

## LOST AND FOUND

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*Edward Harvey Davis (1862–1951), the narrator of the following popular account, was a prolific collector whose activities on behalf of the Museum of the American Indian/Heye Foundation brought him into contact with many native groups in Southern and Baja California, the Southwest, and northwestern Mexico, and contributed significantly to one of the most substantial collections of Native American objects ever assembled. Davis came to California in 1885 and soon settled on an isolated ranch in rural San Diego County. There he began to develop a deep and empathetic interest in his Kumeyaay neighbors that was to eventually culminate in a fascinating career as a wide-ranging museum collector, dedicated photographer, and amateur ethnographer. Most of the ethnographic and archaeological items collected by Davis are now curated at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), which also has about 3,000 of his prints and negatives; another 5,000 or so Davis images are curated at the San Diego History Center (SDHC), which has recently digitized them and made them available for viewing online. The SDHC also has many of Davis' notebooks, although the bulk of his papers are now at the Cornell University Library (from which they can be obtained in the form of microfilm).*

*The article reprinted here originally appeared in the October, 1931 issue of Touring Topics (the precursor of Westways Magazine). It provides an interesting glimpse of the way in which museum collections were being compiled a century ago, and provides another perspective on the life and times of a significant pioneer in the field. The photographs that originally accompanied the article have been replaced with a representative sample of Davis' images generously provided by the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution.*

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### THE PURSUITS OF A MUSEUM COLLECTOR

Edward H. Davis (as told to John Edwin Hogg)

Having spent more than thirty-five years of my life as a museum collector among some twenty-five of the most primitive tribes of Indians of the United States and

Mexico, I am sometimes spoken of as an adventurer. I don't consider myself an adventurer, and I rather dislike having the term applied to me. An adventurer, to my mind, is a sort of worthless soldier of fortune. He's a fellow who gets himself into trouble when he should be using his wits to keep out of it. Adventures are largely mishaps, and the proof of faulty judgment. They have no place in a well-planned scientific expedition, and are something to be avoided, if possible, in any phase of ethnological field work. Of course, a man could hardly travel about as I've done all these years without gathering a bit of experience. But I consider experience one thing worth gaining, and adventure something quite different.

I realize, of course, that my life work has been rather unusual. It is unusual in that only a very small number of men have engaged in it. It is unusual in that it has made my life a never-ending series of field expeditions into remote places and among primitive people. It is unusual, also, in that it has utilized these remote and little known places, and a vanishing race of the world's most primitive people in a purpose that is purely educational.

I arrived in San Diego, from New York, via Panama in January, 1885, seeking health. I still had a little money, but not enough to live indefinitely without work. Work was scarce in such a small community with so little commercial industry. I finally found a job on a surveying project with T. S. Van Dyke. Van Dyke and a man named Robinson had a contract to run a line from the San Diego River into El Cajon Valley—the beginning of the San Diego flume line. After finishing up with this survey, I worked at various jobs in San Diego for a period of three years.

My first year in San Diego, however, was interrupted by an important errand to New York. I received a letter from my mother advising me of the serious illness of Miss Anna Marian Wells, my fiancée. Arriving in New York, I found that the only way I could exercise the authority to bring Miss Wells to San Diego in an effort to restore her health was to marry her. We were married October 20, 1885, and departed for San Diego.

As a bridegroom seeking to establish himself in the then sleepy little village of San Diego, a well-known man, E. W. Morse came to me one day asking if I could

draw a map. Morse was a property owner at San Diego and wanted a map of the City. I'd never drawn a map, and didn't know much about maps. But I was good at lettering and sketching, and work of any sort just then was a question of bread and butter. I took on the map job. Morse paid for it and was well pleased with my work. A local architect saw the map. He came to me and asked, "Can't you make house plans?" Of course, I could make house plans. I was a draftsman. I could do almost anything with a pencil, pen, or brush, as long as there was an honest dollar in sight. I became an architectural draftsman and studied architecture. I drew more maps for the city engineer, and in 1887 helped draft the plans for the Coronado Hotel.

