THE LAND HAS MEMORY

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE, NATIVE LANDSCAPES, and the NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

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Foreword

Like all mothers, Mother Earth is the ultimate giver. She reveals her beauty in countless variations, from wetlands and meadows to rain forests and deserts. Like any good mother, she does many things at the same time and does them all well. She nurtures us with food crops, heals us with medicinal plants, and sustains us with other natural resources. She teaches us how we should live our lives — don’t take more than you need, she chides. And like all parents, she shapes her children’s lives and their ways of looking at the world in profound ways. When we learn that one of our brothers or sisters — Native or not — is from Texas or Alaska or rural Brazil, we then know something about who that person is and how he or she sees the world. So, just as each generation makes its mark on the land, the land inevitably makes its mark on us.

This is Indian thinking. There are many differences between traditional Native philosophies about the natural world and the Western paradigm that has dominated much of recent life in the Americas. Despite its ancient history, the American landscape has come to be seen, over the last several centuries, primarily as the object of Manifest Destiny and a mere backdrop for American civilization. Both of these ideas seem based on the assumption — completely at odds with Indian thinking — that the land is a passive commodity, a thing that gives only if we conquer it, a thing we can own and exploit to fullest advantage. More recently, though, a growing concern is being voiced about the state of our world. A global ecological movement is building that seeks to respect, honor, and preserve the
health and beauty of our planet. These progressive ideas are in response to cutting-edge scientific research, but they reflect the ancient and deeply held Indian concept that the Earth herself is a living being, sentient and self-aware. Native and non-Native peoples have come to share a concern that our Mother is growing ill and that we must now tend to her with the care and love that she has always shown for us. Through performances, films, and lectures held at the Mall Museum and the George Gustav Hoyt Center, the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) has begun to address global warming and the environment, inaugurating our long-term commitment to participating in this crucial and complex dialogue.

As a window into contemporary Native thinking about the land in general, and the Mall Museum landscape in particular, this book offers a wealth of insights. It also rights a number of misconceptions. Like many things about Indian peoples, our relationships with the natural world have often been oversimplified and romanticized. While we certainly experience very deep connections to our homelands, the image of the innocent primitive frolicking in an unblemished landscape is truly at odds with the reality of countless generations of people who developed sophisticated land-management and agricultural techniques, from the controlled burnings of the North American prairies to ensure better grazing for the herds

Navajo family harvesting crops, New Mexico, ca. 1972, 229281

of buffalo, to the careful way we harvest sassafras, to the interplanting of corn, beans, and squash. Any Hopi farmer will tell you that corn doesn't just spring from the dry red earth of Arizona, even though it has grown there for thousands of years. It is the result of Native ingenuity, experimentation, and learning about how we should treat the Earth to best experience her bounty.

The following essays work together to provide a most extraordinary map. They decode physical space, bringing to the printed page significant details that otherwise lie hidden in the water, trees, rocks, and plants sur-
rounding NMAI's Mall Museum. In a larger sense, they are also an atlas to the hearts and minds of a number of contemporary Native people as they construct and deconstruct ideas about their personal relationships to the physical world and to the lands that sustained their ancestors for generations before them. They offer an invitation to see the Mall Museum grounds through the distinctly Indian perspectives from which they were born. To view the landscape through Indian eyes can mean many things. The plantings surrounding the Mall Museum might be seen as a source of medicine and food or as a backdrop for meditation and respite from the city. They could offer a colorful palette that becomes an abstract painting or a piece of beadwork art, or they could provide a setting for remembering the ancestors who came before us.

In the context of the formal geometry of the National Mall, with its carefully tended gardens and uniform rows of trees, we have designed a very different museum site — one that reflects Indian sensibilities. After creating this space in the most culturally careful way we could, we are allowing the landscape, designed to look natural, to become natural once again. Several years into this process, ducks and foxes are our regular visitors. Hardy indigenous plants, happy to be home again, spread and thrive. To our delight, a barren cypress trunk placed in the middle of the museum's wetlands area has sprouted a new sapling, a magical and humbling example not only of Mother Earth's mysterious generative powers but also of her delightful sense of humor. On lands that have been home to the Chesapeake Bay peoples for thousands of years, a new generation of Native Americans has made its mark on a small corner of our nation's capital. And, true to form, this remarkable site makes its mark on us as well.

