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Preface

**LAURIE WEBSTER, LOUISE I. STIVER,
D. Y. BEGAY, AND LYNDA TELLER PETE**

This book began as a simple invitation to write a catalog about the Navajo textile collection at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science (DMNS) and grew into a collaboration and friendship among Navajo and Anglo textile scholars. The four of us share a love of Navajo textiles, and two of us grew up weaving them. We each contributed different expertise and knowledge and learned from each other in the process. We also had a lot of fun.

In early 2013 Dr. Stephen Nash, chair of the DMNS Department of Anthropology, contacted independent scholar Laurie Webster about writing a catalog of the collection. Laurie had written a book about another museum's southwestern textile collection, and she accepted the invitation with the caveat that she include a coauthor. Soon after, retired museum curator and author Louise Stiver agreed to join the project. Both Laurie and Louise had previous museum experience with the history and analysis of Navajo textiles and interpreting them to the public. In the summer of 2013, the two traveled to Denver to meet with Steve and Anthropology Collections manager Melissa Bechhoefer to discuss the project; while there, we received a brief tour of the museum's 380-piece Navajo textile collection. Here, we realized, was one of the last great museum collections of Navajo textiles still relatively unknown to scholars, collectors, weavers, and the public.

Our first step was to develop a theme for the catalog. While we could have interpreted the museum's collection using a "greatest hits" approach, we also wanted to tell a story and explore issues related to Navajo weaving. The 273 Navajo textiles and weaving-related implements amassed by collectors Mary W.A. and Francis V. Crane fit the bill perfectly. As discussed by Joyce Herold in her foreword and her excellent 1999 article about the Cranes' collecting activities and by Louise in her chapter in this book, not only did this couple travel throughout the Southwest during the 1950s and 1960s collecting Navajo textiles and other items, they also documented their trips and purchases in great detail. This documentation was curated in the DMNS anthropology



archives, waiting to be woven into a story. A focus on the Cranes and their collecting activities gave us the opportunity to explore the Navajo rug trade in the mid-nineteenth century and long-term changes in the Navajo textile market. It also enabled us to highlight most of the museum's important Navajo textiles.

Our second step was to finalize the research and writing team. Laurie and Louise felt it was important to expand the book beyond their own historical and anthropological perspectives by incorporating the expertise and voices of Navajo weavers as co-researchers and coauthors. Lynda Teller Pete and D. Y. Begay were the logical choices. Lynda resides in Denver and has worked with the museum for a number of years as an educator and consultant on native issues. An accomplished weaver descended from a long line of Two Grey Hills master weavers and a father who worked as a reservation trader, Lynda possesses a unique perspective on Navajo weaving and the related textile market. D. Y. is not only one of the most innovative weavers of her generation, she is also a prolific writer and textile scholar with extensive experience in interpreting Navajo culture, textile history, and weaving traditions to the public. At the 2013 Santa Fe Indian Market, Louise invited D. Y. and Lynda to participate in the project, and both agreed to join the research team.

The project began in earnest in spring 2014 when Laurie and Louise spent a week at the museum examining the extensive Crane archives at the DMNS Bailey Library

FIGURE 0.1. (Left to right) Louise Stiver, Lynda Teller Pete, D.Y. Begay, and Laurie Webster discussing two ye'ii rugs from the Crane textile collection, Denver Museum of Nature & Science anthropology workshop, 2014



FIGURE 0.2. Lynda Teller Pete (*left*) and D.Y. Begay studying and photographing a Wide Ruins weaving by Stella Terry (see plate 48)

and Archives facility. During that visit we were introduced to the accession and catalog records for the Crane collection by those who know it best: Melissa, anthropology curator emeritus Joyce Herold, and long-time volunteer Peggy Whitehead.

Our next task was to narrow down the number of textiles to include in the catalog. With this goal in mind, each author was sent digital photographs and catalog cards of the entire Crane textile collection and asked to select her top 100 choices based on stylistic and aesthetic qualities, collection histories, or attributes likely to generate conversation or stories. After ranking and tallying the selections, we arrived at a list of 130 textiles—about half the collection—to examine as a group at the museum.

When the four of us arrived at the museum for five days of work in the fall of 2014, we were met by a well-coordinated army of anthropology staff and volunteers who pulled weavings from the storeroom and unrolled and re-rolled them on three oversized tables in the Dr. Jane Stevenson Day Anthropology Workshop at the new Avenir Collections Center. Working through our textile list, we moved from table to table as each new woven wonder was unveiled before us. We oohed and aahed over each tex-



FIGURE 0.3. Lynda Teller Pete (*left*) discussing a ye'ii rug with D.Y. Begay (*middle*) and Laurie Webster (*right*)

tile, discussed its collection history, pointed out unusual or outstanding features, photographed details, and recorded our impressions and observations on paper and laptops (figures 0.1–0.3). In the process, we learned a lot from each other. We also narrowed our list of 130 textiles to 95 for potential inclusion in the catalog. At the end of the week, we brainstormed about major themes and developed a basic outline for the book.

Laurie returned to the museum for three weeks in late fall 2014 and early winter 2015 to conduct a detailed technical analysis of the ninety-five textiles (see appendix). In December 2014 the four of us convened at Laurie's home in Mancos, Colorado, for a two-day meeting to finalize our selection of textiles for the color plates and decide which authors would write about each one. By the end of the meeting, we had selected sixty-one textiles for fifty-seven color plates and another sixteen for in-chapter illustrations. The synergy was stimulating as we discussed emerging themes and revised our book prospectus. After the 2015 Santa Fe Indian Market, we held our final group meeting at Louise's Santa Fe home to discuss D. Y.'s and Lynda's concepts for their essays.

Two fortuitous encounters in 2015 added immeasurably to this book. In the spring, Laurie had the opportunity to spend time with Dr. Ann Lane Hedlund at the Navajo Studies Conference; after discussing the book project with her, Laurie extended an invitation to Ann to write the introduction, which she accepted. Not only would this essay introduce the book and its contributors, but also it would summarize Navajo weavers' growing participation in and collaboration with Navajo textile research and exhibitions, a process with which Ann was intimately familiar.

A few weeks later, Laurie attended a Fort Lewis College lecture "Testing of Dyes in Early Navajo Weavings" by Dr. David Wenger, professor of neurology at Thomas

Jefferson University. Wenger discussed the history of dyes in early Navajo textiles and his spectrophotometric identifications of red dyes, including cochineal and lac. Following the talk, Laurie told him about our project, and he graciously offered to analyze a sample of red yarns from the Crane textiles. A month later Laurie went to the museum and collected thirty-three yarn samples from sixteen textiles and sent them to Dr. Wenger. His invaluable results are presented in the technical appendix at the end of this book.

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Introduction

CONSULTATIONS, COLLABORATIONS, AND CURATION BY NAVAJO WEAVERS: A CELEBRATION AND HISTORY

ANN LANE HEDLUND

In 1973, the Denver Museum of Natural History was among the first museums in the United States to establish a Native American Advisory Group and invite local Indian people from many tribes to participate actively in its exhibitions, programs, and policies.¹ When visitors walk into the museum's Crane Hall of North American Indian Cultures today, a video greets them with a series of Native American people speaking their indigenous languages. As in insightful museums worldwide, first-person voice appears in text panels and artifact labels, presenting native views directly. This present volume reflects the museum's continuing dedication to involve Native Americans in interpreting its collections. It represents a signal effort to invite the expert views of two foremost Navajo weavers, D. Y. Begay and Lynda Teller Pete, who worked alongside Anglo textile specialists Laurie Webster and Louise Stiver to interpret the Diné textile collections at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science.