In 1887 the business future of San Diego was looking up, and I induced my father to finance me in a real estate investment. For \$2,500 we bought a lot at 11th and Market streets. The value of this property soon advanced to \$27,000, and we sold out. The transaction netted us a little financial stake, and after a prospecting tour through the mountains in the back country of San Diego County, I became intrigued with the idea of establishing a home at Mesa Grande. I bought 320 acres, later increasing it to 600 acres, which has been my home and base of operations ever since.

When we first came to Mesa Grande this country was pretty much in the raw. Most of our neighbors were Tookamuck Indians, and they were a primitive lot. We lived up here on top of the world with steep, one-way mountain roads, and wagons for getting in and out. A round trip to San Diego then required six days, and when we heard bells on the road it was time to hunt a hole. We make the same round trip with automobiles nowadays, and it takes about five hours.

Soon after moving to Mesa Grande I became very much interested in the Indians. I must have been born with a little pack-rat blood in my veins. Every object of Indian culture fascinated me, and I began collecting things. I began to realize, too, that if any serious museum collecting were to be done, it would have to be done soon. The missionaries had come in among the Indians—bringing the gospel and all the white man's diseases against which the Indians had no immunity. They were dying off like flies at the approach of winter, with smallpox, influenza, tuberculosis, measles, syphilis, and other scourges. Five-gallon oil tins were beginning

to take the place of the Indian olla. Firearms had begun to oust the bows, arrows, and other primitive implements. Blue jeans and cloth shirts had already taken the place of the breech clout and kilt. I convinced myself that if the evidences of Indian culture were to be preserved for history, educational, and museum purposes, the collection would have to be started while there was still something left to collect. I began gathering up mortars and metates, bows, arrows, stone implements, domestic articles, and every available specimen of Indian arts and crafts [Fig. 1]. I filled all the available floor space, nooks and corners of my house, and when the house overflowed I began filling up the small adobe that I built to harbor things for which I could no longer find storage space.

By 1915 I had become convinced that the most profitable commercial use to which my property at Mesa Grande could be developed would be as a mountain resort. I built an inn, and named it Powam Lodge, "Powam" being the Tookamuck Indian term for "place of rest." The lodge soon gained profitable popularity, but, of course, it was a seasonable enterprise, the recreational season being from May to November.

A year later, George G. Heye, father of the Heye Foundation, and the Museum of The American Indian, came to San Diego, and sent for me. We held a conference in San Diego which resulted in my accepting his offer to become associated with the museum staff as a field collector of ethnological specimens. This gave me the very job I had long hoped to create for myself.

In a certain sense my work among the Indians has been comparable to the life of an Indian trader. My mission has long been primarily that of trading with them. It differs only in that I have operated by a series of expeditions among many tribes of Indians instead of having a permanent trading post located in the domain of one, or possibly, several tribes. I doubt if the average person, or even the Indian trader of long experience in dealing with a single tribe, has any conception of the tremendous differences I have found in dealing with various tribes of Indians. Some Indians, for instance, are friendly, good natured, and easy to deal with. Others are crafty, suspicious, designing, superstitious, and even dangerous to the white man who goes among them. The Apaches of Arizona, for an example, are the shrewdest kind of traders. They'd fleece a Chinaman in a trading deal, and the Chinaman is one of the shrewdest traders



**Figure 1. Catalina Lomas grinding mesquite beans in a hopper mortar at Torres Martinez, 1917 (NMAI P00690).**

on earth. Again, we find a type of Indian like the Seris of Tiburon Island, in the Gulf of California—Indians who are superstitious, and suspicious of all white men. Yet when one has won their confidence they immediately place a childlike faith in the trader.

