathetic narratives of Peale's life filled with quotations from his autobiography and correspondence brought both the personal and political life of this well-known but rarely studied patriot into clear focus. Sellers portrayed his ancestor as a relatable figure seemingly born for his times, who suffered the financial consequences of the American Revolution and great personal loss, but was also someone emblematic of the patriot spirit, whose ambition for personal growth and fame were both naive and admirable. In Sellers's portrayal, Peale is also a man who believed in America's egalitarian exceptionalism wholeheartedly.

In 1975, Sellers produced one of the few works to focus on Peale's relationship with Native subjects, "'Good Chiefs and Wise Men': Indians as Symbols of Peace in the Art of Charles Willson Peale." In December 1796, the museum was the site for a signing of a peace treaty among a group of tribes who were visiting Washington D.C. and Philadelphia. As will be discussed in the second chapter, Peale forever after recalled this peace council as proof positive of the important influence his museum had not only among Americans, but those outside of his society, as well. Sellers looks carefully at this moment in the museum's history to demonstrate that when given the opportunity to interpret Native culture or behavior (such as in his exhibits), Peale preferred to advocate a harmonious coexistence among all humankind. Though Sellers's argument follows straightforward logic, it is important to note because it is the first time that Native people as museum participants were singled out as a subject in the historiography of the

museum.[16] Sellers's essay also reinforces an important point that is often overlooked: Peale considered Native people to be part of his audience, and he believed that an education, such as the one his museum provided, could civilize and enjoin them to the dominant culture.[17] Sellers failed, however, to mention any of the objects in Peale's collection attributed to unresolved warfare or violence between American Indians and Anglo-Americans.

1980 marks an important shift in the study of Charles Willson Peale. Sellers died that year and the National Portrait Gallery (NPG) published the *Collected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family*. *Collected Papers* was the first product of the Charles Willson Peale Family Papers (PFP) that began in 1974, a historical editing project managed by one of the NPG's historians, Lillian B. Miller.[18] For the next twenty years, Miller was the de facto Peale expert. New cultural histories about Peale outside of Miller's circles waned during this time, partially due to the popularity of new social history, and also because Miller and her team of fellow art historians focused their attention on a reexamination of Peale's contributions to early American art. During this time, however, the growing field of museology undertook Peale's Museum as a subject worthy of study in the history of American museums. Miller's death in 1997 would bring

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[16] Charles Coleman Sellers, "'Good Chiefs and Wise Men:' Indians as Symbols of Peace in the Art of Charles Willson Peale," in *New Perspectives*. The other essay which addresses Native people as participants is John C. Ewers's 1966 essay "'Chiefs from the Missouri and Mississippi' and Peale's Silhouettes of 1806." Ewers's subject is the trip 21 members of ten different tribes took to the east to meet Jefferson who had had contact with Lewis and Clark. Ewers's essay contributes a depth of detail about this fascinating excursion, and his argument is that Peale's physiognotrace captured the first accurate likenesses of Native not interpreted through an artistic and therefore inherently biased eye.
[17] Sellers, *New Perspectives*, 127.
[18] Sidney Hart and David C. Ward, "The Peale Family Papers," last modified July 27, 1999, accessed December 8, 2014, http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/peale/index-histed.htm.

a resurgence of the study of Peale as a public figure in early American culture.[19] This is related in part to the controversy surrounding Miller's management of the PFP, which will be discussed later in context with the Peale family papers as a primary source.

The two assistant editors of the PFP, David C. Ward and Sidney Hart, presented "The Waning of an Enlightenment Ideal: Charles Willson Peale and the Mechanical Arts" at the 1987 National Council on Public History conference, which was subsequently republished in 1988 and 1991.[20] This important essay combines museological and historical analysis to explore the reason why Peale's Museum was unable to sustain itself upon an exclusively educational objective. Ward and Hart argue that historians have projected presentist and ahistorical characteristics onto the museum, resulting in a polarized way of understanding the museum's place in American history: "that it was the forerunner of either P.T. Barnum or the twentieth-century Smithsonian Institution."[21] Therefore, past historians have mistakenly presumed that Peale was unable to interest the public or state to fund the museum because it was reputed to be a for-profit venture (like Barnum), or that Peale's idea for a national museum funded by the nation was unprecedented and impossible in its contemporary political climate. Ward and Hart argue that historians have overlooked the fact that part of the museum's death was self-inflicted in that it never escaped its methodology generated by the Enlightenment.[22] Peale's mission to display "the world in miniature" was representative of a characteristic

[19] Robert McGill Thomas, Jr, "Lillian B. Miller, Historian, 74; Studied Art by the Peale Family," *The New York Times*, December 1, 1997, http://www.nytimes.com/1997/12/01/arts/lillian-b-miller-historian-74-studied-art-by-the-peale-family.html.
[20] Sidney Hart and David C. Ward, "The Waning of an Enlightenment Ideal: Charles Willson Peale's Philadelphia Museum, 1790-1820," *Journal of the Early Republic* 8, no. 4 (December 1, 1988): 389–418; Sidney Hart and David C. Ward, "The Waning of an Enlightenment Ideal: Charles Willson Peale's Philadelphia Museum, 1790-1820," in *New Perspectives.*
[21] Hart and Ward, *New Perspectives*, 229.
[22] Ibid., 229.

Enlightenment mentality: all of the answers to the mysteries of nature lay within nature itself, and therefore man's ability to understand his world was only limited by his ability to interact with it.[23] Peale's all-encompassing approach to collecting became inappropriate in nineteenth century science when disciplines such as history, anthropology and archaeology became distinct fields of study that were decreasingly interdisciplinary. Therefore "Peale failed in his attempt to turn popular opinion in the United States to the support of science, and also in his attempt to convince scientists to seek popular support."[24] Under the influence of Peale's sons the museum turned more and more toward Barnum's type of popular entertainment, only further discrediting the integrity of its intellectual initiatives. Therefore, the authors conclude, the museum was a product of its time. Specifically, it was the product of a man of the Enlightenment.

The commemoration of Peale's achievements in twentieth century public memory had been limited to the display of Peale's artwork in museums, but in 1990 the Peale Museum in Baltimore curated the public exhibit *Mermaids, Mummies and Mastodons: The Evolution of the American Museum*. The exhibit presented a history of the Philadelphia and Baltimore Peale museums, contextualized by P.T. Barnum's story. The history of the Baltimore Museum dates back to 1813 when Rembrandt Peale (Charles Willson's second oldest surviving son, then 35) opened the Baltimore Peale Museum in what was the first public building constructed in America specifically to be a museum. The museum survived until 1830, at which time its collection was moved off site and eventually sold. In 1930, Baltimore reopened the building as the Peale Museum, dedicated to art and municipal history. A companion book, titled *Mermaids, Mummies,*

[23] Ibid., 231.
[24] Ibid., 232.

and Mastodons: The Emergence of the American Museum (1992), edited by William T. Alderson, presented five essays by different historians and museum professionals that presented the findings of the original research that contributed to Richard Flint's curation of the exhibit.

The *Mermaids* project is distinct for two reasons. First, it was the first major presentation of Peale's contributions to American museum history intended for a general audience. The Peales' legacy in museums and public history since the family's museums originally closed had been as producers of art; in 1956, the reopened Peale Museum curated its only other exhibit about its origin story and presented itself as a center for art, style and elegance.[25] Second, it was the first museological work to go beyond the Peale museums as a static point in history by attempting to draw a direct, active connection between Peale's struggles as a museum proprietor and the problems of present-day American museums.

In the book's introduction, Gary Kulik argues that the eventual failure of all Peale family museums has resulted in Peale being viewed as a "quaint" founding father rather than as an influential one.[26] Kulik argues, however, that it was Peale's dedication to scholarly education generated for public consumption that eventually emerged as the modern museum model. Kulik also reviewed the exhibit component for *The Journal of American History*, as did Roy Rosenzweig for *The Public Historian*. Both historians described the exhibit as Whiggish, agreeing that the message of Alderson's edited volume fell flat within the exhibit, and presented the trajectory of American museums as

[25] Gary Kulik, "Mermaids, Mummies, and Mastodons: The Evolution of the American Museum; The Other Museum: Power and Spirit," *The Journal of American History* 78, no. 1 (June 1, 1991): 256.
[26] Gary Kulik, introduction in *Mermaids, Mummies, and Mastodons: The Emergence of the American Museum*, ed. William T. Alderson (Washington DC.: American Association of Museums, 1992) 11.

a triumph of reason and education over the carnivalesque spectacle.[27] Kulik also criticized the exhibit for another important reason: it never encouraged its visitors "to ask why American museums came to be repositories of the artifacts and remains of native peoples."[28] Considering NAGPRA had been passed less than a month before the exhibit opened in December 1990, the opportunity to engage the public in this extremely timely topic was sorely lost.[29]

The same year as the Mermaids exhibit, Joel J. Orosz published a major work on the history of museums in America titled: *Curators and Culture: The Museum Movement in America, 1740-1870*. Orosz argues that Peale's methodology heavily reflects the volatile cultural and social shifts in America during the half-century it was open, and his greatest triumph was the creation of a self-aware democratic museum.[30] He identifies five key factors that affected Peale; the Enlightenment, Deism, deference to social order, republicanism and cultural nationalism.[31] All of these were characteristics of the Revolutionary generation, and Peale initially believed that his museum would stir people's innate pull toward logic, civility and self-improvement. Orosz argues, however, that the triumph of violent chaos over order during the Reign of Terror caused Peale to abandon the first four pillars and focus on cultural nationalism and popular education

[27] Kulik, "Mermaids, Mummies, and Mastodons," 259; Roy Rosenzweig, "Review of Mermaids, Mummies, and Mastodons: The Evolution of the American Museum by Richard W. Flint; Elizabeth Mills," *The Public Historian* 14, no. 3 (July 1, 1992): 158.
[28] Kulik, "Mermaids, Mummies, and Mastodons," 259
[29] National Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Pub. L. No. 101-601, 104 STAT. 3048 (1990). The NAGPRA Act is historic legislation that has permanently changed the relationship between American museums and Indigenous communities. It requires that museums make the contents of their collections accessible to source communities, particularly in order to return and prevent the acquisition of items or human remains that were collected under duress or without permission.
[30] Joel J. Orosz, *Curators and Culture: The Museum Movement in America, 1740-1870* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990), 85.
[31] Ibid., 45-46.

after the turn of the century until his death. Peale's shift in focus to a didactic education for the public reveals his realization that most of his museum attendees sought entertainment more than an education.[32] Peale responded with a fluid attempt to balance the desires of his audience from all social classes with his personal imperative to offer a lesson in morality and civility.[33]

David A. Brigham, current president and CEO of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (an institute Peale co-created in 1805), addressed Peale's relationship with his audience in his book *Public Culture in the Early Republic* (1995). What began as Brigham's doctoral dissertation became the closest examination of Peale's audience, and it is one of the few social histories written on the museum. He argued that Peale shaped the participation of Americans in early republican culture through the accessibility of his museum. By manipulating the conditions of visitorship to appeal to different genders, races, creeds and classes, Peale influenced how people saw their own participation in the museum. For example, young Anglo women and men were invited to attend as part of their formal education, and Puritans, who otherwise avoided public amusements, were able to witness the wonders of the Creator. Socialites could pay a quarter in the evening to gather for a concert, or a professor could purchase a year's subscription to research in the museum's collection.[34] The museum's displays taught its audience to identify with the intellectual accomplishments of their counterparts in society, which consequentially let them to identify with certain social groups in broader public culture.[35]

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[32] Ibid., 83.
[33] Ibid., 85.
[34] David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale's Museum and Its Audience* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 84.
[35] Ibid., 1.

Brigham meticulously researched extant visitor statistics of the museum, which included Peale's advertisements, written responses, records of silhouette purchases and donor records. Brigham articulates his research through chapters that focus on Peale's administration, rather than on collecting or curating. For example, Peale used different techniques to appeal to different audiences, such as multiple admission options and prices, extending hours for the working class, and offering popular entertainment as well as intellectual lectures. He also emphasized different elements of the museum's mission: for the farmer, the museum offered valuable information about minerals and husbandry and for the mechanic, the latest technology in machinery. Peale told politicians such as James Calhoun, mayor of Baltimore, that the proletariat would increase its output and economic potential through exposure to this knowledge.[36] For students, professors from the University of Pennsylvania held lectures within the museum and utilized its collections for illustration. For audiences who might find the museum controversial, such as religious leaders, the museum was a temple to God's works. For women, whom Peale presumed might find the museum's scholarly character to be wearisome, Peale offered the delight of having their silhouette traced as a souvenir, for a nominal fee.[37]

Despite Peale's mission to create a universally educated public, according to Brigham, the proprietor contributed to social inequality through such actions as stratifying costs by charging extra for special exhibits. Though that may be true, an additional amount for a special exhibit is not nor ever has been unusual in museums, making Peale's Museum unexceptional in that regard. Also, Peale depended mostly on admission costs to run his museum, unlike present museums that have proven that is an

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[36] 29 June 1796, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:157.
[37] Brigham, *Public Culture*, 72.

unsustainable financial strategy.[38] Lastly, he argues that Peale's placed his displays of humankind in a moral narrative—that warfare is natural only among humankind, and only by overcoming it may we truly live in a civilized and perfect state of being. The dark but unspoken undertone of this message was that hostile Indians must submit to the greater power of the United States or be undone by it.[39]

The most recent—and perhaps the most relevant—work is Ellen Fernandez-Sacco's 2010 article "Framing 'The Indian': The Visual Culture of Conquest in the Museums of Pierre Eugene Du Simitière and Charles Wilson Peale, 1779-96." Fernandez-Sacco, with a background in art history, dedicates her work to focusing on the language of racial degradation in the public culture of the early American republic, particularly museums of art and history. Within this article, she argues that Peale was trying to make a tangible definition of self and national identity through visual arrangements. Her focus is the Iroquois and Wabash human remains that Peale and others displayed, donated by veterans of Major General John Sullivan's 1779 campaign against the Iroquois nation, and General Anthony Wayne, commander at the Battle of the Fallen Timbers in 1794.

Expounding on Brigham's examination of Peale's racial rhetoric, Fernandez-Sacco's argument is that the rational scientific order by which Peale arranged his displays was also an attempt to arrange America's social order, or more appropriately, racial hierarchy. She examines the framework of Indian interpretation by juxtaposing the

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[38] Ford W. Bell, *How Are Museums Supported Financially in the U.S.?*, accessed December 8, 2014, http://photos.state.gov/libraries/amgov/133183/english/P_You_Asked_How_Are_Museums_Supported_Financially.pdf. According to the American Association of Museums, museums in the United States today receive about five percent of their annual income from admission costs, a part of the larger category of earned income (28 percent). State and local governments make up about 24 percent, private donations 37 percent, and invested income 11 percent.
[39] Brigham, *Public Culture*, 144.

heroic, expansionist narrative of military and civic leaders with the dehumanizing, anonymous display of the body parts of Iroquois persons.[40] The effect of this, she argues, was that the explicit violence of military warfare against Native American was sanitized, rationalized, celebrated and absorbed into the national character as a "cult of masculinity" through the museums.[41]

A major problem in Fernandez-Sacco's work is that Peale's representations of Native people were much more nuanced than she suggests. In considering the objectified, anonymous remains Peale displayed, she fails to mention that the remains of Euro-Americans were displayed as well. More importantly, when possible, Peale identified Native individuals. For example, of the approximately 12 wax figures of humans in the museum, only four were identified as actual people, three of them being Native, two of which Peale modeled from life.[42] Peale also displayed a portrait of Mohawk leader, Joseph Brandt (Thayendanegea), among his portraits.[43] In almost all instances where Natives were identified, they were placed in a context of peaceful interactions with Euro-Americans. It is the goal of this thesis to explore the consequence of these displays further in depth.

Just as Fernandez-Sacco saw the acceptance of American military rhetoric in mainstream culture reflected in Peale's displays, Laura Rigal connects the museum to American labor history in her cultural study of federalism, *American Manufactory* (1998). The book argues that American cultural production pivoted on the working class,

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[40] Fernandez-Sacco, "Framing 'The Indian,'" 597.
[41] Ibid., 596.
[42] Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Popular Museum of Natural Science and Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1980), 92.
[43] Doris D. Fanelli, *History of the Portrait Collection, Independence National Historical Park*, ed. Karie Diethorn (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001), 97.

particularly artisans, who attempted to rise up in social standings through opportunities for independence. Artists, craftsmen and the like acquired their socioeconomic power from their exclusive knowledge of their craft.[44] Peale is an ideal figure to represent the "cultural production of production," for Peale believed one of his most important responsibilities was to display new advances in the sciences of industry.[45]

Though Rigal could have focused on Peale's displays of applicable knowledge and other relevant pieces of evidence, she instead devotes a chapter to Peale's exhumation and reconstruction of a mammoth skeleton in 1801. Rigal sees the ideals of the Jeffersonian-Republican Party manifested in the "framing" of the skeleton, demonstrated particularly in the Peales' commemoration of the event: Rembrandt Peale's 1803 written account of the excavation and one of Charles's most famous paintings, the *Exhumation of the Mastodon* (1806). Both representations emphasize stratification between classes that exemplifies the Jeffersonian ideal of private labor for the national good—both the cause and effect of class distinctions.[46] Expansionist narrative was also inherent in Peale's museum; by collecting, cataloguing and arranging specimens from the interior of the continent, Peale created an economic and cultural demand for intellectual access to the expanding peripheries of the nation manifested through manual labor.[47]

Just as Jefferson's connection to the museum made it a target of satire for the politician's enemies, Rigal argues that Peale used his museum as a venue for political dialogue as well. Peale was most active in his portrait painting during the war and the

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[44] Laura Rigal, *The American Manufactory: Art, Labor, and the World of Things in the Early Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 8.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid., 105.
[47] Ibid., 107.

resulting paintings permanently hung in his museum as static monuments to the Revolutionary ideals. Yet these were the same men who would become divided in postwar politics, sympathizing with either Federalists or Democratic-Republicans. Though presented in a seemingly unbiased space, the power of these inoffensive images was subject to Peale's discretion. They lay open to judgment by Peale's audience, their feats of the past and present open to both praise and ridicule by the American public.[48] Rigal reinforces Peale's self-awareness as a cultural creator by interpreting his final self-portrait, *The Artist in the Museum* (1827). As a summation of what Peale considered his most important work in life, it is an image rich with symbolism, and it seems a rite of passage for every Peale scholar to attempt his or her own interpretation of Peale's meaning in this painting. Rigal uses the work to emphasize Peale's mastery of his visual and curatorial art through his control of his own image. Though the image is mostly self-indulgent, it also conveys a darker sentiment—he alone had the power to choose the arrangement of the displays, therefore his audience's experience was a product of Peale's personal point of view.[49]

Published in time for the Corps's bicentennial, Castle McLaughlin's *Arts of Diplomacy: Lewis and Clark's Indian Collection* (2003) is a singular work in the Lewis and Clark historiography because its subject is the extant material cultural stemming the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Presented in a beautifully illustrated catalogue, McLaughlin's text delves into the story of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology's large collection of Lewis and Clark objects at Harvard University, many of which at one time belonged to Peale. McLaughlin bases her narrative on the argument

[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., 115.

that the Enlightenment pursuit of useful knowledge was never separate from imperial expansion. Therefore Jefferson's mission for the Corps of Discovery, despite any scientific overtures or resultant ethnographic displays, was still in essence a tool of imperial ambition.[50] Through the lens of material culture, the author is able to place an emphasis on the process of mutual exchange that Lewis and Clark experienced with their Native counterparts. Of particular interest is her focus on the large pipe collection donated by the captains, which symbolizes not an act of political dominance but an intimate ritual of mutual respect and the assumption of personal responsibility. Lewis and Clark did not trade for these pipes but received them as gifts from Native peoples who played a very active role in political diplomacy. The objects presented by McLaughlin are some of the most important Native objects Peale had in his collection because they epitomized the harmony and humanity that Peale wished to emphasize in Native/American exchanges. As the greatest collection of Peale objects still in existence, their documentation give us a greater understanding of how museums have exhibited these objects over the last two centuries.

Almost sixty years after Sellers's biography, in 2004 David C. Ward published the second biographic monograph on Peale: *Charles Willson Peale: Art and Selfhood in the Early Republic*. Ward posits the theory that Peale used his autobiography, written in the last years of his life, as a way to set his personal record straight for future American generations, lest posterity interpret his life based exclusively on his remaining journals and letters. Ward used a comparative approach between Peale's personal documents and

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[50] James P. Ronda, foreword in *Arts of Diplomacy: Lewis and Clark's Indian Collection*, by Castle McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA; Seattle: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University ; University of Washington Press, 2003), xvi.

his autobiography to show that Peale's sense of self-representation changed markedly through his life, especially as an adult when he realized that his role as de facto court artist, politician and museum proprietor during the birth of the nation would warrant retrospection by future generations. Though historians may take for granted Peale's conscious effort to shape the way early Americans understood their nation's character, like Rigal, Ward argues that we should not overlook his equally manipulative efforts to shape how history regards the man himself.

Ward's biography is an excellent compliment to any biographical piece on Peale. His critical gaze serves as an invaluable annotation to Sellers's detailed but uncritical interpretation of Peale's life. He also delves further into historical context than most of the other works on Peale. Ward does not shy away from Peale's failures, weaknesses and self-doubt. As a result, he offers us a more nuanced, realistic and ultimately more interesting character. Here we see the consequences of growing up as the son of an exiled English felon, the way a modest career depicting the materialistic, introverted worlds of the elite stoked the fire of his radical democratic leanings, and why his indefatigable work ethic was dedicated wholly to an unprofitable and underappreciated effort to give the American public power through knowledge.

Primary Sources

Lillian B. Miller is a name as synonymous with Peale's as Charles Coleman Sellers. Miller assumed the task of editing the APS's collection of the Peale Family

Papers for the National Portrait Gallery in 1974 until her death in 1997.[51] In 1980, Miller published the *Collected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family* on microfiche. Roughly every five years thereafter, one of five annotated volumes of the abridged collection was published as the *Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family.* Two final volumes were scheduled for release that would have contained the papers of his children. Though the first was scheduled for release in 2007, neither has been published. I have relied on both the microfilm and hardbound editions of the Peale Family Papers as my principal sources; they include Peale's diaries and correspondence, as well as museum advertisements. The microfilm edition also contains all extant administrative museum papers, including the accession book, ticket sales, guidebooks, unpublished lectures, floor plans and museum labels.

Miller's editorial methodology has been sharply criticized, most notably by late art historian and Raphaelle Peale-expert Phoebe Lloyd. Lloyd has accused Miller of having poor judgment in her methodology and a pernicious close-mindedness in her interpretation that resulted in her assistants rescinding the text from the publisher for reediting after her death. [52] Though the project's assistant editors, Ward and Hart accused

[51] McGill Thomas, "Lillian B. Miller."

[52] Sidney Hart and David C. Ward, "Response to Phoebe Lloyd's Review of the Autobiography of Charles Willson Peale, Summer 2001, Vol. 68 No. 2," *Pennsylvania History* 69, no. 1 (January 1, 2002): 79. It should be noted that Lloyd's own scholarship on the Peale family is centered on her research into Raphaelle's cause of death. Based on Peale's writings at the time of his son's death, historians including Miller have long believed Raphaelle was a prodigal, saturnine son given to alcoholism, which strained the father-son relationship and was the eventual cause of his death. This opinion has subsequently colored historians' analyses of Raphaelle's administration of the Baltimore and New York museums. Lloyd, Ward and Hart, however, believe that arsenic poisoning from museum work was most likely the cause, a realization Lloyd posits the elder Peale may have come to later in life, as well. An in-depth study of Raphaelle's life would be an important contribution to this subject.

