

The Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum: A Case Study of a Tribal Museum in the 21st
Century

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Arts at George Mason University

by

Claire Denny
Bachelor of Arts
Catholic University of America, 2017

Director: Benjamin Gatling, Professor
Department of Interdisciplinary Studies

Spring Semester 2021
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA

Copyright 2021 Claire Denny
All Rights Reserved

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my inspiring friend Marie Kills In Sight. She welcomed me into the Buechel Memorial Museum and trusted me with the materials and knowledge of her people. For this, I am forever grateful.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the numerous friends, relatives, and supporters who have made this thesis possible. I would especially like to thank the members of the Sicangu Lakota tribe and those at the St. Francis Mission who were willing to talk to me and share their personal stories with me. I would also like to thank Dr. Lisa Gilman who encouraged me throughout my entire research and writing processes and to the additional members of my committee, Drs. Eric Anderson and Lijun Zhang who were of invaluable help. Finally, I thank Marie Kills In Sight for opening the doors of the museum to me and welcoming me into her community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Abbreviations	vi
Abstract	vii
Chapter One	1
Introduction	1
Looking Forward and the Potential of the BMLM	4
The Rosebud Reservation.....	5
The St. Francis Indian Mission School	9
The Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum.....	13
Scholarly Framework	18
Research Methodology.....	22
Chapter Two.....	28
Native American Collections and Museums.....	28
Online Resources and Engagement: Reconnecting Native American Communities and Material Collections through Museum Technologies	29
Physical Repatriation versus Digital Repatriation.....	34
Archives, Records, and Digital Catalogues.....	36
Projects and Initiatives.....	39
Ownership of the BMLM.....	48
Chapter Three.....	59
Fostering Connectivity	59
Collaboration with the Sicangu Lakota Community and Beyond.....	61
Improvements to Physical Museum Space VS. Improvements to Museum Content and Accessibility	68
Benefits of Increasing the BMLM’s Online Presence	73
Chapter Four	80
Conclusion: Reigniting Life within the BMLM.....	80
References.....	86

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum.....	BMLM
St. Francis Mission	SFM
National Museum of the American Indian.....	NMAI
Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia	MOA

ABSTRACT

THE BUECHEL MEMORIAL LAKOTA MUSEUM: A CASE STUDY OF A TRIBAL MUSEUM IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Claire Denny

George Mason University, 2021

Thesis Director: Dr. Lisa Gilman

This thesis discusses a small, tribal museum located on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. The Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum is owned and operated by the St. Francis Mission, a religious mission run by the Jesuit Order of the Catholic Church. The paper explores issues of ownership, narrative, authority, and accessibility as they relate to the current relationships of the local museum and the Sicangu Lakota tribe. It considers the extent to which introducing technological resources could help safeguard this museum's vulnerable collection and further its founder's mission and the tribe's goals of cultural education and preservation. This thesis presents ways to increase community engagement, capitalize on the opportunities for outside partnerships, and it illustrates steps that to be taken to begin the process of decolonizing the BMLM for the benefit of the St. Francis Mission and most importantly the Sicangu Lakota people.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

My first year out of college, I was fortunate to meet Marie Kills In Sight. I lived on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota from August 2017 to November 2018 while serving with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. My relocation to South Dakota was my first time visiting the Midwest, and as a white woman from the east coast, the reservation was a completely new environment for me. At the time, Kills in Sight was the director of the Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum [BMLM]. The BMLM opened in the 1940s and is owned and operated by the St. Francis Mission, which is run by the Jesuit Order of the Catholic Church. The St. Francis Mission has had a contentious presence on the Rosebud Reservation, home to the Sicangu Lakota people, for over one hundred and thirty years. Currently, the St. Francis Mission operates multiple programs on the reservation, including the Religious Education Program I was working for.

I had read about the BMLM when I was applying to the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. Knowing there would be a tribal museum on the Mission's property was one reason I applied to work on the Rosebud Reservation. The Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum is usually open to visitors from Memorial Day to Labor Day, Tuesdays through Sundays. Visitors can call the St. Francis Mission (SFM) during the off-season and schedule a time to visit. The first time I arrived at the museum in late September, two months into my

time on the reservation, I did not even make it in the front door. Kills In Sight said she had forgotten about the appointment and asked to reschedule. It took a few calls and attempts, but eventually Kills In Sight welcomed me into the museum. What I saw inside left me speechless.

From the outside, the BMLM looked like an unassuming, concrete building painted in a strange shade of yellow, with the words *Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum* spray-painted in red block letters over the heavy metal front door. Kills In Sight gave me a brief tour of the museum's main floor, which contained a handful of displays and a gift shop featuring books and pieces of artwork and jewelry from local artists. The collection displays were somewhat dated; however, the artifacts displayed are in excellent condition and are breathtaking. The items on display consisted of beaded moccasins, headdresses, star quilts, buckskin dresses, and more, demonstrating the extensive artistic talents and skills of the Sicangu Lakota people. I was hooked. I wanted to learn more about the collection, and as a native speaker of Lakota, a lifelong resident of the Rosebud Reservation, and an elder in the community, Kills In Sight was undoubtedly the expert to learn from.

The next time I visited Kills In Sight at the museum, I asked if she might be willing to let me volunteer. She paused for a moment, looked me up and down a few times, and then said yes. From that moment on, I spent my free time during my work corps experience working at the museum with Kills In Sight. She gave me specific projects to work on, such as conducting object inventory of the three vaults in the museum basement, sorting the museum gift shop, and reviving the museum newsletter.

On days when I was at the BMLM, she and I always enjoyed a cup of tea together. During teatime, Kills In Sight would share her knowledge about her Lakota culture and language and information about the history of the SFM, BMLM, and items in the collection. She became my mentor and companion.

My experience living on the Rosebud Reservation helped me establish contacts with tribal members. I can say with absolute certainty that my time living there would not have been as informative or interesting without Marie Kills In Sight. Not long after I departed, Kills In Sight left her position at the BMLM. There is currently no one working at the museum, neither is there any indication that the SFM is looking to hire a new director. This thesis examines the contemporary challenges faced by the Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum while simultaneously exploring the material collection's potential. This research builds upon my previous work conducted on the Rosebud Reservation, specifically at the BMLM.

The BMLM is one of a handful of programs overseen by the St. Francis Mission. The collection contains more than 2,000 artifacts, and thousands of photographs and documents. The structure houses two small display areas, a gift shop, a small library, and archive room on the main floor, and three storage vaults in the basement. Due to its remote location, the BMLM has limited accessibility to the general public. More importantly, the creators of the museum collection, the Sicangu Lakota tribe, also have limited interaction with museum contents due to the BMLM's lack of consistent staff, reputation as being owned by the Catholic Church, and lack of working relationships with

the larger Sicangu Lakota community. Few tribal members have studied the full contents of the BMLM.

The cultural and traditional knowledge of the Sicangu Lakota people is an extensive resource that has yet to be fully recognized by the BMLM. If the museum were to increase its community engagement with the tribe, the mutual benefits of increased physical and virtual access to the material collection for both the Sicangu Lakota people and the BMLM would be significant. Expanding this museum's engagement with the tribe, the general public, and researchers will yield positive results for the museum and its visitors.

Looking Forward and the Potential of the BMLM

The financial situation of the St. Francis Mission is dire, and I do not intend to present ideas for how to fix the financial ordeal of the BMLM and its operations under the SFM. Instead, I explore how a pedagogy of "making do" can be adopted by the St. Francis Mission regarding the BMLM and expanded upon. The St. Francis Mission is surrounded by members of the Sicangu Lakota community who are experts in their people's history, culture, and knowledge. Incorporating a pedagogy of making do consists of working with what resources one has. As elderly Lakota language speakers and culture bearers of the Sicangu people continue to age and pass away, their expertise dies with them. The cultural and language resources which can be used to enhance the collection at the BMLM exist. To first be able to utilize the BMLM collection in a mutually beneficial manner, the St. Francis Mission must take steps to build relationships with those who know the collection best, the Sicangu Lakota people. The

museum does not need unlimited funds to engage in processes of decolonizing or reconnecting the collection with the Sicangu people. Untapped potential lies within the BMLM; the first step is to open its doors to the local community.

The Rosebud Reservation

The Rosebud Reservation, located in south-central South Dakota, is home to the federally recognized tribe of the Sicangu Lakota Oyate (Burnt Thigh Nation). The Great Plains Indians were given the name *Sioux* by French trappers, who abbreviated a Chippewa term during the late 18th, early 19th centuries (The Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center: An Outreach of St. Joseph's Indian School 2020). However, the Chippewa people were not allies of the Plains people, as the term Sioux translates to the enemy or little snake (The Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center 2020). The term *Oceti Sakotin*, Seven Council Fires, properly refers to the Great Plains tribal system. Within the *Oceti Sakotin*, there are three distinct tribal divisions composed of bands with different dialects (The Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center 2020). These three divisions consist of the Eastern division- *Isanti/Santee* (Dakota), the Middle division- *Ihanktown-Ihanktowana* (Nakota), and the Western division- *Tetonwan/Teton* (Lakota) (The Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center 2020).

The Sicangu Lakota are part of the Western division, which is comprised of seven bands and is the largest of the three divisions. Members of the seven bands all speak the Lakota dialect. Historically, these seven bands occupied the area west of the Missouri River and later settled in the sacred lands of the *Paha Sapa*- Black Hills located in South Dakota (The Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center 2020). In 1803, when the United

States completed the Louisiana Purchase from the French, there was a shift in relations between the federal government and the *Oceti Sakotin*. The land that the U.S. purchased during this transaction was home to thousands of Native Americans (The Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center 2020). The Supreme Court declared that the government must honor the Native American land holdings by entering into a "nation-to-nation treatise," which was the first law of the land according to Article Six of the Constitution (The Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center 2020). What transpired, however, were numerous violations of land rights by the U.S. government and white settlers (The Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center 2020).

The U.S. government encouraged white hunters to kill millions of buffalo, decimating the *Oceti Sakotin* people's primary source of food, clothing, and shelter (The Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center 2020). Once the population of the sacred animal was severely diminished and with it a way of life, the Great Plains Indians were left with no other choice but to negotiate (The Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center 2020). A treaty between the Sioux Nation and the U.S government was created in 1868 to establish reservations. In exchange for land given to settlers, the government agreed to protect the Sioux people's rights to hunt and provide them with health care and education (The Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center 2020). After thousands of years roaming free throughout the plains region, the Lakota people were required to settle on eleven reservations, nine of which are in South Dakota (The Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center 2020).

Language is a foundational cornerstone of culture. Language is also a fundamental human right of expression (The Lakota Language Consortium 2018). Each language reflects a mindset unique to the people that speak it (The Lakota Language Consortium 2018). The Lakota language is no exception. Lakota language acknowledges a commonality and reflected in the language are Lakota cultural attributes (The Lakota Language Consortium 2018). The Lakota language remains one of the few ties the Lakota nations have to a pre-reservation way of life (The Lakota Language Consortium 2018). Unfortunately, like many other indigenous languages worldwide, Lakota is an endangered language.

The first step of a decades-long process of cultural extermination for Native populations began in the early 19th century when the federal government of the United States and Christian religious organizations began opening boarding schools for Native American children. Students were no longer able to speak their native languages and were forced to speak English. As a result of this forced assimilation, Native dialects became endangered languages. Numerous tribes in the U.S. still feel the generational loss of language, including the Sicangu Lakota people. According to the Lakota Language Consortium, Lakota is one of only eight Native American languages with over 5,000 speakers (St. Joseph's Indian School 2020). Fluent speakers are aging, making it increasingly difficult to teach younger generations their language (St. Joseph's Indian School 2020). In a conversation I had with Lakota language activist, teacher, and Sicangu Lakota tribal member Allen Wilson in November of 2020, he said there are currently less than 500 fluent speakers of Lakota living on the Rosebud Reservation. Wilson also noted

that the Sicangu people lose about twelve speakers a year, and he expects that number to increase significantly for 2020 and 2021 due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. The week I chatted with Mr. Wilson, he informed me that his language teacher and mentor had died due to Covid-19 complications.

Despite the systematic efforts to eliminate the Lakota language and way of life, there are numerous efforts within Native American tribes and communities to preserve their languages. The Lakota Language Consortium (LLC), founded in 2004, has initiated Lakota language revitalization efforts. The LLC is one of the most prominent Native American language organizations in the United States (The Lakota Language Consortium 2018). It is comprised of Native American leaders, linguists, and volunteers whose primary mission is "the complete revitalization of the Lakota language" (The Lakota Language Consortium 2018). Over the past decade, the organization has produced the first-ever professionally developed Lakota language materials for school children (The Lakota Language Consortium 2018). Participation from 20,000 Lakota students from more than fifty-three schools across North and South Dakota makes the LLC the most active language revitalization organization of its kind (The Lakota Language Consortium 2018). These efforts contribute to the preservation of the Lakota people's unique identity through their language.

Today, reservations are home to some of the U.S.'s most impoverished peoples. According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Rosebud Reservation has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country at 83% for a population total of over 28,000 people (U.S Department of the Interior 2020). Yes, despite numerous challenges, the

Sicangu Lakota people are dedicated to preserving their culture and language. One of the few cultural centers on the Rosebud Reservation is the Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum. On the one hand, the Jesuits helped establish and maintain the museum. On the other hand, the Jesuits played a central role in the nationwide cultural elimination of Native American language and culture in the United States and have provided limited resources for sustaining the museum.

The St. Francis Indian Mission School

Jesuit missionaries set up the St. Francis Mission in 1886 in the town of St. Francis, establishing the first Jesuit mission on Lakota land (Koppedraye n.d. and Marquette University 2020). After seeing the trend of the established federal boarding schools for Native American children, Chief Spotted Tail had requested Catholic Missionaries come to Rosebud (Marquette University 2020). He hoped it would allow the Sicangu Lakota children to stay closer to their families rather than be torn apart from their homes and sent thousands of miles away to a federal boarding school, such as the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. Chief Spotted Tail's persistent requests came shortly after the federal government rescinded its Christian evangelization restrictions on reservations (Marquette University 2020). He wanted his people to learn English as a tool to negotiate with the U.S government. Initially funded by federally provided funds, the St. Francis Indian Mission School expanded in its early years, thanks to private contributions by Katherine Drexel, a notable Catholic donor from Philadelphia, and additional disbursement of funds held in trust by the federal government (Marquette University 2020).

The St. Francis Indian Mission School opened to its first fifty students on June 15, 1886 (Ekquist 1999, 95). Parents who sent their children to the school hoped their children would learn to read and write English, which would enable them to serve as future leaders of the tribe and be able to interact with whites (Ekquist 1999, 95-96). They hoped this new generation of educated Sicangu Lakota children would fully comprehend the treaties the whites wanted the tribe to adopt (Ekquist 1999, 96). Students who attended the Catholic St. Francis Mission School had numerous changes to adjust to while living away from their families. For example, students slept in regimented dormitories, ate foreign foods, wore white-style clothing, had to speak a new language, and were subject to new rules of behavior (Ekquist 1999, 109). The Catholic nuns and Jesuits who taught at this school and other boarding schools for Native Americans encouraged their students to abandon their languages, cultures, religions, and traditions in order to assimilate into white society (Ekquist 1999, 97). Students who did not were often punished.