A museum collector must not only take good care to maintain friendly relations with the Indians, but he must cultivate the friendship of government officials and established traders in the various districts in which he operates. That is why in buying from Indians in the vicinity of an established trading post I have always made a practice of getting acquainted with that particular trader. I learn what prices he offers and then make it a point not to pay more or less for any article an Indian might have to offer. Any deviation from this policy would very speedily breed ill-feeling that would make it dangerous for a collector to show himself in such a district a second time. That is why I can always go back and be on friendly terms with any Indians with whom I have previously dealt.

In dealing with Indians one also has to develop a fine sense of discretion toward the superstitions and

religious beliefs of various tribes. The Seri Indians of Tiburon Island, for example, made me a medicine man of the tribe in 1923 because I convinced them that I was capable of performing certain feats which to them are black magic, but which were, in truth, simple chemical experiments.

The Seri Indians have been one of the most dangerous as well as most persecuted tribes. It is little wonder that they hate the white man, and feel that every white man should be killed exactly as we'd kill a rattlesnake or a rabid dog. Their whole history has been a story of fighting, killing, and being killed, for their very existence and of wresting a livelihood from a land in which the white man would be absolutely unable to maintain himself. Mexicans have waged endless warfare upon them, and the Seris have fought with their backs against the wall. Their island is virtually a fortress, but they have been unable to cope with their most deadly enemy, the diseases introduced among them by the white man. There are probably no more than two hundred of them left and a few more years will write "finis" upon them as a race.



In 1922 I made a trip to Tiburon Island. I went there with Robert Thomson [Fig. 2], who now lives at Bahia Kino (Kino Bay), Sonora. Thomson knows the Seris probably better than any other white man, and they regard him as a friend. Thomson had a small boat, a *canoa*, or native dugout, with which we crossed El Infiernillo (Little Hell), the strait that separates Tiburon Island from the Sonora mainland. This was after we had made the trip down from Hermosillo with a motor truck.

Arriving on the island we made camp and spent several days there without seeing a human being. About the third day we explored down the shore with the boat and sighted a small group of huts. When they saw us the

Indians all ran for the brush like frightened rabbits, and when we landed the shore was completely deserted. Thomson began waving a white scarf as a sign of peace, and called out to the men by their names. This brought the wild-looking savages out of the bush. They came forward with guns poised, ready to shoot us down. Then, seeing that we were unarmed, a few words from Thomson allayed their fears. They put down their rifles, came up, and we shook hands all around. Since that day, nine years ago, they've been our friends [Figs. 3, 4, 5, 6].

When the Indians found we'd come to trade with them they sent a runner to the southern end of the island and brought part of the tribe to our camp. We helped to



**Figure 2. Robert Thomson and Chico Romero on beach, Isla Tiburón, 1924. Romero is wearing a pelican-skin skirt (NMAI PO6252).**



**Figure 3. Seri woman wearing pelican-skin skirt, Isla Tiburón, 1924 (NMAI PO6254).**





Figure 4. Seri woman applying face paint to her son, Isla Tiburón, 1924 (NMAI PO6287).

ferry them to the mainland. The trading began soon after the last members arrived on a *balsa* that caught my eye as a highly desirable museum specimen [Fig. 7]. This *balsa* is twenty-two feet long, and weighed about 800 pounds when pulled up out of the water. I later secured it, and it is regarded as one of the finest specimens ever obtained. The City of Mexico has one other, but of inferior quality.

The Seris are popularly regarded as one of the lowest and most degenerate lot of Indians. Horrible tales are current to the effect that they are cannibals, and of how they have tortured and butchered various expeditions that have gone to Tiburon Island. There is unquestionably some foundation of truth to these tales, but it is very difficult to sift the facts from the fiction. In my several visits to the island I have endeavored to learn the truth about the cannibalism stories. The Seris, however, have refused to commit themselves. Since they will neither confirm nor deny it, it is entirely possible that some of them at one time or another may have eaten the flesh of some of their numerous victims.

