THE *ACHFA-HAMMI* PLANKHOUSE:

UNDERSTANDING TRIBAL ARCHITECTURES

IN THE REALM OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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After years of assimilation and acculturation, many Native Americans have both the means and strength to assert their unique identity among mainstream America. They have devised various channels for accomplishing this, such as language classes and continuing traditional practices, often using resources offered through State, Federal or Tribal Historic Preservation programs. Constructions of contemporary traditional architecture can be another of these tools used to promote this cultural renaissance. As a field that defines itself on the basis of cultural conservation, Historic Preservation principles claim to support these endeavors; however, because they do not meet the age criteria for "historic structures," such buildings are often left out of the preservation matrix. By examining the *Achfa-hammi* plankhouse of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, this thesis will address the building's impact on cultural revitalization and explore the

disconnect that exists between Historic Preservation policies and new constructions of tribal architectures.

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INTRODUCTION

Terminology

Several words and phrases used often in the following paper should be clarified for a proper understanding of their usage and meaning. The terms plankhouse and longhouse are often used to describe the same structure. According to Gahr, Sobel and Ames the terms are slowly becoming synonymous among Native Americans, mainstream America and professionals, though differences are evident in the two structures. Plankhouse more often refers to the residential dwelling, itself, while longhouse is more often reserved for ceremonial structures.[1] However, in reviewing the literature from CTGR and in discussion with informants, the terms are synonymous and interchangeable among the tribal members.[2] Following this example, both terms will refer to the *Achfa-hammi* plankhouse and other cases of tribal architecture with similar form and design.

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[1] Elizabeth A. Sobel, D. Ann Trieu Gahr, and Kenneth M. Ames. *Household Archaeology on the Northwest Coast*. Ann Arbor, MI: International Monographs in Prehistory, 2006, 5.

[2] Informant A, interview with the author, March 7, 2013.

Throughout this paper I will also discuss "tribal architectures," a term borrowed from Craig Phillip Howe.[3] Although he uses the phrase in reference to forms which reflect contemporary interpretations of traditional structures, my usage will refer primarily to new buildings that replicate historical designs and traditions. It most thoroughly exemplifies what these structures are without relegating them to the past through the use of modifiers such as "traditional" or "historic." The word "reconstructions" may be applicable as well, although problematic because of the definition established by the Secretary of the Interior Standard for Reconstructions, which refers to buildings that must follow strict regulations and comply unerringly with historical forms. This word also implies that such structures are exact replicas of previous forms and does not allow for the change and cultural realities that tribal architectures represent.

Problem Statement

As one of the most visible and tangible forms of the tribe's material culture, the architecture of the

[3] Craig Phillip Howe, *Architectural Tribalism in the Native American New World*, (Thesis (Ph. D.)--University of Michigan, 1995), 9.

Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde (CTGR) has the potential to convey both past traditions and a continually evolving heritage.[4] After nearly 150 years of assimilation and oppression, the tribe has succeeded in constructing the *Achfa-hammi* plankhouse as a testament to their strength and endurance. Therefore, as a field that calls for the preservation of our country's unique heritage, Historic Preservation programs should be yet another strategy available to Native American peoples in the creation of the built environment, and ultimately their culture.

Beginning in the 1960s, a cultural revolution occurred among Native Americans across the United States. Spurred by the Civil Rights movements, it developed into Red Power activism of the 1970s, and those acknowledging their Indian heritage nearly quadrupled from 500,000 in the 1960s to almost 2 million in 1996 and 5.2 million in 2010.[5] With less intense governmental and societal pressures to conform, they have started to reestablish their heritage and their important role in the formation of the country.

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[4] The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde is comprised of over 27 different bands.

[5] Joane Nagel, *American Indian Ethnic Renewal Red Power and the Resurgence of Identity and Culture*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 12. Tina Norris, Paula L. Vines and Elizabeth M. Hoeffel, "The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2010, 2010 Census Briefs," (U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau), 1.

A resurgence of Native arts, languages, and ceremonies created a new identity and cohesion among various tribes throughout the United States, and all communities experience the results. Parker affirms that "cultural preservation activities that revive and enhance traditions also build self-esteem, which strengthens community resistance to social problems such as alcoholism and drug abuse. Cultural preservation can support the aged and spark in the youth new community awareness and pride in the knowledge of the elders."[6] One form of this cultural revival is the largest and most prominent form of material culture, the built environment of architecture.

As a key component of daily life in which everyday activities as well as important events occur, the built environment, especially among Native American communities, leaves a tangible cultural imprint upon the land. As Craig Howe states, "architecture is eminently suited to the long-term communication of tribally encoded messages, messages that would enable tribal communities to three-dimensionally manifest their uniqueness, to delineate their boundaries, 'to communicate aspects of tribal culture to

[6] Patricia L. Parker, Keepers of the Treasures: Protecting Historic Properties and Cultural Traditions on Indian Lands, (Washington D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division, 1990), 167.

others'"[7] Often built with quickly decomposing materials, few "historic" Native American buildings remain in the Oregon. Consequently, a resurgence of tribal architectures has begun among some tribes, but for most reconstructions of historic architecture or even continuation of construction practices may be a difficult goal. Why, then, are tribal architectures absent from most programs designed to reaffirm heritage? Although some Historic Preservation programs have developed to promote the restoration of other forms of heritage, few specifically focus on the preservation of traditional structures or the reconstruction of contemporary forms. CTGR has succeeded in constructing the *Achfa-hammi* plankhouse, a form of tribal architecture that combines historic models and contemporary standards (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Main façade of *Achfa-hammi* Plankhouse and Trail of Tears commemorative pole. View looking northeast (*photo by author*).

[7] Howe, 8.

In the past many regarded Historic Preservation as a field focused on preserving history as a static, unchanging event. Although these perceptions are beginning to shift, nowhere does this change need to occur more quickly than among tribal communities. This heritage cannot be seen as "an aesthetic replication of a selected past;" it must be allowed to grow and adjust in order to preserve the cohesion of the group.[8] Although the culture is rooted in the past, it does not need to be statically locked to a particular time and place. For many tribal cultures, their notions of heritage reject time and place as constructions of modernity. Their culture has a continually evolving construct which draws on previous traditions and adapts them to modern lifestyles.

> To understand the Native American concept of 'historic preservation' one must see time and space as integral, mutually dependent, and whole. For us, time is neither linear nor segmented, but rather an uninterrupted continuum where the past, present and future seamlessly intersect where the past is as real as the present.[9]

The issue remains, then, of how to support this connection between the built environment and identity.

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[8] Kingston Wm. Heath, *Vernacular Architecture and Regional Design: Cultural Process and Environmental Response* (Amsterdam: Architectural Press, 2009), 3.

[9] Richard West, "Ever-Present Past: Historic Preservation and the Native American Mind," *ICON.* (2004): 21.

Historic Preservation has the potential to become a valuable tool in establishing not only tribal architectures, but ultimately, tribal identity. The field is increasingly recognizing that necessity of preserving not only the built environment of a place, but the cultural traditions that give meaning to that place. Many efforts such as the designation of Traditional Cultural Properties and the establishment of Tribal Historic Preservation Offices recognize the unique tangible and intangible elements of culture.[10] As expressed in CTGR Tribal Vision Statement, the tribe strives "to be…a community willing to act with courage in preserving tribal cultures and traditions for all future generations."[11] Although Historic Preservation principles closely align with this mission, provisions should be made for Native Americans as they establish their evolving identity in the aftermath of European contact. But exactly how these goals can be achieved remains uncertain.