Since the mid-twentieth century, connections among Native American weavers, artists, educators, and other leaders have grown. Many museums now share personal and tribal perspectives with their visitors. In museums across the United States, we have seen growing collaboration between native consultants and museums, hiring of indigenous staff members, and expansion of tribal community museums and cultural centers.² The passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 opened new lines of communication between tribes and museums. The establishment of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) on the Smithsonian Mall in Washington, DC, in 2004, following twenty-four years of planning, championed such networks. Some would say that museums still have a long way to go, and I agree that, despite some progress, there is surely room for further inclusion and innovation.

My intent in this essay is to explore connections between Navajo weavers and museums (including my own) and to underscore the importance of expanding these endeavors in the future. Three areas seem relevant to address. First, when and where have Navajo weavers responded to museum collections on their own terms and participated

in curatorial processes? Second, how have museums and weavers collaborated on reaching their audiences, with more inclusive native perspectives? And third, what opportunities exist for weavers to meet with each other and share their work as part of a larger community of artists—away from their looms, off the printed page, and into assembly with one another (and with others)?

In this selective review of trends, my goal has been to document and celebrate significant efforts that champion Diné voices, views, and artistic efforts. The history of museum/weaver connections during the past half-century underscores significant changes in how weavers view themselves—from craft workers supporting their families to artists expressing their visions and making a creative living. It also parallels how consumers, curators, and other observers have treated the woven works through the decades—from anonymously made decorative items to titled works of valuable fine art.

DINÉ WEAVERS CONNECTING WITH MUSEUMS

The first suitcase held an indigo-blue woman's dress, a chief-style blanket, and a girl's red-bordered shawl.³ Seven women circled and cautiously drew out the *biil*, *hanoolchaadi*, and manta, hand-woven more than a century before. We spread each item on the sheet-shrouded tables in the Ganado Chapter House in Arizona. The weavers stood back to look at their ancestors' garments—then they stroked the fine fabrics, seemed to breathe them in, and gently wrapped the attire around their shoulders. Their daughters and nieces stood alongside, ready to translate, eager to see more. Some recalled their great-grandmothers' stories of the Long Walk and times of enforced livestock reductions. They conferred with each other about family and clan relations. From my field notes of that day in August 1979: “[One woman's] gr gr mo [great-grandmother] was at Bosque Redondo. She remembers hearing about Spider Woman's holes in center of some old blankets—people hid under those blankets and that hole was to watch their enemies thru.” Connecting to the past brought tears and the flow of memories.

The contents of the second suitcase I brought out differed—rugs from the 1960s and early 1970s, bright with synthetic colors or subtly hued with vegetal dyes. Women who viewed them remembered themselves, their mothers, and their grandmothers making such items. They named native dye plants, described patterns and techniques, traced flaws, and admired ingenuity. Wordplay revolved around certain designs. Jokes emerged about the Indian traders known by many weavers and depended on by some.

For that summer of 1979, the Navajo Tribal Museum had hired me to document its collection of several hundred Navajo blankets, garments, and rugs. According to the original grant agreement, “documentation” meant closely analyzing the textiles with magnifiers and measuring tools, compiling and studying the museum's written records, and comparing the pieces with others in well-known museums and books. What evolved, however, was an invitation for reservation-wide weavers to view the museum's treasures in Window Rock, Arizona, and my travel to Navajo communities with textile-filled suitcases like those I shared in Ganado.

In most Navajo communities at the time, the federal Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) was sponsoring weaving work programs. Through my visits to chapter houses, many CETA participants saw museum-quality blankets, dresses, and rugs for the first time. At weavers' homes, relatives and neighbors often gathered to see the museum's rugs. Wanting even more impact, we advertised in the *Navajo Times* and families visited us at the Window Rock museum.

Considering the estimated 12,000 Navajos who wove during the 1970s and 1980s, relatively few sought the limelight or consorted with urban art galleries in those days. Many spoke articulately in Navajo but used little English. Most extended weaving families worked in relative isolation, apart from other communities and from eventual owners of their rugs. Few knew about museums and their collections. Still fewer had seen nineteenth-century blankets woven by long-ago relatives. The oldest textiles most had seen dated to the early twentieth century—rugs made in their grandmothers' and aunts' generations. Exposure to other woven work was generally limited to the “rug room” at a local trading post and to book and magazine illustrations. Although the nationwide 1960s arts and crafts boom opened the Southwest to tourism and wider public attention, most weavers still depended on nearby stores to market their rugs.⁴ Indeed, weaving served as an essential source of income for many Navajo families, and weavers contributed significantly to the Navajo economy well before outsiders viewed the craft as investment-grade fine art.

DINÉ TEXTILES RETURN TO THE NAVAJO NATION

The first major exhibition of historic Diné blankets shown in Navajo country occurred in 1972. The Navajo Tribal Museum (NTM, now the Navajo Nation Museum) hosted “The Navajo Blanket,” organized by Mary Kahlenberg, a Los Angeles County Museum of Art curator, and Tony Berlant, a private textile dealer and artist.⁵ This mini-blockbuster presented a survey of nineteenth-century weaving unlike anything previously seen on the reservation. Dozens of weavers and their relatives viewed the exhibit in the Navajo Nation's capital, Window Rock, Arizona. Among them, Glenmae (Glee' Nasbah) Tsosie visited the show many times because she also worked at the NTM, demonstrating her weaving skills in the galleries. Her close viewing of several wedge-weave blankets from the 1880s prompted her to adopt this rare technique in her own creative work. No one has documented the impacts this traveling exhibition made on other weavers, but influences surely occurred.⁶

Five years later, the Ned A. Hatathli Culture Center at Navajo Community College (NCC, now Diné College) in Tsaile, Arizona, hosted the first textile exhibition prepared by a Navajo cultural specialist. Harry Walters, an esteemed Navajo medicine man and curator, had grown up in a weaving family and consulted often with native weavers. He brought together historic Navajo blankets and rugs from five southwestern museums and several family collections at the Hatathli Center. Completed in 1976 and renovated in 2013, the center looms tall above the piñon-juniper forest that surrounds the college campus. The hexagonal building covered with reflective glass looks like a

cross between a Navajo *hogan* and a NASA space station. Inside the galleries, Diné traditions are mixed with modern trends, and Walters titled his 1977–78 exhibition “Navajo Weaving: From Spider Woman to Synthetic Rugs.” His mimeographed catalog acknowledges the help of Mabel Burnside Myers (1922–87), longtime instructor of weaving and dyeing at NCC, and her daughter, Isabell Deschinny, listed as “weaving specialist” on the staff roster. In keeping with the times, their approach focused on the historical and technical evolution of weaving among the Diné, seen as masters of “acculturation and assimilation.”⁷

During this same period, Ruth Roessel, one of the founders of Navajo Community College, became a noted museum and college lecturer, often speaking about the cultural foundations of Diné weaving. Talks and publications by this dedicated Diné educator have contributed enduring insights from a weaver’s perspective to her audiences.⁸ Her balanced emphasis on indigenous origins, techniques, economics, and designs moved some observers and rug buyers to consider new cultural facets of Navajo weaving.