I disagree most heartily with those who believe the Seris possessed of a low order of intelligence. There is no end of evidence to the contrary. They are skilled

mechanics and artisans in many lines and will fashion all sorts of useful things from almost nothing and with only the crudest of tools. They will, for instance, make a boat out of bits of driftwood, fitting it together piece by piece, making nails from scraps of old wire and binding it with various native fibers. The completed hull is bound and caulked with a native pitch made from seal oil and the heart of dead pitahaya cactus. The finished boat is a very creditable article that the white man would have a hard time duplicating.

The Seris' hunting arrows also display a remarkable degree of craftsmanship. They make an arrow in two pieces, the head being attached to a detachable stick about twelve inches in length. This forward end carrying the head sets into a socket in the shaft which is made from carriso reed. In use it is just an ordinary arrow, but it has the great advantage that a broken arrow when recovered is easily repaired and restored to service. These arrows are also used for hunting deer, and here again the value of the two-piece arrow is illustrated. The coast country is covered with heavy brush, and a deer running through this brush with an arrow in his flesh would probably have a single-piece arrow pulled out,



**Figure 5. Seri girl with basket on head, Isla Tiburón, 1924 (NMAI PO6185).**

and thus would escape. But not so with the two-piece arrow. The deer with one of these penetrating his flesh would probably lose the shaft. The barbed head and the forward end would remain with him, thereby increasing the Indian's chances for following and overtaking his wounded game.

It has been my observation, as a rule, that the primitive man trusts nobody. He will repose his confidence only in those friendships that have been proved, and most of their contact with civilization has tended to shatter what little faith and trust they might otherwise have for the white man.

To illustrate this point let me cite the transaction by which the Seri *balsa* went to the museum from my

expedition to Tiburon Island in 1922. When I saw it I desired it for the museum. I told the Seris that if they would give me the *balsa*, I would, upon my return to Hermosillo, send them sufficient lumber to build a boat much better suited to their purposes of fishing, hunting the sea turtle, and the *lobo marino* (sea lion). Now, mind you, this *balsa* virtually represented their livelihood. Nevertheless, Thomson and I had been accepted by them at our face value. We got the *balsa*, and when I returned to Hermosillo, I immediately sent the lumber I'd promised in exchange.

Had I known at the time what a task I was to face before I finally got the *balsa* to the museum, I'd probably have left it with the Seris. It broke away several times and went adrift during storms before we took it out of the water. Thomson and I chased it all over that part of the Gulf of California before we got it on land to stay. Getting it loaded on the motor truck was another desperate struggle. Eventually, we got it into Hermosillo. There I bought yards and yards of manta cloth, wrapped it, crated it, and shipped it. We had to ship it in an end-door boxcar for it was too big to go into an ordinary freight car. At the international border the Mexican authorities labeled it "*un curiosidad antiguo*"—a contraband export from the country. We shipped it back to Hermosillo, and there the *balsa* went into storage. Then followed much correspondence and political wire pulling. Months later it was released. It is now in the Museum of the American Indian in New York.

Another incident of my 1922 expedition to Tiburon Island is worth mentioning. The usual feud between the Seris and the Mexican fishermen was at white heat. Some fishermen had landed on the island and the Seris had promptly slaughtered them. Thomson and I had arranged a meeting with the Indians at Pozo Vicente near Kino Bay for a trade deal. We came over from the island with the Seri *balsa* in tow, and as we neared the Sonora shore were rather surprised to sight a Mexican fishing boat. Two Mexicans promptly went ashore from the boat and made for the bush. Seeing the *balsa*, they had mistaken us for Indians, and had we been Indians we would undoubtedly have been killed. At least, we found the Mexicans waiting to ambush us. They were armed with full cartridge belts and Mauser rifles, and were about ready to snipe us off when they discovered that we were white men.





**Figure 6. Seri children sliding down hill on turtle shells, Isla Tiburón, 1924 (NMAI PO6230).**



**Figure 7. Ramón Blanco on carrizo balsa with turtle harpoon, Kino Bay, 1922 (NMAI P18413).**





**Figure 8. Alena Levi standing next to storage granary, Torres Martinez, 1917 (NMAI PO2319).**

This feud between the Mexican fishermen and the Seris is still going on. Only recently, so I'm informed in a letter from Robert Thomson, some fishermen landed on the island and attempted to steal two young Seri girls. Fortunately for all concerned, the Indians were unarmed. Instead of fighting, they broke camp in the middle of the night, and silently disappeared into the rugged interior of the island.