Catholicism took root quickly on the Rosebud Reservation during the first half of the twentieth century as local parishes began to pop-up in many communities (Ekquist 1999, 97). Catholic families on the reservation wanted their children to attend the Catholic Boarding School and saw the potential benefits of having their children educated at a Catholic school. Sicangu families who were not Catholic, however, objected to the boarding school due to extended periods of separation from their children, the often harsh discipline their children were subjected to, and educators' attempts to eliminate the local culture (Ekquist 1999, 97).

Regardless of the objections and protests of the school by local families, the school continued to grow in size. By the 1940s, the St. Francis Mission School had roughly 300 students enrolled, including day students and boarders (Ekquist 1999, 216). The staff decided to gradually turn the school into a day school starting in 1965 (Ekquist 1999, 216-17). During the 1960s, a national movement began in Native communities for self-determination. As a result of this new push, the St. Francis Mission School decided to invite input about the school from members of the reservation. At the time, the school had almost 500-day students (Ekquist 1999, 217). A new school board called the *Sicangu Oyate Ho, Inc* (SOH), or the Voice of the Burnt Thigh People, was founded (Ekquist 1999, 216).

During the Richard Nixon administration (1969-1974), the Bureau of Indian Affairs [BIA] began to fund Indian boarding schools to permit tribes to control the schools (Ekquist 1999, 112). The SOH recognized an opportunity and requested funds for the St. Francis Mission School (Ekquist 1999, 217-18). BIA funding was not sufficient to keep the school running, and the Catholic Church agreed to contribute funds while the transition of power took place (Ekquist 1999, 218). The school was continuously staffed by Jesuits and the Sisters of St. Francis until the Jesuits transferred control of the school to the Sicangu Lakota tribe in 1972 (Marquette Univeristy 2020). As a result, the Jesuits stopped teaching at the school, and the name changed to the St. Francis Indian School. The tribe currently retains control over the St. Francis Indian School. The St. Francis Mission School existed for almost a century, and its lasting impacts on the Sicangu Lakota people persist today.

Non-Native staff such as nuns and priests who worked at the St. Francis Mission School throughout its existence attempted to serve the Rosebud Reservation population by teaching its youth. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, few people could have predicted what methods would be executed and the lasting impacts on the population. The St. Francis Mission School's curriculum was designed to promote Sicangu Lakota children's cultural assimilation into dominant white culture (Ekquist 1999, 218). Psychologists have utilized the term "trauma of history" to refer to events in the history of people who cause trauma to the group (Thornton 2002, 20). When a person, or group of people, has experienced generational trauma, the group psyche remains wounded unless the trauma is resolved (Thornton 2002, 21). Boarding schools across Native populations in the U.S. were at the center of efforts of forced assimilation of Native American peoples. The residents of the Rosebud Reservation were no stranger to these efforts. Throughout my interviews with Jesuits currently working for the St. Francis Mission and Rosebud tribal members, differing viewpoints emerged regarding the St. Francis Mission School's history and its lasting impacts. Differing perspectives also emerged out of the stories that the artifacts and photographs in the BMLM tell.

The BMLM has the potential to be a site of decolonization, which would require efforts to amend the historical trauma inflicted upon the Sicangu Lakota people. By decolonization I mean, the museum can incorporate community input and voices in the museum and engage in a process that would relinquish most of the St. Francis Mission's control of the materials and knowledge in the museum. Items in the collection, referred to by Lakota teacher and traditional artist Steve Tamayo as "relatives," serve as

educational resources for the tribe as well as connections to the past. The museum's collection can serve as a vehicle for continued culture and language revitalization efforts. Currently, the narratives presented at the BMLM are minimal in their attempts to incorporate dialogue about the St. Francis Mission School's role and its relation to the current challenges of language and culture preservation. Strategically revisiting the methodology of display and narratives presented at the BMLM, coupled with increased efforts of local, tribal engagement, can transform the BMLM into a museum taking notable strides to become a decolonized institution.

The Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum

The culturally and academically significant collection housed in the Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum contains over 2,000 artifacts and 42,000 photographs (The St. Francis Mission 2020). The foundational collection was donated by a former Jesuit priest, Father Eugene Buechel S.J, after his death in 1954 (South Dakota State University, South Dakota Art Museum 2020). The SFM built the museum in 1947 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Fr. Buechel's time as a Jesuit priest (The Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum 2018). Eugene Buechel was born in Germany in 1847 and joined the Jesuit Order in 1897 (South Dakota State University 2020). In 1900 he came to the U.S to continue his studies in Wisconsin. His superiors sent him in 1902 to work as an educator at the St. Francis Mission boarding school on the Rosebud Reservation (South Dakota State University 2020). He lived in Missouri from 1904-1906 while he continued his theology studies and returned to Rosebud in 1916 after living on the Pine Ridge Reservation for eight years (South Dakota State University 2020). He served as superior

at the SFM for six years before being assigned to Pine Ridge from 1926-1929. Once again, he returned to St. Francis in 1929 and remained there until his death in 1954 (South Dakota State University 2020).

Fr. Buechel was given the name *Wanbli Sapa*, or Black Eagle, by the Lakota people (South Dakota State University 2020). His Lakota name demonstrates the respect he earned from Rosebud's local population. During his time living with the Sicangu Lakota people, he learned the Lakota language, photographed the Sicangu people and regional landscape, and documented the culture and language. He was a naturalist and documented plant specimens and kept daily weather records (Koppedraye n.d.). He also translated several church texts into Lakota, and his file of almost 30,000 Lakota works was published in 1970 as a Lakota- English Dictionary (South Dakota State University 2020). The death of Chief Red Cloud in 1909 may have contributed to Buechel's decision to begin his initial collection and preserve materials which were a testament to Lakota life (Koppedraye n.d.). He was determined to keep the collection among the Lakota people to serve as a repository of their history and culture.

In a forward for the book, *Lakota Cultural Signatures: Bows from the Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum St. Francis, SD*, from the 1940s, Buechel stated his desire to "keep intact the heritage of the Sioux, the history of their nations, and the memory of their customs and folklore." (Koppedraye n.d.). He recognized his views about the necessity of preservation were at odds with his fellow Jesuits at the time; nonetheless, he was dedicated to maintaining a collection that would help the Lakota take pride in their culture (Koppedraye n.d.). While some items were given to him as gifts, Buechel also

commissioned items from local artists to help build his collection (Koppedrayer n.d.). In his will, Fr. Buechel bequeathed his collection of over 940 artifacts to the care of the St. Francis Mission. According to the South Dakota State University Art Museum, his collection “represents one of the most important historical and sociological records in the state” (South Dakota State University 2020). Items housed at the BMLM have never left the boundaries of the Rosebud Reservation. The BMLM collection is significant because it "speaks to the complete histories that informed the interactions of Lakota peoples, Jesuit missionaries, government agents, traders, and others” (Bucko and Koppedrayer 2007, 19). Buechel initially displayed his own smaller collection wherever he could find space. The earliest section of the BMLM was constructed in 1947 to commemorate Fr. Buechel’s 50th anniversary as a member of the Jesuit order (Bucko and Koppedrayer 2007, 19).

Following Buechel’s death in 1954, the museum's inner workings through the 1960s are not well documented. Not all the Jesuits associated with the mission saw the value of the collection. The chain of decisions on behalf of leadership at the SFM which resulted in the preservation of the collection is unknown (Bucko and Koppedrayer 2007, 37). The Jesuits of the mission in the late 1970s made a "deliberate attempt to share control of the museum with a community-based board of directors and see Lakota people serve as directors of the museum" (Bucko and Koppedrayer 2007, 19-20). This transition marked a positive turning point in the attitude of the SFM. It indicates the leadership of the mission recognized the crucial need to have community involvement in decision making about the museum. The St. Francis Mission decided to expand the BMLM in

1999 and can display about a quarter of its collection. Consistent activity and community involvement at the BMLM has been challenging since the 1970s, despite the efforts of the SFM to have a museum board comprised of community members. Since the 1970s, there have been seven museum directors, all tribal members from the reservation. The last official director of the BMLM was Marie Kills In Sight, and she left her position in 2020. There is currently no one working at the museum.

Today, the BMLM's financial resources are severely limited. The St. Francis Mission, a non-profit organization, often finds itself stretched financially. The collection is in three vaults in the museum's basement; however, it is not properly stored or organized. Since no one is currently working at the BMLM, there are no routine conservation efforts of artifacts. The rural location of the museum significantly impacts the collection's visibility. There are few opportunities to share the collection beyond with the occasional, seasonal visitors because little of the collection is digitized. This situation limits accessibility of the collection to tribal members and the general public.

While the BMLM has had a presence on the reservation for over seventy years, an underlying tension persists between the Jesuit management of the collection and the Sicangu Lakota people. There are questions and concerns about the ownership, availability, and maintenance of the BMLM collection. The collection legally belongs to the St. Francis Mission; however, global trends in the museum world have shifted to acknowledging the importance of repatriation and community ownership and engagement with communities of origin. The BMLM is physically situated on the Rosebud

Reservation among the Sicangu Lakota people, yet it is rarely used as a resource by tribal members.

The St. Francis Mission has the opportunity to acknowledge the role the Jesuits played in the forced cultural assimilation of the Sicangu Lakota people and the generational loss of language and culture that stemmed from its school and the many like it across North America. Government- schools meant to assist local populations on reservations have historically been insufficient and sometime corrupt. Christian churches have had a presence on reservations for over a century and are in a position to help the local population. However, many residents of the Rosebud Reservation remain distrustful of Catholic organizations. The mission of the Jesuit order is to "work for reconciliation every day – with God, human beings and with the environment" (The Jesuit Order 2021). Justice is "one of the central elements of the Jesuit mission of reconciliation (The Jesuit Order 2021). Acknowledging the consequences of their Jesuit predecessors' actions would allow the SFM to embark on a new chapter in the relations between the Church and the Sicangu Lakota tribe.

The St. Francis Mission can take steps now to help heal the wound and divide that exists between the SFM and the Sicangu People. One of the first steps would be opening the doors to the vaults of the BMLM to encourage Sicangu Lakota people to interact with and study the materials housed inside. Increasing accessibility of the collection to the tribe would allow the museum to better document the context, meaning, and contemporary relevance of their collection. Improved museum records would increase the

collection's cultural value as a resource. There is untapped potential living within the walls of the museum.

Scholarly Framework

Throughout my study of the Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum I build upon research in the areas of Native American and Indigenous studies, folklore and education, and museums and technology. My interdisciplinary analysis will illustrate connections between the reservation's colonialist roots and issues that persist today which prevent tribes from conserving their material collections. Evolving literature and research in these areas tackle questions regarding the ownership of Native collections, the purpose tribal museums serve, and the increasing role of technology and its relationship to accessibility of collections. Leading research at educational institutions such as the Smithsonian has long been grappling with issues facing the "fragile cultural ecosystems" of Native American populations (Vennum 1989, 22). Today, the historical scarcity of money and resources available to reservations in the U.S means they face ongoing challenges.

Not surprisingly, social scientists and historians view the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a time of significant loss. In the late nineteenth century, museums became repositories of items "alienated from their original contexts, often employed to further racist narratives regarding the primitiveness and exoticism of "vanishing" Native American cultures (Macdonald and Fyfe 1996, Pilcher and Vermeulen 2008, Macdonald 2006, Toelken 2003, Graden 2013). During this time Native populations were informed that there was no place for their tribal identity in

modern society; however their material culture identifying their tribal uniqueness was extremely prized (Lonetree 2012, 9).

A key area of debate in Native American and Indigenous studies pertains to ownership of material collections. Federal legislation such as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, forced museums to revisit Native American collections in their possession. One of the issues pertaining to repatriation is that “it will almost inevitably involve conflicting approaches, both legal and moral” (Harding 1997, 773). Some museums serve as “places intimately tied to the colonization process” (Lonetree 2012, 172); however, the role of museums is changing to what some scholars such as aboriginist art historian Ruth Phillips have referred to as the “second museum age”, making museums more open and community-relevant sites” (Lonetree 2012, 4).

Land ownership and material culture ownership remain ongoing topics of debate between Native communities, museums, and the U.S federal government. Displacement, disease, genocide, and forced assimilation contributed greatly to the current state of ownership dilemmas facing Native American populations. Today, Native American communities are actively involved and consulted for museum exhibits. The move to collaboration in all facets of museum work, including exhibits, is gaining momentum and is considered a “best practice” within the field (Lonetree 2012, 14). A decolonizing museum practice must include assisting Native Communities in “addressing the legacies of historical unresolved grief” (Lonetree 2012, 4).

Just as research in the area of Indigenous Studies and museums is examining issues of collaboration and partnerships, the field of Folklore and Education also stresses importance of community engagement, curriculum integration, inquiry-based learning, and the value of partnerships. The methodologies and educational tools utilized in folklore and education encourage participants to engage in discoveries about themselves, their families, and their communities. The pedagogy utilized by those working in the field of folklore and education provides insights and suggestions for how the BMLM could incorporate some of the methods employed by scholars in the field, and their potential to yield long-term benefits.

In 1988, the Folklore and Education section of the American Folklore Society (AFS) was created. This provided the first professional forum for folklorists working in K-12 education to interact with one another, to share resources and tools, and to debate pedagogical and philosophical issues (Bowman 2006, 73). As projects and program initiatives continue to be developed, questions emerge regarding the importance of community engagement, curriculum integration, inquiry-based learning, and the value of partnerships. Many of the folklorists working in education tend to lead projects and create curriculum rather than publish academic reflections (Pryor and Bowman 2016, 437). These individuals recognize the value of folklore and the importance of grassroots involvement, and they themselves are often working both behind the scenes of projects as well as implementing them. Behind the scenes work includes tasks such as grant writing, coordinating with partners and organizations, creating curricula for educators, and building rapport with communities.

As technology becomes a prominent component in classrooms, more professional folklorists are investing in technologies such as social media, to help build community in institutional settings (Lawless 1996). Folklore and education stresses the need to “bring into the classroom community knowledge as authoritative and community people as teachers” (Bowman and Hamer 2011,13). Work in this field is inherently collaborative and highlights the importance of connecting students with individuals and organizations in their community, resulting in the involvement of young people in “creating knowledge by using and developing primary sources” (Bowman and Hamer 2011,13). There is significant value in collaboration between students and local cultural and language bearers. Today, the field continues to face questions regarding community engagement, curriculum integration, and establishing lasting partnerships.

Folklorist working in education are not the only professionals experimenting with technology, museum staff members are as well. Today, collection catalogues, virtual museum tours, curricula for students, and resources for educators are all part of a well-established museum website. As technology continues to develop and shape our ability to partake in a globalized society, museum educators are shifting their means of interaction. Media and technology scholars such as Ramesh Srinivasan advocate for tribal museums to “adopt a critical and reflexive approach towards using new media technologies to provide digital access to their collections, in support of their agendas of cultural revitalization and self-representation” (Srinivasan et al 2009, 161). Indigenous communities around the world are utilizing new technologies to support cultural self-representation through endeavors such as the creation of websites, and video projects.