Lloyd of a libelous, “gross misrepresentation of our project’s methodology and practice,” the project remains incomplete.[53]

The verbosity of the Peale family and his children and the wide distribution of their extant manuscripts has made it impossible for any single historian to consult all of their documents, despite the efforts of the PFP. For example, the papers of Titian Ramsay Peale (who was a museum assistant to his father and curator after his death) remain an untapped source at the Huntington Library in Los Angeles, and one may presume these would have made up a large part of volumes six and seven. Not being a doctoral candidate, I have been denied access to these papers.

As the owner of a popular cultural institution, Peale frequently advertised by publishing news of the museum, such as new exhibits, acquisitions or visitors of note. Peale most commonly wrote in Philadelphia newspapers, including: *Aurora General Advertiser, Claypoole’s American Daily Advertiser, Gazette of the United States, Independent Gazetter,* among others. Peale also published a partial catalogue to his museum in 1796 and kept extensive accession records after 1809.[54] I have also consulted published visitors’ accounts of the museum.

In the eighteenth century, Carl Linnaeus and George-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon wrote two seminal scientific works that formed the theoretical basis for Peale’s Museum. Peale could not read Latin, therefore he relied on Richard Pultney’s 1781 translation of Linnaeus’s *Systema Naturae* titled, *A General View of the Writings of Linnaeus*. Per the advice of James Madison, he read Buffon’s *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière* between 1787 and 1788. Peale could read French, therefore it is likely he

[53] Ibid.
[54] Appel, “Science, Popular Culture and Profit,” 624.

read the text in its original language. I, however, do not read French, therefore I use William Smellie's 1780 translation that Peale sometimes quoted in his museum work. As a supplement to my discussion, I also quote from the first English translation of Buffon by W. Kenrick and J. Murdoch (1775-1776).

Peale's presence in the scientific society of Philadelphia led him to be a supporter of such early American scholars as Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Rush and Benjamin Smith Barton. The American who most greatly influenced his views on Native Americans, however, was his friend and the museum president, Thomas Jefferson. *Notes on the State of Virginia* was the most influential eighteenth century American scientific work and my thesis references the 1781 edition.

Chapter Outline

The next chapter gives a brief synopsis of Charles Willson Peale's life and the lifespan of the museum. I also discuss in depth a specific anecdote at the museum in 1796 when two groups of Native delegates serendipitously signed a peace treaty at the museum, an incident that greatly affected Peale's belief in the museum's civilizing effect on Anglo and Native visitors alike. Lastly, I give a brief summary of Pierre du Simitière's American Museum and the American Philosophical Society, the two contemporary Philadelphia institutions that dealt specifically with American Indian interpretation and Western expansion, respectively.

The purpose of my third chapter is to explain the scientific influences that affected Peale's interpretive framework of artifacts associated with Native peoples. Peale

did not put forth any new theories on the natural history of humankind; rather, he presented the most widely accepted theories of the Enlightenment that gave rise to anthropology as a discipline. Specifically, I address the prevailing theories on the hierarchy of civilization as conceived by Carl Linnaeus, Comte de Buffon and Thomas Jefferson. Understanding how European theorists influenced American science is crucial, as is acknowledging how Peale's peers shaped him, both directly and indirectly. Though Peale was a man of the Enlightenment, he deferred to his intellectual betters to craft his interpretive work. Within this thesis and particularly the third chapter, I use the term "race" to mean a group of people that share similar physical traits, particularly skin color. I use the term "ethnicity" to imply a subgroup of people that share a culture and are typically of the same racial categorization.

The fourth chapter focuses on Peale's preparation and actual display of Indian ethnographic objects, specifically his interpretive framework. In this chapter I discuss the physiological aspects of particular objects and their displays, including their arrangement and label text, when possible. Evidence describing the physicality of displays is limited, therefore I address the background and historical context of select objects that best exemplify Peale's curatorship over time. Through these examples, the ways in which Peale's audience was expected to perceive the ethnographic displays and think critically about their contents becomes clear. Peale's personal records, museum guidebooks, newspaper advertisements, accession records and tourism guides are important sources for this chapter. Lastly, the final chapter contains my conclusion and suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

"STRIKING FENOMINA OF NATURE"

CONTEXTUALIZING PEALE'S MUSEUM[55]

When the American Revolution came to a close, Peale and likeminded men seized the spirit of utopian optimism to begin building a government and society that placed the values of the Enlightenment at its heart—democracy, knowledge and self-cultivation. Nationalism also characterized this period, as Americans sought to hone national character and identity to be expressed in arts, sciences and public culture. Peale's Museum allowed Peale and its contributors to express their notions of American identity over the next few decades. The reputation of the institution rested on its strict adherence to scientific description and organization until financial decline forced Peale and his sons to present more popular and plebian entertainment. Nonetheless, Peale's Museum stands out because its management so clearly reflects the ideals of its proprietor. In order to also understand the progressive aspects of Peale's curatorship it is important to understand Peale's background and the history of the museum.

Post-revolution, the nation's political leaders were embroiled in the complicated task of determining exactly how the ideals of democracy would actually function within a government. Along with politics, democratic education was also unprecedented, and in his role as public educator, Peale administered his museum in adherence to what he thought democratic education meant: providing the public with a proper environment in which to learn. Despite the degenerative theories of Buffon, Peale believed that education

[55] Peale, *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family*, ed. Lillian B. Miller, Sidney Hart, and David C. Ward, vol. 5, *The Autobiography of Charles Willson Peale* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 362.

was the key to equalizing the varieties of humankind; therefore he felt that the museum should speak to Native visitors as well. Within the museum, Indian visitors were to recognize the superiority of American power, and actively, if not eagerly, accept assimilation. If his museum was capable of improving members of a society that rested lower on the hierarchy of civilization, Peale believed the American people surely could not fail to be transformed as well.

Peale agreed with the Enlightenment ideal that the best chance for Indian survival was their complete submission to American policy, which he presumed was in the best interest of Natives. Peale believed that his museum succeeded at transforming Native Americans into "civilized" people, due in large part to a serendipitous encounter at the museum. In 1796, two Native political delegations happened to meet while touring the museum. The next day, they returned of their own volition to sign a fortuitous treaty of everlasting peace between their multiple tribes, witnessed by representatives of the federal government. This conference had a profound impact on Peale's perception of American Indians and the effectiveness of education in his museum, thus it is the focus of the latter part of this chapter.

The Story of Peale's Philadelphia Museum

Charles Willson Peale was born in Queen Anne Country, Maryland, on April 15, 1741. His father, Charles Peale, had been exiled from England after a death sentence for theft and forgery was commuted to indentured servitude in America. The elder Peale managed to make a meager living as a schoolteacher and the letters he left portray a man

given to self-pity and fatalism, resentful of the family he was required to support.[56] Peale died when his eldest son, Charles Willson, was only nine. Four years later, the young man entered into an apprenticeship with a saddle maker. He emerged from it with knowledge of a craft but severely in debt for reasons still unknown. He sought out alternative means of income including watchmaking, and began painting in 1765 not out of artistic interest but because he saw the potential for a lucrative income. Yet it was never enough. At times Peale was humiliatingly reduced to fleeing the colony in order to avoid his debtors, once for over a year, leaving his wife to give birth to their first child alone.[57] Peale's meager beginnings and his dependency on the mercy and grace of the elite well into his adulthood inspired an exhaustive work ethic driven by self-reliance, his strong Democratic-Republican values and a desire for prestige and legacy he would display later in life.

After Peale displayed an aptitude for painting, Charles Carroll, Barrister, a powerful family friend, mediated a deal between Peale and his creditors. Peale's debts were furloughed without interest for four years, and members of the Maryland elite, including the governor, funded his training in London under the internationally renowned American artist, Benjamin West. Art historians usually consider Peale's contribution to American fine art not as an outstanding or progressive talent, but as the creator of a visual historical record of more than 1,000 portraits of early American figures.[58] Art historian David C. Ward calls the art he produced during this time "homespun," demonstrating a

[56] David C Ward, *Charles Willson Peale: Art and Selfhood in the Early Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 7.
[57] Ibid., 23-24.
[58] Miller, *New Perspectives*, 3.

lack of self-confidence and self-identity, and strict adherence to formulaic composition.[59] Nevertheless, Peale's position as one of the only American artists formally trained in Europe poised him for major success upon his return to the colonies in 1796.[60] Peale became an instrument for the gentry to recreate European luxuries for American consumption. For the next 17 years, he regularly travelled the countryside to paint the political elite, staying in their homes, sharing their conversation and becoming a prominent figure in the American patriotic cause.

Peale's role as a museum director began as a necessary component of his primary occupation. It was common practice for artists and artisans to welcome guests into their homes to view their work as a means of gaining admirers and commissions. In London his work was viewed by those with a cultured appreciation for the fine arts and what this rural American public lacked in refinement, Peale felt they made up for in praise and marvel of his work.[61] A devoted Whig and radical patriot, his pre-Revolutionary portraiture was often filled with patriotic motifs, sometimes bordering on what would be considered treasonous by some. For example, while in England the gentlemen of Westmoreland County, Virginia commissioned him to paint William Pitt. The resulting portrait was filled with symbols of English liberty, with a backdrop of the Banqueting House of Whitehall Palace where Charles I was led to his execution—"a warning to the new young King to be mindful of past errors in his future policy."[62]

Finally debt free in 1776, Peale permanently relocated his family to Philadelphia where he resumed exhibiting artwork in his home. It was during the early years of the

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[59] Ward, *Charles Willson Peale*, 43.
[60] Ibid., 44.
[61] Charles Coleman Sellers, *Charles Willson Peale.* (New York: Scribner, 1969), 80.
[62] Ibid., 70.

Revolution that Peale was most active as a painter. He lent his talents to public patriotic celebrations by designing battle flags, effigies and backlit window transparencies on waxed window shade cloth with colored washes.[63] The Pennsylvania Assembly also commissioned Peale to create a triumphal arch wrought with symbolism for the first anniversary of Independence Day.[64] The popularity of the nationalistic art made the future museum owner realize that professional art could inspire the masses and be more than a tool of the elite for memorialization and status affirmation.[65]

Already 35 at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Peale's staunch patriotism provoked him to enlist in the city's militia in 1776. He saw action at the Battle of Princeton and spent many days at Valley Forge, painting portraits of Washington and his troops. During the years of the American Revolution Peale's political circles expanded rapidly; he painted multiple portraits of political figures that permanently hung in his museum as a cornerstone of his American narrative. His political circles at this time included Thomas Paine, George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. In 1777, he served as the chairman of the Whig Society, and beginning in 1779, served one term as a state representative in the Philadelphia Assembly elected by the Independent Constitutional Party. Peale's party fell out of favor after the Fort Wilson Riots. He swore off future participation in politics partially out of feelings of rejection but mostly to establish neutrality as a cultural public figure that needed support and patronage from all sides.[66]

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[63] Peale to John Dixon, September/October 1774 in *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family*, ed. Lillian B. Miller, Sidney Hart and David C. Ward, vol. 1, *Charles Willson Peale: Artist in Revolutionary America, 1735-1791* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 136-37; Kenneth Silverman, *A Cultural History of the American Revolution: Painting, Music, Literature, and the Theatre in the Colonies and the United States from the Treaty of Paris to the Inauguration of George Washington, 1763-1789* (New York: T.Y. Crowell, 1976), 96.
[64] Peale, in *Selected Papers*, 5:91.
[65] Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 9.
[66] Sellers, *Charles Willson Peale*, 186.

At the end of the Revolution, Peale needed to find a substantial source of income besides his painting to support his growing family. Peale toyed with the idea of specializing in paintings of history as his mentor West did, but at this point in his life his lack of classical education undermined his confidence to capture the minutiae of such scenes.[67] He purchased the house of a fleeing Loyalist on Third and Lombard Street in 1780, to which he added a studio that went through multiple expansions while it housed the museum. During this time Peale welcomed the public to come admire his growing gallery of Revolutionary heroes for free.[68]

The idea of a museum of natural history was born during a serendipitous visit in 1784 from his brother-in-law, Colonel Nathaniel Ramsay. Spotting a pile of mammoth bones that Peale had been commissioned to sketch, he advised Peale that "'…many men like myself…would prefer seeing such articles of curiosity than any paintings whatever.'"[69] Thus Peale fervently redirected his life's work. Although Peale appears to have been familiar with Pierre Eugene Du Simitière's museum collection, there is no evidence that Peale had previously stepped into a museum by this time.[70] The first museum he entered may have been his own.[71]

Through second-hand accounts, Peale familiarized himself with the leading museums of Europe. During this time, European national museums restricted access to the general public. The British Museum had a reputation for snobbishness toward the public; it required visitors to submit their "credentials" prior to attending, docents

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[67] Ibid., 57.
[68] Ibid,, 80.
[69] Nathaniel Ramsay quoted in *Selected Papers*, 5:113.
[70] Ibid., 102.
[71] Robert E. Schofield, "The Science Education of an Enlightened Entrepreneur: Charles Willson Peale and His Philadelphia Museum, 1784-1827," *American Studies* 30, no. 2 (1989), 21.

behaved rudely to visitors, and there was no written guide.[72] It was not until the South Kensington Museum opened in 1857 that England had a museum with unrestricted access to all classes.[73] The Museum National d'Historie Naturelle in Paris opened its ground floors to the public, but specimens were not arranged with viewers in mind, but more as transparent storage for use by the museum's professors and students.[74]

In a year's time, Peale had expanded his gallery and opened his first exhibit, *Exhibition of Perspective Views with Changeable Effects.* Peale used "complicated and costly machinery" to manipulate transparencies depicting nature scenes accompanied by sound and lighting effects.[75] As advertised in the *Pennsylvania Packet* on May 19, 1785, Peale, so proud of his accomplishment, stated that he was "moved by the consideration, that as well as citizens, it might also entertain *strangers*, coming to the city, and add a mite to the agreeableness of it, and to their approbation of the place."[76] Indeed, Peale's Museum became a predominant national tourist attraction in the coming decades.

Peale's initial lucrative success with *Perspective Views* fizzled once others in the city created and exhibited their own moving pictures. Throughout his career, there were many who imitated Peale's museum or exhibits, which was both an indication of Peale's

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[72] Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 70; Miller, 3n, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:487. Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 156. Even Peale's sons needed others to obtain invitations on their behalf to attend the British Museum while they toured England with the second mastodon skeleton.
[73] Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 156.
[74] Miller, 2n, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:101; Philip DePeyster to Peale, 14 July 1800, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:286-87.
[75] Peale, "Advertisement of Moving Pictures," *Pennsylvania Packet*, 19 May 1785, in *Selected Papers*, 1:431; Miller, "Editorial Note: *Peale's Moving Pictures,* 1785," in *Selected Papers*, 5:85. Peale probably based his moving pictures off the *Eidophusikon*, a 1781 exhibit of moving theatrical scenery presented on a miniature scale by Philippe de Loutherbourg. Workers manipulated painted layers of opaque and transparent scenery to present such scenes as the dawn rising on a city street, illuminated by lamplight filtered through colored stained glass. Peale used second-hand accounts of such popular London attractions to create his own, although it is unclear what his sources were.
[76] Peale, "Advertisement of Moving Pictures," *Pennsylvania Packet* 19 May 1785, in *Selected Papers*, 1:431.

influence and vexing to him given the competition they posed. Peale was reluctant to put his energy into maintaining complex showmanship and spectacles, and instead decided that a museum "intended to diffuse a general knowledge of the wonderfull [sic] works of creation" would provide a more reliable income.[77] Writing to his friend John Beale Bordley in 1796, Peale lamented the exportation of American specimens to Europe and expressed his desire to create a museum "off [sic] more consequence than any thing of this sort in America," where Bordley and other Americans could deposit natural curiosities for public scrutiny.[78] Thus he tried to acquire, preserve, classify and display every living (or dead), uniquely American creature he could get his hands on—a vast undertaking no man, not even Peale, could accomplish.[79]

The overwhelming majority of Peale's artifacts were donated, although Peale was responsible for capturing many of the animals himself. He was especially fond of bird-hunting.[80] The Peales painted all but a few works in the museum's art collection. According the 1805 museum guide, visitors would see 190 quadrupeds, 780 unique avian species, 4,000 insects, and innumerable minerals and small fossils.[81] By 1818, the museum displayed at least 228 paintings and portraits and approximately 800 "Indian" ethnographic objects.[82] Visitors would also see artifacts from around the world, including China, South America, Egypt and western Africa.[83] Merchants and sailors brought Peale

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[77] *Selected Papers*, 5:130.
[78] 5 December 1786, in *Selected Papers*, 1:460-61.
[79] Peale, in *Selected Papers*, 5:130.
[80] David R. Brigham, "'Ask the Beasts, and They Shall Teach Thee': The Human Lessons of Charles Willson Peale's Natural History Displays," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 59, no. 2/3 (January 1, 1996): 185.
[81] Charles Willson Peale, *Guide to the Philadelphia Museum* (Philadelphia: Museum Press, 1805).
[82] Rubens Peale, *Historical Catalogue of the Paintings in the Philadelphia Museum…* (Philadelphia: Museum Press, 1813), 56; Charles Willson Peale, "Peale's Museum, In the State House, Philadelphia." Broadside, 1818, in *Collected Papers*, XIA/2.
[83] Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 320.

a wide variety of artifacts from Oceania that reflected the major expansion of global trade and colonization simultaneously occurring. Peale also kept a small menagerie on a lot next to his house that eventually moved to the State House lawn. Among other animals he raised two grizzly bear cubs that Zebulon Pike gave to Jefferson and a five-legged cow that were eventually stuffed for display.[84]

Dr. Rush suggested to Peale that he exhibit portraits of diseased people for medical study.[85] Though no such exhibit was created, Peale did eventually incorporate paintings of people with medical anomalies and similar dissected anatomical specimens, such as a cutaneous horn removed from a woman's chest.[86] Undoubtedly these objects and people solicited a fascination from their viewers, a lurid technique that Peale used but found distasteful. Although Peale found more value in displaying the common than the uncommon, throughout his entire tenure as curator, he would add the occasional morbid curiosity and deformed creature he referred to as *Lusus naturae—"*freak," or "amusing nature."[87] These oddities were devoid of a categorical narrative and served more purpose as bizarre showpieces. As outliers to the museum's taxonomical arrangement, their presence is reminiscent of the fragmented arrangements of museums' predecessors—cabinets of curiosity. They also foreshadowed the type of curiosities that typified dime museums such as P.T. Barnum's.[88]

Peale was unmistakably a product of the American Enlightenment and he executed its philosophy throughout his museum. His European counterparts, Paris's

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[84] Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 206, 90.
[85] Sellers, *Charles Willson Peale*, 103.
[86] Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 42-43; Charles William Janson, *The Stranger in America, 1793-1806*, ed. Carl S. Driver (New York: Press of the Pioneers, Inc., 1935), 198.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Orosz, *Curators and Culture*, 172.

Museum d'Histoire Naturelle and London's Natural History Museum, restricted access to its specialists or discouraged the general public from visiting by holding inconvenient hours or requiring prearranged appointments.[89] The radicalism of the American Revolution embedded in American society the idea that individuals should pursue knowledge for the good of the people, exemplified by such institutions as the APS. The pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake was reminiscent of the personal self-interest of European aristocrats; therefore, educated men were expected to pursue "useful knowledge"—applicable knowledge that could be used to better all of society, rather than the individual.[90] The improvement of physical labor such as agriculture or mechanical arts was especially praised in America, which would in turn improve the economy of the fledgling nation.[91] Peale saw his role as a mediator of such knowledge between experts and the ordinary citizen.

According to Peale, "all knowledge is valuable when properly directed," therefore his main criterion for what he displayed was what he assumed would better either his audiences' attitudes or their behavior as citizens of the United States.[92] Through his natural history displays, Peale wanted people to recognize their place in the broader, global context of the animal kingdom and understand that the citizenry of a progressive nation should live in a harmonious balance. Peale was also confident that his gallery of important American figures would have a civilizing influence on visitors, including American Indians.[93] Likewise, ethnographic implements and realistic wax figures of non-

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[89] Troy Bickham, "'A Conviction of the Reality of Things': Material Culture, North American Indians and Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39, no. 1 (October 1, 2005): 32.
[90] Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1992). 281.
[91] Ibid., 278.
[92] Memorial to the Pennsylvania Legislature, *Dunlap and Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser*, 26 December 1795, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:137; Peale to Dr. Forbes, 28 July 1800, Ibid., 287.
[93] "my design in forming this Museum," Broadside, 1792, in Ibid., 14.

Anglo races would broaden the public's knowledge of global civilizations while contextualizing Americans' place among them.

Peale also displayed objects whose utility was immediately understood by laymen, such as state-of-the-art farming equipment, knowledge about the composition of local soil, and demonstrations of chemistry. At first, Peale imagined that the sheer wonderment of his museum would spark an inherent ability within visitors to absorb observable knowledge and the lessons of the museum. This logic adheres to John Locke's argument in *An Essay of Human Understanding* that all knowledge is gained through sensation or reflection, therefore immersion in a proper environment would be essential to mold a proper person.[94] Over time, however, Peale realized that for many the museum was only a place of entertainment and he hoped that at least it would "instruct in a forcible manner, the vain, the Idle, and the profligate, to *win* them from haunts of Vice and dissipation."[95]

From its conception Peale intended his museum to eventually achieve state recognition and funding so that he and his progeny would be able to continue to make a livable income as directors of the museum.[96] The inability to do so was arguably the greatest contributor to the museum's eventual failure. Peale made multiple attempts to appeal to the national Congress and the State of Pennsylvania in a number of creative

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[94] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 7th ed., 2 vols. (London: J. Churchill, 1715); Wood, *Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 236.

[95] To Thomas Jefferson, 20 May 1817, in *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family*, eds. Lillian B. Miller et al., vol. 3, *Charles Willson Peale: The Belfield Years, 1810-1820* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1991), 483. Peale's emphasis. Peale's aspirations for his museum changed markedly as his career wore on. As argued by Orosz in *Curators and Culture*, Peale lost his enthusiastic but naïve values about the possibility of the museum to transform all visitors. He did not lose faith, however, in the ability of an individual of any status to improve him or herself through the power of education.