The study of objects for an Indian museum collection is something that would occupy the ethnological student for a dozen normal lifetimes. Basketry alone is a subject that no one student could ever hope to master. They range in size alone from baskets smaller than a pea to large storage containers [Figs. 8, 9] for grain and other food large enough to hold a small man. The Pomo Indians do the most artistic small basket weaving, while the Apaches are the producers of the largest baskets.

It was among the Pomo Indians that I heard the utterly ridiculous tale of a basket being swallowed by a barnyard fowl. A white woman offered an Indian woman five dollars to make one of the smallest Pomo baskets for her. The Indian woman went to work, and after many

hours of eye straining labor had the basket ready for the final touch. At this juncture the basket slipped from her fingers and rolled among a group of hungry chickens pecking around at her feet. One chicken, probably mistaking the basket for a grain of corn, promptly snapped it up. Not knowing which bird had swallowed the basket the Indian woman began cutting off heads and opening crops. She killed and dissected half a dozen birds, and the whole flock appeared to be doomed when the white woman who'd ordered the basket appeared on the scene. She put a stop to the slaughter by paying the Indian woman for the basket even though it could not be delivered.

A similar life-long study might be made of ollas. We usually think of ollas only as containers for water. But the Indians use ollas for all sorts of things and make them in an endless variety of sizes and designs. Some are used for water, others for food, and the largest ollas are used for making caches of food in isolated caves where it is to be used only in cases of necessity. I've collected hundreds of ollas of every size, shape, and description, yet I've scarcely scratched the surface [Figs. 10, 11].





Figure 9. Manuela Costa weaving basket, Cahuilla Reservation, 1917 (NMAI POO504).

From the experience of various expeditions I have learned that it always pays to cultivate the acquaintance of local people, be they Indians, white settlers, traders, Mexicans, or what. One always learns things from such people, and occasionally some remark they may drop is the direct clue to an important museum discovery. As an example of this, Robert Thomson and I were making a trip down the Baja California peninsula several years ago when we met a cowboy out in the hills not far from the village of Comondú. This cowboy told us of a cave where there were arrows sticking in the crevices of the ceiling. From his description of the terrain we found the cave, and the arrows. These arrows must have been in the roof of the cave 500 years. They were wood-pointed, representing a very primitive culture, and how they came to be where we found them is an absolute mystery. They were stuck in the cracks between the rocks some twenty feet above the cave floor, and at an angle proving conclusively they couldn't have been shot in.<sup>1</sup> With many hours of labor we rigged up a wobbly, makeshift ladder [Fig. 12] and obtained about a dozen arrows without breaking any of our bones. Baja California is one of the

most interesting of primitive districts adjacent to our State of California, but its interest to anyone interested in Indians is archaeological rather than ethnological. The Indians are about gone. There are a few Indians in the central part of the Northern District, a few along the lower Colorado, and only two that I saw in the entire Southern District. The rest are gone.

While I have said that I have always sought to avoid adventures, I have been on a number of expeditions when I doubted if I'd ever come out alive. I think the most dangerous expedition I ever went out upon was the time I visited the Yaquis of the upper Yaqui Valley. I spent several days there among the most fanatical and dangerous Indians—Indians who kill with no compunction. It was a case of handling these people with silk gloves all the way through, and even then facing the possibility of being shot down, knifed, or clubbed to death at any moment. I obtained very few photographs on that trip because it would have been suicide to have aroused the suspicion and superstition that the very sight of a camera would have engendered. Thomson was with me on that trip, and I think the only thing that let



**Figure 10. Rosa Nejo carrying olla and wearing basket cap, Campo, 1918 (NMAI POO396).**

us come out of it alive was the fact that we had letters from the chief Mexican officials to the general of the tribe. These letters, of course, explained our mission and asked the Indians to safeguard us, and lend us all possible assistance. Fortunately, they seemed to have had some respect at the time for the wishes of the Mexican officials; possibly through fear of military retaliation. The Mexicans and the Yaquis were then at peace, a condition that does not always prevail.