— KEVIN GOVER ( Pawnee/Comanche)  
Director, National Museum of the American Indian

opposite: NMAI's northwest entrance and water feature.
REMEMBERING THE EXPERIENCE OF PAST GENERATIONS

JOHNPAUL JONES

There is no place without a story. Every plant, every animal, every rock and flowing spring carries a message. Native peoples of the Americas learned over thousands of years to listen to the messages, and we know every habitat. We know the earth; we know the sky; we know the wind; we know the rain; we know the smells. We know the spirit of each living place. The spirit of place is embedded deeply within us; we are connected to something larger than ourselves.

In 1993, I joined forces with Donna House (Diné/Oneida), Ramona Sakiestewa (Hopi), and Douglas Cardinal (Blackfoot) to assist in the design phase of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). Through consultations with hundreds of Native elders, artists, educators, and other professionals spanning the entire Western Hemisphere, we attempted to create a building and surrounding habitat that would be imbued with the messages of past generations and the essential spirit of place. We wanted to convey among other things the deep history of Native people here in the area now known as Washington, D.C., and throughout North and South America. We wanted to announce our continued presence: we are still here, even though governments have tried repeatedly to eliminate us. We still practice what our ancestors passed on to us, and our beliefs and traditions live.

It was our firm conviction that we should not simply come and build
on the land. We needed to speak to the land first and explain our intentions, promise to use it wisely, and not deviate from that promise. We had to make a pact with the living site, giving it new purpose. We had to ask the earth not to be angry if we dug or removed the soil, and we had to thank it for its sacrifice. In keeping with these convictions, a group of elders walked the site before construction began. They prayed and talked among themselves and found the land’s center. Without taking measurements or knowing anything about setbacks or building restrictions, they chose a spot that allowed the maximum use of the ground. The spot also marks the intersection of the site’s north-south and east-west access lines.

Today, the stone at the heart of the circular floor in the Potomac, the museum’s beautiful rotunda, sits at that uniquely identified center point.

Native peoples have an extraordinary relationship with the land and the world around them that stems from the broadest sense of kinship with all life. They possess systems of beliefs that are complex yet straightforward, passed down for generations. My personal beliefs are a gift given to me by my grandmother, taught to her by our Choctaw and Cherokee ancestors.

a way of life revolving around the four worlds of my heritage. An understanding of these four worlds — the natural world, the animal world, the spirit world, and the human world — connects and inspires indigenous people across the Americas while allowing them to have distinct cultures with diverse customs and perspectives. As the NMAT design team contemplated our goals for the museum, we sought to ensure that these four worlds were represented in a very pronounced way, so that from the moment visitors step onto the site, they feel they are in a different place, an American Indian place.

To American Indians, the natural world is distinguished by its cycles, with the seasons of the earth governing all living things. Native communities hold ceremonies to mark each season and give thanks for what the earth has provided. From ancient times, indigenous people have rec
ognized connections between the celestial world and the cycles of the earth, erecting structures that refer to seasonal solstices and equinoxes and using the moon as a guide for planting and for performing rituals. This sophisticated knowledge of the heavens and how things happen in the universe was something we wanted to make evident in the design of the museum and its landscape.

One day as we met to discuss the building’s progress, Donna House asked me to stand with her next to a window. As sunlight poured in through the glass, she placed her closed hand in the light and then opened it so that the crystals she was holding made a rainbow pattern on the ceiling and walls beside us. It was her inspired design concept that led to the magnificent prism window mounted in the south wall of the Potomac.

Eight large prisms, each turned to the sun for a particular time of day and season, cast a brilliant solar spectrum onto the floor and walls, blessing all those who pass.

At the center of the Potomac floor, the four cardinal directions and the axes of the solstices and equinoxes are mapped out in rings of red and black granite. The cardinal directions also appear repeatedly outside the museum, notably in the four flat paving stones at the center of the Welcome Plaza and at the edges of the museum site in four stones from Canada, Chile, Maryland, and Hawai‘i. Forty additional boulders known as Grandfather Rocks, the elders of the landscape, surround the building. They hold the memories of those who came before us and give welcome to visitors.