[96] "my design in forming this Museum," Broadside, 1792, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:19.

ways, including giving free memberships to congressmen and local politicians and emphasizing the universal benefits to citizens in advertisements. He created a Board of Visitors in 1792, consisting of influential figures in science and politics that he figured would be able to solicit private and public funding for the museum. They failed to do so.[97]

While Peale's home still housed the museum, he first attempted to petition the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1792 for a loan to build a new museum to house his growing collection.[98] The APS intervened by offering Philosophical Hall as a new location. By 1802, the museum was running out of room again and Peale wished to build a new building financed and owned by the city in its only public park, the State House Yard. The Assembly was able to again avoid the request by a compromise that allowed Peale to move into the upper and part of the lower levels of the State House (presently known as Independence Hall). He occupied space in both buildings, but did not receive financial aid from any other party. In 1802, Peale wrote to President Jefferson (who was also president of Peale's board), asking if he thought the government would ever be willing to purchase the museum and bring it to Washington. Jefferson's reply was bittersweet, saying, "no person on earth can entertain a higher idea than I do of the value of your collection nor give you more credit for the unwearied perseverance and skill with which you have prosecuted it, and I very much wish it could be made public property."[99] Alas, Jefferson understood that his party would never allow exceptions to be made to governmental powers as limited by the Constitution, even if they were for the

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[97] Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 81.
[98] Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 61, 74.
[99] 16 January 1802, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:389.

advancement of science. However, Jefferson was planning a university for Virginia and hoped the collection would one day make an addition to that academic setting.[100]

The most significant event in the history of the museum happened in the summer of 1801 when Peale travelled to upstate New York to exhume two North American mastodon skeletons. At this time, the theory of extinction was still relatively new and not widely accepted in science. Fossils of prehistoric animals were thought to be remnants of other known species or from species still unknown to man. Peale's exhumation of the first complete mastodon skeletons in North America provided irrefutable evidence that an unknown and possibly extinct species had dwelled and declined in the area. Likewise, their discovery shifted the focus of naturalists to North America, giving American scientists the opportunity to become major contributors to contemporary Western science for the first time. Peale rightly knew that such an artifact would bring an influx of visitors (and revenue) to the museum.[101] By then almost 12,000 visitors attended the museum annually, a figure that would triple over the next decade due to the mastodon display.[102] This event became international news—Sellers likens the excitement it stirred to the discovery of King Tut's tomb in 1922.[103] Most importantly, it solidified the museum's international reputation as a credible scientific institution. The museum received an influx

[100] It would be many years after Peale's death that the federal government finally committed its resources to a national museum. Congress created the Smithsonian Institution in 1846 after receiving a $500,000 bequest from James Smithson for "an establishment for the increase and diffusion of knowledge." Congress debated for eight years to determine what form that establishment should take. Suggestions included a national university, a research institution, a library and a museum.
[101] *Selected Papers*, 5:287.
[102] Ward, *Charles Willson Peale*, 103.
[103] Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 143.

of requests for information, exchanges of species and sketches and casts of the bones from European naturalists and museums.[104]

One aspect of Peale's success that cannot be overlooked is the community in which his museum existed. Peale never received any formal education after the age of 13, yet for most of his tenure as director, his displays reflected the latest in American scientific work. In the museum's earliest days, Peale perfected an unrivaled method of preservation through taxidermy that became the foundation for the museum's collection.[105] Naturalists such as Benjamin Smith Barton and Alexander Wilson utilized his collection for their work and thus lent it credibility.[106] He also continuously facilitated specimen exchanges with his European counterparts. Rubens Peale also installed gas lights in the State House, making the museum the first building in America to have gas lighting and allowing it to be open at night.[107]

Peale relied heavily on his sons to assist in the museum. Peale's slave, Moses Williams, also worked in the museum from its inception. When the museum acquired the physiognotrace in 1802, Moses gained his freedom and continued to run a profitable business using the machine to trace souvenir silhouettes for visitors. Starting that year, Peale also hired a series of four men to assist in taxidermy and exhibit preparation.[108]

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[104] Peale used the words mastodon and mammoth interchangeably although they represent two different species, and mammoth became a household word, used in marketing and as political nomenclature. For example, President Jefferson's supporters sent him a "mammoth" cheese wheel to display in the Presidential Mansion. Peale's sons, Rubens and Rembrandt also took the smaller skeleton on tour to England and the southern United States, soliciting attention for the museum. Ibid.; Schofield, "Science Education," 32.
[105] Brigham, "'Ask the Beasts…,'" 189-90.
[106] For a time Barton held his class lectures in the museum and Alexander Wilson's celebrated *American Ornithology* (1808-1814) relied almost entirely on Peale's beloved bird collection.
[107] "1816 Announcement of use of gas lights in Poulson's *Daily American Advertiser*," in *The Collected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family, 1735-1885*, ed. Lillian B, Miller (Millwood, NY: KTO Microform for the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1980), XIA/5.
[108] Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 197-198.

1816 was the high watermark for attendance at the museum; it received 47,686 visitors, earning the museum $12,000.[109] Ironically, that was also the year that marked the beginning of the end for the museum: the city bought the State House and attempted to raise its rent from $500 annually to $2,000. Though they struck a compromised rent of $1,200, the next three years brought financial loss and Peale tried to give the museum to the city, which refused the offer. In 1821, the museum was organized as a joint stock company in an attempt to save it and, at age 81, Peale came out of retirement with an attempt to refocus the museum on scientific progress. Until his death in 1827, Peale attempted to strike a balance between the revenue-generating popular entertainment his sons encouraged and the noble mission of rational amusement he originally envisioned.

David C. Ward and Sidney Hart, assistant editors of the Peale Family Papers project, posit that the museum failed because it was unable to mature beyond the philosophy of the Enlightenment. They argue that Peale's Museum embodied the movement's axiom that knowledge can be found in all things, and that knowledge has the power to transform a person from any class into a rational and contributing member of society. Peale's Museum's success was contingent on its ability to serve as a public space where scientists and the public acted out the pursuit of science together. The expansion of the university system in the nineteenth century caused a divide between the public and academics, who began to retreat inside their university settings. There scholars expanded the traditional field of natural history by dividing and narrowing their foci into specific approaches such as zoology, physical anthropology, comparative anatomy and linguistics. Popular support for the sciences declined as they alienated the public from their research.

[109] Edward P. Alexander, "History Museums: From Curio Cabinets to Cultural Centers," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 43, no. 3 (April 1, 1960): 175.

Meanwhile, scientists' participation in museums declined, as they no longer saw the benefit of presenting their work to the public in the increasingly spectacle-driven institutions they believed were beneath their work. Organizations such as the APS were criticized for being too general in their pursuits and had failed to achieve the Enlightenment tenet of pursuing productive knowledge for the benefit of all mankind.[110] The success of the museum depended on the system of mutual assistance within Philadelphia Revolution generation, but the agency of Peale and his supporters dwindled in a new era of scientific progress.

The Peale Museum was unable to adapt to scientific and disciplinary transformations of the nineteenth century, but one may also see fault in Peale's unrealistic expectations for the institution. It is true that Peale took on an impossibly large task when he first defined the mission of the museum, though he soon modified the scope of his collecting and interpretation. Though Peale ultimately wanted the museum to become a national museum, he also wanted his progeny to continue to run the museum.[111] Peale saw no personal conflict of interest in his family running a state-sponsored institution like any other family business, even though potential donors may have been deterred by the possibility of Peale's heirs selling the collection. By the third decade of the Philadelphia museum's existence, it was their amusing evening programs that sustained the Philadelphia and Baltimore museums.[112]

Though the museum survived for another 20 years, Peale's Museum was no longer able to serve the emerging trends in the scientific community. John Greene also

[110] Hart and Ward, *New Perspectives*, 231.
[111] Appel, "Science, Popular Culture and Profit," 629.
[112] Ibid.

blames a prevailing lack of interest in popular science on the part of the American people, despite the appeals to patriotism, civic pride and self-improvement that Peale thought so irrefutable.[113] Competing museums had also opened in Philadelphia, Baltimore and New York City, dividing the potential audience and attracting those who wanted to be entertained more than taught.[114] Peale's sons were never able to reinstate the pivotal role Peale's Museum once had in American public culture, and between 1842 and 1849, all three Peale museums in Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York closed and sold their collections at auction, the majority of which were purchased by P.T. Barnum.[115] Even if state support was procured and Peale's children had committed heart and soul to the museum as their father had done, it would still have been impossible for them to sustain the museum.

Museologists today understand that it takes a varied group of individuals with a specific set of skills, interests and involvement in a scholarly community to define the mission of a museum and curate it. Present-day museums also rely on changing exhibits to bring repeating visitors through their doors, however, museum did not popularize the practice of installing cohesive interpretive displays until the twentieth century. Nonetheless, through all the problems Peale experienced and the endless hard work and self-discipline it took to maintain the museum, he never doubted his and his sons' ability to sustain the forward momentum of the institution. This reveals that for all the impressive modernity the museum displayed, Peale's museum methodology was essentially intuitive.

[113] John C. Greene, "Science and the Public in the Age of Jefferson," *Isis* 49, no. 1 (March 1, 1958), 25.
[114] Orosz, *Curators and Culture*, 115.
[115] Myron F. Wehtje, "Charles Willson Peale and His Temple," *Pennsylvania History* 36, no. 2 (April 1, 1969), 173.

Peale's Museum could not have existed without the community it served. Philadelphia was the center of American intellectual ambition and activity and the museum was literally at the center of the city in Philosophical Hall. Through the early efforts of Benjamin Franklin, Philadelphia set the example in America for institutional development. Likewise, its leading scientists experimented in chemistry, electricity and medicine.[116] Peale interacted daily with the greatest names in American science that valued the museum and, more importantly, their own participation in it.

Peale's Contemporary Institutions

While Peale was in the process of forming his museum, there were two other significant institutions in Philadelphia that displayed objects of natural science and ethnography for the purposes of knowledge. They were the American Philosophical Society (1743), and Pierre Eugène Du Simitière's American Museum (1782). The precursor that most closely resembled Peale's Museum was Du Simitière's museum. Born in Geneva in 1737, Du Simitière spent extensive time in the West Indies and the southern American colonies sketching, writing and collecting Indian artifacts, coins and natural objects of wonder. He became a naturalized citizen in 1769 and moved to Philadelphia, where the unprecedented Revolution inspired him to acquire objects and contemporary literature he believed would become historically significant.[117] Originally,

[116] John C. Greene, *American Science in the Age of Jefferson* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1984), 37.
[117] Paul Sifton Ginsburg, "Pierre Eugène Du Simitière (1737-1784): Collector in Revolutionary America" (Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1960), 11.

he did not collect with the intent to put objects on public display or to become a museum curator, but he eventually did out of financial necessity.[118]

Du Simitière opened the American Museum to the public by appointment in 1782. Historians such as Andrea Stulman Dennett and Orosz have commented on its significance as the first American museum arranged in a historical narrative and one to display documents as historical objects.[119] It was also one of the first museums to present articles of Indian ethnography, and it may have also been the first archive for historical research that did not require a membership.[120] There are no extant guides or descriptions of Du Simitière's museum, but historians including Paul Ginsburg Sifton have agreed that Du Simitière most likely arranged the material to present specific ideas and themes.[121]

Du Simitière was eager to collect Indian artifacts, and told Governor George Clinton that Indians were "a new subject not yet touched upon…every new specimen I get is different from the former ones, so that were there is such variety one cannot increase the number too much."[122] Sifton argues that Du Simitière, like Peale, did not see Indians as savages, but as an interesting race worthy of study in and of itself.[123] Records show that Du Simitière held dozens of treaties, published histories of Indian wars and vocabularies in his manuscript collection.[124] At the time of his death, he was also

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[118] Orosz, *Curators and Culture*, 35.
[119] Andrea Stulman Dennett, *Weird and Wonderful: The Dime Museum in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 11; Orosz, *Curators and Culture*, 43; Sifton, "Pierre Eugène Du Simitière," 545.
[120] Sifton, 445.
[121] Hans Huth, "Pierre Eugène Du Simitière and the Beginnings of the American Historical Museum," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 69, no. 4 (October 1, 1945), 319; Sifton, 449.
[122] Pierre Eugene Du Simitière and William John Potts, "Du Simitiere, Artist, Antiquary, and Naturalist, Projector of the First American Museum, with Some Extracts from His Note-Book," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 13, no. 3 (October 1, 1889), 348.
[123] Sifton, 324.
[124] Sifton includes a comprehensive list of these documents beginning on 333.

compiling a proto-ethnographic index of references to observations on Native cultures within his document collection.

In contrast to Du Simitière's deep interest in Native ethnography and culture, displayed in his approach to collecting, the material culture within the museum portrayed Native people in a much different narrative. Sifton holds that Du Simitière's placed Native peoples "in the traditional framework as a problem in imperial policy," and the few extant records of the museum's material culture disclose a violent provenance.[125] For example, records show that officials donated scalps and weaponry collected by bounty hunters, and an Indian mask recovered from a razed Indian settlement.[126] He also had "stone hatches, pestles, tomahaws [sic]…bowls of pipes and idol figures" collected from an Indian burial site.[127] Historian Mairin Odle argues that the relationship between the Pennsylvania backcountry and cosmopolitan Philadelphia is discernable in the collection's acquisitions and display techniques used with objects.[128] The violent stories behind these objects were obscured through the act of separation and display, rendering the chaos of the frontier into a stationary curiosity for urban museum visitors. This dichotomy between the realities of harsh frontier living and the leisurely pursuit of knowledge was also present in Peale's displays.

In his letters and autobiography, Peale seems to have little regard for Du Simitière's contributions. Peale dismissed Du Simitière's collection as "some few articles of antiquity with a hope of forming a Museum," vainly adding, "but he made no attempts

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[125] Sifton, 605; Mairin Odle, "Buried in Plain Sight: Indian 'Curiosities' in Du Simitière's American Museum," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biograph*y 136, no. 4 (October 1, 2012), 501.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Du Simitière, "Du Simitière, Artist, Antiquary, and Naturalist," 348.
[128] Odle, 501.

to preserve either Birds or quadrupedes [sic]."[129] Despite the assumptions of earlier historians such as such as Hans Huth, Sellers and Sifton, Peale left no evidence that he purchased the American Museum's collection. [130] If Peale used Du Simitière's collection to start his own, however, it would be characteristic of Peale to attempt to reduce the memory of Du Simitière's progressive museum to heighten his own image for posterity.

Like the Library Company of Philadelphia (1731), the American Philosophical Society was the brainchild of Benjamin Franklin, who began the institution in 1743 with the express purpose of "promoting useful knowledge" among the American colonies.[131] It was the first learned society in America, he modeled it upon London's Royal Society, an organization for gentlemen interested in the "arts" of mechanical technology, medicine, politics and other realms whose pursuit could benefit humankind.

For the first century of the organization's existence, APS members consisted of the greatest names of early American science, medicine, and politics, including David Rittenhouse, Benjamin Rush and John Marshall. It purchased important international publications too expensive for an individual. It housed mechanical models, and ethnographic and natural objects. Beginning in 1777, the APS appointed curators to "take charge of, and preserve…all other matters and things belonging to the Society…to class and arrange them in their proper order…"[132] It was also an archive; Jefferson thought it was the safest place for the precious Lewis and Clark documents and urged all the

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[129] *Selected Papers*, 5:102.
[130] Sellers, Huth, and Sifton believe he probably did. Others including Miller and Orosz do not take stand without evidence. Nevertheless the debate appears evenly divided.
[131] Murphy D Smith, *Oak From an Acorn: A History of the American Philosophical Society Library, 1770-1803* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1976), 1.
[132] "Laws and Regulations of the American Philosophical Society, Held at Philadelphia, for Promoting Useful Knowledge," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 2 (January 1, 1786), ix. Both Peale and Du Simitière served terms as curators.

originals to be deposited there. Though the society described its collection as a museum, it was more of a repository for manuscripts, maps and artifacts to be used sources of information when in preparation for research, as Lewis and Clark did.[133]

The APS played an important role in western exploration in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Jefferson asked members Rittenhouse, Rush and Robert Patterson to prepare Meriwether Lewis, also a member, for his expedition. These men in turn gave the captains detailed instructions for the information they would like collected, including ethnographic information about Indians that contributed to Peale's displays. Alexander von Humboldt (Latin and South America, 1799-1803), Stephen Long (Nebraska, 1820), Charles Wilkes (South American Coast, Pacific Islands, 1838-42) and John Wesley Powell (Colorado River, 1867) are just a few of the other APS members that contributed greatly to American exploration.[134]

1796 Peace Treaty

Native Americans represented more than just members of a different culture for Peale—they were in many ways representative of humankind in its most basic state. Therefore their experience in the museum presented an exceptional opportunity for Peale to study its impact on individuals who may not have already been structured and informed by American society. Although Peale accepted and encouraged American Indian visitors to enter his museum, Peale did not consciously target them as an audience

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[133] James P. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark Among the Indians*, Bicentennial (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 2.
[134] "American Philosophical Society Member History," American Philosophical Society, 2012, http://www.amphilsoc.org/memhist/search.

demographic for the first decade. This changed when 64 representatives from eight different tribes signed a peace treaty at the museum in 1796. This event had a profound impact on Peale and was the fundamental reason why he thought his museum succeeded in improving the character of its visitors.

On November 30, 1796 representatives from four of the Five Civilized Tribes (the Choctaw, Chickasaws, Cherokee and Creeks) visited the museum, having previously come to Philadelphia to discuss the opening government posts on their land. While at the museum, they unexpectedly encountered a delegation of Delaware, Kickapoo, Ottawa, Shawnee, Chippewa and other tribes who were also visiting Philadelphia to discuss the terms of the Treaty of Greenville that ended the Northwest Indian War.[135] The two groups appeared to observers to be hereditary enemies "never having before met, but in the field of battle," and spoke to one another through interpreters. They determined "that as men of the same species they were not enemies by nature; but ought forever to bury the hatchet of war."[136] The two delegations agreed that on the next day, they would return to sign a treaty of peace. Secretary of War, James McHenry witnessed the treaty and recited a message by proxy from President Washington. A week later, two articles memorialized the events in the anti-Federalist *Aurora Advertiser* and the Federalist-leaning *Philadelphia Gazette*, respectively. Peale also spoke of the treaty in depth during the introduction to his 1800 series of science lectures.[137]

The authors of all three texts also use patronizing, paternal language that conveys a sense of self-lauding. Though the *Aurora* author implies the serendipitous meeting

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[135] Miller, 2n, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:163
[136] Charles Willson Peale, *Discourse Introductory to a Course of Lectures on Natural History* (Philadelphia: Francis and Robert Bailey, 1800), 39.
[137] Ibid.

occurred at the will of a divine being, Peale attributed the harmonious outcome to the transformative powers of the museum, as did the author of the *Gazette* article: "This uncommon, if not unprecedented, measure will afford unequivocal evidence of the advantages of a frequent intercourse of the Indian chiefs with the agents of the government and such other citizens as have the power as well as the inclination to promote the happiness of the savage state, by depriving it of some portion of its natural ferocity, and inspiring it with confidence in the purity of our motives."[138] The author concludes that only when American Indians are able to interact with a unified, magnanimous voice of the state will the "true, perhaps only true, art of civilization" occur.[139] In Peale's remarks four years later, he described the museum as "a scene calculated to inspire the most perfect harmony" and similarly concluded that Indians would be bettered when removed from their "natural" environment and placed into a harmonious, albeit controlled, setting under Western power. [140]

The treaty signing is remarkable in how similarly Peale presented it publicly as he would a museum exhibit. The tone of his description and decision to discuss it in his science lectures is reminiscent of an anthropological anecdote regarding two Wabash people's skeletons within the museum's scientific catalog written one-year prior. Also present is the promotion of harmony among races that Peale would later articulate in the Meriwether Lewis/Comeahwait display. As an event, it appeared in the newspapers and Peale's lectures as proof of the utility of the museum to extend useful knowledge and its higher mission of moralization and civilization. More striking is the way in which the

[138] "Indian Tribes Visit Peale's Museum," in *Philadelphia Gazette*, December 8, 1796, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:163.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Peale, *Introduction to a Course of Lectures*, 1800, 39.

identity and culture of the Native delegates is rendered static and subjective once placed inside the controlled environment of the museum. There is no cause or beginning given for the hereditary conflict, just as the *Aurora* included the only comprehensive list of the tribes represented. The Indians are granted agency only to the extent that it promotes the Western agenda, otherwise the details of their relationship to one another is completely arbitrary. Also, the implication that the treaty will "probably secure the permanence of [a] friendly union" between a vast number of tribes whose hereditary territory included most of America's contemporary holdings is optimistic and naive to the point of willful ignorance.[141] In this instance, the actual identities and future of the tribes are of no consequence; their experiences are important only to the extent that they enable and justify the patriarchal Western agenda.

Despite the imperial lens through which Peale and his colleagues gauged the impact of the treaty signing, the participation of Indians in the museum nevertheless realized Peale's theories on democratic education, thus fulfilling his personal mission for the museum. Peale's belief in the success of the treaty meant that not only did his museum succeed in transforming humans in their most "savage" state, but also proved that world peace was achievable through education and the correct environment. If Indians, thought to be so uncouth and ignorant of any education, could be transformed so greatly by one visit, it meant that members of Peale's own society must surely be able to achieve self-enlightenment and enable them to be productive citizens of America. The experience of Indians proved to Peale that museum content is accessible to everyone, is

[141] "A singular circumstance...," *Aurora General Advertiser*, December 8, 1796, Google News, http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=t_XbbNNkFXoC&dat=17961208&
printsec =frontpage&hl=en.

capable of improving visitors and can assist in the assimilation of other cultures into the dominant American narrative.

Among its contemporary institutions such as the American Museum and the American Philosophical Society, Peale's Museum was exceptional in its adherence to scientific order and Peale's personal mission to better the citizenry through the lessons of his museum. Today, museologists recognize that Peale's greatest contribution to modernity was his democratic museum administration; he pulled back the curtain on America's intellectual and territorial expansion for anyone to see and created a meeting place for scientists and the public to interact.[142] Although the zenith of the Philadelphia Museum occurred in the 1810s, it had exceptional longevity, especially considering the rising popularity of other forms of entertainment. The American Mastodon gave way to the Feejee Mermaid, and Peale's methodology, once so progressive, came to be unfairly associated with profit-driven shows like Barnum's.[143]

Peale's earnest belief in the merits of democratic education also makes him stand out among his contemporaries in the Age of Reason. His experiences with Native Americans in his museums resulted in an egalitarian directorship atypical in public culture at the time. Peale's effort to represent multiple cultures while similarly appealing to audiences of various cultural backgrounds is a methodology we recognize in today's museums as multiculturalism. The purpose of multiculturalism in Peale's day and today has been to moderate the differences between dominant and nonstandard cultures, or as Peale put it: "harmonize the most discordant passions."[144] The greatest difference

[142] Orosz, *Curators and Culture*, 85.
[143] Hart and Ward, "Waning of an Enlightenment Ideal," 412.
[144] To Andrew Ellicott 28 February 1802, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:411.

between Peale's promotion of cultural awareness and the efforts of present museums is that Peale's ultimate goal was to replace American Indians culture with the museum's narrative of Americanism, not to foster the tolerance of a coinciding identity. Peale's effort to incorporate American Indians into his audience and displays in order to create a racial equilibrium nevertheless stands as a rare example of cultural sensitivity in public culture during the early American republic.

CHAPTER THREE

"NOTHING BUT TRUTH AND REASON": PEALE'S SCIENTIFIC CANON[145]

Armed with the most prominent texts and theories of his day and his own personal observations, it was up to Charles Willson Peale to articulate the natural differences and similarities between races that his museum would put forth for the public. Peale used the term "epitome of the world" to describe the model for his museum, but what he may not have realized was that he was also epitomizing a culturally constructed interpretation of the role of Indians in American society.[146] As settlers pressed into the North American interior, increased contact and conflict between Euro-Americans and Indigenous people brought into sharp contrast the differences between Western and Native ways of life. Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, the Enlightenment spurred a renaissance of philosophical questioning about the origins and potentials of the human race. Anthropology as a distinct study had yet to evolve, but through methods associated with the study of natural history, philosophers and scientists began to ponder the relationship between the humans of the Old World and the New. In Europe, the taxonomy of Carl Linnaeus assigned humans a place in the biological world and posited four varieties of mankind based on skin color.[147] George-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon foreshadowed the theory of biological evolution by arguing that species—including humans—were directly affected by the quality of their environment, such as in America, where animals

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[145] Comte de Volney, as quoted by Peale in "Memorial to the Pennsylvania Legislature," in *Selected Papers*, 30 December 1795, 2.1:137.
[146] To American Philosophical Society, 7 March 1797, Ibid., 177.
[147] Carl Linnaeus, *A General System of Nature, through the Three Grand Kingdoms of Animals, Vegetables, and Minerals…*, trans. William Turton, vol. 1 (London: Lackington, Allen, and Co., Temple of the Muses, Finsbury Square, 1802), 9.

and humans became inferior versions of their European counterparts.[148] The arguments put forth by Europeans and Americans revealed an invasive political chauvinism, and the small but vocal American scientific community, led by Thomas Jefferson, championed the country's natural indigenous splendor. Western knowledge of American Indian cultures had been contained mostly to observations recorded by missionaries, military agents or travellers, but in the late eighteenth century, naturalists approached Indians with scientific observation through Native philology in an effort to record the "authentic" cultures of tribes they believed were soon to disappear or be corrupted by interaction with Euro-Americans.