DINÉ CURATORS AND EXHIBITION CONSULTANTS

Since 1978, Harry Walters has curated and hosted other exhibitions that feature Navajo weaving, notably one in 2002 that focused on men who weave in collaboration with Diné activist Roy Kady. Male weavers were also the subject of “Weaving in the Margins: Navajo Men as Weavers” at the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture (MIAC) in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1999. For this exhibition, Wesley Thomas, Diné consultant and writer, and Joyce Begay-Foss, MIAC Diné staff exhibition educator, worked with Anglo curator Louise Stiver (featured in this book). A 2004–5 exhibition followed at the Navajo Nation Museum—“*Diné Dah’ Atł’ó*, Men Who Weave: A Revival in *Diné Bikéyah*,” organized and co-curated by Diné staff curator Clarenda Begay and Roy Kady.⁹

In 2002, Diné educators Joyce Begay-Foss and Pearl Sunrise contributed to the catalog and planning for “Navajo Saddle Blankets: Textiles to Ride in the American West” at the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture. For the subsequent MIAC exhibition “They Wove for Horses: Diné Saddle Blankets,” Begay-Foss, as director of MIAC’s Living Traditions Education Program, served as curator. Begay-Foss also co-curated “Spider Woman’s Gift” with MIAC director Shelby Tisdale in 2006 and contributed an essay to the exhibition’s companion book.¹⁰

These collaborations and curatorial responsibilities contrast dramatically with earlier artist-weaver demonstrations, such as the Fred Harvey expositions staged along the railroad route and the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair, in which weavers served primarily as mute icons of stereotyped cultural roles.¹¹ Many craft demonstrations continue today as a limited way to connect artists and public audiences. The best of these presentations are augmented by interactive events to share more about weaving. Most notable are the long-standing and informative demonstrations by master weavers featured at Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site in Ganado, Arizona, since the 1960s. In another early effort, Marsha Gallagher, Anglo curator at the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff, inaugurated a project to follow rug making from sheep to finished

product. While Diné weaver Margaret Grieve was the focal subject, she also became the de facto co-curator of the exhibition and coauthor of the accompanying article.¹²

A BLOCKBUSTER TRAVELING EXHIBITION

In 1986 Eulalie H. Bonar, Anglo curator at the Museum of the American Indian–Heye Foundation, and Diné weaver D. Y. Begay (featured in this book) began discussing an exhibition of historic Navajo textiles. Originally from Tselani (Salina Springs), Arizona, Begay was then living in New Jersey and working part-time in the museum’s education department. In 1990, while “the Heye” transitioned to Smithsonian ownership, Bonar convened a week-long collections consultation in New York with Begay, Anglo textile scholar Joe Ben Wheat, and me, in which we examined and discussed technological, cultural, and aesthetic features of several hundred historic textiles (figure 1.1). After years of bureaucratic delays, preparations resumed in 1994 for the long-awaited exhibition Bonar envisioned. The next phase involved bringing two dozen museum textiles from New York to Tsaile, Arizona, where thirty weavers and family members examined and commented on them in a workshop setting (see below for further description of this 1995 event). Finally, after Diné consultants D. Y. Begay, Kalley Keams Lucero, and Wesley Thomas joined Bonar’s team in New York as formal co-curators and coauthors, “Woven by the Grandmothers: Nineteenth-Century Navajo Textiles from the National Museum of the American Indian” opened in January 1996 for one year at Manhattan’s Customs House/Heye Center. Ultimately, more than a dozen staff members and consultants who share Diné heritage joined others to complete the Tsaile workshop, the New York traveling exhibition, and the Smithsonian-published catalog.¹³

The exhibition’s format, themes, and content reflected the diverse views of the three co-curators and other native staff members. They selected forty-plus textiles and advised on the display sequence and presentation methods, including three-dimensional shoulder mounts with blankets draped as garments. They advocated for the use of the Diné language throughout. Their text for exhibition labels and catalog entries personalized and humanized historic Navajo weaving. These achievements, first seen in New York City, influenced many exhibitions and catalogs that followed and prompted curators, collectors, and others to recognize the artistic and cultural significance of Navajo weaving.

GROUP COLLABORATIONS, BEYOND DEMONSTRATIONS

Two years before the NMAI blockbuster opened in New York, four weavers became bona fide curators of a 1994 exhibition at the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff.



FIGURE 1.1. Dr. Joe Ben Wheat and D.Y. Begay examining a Navajo serape at the Museum of the American Indian–Heye Foundation, New York, May 1990. Photo by Ann Lane Hedlund.

“*Hanoolchaadí: Historic Textiles Selected by Four Navajo Weavers*” brought together Grace Henderson Nez, Mary Lee Henderson Begay, Gloria Jean Begay, and Lenah Begay—a grandmother, mother, and two daughters from Ganado, Arizona—along with me as organizing curator (figure 1.2). Following earlier artist-as-curator models such as Andy Warhol’s *Raid the Icebox* and Eduardo Paolozzi’s *Lost Magic Kingdoms*, we examined the textile collections in the museum’s storage rooms for two weeks during the summer of 1994.¹⁴ Two Native American student interns, Davina Two Bears and Christine Gishey, assisted the five of us as we unrolled several hundred textiles from the museum’s permanent collection and peered at them through magnifiers. Discussion proceeded in English and Navajo, resulting in lengthy tape-recorded commentary.

In the “*Hanoolchaadí*” galleries, where twenty-nine textiles were displayed, a soundtrack added Navajo voices along with ambient home sounds: the beat of weaving combs, the slide of a batten through warps, sheep bleating, goat bells ringing, wind blowing through rafters. While the weavers’ statements wafted through the air, they appeared in print on wall placards. Photographs showed the family members weaving in their homes, herding sheep in nearby fields and woods, and working in the museum.



FIGURE 1.2. Co-curators ([left to right] Gloria Jean Begay, Lenah Begay, Mary Lee Henderson Begay, Grace Henderson Nez, and Ann Hedlund) examining Navajo blankets in preparation for the “*Hanoolchaadí*” exhibition, Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff, 1994. Photo by Davina Two Bears.

The four Diné curators created thematic sections and titled them in the Diné language: *Bizaad: Hanoolchaadí* (chief blankets), *Yisht’lo* (to weave it), *Dzool Hali Biyázhí* (moving along/flashing along/small eyedazzlers; also, falling rapidly and somewhat haphazardly), *Beeldléi Lichíi* (red blankets), *Bee ’adzooi dóo K’osishchíin*

(combs and clouds/checkers), *Dzool Halí* (eyedazzlers), *Beeldléi Dootlizhi* (blue blankets), *Tó bich’osh* (waterbugs), *Biil* (woman’s traditional dress), *Yishbizhi* (herringbone twill weaves), and *’Akidahinilí* (saddle blankets).

