

# *Journeys West:*

The David & Peggy Rockefeller  
American Indian Art Collection



**ABBE MUSEUM**

Bar Harbor, Maine  
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June 15, 2008





Blackfoot Indian encampment near the Rockefeller campsite arranged by ranch owner and outfitter Harry Raiston. (Courtesy of the Rockefeller Archive Center)

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This exhibition builds on **Peter Furst's** excellent catalog, "American Indian Art and Paintings by Taos Artists: The David and Peggy Rockefeller Collection" (1988). In addition, curator **Bunny McBride** and exhibition designer **Betts Swanton** received invaluable assistance from the Rockefeller Archive Center's senior archivist **Michele Hiltzik**, especially in locating and reproducing a rich selection of photographs from the Rockefeller family's private albums. Also indispensable in bringing this exhibition to the public are members of David Rockefeller's immediate staff. Based in his New York City office, **Marnie Pillsbury** and **Marianna Brown** took care of an array of details and kept communication channels flowing. Special thanks to Mr. Rockefeller's art curator **Bertha Saunders** for tending to the conservation needs of paintings in this exhibition. **Doug Hopkins** in Seal Harbor helped track and pack objects featured in the exhibition. He worked in coordination with the Abbe Museum's Collection Manager, **Julia Clark**, who shouldered countless tasks, including permissions for all objects and images. Also of note is author-historian **Peter Johnson**, Mr. Rockefeller's long-time associate and friend, whose in-depth knowledge concerning Rockefeller family history greatly enriched the exhibition narrative. Beyond providing historical information and insight, Mr. Johnson oversaw the recording session that made it possible to include Mr. Rockefeller's voice in the exhibition. Our greatest debt of gratitude goes to **David Rockefeller** himself, who, with his late wife Peggy, cared for the collection after the passing of his parents – and has now graciously made it available to the public.



**ABBE MUSEUM**  
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## CURATOR'S ESSAY, Bunny McBride

*In San Ildefonso we met Maria Martinez, already recognized as the best potter in the region. We watched her form and fire her pots, and my parents purchased a number of them from her. I myself bought a small polychrome pot for which I believe I paid three dollars.*

(David Rockefeller)

It is a tiny pot – the smallest item in the collection. Yet, it holds the story of this exhibition. The story is about a pivotal period in American Indian history when artists, anthropologists, art patrons and tourists converged in the Southwest and transformed attitudes toward and possibilities for the creative endeavors of Native peoples.

The pot joined the Rockefeller American Indian art collection on June 11, 1926, the day before David Rockefeller's eleventh birthday. That day, he visited San Ildefonso Pueblo with his older brothers Winthrop and Laurance and their parents Abby and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. They traveled with anthropologist Kenneth Chapman, an expert on Pueblo pottery. Serving as curator at the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe, Chapman had recently founded the Indian Arts Fund as a means of purchasing Native art for the museum's collection. Well aware of Abby and J.D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s interest in the arts and philanthropy, and hoping for their patronage, he was eager for them to meet some of the better known Indian artists in the state, especially the potter Maria Martinez.

Several years earlier, commissioned by the museum, Maria and her husband Julian had successfully replicated the lost art of black-on-black pottery, modeled after pieces unearthed by archaeologists in the vicinity. At first, Maria was not fond of these recreations and did not openly display them among the polychrome pieces for which San Ildefonso was known. But when Chapman introduced her to Mr. Rockefeller, he told her, "Maria, go ahead and bring those nice pieces you have. This man has lots of money." Abby and John D. Rockefeller, Jr., bought several blackware pieces that day. But young David chose something more colorful – a boy-sized pot with red and black designs painted on a cream background.



Maria Martinez, San Ildefonso Pueblo, New Mexico, 1926. (Photo Laurance S. Rockefeller, courtesy of the Rockefeller Archive Center)

San Ildefonso was one of many stopovers in a two-month 1926 summer sojourn. And that sojourn was one of four extended train trips to the American West that John D. Rockefeller, Jr., took with his family from 1920 through 1930.

*We traveled in a private Pullman railway car... We left the car on sidings at various points along the way and visited national parks and other sites of interest by automobile. We completed a ten-thousand-mile circuit of the country in a period of two months.*

(David Rockefeller)

Beyond stopovers at Indian reservations, these Western trips included visits to archaeological sites and national parks. For the children, they provided hands-on history lessons about their country, its natural environment and its original inhabitants. For their father, the journeys inspired major contributions to extend parklands and to support research and education efforts concerning American Indians historically rooted in those lands. En route, he and his wife Abby, as well as the children, discovered the distinct beauty of American Indian art. Purchasing pieces directly from Native artists, as well as from the famous Fred Harvey Indian stores and through anthropologists associated with the artists, they built a sizable collection of pottery, weavings, baskets, sculptures, paintings and jewelry.