Museums are both a product and producer of culture, and Peale's Museum's location in Philadelphia—the epicenter of American scientific progress—gave it the unrivaled opportunity to be a transmitter of American claims about culture, society and science. Peale understood the power of the museum and used its message to not only cultivate an appreciation for American science, but also promote his vision of a "moral" ideal citizen. Though he lacked a formal education or training in science, Peale selected the scientific arguments the museum would put forth as fact for the viewing pleasure of the American public. Peale grounded the museum's scientific rationale in the accepted works of Linnaeus and Buffon, although he refuted the concept of inherent differences in humankind in favor of the American Enlightenment's patriotic values of equality and self-improvement based in rhetoric of morality. Nevertheless, he articulated his personal

[148] Georges Louis Leclerc Buffon, *The Natural History of Animals, and Minerals…*, trans. W. Kendrick, L.L.D. and J. Murdoch (London: Printed for, and sold by T. Bell, (no. 26.) Bell-Yard, Temple-Bar, 1775) 275-76.

belief in a racial hierarchy in the museum as a reoccurring theme of the progress of civilization that began with the “savage state” of American Indians.[149]

Peale’s self-education in science began in 1788 when the sudden redirection of his life’s work in natural history required he learn contemporary scientific theory and the prevailing attitudes within and toward American science. Peale received letters inquiring about America’s natural history from naturalists all over Europe, including major names in the field such as George Cuvier, and collaborated with others whose pursuits brought them across the Atlantic, including Alexander von Humboldt and Alexander Wilson.[150] Meanwhile, the works and letters being produced at the time by Americans such as J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, David Rittenhouse and Benjamin Smith Barton reveal a heady sense of urgency to investigate North America’s indigenous species, thus establishing American authority over the study of their continent.[151] The insatiable appetite for scientific knowledge of western lands furthered the agenda of the federal government whose land grabs fueled the spirit of American conquest. Expansion gave rise to a nationalistic tone that had been previously absent in Western scientific works.[152] Throughout its life, Peale’s Museum served as a manifestation of America’s political, military and scientific expansion.

From the museum’s inception, Peale dedicated its exhibitionary to an orderly scientific arrangement for the benefit of his visitors. Peale had the resources of cosmopolitan Philadelphia at his disposal and the Philadelphia Library Company granted

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[149] In *Selected Papers*, 5:414.
[150] Sellers, *Mr. Peale’s Museum*, 161, 203.
[151] See such works as Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), Benjamin Smith Barton, *New Views of the Origin of the Tribes and Nations of America* (1797), and David Rittenhouse and William Barton, *Memoirs of the Life of David Rittenhouse* (1813).
[152] Whitfield J. Bell Jr., “The Scientific Environment of Philadelphia, 1775-1790,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 92, no. 1 (March 8, 1948), 13.

Peale, a non-member, special permission to borrow rare books imported from Europe, such as Thomas Pennant's *British Zoology* (1768-70) and Richard Pulteney's *A General View of the Writings of Linnaeus* (1781), until such time as the museum could amass its own collection of natural history texts.[153] The two greatest names in naturalism to influence the museum and the eighteenth century were Carl Linnaeus and the Comte de Buffon. For at least the museum's first 25 years, the work of Linnaeus and Buffon served as the foundation of Peale's taxonomy and methodology.[154]

In the first half of the eighteenth century, Linnaeus devised a taxonomical system for plants, animals and minerals that served as the basis for Western scientific arrangement through the French Revolution. Linnaean taxonomy transformed science permanently; it still serves as the basis of ecologic nomenclature and classification.[155] The Linnaean system debuted in Linnaeus's 1731 work *Systema Naturea* that went through 13 subsequent editions over the next 62 years. Linnaeus based his classification on traits naked to the eye such as number of teeth, making the system comprehensible for amateur scientists, yet these qualities were overall too arbitrary and variable to cement a valid approach.[156] During the life of the museum many naturalists tried to revise the system, most extensively being Georges Cuvier, a French naturalist at the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris and a correspondent of Peale's. However, Peale found these revisions to "refine away the easey [sic] mode of knowing Animals, and thus render[ed] the science of nature more difficult to be remembered and understood."[157] Thus as late as

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[153] Miller, 154n, in *Selected Papers*, 1:525. By 1833, the museum's library contained 500 books. *Pittsburgh Gazette*, August 16, 1833.
[154] Peale, "First Advertisement for the Museum," *Pennsylvania Packet*, July 7, 1786, in *Selected Papers*, 1:448.
[155] *Webster's New World College Dictionary*, 4th ed., s.v. "Linnaeus, Carolus."
[156] Phillip R. Sloan, "The Buffon-Linnaeus Controversy," *Isis* 67, no. 3 (September 1, 1976), 359.
[157] To Thomas Jefferson, 5 April 1806, in *Selected Papers*, 2.2:952.

1806, Linnaeus was still the basis for the museum's taxonomy and nomenclature.

Linnaeus placed humans in the primate class within the animal kingdom. The compartmentalization of humans with animals became somewhat controversial and some naturalists categorized humans separately. Linnaeus did place humankind at the top of their class, however, as the most advanced primate based on our exceptional characteristic of self-awareness, which Linnaeus articulated through the aphorism *nosce te ipsum:* know thyself.[158]

In accordance with Linnaean taxonomy, Peale chose to categorize humans as primates.[159] In a broadside published for his board members at their first meeting, Peale explained Linnaean taxonomy and justified his categorization of humans with a quote from Pulteney's *A General View on the Writings of Linnaeus*:

> "However the pride of man may be offended at the idea of being ranked with the beasts that perish, he nevertheless stands as *an animal*, in the system of nature, at the head of this order…But man is not left by Linnaeus, to contemplate himself merely as such; but he is led to the consideration of what he out to be, *as an intelligent and moral being*, in a comment on the Grecian sage's dictate, KNOW THYSELF; by the true application of which, he cannot but be sufficiently elevated above every humiliating idea which can otherwise arise from such an association." (64)

Linnaeus divided Homo sapiens into five "varieties": *Ferus* (Wild man), *Europaeus albese* (European white), *Americanus rebese* (American red), *Asiaticus fuscus* (Asian yellow) and *Africanus nigr* (African black).[160] In the tenth edition (1758-9), Linnaeus complicated the varieties by adding physical and cultural stereotypical

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158 Carl Linnaeus, *Regnum Animale*, 1735, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Linnaeus_-_Regnum_Animale_(1735).png.

159 "my design in forming this Museum," in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:14. Humans are listed within the primate class in Peales 1795 museum catalogue.

160 B. Ricardo Brown, "The Quadrupedia and the Observations on the Three Kingdoms of Nature by Linnaeus (1735)," *Until Darwin* (blog), December 26, 2012, http://until-darwin.blogspot.com/2012/12/the-quadrupedia-and-observations-on.html.

descriptions. *Americanus* was described as:

> H(omo) rufus Copper-colored, choleric, erect
> *Hair* black, straight, thick; *Nostrils* wide; *Face* harsh, *Beard* scanty; *Obstinate*, content, free. *Paints* himself with fine red lines. *Regulated* by customs

In contrast, *Europaeus* was described as:

> H(omo) albus white, sanguine, muscular
> *Hair* flowing, long, *Eyes,* blue
> Gentle, acute, inventive
> Covered with close vestments
> Governed by laws (Linnaeus and Turton 1802, 9)

Although Linnaeus does not state an explicit hierarchy between the races, B. Richardo Brown argues that through contrasts such as laws or customs and vestments or adornments, the naturalist nevertheless inferred an existing progression/degeneration of civilization that is tied specifically to race and geographic origin.[161] The separation of human groups through descriptions that included the civic state of other races as a qualifying characteristic for scientific classification can also be seen as an attempt to further distant Caucasians from their primate counterparts. By imposing supposed behavior and disposition on the otherwise observable differences of skin color and geography, Linnaeus was in effect arming contemporary and future naturalists and politicians with a scientific argument able to justify racial prejudices for the purpose of furthering personal agendas, such as Peale's.

Though Peale did use Linnaean nomenclature to describe other races, he originally intended to use *Europaeus albus* alone to visually represent man's place in the Linnaean order. In his broadside, Peale explained that the "intelligent and moral" animal

[161] B. Ricardo Brown, *Until Darwin: Science, Human Variety and the Origins of Race* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2010), 33.

that is Man would be represented by his portrait collection of Revolutionary war heroes, which he hoped to expand for future generations with more "relicks of such great men, whose labours have been crowned with success in the most distinguished benefits to mankind."[162] In both the first museum on Third and Lombard and the Long Room in Philosophical Hall, Peale deliberately visually represented Linnaeus's placement of mankind at the top of the animal kingdom by hanging patriots' portraits at the top of the walls above the hundreds of cases of preserved animals and minerals.[163]

Though Linnaeus was only interested in classifying mankind amongst animals in nature's realm, the Comte de Buffon was tackling the very essence of the natural history of the species. Buffon is most well-known for his work *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, a 36 quarto encyclopedia published over the last forty years of his life with the last volume appearing in 1788, the year of his death. The French naturalist sought an explanation for the dissemination of animal species (including people) throughout the world, but unlike most of his contemporaries, he dismissed the influence of a divine Creator and challenged explanations put forth by the church, such as the nature of biological reproduction.[164] What made Buffon revolutionary was his approach to studying humankind: he treated humans as he would any other animal, as an undifferentiated species in terms of their universal capabilities, needs and potential. He "substitut[ed] for a metaphysics of the soul a science where man is seen according to his situation in the world, cut off from the Creator and beholden for his attributes to nature

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[162] "my design in forming this Museum," Broadside, 1792, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:15.
[163] Charles Willson Peale, *Guide to the Philadelphia Museum* (Philadelphia: Museum Press, 1806), 8.
[164] Alan Dugatkin, *Mr. Jefferson and the Giant Moose: Natural History in Early America* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 11.

alone."[165] Buffon, who did not use a traditional Biblical timeline or history to explain the earth, avoided major controversy by basing his arguments only on what could be observed.[166]

Buffon was a monogenist, meaning that he believed all human life originated from the same race.[167] Monogenesis was and is the prevailing theory and most members of the clergy supported it, however polygenism still existed and would experience resurgence in the mid-nineteenth century as a justification for slavery in America.[168] Buffon eliminated the role of divine predetermination and/or intervention in the circumstances of humanity and argued that the physiology and lifeways of different races and nations were based on various environmental conditions, particularly climate, latitude, diet and geographic features, such as altitude or proximity to water.[169] According to Buffon, "Nature, in her most perfect exertions, made men white," therefore skin color other than Caucasian and differences in physical appearance and disposition were the result of degeneration caused by an inability to overpower nature and establish a civilized society.[170] By the time Peale established his museum, Europeans and Americans in the monogenist camp widely believed that Native North and South Americans had crossed the Pacific Ocean into northern North America from Asia.[171]

Buffon posited that American Indians were all of one race, based on the similarities of their languages and customs. He did not study cultures for their own merit

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[165] Claude Blanckaert, "Buffon and the Natural History of Man: Writing History and the 'Foundational Myth' of Anthropology," *History of the Human Sciences* 6, no. 1 (February 1, 1993), 15.
[166] Jan Zalasiewicz, Catastrophism, *In Our Time with Melvyn Bragg*, n.d., accessed January 30, 2014.
[167] Georges Louis Leclerc Buffon, *Natural History: General and Particular…*, trans. William Smellie, 9 vols. (London: William Creech, 1780), 193.
[168] Brown, *Until Darwin*, 62.
[169] Buffon, *Natural History*, trans. Smellie, 181, 203.
[170] Ibid., 181.
[171] Buffon, Jefferson and Benjamin Smith Barton were all monogenists.

as would present-day anthropologists, instead, he and many of his colleagues assessed various peoples based on a ladder of civilization. The more closely a group's laws, religion, manufacturing and agriculture resembled that of Euro-Americans, the closer they were to achieving the ultimate state of being.[172] According to Buffon, American Indians had no measure of civilization and their cultures were not worth study "for, though each nation had peculiar customs and manners, though some were more savage, cruel, and dastardly than others; yet they were all equally stupid, ignorant, and destitute of arts and industry."[173]

Savage, ignorant, ugly, misshapen, stupid and lazy—these were the adjectives that appeared most frequently in Buffon's description of non-white races. According to him, some American Indians only drank blood, some survived on raw meat and others were infanticidal cannibals.[174] Yet these characteristics, or even supposed positive ones such as hunting prowess or harmoniousness, were not indicative of social structure or other characteristics of a civilization for Buffon. Rather, "all these things may be known to happen in one, as well as in several savage nations," observes Buffon:

> for every nation, in which there is no government, no law, no master, no habitual society, ought rather to be termed a tumultuous assemblage of men barbarous and independent; men who obey nothing but their own private passions, and who, incapable of having a common interest, are also incapable of pursing one object, and of submitting to fixed and settled usages; these supposing a series of designs, founded on reason, and approved by the majority. (*The Natural History of Animals, Vegetables, and Minerals*, 261)

Buffon is widely considered to be the founder of natural history as a discipline, and *Histoire Naturelle* is said to have sold more copies than any other work in eighteenth

[172] Buffon, *Natural History*, trans. Kendrick and Murdoch, 273.
[173] Buffon, *Natural History*, trans. Smellie, 170.
[174] Ibid., 171.

century France.[175] Robert Schofield argues that Buffon inspired Peale's attempt to create a complete "world in miniature" based on his estimate that only 200 quadrupeds and 300 birds existed throughout the world. As contemporary naturalists described new species from the interior of North America, Peale later refuted Buffon's estimate.[176] Yet after the first 15 years, Peale admitted that Buffon was "still of infinite use to me," and as late as 1807 he acquired all 38 volumes of *Histoire Naturelle* for the museum.[177]

Like many other Americans who studied Buffon, Peale rejected Buffon's rampant racism. Although Peale quoted liberally from the naturalist during his 1798-1802 lecture series on natural history, he reported that he had "been obliged to censure [Buffon's] hasty errors of the subjects of this Country."[178] Buffon's quasi-agnostic work clashed with Peale's personal belief that God created nature with inherent balance, and that "nature is perfect in all her works, nor is there any thing made in vain."[179] Instead, Peale opted to use Buffon's descriptions as "charming models to moralize on—and if managed with judgment may help to mend the manners of men."[180] It appears, however, that Peale had "trembling hesitation" to lecture on humans as subjects of science for lack of expertise.[181] In the script for his first lecture, he glosses over the subject, saying he may eventually lecture on it.[182] Although he used the same set of scripts every year, he did

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[175] Robert E. Schofield, "The Science Education of an Enlightened Entrepreneur: Charles Willson Peale and His Philadelphia Museum, 1784-1827," *American Studies* 30, no. 2 (1989): 21–40. 23-24.
[176] Schofield, 24.
[177] Peale to James Madison, 21 May 1801, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:306; Acquisitions Records in *Collected Papers*, IX-A/3.
[178] Peale to James Madison, 21 May 1801, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:306.
[179] Peale, *Discourse Introductory*, 1800, 14. Peale's emphasis.
[180] Peale to James Madison, 21 May 1801, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:306.
[181] "Lecture on Natural History," 17 May 1823, in *Selected Papers*, 4:267.
[182] "1st Lecture: Orang-Outang, Baboons and Monkies," 1800, in *Collected Papers*, IID/4.

not. This is somewhat surprising given the plethora of unique ethnographic objects Peale had at his disposal for illustration.

It was not until an 1823 lecture on natural history that Peale broached the subject of the human condition. Avoiding Buffon and science completely, Peale used the opportunity to sermonize to his audience. In the script, Peale polarizes the human condition as existing in either the "natural state" or "state of civilization."[183] He argues that humans in both states are social beings that share the same bodily wants, fear of suffering and are capable of the same degree of happiness. In fact, there is more equality among people in a natural state. The difference between the natural and civilized state, according to Peale, is the driving forces of curiosity and greed. It is the love of labor, industry and family that creates avenues for the growth of happiness and knowledge while maintaining civic order. In sum, Peale argued that civilization is wrought with greater temptations and vices, but bestows greater rewards.

Regardless of whatever opportunities Peale's ethnographic displays presented for a unique scientific discourse on indigenous cultures, in his lessons Peale ultimately reduced the human condition to a binary of civilized and uncivilized. Although Peale may have felt uncomfortable theorizing on the scientific differences between ethnicities, it is more likely that Peale considered it more crucial to give his audience a moral lesson in humanity instead of a scientific one. Yet despite its ethnocentrism, Peale's message nevertheless assigns agency for self-improvement to the individual, not the society.[184]

As evidenced in the above description, Peale subscribed to the popular doctrine of Deism, whose followers supported creationism but did not believe that God interfered in

[183] "Lecture on Natural History," 17 May 1823, in *Selected Papers*, 4:267.
[184] Ibid., 257-272.

the daily activity of mankind—that natural order was true evidence of God's existence. Men such as Jefferson and Franklin believed that nature was intelligently designed by the Creator to maintain its own balance, and that humankind was endowed with reason in order to build civilizations, progress socially and achieve liberty and equality.[185]

David C. Ward calls Peale "a Deist of an almost pure variety," in that he did not subscribe personally or publically to any particular church and saw churchmen as an unnecessary intermediary between a person and God.[186] Peale believed that the greatest way to venerate the Creator was to study the world He created. The museum director began his 1799 series of lectures on natural history with that concept: "Man is just in a situation to be the interpreter and publisher of the divine wisdom; for, indeed he who knows it not from observation on nature, can scarcely learn it from another source."[187] The public imagery of the museum also drew an obvious connection between nature and God—Peale emblazed his tickets and museum publications with an open book, the word "NATURE" written across the pages, while light radiated from behind, symbolizing divine wisdom and the presence of God (See Appendix, fig. 1).

For Peale, the connection between science and divine creation was so strong he envisioned himself building not only a schoolhouse for the public, but a house of worship as well. He argued to the Philadelphia Common Council that his museum was "of immence [sic] Value to the Citizens in a *Political, moral and religious* point of View."[188] Peale used Linnaean taxonomy to represent his belief in an inherent order within nature, meaning that not only was he able to recreate the world in miniature, but also

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[185] Greene, *American Science*, 15.
[186] Ward, *Charles Willson Peale*, 81.
[187] Peale, "Introduction to a Course of Lectures," in *Selected Papers*, 2.1: 263.
[188] To Thomas Jefferson, 20 May 1817, in *Selected Papers*, 3:483.

demonstrate that through complex relationships, God's creatures, including humans, existed in a harmonious balance according to their proper places.

Peale believed that, like a religious society, his museum would help to civilize its visitors, and he believed Pennsylvania state leaders would agree and so appropriate funds to support the museum. When he appealed to the State House of Representatives for sponsorship in 1802, he emphasized that the public "cannot leave such a place without carrying with them powerful lessons of morality."[189] Thus by equating harmonious existence with divine intention, Peale posited that understanding the knowledge within the museum was a moral imperative and civic duty.

Unlike European states that financially supported their scientific institutions, the lack of government sponsorship and established universities meant the pursuit of social science did not offer a lucrative or even sustainable career in America. It was customary for working men with formal learning, particularly college degrees, to occupy themselves with law, medicine, religion, or education as the membership roles of the APS can attest.[190] Simply put, "public service was far more important than science."[191] Those who wished to pursue a science that did not immediately benefit Americans were expected to do it at their personal leisure.

A lack of time, money and resources necessitated collaborations between members of Philadelphia's learned society, resulting in social organizations such as the APS. As a public organization dedicated to the promotion of useful knowledge, its members upheld the ideals of democracy while avoiding societal impropriety otherwise

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[189] To Isaac Weaver, and Resolutions," 11 February 1802, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:396.
[190] Wood, *Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 281. See *Patriot-Improvers* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society) 1999.
[191] Wood, 104.

caused by individual self-interest.[192] Yet despite the fraternal bonds of Philadelphia's intellectuals, American science was unavoidably stunted by the absence of institutes such as France's state-sponsored Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle. Therefore Peale's ability to find a sustainable balance between public interest and the pursuit of a personal interest in science was exceptional in America at the time.

The advantages of wealth and leisure make it more appropriate that polymath Thomas Jefferson wrote the most influential contemporary work of American science: *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785). The text was partially a reaction to Buffon's theory of degeneration in America present throughout *Histoire Naturelle*: "In America…animated Nature is weaker, less active, and more circumscribed in the variety of her productions; …the numbers of species is not only fewer, but that, in general, all the animals are much smaller than those of the Old Continent."[193] Naturally, Americans adamantly opposed this incendiary argument, most fervently of all Jefferson, who championed the mighty and capable indigenous species of the New World. So eager was he to dissuade the most influential of naturalists that he attempted to send Buffon a giant stuffed moose.[194]

Jefferson was the museum's most crucial ally. As president of the APS and a public figure with a known affinity for natural history, he often served as a mediator between objects offered for the public trust and Peale. It was because of Jefferson that Peale's Museum became the de facto national museum, and Peale owed him no small debt for the museum's success. In return, the museum provided a public proving ground

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[192] Murphy D Smith, *Oak From an Acorn: A History of the American Philosophical Society Library, 1770-1803* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1976), 4.
[193] Buffon, *Natural History*, trans. Smellie, 115.
[194] Dugatkin, *Mr. Jefferson and the Giant Moose*, 100.

for Jefferson's scientific agenda, particularly in regard to debunking Buffon. The two men worked together to debunk Buffon's degenerative theory of North America and felt that they had achieved major success with the mammoth excavation.[195] Likewise, the museum's imperative to showcase the latest in mechanical arts enacted Jefferson's vision of national expansion through the labor of independent famers.

Jefferson treated America's indigenous population with no less zeal than Buffon; as negative as Buffon's descriptions were, Jefferson's were equally positive. In *Notes*, he wrote that whatever else may be correct about Buffon's degeneration theories, Americans—native and transplant—were exempt.[196] Jefferson described Indians as unwavering in their bravery; no account had ever been recorded of them asking for mercy at the hands of the enemy though they would defer to white men in recognition of their benevolent justice.[197] He saw them as creative, hygienic and emotionally complex, with a "vivacity and activity of mind equal to ours."[198] Only their want of "genius" had yet to be proven, which he believed would be revealed as they adopted Euro-American customs and rejected war as the foundation of their culture.[199] Though not directly stated, in *Notes*, Jefferson implied a personal belief that he held and supported throughout the rest of his life: Anglo-Americans and American Indians are equal. So equal, in fact, that he publicly advocated the genetic mixing of Euro-Americans and Native Americans, despite

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[195] CWP to *Medical Repository* 5 (1802):83 "CWP: Announcements to the Public of Peale's 'Mammoth,'" PFP vol 2.1, 379.
[196] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. William Peden (Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1829), 59. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.hwqxdy.
[197] Ibid., 61-62. Jefferson's opinions adhered closely with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's concept of the "noble savage."
[198] Ibid., 63.
[199] Ibid., 65.

it being outlawed in many American states, including Virginia.[200] As President, he told a delegation of Delwares, Mohicans and Mundries in 1808: "You will unite yourselves with us, join in our Great Councils and form one people with us, and we shall all be Americans; you will mix with us by marriage, your blood will run in our veins, and will spread with us over this great island."[201] Despite his personal values, however, in reality as president, Jefferson repeatedly passed legislature that furthered Indian separation and removal in the face of conflict.

Notes on the State of Virginia also served as an important instigator for the study of Native Americans. Many naturalists including Jefferson believed that the affinity between Indigenous languages held the secret to Native American origins, and consequently the secret to the relationship between *Europaeus albus* and *Americanus rufus.* Jefferson advocated the collection and preservation "in the records of literature, the general rudiments at least of the languages they spoke."[202] Jefferson supported philology in order to preserve American Indian language, but failed to recognize American Indians' ability to pass their culture from one generation to the next without written documentation, indicating he had already forsaken the possibility of Indigenous cultures surviving.