This can also enable communities to further explore how “technological access to objects can support local goals in supporting learning and engagement in cultural heritage” (Srinivasan et al 2009, 162). The formation of cultural heritage museums specifically created about the lives of indigenous people has contributed to a “growing dialogue between mainstream museums and indigenous people around museum representation” (Srinivasan et al 2009, 163). Tribal museums are in the position of offering alternative narratives to the historically colonial images often found in mainstream cultural institutions, while also serving as a “community anchor” for cultural projects (Bowe chop and Erikson 2005).

This case study of the BMLM builds upon areas of research pertaining to Native American and Indigenous Studies, folklore and education, and museums and technology. As this remotely located museum has no technology currently integrated into its outreach plan, my thesis will shed light on how the incorporation of technology will increase the BMLM’s visibility and accessibility to both tribal members and the general public alike. Research in these areas will inform discussions about the positionality and potential of the BMLM in an ever-growing informed and technological society.

Research Methodology

My thesis argues that transforming the BMLM into an accessible and active community space would be beneficial. I suggest steps that could be taken by the BMLM to make it a more accessible resource that would benefit the tribe. My examination of the museum includes its history, the history of the people it represents, and the current value

the tribe places on the collection. Combining multiple research methods yields research rooted in recent viewpoints about the presentation and preservation of Native material collections and who gets to make these important decisions. This thesis consists of three main elements: a historical analysis of Native American reservations in the U.S, centering on the Rosebud Reservation; an analysis of educational technologies currently being utilized by well-funded cultural institutions, and an ethnographic case study of the BMLM. To learn about the history of the reservation, the Jesuit Mission, and the BMLM, I did library research. In order to learn about the perspectives of tribal members and Jesuits, I conducted interviews.

Interviews with tribal members and current Jesuits working at the SFM provides critical insight into the value of the BMLM and its representational power to the Sicangu Lakota Nation. Those involved in St. Francis Mission leadership and individuals living on the reservation offered their personal perspectives on issues facing the Sicangu Lakota people. Narratives collected through my interviews with museum workers at institutions such as the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and those currently living on the Rosebud Reservation provided insight into issues surrounding Native American material culture collections, cultural preservation, and the potential of the BMLM, connecting happenings on the Rosebud Reservation to national dialogues. Through my interviews, I learned about the concerns of Sicangu Lakota tribal members and museum professionals working with Native collections. Issues we discussed pertained to Native American representation in museums, intellectual property rights, identity, racism, and struggles with proper preservation of a community's

material culture. Contemporary, local input is crucial for understanding the collection's cultural significance.

Tribal input about these topics is necessary for understanding the significance of the BMLM collection in its context of representing the Sicangu Lakota people. I interviewed members of the tribe who currently work for the St. Francis Mission or who used to work for the SFM and individuals who are active members in the tribal community, such as Lakota Language teachers and traditional artists. Many of the people I interviewed were individuals I had met during my time living on the reservation. A majority of the tribal members I conversed with have lived on the reservation for their entire lives. Other individuals I interviewed were people recommended to me during previous conversations. Due to the current global pandemic, in-person interviews were not possible. My interviews took place through online video platforms such as Zoom, as well as via phone calls. Some individuals preferred to answer questions through email. Discussion with tribal members, culture bearers, and Lakota language speakers living on the reservation was crucial to comprehend the museum's value and its reason for existence.

In addition to interviews, I also researched educational technologies; specifically, those currently being utilized by well-funded cultural institutions provide insight into educational resources suited to advance the accessibility of the BMLM. I also researched how other tribal groups and more established institutions have utilized digital technologies to expand capacity, usefulness, and access of tribal collections in order to engage with larger audiences and tribes. Museum educators know how to interact with

online audiences who cannot visit a museum in person, a situation the BMLM is well accustomed to. To continue its mission of cultural conservation, and public education in an ever-growing technological world, the BMLM must increase its online presence and repertoire of technical resources for the benefit of the museum, the tribe, and the general public. An analysis of educational technologies currently being utilized by cultural institutions provides greater insight into how the BMLM can increase the collection's visibility and build an online presence.

Interviews with museum staff from institutions such as the National Museum of the American Indian, such as head textile conservator Susan Heald and her colleague, Collections Manager Cali Martin, are incorporated into the research. Heald has visited the Rosebud Reservation on more than one occasion and has worked closely with individuals from the Sicangu Lakota tribe. Cali Martin is a member of the Osage tribe, and before her job at the NMAI, she worked for the Osage Tribal Museum. These two women have extensive experience working with Native communities and understand the challenges faced by museum institutions today regarding representation and ownership of Native materials. I also discuss and explore online resources created by larger institutions. Today, many institutions with extensive Native American collections have collaborated with Native communities about the presentation and maintenance of material collections. A better understanding of how institutions that maintain Native collections reach a broad audience online is critical for implementing similar technologies and methodologies at the BMLM.

My research findings indicate that incorporating educational strategies and resources at the BMLM will aid in the museum's mission while simultaneously expanding efforts of preservation and accessibility for both the Sicangu Lakota people and the general public. Strategizing what educational resources could be integrated into this museum and developing initiatives such as an online database and curricula will benefit the BMLM, the tribe, the general public, and other academic and cultural institutions. Exploring the benefits of utilizing educational technology at the BMLM and developing the framework for possible initiatives such as online curricula will be discussed in later chapters.

This thesis consists of three chapters. The introduction provides information about the history of the Rosebud Reservation and the Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum. It includes an examination of the boarding school era of the late 1800s to the mid 1900s, in particular the St. Francis Boarding School operated by the St. Francis Mission, and the numerous current challenges of language and cultural preservation, which largely stem from this era and national movement. The chapter concludes with a section about my thesis methodology and the significance of examining the potential of the BMLM. The second chapter discusses the history of museums in North America which house native collections, and the state of museums' relations with Native American communities today. Chapter two also covers online education tools, resources, and projects currently common at mainstream museums. It presents issues of ownership of the BMLM and its relation to the St. Francis Mission and the importance of collaboration and community partnerships. The final chapter focuses on the BMLM's

potential to serve as a site of decolonization and healing. Topics include discussion concerning BMLM relations with the Sicangu Lakota people and the benefits of partnerships with outside institutions and presents strategies to better position the BMLM as an interactive tribal museum in the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER TWO

Native American Collections and Museums

The Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum is one of the numerous museums in the U.S that houses Native American collections. Institutions in North America such as The Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in D.C and New York City are repositories for the most extensive collections of Native Americans and First Peoples material culture in the world. These well-funded institutions are equipped with extensive collections and staffed with experts who manage physical collections and online content. The result is a physical collection that is cared for, and accessible online through a maintained and developed website. Questions remain regarding what materials are appropriate to post online and the extent of working relationships with origin communities. As technologies advance, these questions have navigated to the center of the museum world.

The St. Francis Mission is currently unable to staff the Buechel Memorial Museum due to budget constraints. Besides currently being, the museum does not have an official website; instead, it has a brief write-up on the St. Francis Mission website's home page. While the lack of staffing and online presence has hindered the fulfillment of the BMLM's mission, it nevertheless has the opportunity for growth. Despite the lack of staffing and resources, the museum has the potential to develop its online presence and achieve its mission on a larger scale. An exploration of previous projects and collaborations conducted at institutions such as the National Museum of the American

Indian and the Anthropology Museum at the University of British Columbia can lend insight into technologies that the BMLM may benefit from incorporating into its museum model. I will discuss some resources that I examined and briefly explore their pros and cons and outline how other museums have developed online resources in order to make an argument for why the BMLM should expand its online presence for the benefit of the tribe and the general public.

Resources created through collaborative efforts between museum institutions and indigenous communities explore questions of ownership, narrative, authority, accessibility, and the pros and cons of technological resources. As the BMLM is not currently using any educational tools, resources, or museum education strategies, it can learn from other institutions' initiatives. The BMLM can incorporate educational resources for both an in-person and online audience created through community collaboration with the Sicangu Lakota tribe. Community collaboration ensures mutual investment and benefits for both the St. Francis Mission and the tribe.

Online Resources and Engagement: Reconnecting Native American Communities and Material Collections through Museum Technologies

Educational technologies have become a prominent tool for connecting individuals to cultural resources, especially for museums. In the United States, Native American tribes have opened museums that connect tribal members and the general public to their people's material collections. Local, tribal museums serve as the epicenter of conversation about digital repatriation and the broader issue of utilizing new technologies to reconnect communities and collections in museum settings. An examination of the intersection of technology, Native American community museums,

and Native American material collections will demonstrate how tribal museums today incorporate technology to reclaim ownership of tribal narratives and establish group identities in the 21st century (Sommers 2019, Biolsi 1995, Swan and Jordan 2015, Lawlor 2006).

My exploration of current projects involving digital repatriation includes discussion about collection ownership, how tribal museums utilize technology to engage with their tribes, the general public, museum institutions, and the benefits and drawbacks of using such educational technologies. Online resources and increased collaborations between museums and indigenous communities have been beneficial for all involved. On the other hand, these conversations also reveal the gaps that remain in relations between tribes and museum institutions. Ongoing efforts in repatriation demonstrate the significance of tribal identity, particularly acts of groupness and self-understanding, and how connections to one's material culture play a critical role in forming indigenous identities. Native American identity is often based on shared community claims and ideals, manifested in tangible and intangible culture. The projects highlighted in this section demonstrate the positive impacts and challenges of digital repatriation and online resources, in addition to their ability to help tribes reclaim their narratives about material culture.

Prior to the 1970s, only a few Native American tribes in the United States had their own museums. Today, there are over two hundred tribal museums, and that number continues to grow (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 163). Tribal museums and local cultural centers have increased in popularity within Native American communities due to their role to

cultural revitalization and the agency these spaces provide for tribal communities (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 163). These institutions serve as a mediator between tribal and Anglo-American ideologies in their presentation of knowledge (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 163). Tribal museums can mediate between internal and external viewpoints on tribal history and culture while also sustaining the tension between them (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 165). They can take on the role of mediator between internal and external expectations about a tribe's particular history (Isaac 2007, 6). It is difficult to strike a balance in presenting the tension between esoteric (or secret) knowledge and exoteric (or public) knowledge (Isaac 2007). In the end however, tribal knowledge must be framed on its own terms by the local community and present a self-image they desire.

The growing number of local cultural heritage centers oriented purposefully towards the lives of indigenous people has encouraged an ongoing dialogue between mainstream museum institutions and indigenous populations pertaining to museum representation (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 163). The proliferation of tribally operated museums over the past three decades demonstrates museums' recognized power in representing a people or history (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 165). Regardless of how museums present information, the public views institutional voice as authoritative (Rowley 2013, 31). Conceived as a "pedagogical tool for the masses", public museums have a history of being used as an instrument for "advancing national character through educational means" (Trofanenko 2006, 51). Museums would classify and categorize knowledge through displays of objects, often from private collections of individuals.

Museums began to legitimate their authority by “purposefully shaping the moral, mental, and behavioral characteristics of the masses” (Trofanenko 2006, 51).

Historical museum holdings of Native American collections frequently resulted from the salvage paradigm of the 19th century. At the time, there was a prevalent belief that indigenous peoples and cultures in North America would disappear (Hennessy et al. 2013, 46). The collection and documentation of cultural objects was part of a larger, systematic attempt to eliminate Native cultures. Museums served as repositories of materials collections which had been separated from their homes and contributed to cultural loss. Today, museums are attempting to amend for their role in culture loss through efforts which foster cultural revitalization or conservation. Museums, in general, have been experiencing significant changes over the past forty years. In the 1970s, a major reorienting of museums occurred, which at the time was referred to as "the new museology" (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 266). At the center of this new era of museums, was the assumption that the museum is an educational instrument rather than merely a collecting facility lacking cultural context (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 266). The shift indicates the central role museum educators hold within a museum setting. Museums are no longer seen as merely academic gatekeepers, but rather museums are now seen as educational gatekeepers (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 267). The differentiation between the two roles has resulted in a focus on supporting a diverse range of educational programs such as guides, school tours, and talks at museums.

The new museology resulted in increasing support by museums for educational programs and standardizing collection documentation to serve as critical educational

tools (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 267). Educational performances in museums, such as talks, exhibit guides, school tours, and interactive exhibits, are now part of a typical museum model. While these efforts deserve recognition, museum workers still remove collection items from their cultural environments. Diverse stories may be collected and recorded by museums, "but rarely do they engage directly with the objects' biographies and use" (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 267). When materials are removed from communities, possessed by outsiders, and used in contrary manners, origin communities face dire challenges regarding cultural innovation, and cultural life faces dire challenges (Anderson and Christen 2013, 121-22). It is paramount people to have proper access to their histories, ceremonies, laws, and cultural practices, as these contribute to their cultural continuity, culture innovation, and identity (Anderson and Christen 2013, 121-22). Cultural institutions around the globe are now grappling with the task of how to adequately deal with their collections of indigenous materials, both in terms of "recognizing the conditions which lead to their collection and creating new possibilities for renegotiating their access and control" (Anderson and Christen 2013, 106).

As cultural institutions continue to house "documented indigenous materials as artifacts of colonial rule," those working in these institutions view their role as shifting from owners to stewards of the objects, where "indigenous and traditional communities share in the care and preservation of their cultural materials" (Anderson and Christen 2013, 112-13). Well-funded, larger museum institutions such as the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology (MOA) and the Smithsonian's National Museums of the American Indian (NMAI) have supported the creation of tribal museums. Since its

founding in 1949, MOA has worked closely with British Columbian First Nations people (Rowley 2013, 25). The NMAI, too, has supported tribal efforts through training, grants, and programs and has been at the forefront of empowering U.S tribes to develop their own institutions that meet their local communities' needs (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 168). The increasing collaborations of Native Americans within high-profile institutions "heralds an emerging spirit of collaboration with indigenous groups and its increased centrality within the missions of established museums in North America" (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 168).

Physical Repatriation versus Digital Repatriation

Over the last few decades, as legal, social, and political changes have forced conversations, negotiations, and debates about the return of objects and human remains to Indigenous communities, the term repatriation has become a central concern for museum staff and members of indigenous communities (Bell, Christen, and Turin 2013, 3). Ongoing conversations between larger museum institutions and Native communities indicated legislation was required to respond to anthropologists and scientists' ethically questionable collection practices during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was signed into law in 1990 by President Clinton (Gamber 2010, 184). This legislation attempted to atone for centuries of grave-robbing and theft of sacred or culturally significant objects (Gamber 2010, 184). The passing of NAGPRA by Congress also created the term "digital repatriation" in the field of indigenous studies. Digital repatriation refers to the return of cultural heritage items in the digital format to the origin communities (Herther 2019, 18).

While NAGPRA significantly altered the scope of relations and power between Native American nations, scholars, and collecting institutions; it also left unanswered questions about future technologies and digital repatriation (Bell, Christen, and Turin 2013, 3).