[10] Tribal Historic Preservation Offices were created through provision in Section 101(d)(2) of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 1992.

[11] "Ntsayka Ikanum (Our Story)," The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde website. http://www.grandronde.org/ikanum/index.html.

Conceptual Framework

This research evaluates how efforts to establish tribal identity in a continually evolving culture correspond with current Historic Preservation principles. Using the concepts of identity and cultural evolution, this study analyzed the CTGR plankhouse in order to examine the role architecture has played in the perpetuation of cultural identity. It utilized a variety of research methods, including exploratory research, content analysis, ethnographic studies and case studies, while data collection involved architectural survey fieldwork and visual analysis, personal interviews, as well as archival research.

The following thesis addresses the following questions: What role does the plankhouse play in preserving the heritage of the CTGR? What measures were taken during construction to adapt the traditional building form to modern needs and standards of the community? How does the architecture of the longhouse express a new unified cultural identity of the various tribes of the CTGR? Does the field of Historic Preservation contribute to this cause? Should the policies of Historic Preservation be altered to encourage this method of cultural revitalization?

As one tribal member affirmed, "the mission now for the Grand Ronde tribe is to work to restore tribal culture with the contemporary tribal community, and to continue working to reestablish a tribal society."[12] This thesis ultimately strives to ascertain whether the modern interpretation of traditional architecture by The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde has been a valuable tool in the perpetuation and conservation of their heritage and whether the field of Historic Preservation has contributed to this cause or whether it should learn from it.

Research Methods

Most aspects of Historic Preservation stress the importance of the built environment; however, the principles guiding preservation on tribal lands differ from those in traditional practices. To address this dichotomy of principles, I examined current practices in Historic Preservation that focus on cultural preservation and programs more specifically directed toward Native American communities. The research shows the ways in which tribes are currently using the preservation programs to develop

[12] David G. Lewis, *Termination of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon: Politics, Community, Identity*, Thesis (Ph. D.) -- University of Oregon, 2009, 310.

their language, arts, oral histories and material culture, and ultimately their heritage.[13] It then focuses on a specific case study, the plankhouse of CTGR, to identify the manifestations of cultural revitalizations in tribal architectures.

Analysis of the plankhouse used a variety of research methods, including both qualitative and quantitative approaches, personal interviews and archival research. Using a variety of methodologies allowed for a broader range of information from which to draw conclusions. Furthermore, this multi-faceted approach parallels the interdisciplinary nature of Historic Preservation that draws strength from the fields of history, anthropology, architecture and cultural geography.

Personal Interviews

Interviews with tribal members and associated persons were an essential element in data collection and analysis and were crucial to the development of the research. They allowed me to gain insight not only to the more subjective building structure and design, but more importantly, the

[13] Programs include the National Park Service Tribal Preservation Program and the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers which encourage these endeavors through Tribal Historic Preservation Plans and grant funding.

personal attitudes and feelings of tribal members toward the longhouse. They aided interpretation of the longhouse and generated conclusions about the value and importance of this architecture to the cultural identity of the tribe.

Archival Research

As a method of non-intrusive documentation, archival research is a key component to the data collection. The main source utilized was the archives of CTGR which provided primary documents and invaluable access to the early history of the tribe. Additionally, their bi-monthly newsletter, *Smoke Signals,* provided information about the creation of the longhouse, including the construction process and design, and valuable resources on tribal history and tradition. This allowed further insight into community perceptions of the building and shaped conclusions related to the physical structure of the longhouse and continuing heritage of the tribe.

Fieldwork

Evaluation and assessment of the *Achfa-hammi* longhouse was an essential element of this research. It examined the physical structure and conceptual design of the building form from several different aspects to provide the

necessary data from which to conduct the final analysis. The investigation focused on identifying key features of the building which represent physical manifestations of cultural evolution. Final analysis compared methods of Native American heritage conservation with current principles in Historic Preservation and assessed the interface between these two fields.

Chapter Descriptions

As a means of properly understanding the deeper meaning of traditional architecture, this research consists of a case study of the plankhouse located on the CTGR reservation. Chapter I is an introduction to the thesis, outlining the problem statement, research design and case study. Chapter II is a literature review of the limited body of knowledge available on the topics. It is divided into three subjects- cultural revitalization, Native American architectures and Historic Preservation.

Chapter III is an overview of Native American history in this country since the time of European contact. It ends with a focus on recent and ongoing cultural revitalizations which are reshaping the Native American community as a whole. Chapter IV addresses content analysis of Historic Preservation principles and programs

which impact Native American communities. It examines both the history of the cultural conservation movement, as well as current practices and policies which shape Tribal Preservation programs today. Understanding the intersection of these principles and programs allows for a comparison between the case study and current practices to determine if these elements can be better incorporated. Furthermore, this chapter highlights the need to understand Native Americans' perspectives on preservation and the necessities of community involvement. Chapter V is an exploratory study focused on the connection between architecture and identity. This concept is a basic premise for Historic Preservation and is essential to the developing the underlying questions of the paper.

Chapter VI begins with an overview of historic plankhouses and their role in the Northwest Coast Culture area to provide a baseline from which to compare the longhouse. It then examines the history of the tribe including its creation, termination and subsequent restoration. Essential to the development of any report on ethnic cultures, understanding the traditional lifeways of the people allows for a deeper appreciation of their current practices and values.

Chapter VII begins the analysis of the plankhouse. It outlines the variety of adaptations that occurred not only to satisfy modern construction requirements and codes, but more importantly to create a space that meets the modern needs of the tribe. Chapter VIII provides a comparison of a select number of other longhouses that tribes in the Pacific Northwest have constructed. Although not an extensive list, it attempts to show the range of "historical accuracy" represented through these buildings. The final Chapter IX concludes the thesis by synthesizing the presented information and highlighting the disconnect that exists between the policies and programs of Historic Preservation and the stated goals of the field in regards to cultural preservation.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

An exhaustive review of sources on these subjects generated the hypothesis of this research, though it is by no means complete. Many only tangentially address the motives and significance of traditional Native American architecture in the formation of cultural identity, but none offer the in-depth analysis on the topic that I examine in this research. Published academic studies on Native American architecture remain limited, and those focused on the integration of Historic Preservation and architectural traditions are nearly nonexistent. However, a large body of work is available in regards to the formation of tribal identities and the process of cultural adaptation, which serves as the underlying framework for this thesis.

Cultural Revitalization

Several sources are key to the development of the argument related to tribal identity. These approach the subject from a sociological and anthropological perspective to address cultural identity among Native Americans, specifically. Joane Nagel in *American Indian Ethnic*

Renewal: Red Power and the Resurgence of Identity and Culture and Eva Marie Garroutte in *Real Indians: Identity and the Survival of Native America* both discuss the resurgence of tribal cultures and the reclamation of a new identity. Nagel discusses the dramatic increase in the Native American population in recent decades and attributes this to the Red Power movement of the 1970s, while Garroutte provides an analysis several personal interviews focused on cultural change. They emphasize the importance of both the individual and collective identity in the struggle to recover from the destruction wrought by European Americans.