Fire and water, also fundamental elements of the natural world, are represented in the museum habitat. On the north side of the building, nestled between the wetlands and hardwood forest, a fire pit was constructed for use in honoring and blessing ceremonies. It would not be a Native place without fire and smoke! At the Northwest Plaza, a waterfall grows out of the building’s face, seeping between layers of stone. It is a reminder of Tiber Creek, which flowed through this place at another time in history. The land has memory.
Native cultures have always had profound relationships with the animal world. Many Native cultures believe that animals are sacred because they have powerful souls; they carry spiritual messages and can possess healing powers. Individual tribes embrace their connection to the earth and all of its inhabitants by honoring the animal life that sustains and informs them. In their crests, the Tsimshian people of the Pacific Northwest pay homage to their animal brothers the Raven, Eagle, Wolf, and Killerwhale. The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) consider the earth to be a living being, the Great Turtle, with all life riding on her back. We remembered the animal world as we approached the design of the museum, and we wanted to share with visitors our belief in the interconnectedness of all life. To create a wild home for animals on the National Mall, we fashioned wetlands at the eastern end of the site. We envisioned a place where frogs would sing in the springtime, where birds and butterflies would rest, and where trees would remind us of the four seasons of life. Wild rice plants and plentiful nesting spots have brought flocks of mallard ducks to the wetlands habitat. Herons have been seen feeding there, and even an errant fox has come to investigate a landscape that his ancestors would have recognized. In the warmer months, the large building overhang at the Welcome Plaza forms a natural sound amphitheater that resonates with the songs of the abundant animal life in residence.

In the Native worldview, everything is alive, endowed with spirit or energy. Nature has something to teach us, not only through obviously animate things like plants and animals but also through rocks, mountains, rivers, and places large and small. These are all part of our spirit world. Sacred sites, etched in tribal memory, are prized for the forces that abide there and keep things in order and in motion. Native sacred spaces include places of healing, such as springs and waterfalls; places where medicinal plants or special animals may be found; places for celestial observation; and places for dreaming, visioning, and listening to the land. These are the features we undertook to include in the museum and its landscape. The deep significance of sacred sites is present in the Northwest Plaza waterfall, the sound of which echoes off the powerful exposed boulders. The organic pattern of the stone walkways, which recall the bed of a flowing stream, also reminds us of the importance of sacred lands. The nurturing gifts of our land are present in the sunflower, the witchhazel, and the sassafras—plants long recognized for their healing properties—scattered throughout the hardwood forest and croplands of the museum site.

In the early days of the design process, the team traveled across the Americas to hear suggestions from Indian people about how to infuse this new Native place with the spirit of our ancestors and the diverse spiritual traditions of our tribal communities. For example, while few Native American structures have anything close to a dome, many have an open...
ing at the top to release smoke and allow access to spirits. The dome we created soars 120 feet over the main floor and features an oculus or circular skylight — a symbolic passegeway for spirits to come and go. The Potomac is the heart of the museum, a space to celebrate the rituals, songs, and dances that keep the Native spirits of the hemisphere alive.

Indian people have often seen museums as dead places that represent Native cultures as relics of some distant past. But the National Museum of the American Indian strives to be a living museum dedicated to transferring knowledge according to ancient traditions, through oral histories, storytelling, performances, and exhibits presented in distinctly Native voices. This is the human world, and it is central to the museum’s mission. Grandmothers and grandfathers give us words. Community elders are our first teachers, sharing stories, guiding us, and connecting us to our ancestors and our past. Then one day it becomes our turn to have children all around us, hungering for stories. In the Outdoor Theater, encircled by a flowing waterway, presentations, dances, and musical performances celebrate the power of Native language and knowledge. In this place live the humor, hospitality, prayers, and dreams of our ancestors. We hope that in the future, the landscape will continue to provide a living “stage” for cooking displays; ceremonies involving fire, water, and plant materials; and traditional harvesting demonstrations. Without the ingenuity of Native peoples, we would not have corn chips, guacamole, tomato sauce, or French fries!

The National Museum of the American Indian is a celebration of indigenous peoples’ deep appreciation and understanding of the natural, animal, spirit, and human worlds. There is no division between the building and grounds, and the museum itself is centered on that which is common to Indian communities everywhere. It is a place where our beliefs have not been left out, where our ancestors’ lessons can be heard. It is a place that marks the other side of an arduous journey of survival. At long last we have an honored place in Washington, D.C., a Native place to tell our stories and celebrate our cultures.