While this legal initiative was a step in the right direction, the logistics of digital repatriation are messy, complicated, and still evolving. The sharing of digitized records, archival documents, field notes, photographs, and audio recordings differs significantly from repatriation under NAGPRA (Powell 2016, 67). Digitizing archival collections is relatively simple for well-funded institutions. The challenge lies in repatriating digital surrogates to communities of origin and developing acceptable access protocols for the specific tribe (Leopold 2013, 95). Each repatriation situation is unique, meaning there is no one-size-fits-all solution or simple list for digital repatriation processes and protocols. Questions remain about the production, consumption, and circulation of digital objects.

Tribes are not always able to accommodate returned artifacts and store them properly. In these cases, digital repatriation often serves as an alternative to physical repatriation. As the creation of new technology continues to occur, digital repatriation has become a critical process for differential practices of returning indigenous materials to their homelands (Bell, Christen, and Turin 2013, 5). The ease with which digital resources may be copied, distributed, and revised, their capability to be accessed from numerous locations, and their ephemeral nature situate them as distinct cultural objects separate from physical artifacts (Bell, Christen, and Turin 2013, 5). As an evolving and distinct practice, digital repatriation consists of differing types of return and "calls for

work to define new areas of cultural needs, and to forge alternative sets of practices, around the distinct features of digital objects" (Bell, Christen, and Turin 2013, 5).

At its core, digital repatriation has evolved into negotiations of ownership and authority over digital collections and data (Hennessy et al. 2013, 47). While challenges remain, digital repatriation has created new opportunities to preserve, share, and enhance information regarding indigenous communities worldwide (Herther 2019, 19). A critical issue of inequality in digital accessibility among potential recipients and audiences of museum databases remains a notable challenge pertaining to digitization of museum collectionsⁱ. One positive element of digital returns is that they decenter museums' authority and remind scholars of the ontologies in which objects are both situated and understood (Bell, Christen, and Turin 2013, 5). Contemporary technological innovations shape new opportunities for tribal museums to engage in conversations with museums about collections' access and objects. Tribal museums have the chance to utilize technological systems as digital repositories and as a means of fulfilling outreach-oriented goals (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 162). Developments in new technologies to archive and circulate materials have spurred numerous digital return and repatriation projects and initiatives such as the Inuvialuit Living History Project, which resulted from a collaboration between the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and the Inuvialuit nation of Canada (Hennessy et al. 2013, 47).

Archives, Records, and Digital Catalogues

Mainstream museums have made considerable strides in incorporating indigenous voices in exhibits and programming. More work remains regarding museum

documentation of objects in catalog descriptions, as this task remains in the hands of a handful of specialists and professionals (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 166). The intellectual control over mainstream museums' informational core that houses Native American material collections remains under the direction of a handful of museum professionals with a highly specialized vocabulary for describing objects (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 164). Tribes may have a different classification system for their material collections than how museums categorize items.

This often creates a barrier between source communities and museum records, limiting a community's ability to engage with and learn from their collections. The editorial control museums exercise over the permanent records of objects in their possession minimizes the dynamic roles the objects might hold within the societies that imbue them with meaning and significance (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 176). As mainstream museums continue to increase their collaboration with tribal museums to share information about collections, the tension between specialized language present in museum catalogues and the community-oriented intentions of tribal museums who desire to make use of those catalogue entries becomes a vital matter to address (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 164).

The critical shift occurring in how museums use new technologies, from the exhibition-oriented model to a critical and reflexive model rooted in indigenous, local contexts can enable museums to develop richer representations and object descriptions (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 163). A critical and reflexive model allows Native and indigenous communities to have more say in the information disseminated online. Museum

collections house vast repositories of "intangible forms of knowledge which are encoded intangible objects" (Hennessy et al. 2013, 50). The stories and histories of material collections and audio recordings come alive in the hands of their communities of origin (Powell 2016, 72). Source communities often have a vested interest in determining the nature of the heritage materials that reside in museum settings, either online or off (Leopold 2013, 88). Numerous indigenous communities want to have input over the circulation of cultural materials and knowledge based on their cultural systems (Bell, Christen, and Turin 2013, 6).

New media technologies have great potential for tribal museums to increase "the visibility of, and discussion around, objects, in both inward- and outward-looking directions" for indigenous communities as they reclaim their material culture and knowledge (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 162). Indigenous communities maintain the capability for utilizing digital technology, regardless of their infrastructure (Powell 2016, 68). Media and Technology scholars, such as Ramesh Srinivasan, maintain that the possibilities are two-fold, meaning "museum's technologies have the potential to further tribal goals of cultural revitalization and connectedness to heritage by engaging their communities critically and actively" (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 162), and museum technologies also have the potential to enable tribal leadership to assert tribal claims to larger institutions and outside partners (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 162). Indigenous communities, museums, archives, and libraries are increasingly utilizing digital platforms and materials in engaging ways.

Projects and Initiatives

Museums, institutions, and indigenous communities worldwide embark on new projects and initiatives each day. These include efforts about language revitalization and preservation, material culture preservation and research, and updating archival records and museum catalogues. Collaborations between Native American nations and institutions have resulted in establishing legal frameworks for tribes, such as Traditional Knowledge License and Labels, collaborative software programs such as Mukurtu, and projects such as the Indigenous Digital Archive, the Reciprocal Research Network, and the Inuvialuit Living History Project.

In the U.S, Native American populations maintain a complex legal definition and relationship to the federal government (Gamber 2010, 175). The combination of indigenous, colonial histories paired with prevailing social climates in settler nations has produced a varied landscape of legal landmines for Native nations to navigate with regards to repatriation. Intellectual property rights have become a significant point of contention between museums and indigenous communities. Intellectual property law is one of the most influential bodies of law in contemporary society due to its ability to identify specific types of knowledge, create value for the knowledge, and establish restrictions for how it may be accessed, used, and distributed (Anderson and Christen 2013, 107). As technology advances and aids in the movement and reusing of objects and knowledge, there is a new urgency for stakeholders to define and defend ownership, stewardship, and one's creative contributions (Anderson and Christen 2013, 107).

Native American tribes face numerous obstacles when it comes to property rights. It is not as easy as merely smacking a copyright or additional legal label on an item of cultural significance. The extremely precarious legal positions that many Native American nations have to their cultural heritage materials, emphasizing the collective responsibilities of stewardship and care for the materials, frequently restricts the effective nature of copyright law (Anderson and Christen 2013, 106). Licenses have become a way for Native nations to augment traditional copyright. Labels and licenses are as prolific as a copyright in today's digital ecosystem (Anderson and Christen 2013, 110). Scholars such as Christen Anderson see the creation of a new set of licenses as an opportunity to establish culturally conducive conditions with local indigenous communities.

Licenses and labels such as the Traditional Knowledge Licenses and Labels answer a grassroots, global call from indigenous communities and museum specialists for an alternative to traditional copyright law to meet indigenous communities' needs (Anderson and Christen 2013, 105). Traditional Knowledge labels and licenses were "specifically created for researchers and artists working with or thinking of digitizing materials created by indigenous groups" (Kirby 2021). They were developed through partnerships with indigenous communities from multiple countries. They are created for educational rather than legal value, as they aim to allow indigenous communities to reclaim some control over their cultural heritage and to "educate users about how to incorporate these digital heritage items in a more just and culturally sensitive way" (Kirby 2021), an organization directed by Jane Anderson, a professor at New York University, and Kim Christen, a professor at Washington State University, administers

TK labels and licenses. The organization is dedicated to “helping Native Americans and other indigenous groups gain recognition for, and control over, the way their intellectual property is used” (Kirby 2021). They have received funding from federal sources such as the National Endowment for the Humanities and other organizations such as the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Traditional Knowledge (TK) licenses draw attention to the documentation of traditional and indigenous knowledge systems as "dynamic and collective forms of expression, for which Western copyright schema do not adequately represent ownership of paradigms" (Hennessy et al. 2013, 54). TK Licenses and Labels initiatives stemmed from work with indigenous communities seeking to manage materials in both digital and analog forms, mainly outside their communities (Anderson and Christen 2013, 111). They serve as tools for use as the cultural interface between indigenous communities, non-indigenous communities, and third parties (Anderson and Christen 2013, 111). TK labels and licenses are a way to incorporate protocols for cultural practices into humanities data management and presentation strategies (Kirby 2021). The TK Label text is meant to be customized by each community, with the aim of giving the labels specificity and context (Local Contexts 2021). The label icons are consistent and not meant to be altered, “ensuring national and international recognition across content and collection management systems, online repositories, websites, and physical exhibits” (Local Contexts 2021). They are a strategic solution to a specific issue, namely the management of existing and circulating digital materials such as recordings and

photographs, representing traditional practices and culture (Anderson and Christen 2013, 112).

TK Labels are generated and added to work by families, clans, and communities; however, they are not legally binding (Anderson and Christen 2013, 118). Instead, they provide an educative function making their designation to encourage dialogue between indigenous peoples and external users of cultural knowledge and traditional cultural expressions (Anderson and Christen 2013, 118). Institutions collaborating with communities are also encouraged by indigenous populations to utilize them. The rightful authorities over material collections and cultural knowledge systems are indigenous peoples, and origin communities deserve that recognition. Uprooting and reexamining the paradigm of colonial authority with its enduring colonial legal and social legacies is necessary to achieve this goal. Effectively implementing this tool at the local and global levels remains the main obstacle to this initiative.

The initial TK Licenses and Labels were created alongside the digital software program Mukurtu. First launched in 2012, Mukurtu began as a browser-based digital archive from the Warumungu Aboriginal community in Australia (Anderson and Christen 2013, 111). The Warumungu community members collaborated with Kim Christen and Craig Dietrich to bring the tribe's vision to life in the Mukurtu Wumpurrarni-kari Archive form. Today, it continues to be maintained by the Mukurtu team at the Center for Digital Scholarship and Curation at Washington State University (Mukurtu CMS 2021). The term Mukurtu means "dilly bag," a phrase used by the elders of the community who would keep sacred materials in such bags. To access the bag's contents, an individual

must first learn the appropriate knowledge about the items and be responsible enough to be trusted with the knowledge (Anderson and Christen 2013, 111). Mukurtu Content Management Software (CMS) is "first and foremost a social system," a tool that facilitates multiple types of relationships of trust (Anderson and Christen 2013, 111). This trust is structured around respecting "the ethical and normative systems that already exist within indigenous communities for the circulation and reuse of cultural materials and their associated sets of knowledge" (Anderson and Christen 2013, 111).

The idea behind Mukurtu is to provide software that permits indigenous communities to circulate their materials using their cultural and ethical systems already in existence, both internally and externally (Anderson and Christen 2013, 112). The platform utilizes community-created protocols to define access levels that determine the circulation of digital materials between community members and within the archive itself (Anderson and Christen 2013, 112). Digital tools such as Mukurtu are responses to discussions about cultural narratives of technology, ownership, and heritage.

The Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia (MOA) responded to this ongoing debate when it launched the Reciprocal Research Network (RRN). The RNN launched in 2007 in partnership with several First Nations communities (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 168). This partnership was a critical step by MOA to better formulate collaborative working practices with First Nation peoples. Since institutions such as MOA maintain control over the data they contribute, the RRN "makes data available in ways which increased people's ability to both find it and engage with it" (Rowley 2013, 37). The RRN revolutionized access to artifacts, images, and knowledge

by linking museum researchers and collections with regional, national, and international indigenous communities (Rowley 2013, 23). It incorporates collaborative methodologies into its physical and virtual spaces as a response to innovations in museum research (Srinivasan et al. 2009, 168).

The project is intended to significantly increase First Nation's access to their cultural heritage through digital technologies. The reciprocal nature of the RRN is the fundamental element of the system, as it intends to facilitate the sharing of data about cultural objects and artifacts (Rowley 2013, 33). However, the physical exchange, transfer, or repatriation of cultural objects between parties does not fall under the purpose of the RRN (Rowley 2013, 37). Rather, the fundamental role of dialogue is at the center of the project. Since its initial launch, the RRN continues to expand its platform thanks to indigenous communities' contributions and a commitment to collaboration.

A more recent project is the Indigenous Digital Archive. This digital platform was launched in 2017 by the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture in collaboration with the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center and the State Library Tribal Libraries Program, thanks to funding from the National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museums and Library Services (Museum of Indian Arts & Culture 2020). It currently contains over half a million pages of information such as letters and reports from the 19th and 20th-century boarding schools and water rights claims from New Mexico (Herther 2019, 18). The online toolkit is designed to be community-based and allows for automated and community-sourced tagging of scanned documents (Herther 2019, 19). The project also

includes efforts such as online collaboration between tribes, natural language processing, annotating materials, and creating one's collections within the system (Herther 2019, 19).

In 2009, a delegation of Inuvialuit elders, cultural experts, youth, and media producers from the Inuvialuit Settlement Region in the Canadian North traveled to Washington D.C to research and document the MacFarlane Collection housed in the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History (Hennessy et al. 2013, 44). The MacFarlane Collection is arguably “the most significant assemblage of Inuvialuit martial heritage in a museum or private collection” (Hennessy et al. 2013, 45). The project reflects a quickly shifting technological context in which “the creation of access for originating communities to their heritage in distant museum collections and the collaborative multimedia production are increasingly parallel projects” (Hennessy et al. 2013, 44). The elders’ goal was to bring knowledge of the collection back to the Inuvialuit community (Hennessy et al. 2013, 44). The result, however, was more than merely a fact-finding exhibition. After the initial visit, people from the museum and Inuvialuit community collaborated to create a virtual exhibit and community-based digital archive called the *Inuvialuit Pitqusiit Inuuniarutait: Inuvialuit Living History*. New digital networks connect heritage institutions and their data are creating opportunities for indigenous recontextualization of heritage (Hennessy et al. 2013, 44).

Previous initiatives such as the Mukurtu CMS and the Reciprocal Research Network inspired the team and their potential for increased access to collections and "indigenous control over their representation and circulation in digital contexts" (Hennessy et al. 2013, 47-8). The project was the product of a multi-year collaboration

between numerous community, academic, and institutional partners (Hennessy et al. 2013, 48). The Inuvialuit Living History project is a living digital archive designed to continue to grow through contributions from Inuvialuit community members. A critical step of the process was building strong relationships between Inuvialuit culture-bearers and Smithsonian museum staff caring for the MacFarlane Collection, and therefore Inuvialuit heritage (Hennessy et al. 2013, 50).

The Inuvialuit Living History Project website launched in 2012. The initial website is designed to change and grow as users contribute knowledge to the collection (Hennessy et al. 2013, 57). The site is divided into seven key sections: background on the MacFarlane Collection, the project itself, sections for commenting, community outreach descriptions, and a documentary about the team's visit to D.C. The website is an interactive space where transactions between individuals and institutions can occur. The challenge will be sustaining the momentum of the project into the future. Ideally, the Inuvialuit Living History project will continue as an example of digital and community-based initiatives dedicated to the documentation and transmission of indigenous peoples' cultures and languages (Hennessy et al. 2013, 63).