A short article by Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin titled "Tradition, Genuine or Spurious" criticized the naturalist view of tradition and instead suggested "that tradition is an interpretive process that embodies both continuity and discontinuity."[14] It attempts to explain the oftentimes misleading definitions of tradition and its role in a continually evolving culture. Using case studies from Quebec and Hawaii, the concept of tradition as a historical model is challenged, because it is inevitably a construction of the past based on modern perceptions.

[14] Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin, "Tradition, Genuine or Spurious," *Journal of American Folklore* 97, no. 385, (1984): 273.

The article aided in the discussion of cultural change among the CTGR and in proving the "authenticity" of contemporary architecture as it relates to this evolving concept of tradition and heritage.

In an enlightened perspective of reconstructed traditions, Judith Ostrowitz discusses a historic example of a continually reconstructed Tlingit house form, The Chief Shakes house in Wrangell, Alaska. While highlighting historic precedent for tribal architectures, she emphasizes, however, the imprint that societal values and aesthetics have on each iteration of the house, raising questions of authenticity when replicating the house form and technology from only one particular time period, and about how this longhouse will be perceived by future generations.

Fitzgerald focuses on the means, motivation and significance of Native American identity reclamation from a sociologist's approach in *Beyond White Ethnicity: Developing a Sociological Understanding of Native American Identity Reclamation*. In deconstructing the processes by which this is accomplished, she identifies four primary means for achieving a renewed sense of self:

religion/spirituality, language, family and food.[15] One particular comment parallels my own concern with embracing traditions in a world of cultural change: "it is also important to recognize that as reclaimers attempt to practice their new racial/ethnic heritage,…they actually portray Nativeness as less fluid than it is and as less fluid than traditional, non-reclaiming Natives recognize it to be."[16] The intentionality behind this discussion stems from interviews with Native Americans and their personal methods for identity renewal. Therefore, it is evident that the role of architecture in identity formation is not only absent from communal endeavors, but individual associations, as well.

Native American Architecture

Although still not a plethora of information, some sources on contemporary Native American housing exist, primarily in the form of governmental reports. *Building the Future: A Blueprint for Change: "By Our Homes You Will Know Us": Final Report of the National Commission on American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Housing*

[15] Kathleen J Fitzgerald, *Beyond White Ethnicity: Developing a Sociological Understanding of Native American Identity Reclamation,* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007),111.

[16] Fitzgerald, 150.

and *Our Home: Giving Form to Traditional Values : Design Principles for Indian Housing* emphasize the importance of incorporating cultural values and ideals into homes built by tribal members on reservations, particularly those constructed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. While these address the necessary importance of culturally sensitive and appropriate housing for tribal communities, they do not focus on other types of buildings such as community centers. As spaces where tribal members convene to discuss current issues and practice their traditions, the role these buildings serve is equal to that of housing. It follows then, that other types of reservation buildings, especially one whose primary function is for tribal assemblies, would have the same importance and need the same design focus as housing. However, because community centers may not be funded by governmental programs, they do not receive the same amount of formal review and commentary.

Of the limited resources on Native American architectures, one stands out as the most comprehensive and analytical. *Contemporary Native American Architecture* by Carol Krinsky is an overview of all types of buildings from across the country grouped according to several factors such as design, function and symbolism. As such, however,

it does not offer in-depth analysis of any one particular building or community, only a brief overview of various structures. In addition, it was written in 1996 and therefore does not include more recent accomplishments built both for and by Native Americans. More importantly, it does not address building directly modeled or constructed after traditional forms, only those designed according to contemporary trends.

In *Architectural Tribalism in the Native American New World,* Craig Howe also discusses the process of constructing contemporary structures for tribal peoples. First addressing issues of tribalism he develops a model of architectural codes which can be used as a source for designing buildings for a tribe. The insights into the relationships between architecture and identity were invaluable in the development of this thesis.

Anne Marshall examined a specific case study for her dissertation*, Indigenous Architecture: Envisioning, Designing, and Building the Museum at Warm Springs*. It highlighted architecture as a means for decolonization and explored the processes involved in the creation and design of the museum that aided this effort. Points of emphasis include the selection of the proper design team, the importance of storytelling as a means of communication, the

symbolism of the architecture, the construction process and the history of the museum. But like Krinsky and Howe, the dissertation focuses on contemporary manifestations of tribal forms rather than modern adaptations of traditional buildings.

Historic Preservation

In *Keepers of the Treasures: Protecting Historic Properties and Cultural Traditions on Indian Lands*, a publication produced by the National Park Service in 1990, Historic Preservation issues concerning tribal lands and properties are addressed through the perspectives of Natives Americans and governmental officials. It examines key questions related to preserving all aspects of Native cultures such as crafts, language and religion. It offers solutions for these and other issues affecting tribal preservation, such as cultural differences that lead to misunderstandings between tribes and government officials and proper consultation practices. However, it only briefly discusses the reconstructions of traditional architecture and their contribution to the health of tribes. Furthermore, it does not specify programs which can be used to support such endeavors, leaving this key link between

Historic Preservation and traditional reconstructions fragmented.

Other documents and governmental reports focus on consultation with Native American tribes in compliance with Section 106 procedures. Although these are valuable when addressing traditional cultural properties, they do not contribute to the limited body of knowledge on cultural conservation programs.

CHAPTER III

UNITED STATES' NATIVE AMERICAN POLICY

A very brief history of Native American policy in the United States and North America must be described for a complete understanding of the issues underlying this thesis. The influx of European explorers beginning in 1492 dramatically impacted the Native population of North America, altering their culture, lands and very way of life. These changes took many forms, some beneficial such as the introduction of the horse to the peoples of the Great Plains or the adoption of iron tools by others. Most often, however, the change was detrimental, so that by the end of the Revolutionary War in 1776, many Native Americans had experienced the ravages of European warfare, epidemics of disease, loss of landbase and upheaval of their traditional lifeways.

Beginning with the earliest European settlers in the Colonial Era, tribes were pushed off of their ancestral lands and onto reservations in order for incoming settlers to acquire more lands and ease tensions between the two groups.[17] Federal policy expanded in 1830 with the passage

[17] The first reservation was established in 1638 in Connecticut for the Quinnipiac band of Indians, though it was not until the 1830s that reservations became the focus of Federal Indian policy.

of the Indian Removal Act which forced Natives in the eastern United States west of the Mississippi River. Most were settled in the Indian Territory in Oklahoma, established through the 1834 Indian Trade and Intercourse Act, or to other areas in the west, all of which were vastly different from their traditional homelands. Though many tribes resisted, they eventually had to succumb to federal policy, so that by 1858 the United States had seized over 580 million acres of land from the Native Americans.[18] Coupled with this were war, massacres and disease, all of which worked to reduce the Native American population to a fraction of what it once was.

The removal to reservations was one of the more destructive policies of the United States government. They were initially formed as a way to isolate Native Americans from new settlers, but they quickly developed as a means for sequestering tribes in order to confiscate their lands. Wrought with difficulties from the beginning, reservations were often in remote locations in an environment wholly unfamiliar to the people forced to inhabit them. Native American cultures are inherently linked to their lands, not just on a physical level, but a spiritual one. Particular

[18] Parker 1990, 18.

places, landmarks or terrains contain their history, spirituality, and identity and often forms the basis for their ceremonial and religious practices. When wrenched from their homes they lost more than just their land or lifeways, but the very essence of their individual and cultural identity.