In her article documenting the show, Navajo intern Davina Two Bears noted, “It is with exhibitions like *Hanoolchaadí* that Diné matrilineal wisdom is being passed on and shared. Knowledge gained from the teachings of *Na’ashjé’ii Aszdáán*, Spider Woman, is being shared by her pupils, Diné weavers, to the public in its purest form—directly from the weavers’ words. Their strength, humor, wisdom and sincerity are conveyed to the audience through *Hanoolchaadí*.”¹⁵

In 1987, the Arizona State Museum embarked on a project that resulted in the 1993–95 installation of “*Paths of Life: American Indians of the Southwest*.” Through university, tribal, and personal connections, more than two dozen consultants were engaged in producing exhibits that covered ten tribal groups in the 10,000-square-foot hall. When “*Paths of Life*” opened in the early to mid-1990s, histories relating native perspectives in the first person represented a breakthrough; many examples have fol-

lowed at other institutions. As one text panel explains, “A people’s view of their origins can help us to understand how they see their place in the world . . . Their life today is shaped by the past and traditional values that have been passed down through generations . . . while a culture changes through time, the threads that bind a people remain unbroken.”¹⁶ One extended Navajo family—student intern Nicole Horseherder, her mother, Lily Lane, and grandmother, Alice Nez—contributed to a life-size diorama of a modern Navajo home, complete with a domestic weaving scene. Other Navajo participants included Dr. Jennie Joe, NTM curator Clarenda Begay, Zonnie Gorman, Grace Boyne, Albert Jim, and Nathaniel Yazzie.¹⁷

Also in the mid-1990s, a two-year field project led by Navajo linguist Roseann Willink and Anglo scholar Paul Zolbrod elicited comments from sixty weavers and their relatives, mostly from the Crownpoint area of New Mexico. Bonnie Bennally, June Kalleco, Sarah Johnson, Annie James, Harry and Annie Burnside, and Willie and Nellie Becenti were singled out as leaders by the project organizers. Discussions centered on the cultural roles and sacred elements of weaving, using direct observations of the collections at the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture. The authors’ interpretations of the participants’ commentary resulted in an exhibition and a book.¹⁸

In 1999, sisters Barbara Jean Teller Ornelas and Lynda Teller Pete (featured in this book), plus Barbara’s daughter, Sierra Teller Ornelas, and son, Michael Teller Ornelas, contributed section labels for “Fancy Blankets,” organized by Ann Marshall at Heard North, a satellite of the Heard Museum in Phoenix. The consultants provided fresh insights, observing that even during times of social upheaval, Diné weavers produced impressive textiles that reveal and resist the difficult conditions under which they worked.¹⁹

Several years later, one of my all-time favorite images emerged at the Arizona State Museum—five Diné co-curators from the Teller-Ornelas family raise their white-gloved curatorial hands in gleeful greeting to a Tucson photographer. From its 2003 start, the organizing curatorial team for “Navajo Weaving at Arizona State Museum: 19th Century Blankets; 20th Century Rugs; 21st Century Views” included Barbara, Sierra, and Michael Ornelas, along with visits from Lynda Teller Pete, mother Ruth Teller, and aunt Margaret Yazzie (figure 1.3). Our process expanded on my 1994 project at the Museum of Northern Arizona. This time, the team reviewed color slides for the entire Navajo collection of 500-plus objects, selected a series for enlarged projection and discussion, refined the choices to a smaller set for examination, and created the list of objects to display. Conversations were in English, tape-recorded, and the exhibition script and label copy derived from the curators’ direct statements. An online version of the exhibit perpetuated these weavers’ messages.²⁰

The weavers’ commentary sought a personal as well as a historical basis for understanding the museum’s blankets. The family’s collection of twentieth-century rugs and tapestries plus photo albums added further depth. Brother and sister (each of whom continues to weave) provided views that bounced modern insights off the walls and onto the textiles. They plied art historical terms like minimalist, asymmetric, and chiaroscuro. To connect with historical works, they used analogies with the glamour of Marilyn Monroe, Katharine Hepburn, Greta Garbo, and Grace Kelly; the cowboying



FIGURE 1.3. Weavers participating in the “Learn about Weaving” tent at the 2003 Southwest Indian Arts Fair, Arizona State Museum, Tucson. Seated: Margaret Yazzie (left) and Ruth Teller; standing (left to right): Lynda Teller Pete, Ramona Yazzie, Barbara Teller Ornelas, Sierra Teller Ornelas, and Michael Teller Ornelas. Photo by Myriam Neuts.

of Gary Cooper and Jimmy Stewart; the spirit of a 1920s Christmas window at Macy’s; the energy and motifs of Atari and Pac-Man, and the rebellion of punk rock. “We find,” noted Sierra, “[that] using metaphors helps us relate to our predecessors as human beings instead of silent faces in a photograph.”²¹

In 2004–5, Anglo curator Jennifer McLerran brought members of four Navajo families together to assist in planning “Weaving Is Life” at the Kennedy Museum in Athens, Ohio. Veteran museum curator and Diné artist D. Y. Begay headed the team; Grace Henderson Nez, Mary Lee Henderson Begay, and Gloria Begay had taken part in the aforementioned Denver Art Museum and Museum of Northern Arizona projects; Glenabah Hardy, Irene Clark, and Teresa Clark from Crystal, New Mexico, also had prominent roles in Denver. The Taylor/Beall family from Indian Wells, Arizona (Lillian Taylor, Lillie Taylor, Rosie Taylor, Diane Taylor Beall, and Amber and Twyla Gene), while active in native art fairs, brought fresh energy to exhibit curation.

Along with galleries hung with rugs, tapestries, and photomurals, the exhibition provided “an immersive visitor experience to the area of the country known as *Diné Bikéyah* (Navajo Lands) in both the sound of the Navajo language, and in the words of the weavers.”²² In addition, D. Y. Begay and Diane Taylor Beall contributed essays from their distinct weavers’ viewpoints to the companion catalog.²³

THEMATIC AND SOLO SHOWS

In the 1990s and early 2000s, Diné views appeared in text, articles, and catalogs for exhibits focusing on specialized textile categories.²⁴ D. Y. Begay wrote on pictorial weaving at the Wheelwright Museum in 1994, and Jane Hyden discussed pictorials at the Heard Museum for “Picture This” in 2013. Diné religious specialist Joe Ben Jr.

commented on Navajo weaving in “RAIN: Native Expressions from the American Southwest” at the Heard. Navajo weaver Marilou Schultz selected and provided commentary for the Heard’s “Brilliant: Navajo Germantown Textiles” in 2001. Also there, Wendy Weston, Diné curator and director of American Indian relations, and consultant Roy Kady interpreted Teec Nos Pos, sandpainting, and ye’ii rugs for “Our Weaving (*Nihi Diyogi*): Weaving from the Four Corners” in 2007–8.²⁵

Exhibitions and catalogs focusing on solo weavers began to appear during this same period, providing rare but significant acknowledgment of weavers as professional fine artists. The solo show “Another Phase” featured D. Y. Begay at the Wheelwright Museum in 2003–4. Two years later she designed and curated her one-person show, “Interpretive Landscapes,” at the Mesa Arts Center in Arizona, followed by a larger 2013 retrospective at the C. N. Gorman Museum in Davis, California. Morris Musckett’s work became the focus of a show at the Wheelwright Museum in Santa Fe, with catalog commentary by the artist.²⁶

Artists’ statements are common in non-native gallery shows but relatively new in Navajo weaving exhibits. In addition to those mentioned above, “Family Ties: Young Navajo Weavers” featured formal artists’ statements by Sierra and Michael Ornelas, LaVera Blake, Charlotte Begay, Melissa Cody, and Elain Martina in a group show produced by Anglo curator Janet Cantley at the Heard North in 2007–8.

During a three-year consultation at the Amerind Museum in Dragoon, Arizona, Barbara Ornelas joined Anglo curator Eric Kaldahl to select and comment on textiles featured in “Interwoven Traditions: The Cultural Legacy of Southwestern Textiles.” From 2011 to 2013, the annual interchange of three sets of textiles allowed Ornelas to speculate about the experience and proficiency of each weaver and to discuss her own family’s practices and beliefs. Her insights and stories brought the “hands, hearts, and minds” of the makers, as she says, closer to museum visitors.