8 Introduction
HONORING OUR HOSTS

DUANE BLUE SPRUCE

For Native people, the process of creating something—a meal, a basket, an article of clothing, a dance, a song—is as important as that which is being created. Pueblo people demonstrate this belief in their daily lives, whether they are making loaves of oven bread or hand-coiled clay pots. To make ceremonial or everyday pots and bowls, for example, Pueblo women work together on the arduous task of gathering clay from riverbeds and wooded areas and watch their elders to learn which plants to collect for the pigment. They sing songs taught to them by their families, giving thanks for the bounty and honoring the removal of earth and plant life from the ground. Each task is equally important and must be undertaken in the right frame of mind since negative thoughts could destroy a pot while it is being fired. Likewise, in envisioning and developing the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., as a truly Native place, everyone who participated treated each step in the process as a significant creative act in itself, guided by a collaborative spirit and following Native protocol throughout the planning and implementation of the project.

Paradoxically, one of the first steps in creating the museum’s lush landscape took place during four days of bitter cold in January 1995, when the museum site was frozen and covered in snow. A vision session had been organized with about two dozen elders, leaders, educators, and artists...
CARDINAL DIRECTION MARKERS
BRINGING THE FOUR DIRECTIONS TO NMAI

JAMES PEPPER HENRY & KRISTINE BRUMLEY

Nearly every culture on earth has a concept of the cardinal directions: north, east, south, and west. A basic means of establishing geographic orientation, they are known as the Four Directions to many indigenous peoples throughout the Americas and are represented in ceremony, art, clothing, and architecture.

The Four Directions have greater significance beyond their practical function. They are imbued with metaphor and supernatural powers that relate to our existence as human beings. Many Native peoples associate colors, seasons, and animals with the Four Directions, associations that form the basis of an indigenous philosophy known as the Medicine Wheel. Each direction of the Medicine Wheel has a specific meaning that varies from community to community. For example, some Native people believe that north corresponds to the color white, suggesting the winter season and its qualities of cleansing, endurance, and wisdom. Some Plains tribes associate the sacred animals White Eagle and White Buffalo with the north. East is often connected to the color red—the spring season and the rising sun, representing peace, light, and new life. The revered Spotted Eagle is often associated with the east. For some Native communities, south corresponds to the color yellow and the summer season, representing warmth, understanding, and humility. The Golden Eagle and Coyote are sacred animals often associated with the south. Many Native
people connect west to the color black, the fall season, and the setting sun, representing finality and introspection. The Bald Eagle and Bear are often associated with the west. Some believe that the Four Directions also equate to the four stages of human life (birth, youth, adulthood, and old age).

The confluence of the Four Directions is the center point, which represents balance. Many indigenous religious beliefs and practices encourage human beings to find balance in life with regard to the lessons of the Four Directions. If there is too much emphasis on one direction or another, it is believed, a person risks shifting his or her life out of balance.

The theme of cardinal directions is one that resonates with many who visit the National Museum of the American Indian. The museum’s planners agreed that four special stones would be placed at the four exterior cardinal points of the museum landscape to physically represent the cardinal directions. These stones would “anchor” the museum to the site, creating balance and representing Native people from the four directions of the Americas.

Originally the strategy was to acquire four large boulders from within the contiguous United States, but this idea was eventually expanded to include the entire Western Hemisphere and Hawai‘i. A team of Smithsonian staff established the criteria for the selection of the Cardinal Direction Markers: the four stones had to be selected by Native communities, ensuring respect for the cultural authority of indigenous peoples while maintaining the stones’ integrity; and the acquisition process needed to avoid altering the land from which the stones originated. As with the placement of the museum’s Grandfather Rocks, each marker stone’s original orientation in the landscape would be recorded so that it could be approximated in its new home.

Team member Tim Rose, Smithsonian mineral sciences geologist, suggested using stones from different epochs in the earth’s geological life cycle as a metaphor for the human life cycle. This approach was consistent with the concept of the four stages of life and helped to narrow down potential sources of stone and their corresponding Native communities. Finally, the team considered diversity in the composition of each stone.

A brief geological survey of the hemisphere yielded four potential sources of stone that met the criteria of cultural relevance, geographic variety, and geological diversity: Northwest Territories, Canada (northern marker); Monocacy Valley, Maryland (eastern marker); Isla Navarino, Tierra del Fuego, Chile (southern marker); and Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park, Hawai‘i (western marker). The team spent several months securing permission to travel to these locations and develop partnerships with the communities for the acquisition of the stones.