Collaboration between indigenous communities and larger institutions is at the core of each project and initiative discussed. They highlight the need for project partners to exhibit flexibility and willingness to adapt. Practicing flexibility ensures efforts remain "community-defined, culturally relevant, reservation-based, practical, and tribally-approved" (Kant et al. 2014, 462). Situations, where all parties involved benefit from the relationship are created by working closely with community partners (Kant et al. 2014,

469). The priority must be community consultation and outreach. If equal partnerships are the goal of museum institutions, archives must respect indigenous protocols and provide a rich cultural context for the objects, when appropriate (Powell 2016, 73).

Involving members of communities in the process of creating initiatives and determining objectives is a crucial first step. Disseminating information early and often with community partners is also an important component when working with indigenous communities. The indigenizing of museum archives and digital repatriation efforts do not occur overnight because this undertaking involves revisiting and undoing decades long institutional practices of collecting, displaying, and collaboration or lack thereof. Regardless, the slow-moving processes will yield outcomes that benefit Native and non-Native communities and researchers alike (Powell 2016, 74). Partnerships that incorporate firsthand traditional knowledge from elders and tribal members help achieve this goal. The input of cultural bearers and leaders in Native nations is vital. Tribal texts should be read within their "sovereign tribal traditions as a way of reasserting and reinforcing tribal political and cultural sovereignty" (Gamber 2010, 178). Digital repatriation projects assist with efforts of reaffirming tribal sovereignty and identity.

Technology is forming the foundation of a new era in the relationships between museums and indigenous communities, which has the potential to empower and emphasizes native voices and acknowledges the importance of repatriation in physical and digital forms. NAGPRA was simply the steppingstone for repatriation efforts. It provided a legal premise for the return of ceremonial items and human remains, but there is much to be accounted for regarding digital repatriation. As new technologies emerge,

there are endless possibilities for repatriation practices. Digital surrogates should not replace physical repatriation; however, it can be used as temporary place holder until museums and tribes are able to negotiate physical repatriation of artifacts.ⁱⁱ The input of Native American nations must remain at the center of all ongoing and future collaborations. These projects demonstrate significant progress that remains on behalf of collecting institutions by paying more attention to the injustices faced by Native American peoples and the harsh histories of their tribes.

Examining how these institutions have collaborated with Native communities provides models that are useful for thinking about the potentials of the BMLM. Community collaboration encourages mutual investment by both the St. Francis Mission and the tribe. The BMLM can create new online databases and resources from scratch. As the BMLM has not currently used any educational tools, resources, or museum education strategies, it can learn from project initiatives at institutions such as MOA and the NMAI. While the BMLM does not have the staff capacity or funding of these larger institutions, it benefits from being physically located among the Sicangu Lakota people. The educational resources discussed above which were created through collaboration efforts can begin to address ownership, narrative, authority, and accessibility issues. These strategies can also be applied to the physical museum space and create a community museum that addresses these issues and presents inclusive narratives.

Ownership of the BMLM

The BMLM has an advantage over some of the examples discussed because the items in the BMLM have not left the reservation; they remain within the community where they

rightfully belong. The artifacts exist for the community to work with to meet a variety of goals of cultural and language revitalization that would significantly benefit, first and foremost, the Sicangu Lakota people. The tribe would also benefit from having authority over a digital collection that is accessible to the public. An online collection curated by the tribe allows a larger audience to learn from the Sicangu Lakota people about their tribe's history, language, and culture. The value of digitalizing the collection for the tribe lies in their ability to control the outward-facing narratives stemming from the BMLM collection. Tribal authority extended to an online audience through a digital collection would increase the tribe's cultural sovereignty and agency efforts. The Sicangu Lakota people would control their own narratives.

Despite technology's capability to interact with an online audience or reconnect origin communities with aspects of their heritage, questions remain about what content is appropriate to publish online and who controls the narrative presented. A handful of these technical questions have underlying ownership and authority issues about material culture and traditional knowledge. While the BMLM has the advantage of being located on the reservation, it nevertheless is not owned or operated by the Rosebud tribe. As a pseudo-tribal museum, questions of ownership and authority remain concerning the BMLM's collection. The St. Francis Mission's history is complex, and for some tribal members, its presence on the Rosebud Reservation serves as a lasting reminder of the role the Jesuits played in cultural assimilation and heritage loss of the Sicangu Lakota people.

The BMLM's collection in its entirety legally belongs to the St. Francis Mission. Through my conversations with Jesuits currently working for the St. Francis Mission and

tribal members, it became apparent that both parties believe the collection should remain under the jurisdiction of the SFM. This does not mean tribal members desire the operations at the BMLM to continue as usual. Rather, they expressed that for the protection of the collection as a whole, it is safer in the hands of the St. Francis Mission. Tribal members want changes to occur within the museum, such as increasing tribal access to the artifacts and altering the history presented in the museum; however, they also want the SFM to legally own the collection rather than for the tribe to own the collection. Questions remain about who can curate, for whom, and under what circumstances? These are fraught issues in the context of the St. Francis Mission, in which a colonial institution took part in the colonizing of knowledge and the looting of cultural patrimony.

The current president of the St. Francis Mission, Fr. James Kubicki, S.J, whom I interviewed on July third of 2020, believes that it should remain under the ownership of the St. Francis Mission for the good of the collection. Fellow Jesuit Father Jacob Boddicker, whom I interviewed on July thirty-first of 2020, has lived on the Rosebud Reservation for the past four years and is conducting his Church-related research at the BMLM, also believes the collection should remain in the hands of the SFM. The two Jesuits worry if the collection's ownership was transferred to the tribe that tribal politics would interfere with preserving the collection. Boddicker noted his concerns that the collection could be split up and no longer cared for as a whole entity. Kubicki and Jacobs do not want the collection to become politicized. They worry this would be the case if the tribe owned the collection.

Kubicki and Boddicker were not the only individuals to mention the concern of tribal politics. Tribal members such as former BMLM director Marie Kills In Sight and Lakota language teacher and advocate Allen Wilson also voiced their concerns about handing over the museum's collection to the tribe. During my conversation with Kills In Sight on October eighteenth of 2020, she acknowledged the importance of the collection remaining together and fears items may be sold if the tribe had ownership of the artifacts. During my conversation with Wilson in November of 2020 he echoed additional concerns expressed by Kills In Sight, mainly what would happen if items were returned to families on the reservation. The two Sicangu Lakota culture and language bearers did not feel confident that returning items to families would ensure future safety and conservation. Both wished they could say with certainty that giving the collection back to the tribe would ensure its protection and unity. However, the lingering realities of uncertain tribal politics prevented them from making such a statement.

Issues regarding local tribal politics occur in other Native communities as well. During conversations with NMAI Collections Manager Cali Martin, a member of the Osage Nation, she mentioned her encounters with tribal politics. Martin previously worked at the Osage Museum and frequently had her issues with the local Department of Tribal Nations. For example, the tribal congress determined the Osage Museum's budget, but the limited budget made the tribe's expectations of the museum challenging to follow through on. Martin attempted sought donations from donors outside of the tribal congress in the hopes of having the museum become more financially independent, but this proved to be challenging.

Another challenge Martin noted pertained to the museum's website. It was part of the Osage Nation's general website. As such, the tribal congress maintained a certain level of control over the museum's online content. The museum portion of the tribe's website announced programs, highlighted news and events, and described current exhibits. The page also had a donations button. Martin felt that the website was useful to a certain extent; however, it lacked a critically needed search feature. She argues it would have been a better resource if it had been a separate entity from the tribe's website. She explained that a separate website would have provided the museum staff with more freedom regarding the site's content. In my conversation with Martin, she made sure to point out that she enjoyed working at the Osage Museum; however, complications often arose due to encounters with tribal politics. Her frustrations with the tribal government echoed Kills In Sight and Wilson's concerns about whether or not the tribe should own the BMLM collection.

Ownership and authority issues do not only pertain to legal jurisdiction over a museum's collection. Because the St. Francis Mission owns the collection, I was curious how this fact has impacted the museum's reputation on the reservation? Tribal members such as husband and wife duo Jenny and Ben Black Bear III, who works for the St. Francis Mission, also noted the historical implications of the Jesuits owning the BMLM and how many tribal members still associate the Jesuits with the dark history of the Catholic Church. The Black Bears have spent most of their lives living on the Rosebud Reservation and have extensive ties to the community. The couple noted their fellow tribal members might not be familiar with the specific contents of the BMLM collection;

however, tribal members are aware that the St. Francis Mission- or simply “the Church” owns it. During our email correspondence from October and November of 2020 Jenny Black Bear said, "the ownership of the BMLM from the community standpoint is that it belongs to the Church, so they don't really know or understand what is in it."

During my interview from November sixth, 2020 with Traditional artist and Lakota language bearer Steve Tamayo, he also acknowledged the museum and its ties to the Catholic Church. He voiced his concerns about the lasting damage the Catholic Church has had on the Sicangu Lakota people and how it has caused a divide among the Sicangu Lakota people. He mentioned Fr. Buechel and how the local community considered him a passionate and compassionate person. Tamayo believed Fr. Buechel’s notes demonstrate his access to knowledge, meaning tribal members were willing to talk to him. Tamayo also mentioned the positive lasting impact of Fr. Buechel on preserving the Lakota language and wished the current Jesuits would continue with Fr. Buechel’s cultural heritage preservation approach. He wished the BMLM would reconnect with its founder's mission and make the collection more accessible to the tribe. Echoing Kills in Sight, regarding the ownership of the BMLM, Tamayo stated the "tribe today is a business," and he did not think the tribe should have ownership of the collection. However, he made sure to note that the relationship between the BMLM and the St. Francis Mission must be acknowledged and taken into account regarding local people wanting to visit.

The reality of the museum ownership by the St. Francis Mission and, therefore, the Catholic Church may be a barrier for members of the tribe, as indicated by tribal members such as the Black Bears and Tamayo. This issue may limit the amount of

interaction tribal members wish to have with the museum, regardless of the collection's contents. Despite the expressed desire on the part of some tribal members such as Wilson and Tamayo to reconnect with the collection, tribal members I talked with believe the collection is safest in the St. Francis Mission's hands. They acknowledged the at times dark history shared between the Catholic Church and the Sicangu Lakota people, yet for the good of the collection, they believed it should remain with the mission. The St. Francis Mission has an opportunity to use this shared consensus to its advantage. My conversations with Rosebud locals have revealed a significant point of agreement between the Jesuits and tribal members. The point of agreement gives me hope and could serve as a steppingstone for moving forward in the relationship between the SFM and the Sicangu Lakota people. The museum could serve as a community space rooted in healing and new relationships between the Jesuits and the Sicangu Lakota community. A crucial first step towards this goal is to change the information presented at the BMLM regarding the Jesuits and the St. Francis Mission Boarding School.

While presently the legal jurisdiction over the collection may be best suited for the SFM, the authority over the history and stories of the people, items, and photographs presented in the collection could belong to the tribe. NMAI employees Heald and Martin stressed the importance of conversing with tribes about collections. I interviewed Susan Heald on September eleventh of 2020. Heald said she values the importance of bringing collections to tribes and making materials more accessible to them. Heald also noted the significance of understanding what is essential to the origin communities and how she can help facilitate access through her position at the museum.

NMAI Collections Manager, Cali Martin, whom I interviewed on September sixteenth of 2020, echoed the sentiments of her colleague. Martin stressed the importance of tribal authority over material collections and indigenous knowledge. She believes giving people the right to tell their stories and collaborating with indigenous communities is the foundation of fruitful museum practice. She made no qualms about this approach being something that does not occur overnight and recognizes that incorporating these methods takes time; however, she believes such efforts can help establish beneficial collection care practices. “Trust” was a word Martin used often. She said trust is a vital element to building relationships with origin communities. My interviews with members of both the tribe and the mission made it clear that trust is lacking between the Sicangu Lakota people and the St. Francis Mission.

While the St. Francis Mission may possess the collection, the artifacts' community of origin is the Sicangu Lakota people. The Jesuits and Sicangu Lakota may not use the BMLM exhibit spaces to tell the same perspective of history. The tribe should maintain the authority and right to tell their *ancestors' stories*. For the BMLM collection to live up to its full potential, the Sicangu Lakota people should control the telling of their stories and tribal history. For example, the written content and artifact panels provide limited acknowledgment of the St. Francis Mission Boarding. One corner of the museum where Star Quilts are featured briefly mentions the school. It discusses how female students who attended the St. Francis Mission school were taught to sew and make quilts. Students incorporated their culture into their designs, such as the star shape and medicine wheel colors, to create quilts imbued with meaning and significance. Aside from this brief

reference, the museum does not reference the SFM school and its lasting impacts on the Sicangu Lakota culture. The museum also lacks any contemporary references to Sicangu life and presents an outdated and frozen snapshot of the Sicangu Lakota people.

Lakota language teacher Allen Wilson wished the museum told the story of the collection and acknowledged the St. Francis Mission's role in the reservation's local history. He believes the Mission acknowledging its role in the cultural assimilation of Native peoples would be a significant step towards healing. Wilson also noted the lack of Lakota language translation panels present in the museum. Steve Tamayo pointed out, what is severely lacking in the BMLM is "our voice." He said Marie (Kills In Sight) took special care and responsibility of the tribe's relatives in the collection, but she was unable to change the museum's content drastically. As a team of one, she was significantly understaffed to take on all of the daily roles of museum staff. If the BMLM was to establish a working relationship with the tribe, the Jesuits and the tribe could share authority and ownership over the history and narratives presented at the museum. Incorporating the input of local community members would push the BMLM in the direction of building a sense of community around the museum. Incorporating local tribal members would help demonstrate to the larger Sicangu Lakota community members that the SFM is taking strides to decolonize the museum.

Despite all the changes that could be implemented at the BMLM, former BMLM director Marie Kills In Sight made an additional interesting point regarding the collection's ownership. As a lifelong resident of the Rosebud Reservation, Kills In Sight has seen many Jesuit presidents come and go. Some of the presidents have been active in

the community and made great efforts to know the tribe, such as Father Buechel. With sadness in her voice, she said whatever Jesuit currently holds the position of president, he has the power to determine what programs to prioritize at the mission. When the SFM leadership changes, the new Jesuit president's views, and attitude affect the Mission's programs, especially the museum. An example of this that Kills In Sight offered was a conversation she had with Mission leadership where items in the collection were referred to by the individual as "trinkets," a phrase that drastically neglects the artifacts' significance to the Sicangu people.

Kills In Sight's point is critical. Regardless of the legal standing of the collection, individual leadership at the Mission has the opportunity to hinder or advance the mission of the BMLM drastically. Whoever the current Jesuit President is has the power to invest in the museum and the community, acknowledging the collection's significance to the local community. If he chooses not to invest both financially and metaphorically in the museum, it will sit in the dark as it does right now. Disregarding the significance of the BMLM collection to the Sicangu people neglects the Mission's responsibility and disregards Father Buechel's dedication to continued preservation and education. The collection is not just a privately-owned entity for the SFM. The Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum represents centuries of Sicangu artistic expression, cultural knowledge, history, and heritage. The SFM should make a firm commitment to preserving the collection and allowing it to fulfill its potential as a resource and repository of local Sicangu history and knowledge.