WEAVERS AND MUSEUMS CONVERGE

In 1990–92, when the Denver Art Museum and I began organizing the first major convergence of Navajo weavers to open the exhibition “Reflections of the Weaver’s World: The Gloria F. Ross Collection of Contemporary Navajo Weaving,” several basic questions arose: would weavers travel to Denver? Not having met before, how would they interact with each other? Would they participate in public conversations about their work? Using personal letters, questionnaires, postcards, phone calls, and home visits, I explored ways to encourage participation and enhance the somewhat novel experience of making public presentations. Providing funding, arranging shared meals, and including companion travelers (many of whom served as translators) proved important. The opportunity to sell new woven work and make friends with prospective buyers became another incentive to attend the exhibition’s opening festivities.

Our central goal was to celebrate the thirty-three weavers represented in the exhibition and its companion book, based on my long-term ethnographic work among



FIGURE 1.4. Weavers (left to right) Amy Begay, Ason Yellowhair, Bessie Lee, Mary Lee Henderson Begay, Jennie Thomas, Grace Henderson Nez, Mary Brown, Ella Rose Perry, Rose Owens with granddaughter Davida Kee, and Elsie Wilson attending reception for “Contemporary Navajo Weaving,” Denver Art Museum, 1992. Photo by Ann Lane Hedlund.

Diné weavers. This was the first show to emphasize living weavers’ aesthetic perspectives through their own narratives and the first to illustrate how traditional and modern perspectives coexist and to include family histories and clan relationships. Seventy-five Navajo people participated in the 1992 Denver opening ceremonies (figure 1.4).²⁷

The choice of the art museum in Denver for this groundbreaking gathering was not accidental. When it acquired a collection of Navajo blankets and rugs in 1925, the Denver Art Museum became the first major American art museum to collect and showcase Native American textiles and other artifacts. Championing these pieces as objects of fine art, equal to paintings and sculpture, has become an important theme for the museum during the past ninety-plus years. One reviewer wrote that the museum’s 1992 installation set “the standard by which to judge presentation and scholarship in exhibits of Native North America weaving during its next—fourth—century.” Others acknowledged “the questioning of longstanding premises that have shaped art history, anthropology, and public museums since the 19th century and [our goal] to envision tangible alternatives in public spaces.” In particular, they noted “the social context in which the weaving is produced, the individuality of the weavers, and their mental and imaginative involvement with the physical process of weaving.” Finally, they observed that the exhibition addressed “issues of gender, voice, commodification, and distinctiveness.”²⁸

At a Denver press conference and several meetings, weavers and their relatives made speeches in traditional Navajo style. They claimed credit for their own work and its consequences. Among others, sixty-three-year-old Rose Owens proclaimed in Navajo, “It’s because of my weaving that I’m in Denver now enjoying myself. Because of my rugs, I’ve been [able] to visit a lot of places—Connecticut, Washington, Alabama. I’ve known Gloria Ross and other people from New York and all [kinds of] places, per-



sonally and by mail. I am well-known for my rugs. Lots of you [weavers] here have been lots of places because of your rugs, too. We are well-known because of our weaving.”²⁹

FIGURE 1.5. Participants in the “Navajo Weaving since the Sixties” conference, Heard Museum, Phoenix, 1994. Photo by Ann Lane Hedlund.

The weavers’ forthright comments in Denver, along with an eagerness to meet each other and express themselves to a wider audience, prompted us to organize a full-scale symposium when “Reflections of the Weaver’s World” traveled to the Heard Museum in Arizona two years later.³⁰ Held March 10–14, 1994, and attended by 135 people, “Navajo Weaving since the Sixties” was the largest and longest convergence of Navajo weavers at a museum to date and the only fully bilingual interchange between weavers and an audience. Honoraria and travel to Phoenix were subsidized for native participants through grants and donations. As in traditional tribal meetings, weavers were invited to talk as long as they wanted in their choice of languages, with full sequential translations (figure 1.5).

The 1994 weavers’ conference at the Heard provided one model for NMAI’s 1995 Tsailé community workshop, which involved Diné weavers in plans for “Woven by the Grandmothers,” the 1996 blockbuster exhibition described above. NMAI organizer Eulalie H. Bonar attended the Phoenix event and drew inspiration from the weavers’ presentations. On the phone between New York and Arizona, Eulie, D. Y., and I talked late into many nights—brainstorming the invitation list, Native American and museum meeting protocols, translation concerns, and numerous other issues. During the summer of 1995, more than seventy-five Navajo weavers and relatives converged at NCC’s Ned A. Hatathli Culture Center. There, they examined twenty-four rare



FIGURE 1.6. Mary Brown demonstrating weaving to a crowd, National Museum of the American Indian Customs House/Heye Center, New York, 1996. Photo by Ann Lane Hedlund.

historic textiles that had traveled from New York to Tsaile. Once the NCC display opened to the public, more than 800 visitors, predominantly living around the Navajo Nation, signed the guestbook. Since then, the Hatathli Center has hosted smaller gatherings whenever textiles have appeared on display in its main gallery, but nothing of this magnitude has recurred near the Navajo Nation.

The National Museum of the American Indian exhibition “Woven by the Grandmothers” and the Denver Art Museum’s “Reflections of the Weaver’s World” opened together in January 1996 at the Customs House/Heye Center in Manhattan. Former tribal chair Peterson Zah and I raised funds and garnered complementary tickets from America West Airlines to host thirty weavers and their relatives in New York for three days, many for their first time in the city. Through their public presentations, weavers again took credit for their own work and expressed themselves as individuals living in the modern world while honoring their distinct Diné heritage (figure 1.6).

The Gloria F. Ross Center for Tapestry Studies, founded in 1997 at the Arizona State Museum, sponsored several symposia and other gatherings at which Navajo and other weavers met. In 1999 we worked with the American Tapestry Alliance to produce “Southwest Influences on Contemporary Weaving” in Tucson, in which more than thirty Anglo and twelve Navajo weavers and translators participated. In 2000 we organized “Southwest Indian Tapestry Traditions” at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas, where Kalley Keams Lucero, D. Y. Begay, and Irene Clark spoke about vegetal dyes in the Navajo tradition. Both events emphasized the challenges and joys Anglo and Navajo hand-weavers have in common—for instance, the fear that young people aren’t continuing the craft, the difficulties of promotion and sales, and the pleasure of becoming recognized as an artist regardless of the medium. For once, Navajo weavers heard that Anglo weavers share many of their concerns.

After “Navajo Weaving at Arizona State Museum,” co-curated by the Teller/Ornelas family, opened in Tucson in 2004, it seemed time to host another major celebration of modern Navajo weavers’ accomplishments.³¹ “Navajo Weaving Now! A Symposium” ensued in April 14–17, 2005, drawing 187 participants, more than half of whom were Navajo. Sierra Teller Ornelas served as program assistant to co-organizers Bobbie Gibel and me. Swedish tapestry weaver Helena Hernmarck delivered a keynote lecture, acknowledging her friendship and trans-Atlantic exchanges with D. Y. Begay and noting the influences of landscape and architecture on each of them. Eight Navajo weavers (Barbara Ornelas, Marilou Schultz, Jason Harvey, Kalley Keams Lucero, Melissa Cody, Sierra Teller Ornelas, Michael Teller Ornelas, and Ariel R. Begaye), moderated by Melanie Yazzie and Ella Rosa Perry, gave presentations on themes of accepting change, gaining respect, experimenting with materials and designs, mixing media, and looking to the future. Panel talks and open discussion in Navajo and English focused on

artistic, spiritual, and economic concerns. Emily Malone and her daughters LaVera, Larissa, and Laramie Blake—the Spider Rock Girls—provided demonstrations with youthful edginess. Five Anglo scholars (Cathy Notarnicola, Jill Ahlberg Yohe, Susan Strawn, Jennifer McLerran, and Teresa Wilkins) added historical perspectives. And again, weavers had the opportunity not only to express themselves but also to sell their work and meet future patrons. Afterward, when one weaver inquired, “So, where are you taking us next?” I found myself suggesting that the next decision should be made by a predominantly Navajo team.