In 1923 I went on another extremely hazardous expedition among the Huichol Indians in the States of Nayarit and Jalisco. This is back in the barranca country some 150 miles east and slightly north from Tepic. These Indians and their neighbors, the Coras, have a culture

absolutely pure and uncontaminated by civilization. Few of them have ever seen a white man, and they no doubt have a primitive instinct to kill any creature that arouses their fears. They resented our intrusion into their mountain fastness.

Robert Thomson and two Mexican guides accompanied me on this trip, and every mile of it was through country so literally on end that transportation was a matter of feet and mules. To get into the country we had to ford the Cora River no less than fifty times. The Cora is a tributary of the Santiago, which we forded twice, and the largest river in Mexico. At such a distance from the coast I was greatly surprised to find the river full of crocodiles. By crocodiles I don't mean alligators. Central America has both. The country here is nothing but rocks, and it would be impossible to create a more jumbled topography without gravity pulling it down. The trails are merely grooves worn in the rocks by the bare feet of men and animals through the passing centuries. Charles Lumholtz was in this country in 1895, and to the best of my knowledge he is the only other white man who was ever in this section.

The mosquitoes had given me numerous hypodermics of malaria germs, and I was coming down with the fever. I was therefore in a hurry to complete my work and get out. Nevertheless, we were in this country for two months, during which time I did a great deal of collecting. I collected so many bows and arrows that we soon found the Indians had gained a bad impression of us. They thought we were trying to disarm them, and that spelled trouble.

The center of this Indian population was a little village called Jesús María, and I had letters to Juan Moreno, the *jefe político* there. Nevertheless, we had not been in this region long before we had good reason to feel that the Indians had become very suspicious of us, and almost anything was liable to happen. My fever was also getting worse, and getting out as fast as we could go seemed the most logical thing to do.

The roughness of this country simply defies description. There were many places where we made our way along on *cuchillos*, or knife edges. These are merely places where the mountains have slipped leaving an upright ledge with perpendicular sides and no talus slopes. Going along these *cuchillos* it would often be 150 or 200 feet from the trail to the bottom, and the walls so





Figure 11. Celso Serrano, native policeman, with collection of ollas, baskets, and other items, Soboba, 1917 (NMAI PO1811).



Figure 12. Robert Thomson extracting arrows from roof of cave near San José de Comandú (NMAI P20101).

nearly perpendicular you couldn't have hung your hat on them.

Such was the country through which we were traveling when we came to a place where the Indians had blocked the trail by felling trees across it. We could, of course, have removed these barriers or made our way through them, but it would have been suicide to have attempted such a thing. A party that had been in the country ahead of us had had this experience. The Indians had blocked the trail for them, and when they attempted to go through the blockade they were wiped out with a shower of arrows and falling boulders rolled from the cliffs. I didn't propose to take any such chances if they were to be avoided.

It was obvious that the Indians had set a trap for us. We held a consultation with our guides. One of them was a highly intelligent fellow. He thought he knew another trail down the steep side of the mountain, a trail that crossed the Chapalagana River, and which would put us on another trail out of the country. So, instead of trying to go through the barrier, which I'm convinced would have been certain death, we turned about, and went back to the Indian village of San Andres. When we got there, there wasn't an Indian in sight. They were all out along the trail waiting to waylay us. Suffice to say that the guide's judgment proved to be correct. We made our way out of the country without seeing an Indian. Had we been blundering adventurers and tried to go through the barrier, I haven't the slightest doubt about what would have happened to us.