It was critical for the team to understand cultural perspectives when approaching Native communities. They took special care to avoid acquiring any stone with possible historical or archaeological significance or with specific ceremonial associations. They also sought to preserve each stone in its natural condition. One important cultural perspective
that the team addressed was concern about the "void" left behind by the stones removed. A piece of Kasota limestone, the same stone of which the museum is constructed, was given to each participating community in a symbolic exchange.

The oldest known deposit of stone on earth is found on a peninsula of Acasta Lake in Northwest Territories, Canada. The stone, known as Acasta gneiss, is approximately 4 billion years old (Proterozoic era) and represents the planet in its youth. With the help of the Canadian government, the team identified the Tlicho (Dogrib) community of Behchoko to sponsor the selection of a northern marker from this deposit. They had recently signed a treaty with the Canadian government giving them territorial rights to the area encompassing Acasta Lake.

The team worked closely with the Tlicho community, mineral rights holder Jack Walker, several Canadian-based organizations, and the Canadian Embassy in the process of identifying, selecting, and extracting the stone from Acasta Lake. To make the final stone selection, the NMAI team traveled to Acasta Lake by floatplane with a small delegation, including Jon B. Zos, the chief negotiator for the Tlicho Treaty 11 Council, and Henri Simpson, a Tlicho elder. Using only tape measures and on-the-spot calculations, the scientists accompanying the group had to approximate the weight of various stones to identify those that could be carried by helicopter. Zos made the final choice, a stone weighing approximately 1,600 pounds, and Simpson performed a ceremony in honor of the stone's selection. The stone was airlifted to the city of Yellowknife, where it was loaded onto a flatbed truck and driven to its new home.

In late January 2004, the Smithsonian team traveled to Tierra del Fuego in southern Chile to ask for the participation of the Yagán, the southernmost indigenous community in the world, in the selection of the southern marker. The team journeyed to Bahia Mejillones (Mussel Bay), the ancestral land of the Yagán, where the community selected a large boulder sitting on a grassy slope overlooking the water, facing northward across the bay to Argentina. The stone was estimated to be from the Cretaceous
Preparing the Plants

“You should go outside and feel the grass under your feet, play in the dirt, go swim in the river. This will take care of anything that ails you.” When I was eight years old, this was the advice my aunt offered as a cure for the restlessness and boredom of long summer days. I sought shade at the base of an oak tree whose unearthed roots formed a cradlelike seat around me and dug my toes deep into the cool, rich Robeson County soil. My mother, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, and neighbors had all worked this farmland of eastern North Carolina, cropping tobacco and baling cotton. At the time, I did not understand the importance of the soil, nor my family’s respect for our land, the nearby river, and the plants that appeared year after year, seemingly without effort.

Thousands of plants such as cotton and tobacco have sustained Native communities in countless ways — economic, social, medicinal, nutritional, cultural, and recreational. Until recently, tobacco and cotton were the primary cash crops for many Lumbee people. A cotton or tobacco crop determined whether a family’s year would be one of feast or famine. Entire families and their neighbors worked together to “crop” tobacco or “bring in” cotton during harvest time, rotating to each farm to finish in time to go to market. This type of community support over generations built lasting bonds that still prove invaluable. Although the Lumbee are no longer primarily agrarian, we still honor those family relationships and commitments, supporting one another in community and business collaborations.

When the design plans were released for the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in the early 1990s, many in our community were particularly curious about the landscape. I imagined it would be a formal, manicured setting of flowers, trees, and sidewalks, much like the rest of the National Mall. Luckily, I was one of the first in the community to learn otherwise. One day while at work at the Metroina Native
Donna House concluded the ceremony, offering a blessing with blue cornmeal from her home in New Mexico. With a joyful smile, she tossed the cornmeal over the plants and each of us. I remember noticing that the water and cornmeal had made a "batter" on the nursery employees' shirts and in their hair. That was a great sign — the prayers had stuck!

Today, these Native plants are a vibrant life source for the museum's magnificent place in our nation's capital. The plants blessed in North Carolina soon joined varieties from two other nurseries in Pennsylvania and Connecticut. In each location, the seeds and young plants had been prepared for their journey with blessings from Native peoples of the area. In their new home, these living beings have created a fertile foundation for educating visitors, much like the one provided to Native people for centuries. Their roots reach under the stone and steel and connect the museum firmly to our collective heritage. Their pollen brings new life to each visitor, and their foliage provides medicine and comfort to this important place, which retains so much of our history.