FURTHER CONNECTIONS

What opportunities exist for Diné weavers to meet with each other and share ideas as part of a larger community of artists and consumers? In this far-from-exhaustive survey, I mention a few models and possibilities because they might be useful to future weaver-museum collaborations.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Native American Art Studies Association (NAASA) was founded in 1979, primarily by Anglo art historians, but it has since evolved to include Native American artists and scholars in prominent leadership and membership roles. The Navajo Studies Conference (NSC) was formed in 1986, likewise by Anglo anthropologists and historians working near the Navajo Nation. It has transformed in parallel fashion with NAASA, as participation and governance grew to include more Navajo board and general members. The use of the Diné language has increased at meetings, and Navajo Nation locations are now standard. Few native weavers, unless expressly invited, have participated in annual meetings of either organization, but these groups often link with local museum programs and represent opportunities for future engagement by weavers.

For the 1995 Navajo Studies Conference held in Farmington, New Mexico, I organized a two-day series of eleven bilingual presentations by weavers and scholars. Providing translators and leaving sufficient time for comments were essential to encourage exchanges between Diné and English speakers. The open discussion focused on several recurring themes—the challenges of selling rugs in today’s marketplace, working hard for inadequate pay, questioning scholars’ practical experience in weaving, and concerns about designs being copied and co-opted.³²

Organized by Navajo weavers and sheep raisers, *Diné Be’iiná* (DBI, translated as Navajo Way of Life) is a nonprofit grassroots community organization established in 1991 and devoted to serving sheep and goat producers and fiber artists. It has convened the “Sheep Is Life” conference throughout Navajo country annually since 1996. The organization also organizes popular spin-offs, other workshops, clinics, and meetings for the artistic, social, and economic development of shepherders and weavers.

At the annual DBI conference held in Farmington, New Mexico, in 1997 and partly in response to the concerns weavers expressed at our 1995 meeting, I organized a session “Copyright or Copy Wrong: How Can Navajo Weavings Be Protected?” Peterson Zah, former president of the Navajo Nation, moderated our panel, which included Lloyd Rich, a Denver attorney, and Johnson Dennison, a spiritual leader from Navajo Community College, with Esther Peterson providing simultaneous translations through headphones. The speakers addressed the threats copying poses to an artist’s creative integrity and economic potential (Zah), potential ways of protecting blanket and rug designs from reproduction through US copyright and trademark laws (Rich), and the traditional cultural perspective that weaving comes from the *Diyin Diné*’ and, as a product of spiritual forces and nature, is inappropriate to protect or to claim exclusive rights (Dennison). Since then, others have convened meetings to raise awareness about copyright issues,³³ but challenges to resolve such dilemmas persist.

MARKETPLACES

In ways critical to their livelihoods, professional weavers and artists meet regularly at commercial and nonprofit-sponsored marketplaces in Arizona, California, Indiana, New Mexico, and elsewhere. Such annual gatherings serve as informal networking events and can empower emerging artists of all media.³⁴ They often accompany museum lectures and educational events beyond sales activities. Between 2008 and 2013, the Heard Museum sponsored a specialized Navajo Weavers Marketplace, with about forty-five weavers and hundreds of visitors attending each year.

The majority of Navajo weavers, however, are relatively new to these art-oriented circuits and numbers remain small, in part because accumulating an inventory of woven works can be daunting. Funded competitions for prizes offer one incentive to attend. While specific awards for garments and textiles exist, the concept of a rug or tapestry winning Best of Show over other media is relatively new. The only Best of Show awards for hand-woven textiles were given in 1987 at the sixty-sixth annual Santa Fe Indian Market (received by sisters Barbara Jean Teller Ornelas and Roseann Teller Lee), in 1990 at the Museum of Northern Arizona’s forty-first annual Navajo Craftsman Exhibition (earned by Irene Clark), and in 1996 at the fifth annual Heard Museum Guild Indian Fair and Market (awarded to Barbara Ornelas, tied with Hopi ceramicist Preston Duwyenie).³⁵

TEACHING

Mabel Burnside Myers founded the fiber arts program at Navajo Community College when it opened its doors in 1969. Since then, other Navajo weavers have served as instructors at the college.³⁶ Myers’ daughter, Isabell Deschinny, and her grandson, Mark Deschinny, now offer independent weaving and dyeing workshops, as do a few other enterprising weavers. Pearl Sunrise has taught weaving at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, Armand Hammer College in Las Vegas, New Mexico, and

the Taos Art School. Beginning in the 1970s, Kalley Keams Lucero taught hands-on weaving classes and workshops in addition to giving illustrated museum lectures. As a visiting artist, D. Y. Begay led influential natural dyeing workshops for the Ramah community and others. Barbara Ornelas and Lynda Pete have taught intensive week-long residential courses since the late 1990s at the Idyllwild Arts Summer Program in California and elsewhere. Jennie Slick leads weaving classes in collaboration with Anglo organizer Mary Walker and her company, Weaving in Beauty. Roy Kady, former director of DBI, organizes and teaches community workshops. Diné weaver Sarah Natani, her daughter, TahNibaa Naataanii, and many other skilled weavers teach in their homes and through other institutions.

Each of these programs welcomes Navajo and non-Navajo students and includes established artists as well as rank beginners. Students emerge with fundamental understandings that range from technical and aesthetic to cultural and economic, as each teacher provides unique perspectives on his or her subject. Such instruction remains controversial among some Navajos, who would restrict teaching only to Navajo students; others feel no threat to cultural preservation by generously sharing their knowledge widely.

OTHER SEMINARS AND ARTISTS' RESIDENCIES

Two Santa Fe organizations pioneered some of the first symposia that brought together scholars with audiences and, eventually, with native artists. One of the first gatherings of its kind, Shared Horizons, began in 1980 as a seminar that accompanied an eponymous exhibition. Anglo weaver and teacher Noël Bennett and Wheelwright Museum director Susan Brown McGreevy hosted the first seminar. Rain Parrish, a Navajo staff member, contributed exhibition design expertise, but no native weavers were directly involved. Since 1984, Recursos de Santa Fe has specialized in symposia, conferences, and tours on southwestern topics including Navajo, Pueblo, and Hispanic weaving. Directed by Ellen Bradbury-Reid, Recursos has served as an umbrella organization for grants that support DBI's Sheep Is Life and other grassroots organizations.

Since 1994, the School for Advanced Research (SAR, formerly the School of American Research) has sponsored numerous artist residencies and specialized seminars. Kalley Keams Lucero was the first Diné weaver honored as the Ronald and Susan Dubin Native American Artist Fellow, followed by Geneva Shabi in 2006. In 2015 Marlowe Katoney became the first to hold the Rollin and Mary Ella King Fellowship at SAR's Indian Arts Research Center (IARC).

Four of the dozens of SAR seminars offered since 2001 have included Navajo weavers, none yet resulting in publications. As part of her fellowship, Keams first convened eleven weavers in 2001 for the seminar "Gifts of Spiderwoman: Myth and Reality Regarding Spirituality in Navajo Weaving," facilitated by Keams and Anglo IARC director Kathleen Whitaker and including Irene Clark, Mae Clark, Glenabah Hardy, TahNibaa Naataanii, Marilou Schultz, Clara Sherman, Angie Silentman, Brenda Spencer, Anthony Tallboy, Barbara Teller Ornelas, and Janet Tsinnie. These weavers

ranged in age from twenty-nine to ninety years old. A few met for the first time, but most had participated in the 1994 Heard Museum symposium and subsequent museum gatherings.