1926 journey West. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (2nd from right), and his sons Winthrop (3rd from right) and David (4th from right) with other members of the trip in Montana. (Photo Laurance S. Rockefeller, courtesy of the Rockefeller Archive Center)

The Rockefellers were among an ever growing number of people touring the West, drawn by the region's natural and archaeological wonders and by a fascination with the artistry and lifeways of American Indians who seemed less acculturated than those in the East. Tourism had become a national pastime, thanks to the comfort and expansive reach of the railway system. Train travel owed much of its popularity to English-born immigrant Fred Harvey who, in partnership with the Santa Fe Railway, had built Harvey House hotels, restaurants and retail shops alongside railway stations west of the Missouri River. Described as "tracksides palaces in the wilderness," his establishments were famous for first-class lodging, tables set with Irish linen and fine food served by well-groomed "Harvey Girl" waitresses.



Fred Harvey's Alvarado Hotel Indian Building main salesroom, Albuquerque, New Mexico. (Special Collection / University of Arizona Library/Fred Harvey Collection)

The most renowned Harvey Houses were in the Southwest, where fine American Indian art became the hallmark of Harvey stores. The company's Indian Department sent anthropologists and traders all across the region to find museum-quality Indian artworks for display and sale in the retail galleries of its flagship hotels – the Alvarado "Indian Building" in Albuquerque and the El Tovar "Hopi House" in the Grand Canyon. To pique buyer interest, Harvey hired Native potters and weavers to demonstrate their skills and offered bus and private automobile tours to Indian villages.

While Harvey stores thrived on the popular myth of the "Vanishing Indian," which urged clients to buy before it was too late, the School of American Research and the Museum of New Mexico promoted Native arts as the key to cultural survival. Housed in Santa Fe's historic Palace of the Governors, these sister institutions were committed to the preservation and endurance of Southwest Indian material culture through archaeological research and the careful collection of past and present works of Indian art. Both fell under the directorship of Edgar Lee Hewett, a robust and controversial archaeologist known as "El Toro." Hewett and the museum's curator, Kenneth Chapman, worked closely with Native artists, such as Fred Kabotie, Awa Tsireh, Ma-pe-wi and Tonita Peña – collecting and exhibiting their work and providing them with studio space in the Palace. In 1922, aiming to educate the public and build fair market possibilities for Indian artists, the school and the museum sponsored the first Southwest Indian Fair, forerunner of today's famous annual Santa Fe Indian Market.

The efforts of Hewett, Chapman and other anthropologists in the region helped inspire the founding of the Eastern Association on Indian Affairs (EAIA), comprised primarily of East Coast anthropologists, artists and wealthy socialites who shared an interest in the art and cultural survival of Indians in New Mexico. They were social activists and taste-makers intent on educating the public about American Indian culture and art and simultaneously improving the social and economic conditions in Native communities by preserving and promoting their artistic traditions. Many EAIA members visited New Mexico frequently and some lived there part of the year.

***Mother was an enthusiastic supporter of a traveling exhibition of American Indian art in 1931. I believe this was the first time that the creative efforts of Indians were exhibited in this country as works of art rather than as anthropological artifacts.***

(David Rockefeller)

For Abby Aldrich Rockefeller and other art patrons involved in the EAIA, collecting American Indian art was part of a movement to advance a uniquely "American" art and to transform mainstream society's concept of art to include creative works by indigenous artisans previously relegated to natural history museums. Toward this end, they helped organize the landmark 1931 Exposition of Indian Tribal Arts, a public call to give Indian artists "the recognition that is their due as creators of beauty." After opening in New York City, this exhibition of 650 works representing some eighty Eastern and Western tribes, traveled to major cities across the country. The driving force behind the show was newspaper heiress Amelia Elizabeth White, a serious collector of ethnographic literature and Native art, and a powerful advocate of Indian rights. Abby Rockefeller served on the Exposition board, along with other art patrons and well-known artists and anthropologists such as John Sloan, F.W. Hodge, Oliver La Farge and H.J. Spinden. Additionally, she and her husband were the major financial contributors and loaned several artworks for the exhibition, including a painting by Tonita Peña whose work won best of show.

For Native artists, the Exposition was a turning point toward more prestigious and profitable markets for their work. It cost them a measure of autonomy, but in the words of Penobscot performing artist Lucy Nicolar ("Princess Watahwaso"), it answered their own call for "dignified opportunities for artistic expression."