Further contributing to this dissemination of life and culture were the assimilation policies which actively sought to destroy traditional lifeways and supplant them with Western European values, ideals, religions and economies.[19] Even on reservations, the government still controlled Native Americans' lives. Farming and agricultural practices replaced traditional economies; people were made to live in wood frame houses of the Euro-American standard; missionaries stripped them of their spirituality and beliefs. Most disruptive of these practices were boarding schools which removed entire generations of Native American children from their homes and obliged them to abandon their language and customs. The goal of these policies was to "civilize" Native Americans, and through this forced acculturation erase them

[19] Parker 1990, 23.

from United States history.[20] Thus involuntary removal from traditional homelands onto reservations was one of the main factors leading to the decimation of Native American cultures.

This detriment continued with The General Allotment Act of 1887, also known as the Dawes Act. Passed with the pretense that it would make Native Americans living on reservations self-sufficient, it divided reservation lands into 160-acre tracts for families and eighty-acre tracts for individuals with the intent that they would become ranchers and farmers.[21] However, the thinly laid plan was problematic from the start. Most reservation lands were located in harsh climates and terrains where farming was impractical, and many of the people had no knowledge or desire to become farmers. Furthermore, the lands not allotted to reservation residents were released for public sale and quickly bought by settlers. Overall, the Dawes Act reduced the total size of reservation lands from 154 million acres to 48 million acres, and divided reservation

[20] Carol Herselle Krinsky, *Contemporary Native American Architecture: Cultural Regeneration and Creativity,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 14.

[21] Jeff Zucker, Kay Hummel, Bob Høgfoss, Faun Rae Hosey, and Jay Forest Penniman. Oregon Indians: Culture, History & Current Affairs, an Atlas & Introduction. (Portland, OR: Western Imprints, the Press of the Oregon Historical Society, 1983), 73.

lands so that it was even more difficult to sustain distinct cultures.[22]

The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 established a baseline for Native American policy related to reservations that the government continues to follow to this day. It officially put an end to the policies of the General Allotment Act and required any lands not allotted returned to the tribes.[23] Furthermore, it returned some governmental powers to the tribes, and authorized them to establish constitutions and Tribal Councils so they could properly communicate as equals in government-to-government relationships.

Many of these rights and privileges, however, were taken away by the termination policies of the 1950s, the "final major expression of assimilation policies."[24] This relinquished not only the sovereignty of Indian nations, but also federal supervision and services provided to tribes, often leaving their people on lands too remote and desolate to support themselves. Consequently, many were relocated from reservations to urban areas, further

[22] Jake Page, *In the Hands of the Great Spirit: The 20,000-Year History of American Indians*, (New York: Free Press, 2003), 330.

[23] Ibid, 359.

[24] Parker 1990, 27.

severing the last threads of cultural ties. Because of termination policies, Native Americans were no longer recognized as individual peoples, but were brought into mainstream American culture in an attempt to "legislate them out of existence."[25]

Cultural Revitalization

Regardless of what a tradition is, its practice plays a vital role in constructing and continuing a culture. As Rapoport states, "as long as the tradition is alive, this shared and accepted image operates; when tradition goes, the picture changes. Without tradition, there can no longer be reliance on the accepted norms, and there is a beginning of institutionalization."[26] This highlights the principle reason why federal Indian policies in the United States were so destructive. They penetrated the core of their culture and sought to replace societal norms with new and unfamiliar ideals.

Nevertheless, many Native American communities responded to this directed culture change through a combination of resistance and accommodation. These forces

[25] Zucker, et. al., 78.

[26] Amos Rapoport, *House Form and Culture*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), 6.

led to a hybridization of cultural forms which created entirely different traditions and practices, such as the use of canvas in tepee coverings. The goal of the federal government was replacement of their heritage, but tribal peoples resisted.

Beginning in the 1960s, hope sprang forth in the form of the Civil Rights movement as Native Americans across the country joined in the efforts by asserting their own ethnic identity through both recognition of their presence in mainstream society and renaissance of traditional lifeways. Occupations at Alcatraz and Wounded Knee were the beginnings of Red Power activism and the American Indian Movement (AIM) of the 1970s. Some of these movements were the result of imminent threats to traditional lands or customs, such as the fish-ins of the Pacific Northwest Coast tribes that raised awareness of legal threats to salmon fishing rights.[27]

Many efforts received legal support through the passage of such laws as the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990. Native Americans gained further empowerment through colleges and Native

[27] Mary B. Davis, *Native America in the Twentieth Century: An Encyclopedia,* (New York: Garland Pub, 1994), 157.

American studies programs under their direct authority, both providing their peoples higher education and a community which was sensitive to the needs of Native students.[28] In more recent decades publications such as *American Indian Today* and *Native American Quarterly* have connected Native American peoples across the country.

Davis defines cultural revitalization as a movement that "involves a public mobilization that makes an appeal to the past while focusing community attention on the improvement of contemporary social, moral, or ritual conditions."[29] This idea has manifested in many different ways- through language restoration as exemplified by the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project which restored the Wampanoag language after being lost for 150 years; through the reclamation of artifacts and the development of tribal museums such as the Warm Springs Museum at the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation; or through the tremendously successful renaissance of the Canoe Journey among tribes of the Pacific Northwest. No matter what form or strategy used, through this cultural revitalization, Native American peoples gained strength and energy that is felt on both personal and community levels.

[28] Krinsky, 41.

[29] Davis, 156.

This cultural revitalization can occur on two levels, the individual and the collective. It can consist of a single person's movements to revive their individual tribe; or it involves a tribe's efforts for revitalization of a larger pan-Indian culture.[30] This movement embraces various traditions from multiple tribes. Many Native American communities have adopted and adapted individual tribal customs such as pow-wows, sweatlodges, and the Native American Church as a way to unify and strengthen all cultures.

Howe also attributes the commencement of a new phase of Native American architectures to the period of activism in the 1970s whereby Indian centers, such as longhouses became the nexus for the manifestation of pan-Indianism.[31] These buildings not only serve as a way to connect individual Native Americans who have ancestry from various tribes, but their cohesive application across the country also forms a stronger resistance to the dominant culture. Many college campuses build these community centers to offer a sense of comfort and familiarity to students who are accustomed to reservation life.

[30] Howe, 28.

[31] Ibid, 22.

Although the Native American presence among mainstream American culture has grown, it is not completely a success story. Years of oppression have left Native American communities with higher rates of suicide, addiction, poverty and other social issues both on and off the reservations. Therefore, revitalization efforts that instill a strong sense of identity and unity hold a critical role in combatting these problems and reversing over 500 years of cultural devastation.

Furthermore, another of the issues facing individuals and communities today involves more than just affirmation of their heritage, but expression of their ongoing culture. As Fitzgerald states, "they are struggling to go the other way- from simply *feeling* Native American… to *being* that. There is an ambiguousness regarding where "being" ends and "feeling" begins."[32] Rather than only profess their affiliation as part of a unique culture, a person needs to convey this in their daily lives. Native American communities throughout the country have embarked on cultural revitalization efforts as a means to this end.