Discussions regarding ownership and authority of indigenous collections have been an ongoing debate in the museum world. The projects and initiatives discussed in the above sections serve as examples of areas where there is room for improvement between museums and indigenous communities. The BMLM has the opportunity to learn from previous museum-led initiatives to best engage with the local Sicangu Lakota community. The local community should have the final say in the presentation of their culture and history at the BMLM. The issues facing the St. Francis Mission are not unique. However, what is unique is the specific history and relationship the BMLM has with the Sicangu Lakota people. The tension between the tribal community and the Jesuits does not have to be permanent. There are steps to be taken to mend the relationship between the SFM and the tribe and build trust. The Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum is the ideal space for such efforts to be initiated because of the collection's representational power and significance for the Sicangu Lakota tribe.

CHAPTER THREE

Fostering Connectivity

As concerns for safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage become an ever-growing issue worldwide, museums' roles have become scrutinized. Museums today serve as more than mere repositories of collections and sites of exhibitions to assist with the education of the public (Dewherst, N'Diaye, and MacDowell 2014, 456). Museums house resources that can help address global and local important issues (Dewherst, N'Diaye, and MacDowell 2014, 456). Local museum collections, such as those housed in the Buechel Memorial Lakota museum, can serve as "foundations for museum research, exhibitions, and programs that have more resonance with and relevance for those communities" (Dewherst, N'Diaye, and MacDowell 2014, 455). Museums that strive for diverse audiences and staff are crucial; however, museums must also strive for "inclusive excellence in all dimensions of their activities" (Dewherst, N'Diaye, and MacDowell 2014, 456). When this is the museum's goal, the "social capital that museums represent will not only be strengthened, but museums also will be able to use that capital better to advance knowledge and transform lives" (Dewherst, N'Diaye, and MacDowell 2014, 456).

Museums such as the BMLM should consider using their social capital to cultivate connectivity within the community they serve and represent. There are many effective ways museums can facilitate connections with local communities. One method is to create connectivity through collaborations on projects or exhibits with outside

partners and organizations. Striving for co-creation in a museum setting allows community members and museum staff to maintain ownership of the work. Co-created work requires a willingness from all museum partners to engage in dialogues at all steps of the planning process (Dewherst, N'Diaye, and MacDowell 2014, 463). Meaningful shared visions, goals, and responsibilities in the development and continuous work processes are also necessary for successful co-creation (Dewherst, N'Diaye, and MacDowell 2014, 463).

Museums can also achieve connectivity by addressing local and global issues. The BMLM can use its social capital to engage in meaningful discussions. Museums that are absent during times of need for local communities risk marginalization by the community they serve (Dewherst, N'Diaye, and MacDowell 2014, 466). The St. Francis Mission could use activities and projects of the BMLM as a way to address local Sicangu Lakota histories, concerns, and development. A third method of cultivating connectivity builds upon the projects discussed in chapter two. Museums can connect with communities through inclusive collections and increase accessibility to said collections. The BMLM can rethink how it interprets and creates access to the museum's collection. For example, connecting the historical collection with the current Sicangu Lakota community would also help increase dialogue around what the priorities of the tribe may be concerning issues of representation and access.

By increasing the accessibility of the collection to the tribe, the BMLM can create the opportunity for more meaningful uses of the artifacts and knowledge, which the SFM currently keeps in the basement vaults. This process would also deepen relationships

between the tribe and the St. Francis Mission. Lastly, a final way to cultivate connectivity is to have a museum serve as a site and dialogue agent. The BMLM can become a site for safe and open community dialogue. While there are other community centers and other cultural centers on the reservation, none maintain a collection as extensive as the BMLM. Not all tribal members currently view the BMLM as a welcoming museum. If the St. Francis Mission were to undertake these initiatives to cultivate connectivity between the BMLM and the Sicangu Lakota community, the museum would no longer remain on the fringes with the local community. The ability of the BMLM to engage with members of the tribe directly impacts the museum's quality and value as a resource.

Collaboration with the Sicangu Lakota Community and Beyond

Collaboration is the key to unlocking the educational and communal potential of the BMLM. A partnership between the St. Francis Mission and the local Sicangu Lakota community and other universities and cultural organizations is how collaboration could take root. Processes of collaboration and trust-building take time, but the good news is other museums have engaged in these efforts and can be used as models for the BMLM. For example, the Indian Arts Research Center in 2019 published two documents entitled, "Guidelines for Communities" and "Guidelines for Museums", which contain guidelines as a resource for museums and Native communities. The documents were "developed over a three-year period of collaboration between Native and non-Native professionals" such as cultural leaders and artists (Indian Arts Research Center 2019). These guidelines offer principles and considerations for both museums and communities for building successful collaborations. Incorporating these guidelines into the collaborative approach

of the BMLM will help the museum respond to the evolution of relationships between Native populations and collecting institutions.

The SAR Guidelines for Collaboration were brought to my attention by National Museum of the American Indian Collections Manager Cali Martin. Martin valued the insights regarding planning and implementation that the guidelines offered. She thought the BMLM might benefit from incorporating the suggestions about the collaboration between communities and museums. The guidelines begin by acknowledging how museums serve as repositories of material culture and improve their representations of cultures, increasing access to archives and collections and altering collections stewardship (Indian Arts Research Center 2019, 2). The SARS Guidelines define collaboration as "sharing both authority and decision-making and includes cooperative planning, the definition of outcomes and roles, task accountability, transparent budget discussions, and a clear structure for commitment" (Indian Arts Research Center 2019, 2).

Collaboration enables museums to "better document the context, meaning, and contemporary relevance of collections" (Indian Arts Research Center 2019, 2) and can improve the accuracy of museum records. Partnerships also allow for better-informed curation and enhanced conservation and collection management practices (Indian Arts Research Center 2019, 2). The SAR Guidelines for Collaboration includes suggestions about topics such as the benefits and logistics of collaboration and the importance of documentation and accessibility of collections, all with the shared goal of forming a solid

foundation for cooperation. Some potential outcomes of collaborations between museums and communities include:

- *Artistic inspiration for individual artists and community-based arts programming.*
- *Community-based traditional arts and cultural revitalization initiatives.*
- *Augmenting and improving museum catalog information.*
- *Incorporating cultural protocols into collections stewardship.*
- *Collaborative conservation examination, decision-making, and treatment.*
- *Expanding museum loan programs to and with communities.*
- *Collaborative exhibit development and curation.*
- *Developing collaborative educational and interpretive programming.*
- *Strengthening and adjusting museum policies regarding access to collections.* (Indian Arts Research Center 2019, 3).

The BMLM and the Sicangu Lakota community would mutually benefit from each of these positive outcomes. It would also greatly benefit from collaboration initiatives. The Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum will not fully embrace its potential as a tribal museum unless it interacts with the local community and builds positive relationships based on trust on collaboration.

Active participation of the Sicangu Lakota tribe is the missing element from the BMLM. The good news is there are tribal members close by who can assist with bettering the information, outreach, and mission of the BMLM. A central component of Sicangu Lakota culture is *tiospaye*, which translates to "extended family." Tiospaye is at the core of Sicangu Lakota culture and demonstrates the importance of family and community for the tribe. The St. Francis Mission incorporates notions of tiospaye at their small Catholic school, Sapa Un. For example, the Sapa Un staff frequently invite community members to come into the school to teach about topics such as the Lakota language and treating one another with respect.

The school recognizes the value of integrating community values into the school and connecting students with their fellow tribal members. It could easily incorporate this at the museum. Just as the school recognizes the strengths and knowledge of tribal members and the value of bringing local residents into the school, the same strengths and knowledge of tribal members would benefit the museum. Efforts to increase community collaboration, formulating new trust between the St. Francis Mission and the Sicangu Lakota community, through incorporating tiospaye at the BMLM would allow the museum to become a space for learning, healing, and relationship building.

The BMLM can alter its current systems of authority and power-sharing at the museum. These initiatives would form the building blocks of efforts to decolonize the museum and serve as a place of healing. However, before this can happen, the BMLM needs to integrate into the Sicangu Lakota community. The contents of the museum belong to the community and should be used by the community to meet their cultural and language needs and goals. The SFM exists to serve the Sicangu people, indicating the BMLM should first and foremost be used to further the mission of the tribe and local population. The best place for the museum to be is in its current location on the reservation. The collection exists because of the tribe and should continue to exist for the tribe. The museum should be a gathering place and resource for community members. Informal get-togethers that build up to official meetings regarding the BMLM can help garner input from local artists, Lakota language teachers, elders, culture bearers, and additional tribal members.

The museum should be centered in the community and be a source of activity, collaboration, and inspiration. The Sicangu Lakota community would benefit from reaching outside the confines of the reservation. Due to the BMLM's current financial situation, increased outreach to universities and other organizations on the reservation, such as the local tribal university, Sinte Gleska University, would increase partnership and collaboration opportunities. These partnerships would foster new connectivity between the museum, its collection, the local community, and the general public. These collaboration efforts coupled with a better online presence would increase awareness of the BMLM and its historic collection on a grander scale than currently exists.

The BMLM already does have some partnerships with outside organizations. However, unfortunately, the St. Francis Mission's relationships with universities such as Marquette and Creighton University recently have fallen to the wayside. In the 1980s, the SFM partnered with the archival libraries at Marquette University to help manage the archival content of the BMLM. The archives of the BMLM include thousands of photographs from the start of the boarding school era on the Rosebud Reservation to the early 2000s. I spoke with Marquette University Special Collections and University Archivist Mark Theil on July fifteenth of 2020 to discuss the current relationship between the St. Francis Mission and Marquette University and the potential he sees in the partnership with the BMLM.

Theil has been working at Marquette University for over thirty-five years. The Marquette University archives house an extensive collection of items from the Mid-western Jesuit Province. The collection includes historical sites such as previously

operational Jesuit-run missions on reservations in the mid-west. The St. Francis Mission was simply one of the missions established among Native American communities in this part of the country. Theil is responsible for overseeing items housed at the Marquette archives, including items from the BMLM. The St. Francis Mission and the Marquette archives reached an agreement in the 1980s. The agreement pertained to the transfer of photographs in the BMLM collection that were transferred before 1950 to the Marquette archives. There they would be digitalized and preserved with the help of the Marquette archivists. These photographs include images from the boarding school era on the Rosebud Reservation and images of ceremonies, daily life, and the local landscape. The SFM placed restrictions on what photographs and documents could be removed from the BMLM.

Theil noted a time gap between the initial agreement's signing of the agreement in the 1980s and when the first transfer took place. He was part of the team responsible for the initial physical transfer of photographs in the early 2000s. This transfer included the physical moving of items such as glass plate negatives and several original pictures. Theil said there was pushback on behalf of some of the Sicangu Lakota community to have original photographs leave the St. Francis Mission's premises. He understood why there was some pushback to museum content leaving the reservation; however, Theil argued the benefits of allowing Marquette University Archives to digitize the collection would ensure preserving the photographs that were beginning to fade. The preserved digital database and access to digital BMLM photographs that was created as a result of this partnership has been a resource for the Sicangu Lakota community. Theil said in our

conversation that members of the tribal will occasionally comment on images in the archival database or inquire for copies of certain photographs.

While there was some discussion about the continuation of transferring materials from the BMLM to Marquette after the first transfer, communication between the two institutions came to a halt in the early 2000s due to lack of communication on behalf of the SFM staff. At the time programs other than the museum took precedence and required the time and resources of the SFM. Theil had occasionally assisted with exhibits at the BMLM, received calls regarding the search for a particular scan, and still receives requests from tribal members and others for scans of high-resolution photographs; however, he has had limited contact with the St. Francis Mission. During my meeting with Theil, he expressed an interest and willingness to work with the tribe and the St. Francis Mission. He said, "what is most important is ongoing communication," which is undoubtedly "challenging on both sides" but is a worthwhile endeavor.

Theil is aware of the current financial challenges of the St. Francis Mission and has had a sparse conversation with current SFM president, Fr. James Kubicki; however, a true partnership between the SFM and Marquette has never developed. Theil has not closed the door on the possibility of establishing a working relationship with the mission, and he recognizes the potential and benefits of increasing collaboration. Marquette's archives staff could digitize archival materials from the BMLM, a resource the BMLM currently lacks. Theil believed the internet could be valuable resource for removing the factor of distance. Tribal members and the general public could examine records and photographs online without visiting the BMLM in person. There are drawbacks to this,

previously discussed in chapter two. Theil maintained, however, that the preservation of photographs is critical to document the cultural change. Photos can be damaged or faded, but scanning and preserving them in a digital file extends their lifetime. Theil would like the communication from the SFM to not be "demand-driven" but instead stem from continual collaboration efforts. The relationship with Mark Theil and the library archives at Marquette University is one example of a partnership worth investing in for the BMLM and, by extension, the Sicangu Lakota tribe.

Improvements to Physical Museum Space VS. Improvements to Museum Content and Accessibility

One of the questions I asked during my conversations with the Jesuits and members of the tribe pertained to their visions of an ideal Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum. How would this museum look? What resources would the museum have? Who would be working at the BMLM? The responses of tribal members usually differed from those of the Jesuits. There was certainly some overlap in the responses I received; however, two distinct approaches to answering the question remained evident. The Jesuits I interviewed immediately responded to this question as it pertained more to the physical space of the BMLM and its resources. By contrast, members of the tribe readily answered these questions with a focus on accessibility and care for the museum's contents.

Father James Kubicki had previously thought about the hypothetical. When asked what he would do if the BMLM suddenly had unlimited funds at his disposal, he quickly answered with a relatively long list. His response demonstrated that Kubicki saw the value in the museum collection. For example, he immediately started his reply by hiring

two people full-time to be the museum director and assistant. After asking for clarification about who he envisioned those people to be Kubicki said:

"Ideally, it would be local people who would speak the language and would have a degree in either, you know, anthropology, or folklore cultural...and would also have the skillset with modern technology. The idea being that as they would go around, they would represent Lakota, not as an outsider representing, but as an insider, a member of the tribe who could go to the schools around the state and beyond represent the Lakota culture and language...They would be a role model for the children of the reservations to see that a local person can get a degree becoming museum director and such. Now, that may take time. But that would be my hope in the long run. In the meantime, you know, we, if we had the funding, I would be interested in finding anyone who could get this museum moving in the right direction."

Kubicki's statement demonstrated that he cannot fulfill his idea to hire community members because of the current financial situation. It also indicates he is thinking of the future and the impact the museum can have on younger generations. Kubicki also mentioned the physical confines of the museum and noted that he would, of course, prefer a state-of-the-art museum space. He wishes the museum had a better capability to display more of the museum collection and a digital collection database.