Jefferson's writing set the tone for the sympathetic treatment of indigenous people in scientific discourse, but despite Jefferson's emotional plea, his writing betrays an interest in Indians based more on personal curiosity than an empathetic desire to preserve

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[200] Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 85.
[201] "Advice to Indian Chiefs: To Captain Hendrick, the Delawares, Mohicans, and Munries," Washington, D.C., 21 December 1808, in *Letters and Addresses of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. William B. Parker and Jonas Viles (New York: A. Wessels, 1907), 190, http://www.archive.org/details/lettersandaddres00jeffuoft.
[202] Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, 104.

the people or their way of life. For example, in *Notes*, he describes his excavation of a burial mound he knew to be sacred to contemporary Natives with insensitive detail. As one of the earliest records of American archaeology, Jefferson's indifference set a moral precedent for antiquities and archeology fieldwork for more than a century.

Jefferson's descriptions of indigenous Americans in *Notes on the State of Virginia* and Buffon's in *Historie Naturelle* epitomize two of the most classic Indian stereotypes: the noble savage and the bloodthirsty savage. Despite their arguments' clear grounding in personal ethnocentric biases, their theories held up equally in popular and scientific culture of the time. So little information was available about American Indians that genuine scientific evidence could not outweigh the inherent biases of a beholder. As stated by Reginald Horsman, "there was no general agreement on what constituted a proper scientific study of races, all types of evidence were brought forward to support the general idea of inherent differences," or in the case of Jefferson, inherent similarities.[203] As noted above, Peale appears to have never formed his own hypothesis on the scientific differences between races as Buffon and Jefferson had. Though he failed to rebuke Buffon's racism toward Native Americans directly, Peale acknowledged the power of American Indians to create historical change by representing individual American Indians as subjects. The museum's treatment of Natives aligned with Jefferson's "assimilate or perish" mentality, which paralleled Peale's moralistic message of self-improvement for his own society.

In Peale's mind, his displays of humans as subject conformed to his deployment of Linnaean taxonomy, though in reality they were much more complicated than his

[203] Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 1981), 53.

displays of animal species. Peale wanted his displays of humans to not only educate his audience about the superiority of humans within nature's realm, but more importantly, also serve as a guide to a moral way of life, exemplified by American civilization. Like other cosmopolitan minds of the American Enlightenment who stressed the equality of mankind, Peale saw Indians as human beings who could harmoniously join the ranks of society through complete cultural assimilation.[204] And like Buffon and his followers, Peale believed in a progressive hierarchy of civilization.[205] Therefore, Peale organized the natural history of man to "show the progress of arts and science, from the savage state to the civilized man."[206] Peale placed his culture at the top of the hierarchy, and he did so by contrasting it with pre-modern, pre-industrial civilizations from around the world, most prominently Native American cultures.

Peale's interpretation aligned with a hierarchy of civilization, and accordingly there was one major component found throughout all society types. Unlike Buffon, Peale addressed warfare, despite his participation in the American Revolution. Peale outwardly abhorred the practice, a sentiment that emerged in the authoritative voice of the museum.[207] Both he and his sons as curators stressed that humanity was the only species who upset the balance of nature by fighting among itself.[208] Such internal strife was the hallmark of a civilization not yet fully realized, and Peale looked "forward to the enlightening of Mankind, when Wars shall find no advocates; when the pride of Nations shall be to cultivate the arts of peace and fellowship with each other."[209] For Peale,

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[204] Ibid., 106.
[205] "Lecture on Natural History," 17 May 1823, in *Selected Papers*, 4:269.
[206] In *Selected Papers*, 5:414.
[207] Peale, "Introductory to a Course of Lectures," 8.
[208] Brigham, *Public Culture*, 126, 144.
[209] To Dr. Richard Bradford, 14 February 1818, in *Selected Papers*, 3:575/

Indians and Euro-Americans were on the same trajectory toward such an enlightened society, but in different stages of progress. Peale considered members of the dominant culture and Native cultures to be equally in need of the museum's lessons in civilization. Separated from the realities of aggressive territorial expansion, Peale never had to defend the idealistic philosophy on Indian relations that he presented in the museum.[210]

As America expanded westward during the museum's existence, Peale increasingly felt pressure to rationalize the violent interactions between his countrymen and their indigenous counterparts. The occupation of Euro-Americans on land that had until very recently been home to Natives thwarted Peale's Deistic belief in nature's balance. His adherence to Buffon's theory was also complicated by the Frenchman's theory that prolonged exposure to the North American environment may render Euro-Americans susceptible to degeneration as well. Buffon, however, also argued that life becomes meaningful for humans once they are able to overcome and control nature through architecture, agriculture and husbandry and form a law-abiding, organized society.[211] Therefore, Peale argued that the solution to warfare between cultural groups could only be achieved through the cultural assimilation of American Indians to American ways, thus eliminating the need for warfare.[212] Linnaeus's equalizing philosophy of self-awareness also corroborated Peale's views. Any animal may be able to adapt to a new environment, but as humans with self-awareness, Native Americans could

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[210] Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 106.
[211] Claude Blanckaert, "Buffon and the Natural History of Man: Writing History and the 'Foundational Myth' of Anthropology," *History of the Human Sciences* 6, no. 1 (February 1, 1993), 30, doi:10.1177/095269519300600102.
[212] Ward rightly argues that the pacifism Peale displayed later in life and in the museum is hypocritical considering his participation in the American Revolution. Beginning with the Stamp Act in 1765, Peale was a "zealot advocate for the liberties of his Country" and Ward describes his actions during the war as "radical." Peale does not attempt to redress his conflicting acts and ideals within his autobiography. Ward, *Charles Willson Peale*, 74; In *Selected Papers*, 5:47.

speed the change through willing acceptance, and with the proper education, come to understand why the adoption of American culture was preferable and inevitable. Peale proudly believed the museum was a key tool of civilization for both the citizens of the United States and the Natives of the land.

Though Peale's ideas seem naïve by today's standards, it must be remembered that his interactions with Indians were quite different than those of backcountry Americans. Peale, like many other cosmopolitan Americans, interacted most often with Indians who had adopted Western customs such as dress, religion, language and commerce.[213] As a resident of the nation's governing and academic center, most Indians that Peale met were visiting for peace talks, or had been educated in American systems. Yet the violence of the borderlands still penetrated his life in the form of war trophy donations obtained through gruesome means. There is no evidence that Peale provided any different interpretation or provenance other than standard identification for such grizzly items as human scalps, rendering them morbid curios at best.[214] Meanwhile, he emphasized the importance of objects that indicated peaceful interactions between Americans and Indians, such as the Lewis and Clark artifacts, which he lent a greater deal of interpretation.[215] Peale's methodology for the display of these items is the subject of the next chapter.

Though Peale's pursuits in natural science were mostly consumed by zoological observations and categorization, his museum touched on a number of other areas of scholarly interests, not the least of which was the study of antiquities. In the early

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[213] Brigham, "'Ask the Beasts…,'" 201-02.
[214] "Description of the museum by an anonymous visitor," 4 September, 1793, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:68-69.
[215] Peale to Thomas Jefferson, 29 January 1808, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:1055-56.

American republic, the search for antiquities was inspired by both a hunt for material culture from expired civilizations and speculation on the history of North American peoples. Burial mounds, fortifications and other remnants hewn into the natural landscape, particularly those built in the Ohio River Valley, spurred the imagination of settlers on the peripheries of the nation. Today, we know that these features were built 2,200 to 1,600 years ago by pre-Columbian North American cultures referred to as Moundbuilders, the ancestors of contemporary American Indians.[216] Yet Peale's contemporaries who saw the sites did not believe there was a connection between the ancient cultures and modern Indians, for they saw no demonstration of the same sort of engineering in contemporary society. The general consensus favored the argument that Indian cultures had defeated the Moundbuilders in an ancient battle, which some historians have argued legitimized America's contemporary conquest by placing it in a larger historical framework of cultural eradication in North America.[217] This theory denied the permanent presence of American Indian cultures, eroding their entitlement to the land while lending a scholarly pretext to continued Western expansion.[218] However, historian Andrew Lewis posits a counterargument that a willful overlooking of an obvious connection between ancient and modern history denies the agency of American naturalists who were attempting to explain the cultural history of the continent through universally accepted scientific methods.[219] The use of eyewitness observations and the analysis of findings through a lens of popular historical theory enabled field researchers

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[216] Loretta Fowler, "Moundbuilders," *Indians of the Midwest.* Chicago: Newberry Library, 2011. http://publications.newberry.org/indiansofthemidwest/people-places-time/eras/moundbuilders/
[217] Andrew J Lewis, *A Democracy of Facts: Natural History in the Early Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 77.
[218] Ibid.
[219] Ibid.

in the western continent to join the bookish conversations occurring in eastern scientific centers such as Philadelphia, thus spreading the credibility of American science into the West.

Museums like Peale's that displayed antiquities were often the venues where public conversations about the history of the West and its Native peoples played out. Though white militarists donated many of Peale's Indian artifacts and had some idea of the objects' provenance obtained through trade or conflict, the donations of found material culture with little to no credible background grew after the turn of the century.[220] Indeed, lack of contextual evidence would also be the downfall of antiquities as a serious academic discipline, but in the meantime, the museum displayed such objects in an interpretive framework that at best was mere guesswork, although it was presented (and accepted) as truth.

As Peale's Museum progressed through the nineteenth century, the study of humankind as a discipline of natural history branched into the new disciplines of anthropology, ethnography and cultural history. Peale centered the museum's interpretation and programming on the foundational theories of Linnaeus and Buffon, and was strongly influenced by his American naturalist contemporaries such as Jefferson. Peale's own work in natural history was focused on collection, preservation, interpretation and dissemination, meaning that he contributed little original scholarship himself. Peale's exhibitions of humans as a subject were an accumulation of what he garnered from celebrated scientific works, but were overshadowed by his motivation to convey lessons in civilization to his audience. Peale contributed to science by providing a

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[220] Accession Records, in *Collected Papers*, XIA/3. Donations entered into the museum accession book listed as found increase after 1805.

unique space for study and hands-on learning, but did not have the resources to sponsor professorships or an academic publication, as he so desired. Without adding to the on-going academic scientific conversation, scientific presentations at the museum would become less and less relevant over time.

Nevertheless, Peale's pursuit of natural history provided him with the tools to support his personal views about humankind and its relationship with people and nature. Peale adapted the complicated theories of Linnaeus and Buffon for a public audience and heeded Jefferson's call to preserve the culture of dwindling Native groups. Yet Peale's greatest contribution to Western science failed to be fully appreciated by the scientific community; that of material culture. The museum extracted Linnaean taxonomy and Buffon's encyclopedic entries from scholarly texts and libraries and made them tangible to the public through his exhibits, transmitting information not through words but objects in a multi-sensory experience. By rendering human culture into a three-dimensional reality supplemented with taxonomic information, Peale asked his audience to reimagine objects as singular subjects of study. By placing the physiology and culture of humans on display in a moralizing rhetoric of order, he asked visitors to rethink their relationship with the subjects and accept his categorization as scientific truth. Most important to Peale's purpose for the museum, however, was that by instilling a subjective, moral lesson of God's purpose for mankind into his exhibitions, Peale expected his audience to accept his message. A visitor who agreed with Peale's perspectives became a compatriot in an enlightened pursuit of truth, reason and harmony, but to disagree was to stand outside of science, outside of God and outside of American society. Therefore, Peale's displays of mankind became less about the uniqueness of each culture, and more about

the differences that set a rudimentary civilization apart from a progressive one. Yet all could be united harmoniously by aspiring toward the same ultimate goal of complete civilization, ushered in by the new American empire.

CHAPTER FOUR

"A CHAIN OF FLOWERS": AMERICAN INDIAN EXHIBITIONARY[221]

Peale's Museum witnessed the first six decades of the United States' nationhood. Peale began collecting for his museum only a year after the ratification of the Treaty of Paris and by the time the museum closed in 1848, the federal government had completed its territorial acquisition of the continental United States.[222] The annexation of land through Treaty of Paris and Louisiana Purchase did not result in the immediate displacement of its Native inhabitants and the struggle for cohabitation meant Natives and Euro-Americans constantly renegotiated their relationships with one another.[223] The role of Indians in America's future was still unknown and the question of the "Indian problem" was explored through politics, warfare and culture. Present since the beginning of European colonization, the role of the Indian in American culture was fluid and manipulated to represent both the continent's unique indigenous qualities *and* the superiority of Americans in contrast to their antonymous fellow inhabitants. During that time Peale's Museum was a public forum where its curators attempted to rationalize, order and normalize the innumerable changes in the surrounding world for public consumption. As the curator of "the world in miniature," Peale's displays of Native cultures represented more than Indigenous peoples' place in nature but their standing in American society as well.

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[221] Peale, "1st Lecture. The Theory of the Earth. Linnaean System of Animals, and moral reflections on Man," in *Collected Papers*, IID/4. Adapted from the quote: "Rousseau first taught us to lead our children to the paths of Virtue with a Chain of Flowers!"
[222] Eric Foner and John A. Garraty, eds., "Expansion, Continental and Overseas," in *The Reader's Companion to American History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1991), 366.
[223] Michael Witgen, "The Native New World and Western North America," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (October 1, 2012), 295, doi:10.2307/westhistquar.43.3.0292.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the inherent messages within Peale's displays of objects representing Native cultures and peoples. The Philadelphia Museum accumulated one of the largest public collection of Native American art, weaponry, implements and dress in antebellum America; by the museum's closure, they had accumulated over 800 Native ethnographic objects.[224] Detailed records of Peale's exhibitions are rare, however, therefore I've narrowed my focus to approximately eight collections, artifacts or displays that represent Peale's larger methods. Through my analysis, four distinct phases of Peale's Native curation emerge that correspond roughly with changes in the broader political landscape and the first four iterations of the museum, at Third and Lombard Streets (1786-1794), Philosophical Hall (1794-1802), Philosophical Hall and the State House (1802-1811), the State House (1811-1828).

Expanding on the works of Michael Foucault, museologist Tony Bennett theorizes that museums in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries empowered the public through the "exhibitionary complex"—the act of removing objects from private control and placing them in a public area where they served as vehicles to relay the message of a large power or the state. [225] According to Bennett, the purpose of the exhibitionary complex is to empower the masses to self-regulate through self-awareness, rather than be controlled or coerced. As discussed in previous chapters, Peale adhered to the principles of the Enlightenment and he consciously served the values of the Revolutionary generation by educating his visitors to be better citizens and contributing members of society. Peale used the exhibitionary complex to teach his audience to

[224] "Peale's Museum in the State House, Philadelphia," Broadside, 1814, in *Collected Papers*, IID/30.
[225] Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 61.

identify with natural order and American exceptionalism, and in the process normalized American imperialism.

Bennett postulates that the exhibitionary complex functions to transform the mentality of individuals into a collective "we," thus creating a sense of nationalism and personal responsibility for the civic wellbeing.[226] This is done in imperial nations through the "Othering" of subjects of power, usually other ethnicities or races.[227] Similarly, Ellen Fernandez-Sacco argues that museums in the early American republic shaped national identity by visualizing the boundary between "self, nation, and other" through a rhetoric of science.[228] Although Peale believed that all members of the human race were equally capable of self-improvement through education, he nevertheless created a distinct dichotomy between the subjects and objects of power, which he identified as the "natural" and "civilized" states, most often between American Indians and Euro-Americans, respectively.[229]

Curios at Third and Lombard

Peale declared his intention to create a national museum publicly for the first time in 1790 by issuing a broadside that appeared in the *Pennsylvania Packet*. Within it, he also solicited ethnographic donations; besides animal species, Peale requested "utensils, cloathing, [sic] arms, dyes, and colours, or materials for colouring, or for physic, from amongst the Indians, African, or other savage people."[230] Open for four years already, the

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[226] Ibid., 79.
[227] Ibid., 67.
[228] Fernandez-Sacco, "Framing 'The Indian,'" 571-72.
[229] "Lecture on Natural History," 17 May 1823, in *Selected Papers*, 4:267.
[230] "To the Citizens of the United States of America," Broadside, 1790, in *Selected Papers*, 1:581. Physic meaning medicine. He used the same wordage in a broadside that ran throughout 1792 as well.

museum had acquired "precious curiosities" from people who had visited China, Oceania and "different parts of America; some whereof are the more curious, as they have been but very recently discovered, even by the great voyagers of Europe."[231] Despite the early introduction of ethnographic objects to the museum, there is no evidence that he intended to display them with any design or specific organization in the museum's first decade.

Peale was not the first to put American Indian culture on display; nevertheless, there was no precedent in Peale's mind for how humanity should be exhibited. Although anthropology had yet to be fully articulated as an individual area of study, material culture from the New World had been highly desired for private and personal collections since at least the seventeenth century.[232] Peale modeled his museum on what he knew of the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle and was most likely familiar with Du Simitiere's exhibits of Indian material culture, though they did not impress him.[233]

When Peale advertised the public opening of his museum in 1786, he described how he would display the objects: "The several Articles will be classed and arranged according to their several species; and for the greater ease to the Curious, on each piece will be inscribed the place from whence it came, and the name of the Donor, unless forbid, with such other information as may be necessary."[234] Two decades later, the Peales used this method of identification—a label with object name, place of origin and donator—on the extant ethnographic labels from the Lewis and Clark collection, therefore it may be assumed this is how ethnography was displayed throughout the life of

[231] Ibid.
[232] Bickham, "'A Conviction of the Reality of Things,'" 32.
[233] In *Selected Papers*, 5:102.
[234] Peale, "First Advertisement for the Museum," *Pennsylvania Packet*, July 7-November 12, 1786, in *Selected Papers*, 1:448.

the museum.[235] Animal species were assigned labels with their classifications in English, French and Latin.[236] Though this approach may seem minimalist by today's practices, it was not until the twentieth century that it became common for museums to add interpretive text to labels of objects.[237] He also installed glass cases of varying size with sloping shelves for the smaller objects.[238]

Peale describes his work during these first years as "excessive and urgent," as the labors of studying natural history, procuring specimens and arranging the museum occupied much of his time.[239] His vast collection of native animals, birds and insects was relatively simple to classify according to formulaic Linnaean taxonomy. Peale carefully arranged them to appear in lifelike positions and placed them in front of backgrounds depicting their natural environment, thereby deviating from traditional museum arrangements. Peale pioneered this proto-diorama presentation, a natural evolution of his artistry, whereas European museums display their specimens with a white or no background. He believed it would be more visually pleasing and educational for visitors, which demonstrates his early inclinations to organize objects into a corresponding narrative beyond taxonomy.[240] In the later years, Peale supplemented displays with descriptions through multilingual labels, a free guide and a purchasable catalog.[241]

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[235] Museum labels, in *Collected Papers*, XIA/16. There are a few printed labels that still exist as recent as 1809.
[236] Harold Sellers Colton, "Peale's Museum," *Popular Science Monthly* 75 (March 1909), 224.
[237] Tony Bennett, "Speaking to the Eyes: Museums, Legibility and the Social Order," in *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture*, ed. Sharon Macdonald (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), 33.
[238] Ibid., 222, 225.
[239] In *Selected Papers*, 5:130.
[240] Ibid., 309.
[241] Providing visitors with interpretive reading in exhibits or guides was not common until the twentieth century, therefore Peale's plans for such literature are demonstrative of his thorough effort to educate the public. After the first scientific catalog failed to generate income, however, he did not continue. He published abbreviated guides as early as 1805.

The first incarnation of Peale's Museum was located at his home on Third and Lombard streets until 1794 (See Appendix, fig. 2). Peale added two editions in 1782 and 1784, bringing the total length of the exhibit space to 77 feet.[242] By 1792 he had already begun to run out of exhibit space and turned to the most prominent men in American politics, religion, science and business for help.[243] At the proprietor's behest, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, David Rittenhouse, Benjamin Smith Barton and others joined Peale's Board of Visitors.[244]

Though the board faltered within a few years, it was Peale's first attempt to form a mutually beneficial relationship between state and museum, a relationship that Bennett argues is characteristic of a modern state.[245] Through the act of creating a Board of Visitors, Peale literally attempted to put the museum in the hands of state, allowing the new nation's most influential and wealthy men to have a direct influence over the culture being consumed by the American public. Peale's interpretation continued to exemplify the national agenda, as he held onto the dream that at any moment the municipal or federal government would select the museum for state-sponsorship.[246]

Peale first demonstrated his nationalistic agenda when he opened his portrait gallery for public viewing in 1782. With 44 portraits of "worthy Personages" such as Washington, Marquis de Lafayette and Franklin, Peale placed copies of his commissions in an interpretive framework that celebrated the military and political accomplishments of

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[242] Ibid., 5:224.
[243] Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 56.
[244] Unknown, "Description of Peale's Museum," *National Gazette*, September 4, 1793, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:69.
[245] In *Selected Papers*, 5:113.
[246] Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 236.

the Revolutionary generation.[247] In the process of organizing his collection into a natural history museum, Peale determined that these portraits should serve a dual role as a scientific representation of Linnaeus's highest genus: *Homo*. When he described his plans for a new museum to the Board, creatures would be arranged according to the six classes of Linnaeus, all the way down to worms. Representing humans would be his gallery of prominent Americans "who have been highly distinguished in their exertions, in the late glorious revolution."[248] Peale believed that these Americans were exemplary species of the human race, superbly equipped to lead humanity forward out of savagery into civility.[249]

As the representatives of the human race, Peale symbolically hung the great men's portraits above all the cases and arrangements in the main gallery, where they were prominently displayed. This arrangement was sustained throughout Peale's lifetime in the three renditions of the main exhibition space. Besides bestowing a lesson in civic history, Peale most likely hoped this arrangement would please the portraits' subjects and encourage their support and sponsorship. The museum published guides to the paintings in 1795 and 1813 that contained biographical information about the figures. The museum offered these guides for purchase at the entry of the museum and they provided the most in-depth interpretation on specific objects that was accessible at all times. Otherwise, visitors could direct their inquiries to museum staff, subject to availability, as one may in today's museums.

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[247] "Announcement of CWP's Portrait Gallery," *Pennsylvania Packet*, November 14, 1782, in *Selected Papers*, 1:373.
[248] "my design in forming this Museum," in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:14.
[249] Mark Kirkham Pingree, "From Revolutionary Patriots to Principal Chiefs: Promoting Civilization and Preserving Savagery in American Museums, 1785--1865" (Ph.D., University of California, Davis, 2003), 53.

Peale believed that a museum gazer could absorb the supreme characteristics of the objectified upon just by gazing upon their visage.[250] By placing the public figures above the mounted species of the "world in miniature," the visitor gazed up to the great Americans who in turn were gazing down upon the world. This arrangement sent the message that there was nothing in the world that America did not see, and that this superiority was unwavering and permanently etched in history. Peale also updated the gallery frequently with new additions, many of whom were museum patrons, thus establishing a rhetorical narrative between celebrity and museum participation. Ward also makes the point that that these Americans entered the Peale pantheon through their deeds, sending the message to America that heroism is democratic and achievable through service to the state.[251]

All "natural state" peoples were conspicuously absent from inclusion in the first museum's scientific arrangement, thus excluding Linnaeus's four subspecies of *Homo sapiens* and leaving that aspect of Linnaean taxonomy incomplete. This is surprising considering when given the option, Peale preferred to display a specimen of poor quality that than leaving part the taxonomical record visually incomplete.[252] Evidence suggests Peale would not use ethnographic objects alone to represent people in a taxonomical context. It was not until Peale was able to represent a *likeness* of a race that he added it to his scientific order, whether that be in the form of a painting, wax figure or actual human remains.