The full implications of this dramatic revolution have yet to be seen. However, it has had positive effects

[32] Fitzgerald, 227.

resulting in revitalized traditions, religious practices and in tribal governmental power. As Bordewich noted: "in almost every respect, it was challenging the worn-out theology of Indians as losers and victims and was transforming tribes into powers to be reckoned with for a long time to come"[33]

The population of those identifying themselves as American Indian or Native Alaskan alone or in combination with other races reached 5.2 million in 2012, a growth of thirty-nine percent in merely ten years.[34] Nagel attributes this dramatic increase since the 1960s to the Red Power movement and other similar cultural revolutions that removed much of the stigma and concern associated with proclaiming this heritage.[35] It could also be due to new options on the United States census which allow individuals to identity with more than one race. Regardless of the reason for this growth, it illustrates that Native Americans are a strong and growing presence in the United States.

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[33] Fergus M. Bordewich, *Killing the White Man's Indian: Reinventing of Native Americans at the End of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 11.

[34] Tina Norris, Paula L. Vines and Elizabeth M. Hoeffel, "The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2010, 2010 Census Briefs," (U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau), 1.

[35] Nagel, 13.

Of the current Native American population seventy-eight percent live outside of reservations.[36] Thus with only twenty-two percent of the population residing on reservation land with more direct connections to tribal services and community benefits, the need for a cohesive cultural identity is strong. For those not living on reservation lands, having a place to celebrate this heritage among community members, in the forms, traditions and styles of their ancestors can further aid in developing their cultural identity. As such, it poses a unique challenge to the field of Historic Preservation which must understand these cultures not as historical entities, but contemporary peoples.

[36] Nagel, 12.

CHAPTER IV

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Overview

The United States' government's policy toward historic preservation has taken many forms beginning with the Antiquities Act in 1906 that protected archaeological sites from looters and authorized the president to designate National Monuments, followed by the Historic Sites Act of 1935 that directed the National Park Service to locate and preserve significant cultural resources on their lands.[37] These and others set the stage for the laws enacted in the 1960s and 1970s which form the basis of federal preservation legislation today. One of the most important was the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 which established the main body of policies, regulations and programs that are followed today. While it does state a goal of preserving "the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation," it only distinguishes the physical elements of our history as worthy of conservation.[38]

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[37] Davis, 53.

[38] Ormond Loomis, *Cultural Conservation: The Protection of Cultural Heritage in the United States: a Study*, (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1983), 13.

Amendments to NHPA in 1980 mandated that all federal agencies must inventory cultural resources on federal lands, and determine their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). However, this act did little to encourage dialogue between Native Americans and professionals, thus many significant properties went unrecognized by surveyors.[39] Recognizing this disconnect, the 1992 amendments to the NHPA established a National Tribal Preservation Program "to preserve and protect resources and traditions that are of importance to Native Americans."[40] Included in this were provisions for the creation of Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPO) and Tribal Heritage Grants as two strategies to support these efforts of Native peoples.

Despite these advances in recent years, however, one problem that remains inherent to the field of Historic Preservation is its primary focus on the documentation of historic buildings and properties.[41] The National Register of Historic Places, National Monuments and other similar

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[39] Andrew Gulliford, *Sacred Objects and Sacred Places: Preserving Tribal Traditions*, (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2000), 102.

[40] Tribal Preservation Program website. http://www.nps.gov/tribes/Tribal_Historic_Preservation_Officers_Program.htm. Accessed February 8, 2013.

[41] Parker 1990, 7.

designations focus the field on the recognition of tangible elements of our history. While these places certainly play a role in the cultural heritage of our nation, other locations which embody the spirit of a community should also be offered the same distinction.

Additionally, some standards imposed by the field of Historic Preservation are too strict in regards to Native American cultures. It may require that in order for a spiritually significant place to be identified, privileged information about that place be revealed, thus undermining and invalidating cultural practices. They may place too much emphasis on a single, historical moment, or consider only the physical realm in disregard of a more holistic approach. Because most tribal communities do not ascribe to these same concepts, it is yet another way in which the Euro-American and professional culture is being imposed upon Native American cultures and forcing them to conform to unwarranted standards.

Thomas King has identified six "theories of significance" whereby people assess the value of an historic property.[42] *Commemoration and illustration* evaluates a place based on its relevance to an historic

[42] Thomas F. King, *Places That Count: Traditional Cultural Properties in Cultural Resource Management*, (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2003), 14.

event, process or theme. The u*niqueness-representativeness* mindset highlights those properties which are wholly distinct or exemplary of a specific type. Those who follow the *scholarly value* school signify places which have the potential to reveal something about the past, most commonly archaeological sites. The *ambiance retention* approach views properties as significant when they embody a unique and recognizable sense of place. *Kitsch* focuses on those properties which represent the idiosyncrasies and curiosities of a place. Finally, *community value* identifies a place that "contributes to the community's sense of identity, its cultural integrity, or its relationship with the biophysical- and sometimes spiritual- environment."[43]

While any number of these theories can simultaneously be applied to a given property, he argues that most professionals only ascribe to one or two. Consequently, many properties may be assessed for only their physical significance, rather than by the intangible evidence of *ambiance retention* or *community value.* Even worse, if this is their only means of significance, they may not be valued at all. When discussing properties of importance to Native

[43] King 2003, 14- 16.

American communities, these latter two views are often the most relevant and applicable.

Cultural Conservation

In the 1980s the federal government began to recognize the need for a more broad-based approach to preservation that focused specifically on cultural conservation. This holistic perspective sought to include other disciplines such as folklife and ethnography in order to incorporate the intangible elements of culture such as language, beliefs, rites of passage, and even natural elements such as rocks and trees. The Historic Preservation profession has also specifically taken measures to incorporate the unique relationship with Native American tribes into its policies.

Loomis identifies two approaches to cultural conservation: *preservation* and *encouragement*. Preservation focuses on planning, documentation, and maintenance, while encouragement involves publications, public events, and educational programs.[44] Recognizing and combining these two separate methods allows for a more comprehensive protection and perpetuation of cultural heritage. Through

[44] Loomis, 10.

the following analysis of tribal architectures it will become evident that such buildings embody both of these strategies, and are thus an effective means of reaching the goals of cultural conservation.

The movement of cultural conservation has developed a realization that for Historic Preservation to be truly beneficial, it requires a bottom-up approach to planning that involved those directly connected to the traditions and heritage of interest.[45] Such concerns related to the immense pressure and standards instituted by professional disciplines is echoed by Pannoekek who believes that

> issues regarding the historical significance of a community's culture have been increasingly filtered by professionals and professional bureaucracies. In the process, a community has been alienated from the decisions relating to the preservation and advancement of its culture. Professional validation (usually from the outside) has become required to secure recognition and preservation of a community's heritage.[46]

Historic Preservation practices in regards to cultural resources do not necessarily incorporate the ethnographic or folklore perspective. These tend to emphasize

[45] Mary Hufford, "Introduction: Rethinking the Cultural Mission," in *Conserving Culture: A New Discourse on Heritage*, ed. by Mary Hufford, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 1.