I now work at the museum and enjoy the opportunity to reconnect with the familiar plants from home. Every day, I notice how black-eyed Susans populate the meadow and wild strawberries grow thick in the forest area, flourishing in the blessings offered years ago. There are signs that all of the landscape plants are at work; people harvest and use the tobacco, eat the crops grown with the help of insect-eating ladybugs, and enjoy the cool shade of the trees in the forest. This truly is a Native place.

— NANCY STRICKLAND
period (between 65 and 145 million years old). The stone's 18,000-mile international journey began with the short trip from Mussel Bay to Puerto Williams, a seaport town on Isla Navarino, Chile, where the 7,000-pound boulder was unloaded and placed in a sea container. It was then shipped by boat to the Baltimore Harbor and transported to Washington, D.C.

The youngest of the four stones is a lava ball from the Keamoku Lava Flow at Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park near Hilo. Shaped like a giant bowling ball, the stone is estimated to be between 300 and 400 years old (Quaternary period). In November 2003, the team met with the Volcano Kupuna, a council of Native Hawaiian elders who oversee cultural activities at Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park. After some discussion, the Kupuna representatives explained that stones are the body and living spirit of Pele, the volcano goddess. They believe that it is taboo to remove stones from the Hawaiian Islands, and those who do so without permission face retribution from Pele.

Several months later, the team returned to Hawai‘i at the request of the Kupuna, who explained that a ceremony existed to temporarily remove the stone from the Kilauea Volcano. The Kupuna selected a stone for the western marker and named it Kane Po, meaning “light and dark,” during a special naming ceremony. Like many Hawaiians who travel to the “mainland” to study and work for a time, the rock would return home after a period of twenty years. A new stone from another island would be selected to take its place, continuing the cycle and relationship. After a Kupuna ceremonial blessing, the 4,000-pound stone was transported to the harbor in Hilo and placed in a sea container. It was shipped from Hawai‘i to Oakland, California, where it was unloaded and driven across the country.

In May 2004, representatives of the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs and the Virginia Council on Indians visited Sugarloaf Mountain in the Monocacy Valley near Dickerson, Maryland, to help locate a quartzite stone as the museum's eastern marker. A strong and durable stone, quartzite was highly prized by Native peoples of the Mid-Atlantic region.

Cardinal direction markers 43
The western marker decorated with leis during the stone's dedication ceremony, 2004. Native Hawaiian believe that pohaku (stones) are living beings.

Karene Wood (Monacan) blesses the eastern marker with corn pollen, 2004.

for making arrowheads and ceremonial items. Karene Wood (Monacan) conducted a ceremony to bless the 544-million-year-old (Cambrian period) boulder, acknowledging the stone's significance in representing indigenous peoples from throughout the area. Following a trip by flatbed truck to the museum, the 5,000-pound boulder was positioned to face the Capitol building—a location intended to encourage continued positive relations between local Native peoples and the U.S. government.

The most obvious representation of the cardinal directions can be found embedded in the floor of the museum's Potomac, where a large recessed...
circle is divided into quadrants of hardwood and oriented on north-south and east-west axes. In the center is a smaller circle of red sandstone, which represents the literal and metaphorical heart of the museum. It also marks the point of convergence of the four Cardinal Direction Markers found in the landscape — if a straight line was drawn from each stone through the walls of the building to a center point, that point of convergence would be the red sandstone circle in the middle of the Potomac. This center stone was quarried from Seneca Creek, Maryland, and it was used to construct the first Smithsonian building, known as "the Castle," which was completed in 1855. It is very fitting that NMAI, one of the newest Smithsonian museums, has at its heart the stone used to construct one of the first museum buildings in Washington, D.C.
Indigenous Geography/
Geografía Indígena

The Community and Constituent Services Department of the National Museum of the American Indian manages a bilingual website that emphasizes the importance of place. Indigenous Geography/Geografía Indígena invites communities to discuss who they are and where they live. Each community authors a series of essays centering on several themes: living world, economy, family, ritual, origins, community, seasons, and place. The first-person narratives combine with rich photography, short videos, and audio clips to provide an intimate and detailed sense of place and an idea of the rich bounty of the earth that surrounds the community.

The Indigenous Geography/Geografía Indígena website is one of many community-based, international resources exploring the relationship between Native peoples and the environment. Appendix 1 offers selected books, websites, and organizational contacts for further study.

— AMY VAN ALLEN