[250] Miller, 4n, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:24.
[251] Ward, *Charles Willson Peale*, 88.
[252] Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 216.

Peale understood the public's interest in seeing Native curiosities and he continued to happily add and advertise such additions to his museum. Nevertheless, Peale seemed disinterested in presenting cultural portrayals of other ethnicities at this time. In his description for the Board of Visitors of his ideal museum arrangement, ethnography appears last, after he mentions all other outliers, including animal skeletons, fossils, vegetables, and even *lusus naturea*: "A collection of the arms, dresses, tools and utensils of the aborigines of divers countries, may also fill a considerable space."[253] Instead it appears that as the museum grew, Peale literally shoved difficult-to-categorize items out of the way of ordered nature. Peale grouped all non-Anglo ethnography together, therefore he placed Native material culture alongside that of Hawaiian and Tongan peoples.[254] A visitor to the museum in 1793 noted that fossils, animals "hostile to the human race," and Indian artifacts were removed to the "further extremity" of the museum.[255] Therefore it may be derived that Peale displayed ethnographic items in cases *en masse*, without a contextual connection to the surrounding objects as would form an exhibit. Deprived of both a scientific and historical context, cultural objects appeared as little more than individual curios.

The timing of the first museum overlapped with the Northwest War (1785-1795), the latest iteration of the century-old struggle for control of the Northwest Territory between the United States, Britain and regional peoples. Members of multiple tribes including the Miami, Wyandot, Mohawk and Shawnee, came together after the American Revolution to resist the transfer of land from British to American hands. The United

[253] "my design in forming this Museum," in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:18.
[254] Heny Wansey, *An Excursion to the United States of North America, In the Summer of 1794* (Salisbury, England: J. Easton, 1798), 122.
[255] Unknown, "Description of Peale's Museum," in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:69.

States experienced a series of embarrassing defeats and violent skirmishes at the hands of these tribes, labeled the Western Confederacy, whom the British aided. After negotiations failed, Washington appointed Revolutionary hero Major General Anthony Wayne to wage a campaign of attrition against belligerents in 1792. His forces defeated the Confederacy at the Battle of the Fallen Timbers in 1794 and permanently secured the United States's political claim over the Great Lakes region.[256]

The repercussions of the war entered the museum in the form of donations, firstly as war trophies from soldiers (including Wayne) and later with visits from Native participants in the war. In July 1790, Peale advertised, "a dressed skin of the leg and thigh of an Indian, killed in the march of General Sullivan into the Western country, during the late war—Presented by Zebulon Potts, Esquire, Member of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania."[257] Peale also put Native and Anglo scalps on display.[258]

Fernandez-Sacco argues that such grizzly souvenirs of war like this were not put on display for the benefit of the public but instead were commemorative trophies of personal conquest.[259] The thigh dated to Sullivan's 1779 Expedition into western New York, meaning the thigh had been held privately as a war trophy for at least 10 years before Potts donated it to the museum.[260] The recognition of Potts as a prominent

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[256] Ray Allen Billington, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*, 4th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 221.
[257] Charles Willson Peale, "Additions to Mr. Peale's Museum," *The Independent Gazetteer*, July 3, 1790, http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83025884/. New acquisitions were frequently published in local papers as a means of advertising and also of publicly recognizing donators.
[258] Unknown, "Description of Peale's Museum," *National Gazette*, September 4, 1793, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:69.
[259] Fernandez-Sacco, "Framing 'The Indian,'" 592.
[260] Ambroise Marie Francois Joseph Palisot de Beauvois and Charles Willson Peale, *A Scientific and Descriptive Catalogue of Peale's Museum* (Philadelphia: Samuel H. Smith, 1796), 3.

member of the state equated warfare against "the Indians" with righteous authority and defused the cruel mistreatment of American Indians. There is no evidence that Peale displayed these objects differently than other curios, but the act of assigning the objects' provenance to Sullivan normalized their violent context. Meanwhile the anonymity of the people whose remains were displayed implies their unimportance, transforming their experience and lives into a collective, objective "Other" for museum gazers. As such, it was easier for visitors to ignore the humanity of the unwitting victim and correlate the remains with a faceless, bloodthirsty savage who mistakenly engaged the American military in combat.

By 1795, Peale added a portrait of Wayne to the gallery and described the general's accomplishments during the Northwest War in the portrait catalog; Rubens noted in the 1813 catalog that Wayne had "gained a complete victory" over the "hostile Indians" at Fallen Timbers.[261] For Peale to normalize and arguably glorify the American Revolution and the Northwest War in the museum is contradictory to the message of peace that Peale later emphasized. Peale's hypocritical glorification is indicative, however, of Peale's stance as a vocal Revolutionary and his unwavering loyalty to American causes. The contrast of culturally, scientifically and historically disconnected Native objects to the celebratory narrative of American military victories shows that Peale was preoccupied with creating a pro-American scientific and historical narrative in the first museum. Peale provided no significant educational information about Native cultures in the first museum. American Indian artifacts were displayed as curiosities and the people given agency as historical characters only as enemies of the state.

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[261] Rubens Peale, *Historical Catalogue of the Paintings in the Philadelphia Museum…*(Philadelphia: Peale's Museum, 1813), 20.

Parables at Philosophical Hall

When the museum moved into Philosophical Hall in 1794, Peale placed Native artifacts in the Model Room (See Appendix, fig. 3). The room contained a hodgepodge of objects not applicable to Linnaean taxonomy, including historically significant objects, found antiquities, paintings and models of foreign and domestic machines.[262] Though the Native collection was growing, initially there was still no method to its display. During this period, however, Native people began participating in the museum. As a result, Peale began to craft a narrative that favored examples of Native assimilation and acceptance of Euro-American agendas, cumulating in a display specifically targeted to American Indian visitors. Peale also recognized Native people as members of the Linnaean taxonomy for the first time.

In early 1797, Peale added his first portrait of a Native American, that of Joseph Brant (Thayendanegea).[263] Brant was a Mohawk leader with a formal Western education who allied with the British during the French and Indian and Revolutionary Wars.[264] His "name during the war of the American revolution carried terror in every border hamlet" because of his reputation for "swift and deadly attacks," earning him the nickname "Monster Brant," though historians now posit that Ohio borderland settlers exaggerated his reputation.[265] During the Northwest Indian War he served as a mediator between Britain, the Six Iroquois Nations and America. Brant advocated for peace and though

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[262] Peale, *Guide to the Philadelphia Museum* (Philadelphia: Museum Press, 1805), 7-8.
[263] "On Wednesday evening...," *The Independent Gazetteer*, February 24, 1797. This was Brant's last recorded visit to Philadelphia and his portrait is missing from the 1796 catalog of paintings.
[264] He attended Moor's Charity School (Dartmouth College).
[265] "Death of Catherine Brant," *The Pittsburgh Gazette*, January 3, 1838; Thomas Campbell, *Gertrude of Wyoming: A Pennsylvanian Tale and Other Poems* (London: Longman & Company, 1810), 59.

respected as a leader on all sides, failed to prevent hostile Indian attacks that led to the Battle of the Fallen Timbers.[266]

The Northwest Indian War ended with the signing of the 1795 Treaty of Greenville, in which more than ten tribes ceded the present day areas of Chicago, Detroit and a large part of Ohio to America in exchange for annuities and protection from transgressive frontiersman.[267] After the war, Brant continued to fight for the land rights of Indians, including the Six Nations.[268] Peale requested that Brant sit for him in 1797 while he was visiting Philadelphia, at that time the interim federal capital. In the portrait, Peale emphasizes Brant as a negotiator with a delicate floral headband (see Appendix, fig. 10). He appears pacified, even genial. He is wearing traditional dress and painted on his cheek are "fine red lines," one of the distinguishing characteristics of *Americanus rebese* in Linnaean taxonomy.[269] Through the portrait, Peale is showing that a person born as a Native can be not only accepted but also rewarded with hero-status by embracing a Western lifestyle.

With Brant's image, Peale is affixing a parable of concord and harmony onto the identity of a celebrity in British, American and Native societies. Brant is also adorned with metal ornaments clearly of Western design and most likely gifted to him by the British and Americans.[270] By assuming these symbols of Western power and peace, Brant is permanently held within a narrative of confluence and capitulation to the United States

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[266] John Anthony Caruso, *The Great Lakes Frontier: An Epic of the Old Northwest* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1961), 173.
[267] Ibid., 181.
[268] Louis Aubrey Wood, *The War Chief of the Six Nations: A Chronicle of Joseph Brant* (Toronto: Glasgow, Brook & Company, 1914), 121.
[269] Brown, "The Quadrupedia and the Observations on the Three Kingdoms of Nature by Linnaeus (1735)."
[270] Doris D. Fanelli, *History of the Portrait Collection: Independence National Historical Park*, ed. Karie Diethorn (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001), 97.

that any gazer may recognize, even without the context provided by the museum catalogue. As a static image, there is no implication in the image of any of the sustained violence in the wars before hand, or Brant's retreat to ancestral Iroquois land after.[271]

One of Peale's goals for the museum was to publish a prestigious scientific catalogue in French and English that would correct Buffon's errors about American species.[272] Peale did not have the expertise to write it therefore he solicited the help of A.M.F.J. Beauvois, an exiled French nobleman and career naturalist. Though he was not able to obtain enough subscriptions to publish an entire catalogue, they were able to publish the first volume on quadrupeds in 1796. Beauvois wrote the work for an academic audience, as it was meant to summarize Peale's collection available to researchers, but it was also available for purchase to the public upon admission.[273] Four specimens were listed to represent *Homo sapiens*; the aforementioned thigh, a piece of tanned skin and two skeletons of a Wabash man and woman. All were identified as American Indian.

The reversal of Anglo Americans to Native Americans as the scientific representations for Linnaean's first genus is unsurprising when Peale's motivation for each is considered. There is no evidence the skeletons were displayed in the museum; rather, they were most likely in the collection as anatomical objects for scientific study. If they were displayed, however, it aligned with Peale's behavior; he made serious attempts to obtain Anglo remains for display as well.[274] The display of Peale's portraits, however,

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[271] Ibid.
[272] Sellers, *Charles Willson Peale*, 279.
[273] Ibid., 335.
[274] In *Selected Papers*, 2.1:15; Miller, Ibid., 4n, 24. Peale lamented that he had not perfected the art of embalming before Benjamin Franklin's death, earnestly believing the great philosopher would have acquiesced to being preserved and mounted for the museum, much like Jeremy Bentham. He also attempted to obtain a skeleton of a dead Anglo infant and "petrified Negro" offered to him as a practical joke.

was meant to directly influence Peale's public audience and foster allegiance to American heroes. Although Peale was beginning to include contextual provenance for the museum's Native American specimens at this time, his and Beauvois's narratives in the catalog placed American Indians as objects of scientific study in a zero-sum polarization of stereotypes of the "noble savage" versus "bloodthirsty savage" stereotypes of Jefferson and Buffon, respectively.

A doctor who participated in the Northwest War donated both *Homo sapiens Americanus* skeletons. Though not physically "remarkable," Beauvois and Peale included an anecdote to inform readers of "the manners of these people."[275] The couple and their infant had been members of a Wabash group of allies during the Revolutionary War. The mother fell ill and "the child was taken care of by American soldiers."[276] The father also died and at which point the soldiers noticed the child was missing, to which the other Wabash assumed no knowledge. "Some surgeons in the American army, wishing for anatomical subjects, dug up the dead Indian, and to their astonishment found the child they had before sought in vain, placed between the knees of its deceased father."[277] After reproaching the Indians for their "cruelty and barbarism," the group replied that without parents, there would be no one to raise the child, and they had "sent it to its parents."[278]

Beauvois wrote the narrative to emphasize the instance of infanticide, which exemplifies the argument that without the intervening hand of civilized people, Indians were wont to act on their most basic instincts of self-preservation. This observation is

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[275] Beauvois and Peale, *A Scientific and Descriptive Catalogue of Peale's Museum*, 3.
[276] Ibid.
[277] Ibid.
[278] Ibid. In her paper, Fernandez-Sacco notes that the donors' names were removed from the catalogue, further objectifying the people as scientific specimens. However, the donors' names do appear on the facsimile of the catalog that appears in *Collected Papers*, IID/1.

remarkably similar to the negative characteristics that Buffon used to describe Native Americans.[279] The story places Anglo-Americans in a benevolent paternal role, while in contrast vilifying and dehumanizing the Indians, making them appear as little more than depraved and brutish animals. The act takes on further significance if we consider that Peale believed childrearing is one of the foremost moral characteristics that distinguished humans from animals; "Can there be a greater stimulous [sic] to make men virtuous, prudent, and even circumspect in every step they take in the presence off, or to guide a *Beautiful offspring*?"[280] Ironically the act of disinterring fresh corpses is noted without comment.[281] If the couple had been Euro-Americans, it not only would have been taboo, it would have been illegal.[282] Instead, the doctor treated the bodies as animals without self-awareness and without the respect of their cultural or religious-based burial customs and beliefs.

The catalogue also gave Peale the opportunity to expound on the provenance of Potts's thigh. "This piece of skin belonged to a warrior, who was wounded in Major General Sullivan's expedition into the Genesee country, and who, not being able to defend himself, would not yield."[283] The imagery of a defenseless but unyielding Indian warrior conjures the racist stereotype of a noble savage and echoes Jefferson's observation in *Notes* that "no account had ever been recorded of [Native Americans]

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[279] Buffon, *Natural History*, trans. Kendrick and Murdoch, 261.
[280] "1st Lecture. The Theory of the Earth. Linnaean System of Animals, and moral reflections on Man," in *Collected Papers*, IIA/3.
[281] Fernandez-Sacco, "Framing 'The Indian,'" 594.
[282] At this time there was no legal means for physicians to acquire cadavers for medical research and body snatching was a common crime in Philadelphia. The use of Native American bodies for academic research conveniently circumvented such preventative laws. See *Body Snatching: The Robbing of Graves for the Education of Physicians in Early Nineteenth Century America* by Suzanne M. Shultz.
[283] Beauvois and Peale, *A Scientific and Descriptive Catalogue of Peale's Museum*, 3.

asking for mercy at the hands of the enemy."[284] It contextualizes Native Americans as respectable adversaries, lending the view that American soldiers and Indians were well matched in battle and making the American victory that much more impressive.

The same year Peale completed the Brant portrait, the museum installed its most prominent display of humanity in the Model Room—10 life-size wax figures.[285] They included a Hawaiian, an Itelmen, an Aleut, a Carib, a Tahitian, a Chinese laborer, a Chinese gentleman, an African and two Native Americans.[286] Peale's purpose in this exhibit was "to appreciate the several dresses which have been presented to the Museum, and to exhibit the manner of wearing them."[287] He had also "taken much pains to form the characters of the several nations represented as perfect as possible, hoping that in that point of view they will be useful."[288]

Peale did not attempt to create a comprehensive arrangement of human subgroups with the wax figures; he selected the ethnicities based on the museum's preexisting ethnographic collection. The wax figures were Peale's first attempt, however, to organize those objects into a cohesive display of non-Anglo cultures, supplemented with realistic anatomical reproductions of their originating ethnicities.

Interestingly, the Philadelphia Museum had artifacts from extremely remote indigenous peoples around the globe long before it had a meaningful, established

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[284] Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, 61-62.
[285] Charles Willson Peale, "Additions to Peale's Museum," *The Independent Gazetteer*, August 15, 1797, http://www.newspapers.com/image/39940116/.
[286] Ibid. The Itelmen, or Kamchadal, are the small but reviving indigenous people of eastern Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula. The Aleut are the indigenous race of the Aleutian Islands in Alaska. He may have later changed the identity of the Carib to South American.
[287] Peale, "Additions to Peale's Museum," *The Independent Gazetteer*, 1797, http://www.newspapers.com/image/39940116/.
[288] Ibid.

collection of American Indian objects.[289] The indigenous populations presented were congruent with places in the world where the Anglosphere had recently extended its maritime trade networks. Peale prided himself on being one of the earliest curators to solicit foreign objects from seafaring merchants.[290] For example, in 1792 Washington donated the Hawaiian ethnographic objects from Captain Robert Gray, the first American to circumnavigate the globe.[291] Like the Gray artifacts, most of the figures' adornments were obtained through trade and donated by local sailors and merchants. Those who had read about the adventures of Captain James Cook between 1768 and 1780 would recognize the ethnicities presented.[292] The presence of these global and remote ethnicities indicated the growth of America's international commerce and influence.

These ethnicities did not fit into Buffon or Linnaeus's varities of humans, therefore the wax figures exhibit was also one of Peale's first attempts to create a display with a theme other than scientific taxonomy. To complete the mannequin exhibit, Peale took objects that were related but previously displayed separately and transferred them onto a human figure, thus creating a cohesive grouping among the objects. The American Indian statues were taken from first-hand knowledge but Peale did not have contact with the other cultures. The figures, nevertheless, represented his idea of what comprised each ethnicity based on his available resources. The cultures on display were in effect only Peale's *impression* of the cultures, including physical appearance.

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[289] Brooke Hindle, "Charles Willson Peale's Science and Technology," in *Charles Willson Peale and His World*, by Edgar Preston Richardson, Brooke Hindle, and Lillian B. Miller (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1983), 166.
[290] To Mordecai Lewis, 12 April 1796, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:147.
[291] Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, *Helmet (Mahiole)*, accessed December 17, 2014, http://pmem.unix.fas.harvard.edu:8080/peabody/view/objects/asitem/search$0040/3/title-desc?t:state:flow=0c8deba4-8001-4e05-ad71-a49365839fe7
[292] Cook deposited a collection of ethnography at the British Museum. Sellers suggests that some of Peale's items may have been from Cook as well, but offers no evidence.

The exhibit's imperialistic implications were undeniable and unlike the museum's other expansionist narratives, the wax figures implied peaceful expansion through commerce, not conquest. Peale strove for realism and accuracy, giving his display an air of credibility and scientific expertise so that they became authentic and knowable to the viewer through the act of gazing.[293] Grouped together behind glass, they were the collective Other, allegorically and literally imprisoned for the scrutiny of the gazer. Likewise, the identification of the objects' donors represented tangible evidence of their submission. Though the objects were not war trophies, their exoticism nevertheless made them trophies of power. Displayed for the nation within Peale's Museum, visitors were invited to admire and identify with their countrymen's conquests and accomplishments.

Of the wax figures, the two Native American men differed from the rest because they were identified as real humans, associated with a provenance visitors may have been familiar with. Taken from life, they represented Blue Jacket and Red Pole, two Shawnee members of the Northwestern present at the treaty signing in 1796. Like Brant, newspaper readers would have likely been familiar with the "famous" and "notorious" Blue Jacket who had been a prominent leader at the Battle of the Fallen Timbers and had signed the Treaty of Greenville.[294] Because of their established celebrity, featuring Brant and Blue Jacket's likenesses appealed to Peale's business sense, whereas Red Pole impressed Peale as the primary orator of the Indian delegates and "principal Village

[293] The realism of Peale's figures cannot be known, but many guests praised them for their realistic quality; one visitor even mistook a wax figure of Peale to be Peale himself. Peale may have cast the Natives' faces from life as he would later with Meriwether Lewis. Peale may have learned the technique while in Europe, where a contemporary of his gained notoriety for the art—Madame Tussaud. The oldest mannequin on display currently at Madame Tussaud's in London is Madame du Barry, cast in 1763. Its realism is quite remarkable.
[294] "Treaty of Greenville," *The Independent Gazetteer*, January 20, 1796.

Chief."[295] Two months earlier, General Wayne donated a buffalo mantle and three calumets he had received during the Treaty of Greenville signing; those items may have been used to adorn these figures.[296]

Like the Brant portrait, Peale gave prominence to Red Pole and Blue Jacket because of their roles as peace mediators between Natives and the United States. Much like Peale's belief that American citizenry could absorb the exemplary qualities of American heroes just by gazing upon their features in portraiture, it is possible Peale similarly believed that through accurate likenesses, his Native visitors could absorb the diplomatic qualities of their exhibited brethren as well. Brant's exceptional upbringing with Western traditions may have justified his portrait's presence among another Anglo figures, but Blue Jacket and Red Pole's participation in Western culture was limited to their roles as foreign diplomats. Peale therefore categorized them as wax statues with the other anonymous ethnicities.

Red Pole and Blue Jacket's likenesses recreated in the wax figures display placed them in a natural history narrative as well as a cultural one. Positioned with other figures meant to be archetypical examples of the ethnicities they represented, Peale sent the message that Native Americans appeared in their most ordered state when they complied with American authority. Since no other historical narratives existed between the other ethnicities represented in the case, the display gave the impression that all non-Anglo

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[295] "Additions to Peale's Museum," *The Independent Gazetteer*, 1797; "A singular circumstance…" *Aurora General Adviser*, 1796. Also see "To George Washington from James McHenry, 28 November 1796." http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/99-01-02-00036

[296] Charles Willson Peale, "Late Donations to Peale's Museum," *Aurora General Advertiser*, June 20, 1796.

societies regarded American power in the same way. Thus obedience became a shared trait between all the cultures represented.

The Meriwether Lewis Exhibit

Soon after Peale installed the mammoth skeleton in Philosophical Hall in 1801, he moved most of the natural history collection into the State House (See Appendix, figs. 4 and 5). The Mammoth Room, Antique Room and Model Room remained in Philosophical Hall. Peale previously charged 50 cents to view the mammoth, but now the extra charge applied to all the contents of Philosophical Hall, including the American Indian displays.[297] For the next nine years, the museum was split between Philosophical Hall and the State House, which reduced the percentage of visitors who saw the ethnographic collection. In the first year of the mammoth exhibit, approximately 3,663 people bought admission to Philosophical Hall. After that, the average dropped to 1,011 people a year until Rubens moved everything into the State House and dropped the additional mammoth fee in 1811.[298]

The first glimpses of the Far West that Peale displayed in his museum arrived in October of 1805. While wintering at the Mandan Villages in present-day North Dakota, Lewis and Clark organized a shipment of unique American plant and animal species they had identified and collected to send back to the President, many of which Jefferson immediately sent on to Peale.[299] When the expedition returned in 1806, newspapers

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[297] *Guide to the Philadelphia Museum*, 1805, 6.
[298] "Receipts in Museum of Mammoth," in *Collected Papers*, XIA/5. Between 1801 and 1811, an estimated 18,862 people bought admission to the State House exhibits.
[299] Peale to Thomas Jefferson, 2 November 1805, in *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents*, 1783-1854, ed. Donald Jackson, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962), 267.

reported that they brought "several curiosities with them from the Ocean."[300] Until the journals were first published in 1814, the artifacts in Peale's Museum were virtually the only tangible result of the Lewis and Clark expeditions accessible to the public. Sellers likens the rarity and exoticism of the Lewis and Clark objects to moon rocks in 1970s.[301]

In spring 1807, Meriwether Lewis ventured to Philadelphia to prepare the journals of the expedition for publication and deposit more specimens and artifacts into Peale's Museum. Peale awaited the additions eagerly; he told Jefferson, "everything that comes from Louisiana must be interresting [sic] to the Public."[302] For weeks, Lewis and Peale worked together preparing animals and illustrations for the journals. Peale painted Lewis's portrait for the gallery and lastly prepared a wax figure of Lewis with a cast of his face.[303] The display of Lewis was the grandest exhibit of the Lewis and Clark collection and Peale designed it specifically to target American Indian visitors.