[46] Frits Pannokoek "The Rise of a Heritage Priesthood," in Michael A. Tomlan, *Preservation of What, for Whom?: A Critical Look at Historical Significance* (Ithaca, N.Y.: National Council for Preservation Education, 1998), 30.

significance based on the physical elements of a place without considering the value they hold to a community of people.[47] Thus, for Historic Preservation and similar fields to be truly beneficial to a tribal community, professionals need to be sensitive to heritage and culture as seen through the eyes of Native Americans.

Native American Perspectives

Central to the relationship between Historic Preservation and cultural conservation is an understanding of and respect for the different world views which many Native American nations hold. For without a grasp of this concept, efforts for proper communication between the two groups are futile. For example, in 1983 the U.S. Forest Service conducted Section 106 compliance surveys of the Badger-Two Medicine area on aboriginal lands of the Pikuni in western Montana without consulting any tribal members. Through survey alone, they found no sacred sites, however, after a review of ethnographic and interviews with the Pikuni, themselves, it was discovered that the mountain

[47] King 2003, 37.

peaks were significant spiritual places and the previous conclusions had to be reevaluated.[48]

Native American cultures tend to focus on spatial associations rather than temporal ones. As Richard Ackley declared, "while architects and historic preservation specialists care about buildings, Ojibwe people are most interested in space."[49] The significance of many places derives from their location and the memories embedded in a site which have informed the present. Keith Basso highlights this idea in his work with the Western Apache stating that "inhabitants *of* their landscape, the Western Apache are thus inhabited *by* it as well, and in the timeless depth of that abiding reciprocity, the people and their landscape are virtually as one."[50] Most Native peoples see themselves as intrinsically tied to their ancestral lands, and the protection of these lands is fundamental to the continuation of their culture.[51] Additionally, for many Native American peoples, their

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[48] Sally Thompson Greiser and T. Weber Greiser, "Two Views of the World," *CRM* 16, Special Issue 1993, 9-10.

[49] Krinsky, 166.

[50] Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 102.

[51] Richard W. Stoffle, and Michael J. Evans, "Holistic Conservation and Cultural Triage: American Indian Perspectives on Cultural Resources" *Human Organization* 49, no. 2 (1990), *92.*

system of time is a cyclical continuum of events, rather than strictly linear.[52] The past is not necessarily isolated from the present, but is a part of their everyday life.

However, Native Americans communities as a whole and individuals can hold very different views of what their traditions are. While some hold that "history is to be passed on through traditional means,"[53] others desire to adapt their practices to mainstream society, such as the use of high powered rifles in the Makah whale hunting practices. What may be valued by one generation is not necessarily as important to the next. Thus when attempting to discuss the protection and perpetuation of Native American cultures – and any culture – one solution does not exist, but rather, a range of ideas, perspectives and strategies must be sought in order to more thoroughly address these issues.

Many efforts of Historic Preservation fail to acknowledge the strong and thriving presence of these communities in contemporary culture. Parker discusses that

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[52] W. Richard West Jr., "The National Museum of the American Indian: Perspectives on Museums in the 21st Century," *Museum* Anthropologist 18, No. 3 (October 1994), 54.

[53] Parker 1990, 47

"some Indians do not want to use the term "historic preservation" or "cultural preservation" at all because, from their point of view, the terms imply to non-Indians that Indians have somehow lost their culture."[54] For many Native American communities, great pride comes from the fact that they have sustained their unique lifeways after so many years of forced assimilation and oppression. To apply the label of "preservation" does not allow them to grow and evolve as a people, but implies that Native American cultures as something of the past.

In order for preservation to be most meaningful, therefore, professionals must broaden their perspectives in and attempt to understand these alternative worldviews. More importantly, those directly impacted by it must be involved. While aid from outside sources is undoubtedly beneficial to navigate the bureaucratic minutiae of the profession, Historic Preservation must be directed to those areas which Native Americans themselves identify as most significant.

According to Parker, the focus of many Native American communities involves

(1)the return and reburial of tribal ancestors,
(2) the institution of strong measures to rescue,

[54] Parker 1990, 6.

> maintain, and support the retention of American Indian languages, oral history, and oral literature, and (3) reinforcing, nurturing, and strengthening the spiritual traditions of life.[55]

The goals do not focus primarily on the tangible features of their heritage, but on the more intangible elements that support a living culture. The language used implies active engagement with cultural practices which will thus enrich their communities. Additionally, documentation and recordation of historic properties seems to be of lesser concern when compared to the larger desire of cultural encouragement. While such inventories of culturally and historically significant places undoubtedly contribute to a community's sense of place and aid in consultation and compliance efforts, the actual practice of a cultural tradition can offer a more direct and immediate connection to one's heritage.

Parker goes on to emphasize that professionals must take a broader view of Preservation when working with Native Americans, Native Alaskans and Hawaiians.

> Assisting Indian tribes, or any indigenous cultures, to preserve their cultural heritage requires a recognition that standard approaches and techniques must be modified to function in a tribal or traditional setting. Because American Indian tribal cultures are a living heritage,

[55] Patricia L. Parker, "What You Do and How We Think," *CRM* 16, Special Issue 1993, 4.

> where past meets present in daily life, they can be protected only by providing for their expression and transmission according to tribal values and standards.[56]

Expression and transmission are key words in the above statement. They are the means by which a person experiences their culture and makes it a part of their identity, and once again allude to a dynamic engagement with one's heritage. Yet the primary focus of national Preservation programs is still on documentation of historic sites and not the encouragement of living traditions.

The challenge for Historic Preservation professionals, therefore, is to better understand the customs of Native American communities as part of many different living cultures. We must not simply document and record them as they were, but recognize how current properties, as well as practices, represent these cultures as they exist in the twenty-first century. The field must focus on the dynamic nature of culture and discover new ways to support and perpetuate these ever-changing traditions, and reinforcement of this heritage through tribal architectures offers one solution.

[56] Parker 1990, 171.

Cultural Programs

Many of the issues related to Historic Preservation and Native American cultures stems from the reservation policies of the 1800s. Tribes were often removed to reservations far from their ancestral lands, so that today, the places that hold the greatest significance may not be located anywhere near their current territories. Many also want to establish supervision, if not ownership, of their traditional territories so they may once again draw strength from their ancestors. Often this may only be at a certain time of the year, rather than permanently, further adding to the complexity of protecting these places which are vital to sustaining Native American cultures.[57]

While many Native American nations do have valuable historic properties both on and off their reservation lands, they are also endowed with various other cultural resources such as traditional plant gathering locations or sites associated with spiritual practices. Because many such places derive significance from the activities that occur there, they do not conform to the narrow scope of the labels dictated by the NRHP.

[57] Parker 1990, 19-21.

The designation of Traditional Cultural Properties (TCP) for properties listed on the NRHP has been one attempt to recognize the intangible elements of a community. It is defined as a property

> that is eligible for inclusion in the NRHP because of its association with cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that (a) are rooted in that community's history, and (b) are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.[58]

It is one tool that can be instrumental in preserving the cultures of Native American communities through the preservation of the very places that embody deep cultural significance. It highlights the essential connection that exists between place and identity and how often it is not merely the physical characteristics of a place that give it meaning, but the memories, feelings and spirit of a location that are important.