In 2004 a seminar titled “Establishing Identity: The Social and Political Life of the Chief White Antelope Blanket” included microscopic research and analysis regarding one historic Navajo blanket’s physical properties as well as its origins, history, and social life. Chaired by Kathleen Whitaker, the group included one Diné weaver/artist/scholar, Marilou Schultz, along with ten Anglo and Hispanic scholars. The 2007 seminar “Art, Gender, and Community” brought together eleven native women artists, including TahNibaa Naataanii, to discuss their work, issues for women in the arts, and the future of Native American art. In 2009 a textile seminar, organized by staff member Elysia Poon, brought Roy Kady and Bonnie Yazzie together with Ramah Navajo Weavers Association members Sarah Adeky, Joann George, Dan Betom, Julia George Betom, and Katie Henio to focus on fifteen textiles from the IARC.

TECHNOLOGY

Today, weavers communicate with each other, their fans and buyers, and organizations such as those mentioned above through Facebook, websites, and blogs. Smartphones sit next to many looms. Weaving progress is charted on Instagram and cheered along on Twitter. Objectives appear to range from social camaraderie and technical problem-solving to public sales pitches, but weaverly gossip and private rivalries are rarely posted.

CONCLUDING NOTES

Looking back, my original concerns at the Denver Art Museum about weavers’ willingness to participate with museums seem outdated and overblown. Since then, Navajo weavers have gathered to inaugurate and interpret exhibits at many venues. Some who traveled to Denver, Phoenix, and Manhattan now organize in-person and virtual events of their own. Newcomers might even take the inclusive process for granted as they curate projects. Yet there *is* more work to do if museum audiences are to hear directly and consistently from Diné weavers. The essays by D. Y. Begay and Lynda Teller Pete in this book contribute to this goal.

Economic issues are paramount in engaging Navajo participation in museum programs. Co-curators, speakers, consultants, and visiting artists must be paid appropriately and weavers given opportunities to sell their woven work. This review of past collaborations reveals the importance of museum support agencies that recognize Navajo weaving on par with other arts. The National Endowments for the Arts and for the Humanities, plus state councils for the arts and humanities and private foundations, have sustained many projects and remain critical for future planning. Also obvious are the importance of bilingual programs, the need for broadening the selection of collaborators, and the critical importance of hiring full-time Navajo staff members.

Another way to enlarge our views is to invite non-weaving Navajo artists and cultural specialists—especially the growing number of college-trained art teachers at the college level—to share their Diné heritage and perspectives. In 1988 visual and verbal artists Shonto Begay and Luci Tapahonso contributed to “*Anii Ánáádaalyaaígíí: Continuity and Innovation in Recent Navajo Art*” at the Wheelwright Museum in Santa Fe.³⁷ Other contemporary artists and professors such as Esther Belin, Hulleah Tsinnijinnie, Wendy Weston, Will Wilson, Melanie Yazzie, and Venaya Yazzie have occasionally commented on weaving. These authorities and others could be invited to the table.

When I worked for the Navajo Tribal Museum in 1979, my rug-filled suitcases and I visited Ellen Smith, a weaver known affectionately around the Wide Ruins community as “Asdzan Sixty” (translated as Mrs. Sixty or Old Lady Sixty). At that time, she was past her sixties, and the reason for her nickname was not her age but her speed. When driving her pickup truck, her relatives told me, she would punch her foot to the floor and go sixty miles per hour, no matter what the road conditions. Mrs. Smith was a memorable Navajo woman (figure 1.7).

Navajo weavers move with even greater speed and alacrity today. And they fly internationally as ambassadors for Diné culture. Pearl Sunrise held a Fulbright to teach in New Zealand and a commission from the US Department of State to visit Lesotho, South Africa, and Toronto, Canada, as a cultural specialist. Barbara Ornelas traveled to London, where she met Prince Phillip and demonstrated at the Museum of Mankind for two weeks in 1985; she participated twice in cultural exchanges in South America and taught master classes and exhibited her family’s work in Uzbekistan during 2012. D. Y. Begay



FIGURE 1.7. Ellen Smith at her loom, Wide Ruins, Arizona, June 1990. Photo by Ann Lane Hedlund.

has participated in international conferences in Mexico City and Sydney, Australia. Through the ART in Embassies program, she presented programs in South and Central America, England, and Corsica. Sarah Natani, daughter TahNibaa Naataanii, and granddaughter, Winter N. Hoskie, contributed to the Embassies program, visiting Ventiane, Laos, in 2014. Their weavings were displayed there along with work by seven colleagues (D. Y. Begay, Marilou Schultz, Geneva Scott Shabi, Cecilia Nez, Lynda Pete, Marie Shirley, Elaine Upshaw). When not herding sheep and weaving in Teec Nos Pos, Roy Kady has traveled to South America three times, first in 2002 for a world art festival in Quito, Ecuador. He traveled as well to Turin, Italy, in 2004 and to India in 2015 to share native Churro cuisine as well as the weaving arts.

Clearly, native weavers speak well for themselves. Whether at home in the Southwest or in galleries around the globe, Diné weavers today have much to contribute as consultants, collaborators, and curators.

IN THIS BOOK

The essays and commentary in this volume represent a continuation of the trends analyzed above. The team of experts chosen to study the collection at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science includes two master weavers who are also experienced teachers, bringing their personal views, artistic talents, and Diné cultural heritage into the narrative, alongside two Anglo scholars with expertise in southwestern native art.

In her essay, Louise Stiver, a specialist in Southwest collecting and marketing practices, describes how Mary W. A. and Francis V. Crane became passionate collectors of Indian arts and crafts during the mid-twentieth century. On exhaustive collecting trips from 1951 through 1966, they acquired Native American objects from other collectors, active traders, and prominent dealers across the American West. Stiver's accounting of the Cranes' suppliers provides a veritable Who's Who of mid-century Southwest commerce. As was customary for buyers in those days, the Cranes bought primarily from secondary sources, not directly from the makers. In all, they amassed the 273 Navajo textiles and weaving implements upon which this book is based. With dates ranging from the 1800s into the early 1980s, these works span the period when native weavers moved from producing garments and other functional items to creating objects of fine art. Although the Cranes' original vision in the 1950s included their own Southeast Museum of the North American Indian in Marathon, Florida, the complete saga of how the entire Crane Collection found its way to Denver in 1968 is presented in Stiver's essay.

From early inter-tribal trade to gallery shows, Laurie Webster details the "multiplicity of markets" that have featured Diné weaving in past centuries. Aboriginal trading between Navajo and Pueblo, Pai, Apache, Ute, and Plains tribal peoples is delineated, as are historical exchanges with New Mexican Hispanic and Euro-American entities during the nineteenth century. The rise of trading posts and the development of Indian fairs and marketplaces are well documented. Finally, Webster traces the transformation of Navajo weavers from anonymous craft workers to recognized artists, culminating in the increased freedom possessed by contemporary weavers who create, speak for, and curate their own innovative work.

One of those forthright weavers, without question, is D. Y. Begay, author of the next essay in this book. Her personal trajectory starts with her family's off-the-grid homestead in a quiet community near the Navajo Nation's center. This story focuses on locality, livestock, and especially the artist's early exposure to weaving by close family members. Begay's memories of the remote Salina Springs Trading Post provide a transition to her own art training in college and professional experiences in the outer world. Living in New York City during the 1980s and exploring the textile collections housed at the former Museum of the American Indian stimulated a career that has moved past national and international boundaries. Begay expanded beyond regional rug styles and formed a wide-ranging personal artistic style; now living in the art mecca Santa Fe, she smoothly articulates her business acumen. Considering herself both traditional in practice and contemporary in outlook, D. Y. Begay deftly demonstrates exactly how Diné weaving can bridge many worlds.