Father Jacob Boddicker had similar ideas to his fellow Jesuit brother Father Kubicki. When asked about what his ideal BMLM museum looked like, Boddicker began by saying he too envisions an entirely new facility. He mentioned how he would relocate

the collection to a central location on the reservation, such as the towns of Mission or Rosebud. His reasoning behind the move would be to make the collection more physically accessible for tribal members. Boddicker would also want to expand the number of exhibit spaces in the BMLM to allow for more items from the vaults and photography archives to be on display. Like Kubicki, he wished the museum could expand its outreach and education initiatives to learn about the peoples and materials involved in making the artifacts. For the most part, Kubicki and Boddicker's visions of an ideal BMLM are mostly concerned with the museum's outward-facing image and how that reflects on the St. Francis Mission. The two Jesuits did not mention anything about changing the history presented at the BMLM or say that they would like to see a significant increase in local community involvement at the museum. The two know the collection's value; however, their ideal museum differs from those of tribal members I interviewed.

When I asked the same question to tribal members such as Marie Kills In Sight and Allen Wilson, the responses I received focused predominately on making the collection accessible to tribal members and updating the museum's content. As former museum director, Kills In Sight was familiar with the inner workings of the SFM and understood the financial limitations. Regardless, she believes since the BMLM collection is under the Jesuits' jurisdiction, they are responsible for ensuring it is accessible to the tribe. For example, she recognizes the collection's educational potential for current and future generations of the Sicangu Lakota Nation. Kills In Sight wished more elders in the community would visit the museum and share their knowledge about the collection items.

The establishment of better artifact and photography records would be invaluable for the Sicangu Lakota community and the general public. These individuals want to increase the written presence of Sicangu Lakota voices in the collection, ensuring they have the opportunity to write their history and represent themselves. As Kills In Sight bluntly stated when referencing the Jesuits, "you're here because of us, so why won't you listen to us?" a sentiment which other tribal members similarly expressed.

When asked what an ideal BMLM would look like, Wilson and Tamayo had similar responses to Kills In Sight and mainly focused on museum content changes. For example, Wilson wished the BMLM told the "actual" story of the collection and the history of the St. Francis Mission. He wants the Jesuits to acknowledge their role in the reservation's local history formally. Wilson believed "the boarding schools were used as weapons," and the schools' staff worked hard to eliminate the local language, and therefore the culture. In an ideal BMLM space, he would want the Jesuits to be transparent about their role in the cultural assimilation of the Sicangu Lakota tribe. Wilson believed the Jesuits "need to be more transparent to rebuild community trust."

Allen Wilson stressed the connection between language and culture. He and Tamayo ardently noted the lack of Lakota language present in the BMLM. They said they would incorporate Lakota information panels into the museum. He believes "preserving the language preserves the culture." The BMLM could play an active role in Lakota language revitalization and Lakota language preservation. Wilson also said, "A good way to heal trauma is through language learning." He believes the BMLM could serve as an educational, communal space for people from the community to gather and learn about

the tribe's past and come together to help ensure its future by incorporating the Lakota language.

Throughout my conversations with Wilson, he kept repeating a phrase that caught my attention. He said the BMLM needs to “take the collection out from behind the glass.” Like Kills In Sight, Wilson sees the artifacts' educational potential; however, there is a literal glass barrier between the tribe and the cultural objects. The collection items are part of a living culture that still exists today. The Sicangu Lakota tribe once used the items in the BMLM collection as part of the everyday life of the tribe. Wilson felt they are not supposed to be kept in a display case. If the artifacts were to come out from behind the glass, tribal members could see how artists made the objects, regain knowledge about older creation practices, reconnect with certain ceremonies, and recover a connection with the collection of their people. Kills In Sight, Wilson, and Tamayo, when asked about an ideal BMLM space, were primarily focused on altering the content of the museum and increasing the accessibility and usability of the collection. There were, however, a few similarities between the Jesuits' responses and the responses of tribal members.

As the primary caretaker for the BMLM for the past ten years, Kills In Sight had a few thoughts about changes to the physical museum space. She said if she suddenly had access to a large pool of money for the museum, she had a few ideas for how she would spend it. She would create better temperature-controlled vaults in the basement, update the display cases and information panels, perfect the exhibit lighting, purchase a proper scanner, and create a more extensive gift shop as well as larger exhibit spaces.

Additionally, she would hire staff to research artifacts, conduct inventory, train staff in the local history and culture of the tribe, and create an online database for artifacts and photographs. Both tribal members and the Jesuits share preservation goals, but the motives and details are different. Yet, once again, there is common ground between the two groups.

Benefits of Increasing the BMLM's Online Presence

If the BMLM wants to maximize the use of contemporary technology to achieve its' mission on a larger scale and have a greater impact, a critical step in this process would be to increase the museum's online presence. The St. Francis Mission's website currently contains only a brief write-up about the BMLM. The museum is listed under the "Programs" tab and includes a short write-up about the collection and museum hours. The information provided consists of the following:

“The Buechel Museum's collection of 2,000+ artifacts from the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota honors the traditions, culture, and history of the Lakota. The Museum is open to the public each year from Memorial Day through Labor Day and provides a wealth of information on the history and culture of the Lakota people. The Museum is staffed by volunteers and locals, who give tours of the museum and historical churches on the St. Francis Mission, such as the St. Charles Borromeo church.” (The St. Francis Mission 2020).

The information on this page is outdated, as it says the museum will reopen on Memorial Day in 2019. However, the page does acknowledge the staffing shortage. It states the museum can no longer assist with the public's research requests.

The establishment of an official Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum website would significantly enhance the museum's visibility and accessibility for the Sicangu Lakota tribe and the general public. Page views and engagement to a BMLM website will assist in the visibility of the museum's collection and developing a partnership between the St. Francis Mission and the Sicangu Lakota tribe. A website would allow the BMLM to advertise events at the museum better, provide a space for an online database for the material collection and archival materials, virtual exhibits, and serve as a source of information about the Sicangu Lakota tribe composed of tribal members. Perhaps most importantly, a website will also allow individuals who are unable to visit the museum in person to explore online the collection and history of the Sicangu Lakota people. A website would also get items out from behind the glass in a way that would allow them to be available to viewed and interacted with online.

The remote location of the BMLM makes it difficult for the general public to visit. The town of St. Francis is situated on the western side of the reservation. It is a ten-minute drive away from the town of Rosebud which is considered a prominent town of the reservation. The town of Rosebud is where tribal headquarters are located as well as the tribe's pow-wow grounds. The rural location and lack of foot traffic do not decrease BMLM's collection's significance. If anything, the collection's home on the Rosebud Reservation increases its historical value as it has never left the Sicangu Lakota people's presence. Regardless, the reality of the remote site is an obstacle. A website dedicated to the archival collections, material artifacts, history of the St. Francis Mission among the

Sicangu Lakota, and the contemporary life of the tribe would eliminate help lessen that obstacle.

The projects and initiatives discussed in Chapter Two highlighted the importance of having an online database. It is helpful for museums, tribes, and the public. As archivist Mark Theil noted, unfortunately, physical items often have a limited lifespan, and digital records of objects can ensure a longer lifespan. Digital records augment the preservation of photographs and documents that fade overtime. Online databases also allow for those who cannot visit a museum to view portions of its collection online. Online content can assist with outside research endeavors and help educate the general public about the BMLM collection. An online collection would also allow members of the tribe who cannot visit the museum, or who live off of the reservation to be able to access the contents of the museum. Not everyone who is enrolled in the Sicangu Lakota tribe lives on the reservation. An online collection would be an accessible tribal resource to allow tribal members to engage with museum content and interact with their heritage from their own homes. Proximity to the BMLM and ability to drive there would no longer dictate who has access to the museum's collection.

As a partnership between the tribe and SFM, the BMLM would ideally work with tribal members to determine what material items in the collection and photographs in the archives should be acceptable to publish online (Toelken 1996-97). This Sicangu Lakota authority level would help decolonize the BMLM and shift power and say back to the tribe. Write-ups and collection information generated by local culture bearers, historians, and Lakota language speakers would ensure the information published in the database is

what the community is comfortable sharing. Updated information would also allow the online database to be in Lakota and assist in continued efforts of decolonization and Lakota language revitalization. These efforts would be time-consuming, mainly when sorting through photographs at the BMLM. However, the significant time investment in sorting the photograph collection can yield considerable benefits for the tribe and St. Francis Mission. Given the financial constraints of the SFM, a partnership within and investment from the tribe, tribal members may be willing to volunteer their time to make this a feasible endeavor.

In 2013, the Arizona State Museum located in Tucson Arizona, featured an exhibit entitled *Curtis Reframed: The Arizona Portfolios*. This photography exhibit showcased the work of Edward S. Curtis, who created a series of Native American portraits during the early 1900s. The exhibition also featured new photographs from Native youth in the area, intending to encourage visitors to consider the historical context and multiple levels of meaning present in pictures. Students who participated in this project were able to depict themselves as they would like to be seen today and explore identity expressions, specifically their own. The museum advocated for viewers not to take photographs at face value but instead consider them as evidence of what they thought they may know about the world. The BMLM's extensive photograph collection could be used in a similar manner. Multiple photographers have their collections stored at the museum, providing visitors with multiple opportunities to engage with their previously conceived notions of Native American peoples.

Even among people living on the Rosebud Reservation, there are differing opinions about what images in the photograph collection depict. For example, the BMLM photograph collection was a topic of discussion during my conversations with Jesuits and tribal members. Differing views emerged as to what the photographs represented. Father Boddicker, for example, considers the photographs from the boarding school era to be beautiful snapshots of life at the time. Tribal members on the other hand, recall such photos as snapshots representing the harsh reality of cultural assimilation. The extensive photograph archives at the museum can be used as conversation starters about the world views of tribal members and Jesuits.

The BMLM has over 12,000 photographs on the premises. These photographs are from an assortment of collections amassed throughout the SFM's one-hundred-and-fifty-year presence. Better information and background about photos in the BMLM collection would help challenge stereotypes of Native peoples and challenge the histories people are familiar with. A concerted effort on behalf of the SFM to work with community members in identifying people, objects, places, and events present in the photograph collection would significantly increase the local and cultural data about the images. In particular, elders in the community may be able to identify some aspects in the archival materials which younger generations cannot. An increase in record-keeping efforts and new rich data would increase the knowledge secured for future generations. It would increase the educational capacity of the photograph collection. The BMLM would harness the potential to use its photograph collection to facilitate conversations about identity, repression, and interpretation for both in-person and online visitors.

A BMLM website would also serve as a vital resource for the local community's reservation. As Cali Martin from the NMAI mentioned about the Osage Museum website, it became a place for tribal members to learn about the museum's events and happenings. A BMLM website would be an ideal space for the St. Francis Mission to advertise what is currently happening at the museum. A calendar, for example, could fulfill the need by showing upcoming events such as Lakota language classes, art classes, and evenings for community members to come and explore the vaults and photography archives. A website would serve as a central place for information about the museum.

Additional benefits of having a BMLM website would be to have a centralized location for any publications that the St. Francis Mission or local individuals publish. Publications could include the annual newsletter produced by the BMLM or smaller publications created about its collections. Hopefully, the museum vaults and archives' opening would encourage reinvestment in researching the collections. The website could also host an online store that features local Rosebud artists' work. The BMLM has a small gift shop located at the museum entrance. Still, an online store may allow for the expansion of the physical store and be an increased investment on behalf of the St. Francis Mission in the local economy.

A BMLM website would also serve as a valuable resource for the general public. If the St. Francis Mission were to collaborate with the Sicangu Lakota tribe, resources on the website could contain information from the local community's perspective. A BMLM website would allow the general public to learn from the Sicangu Lakota community about the Sicangu Lakota community, its history, and what contemporary life looks like.

Website information from virtual exhibits and museum tours and the online database would help decolonize the historical presentation of the Sicangu Lakota community.

Write-ups and collection information generated by local culture bearers, historians, and Lakota language speakers would provide information from the Sicangu Lakota community's perspective. The maintenance of an official Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum website would significantly impact the visibility and accessibility of the collection for the Sicangu Lakota tribe and the general public.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion: Reigniting Life within the BMLM

In my conversations with Steve Tamayo and Father James Kubicki, they referred to the Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum as "a treasure that nobody knows about" and "the reservation's best-kept secret," respectively. Such comments from the St. Francis Mission president and community members' leadership indicate that the museum is not an active component of the Rosebud Reservation. My conversations and research examined what is needed for the BMLM to be a resourceful space for the local community and general public. At its core, collaboration, partnerships, and engagement are required for the BMLM to earn the title of a tribal museum. While the museum is financially vulnerable, the needed elements to help re-establish the BMLM as a Sicangu Lakota community space cannot necessarily be purchased.

Galvanizing incentives for the community to invest in their museum could lead to an increase in volunteers who donate their time and knowledge, individuals to develop initiatives and activities, write grants, and possibly organize fundraising efforts. Shifting the SFM mindset to programming from a funding centered to a people centered approach could yield positive results. My recommendations are shaped by the agreements that exist between the Jesuits and tribal members about the collection remaining under the care of the Jesuits, that tribal staffing is important, and the shared belief that the collection is valuable. These agreements suggest great potential for relationship between the St. Francis Mission and the tribe moving forward. My six steps listed below incorporate

suggestions related to ownership, narratives, authority, and accessibility. The suggestions also contribute to the sustainability of small museums with limited resources such as the BMLM. The overall goal is to help the St. Francis Mission shift from a mindset to programming from a funding centered to a people, specifically Sicangu Lakota centered approach.

Step one is for the St. Francis Mission to prioritize the BMLM. My research suggests that the SFM is inadvertently shirking its responsibilities of preserving the collection by letting the museum sit in the dark. It needs to reconnect with the mission of its founder, Father Buechel. In my opinion, the SFM must choose to prioritize the museum and invest time in it. If the SFM chooses to remain stewards of the BMLM collection, it must act accordingly. Being stewards of the collection involves respecting its significance to the Sicangu Lakota people and accepting the responsibilities of being a tribal museum in a local community. Respecting the collection's value means taking action and reigniting life within the museum. Fostering local life in the museum can be achieved by opening the doors of its vaults to the Sicangu Lakota tribe and reclaiming the BMLM as a community space by hosting events and happenings for tribal members of all ages.

Step two is to expand the number of tribal members who serve on the St. Francis Mission Board. I would suggest establishing a board specifically for the BMLM. Father Kubicki mentioned this when we chatted, and I would encourage him to act on his idea. Members of the Sicangu Lakota tribe, such as Lakota language teachers, artists, teachers, elders, and active youth in the community, should be on this museum board. Ask Marie Kills In Sight to return to the SFM and lead the board, as she is the individual on the

reservation with the most extensive institutional knowledge of the BMLM. This BMLM board would help oversee the changes in the museum, such as incorporating the Lakota language into museum information panels and changing the collection displays. A committee comprised of a majority of Sicangu Lakota tribal members would begin shifting the authority of the BMLM back to the local community.