Peale prepared the Lewis model to wear a Shoshone garment—an impressive mantle with "140 Ermine Skins on its fringe, the body being of Beavor [sic] studded with prismatic coloured [sic] Shells, a species of muscle found on the Missourie [sic]."[304] The mantle had been a gift from Comeahwait, chief of the Lemhi Shoshones and Sacajawea's brother. Lewis had a keen eye for appreciating Indian dress in his journals, but this item was "the most elegant piece of Indian dress I ever saw."[305] The richness of the tippet

[300] "Raleigh, Monday, November, 10, 1806.," *The Raleigh Minerva*, November 10, 1806, 3.
[301] Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 171. Nicholas Biddle published the first edition of the Lewis and Clark journals in 1814. Only 2,000 copies were printed and they were so scarce even Clark was unable to secure one for at least two years. A revised account of the expedition that utilized the original source material would not be published until 1904.
[302] 22 October 1805, in *Selected Papers*, 2.2:901.
[303] In *Selected Papers*, 5:358.
[304] To John Isaac Hawkins, 25 October 1807, in *Selected Papers*, 2.2:1037.
[305] Meriwether Lewis, August 20, 1805 entry in *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, ed. Gary Moulton (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press / University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries-Electronic Text Center, 2005), http://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/read/?_xmlsrc=1805-08-20.

visually conveyed the message that the Far West was full of valuable furs and a worthwhile pursuit for American commerce. As a common symbol of Native diplomacy, Peale placed a calumet in Lewis's left hand and pressed Lewis's right hand against his chest in a gesture of earnest fidelity (See Appendix, fig. 11).

From the perspective of the viewer, at first glance, s/he would most likely be struck with the impressive detail of the garment. The exoticism of the outfit would have been otherworldly for Anglo visitors, representative of an unfamiliar world with unfamiliar customs beyond the peripheries of the world they had experienced. Euro-American viewers would have recognized Lewis as one of their own, however, and if they had seen his face in the portrait gallery, he would have already been contextualized for them as an American hero.

Next, the literate public would have read the plaque that Peale placed in front of Lewis:

> "This mantle…was put on Captn. Lewis by *Comeahwait* their Chief. Lewis is supposed to say, Brother, I accept your dress—It is the object of my heart to promote amongst you, our Neighbours, Peace and good will—that you may bury the Hatchet deep in the ground never to be taken up again—and that henceforward you may smoke the *Calmut* [sic] of Peace & live in perpetual harmony, not only with each other, but with the white men, your Brothers, who will teach you many useful Arts. Possess of every comfort in life, what cause ought to involve us in War? Men are not too numerous for the lands which are to (be) cultitvate(d); and disease makes havock anough [sic] amongst them without deliberately destroying each other—If any differences arise about Lands or trade, let each party appoint judicious persons to meet togather [sic] & amicably settle the disputed point." (Peale to Jefferson, 29 January 1808, in *Selected Papers*, 2.2:1056)

Peale acknowledged his idealized interpretation of the scene; he told Jefferson, "such I believe to be the sentiments of our friend Lewis, and which he endeavored to instill in the Minds of the various Savages he met with in his long & hazardous Tour. I am pleased

when ever I can give an object which affords a moral sentiment to the Visitors of the Museum."[306]

The Lewis display represents the fullest articulation of Peale's position toward Indigenous Americans. He told Jefferson, "my object in this is to give a lesson to the Indians who may visit the Museum, and also to shew [sic] my sentiments respecting Wars."[307] Through this display Peale was playing diplomat; using Lewis as a mouthpiece, he willfully employed an idealistic rhetoric of benevolent paternalism and harmony to deny and disguise America's true policy of Native cultural eradication. [308] The exhibit simplified the semantics of Native-Anglo relations and Lewis and Clark's diplomatic agenda in order to promote a naïve but comfortable parable of human harmony. The speech put into the mouth of Lewis was generic enough that it could be transposed onto any council, any treaty and any confiscation of Indian property with any tribe at any time. It had a familiar message—the dominant culture is superior, and the superior culture will provide. The display was blatant propaganda for American imperial expansion. By "perpetual harmony," Peale truly meant perpetual pacification. Although the label text is directed at, he is conspicuously absent in the display, allowing visitors to assume his place as receipt of Lewis's lesson in harmony.

The museum's Native visitors were most likely unable to read the English label text, a fact that Peale would have been aware of. Therefore it is important to consider the

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[306] 29 January 1808, in *Selected Papers*, 2.2:1056. It is unlikely that Lewis had any input in the label text. The situation between the Shoshones and the Corps of Discovery had been much more precarious than Peale depicted; it had been crucial for Lewis and Clark to obtain horses from the tribe to cross the Rocky Mountains. More than anything, the Shoshone people wanted guns in return from the Americans. Though Peale displayed the event as a moment of harmonious enlightenment, in reality, its success was contingent on the Corps's ability to arm the Shoshones with firearms.
[307] Ibid., 1055.
[308] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 186-187.

message that Peale attempted to contained within visual cues. Although the interpreters that usually accompanied visiting delegations may have translated the label text, Native visitors' sight provided them with the most unadulterated and intimate gazing experience. The image of Lewis dressed elegantly in Indian garb indicated Anglo tolerance of Shoshone culture. Viewers would have perceived the elaborate and time-consuming craftsmanship involved in the ermine mantle, yet it and the calumet's presence were not ethnographic as much as they were symbolic albeit authentic props that verified the Shoshone people's acceptance of Lewis. Therefore although the display was culturally ambiguous, one would have been left with the impression of Lewis's control of the situation. By "playing Indian" in chief-like attire, Lewis appropriated the power and authority otherwise associated with Comeahwait and other Native leaders.

Despite the ethnocentric themes of the Lewis display, the exhibit is evidence of a paradoxical racial tolerance of Indians. Although it was atypically aimed at Native visitors, Peale designed the display as he would for a Western audience. He believed that all people were inherently equipped with the same ability to "read" his "book of Nature," meaning that humans share the same capacity for learning and self-improvement in a didactic environment. Peale considered the exhibit to hold the same potential for Native amelioration as any mechanical display for the farmer, any skeleton for the medical student or any portrait for the citizen.

In November, Peale received the remaining ethnographic items from the Corps of Discovery in a shipment "consisting of Indian dresses, Pipes, arrow, and Indian pot entire."[309] Peale presumed Lewis had intended to help him with their descriptions, but the

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[309] Peale to Rembrandt Peale, 17 November 1809, in *Selected Papers*, 2.2:1238.

captain tragically killed himself the previous month en route to Washington, D.C.[310] The accession records from December 1809 show a rich plethora of items that represented all facets of tribal life, including nutrition, weaponry, clothing, peace pipes and artistry. In total, there were more than 70 objects from approximately 10 tribes.[311] It is presumed to contain most of Lewis's personal collection from the expedition.[312] With the items' provenance lost, it appears from the extant labels that the Peales identified most of the Lewis and Clark artifacts simply with a brief item identification, tribal origin and donor name (See Appendix, fig. 6).

Salvage Ethnography at the State House

The museum announced the addition to the Lewis and Clark collection in March 1810. Its debut marked a new era for Native exhibitionary in the museum; it was the last exhibit Peale processed before his initial departure as director. Its accession was also concurrent with a dramatic reversal in Native-Anglo political relations in the Great Lakes region, despite the relative concord between settlers and Natives that had existed there since the Treaty of Greenville. In September 1809, Territorial Governor William Henry Harrison persuaded the Delaware, Eel River, Miami, Potawatomi, Kickapoo and Wea nations to cede three million acres of land to the United States in exchange for $7,000 and $1,750 in annuities.[313] In response, Tecumseh, a Shawnee leader and veteran of the Northwest Indian War, rose against the signers of both sides of the treaty. Along with his brother, the religious leader Tenskwatawa, Tecumseh organized many disaffected pan-

[310] Ibid.
[311] Museum Accession Records, in *Collected Papers*, XIA/3-5.
[312] Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 187.
[313] Billington, *Westward Expansion*, 265. The Treaty of Fort Wayne.

tribal warriors who also resented American encroachment and the influence of Western culture. Harrison defeated Tecumseh's Confederacy at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811, however, effectively eliminating the last major frontline of organized American Indian resistance. Tecumseh's War also prefaced the militant, zero-tolerance federal policies toward Native Americans that expedited western migration, characterized by military and administrative leaders such as Harrison, James Monroe and Andrew Jackson. The fate of Indians was no longer ambiguous for Americans; the assumption that resistant Indians were destined for inevitable extinction became commonplace in public culture. The federal government officially adopted a policy of cultural extermination with the passing of the Civilization Fund Act in 1819, which funded Christian missionaries to educate and "civilize" pacified Natives through boarding schools.[314]

When Rubens assumed the museum directorship at Peale's retirement, he abandoned the museum concept of a moralizing temple in favor of more lucrative endeavors. He envisioned the museum as a fashionable evening lounge where people would gather under the gas lamps to listen to performances by musicians, lectures and human "prodigies."[315] Formerly arranged as a literal representation of Linnaean order, Rubens rearranged the animal species to exhibit the best specimens, favoring quality over quantity. Rubens brought out the *lusus naturea* Peale found repellent, including jars containing human fetuses.[316] He also added labels to all objects and removed the framed catalogue entries from the galleries and replaced them with Bible verses.[317] His

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[314] "Civilization Fund Act," 3 March 1819, *Documents of United States Indian Policy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 33.
[315] Miller, "Editorial Note: Rembrandt's Baltimore Museum," in *Selected Papers*, 5:339.
[316] Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 216.
[317] Ibid. See *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* vol. 36, 1912. "Notes of a visit…"

rejuvenating efforts doubled the museum's annual profits in the first year and his lucrative start permanently altered programming from a basis in education to the extraordinary. Rubens also moved the remaining objects from Philosophical Hall into the State House, dropping the additional fee.[318]

With constant additions to the portraits in the Long Room, the museum's narrative of American exceptionalism shifted from the past heroes of the American Enlightenment to the celebration of contemporary western expansion (See Appendix, fig. 7). The additions of Lewis and Clark heralded a new portrait series of American explorers and naturalists including Zebulon Pike, Stephen Long and William Maclure.[319] In 1816, Peale added replicated portraits of Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, Ferdinand Magellan and Hernán Cortés, most likely at Jefferson's request. Jefferson believed it was a "public concern that our country should not be without the portraits of it's first discoverers," and their presence in the museum linked America's expansion to centuries of European colonization and validated America's position as a Western world power through its progressive imperialism.[320] Peale's advocacy of a celebratory narrative aligned with the values of the Enlightened generation; the influx of Anglo settlers into the interior represented the triumph of civilization over the natural state of man. Peale was able to circumnavigate a direct focus on the violence associated with frontier growth by celebrating the expansion of scientific knowledge instead.

While the Peales added imperialist portraiture to the Long Room, a dichotomy formed simultaneously in the Back Room where Rubens exhibited its Native collection,

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318 Peale to Angelica Peale Robinson, 14 October 1811, in *Selected Papers*, 3:119.
319 Museum Accession Records, c.1818, in *Collected Papers*, XIA/3.
320 Thomas Jefferson, "Thomas Jefferson to Joseph Delaplaine," May 3, 1814, Founders Online, National Archives, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-07-02-0249.

visualizing America's growing intrusion into Indigenous lands and the plunder of conquest (See Appendix, fig. 8). Here he placed the majority of the Lewis and Clark collection on the north wall with other international ethnography on the west wall.[321] Peale replaced many of the original figures with updated wax models of Natives in "war dress," including one of Comeahwait.[322] Yet Indian accessions stalled after Peale's initial departure in 1810.

Whether physically or culturally exterminated, Native American declension rhetoric permanently entered the public consciousness, infusing a new sense of urgency toward ethnographic collecting. The museum's collection now dominated by American Indian culture became a collection of "salvage ethnography," as preservationist collecting rose in popularity.[323] The public perceived a declension narrative in the Back Room; James Mease's 1835 guidebook to Philadelphia described the Indian display as "full and complete in all that is illustrative of the customs of this interesting, and fast decreasing people."[324] Rubens also installed the mammoth exhibit in the Back Room, further emphasizing the obsolescence of Indian heritage. The presence of the huge mammoth fossils among life-size representations of Native peoples blurred historical chronology and reinforced a narrative of primitive lifestyle and extinction.

Ironically, as the access to Native material culture increased, the participation of Indians as visitors in the museum dwindled. Rubens did not consider Indians a target

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[321] Museum Floor Plan, in *Collected Papers*, XIA/6.
[322] Thomas Wilson, *Picture of Philadelphia, for 1824, Containing the "Picture of Philadelphia, for 1811, by James Mease, M.D." with All Its Improvements Since That Period*. (Philadelphia: Thomas Town, no. 38, Chesnut-Street, 1823), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t5k93n23w.
[323] *Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) s.v. "salvage ethnography."
[324] *Picture of Philadelphia, Or, A Brief Account the Various Institutions and Public Objects in This Metropolis….* (Philadelphia: E.L. Carey and A. Hart, 1835), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t6251wh8h.

audience as his father had. When Washington, D.C. became the nation's capitol in 1800, the visitorship of political diplomats, including those of American Indian heritage, shifted south. The simultaneous push of American Indian further and further west made Native visitors in any other capacity highly unlikely. During this time, Natives impeded America's expansion during Tecumseh's War (1809-1813) to the west and the First Seminole War (1814-1818) to the south. The episodes of peaceful negotiations Peale had proudly emphasized earlier appeared naïve now. By 1813, the Peales removed the Brant portrait from the hero gallery and placed it among miscellaneous portraits, including medical anomalies. In the descriptive catalogue it appeared as the penultimate entry: "227. Captain Brant, an Indian Chief," followed by an unidentified Osage "King."[325]

When Peale returned to the helm of the failing museum in 1822, he attempted to rebuild the museum's reputation as a scientific institution. Part of this endeavor was the accession of more Native ethnography. The year before his death, Peale purchased a large collection of Plains Indian artifacts, breaking from his collecting methodology by purchasing a commodified collection. The collection originated from two traders who had lured a group of Osage Indians to Philadelphia in an attempt to transport them to Europe as a living exhibit. They managed to escape, leaving the ethnography with the traders who then sold it to Peale.[326] The collection cam from various Plains tribes and contained clothing, a tipi, weaponry and ceremonial objects, including a buffalo robe painted by the Arikara depicting the Arikara War. The museum advertised it as "the most complete [collection] that has ever been exhibit."[327] Peale did not take advantage of these objects to

[325] Rubens Peale, *Historical Catalogue of the Paintings*, 1813, 56.
[326] Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*, 252.
[327] "Indians of the Missouri.," *Poulson's Daily Advertiser*, September 22, 1826.

act out his lessons of morality, however, and they existed in the museum to serve essentially the same purpose ethnography had in the early days—to satiate the public's curiosity.

Though the display of upwards of 800 Native objects *en masse* must have been impressive, it probably worked against the museum's educational mission. With limited space, an orderly arrangement would have been difficult to achieve and the cacophony of artifacts probably overwhelmed visitors. This arrangement also directly contrasted Rubens's "quality over quantity" approach with the zoological species in the Long Room. Without a coherent rationale to the collection, appreciation of any one object would have diminished. The Back Room took on the characteristics of a trophy room more than a legible book of Nature.

Peale's purchase of the Plains collection is also evidence of the Peale museums' switch from treating Natives as equal visitors to commodified subjects. As the museum came to rely more and more on evening performances to drive ticket sales, the Peales brought in Native peoples to act out traditional cultures as evening entertainment. In 1821, Rubens considered exhibiting an Inuit family in Philadelphia, but decline when he heard rumors that their guardian, Captain Samuel Hadlock, Jr., had kidnapped them against their will.[328] By 1827, however, mixed Native groups were performing war dances, miming scalping maneuvers and demonstrating the use of tools during evening and educational performances at Rubens's museum in New York.[329] Such performances, entertaining those they may have been, only served to polarize the differences between

[328] James Milnor to Rubens Peale, 21 March 1821, in *Selected Papers*, 26.
[329] See advertisements in the *New York Evening Post*, November 3, 1827, April 1, 1828, January 2, 1829, June 17, 1830.

traditional Native cultures and Western nations. Ticket holders were not interested in seeing Indians who demonstrated modernity and adaptation to Western culture, they expected to see culture that was physically and temporally distant from their own.

During Peale's tenure at the Philadelphia Museum, his displays of humankind, especially Indian culture, were often placed in rhetoric of aiding or impeding progressive harmony, led by the civilizing influence of American men. While Peale centered his celebratory version of the American historical narrative on the accomplishments of the founding fathers and his own democratic values, he used the displays of Indian artifacts to convey his own opinions about the "Indian problem," which were often selectively related to moments of confluence and peacemaking between the two races. Peale's treatment of Indian culture shared characteristics with the Native American declension narrative of the second half to late nineteenth century, unsurprising given the direct involvement and impact of President Jefferson, military officers and explorers in the museum. Peale most often displayed Native material culture with little corresponding narrative, but when he did discuss American Indian experiences, he usually assigned his subjects the characteristics of "good" and "bad" Indians that corresponded to the Buffon's stereotype of the bloodthirsty savage or the Rousseauian stereotype of the noble savage, respectively.

During the first decade of the museum following the revolution, Peale put his greatest emphasis on growing his portrait collection of important American men; in fact, until the end of the museum, the portrait gallery was primarily described as one of

Revolutionary figures.[330] His ethnography displays were subject to whatever donations he received and comprised of military war trophies and objects from global cultures acquired through maritime trade. Peale did not add interpretative context to the ethnography other that the provenance explained by its donors because he had yet to implement a hierarchical narrative in the museum. As observed by the historian Robert F. Berkhofer, the future civility of America was so precarious at its birth that there was no room for tolerance of Native cultures.[331] Correspondingly, American Indians and other racial "varieties" were purposefully left out of Peale's taxonomical representation of humankind.

It was not until the museum moved into Philosophical Hall that Native American subjects began to appear as agents of historical change. By that time, Peale had fully articulated his mission for the museum: "the more [visitors] become acquainted with the wonderful works of Nature the more they will…contentedly see the justice of their own situation."[332] Conveniently located at the political center of the nation, Peale was privy to Native delegates who enabled him to capture their likenesses for presentation in the museum. Joseph Brant, Red Pole and Blue Jacket were accessible visitors whose actions aligned with the political agenda of the United States and supported Peale's personal values of progressive harmony. By prominently featuring their stories, Peale employed the exhibitionary complex to demonstrate how Indians should properly behave in American politics and culture in order to achieve civility. The display of global ethnography also promoted the idea of a progressive American society through its

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[330] See the 1813 portrait guide: *Historical Catalogue of the Paintings in the Philadelphia Museum: Consisting Chiefly of Portraits of Revolutionary Patriots and Other Distinguished Characters*.
[331] Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian*, 137.
[332] To James Calhoun, 29 June 1796, in *Selected Papers*, 2.1:157.

commercial reach to the far corners of the world. By gazing upon such objects as Chinese women's shoes and a Tahitian headdress, Americans of any class or gender were invited to share in collective sense of pride and wonder at the capabilities of their fellow citizens. Peale hoped that foreigners and Natives as outsiders would be impressed and perhaps intimidated by such displays, as well.

In contrast, Native specimens such as the Wabash skeleton couple represented the dismal quality of life for sub-hierarchical humans still in a "state of nature," unexposed or opposed to civilizing influences. Behavior such as infanticide aligned with Buffon's argument than American Indians were savages wont to act on their "private passions," thus justifying their inhumane treatment at the hands of American army officers.[333] Likewise, Peale used the bloodthirsty savage stereotype to downplay and normalize the violence associated with scalps and other human war trophies.

The addition of the Lewis and Clark ethnographic collection in 1809 heralded the epoch of Western expansion in the United States. The Lewis exhibit represented Peale's most earnest effort to address his Native audience, encouraging passive acceptance of American infiltration and the adaptation to American "useful arts."[334] The Lewis statue is often noted as the most prominent of ethnographic displays in extant guidebooks and records, but its message fell on deaf ears as Americans as the principles of the Enlightenment waned. The disparity between Natives and Americans came to be viewed less as a dichotomy between savage and civilized and more in terms of racial superiority.

With Peale's initial departure from the museum, his son, Rubens, immediately dropped his father's mission to better the American populace through education and

[333] Buffon, *Natural History*, trans. Kendrick and Murdoch, 261.
[334] To Thomas Jefferson, 29 January 1908, in *Selected Papers*, 2.2:1056.

turned to lucrative programming. On the national stage, Indian wars on the frontier to the west, south and southwest stalemated tolerance between Native inhabitants and emigrants. In 1825, President Monroe urged the removal of all Natives to west of the Mississippi, for:

> Experience has clearly demonstrated that in [American Indians'] present state it is impossible to incorporate them in such masses, in any form whatever, into our system. It has also demonstrated with equal certainty that without a timely anticipation of and provision against the dangers to which they are exposed, under causes which it will be difficult, if not impossible to control, their degradation and extermination will be inevitable. (James Monroe, Message to Congress, 1825)[335]

Additionally, the arrangement of the Back Room, later called the Indian Room, placed Native peoples in a narrative of natural history and forgone extinction, devoid of historical agency. The majority of these ethnographic items were obtained through confluence or commerce and Peale derived his authority to represent Natives from those moments of supposed cultural confluence.

The museum never displayed Indians' cultural progress toward Americanism in its displays or shows. Rather, it demonstrated the agency of specific individuals, and tolerance between Americans and tribal nations was always shown to be a coerced effort between two otherwise opposing sides, not a natural byproduct of cultural cohabitation. The exhibits of ethnography became a zone of contact for Anglos to artificially immerse themselves in Native culture while remaining in control of their own experience. Separated from the object's context in which it was collected, the visitors' participation in Other culture was limited to observation, resulting in a personal detachment from American Indians. Furthermore, it was difficult for visitors to look at a Sioux otter-skin

[335] James Monroe, "President Monroe Justifies the Removal Policy," 1825, http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtid=3&psid=677.

tobacco pouch or a Blackfeet belt of raven feathers and empathize with their cultural purpose. Outside of the moral lessons of Peale, these items began and ended as curios for the American people, appreciated mostly as remnants of a perishing race of humans.

CONCLUSION

Charles Willson Peale believed that all races share the same potential to achieve civilization. His museum's message, however, operated against a backdrop upon which Indians' fight for survival was a constant deterrent to American ambitions. Yet westward expansion did not result in the immediate displacement of Native peoples, and while their future was still unknown, Natives and Euro-Americans constantly renegotiated their relationships with one another.[336] The presence of Native Americans in Peale's Museum is missing from the historiographical record, and the scholars who have addressed those intersections have failed to acknowledge the nuances of such cultural exchanges. Although Peale's Museum identified "non-civilized" races as Others, Peale nevertheless considered them to be a part of his audience. Most importantly, he believed that he succeeded in affecting Native visitors with his message of civilization and order, proving his belief that any person can improve her or himself through a public education.

Peale wanted to create an immersive environment where the American citizenry and foreign nationals could not help but be moved by the grandeur of North America and all its unique indigenous attributes. Working at the end of the Revolution, Peale had the opportunity to craft his personal vision of democratic education and invited anyone into his museum who could afford the quarter admittance fee. The result was one of the most egalitarian public institutions of its time. Despite never securing state sponsorship, Peale nevertheless conceived his museum as a state institution, meant to represent an all-encompassing model of American progress and strength.

[336] Witgen, "The Native New World and Western North America," 295.

Other public institutions also contributed to the scientific discourse that placed American expansion and its wealth of internal resources at the heart of American progress. Coinciding with the rise of American Indian material culture in museums, there was a marked increase of American Indians as subjects of study in such areas as philology, antiquities and physical anthropology. These areas of interest emerged in public culture as well, with institutions such as Pierre Eugene Du Simitière's American Museum, which acknowledged the interest in Native culture through museum displays and the preservation of ethnographic and political documents that recorded their histories. Dedicated to the pursuit of useful knowledge, the APS also devoted its resources to assisting in western expansion, greatly enabled by invaluable allies such as Thomas Jefferson.