The National Register Bulletin 38, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties* states that properties with traditional cultural significance may be eligible for inclusion, including "a location where a community has traditionally carried out economic, artistic, or other cultural practices important

[58] Patricia L. Parker and Thomas F. King, *National Register Bulletin No. 38: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties,* (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resource Division, 1990), 1.

in maintaining its historical identity."[59] The bulletin goes on to emphasize that one should document both visible and non-visible characteristics of a place, and move beyond mere physical descriptions and describe the deeper meanings that they may hold in the traditions of the culture.[60] Conversations with community members may be the only way to accomplish this, emphasizing the need for proper communication.

However, it also requires that such "association… must be documented through accepted means of historical research."[61] In addition to being irrespective of many Native American communities' alternative views on documentation, such as oral history, this statement also ignores the inevitable change of cultures. Communities often adapt ceremonies and rituals so that they will better serve their present state and the historical research may not support this. This does not make the event any less significant to the people or to the maintenance of their culture.

For all the benefits and applications of the TCP designation, however, it ultimately falls short in regards

[59] Parker and King, 1.

[60] Ibid, 17.

[61] Ibid, 11.

to the presence of tribal architectures. Such places embody the spirit and values of a community, and are not only important, but vital to "maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community."[62] The only facet inhibiting them from inclusion and subsequent recognition, is their age because the NRHP requires that properties be fifty years or older.[63] While TCPs recognize and protect these places of significance, other programs allow for more active support of Native American cultural resources.

Since 1990 the National Park Service has awarded Tribal Heritage Grants to "assist Indian Tribes, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiian Organizations in protecting and promoting their unique cultural heritage and traditions."[64] The grants are divided into five categories which include: locating and identifying cultural resources; preserving historic structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places; comprehensive preservation planning; oral history documenting cultural traditions; and education and training for building a Historic Preservation

[62] Parker and King, 1.

[63] Under Criteria Consideration G, properties which have achieved significance within the past fifty years can be considered eligible for inclusion in NRHP.

[64] Tribal Heritage Grants website, http://www.nps.gov/history/tribal_heritage/. (Accessed January 11, 2013)

Program. These categories are intended to address different areas of cultural revitalization in order to provide for the needs of the multiple and various organizations.

An analysis of the 283 grants awarded since 1999 reveals that the largest number of grants, over seventy-five percent, contributed to "oral history documenting cultural tradition" or "locating and identifying cultural resources" (Figure 2). These aided in cultural revitalizations of various kinds, including the traditional opelu fishing practices of the Hoi Mai Ka Lei I Mamo tribe

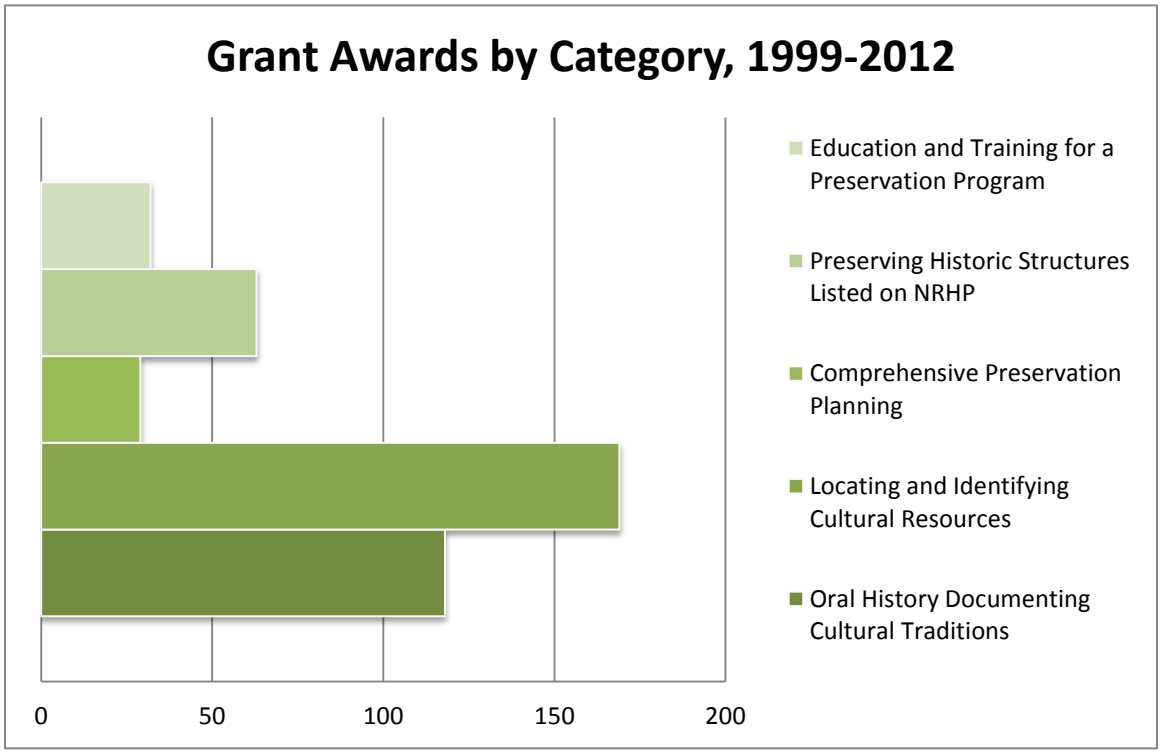

Figure 2. Categorical distribution of Tribal Heritage Grants, 1999-2012.

in Hawaii and the recordation of ethnobotanical information among elders and tribal plant-gatherers among the Quinault Indian Nation in Washington.[65]

One 2006 grant, the Pueblo of Cochiti Cultural Traditions Preservation Project, focused on the construction of a horno, a traditional oven using traditional materials and technologies.[66] However, this endeavor marks the only funds aimed at the revival of traditional building methods related to houses or structures. While others support the documentation and education of constructing other forms of material culture such as canoes, none are specifically directed toward the construction of traditional buildings. This vital aspect of material culture seems to have been left out of the historic matrix of support for cultural practices.

[65] *A Report on Fiscal Year 2012 Historic Preservation Fund Grants to Indian Tribes, Alaskan Natives and Native Hawaiian Organizations*, (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Heritage Preservation Services, Tribal Preservation Program: 2012), 6, 8.

[66] *A Report on Fiscal Year 2006 Historic Preservation Fund Grants to Indian Tribes, Alaskan Natives and Native Hawaiian Organizations*, (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Heritage Preservation Services, Tribal Preservation Program: 2006), 7.

CHAPTER V

ARCHITECTURE AND IDENTITY

The identity of a person or group of people represents a compilation of many elements ranging from ethnicity to gender to profession, which form both an individual and collective self-image. Any number of these features can play a role in forming one's identity, and some undoubtedly have more influence than others. Weaver affirms that these factors "are always fragmented, multiply constructed, and intersected in a constantly changing, sometimes conflicting array."[67] Culture is one factor which strongly impacts identity, and for some, it is at the very core.

For members of most Native American nations, the attempted destruction of their culture meant they had to struggle to retain those elements which most thoroughly embodied their identity. Such factors are the essence of a people which form both an individual and collective identity. They include everything from language and kinship to spirituality and social structure. One important aspect of this cultural identity is the often

[67] Hilary Weaver, "Indigenous Identity: What Is It, and Who Really Has It?" *American Indian Quarterly.* 25, no. 2, 240.

largest and most prominent form of material culture, the built environment.