Step three consists of building partnerships. Local partnerships could begin by allowing community members, especially elders, into the museum vaults to see what is in the collection. Engagement with the local culture and language bearers, specifically elders expand expertise about the collection contents. Step four is to build trust with the community through collaboration with the BMLM board, local schools, Sinte Gleska University, and reinvesting in previous relationships with Creighton and Marquette University. These types of partnerships would all for expanded capacity without additional expenses given the current finical constraints of the SFM. Engagements through collaboration efforts would show the Rosebud Reservation that the Mission is reinvesting in the museum's success and would serve as through action that the SFM was serious about decolonizing the BMLM. Changing the outward-facing image of the BMLM as a space owned and operated by the SFM and the Catholic Church to a community space run by a board comprised of tribal members, which actively has local visitors, would begin to break down the historical barriers established by the boarding school ear.

Step five consists of increasing the museum's online presence. I recommend that the St. Francis Mission invest in creating a museum website. The brief blurb about the

museum currently located on the St. Francis Mission website is insufficient. Increased foot traffic to a BMLM website will assist in the visibility and accessibility of the museum's collection and a partnership with the Sicangu Lakota tribe. A museum website will allow the BMLM to advertise happenings better, provide a space for an online database for the material collection and archival materials, and serve as a source of information about the Sicangu Lakota tribe composed of tribal members. It will also allow individuals who cannot visit the museum in person to explore the collection online. An increased online presence will benefit the BMLM, the general public, and the Sicangu Lakota tribe.

The final step involves looking to the future. Younger generations must be involved in the museum's happenings and decisions to ensure the future success of the BMLM. Investment in the museum cannot only come from adults, elders in the community, and at the St. Francis Mission. Generating involvement from younger generations can be achieved through many different avenues. My suggestion is to have younger community members serve on the BMLM board. If younger people felt their voices matter and had weight, their investment in the museum may be longer-lasting. Another way to get youth involved in the museum is through hosting events at the museum that they would want to attend. Events could consist of Lakota language lesson nights taught by local language teachers or art nights for traditional art lessons such as beading and star quilt making, led by local art teachers. The museum could also sell artwork from younger artists in the museum gift shop. If youth see their work represented in the museum, this may positively impact them. A final critical way to have involvement from younger generations at the

museum is to offer internship opportunities. Students could come to learn about the inner workings of a museum while simultaneously learning about Sicangu Lakota history and culture. The St. Francis Mission harnesses the capability to embark on a new chapter in the relationship between the Jesuits and the Sicangu Lakota tribe. Investment in the BMLM on behalf of the SFM has the potential to spark a new era in the museum's history, one rooted in healing and efforts of decolonization.

During my conversation with Father Jacob Boddicker, he referred to the Jesuits as the "custodians of the collection." Implementation of the six steps listed above would help pave the way for the Jesuits to claim that title and for the BMLM to truly position itself as a tribal museum in the 21st century. The St. Francis Mission has the opportunity to acknowledge the role the Jesuits played in the forced cultural assimilation of the Sicangu Lakota people and the generational loss of language and culture that stemmed from its school and the many like it across North America. The BMLM does not need unlimited funds to decolonize or reconnect the collection with the Sicangu people.

There is untapped potential in community members if they are given ownership and agency of the content within the walls of the museum. If tribal members are presented with an incentive to care, such as reclaiming a history and embarking on a new chapter in the relationship between the SFM and the tribe, community members might be willing to invest time and energy in the museum. The museum's collection has the potential to serve as a vehicle for continued and enhanced efforts of culture and language revitalization. Strategically revisiting the display and narratives presented at the BMLM,

coupled with increased local, tribal engagement measures, can transform the BMLM into a museum taking notable strides to become a decolonized institution.

REFERENCES

- The Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center: An Outreach of St. Joseph's Indian School. "Understanding The Great Sioux Nation." The Akta Lakota Museum and Cultural Center: An Outreach of St. Joseph's Indian School, Chamberlain South, Dakota. Accessed April 30th, 2020.
<http://aktalakota.stjo.org/site/News2?page=newsArticle&id=9017>
- Anderson, Jane, and Kim Christen "Chuck a Copyright on It': Dilemmas of Digital Return and the Possibilities for Traditional Knowledge Licenses and Labels." *Museum Anthropology Review* 7, no. 1-2 (2013): 105– 126.
- Bell, Joshua A., Kimberly Christen, and Mark Turin. "Introduction: After the Return: Digital Repatriation and the Circulation of Indigenous Knowledge." *Museum Anthropology Review* 7, no. 1–2 (2013): 1–21.
- Biolsi, Thomas. "The Birth of the Reservation: Making the Modern Individual among the Lakota." *American Ethnologist* 22, no. 1 (February 1995): 28–53.
<https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1995.22.1.02a00020>.
- Bowechop, Janine, and Patricia Pierce Erikson. Forging indigenous methodologies on Cape Flattery. *American Indian Quarterly*. 2005, 29: 263–73.
- Bowman, Paddy. "Standing at the Crossroads of Folklore and Education." *Journal of American Folklore*, Volume 119, no 471, (2006): 66–79. Accessed April 30th, 2020.
<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/193095>
- Bowman, Paddy and Lynne Hamer, editors. *Through the Schoolhouse Door: Folklore, Community, Curriculum*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2011.
- Bucko, Raymond, and Kay Koppedray. "Father Eugene Buechel's Collection of Lakota Materials." *Material Culture* 39, no. 2 (2007): 17-42. Accessed March 5, 2021.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/29764407>.
- The Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum. "Fr. Eugene Buechel, S.J. (1874-1954)," Exhibit Writeup. The St. Francis Mission, St. Francis, South Dakota. 2017.
- Dewhurst, C. Kurt, Diana Baird N'Diaye, and Marsha MacDowell. "Cultivating Connectivity: Folklife and Inclusive Excellence in Museums." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 57, no. 4 (October 2014): 455–72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cura.12085>.
- Ekquist, Karla. "Federal Indian Policy and the St Francis Mission School on Rosebud

- Reservation, South Dakota: 1886-1908". Iowa State University Digital Repository, 1999.
- Falk, Lisa. "Expressing and Reading Identity through Photographs". *Journal of Folklore and Education*, Volume 1, (2014).
- Gamber, John. "Native American Studies." In *A Concise Companion to American Studies*, 172–189. Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. Accessed March 23, 2020. <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.mutex.gmu.edu/doi/10.1002/9781444319071.ch8>
- Gradén, Lizette. 2013. "Performing Nordic Spaces in American Museums: Gift Exchange, Volunteerism and Curatorial Practice," in *Performing Nordic Heritage: Everyday Practices and Institutional Culture*, eds. Peter Aronson and Lizette Gradén. Farnham: Ashgate, 189-220.
- Harding, Sarah. "Justifying Repatriation of Native American Cultural Property," *Indiana Law Journal*: (1997) Vol. 72 : Iss. 3 , Article 4. Accessed March 23, 2020. <https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/ilj/vol72/iss3/4/>
- Hennessy, Kate, Natasha Lyons, Stephen Loring, Charles Arnold, Mervin Joe, Albert Elias, and James Pokiak. "The Inuvialuit Living History Project: Digital Return as the Forging of Relationships Between Institutions, People, and Data." *Museum Anthropology Review* 7, no. 1–2 (2013): 44–73.
- Henn, Danielle. "A Pedagogy of Making Do". *Journal of Folklore and Education*, Volume 5. 161-169. 2018.
- Herther, Nancy K. "Digitization Provides Access to Native American Archives." *Information Today* 36, no. 1 (February 1, 2019): 18–20.
- Indian Arts Research Center. 2019. Guidelines for Collaboration (website). Facilitated by Landis Smith, Cynthia Chavez Lamar, and Brian Vallo. Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research. Accessed March 23, 2020. <https://guidelinesforcollaboration.info/>.
- Isaac, Gwyneira. 2007. *Mediating knowledges: Origins of a Zuni tribal museum*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- The Jesuit Order, Jesuits.org. "Our Mission." Accessed March 31, 2021. <https://www.jesuits.org/about-us/mission-and-ministries/>.
- Kant, Joanita M., Tinant, Jason C., Suzette R. Burckhard, and J. Foster Sawyer, "Partnering with a Native American Community in a Collaboration Between a Tribal College and Two Mainstream Universities." *International Journal for Service*

- Learning in Engineering*, no. Special Issue (December 31, 2014): 460–474.
<https://ojs.library.queensu.ca/index.php/ijlsle/article/view/5563>
- Kirby, J. “An Introduction to Traditional Knowledge Labels and Licenses | Commons Knowledge - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.” Accessed March 18, 2021.
<https://publish.illinois.edu/commonsknowledge/2017/09/07/an-introduction-to-traditional-knowledge-labels-and-licenses/>.
- Koppedrayer, Kay. *Lakota Cultural Signatures: Bows from the Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum St. Francis, SD*. u.d.
- The Lakota Language Consortium. “About Us.” The Lakota Language Consortium. 2018. Accessed May 3rd, 2020. <https://lakhota.org/understanding-the-issue/why-save-lakota/>
- The Lakota Language Consortium. “What Is Language Loss?”, The Lakota Language Consortium. 2018. Accessed May 3rd, 2020.
<https://lakhota.org/understanding-the-issue/what-is-language-loss/>
- The Lakota Language Consortium. “Why Save Lakota?”, The Lakota Language Consortium. 2018. Accessed May 3rd, 2020. <https://lakhota.org/understanding-the-issue/why-save-lakota/>
- Lawless, Elaine, chair. 1996. Virtual Ethnography of a Classroom Community Session presented at the annual meeting for the American Folklore Society, Pittsburgh, PA, October 17-20.
- Lawlor, Mary. *Public Native America: Tribal Self-Representations in Casinos, Museums, and Powwows*. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2006.
- Leopold, Robert. “Articulating Culturally Sensitive Knowledge Online: A Cherokee Case Study.” *Museum Anthropology Review* 7, no. 1-2 (2013): 85–104. <https://search-proquest-com.mutex.gmu.edu/docview/2387822347?pq-origsite=primo&accountid=14541>
- Local Context, “TK Labels – Local Contexts.” Accessed March 31, 2021.
<https://localcontexts.org/labels/traditional-knowledge-labels/>.
- Lonetree, Amy. *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012.
- Macdonald, Sharon and Gordon Fyfe. 1996. *Theorizing Museums*. London: Blackwell.
- Macdonald, Sharon, ed. 2006. *A Companion to Museum Studies*. London: Blackwell.

- Marquette University, Raynor Memorial Libraries. St. Francis Mission Records, Historical Notes, Archives. Accessed December 10, 2020. <https://www.marquette.edu/library/archives/Mss/SFM/SFM-history.php>.
- Mukurtu CMS. "About." Accessed March 31, 2021. <https://mukurtu.org/about/>.
- Museum of Indian Arts & Culture. Laboratory of Anthropology. *Indigenous Digital Archive*. 2002- 2020. <http://miaclab.org/indigenous-digital-archive>
- Pilcher, Jeremy and Saskia Vermeulen. 2008. "From Loss of Objects to Recovery of Meanings: Online Museums and Indigenous Cultural Heritage." *M/C Journal*. 11.6.
- Powell, Timothy B. "Digital Knowledge Sharing: Forging Partnerships between Scholars, Archives, and Indigenous Communities." *Museum Anthropology Review*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2016, pp. 66–90., DOI:10.14434/10.14434/mar.v10i2.20268.
- Pryor, Anne, and Paddy Bowman. "Folklore and Education: a Short History of a Long Endeavor. (Essay)." *Journal of American Folklore*, 129, no. 514 (September 22, 2016):436–458.
- Rowley, Susan. "The Reciprocal Research Network: The Development Process." *Museum Anthropology Review* 7, no. 1–2 (2013): 22–43.
- Sommers. "Folklore and Historic Preservation: Past, Present, and Future." *The Journal of American Folklore* 132, no. 526 (2019): 359. <https://doi.org/10.5406/jamerfolk.132.526.0359>.
- South Dakota State University. South Dakota Art Museum, "Eugene Buechel." Accessed December 10, 2020. <https://www.sdstate.edu/south-dakota-art-museum/eugene-buechel>.
- The St. Francis Mission. "The Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum." The St. Francis Mission, 2020. Accessed December 10th, 2020. <https://www.sfmission.org/museum>
- Srinivasan, Ramesh, Robin Boast, Jonathan Furner, and Katherine M. Becvar. "Digital Museums and Diverse Cultural Knowledges: Moving Past the Traditional Catalog." *Information Society* 25, no. 4 (July 2009): 265–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01972240903028714>.
- Srinivasan, Ramesh, Jim Enote, Katherine M. Becvar, and Robin Boast. "Critical and Reflective Uses of New Media Technologies in Tribal Museums." *Museum Management and Curatorship* 24, no. 2 (June 2009): 161–81. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09647770902857901>.

- St. Joseph's Indian School. "Lakota Language." St. Joseph's Indian School, Chamberlain, South Dakota. 2020. Accessed April 30th, 2020.
<https://www.stjo.org/native-american-culture/lakota-language/>
- Swan and Jordan. "Contingent Collaborations: Patterns of Reciprocity in Museum-Community Partnerships." *Journal of Folklore Research* 52, no. 1 (2015): 39.
<https://doi.org/10.2979/jfolkrese.52.1.39>.
- Thornton, Russell. "Repatriation as Healing the Wounds of the Trauma of History: Cases of Native Americans in the United States of America." In *The Dead and Their Possessions*, 17-24. Taylor & Francis Group, Routledge, 2002.
- Toelken, Barre. 2003. *The Anguish of Snails: Native American Folklore in the West*. Logan: Utah State University Press.
- Toelken, Barre. "The Yellowman Tapes, 1966-1997." *The Journal of American Folklore* 111, no. 442 (1998): 381. <https://doi.org/10.2307/541046>.
- Trofanenko, B. "Interrupting the Gaze: On Reconsidering Authority in the Museum." *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 38, no. 1 (February 2006): 49–65.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00220270500038511>.
- U.S Department of the Interior. "Rosebud Agency | Indian Affairs." Accessed January 8, 2021. <https://www.bia.gov/regional-offices/great-plains/south-dakota/rosebud-agency>.
- Vennum, Thomas. Jr. "American Indian Problems and Access and Cultural Continuity". Festival of American Folklife Washington, D.C., and Smithsonian Institution. *1989 Festival of American Folklife, June 23-27, June 30-July 4*. The Institution, 1989.
<https://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/1989festivalofam00fest>

BIOGRAPHY

Claire Denny graduated from Cardinal O’Hara High School in Springfield, Pennsylvania in 2013. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and Certificate in Studio Art from the Catholic University of America in 2017. She was employed as a teacher on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota while serving with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps from 2017-2018. She received her Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies with a Concentration in Folklore from George Mason University in 2021.

ⁱ Digitalization has been a trend in museums. While there are many benefits of digitalizing collections, there are also many issues which remain. This is not a focus of my research but should be noted when discussing digitalization.

ⁱⁱ While I personally believe digital repatriation should not replace physical repatriation, the projects and initiatives discussed in this paper demonstrate the possible benefits of digital surrogates and the access to them by tribes. The legal proceedings and complex negotiating that occurs between tribes and museums about physical repatriation is not the focus of this thesis.