Finding a seventy-ton whale in the Colorado River may sound like a bit of fiction, but it is only one of many strange and interesting experiences. It was in 1896 that I made a trip down the Colorado from Yuma for the purpose of studying and collecting among the river Indians. With two companions I drove from Mesa Grande to Yuma with a team and wagon. At Yuma we got a makeshift boat and spent several days reconditioning it for the trip down the river. We went down the Colorado to the mouth of Hardy's Colorado, and then rowed up Hardy's Colorado. About a mile up the stream from the main Colorado we rounded a bend to come upon the whale. Stretched out on a sandbar he looked as big as a modern submarine and smelled like all the packing houses of Chicago with the fishing industry of Gloucester included. The whale had evidently

been dead for several days and was swelled to a size considerably greater than his estimated, original, seventy tons. The coyotes and *zopilotes* (buzzards), of course, had had a grand feast. The huge creature had evidently been caught in the bore waves at the mouth of the Colorado, and carried upstream. Buffeted and bewildered he probably swam up Hardy's Colorado trying to get back into the Gulf of California, but only to get stranded and die. When a whale gets ashore he can't flap back into the water like a minnow. He's exactly like a beached boat of similar size and tonnage.

During the years that I've been collecting among the Indians I have gathered specimens sufficient to fill one entire floor, representing approximately 12,000 square feet of floor space, in the Museum of the American Indian. This collection has been made from the following tribes: Modoc, Klamath, Piute, Yuma, Cocopah, Chemehuevi, Mojave, Hualapai, Pima, Papago, San Carlos Apache, Tonto Apache, Fort Apache, Apache, Yavapai, Pueblo, Navajo, Seri, Yaqui, Southern Pima, Mayo, Huichol, Cora, Maricopa, Paipai, and Kiliwa. In traveling among them I have journeyed tens of thousands of miles with wagons, pack animals, boats, trains, motor trucks, automobiles, and afoot. Many of these journeys have been fraught with hardships and privation.

It may be worthwhile to mention some of the essential attributes of a museum collector among the Indians in addition to those we have previously discussed. A museum man must have the patience of Job. He can't be too fussy about what he eats or drinks. Many a time I've had to live on the food that was available among the Indians, and the average white man would find himself chewing pretty high on some of the things they eat. For instance, I sat down to a meal once with the Maricopas. This was in Arizona in 1920. I was tired and very hungry, and ravenously devoured a very tasty gastronomic mystery. It looked like peanuts fried in fat; delicious, and quite satisfying. Later I asked the Indians what it was, to discover that I had eaten several heaping plates of fried caterpillars, the smooth, hairless kind. They were somewhat disguised by the cooking and the fact that their heads had been pulled off. Aside from the white man's prejudices against eating something to which his taste has not been educated they're really very good food.

In the great arid spaces where so many of these Indians live water is water regardless of color, quality,



and degrees of pollution. Many a time I've had to muck out a desert spring in order to get a much needed drink. I do not believe in destroying native wild life, and for that reason have never done any hunting except when it was absolutely necessary in order to obtain something to eat. I wouldn't even kill a rattlesnake except for the fact that they're dangerous to human beings. And, speaking of rattlesnakes, I may say for the possible mental relief of persons who fear them, that I don't consider them a source of great danger. I've come into contact with hundreds of them, and killed them, but I've never really had what I'd call a narrow escape from being bitten. The creature that I fear more than the rattlesnake is the *alacran* (scorpion) of Mexico. They're always hanging around among the rocks where I've had to run the risk of being stung by them. They'll get into your bed, or drop off the rocks or trees onto you. The scorpions that we have up in this part of the country are probably no more dangerous than bees, but those down in southern Sinaloa, Nayarit, Jalisco, Durango and some other parts of Mexico, are altogether different.