*Fighting Buffaloes* by Blackfoot Indian artist John L. Clarke. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., purchased this piece from Clarke at his studio in 1924.

In 1974, David Rockefeller spontaneously gave away the tiny pot he bought from Maria Martinez when he was a boy. He gave it to his friend Robert Binnewies, who had served as Acadia National Park's chief ranger in the late 1960s and worked closely with Peggy Rockefeller in founding the Maine Coast Heritage Trust. That year Robert and his wife Midge traveled to New Mexico with Peggy and David. "We stopped at San Ildefonso," Robert recalls, "and David reminisced with Maria. He mentioned buying the pot from her and asked if she remembered. She did."

## Artworks in the Exhibition

Unless otherwise indicated, all artworks are from  
The David & Peggy Rockefeller Collection of American Indian Art

### Late Classic Wearing Blanket Navajo, c1870-75

Mixed commercial and raveled wool yarns, including Saxony and bayeta, indigo, cochineal, and aniline dyes  
50 x 29 1/2 in.

### Late Classic Wearing Blanket Navajo, c1870-75

Mixed commercial and raveled wool yarns, including Saxony and bayeta, and indigo, cochineal, and aniline dyes  
51 x 32 in.

### Terraced-style Late Classic Phase III Chief's Blanket (Sarape)

Navajo, c1875-85  
Black, white, brown, indigo-blue, and red bayeta yarns  
57 x 45 in.

### Polacca Polychrome Handled Bowl

Hopi, c1880-1900  
7 in. diameter  
Gift of Mr. & Mrs. David Rockefeller, on loan from The Museum of Indian Arts & Culture/Laboratory of Anthropology, Museum of New Mexico (46520/12)

**Concha belt**  
Navajo, c1900-1924  
Wrought silver on leather  
40 1/4 x 3 1/2 in.

**Concha belt**  
Navajo, c1900-1924  
Wrought silver on leather  
42 x 3 in.

**Concha belt**  
Navajo, c1900-1924  
Wrought silver on leather  
41 1/2 x 3 1/4 in.

**Concha belt**  
Navajo, c1900-1924  
Wrought silver on leather  
39 1/4 x 3 1/2 in.

**Concha belt**  
Navajo, c1930-1940  
Wrought silver on leather  
36 x 3 1/2 in.  
Collection of Eileen R. Growald



### Fighting Buffaloes

John Louis Clarke (1881-1970)  
Blackfeet, c1924  
Cottonwood  
11 x 19 x 11 in.

### Squash Blossom Necklace

Navajo, c1935-1940  
Sterling silver and turquoise  
32 1/2 in. long  
On loan from Abby A. Rockefeller



Navajo Late Classic Wearing Blanket, 1870-75. Purchased by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 1926.

**Vase**  
Maria Martinez (1887-1980)  
San Ildefonso Pueblo,  
New Mexico, c1926  
12 1/2 in. tall, 10 in. diameter

**Jar**  
Maria Martinez (1887-1980)  
San Ildefonso Pueblo,  
New Mexico, c1926  
12 1/2 in. tall, 9 in. diameter

**Jar**  
Maria Martinez (1887-1980)  
San Ildefonso Pueblo,  
New Mexico, c1926  
8 1/2 in. tall, 8 in. diameter

**Sacred Meal Bowl**  
Maria Martinez (1887-1980)  
San Ildefonso Pueblo,  
New Mexico, c1925  
5 in. tall, 10 in. diameter

**Salt Storage Jar**  
Papago, c1900  
Yucca, bear grass, and ocotillo  
17 in. high, 20 in. diameter

Navajo Concha belt, c1900-1924.  
Purchased by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., c1924.

**Feathering Arrows**  
Joseph H. Sharp (1859-1953)  
Oil on canvas, c1926  
14 x 17 in.

**Flat Woven Wallet**  
Nez Percé, c1890-1910  
Twined corn husk, Indian hemp,  
dyed bear grass, worsted wool  
yarn, cotton drawstring  
25 x 16 1/2 x 4 1/2 in.

**Flat Woven Wallet**  
Nez Percé, c1890-1910  
Twined corn husk, Indian hemp,  
dyed grass, worsted wool yarn,  
tanned deer-hide drawstring  
21 x 14 1/2 x 3 1/2 in.

**Flat Woven Wallet**  
Nez Percé, c1890-1910  
Twined corn husk, Indian hemp,  
dyed grass, worsted wool yarn,  
tanned deer-hide drawstring  
20 x 14 x 3 in.