As a quintessential product of the American Enlightenment, Peale based his pedagogy on the Lockean theory that all varieties of people are endowed with the ability to perceive and absorb knowledge within the "proper" environment. The curator believed that the proper environment he created in the museum could teach visitors not only about the world, but more importantly, also to perceive their own role in Nature's order. Peale's friendly interactions with American Indian museum visitors reinforced this belief, but no event affected Peale as much as the signing of 1796 peace treaty between two delegations representing eight tribes from the southern and northwestern regions of the country, respectively. Peale accepted this moment as proof positive that American Indians could be enlightened and come to appreciate Euro-American culture as a superior way of life. Such a solemn ceremonial truce indicated to the American witnesses that this race was indeed suspended in a "natural" or "savage" state by their own ignorance. Through a

rigidly controlled environment of paternal benevolence and coercion, these Americans saw it as their moral obligation to assimilate American Indians into Euro-American culture with the ultimate ancillary benefit of Indian pacification.

Though a mediator between science and the public, Peale did not consider himself a naturalist. With little scientific or anthropological understanding of American Indians, early American Indian scholarship was more indicative of the biases and observations held by authors than any Native voice. Peale preferred to limit his exhibitionary to categorical ordering and declined to compare cultures and races with any great depth, despite the ever-increasing presence of Native material culture in the museum. Instead, he based his displays on the widely implemented and accepted taxonomy of Linnaeus and the scientific descriptions of Buffon.

When it suited his purposes, Peale often cast aside Buffon's degenerative theory and ethnocentric racism present in *Histoire naturelle*, however, and argued that the Creator made all living things in balance. He instead deployed idealized characteristics of Jefferson's "noble savage" stereotype wherever it aligned with his mission, thus crafting a narrative that equated an enlightened Native American with an Anglo American. True to his patriotic values, he emphasized the agency of the individual and the principle that all men are inherently endowed with the same mental capacity. Though humans may vary physically, according to Peale we are all on a trajectory toward the same endpoint of ultimate enlightenment.

Driven by the belief that through education all varieties of humans could reach the zenith of civilization, Peale crafted his narrative on the human experience around a zero-sum binary between "state of nature" and "state of civilization." Peale used his platform

as the director of a museum to implement what he saw as a homily of morality that encouraged order, harmony and self-awareness for the betterment of society. The scholarly credibility bestowed by the global scientific community upon the museum conferred Peale's voice with the power of authority and truth. By presenting scientific, religious and civic doctrine, Peale believed he created an environment where any willing participate would be transformed by the Book of Nature, no matter what their background.

During the first decade of the museum following the Revolution, Peale was preoccupied with creating a national museum that defined the new nation through its unique animal species, its scientific and mechanical progress and the accomplishments of great men. Euro-American donors presented Native material culture and artifacts to the museum in its earliest days, and their provenance often reflected the narrative of America writ large, such as the war trophies that boasted of victory against hostile Native American forces. It was not until the museum moved into Philosophical Hall around the same time as the end of the Northwest Indian War that Indians achieved a nuanced presence in the museum. The influx of American Indian political delegates during peacetimes allowed Peale to lionize Indian men such as Red Pole and Blue Jacket, whose behavior assisted the political agenda of the rapidly expanding nation. Meanwhile, Peale used an objective, scientific treatment toward hostile Indians that often echoed Buffon's Indian stereotypes, such as the Wabash skeletons, when their behavior did not progress his argument. Good or bad, Indians only appeared as agents of historical change as individuals, as did Euro-Americans. Neutral indigenous cultures were placed in a natural

history context meant to convey a suspended state of nature on the lowest rung of civilization's hierarchy that gave way easily to a narrative of inevitable decline.

Though the 1796 peace treaty signing proved to Peale that Indians could benefit equally from his museum, it was not until Peale designed the wax display of Meriwether Lewis that he aimed his message specifically at American Indian visitors. Peale utilized the authenticity of material culture that symbolized Indian diplomacy to send the message that Lewis and Clark had opened the great expanse of the continent and that the peoples of the Far West waited with open arms for the civilizing influence of Americans.

Peale's initial retirement brought the museum's decline as a national institution on the cusp of scientific achievement. Rubens Peale, Peale's son and successor, did not emphasize a specific message of self-improvement as his father did. Lewis's statue, originally a message of hope for peace between the races, survived over the decades only to become a cruel reminder that despite the theories of Enlightenment thinkers, cultural submission had not protected the Indians. Comeahwait's mantle and other items no longer represented a hope for cooperation between the fledgling nation and American Indians but a sad and naïve relic of a brief moment in history when an increase in cultural tolerance seemed possible in American policy.

Through the historiography of Peale's Museum, scholars have revealed important threads between Peale's museum model and its American descendants into the twenty-first century. It is also possible to draw a thread between the anthropological narrative in Peale's Museum and the trajectory of similar narratives in American natural history museums. Similarly, Peale's relationship with Native ethnography provides us with the opportunity to reexamine attempts at non-Western cultural sensitivity within the public

culture of the early American republic. The similarities between the exhibition of multiple cultures at Peale's and new museology may not be readily apparent because Peale's methodology was intolerant of cultural cohabitation; Indigenous people were treated as being equally capable of self-improvement as non-Native museum participants, but only at the cost of abandoning their traditional cultures. Peale valued the presence of North American peoples within the American landscape and their potential to become American citizens, but he and others measured Native self-improvement exclusively as assimilation to Western lifeways. Subsequently, Peale denied traditional Native cultures any claim to Americanism within the museum exhibitionary. The result was a gradual shift in tonality toward Native existence from concurrent to obsolete. As the museum began to discount American Indians' agency as part of its audience, Peale's egalitarian pedagogy quick disintegrated after 1810, spurred by the inextricable declension narrative toward American Indians in Euro-American public culture.

Though the museum offered Peale a unique means to explore his personal notion of Americanism, his progressivism worked within the existing boundaries of contemporary museology and science. Peale's version of cultural tolerance is representative of views on American Indians in science and society during his time, as has been discussed in previous chapters. Just as Peale's Museum was an enactment of eighteenth and nineteenth century intellectualism, today's museums are similarly controlled by shared values.

By studying the constraints of Peale's era, it is possible to see the extent to which cultural acceptance existed in Peale's Museum. Such factors also reveal the potential for racial equality, if any, that existed in early American public culture. Such an analysis

serves to remind us that all museums at any point in time operate under and are restricted by inherent biases and social norms. Regardless of the curators' intent, it is impossible to escape a presentation of Othering in any attempt at multiculturalism. Though as museum professionals we aim for cultural sensitivity and understanding while encouraging pan-cultural self-identification, the difference between dominant and non-dominate cultures—whether traditional or contemporary—still drives the museum experience in Native exhibitionary. Regardless of intent, the placement of an alternative culture on display is still inherently a means to preserve that culture, and increasingly to create tolerance between alternative cultures. Categorization is paradoxically inescapable—in order to promote the tolerance of multiple cultures, their differences must be distinguished and reinforced as a result.

Peale believed he succeeded in promoting a peaceful cohabitation between Natives and Anglos in the best interest of both groups' survival, although we interpret Peale's museum displays as actively promoting the destruction of Native lifeways. His exhibitionary failed to cultivate cultural tolerance because he presented Western culture as being superior to Native. Today our prerogative for exhibiting American Indian culture in museums is different. Native people have an increasing voice in present-day cultural institutions and Native exhibitionary is progressively displayed in rhetoric of celebration rather than obsolescence. Nevertheless, Peale and contemporary institutions that consciously advocate for cultural tolerance are equally motivated by morals beliefs, although stemming from two different sets of social values.

Ethnographic displays in museums are essential tools for visitor education and may be a positive means to promote multicultural tolerance. The reinforcement of

cultural differences may showcase what makes a non-dominate culture unique and essential to a person or group's cultural identity. Therefore it is imperative for museum professionals to be aware of the inherent cultural biases that influence our interpretation of other cultures, whether we believe they are positive or negative. As "artists of civilization," we must always question from whence do we derive our authority to speak on behalf of humankind, and who it is that we expect our interpretation to benefit.

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APPENDIX A

IMAGES PERTAINING TO PEALE'S MUSEUM

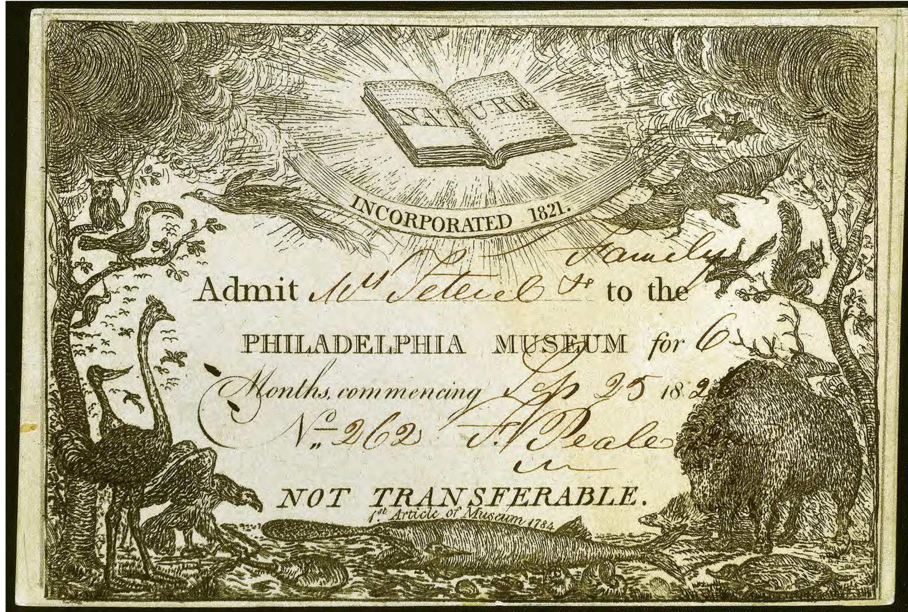

Figure 1 Admission Ticket to Peale's Museum (1822).

Figure 2 First museum at Peale's house at Third and Lombard (1786-1794). *The Old Museum* by Rubens Peale, 1858-60.

Figure 3 Philosophical Hall, second museum (1794-1802,-1811).

Figure 4 *State House*, third museum, back view facing the State House Yard, with a Native political delgation in foreground (1802-1838). By William Birch.

Figure 5 *State House*, third museum, front view along Chestnut Street (1802-1838). By William Birch.

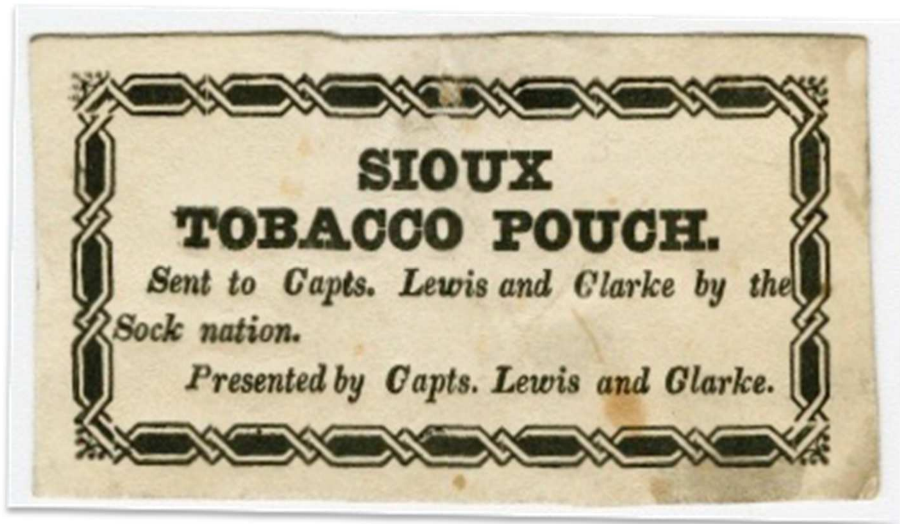

Figure 6 Label from the Baltimore Museum, possibly originated at the Philadelphia Museum.

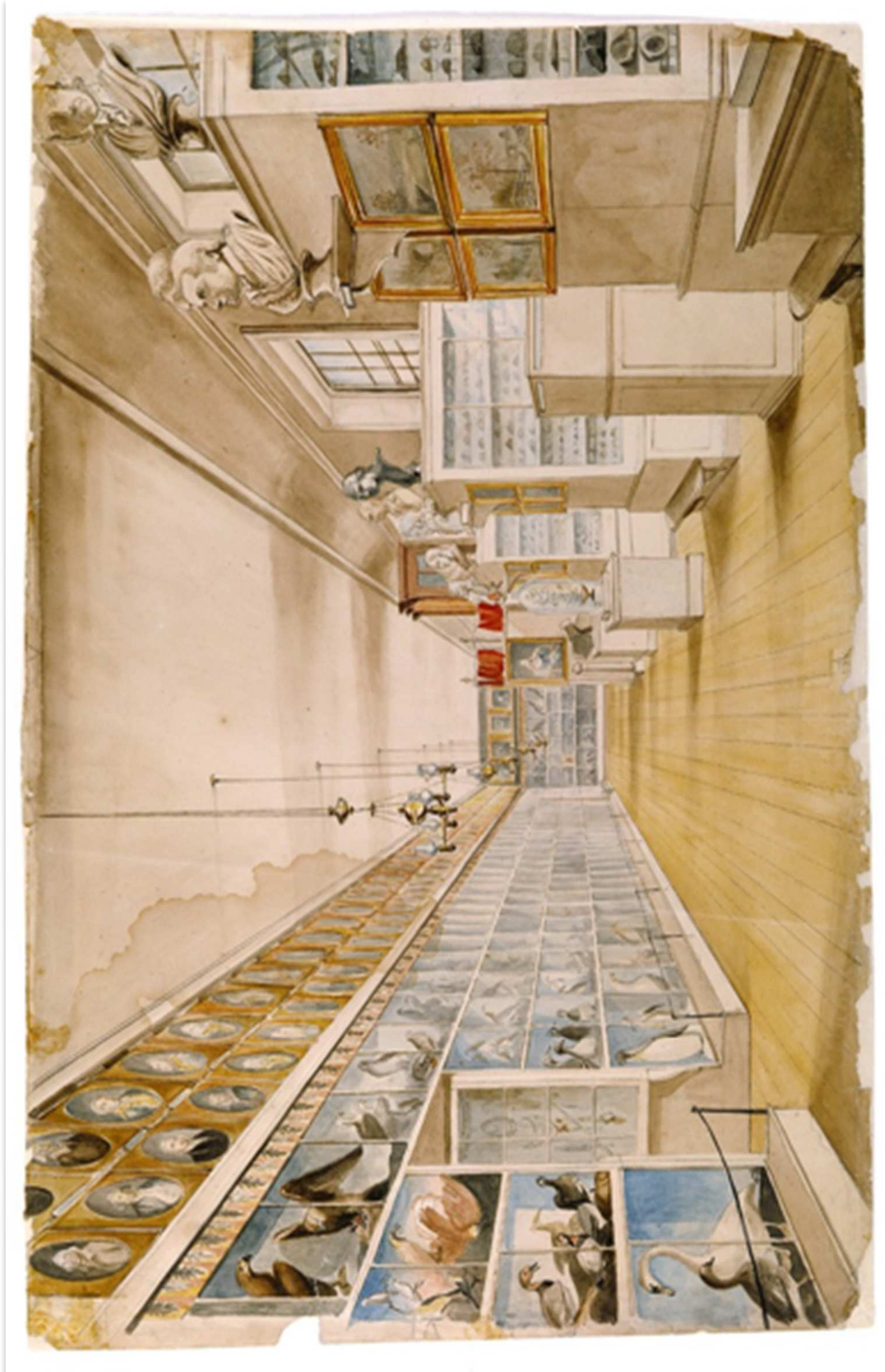

Figure 7 *The Long Room* by Charles W. and Titian R. Peale (1822). A view of the Long Room in the State House. American Indian artifacts were housed in the Back Room, where the door is in the left foreground.

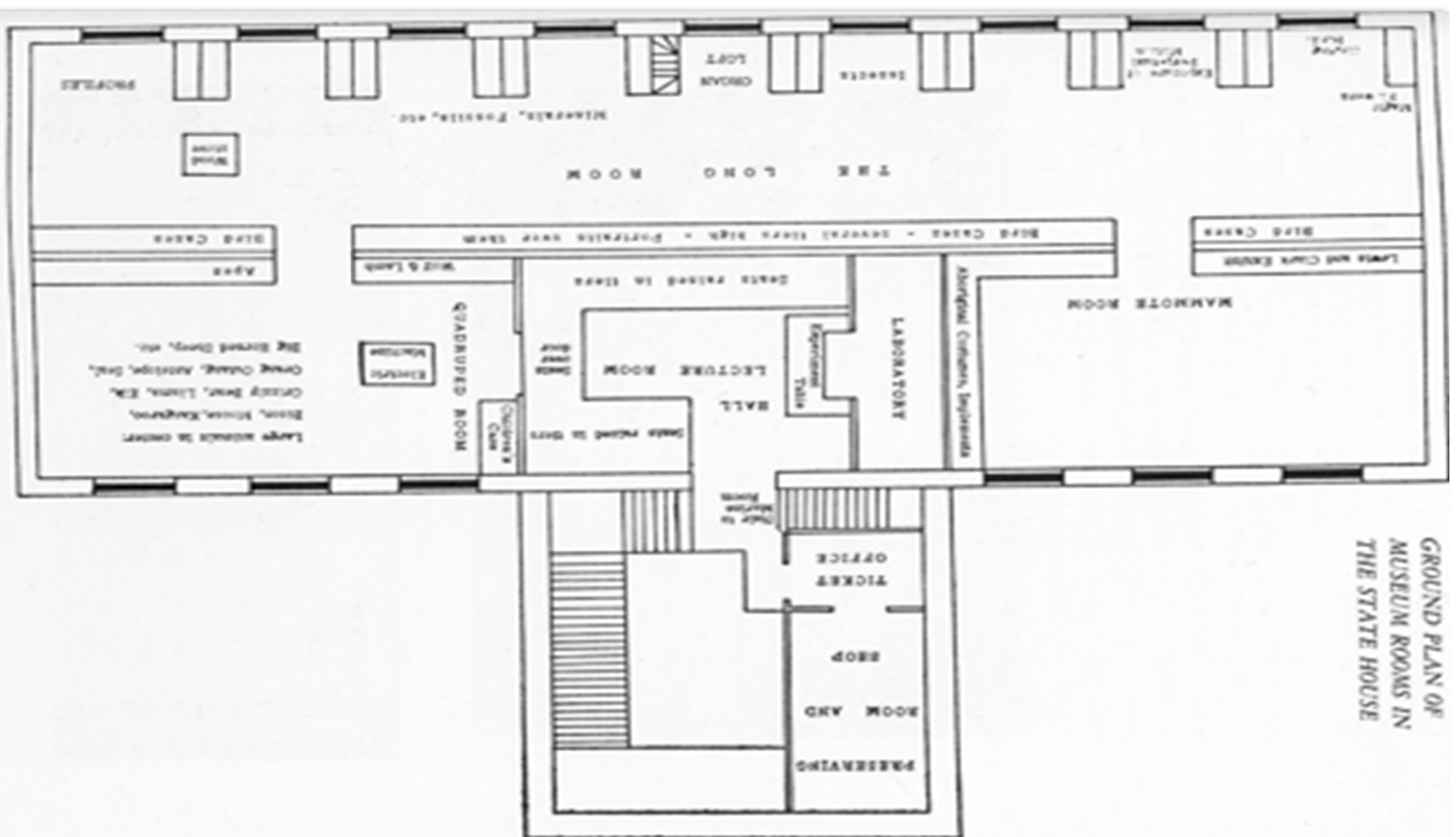

Figure 8 State House floor plan (1810-1828).
From Sellers, *Mr. Peale's Museum*.

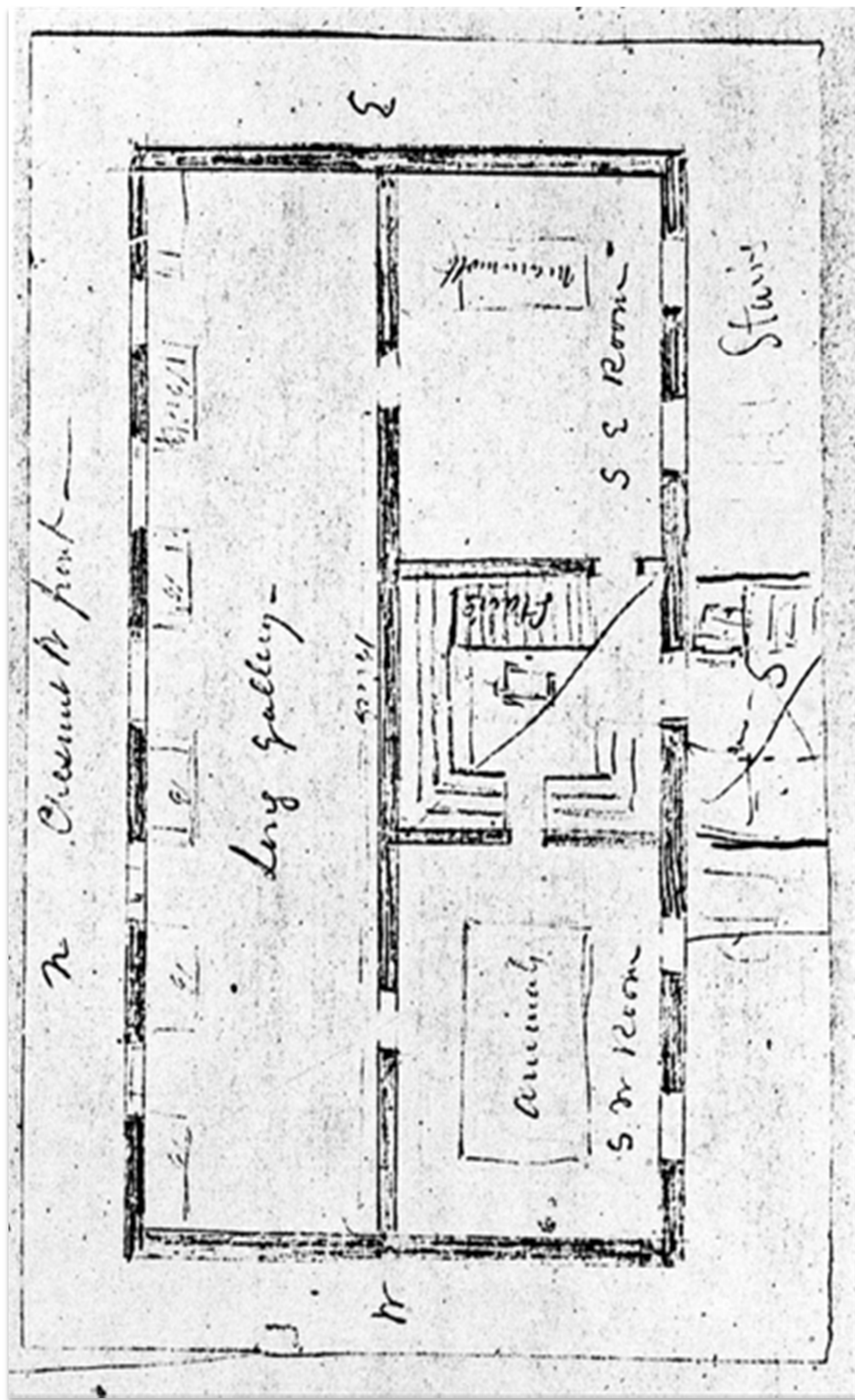

Figure 9 State House, floor plan 1810-1828.
In *Collected Papers*, XIA/16

Figure 11 *Captain Meriwether Lewis* by Charles B,J.F. Saint-Memlin (1807). Meriwether Lewis in Shoshone Tippet.

Figure 10 *Joseph Brant* by C.W. Peale (1797).