In order to get along well with primitive people among whom one is a stranger one must cast aside all personal egotism, cultivate a friendly, tolerant attitude toward all mankind, respect religious beliefs, and grant to others the inalienable right to live and think according to psychological processes that are the result of historical and ancestral backgrounds. I believe this also applies equally well in our modern civilization. In all my contact with the Indians, and in traveling in remote places, I have found that it pays not to be conspicuous. If I go into Mexico, I dress much as the Mexicans do. One is far more apt to be accepted by strangers at his face value by presenting himself as one who is neither above nor below them. The display of superior financial or property wealth is one of the surest ways to cultivate trouble. That is why in all my dealings with the Indians I have always made a practice of carrying an abundance of change. Then when a transaction is about to be closed, I hand out the correct sum without displaying any other money or letting anyone know there is any more money in my outfit. In dealing with primitive people absolute fairness and honesty is essential. Cheat, or make promises that you do not keep and the primitive man will resent it and take it even more seriously than his white brothers. This is because such injustice looms much larger in the primitive

man's life. The civilized man is educated to all sorts of trickery. He expects it, and his life is so complicated he soon forgets that someone lied to him, cheated him, failed to deliver upon a promise, or otherwise misused him. The Indian, on the other hand, leads such a simple life that he is inclined to brood over petty injustices that the white man quickly casts aside.

While my work has been thoroughly interesting and fairly remunerative, I also feel that I've had a little more than my share of the misfortunes of life. The greatest sorrow that Mrs. Davis and I have had to bear during our long, happy, married life was the loss of our eldest son, and a daughter, just as they attained maturity, and when life seemed to hold the greatest promise for them. Two other sons survive, and now that we have ten grandchildren the Davis family is evidently due to be long perpetuated. On the night of April 30, 1930, I saw the major portion of my financial resources, and the fruits of many years of effort, go up in smoke in a fire that destroyed Powam Lodge. That fire dropped me into red figures to the tune of \$75,000. I also lost an utterly priceless and irreplaceable Indian collection, consisting mostly of rugs, baskets, ollas, etc. The loss of the lodge also destroyed the market we formerly had for butter, milk, fruit, and other products of the ranch. It isn't easy to face the prospect of attempting to recoup the financial fortunes of a lifetime with your three score and tenth birthday just around the corner.

There is still some important museum collecting to be done before the Indians will have become extinct, but so far as the Museum of the American Indian is concerned further activity will have to await completion of additional buildings to house the collection now on hand. A great deal of the material I've collected in recent years is now in storage, and must remain there until funds are available for putting it on display.

The bloom is practically off the collector's efforts insofar as the United States is concerned. Almost all the old and interesting objects connected with the lives of these primitive people are gone. Burlap grain sacks have largely ousted the arts of Indian basketry. Galvanized iron buckets are substitutes for the old pottery ollas. Cotton cloth has largely supplanted clothing made from skins. Cheap automobiles, like a plague of rabbits, now infest most of the territory where the Indians formerly galloped or walked. Indian lands have become

billboard sites, and in many instances we find the Indians themselves operating gasoline stations or hot dog stands. Mexico is still much of a virgin field for the museum collector, but Mexico has enacted laws by which she proposes to keep her own relics of primitive mankind under her own flag. Mexico, of course, will someday have her own museums, but just now she needs highways, irrigation ditches, schools, and many other things that must be financed before money will be available for non-essential, educational purposes.

Now that the fire and changing conditions have largely disrupted my sources of financial income, we are living up here in the rolling hills and mesa at an elevation of 3,400 feet. We are surrounded by the last of our original neighbors' and hundreds of Indians who greet us with glad hands and friendly smiles. While a ranch of

600 acres gives us ample room to turn around with an automobile, it really seems quite cramped to one whose range has only been limited by far horizons in regions fresh from the hand of the Creator and still unmarred by civilization. To the east of us lies the vast mysterious desert. To the west, and visible from the ranch, stretches the vast, blue Pacific. To the north we look out upon the snowy peaks of the higher ranges, and to the south into that magnificent, unspoiled, virgin playground, Baja California, protruding a thousand miles around the curvature of the earth. What a marvelous country to live in. We are proud to be a part of it!

#### NOTE

<sup>1</sup>(Ed.) This is still another example of the unusual type of site described previously in *Lost and Found*, JCGBA 27(1):79–81.