**Flat Woven Wallet**  
Nez Percé, c1890-1910  
Twined corn husk, Indian hemp,  
dyed grass, worsted wool yarn,  
deer-hide drawstring  
23 x 18 x 4 in.

**Coiled Basketry Jar**  
Lina Manakaja Chikapanega  
Iditicava (1893-1968)  
Havasupai, 1924  
Willow, catclaw, and devil's claw  
6 in. high, 8 in. diameter

**Kachina Dancer**  
José Rey Toledo, (1915-1994)  
Jemez Pueblo, New Mexico,  
c1934  
Tempera on paper  
18 x 12 in.

**Kachina Figure,  
probably Ma'alo  
(Rainbow Stick Man Kachina)**

Hopi, c1900  
Cottonwood root with  
water-based paint  
12 x 5 in.

**Kachina Figure,  
probably Tuskiapaya  
(Crazy Rattle Kachina)**

Hopi, c1900  
Cottonwood root with  
water-based paint  
13 x 6 in.

**Kachina Figure, Tsitoto  
(Flower Kachina)**

Hopi, c1900  
Cottonwood root with  
water-based paint  
11 x 4 in.

**Kachina Figure, Tasap  
(Navajo Kachina)**

Hopi, c1900  
Cottonwood root with  
water-based paint  
12 x 5 1/2 in.

**Standing Bear**

John Louis Clarke (1881-1970)  
Blackfeet, c1924  
Cottonwood  
26 x 16 x 13 in.

**Quill-embroidered Cuffs  
with Tipi Design**

Dakota (Sioux), c1880-90  
Dyed porcupine quill,  
deer hide and gingham  
trade-cloth backing  
22 x 6 in

**Women's Saddlebags**

Dakota (Sioux), c1875-85  
Tanned hide, lazy-stitch  
beadwork embroidery,  
sinew and tin cones with  
tufts of dyed red horsehair  
20 x 12 in.



Polychrome pottery, Maria Martinez,  
The first piece of American Indian art  
purchased by David Rockefeller, c1926.

**Polychrome Pot**

Maria Martinez (1887-1980)  
San Ildefonso Pueblo, New  
Mexico, c1926  
3 in. tall, 4 in. diameter  
On Loan from  
Robert & Midge Binnewies

**Pipe Bag**

Dakota (Sioux), c1875-1900  
Tanned sinew-sewn  
buckskin, lazy-stitch beadwork,  
buckskin fringe, and split and  
dyed porcupine quills  
30 x 8 in.

**Pipe**

Dakota (Sioux), c1875-1900  
Red pipestone (catlinite) bowl;  
ash stem  
29 x 1 1/2 x 4 1/2 in.

**Smoking Pipe**

Eanger Irving Couse  
(1866-1936)  
Oil on canvas, not dated  
24 x 29 1/4 in.

**Deer**

Awa Tsireh (Alfonso Roybal),  
(1895-1955)  
San Ildefonso Pueblo, c1930  
Watercolor on paper  
11 x 14 in.

**Buffalo Hunt**

Ma-Pe-Wi (Velino Shije Herrera),  
(1902-1973)  
Zia Pueblo  
Watercolor on paper, not dated  
18 1/4 x 25 3/4 in.

**Dancing Lesson**

Ma-Pe-Wi (Velino Shije Herrera),  
(1902-1973)  
Zia Pueblo  
Watercolor on paper, not dated  
10 1/2 x 15 in.

**Ceremonial Dance: Buffalo  
Dance & Chorus**

Tonita Peña (Quah-Ah),  
(1895-1949)  
Watercolor on paper  
San Ildefonso Pueblo, c1930  
14 1/2 x 21 1/2 in.



Western Apache Basketry Storage Jar.  
Purchased from Fred Harvey, Grand  
Canyon National Park, by John D.  
Rockefeller, Jr., 1924.

**Basketry Storage Jar**

Western Apache (White  
Mountain or San Carlos),  
c1910-25  
Willow, catclaw, and  
devil's claw dye  
19 in. high, 20 in. diameter

**John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s Trip  
Logs from three Western trips,  
1920, 1924 and 1926**

On loan from the Rockefeller  
Archive Center



Dakota (Sioux) paired saddlebags, 1875-85. Purchased in 1924 by  
John D. Rockefeller, Jr., at Glacier Park Hotel.

**David Rockefeller's  
Scrapbook from the  
1926 Trip West**

On loan from David  
Rockefeller and the  
Rockefeller Archive  
Center

**Catalog of the 1931  
Exposition of Indian  
Tribal Arts, New York**

Collection of the  
Abbe Museum