Lynda Teller Pete, the fourth author, has traversed and negotiated multiple realms as well. Hailing from a family of distinguished Two Grey Hills weavers, this master weaver shares her respect for long-standing regional traditions. She recounts activities around the old-time Two Grey Hills Trading Post, where her father worked and the Teller family lived periodically. She balances her fond memories with concerns for critical artistic and economic issues that have hindered the progress of Diné weavers. Pete also epitomizes the modern professional weaver, one who collaborates with family members and others, participates in commissioned artworks, and maintains an active teaching and travel schedule.

After the four coauthors convened at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science to examine the Cranes' Navajo textile collection, they developed extended commentary to accompany the fifty-seven color plates in this book. Each of the sixty-one pieces illustrated in these plates received a full technical analysis of its fibers, yarns, dyes, weave, and finish techniques, all of which aided in confirming or ascribing provenance and attributing dates of origin to the textiles. The team's observations range from broad comparisons between style classifications to the minutest weaverly details. Their insightful interpretations successfully personalize the character of Navajo weavers, contextualize Diné culture, and humanize the weaving process. Mindful of the role of hand-woven blankets as garments during the nineteenth century, many remarks could well serve as suitable narrative to a fabulous New York or Paris fashion show, with the *beeldléí*, *biil'žéé*, and *diyugi* worn by models parading down a dramatically lit runway. As my imagination flies even further, I see the runway lined with the splendid Navajo saddle blankets and rugs from this collection. Thus, as you engage with this entire book, enjoy the show.

NOTES

1. "To be clear, other museums had by this time worked together with Native Americans in carrying out research, collecting, and other activities but no such instance appears to have involved an organized, named, multi-tribal Native American Advisory Group under Museum policy and action" (Joyce Herold, personal communication, 2016).
2. See, for instance, Simpson, *Making Representations*.
3. The meanings of the terms *Navajo* and *Diné* can be considered interchangeable. The Navajo Nation and many scholars recognize both terms. I tend to use "Navajo" in a more general, descriptive manner and in referring to secular, political, and economic concerns. Although not rigid in my practice, I am inclined to reserve "Diné" for references to personal, artistic, cultural, and especially spiritual domains.
4. Most of this information is derived from research conducted for a PhD dissertation in cultural anthropology (Hedlund, "Contemporary Navajo Weaving"). Later, I estimated the total number of weavers using general census records, chapter house and trading post surveys, and other references. My estimates were cited in the *Sunset Magazine* article "The Land of the Navajo and the Hopi" in 1987.
5. Kahlenberg and Berlant, *Navajo Blanket*.
6. Hedlund, "Glenmae Tsosie and Her Modern Rugs."
7. Walters, "Navajo Weaving."

8. Roessel, *Women in Navajo Society*; “Navajo Arts and Crafts.”
9. Stiver, *Weaving in the Margins*; “Weaving in the Margins”; Daugherty, *Diné Dah’ Atł’ó*.
10. Begay-Foss, “Weaving Processes and Techniques”; “Spider Woman’s Gift.”
11. Howard and Pardue, *Inventing the Southwest*.
12. Gallagher, “The Weaver and the Wool.”
13. Bonar, *Woven by the Grandmothers*, with essays and commentary by D. Y. Begay, Kalley Keams Lucero, and Wesley Thomas. “Woven by the Grandmothers” eventually crisscrossed the United States to the Navajo Nation Museum, Window Rock, Arizona; the National Museum for Women in the Arts, Washington, DC; and the Heard Museum, Phoenix, Arizona. It completed a fourteen-month tour of Latin America, where it appeared in museums in Montevideo, Uruguay; Guatemala City, Guatemala; La Paz, Bolivia; Santiago, Chile; and Mexico City, Mexico.
14. De Menil, *Raid the Icebox 1, with Andy Warhol*; Paolozzi, *Lost Magic Kingdoms*.
15. Two Bears, “*Hanoolchaadi*,” 64.
16. Arizona State Museum website, <http://www.statemuseum.arizona.edu/>.
17. Sheridan and Parezo, *Paths of Life*.
18. Willink and Zolbrod, *Weaving a World*.
19. Ann Marshall, personal communication, 2015.
20. The online version of this exhibit is no longer available on the museum’s website. Some text and labels were also drawn from transcripts made for Cathy Notarnicola’s (2001) master’s thesis in American Indian studies (“Woven Lives, Weavers’ Voices”), in which a series of ethnographic conversations probed this weaving family’s aesthetic perceptions.
21. Exhibition text, “Navajo Weaving at the Arizona State Museum: 19th Century Blankets, 20th Century Views,” curated by Ann Lane Hedlund, Barbara Teller Ornelas, Lynda Teller Pete, Sierra Teller Ornelas, and Michael Teller Ornelas, Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona, Tucson, October 2004–April 2005.
22. Legris, “Foreword,” 6.
23. Ibid.; McLerran, *Weaving Is Life*.
24. Weavers’ views appeared indirectly, too. Between 1997 and 2004, my long-term ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, photo sessions, and friendships with weavers and their families provided the basis for themes and content for five thematic exhibitions of historic and contemporary Navajo textiles (the Cowboy Hall and Museum, Oklahoma City, 1997; Saint Louis Art Museum, 1997–98; University of Arizona Museum of Art, Tucson, 2001; Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2001; and the Textile Museum, Washington, DC, 2003–4). Unfortunately, none of these projects included Diné specialists as co-organizers or curators. None of the museums scheduled time or budgeted money for a more inclusive approach, and I lacked the position to insist otherwise. In fairness, neither did a handful of other museums that produced exhibitions during this time, also organized by Anglo curators.
25. McGreevy and Begay, *Image Weavers*; Weston, “*Nihi Diyogi*.”
26. Begay, *Weavings of D. Y. Begay*; Muskett, *Warp to Weft*.
27. Hedlund, “Contemporary Navajo Weaving”; *Reflections of the Weaver’s World*.
28. Stanfill, “Contemporary Navajo Weaving,” 24; Dominguez and Desmond, “Crafting Exhibitions,” 780–81.
29. Hedlund, “Speaking *For* or *About* Others?,” 40.
30. Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, this exhibition traveled to five venues—the Denver Art Museum; the Heard Museum; the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska; the Smithsonian’s Renwick Gallery, part of the National Museum of American Art in Washington, DC; and the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian in New York.

31. In 2003 the Textile Museum and I organized a two-day Navajo weaving symposium at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. More than 100 non-Navajo registrants gathered for presentations by D. Y. Begay alongside four Anglo scholars.
32. Martin, “Mini-Ethnography of the 1995 Navajo Weaving Symposium.”
33. M’Closkey, “Up for Grabs.”
34. Wray, “Economic and Educational Impact of Native American Art Markets.”
35. Navajo weaver Desbah Evans took a previous top prize for her double-weave rug in 1972 during the Heard’s Arts and Crafts Exhibit, begun in 1968 and replaced by the Indian Art Fair and Market in 1991.
36. Myers demonstrated her art at the (then) Denver Museum of Natural History in 1968; see <http://digital.denverlibrary.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15330coll22/id/37015>.
37. Bernstein and McGreevy 1988.

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