The built environment comprises the buildings, landscapes, occupied spaces, as well as unoccupied spaces, which have been shaped by human hands. It conveys much about the daily lives of the people who formed a place, such as their values, social organization, technology and economy. Many studies of the built environment, especially in the field of Historic Preservation, focus on a building as simply the sum of its physical parts, such as materials, form and style.

However, architecture is inherently about spaces, and creating places which embody certain characteristics or elicit specific meanings. The way humans use such a space is the both the motivation behind many architectures and the very reason that they receive significance. Thus, by studying the architecture of any given place, we can begin to more intimately recognize the culture that inhabits those spaces. We can understand the imprint of social structure, spatial organization, and even cosmology that is expressed in the built environment, whether intentionally or inadvertently.[68]

[68] Peter Nabokov and Robert Easton, *Native American Architecture*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 12.

Architecture holds a prominent role in the embodiment of Native American cultures and maintained a vital role in the lives of its inhabitants. For many tribes, a house was more than just a residence; it served as a location for many societal activities such as ceremonies or funerals; it was seen as utmost expression of spirituality and community; it was often linked to creation stories which dictated the layout or design. A house was not simply an inanimate element of the landscape in service to a people, but often regarded as a living entity which required respect and reverence from those who received its benefits.[69] Therefore, constructing homes was part of a continuum in which they recalled the origin of their ancestors, thus rejuvenating their own life and culture.[70]

Anthropologists today have divided indigenous peoples of North America in to various culture areas as a way to study and organize the plethora of tribes. Similarities exist within each of these such as language, economy or house type. Although many tribes could share the same architectural form, such as the longhouse, they encoded

[69] National Commission on American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Housing (U.S.), *Building the Future: A Blueprint for Change: "By Our Homes You Will Know Us": Final Report of the National Commission on American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Housing.*" (Washington: The Commission, 1992), 65.

[70] Peter Nabakov, as quoted in Howe, 20.

their buildings with meanings unique to their community. The ceremonies performed through each place and the social meaning in each created a distinct form of material culture that was not necessarily shared by other tribes who resided in similar buildings.[71]

For many Native American cultures, houses in particular were not preserved in a specific place and time, but continually inhabited for hundreds of years, as shown through archaeological evidence at two sites in particular. Over a 400 year period, the Meier house in the Lower Columbia River Valley was constantly occupied, altered and repaired to ensure its livability.[72] Similarly, at the Palmrose site on the northern Oregon coast, one house seems to have been occupied from around 2,750 years ago until about 1,500 years ago, even being rebuilt after a fire.[73] These multiple layers of history "are simultaneously histories of houses and histories of group continuity and identity, and long-term commitments to the physical structure."[74] This dedication to a single structure

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[71] Howe, 39.

[72] Ann Trieu Gahr, "From Architects to Ancestors: The Life Cycle of Plank Houses," in Elizabeth A. Sobel, D. Ann Trieu Gahr, and Kenneth M. Ames, *Household Archaeology on the Northwest Coast*, (Ann Arbor, MI: International Monographs in Prehistory, 2006), 68.

[73] Ibid, 68.

[74] Ibid, 75.

underscores the extent to which architecture informs the culture of a people. After so many centuries of occupation and use, the house came to represent not only the endurance of the community, but the values they placed on their built environment. Thus the house did not exist in the sense of a static being, but became essential in the formation of their cultural identity and sense of place.

It follows, therefore, that Native American cultural revitalizations through the form of architecture, can be one of the strategies which should be utilized to reclaim that identity, just as it was an instrument that assimilation policies exploited to deconstruct their culture. Furthermore, unlike other forms of revitalization movements, the art of building encourages the production of other tribal practices such as ceremonies or rituals.[75]

Howe confirmed this argument when he stated that "architecture is eminently suited to the long-term communication of tribally encoded messages, messages that would enable tribal communities to three-dimensionally manifest their uniqueness, to delineate their boundaries, 'to communicate aspects of tribal culture to others'"[76] Such buildings are a statement about their identity, both to the

[75] Howe, 35.

[76] Howe, 8.

tribal community and the larger mainstream culture. Howe goes on to suggest that these renewals have become a form of protest, in which a tribe rebels against mainstream typology and pronounces their connection to the history of the landscape. "To assert a tribal identity is to shun a universal identity, to resist detribalization… Thus, the spiritual function of tribal architectures is to embody and explain a community's generative principles while enclosing a place for their re-creation."[77]

Additionally, CTGR and many other tribes developed from multiple cultures and nations who may proscribe different meanings to their buildings. Therefore architectural expression can support the identity of both the individual tribes of a person's ancestry, as well as a contemporary affiliation with the Native American community as a whole. The larger image of the building sends a message of "Indianness" and collective heritage, while the finer elements of the place, such as design or ritual use, relate the minutiae of a specific tribal culture.

Architecture and identity can be viewed as two forces that bear a reciprocal relationship, whereby one reinforces the other. In the creation of a place, the customs and

[77] Howe, 110.

beliefs of a people are lived out in physical form, and consequently these very same traditions and values are guided by the human-spatial relationship within those locations.[78] It becomes evident that the cultural knowledge of the construction techniques and building practices which are transferred during the creation a traditional building have as much relevance to cultural preservation as the structure, itself.

The essentialism and constructivism debate in the field of anthropology lies at the center of this relationship. Essentialism holds that cultural identity is rooted in specific elements and practices which reflect "authentic tradition."[79] Therefore, the physical attributes of the building itself are not the only thing at stake when Native American communities no longer retain the houses of their ancestors, but the essence of their entire being is undermined when a tradition is lost. Constructivism, on the other hand, holds that cultures are constantly evolving through the creation and invention of new traditions, such as the utilization of milled lumber in the plankhouse.[80]

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[78] Rapoport, 16.

[79] Christopher L. Ruiz, *Cultural Preservation and Representation: A Case Study at Mooretown Rancheria Cultural Center, Oroville, California.* Thesis (M.A.)— California State University, Chico, 2005), 31.

[80] Ibid, 32.

In an attempt to connect these two divergent viewpoints, Fischer introduces the idea of cultural logic. This holds that while cultures will inevitably change in response to their outside influences, they retain the cognitive processes that are unique to their culture.[81] Using this approach, tribal architectures can be can be seen "as a historically continuous construction that adapts to changing circumstances while remaining true to a perceived essence" of a culture.[82] This provides tribes with a connection to their "authentic" traditions, while at the same time reflecting the inevitable changes of the community.

Many Native American peoples recognize that tribal architectures are vital to the health and wellbeing of their people and can provide a space where they can connect with their ancestors and enrich their heritage. Practicing traditional customs and teaching them to tribal youths is a key factor in solving some of the social problems that exist among many Native American peoples today. It is not an outright cure for such issues, but it enhances self-

[81] Edward F. Fischer, "Cultural Logic and Maya Identity: Rethinking Constructivism and Essentialism," *Current Anthropology* 40, no. 4, 474.

[82] Fischer, 488.

esteem and reinforces the connection to their heritage and community.[83]

Under these same auspices, the Kodiak Area Native Association obtained a grant for a Traditional Healing Project from the Department of Health and Human Services. Highlighting this link between health and heritage, the tribe built barabaras for support meetings and dancing events for those affected by drug and alcohol abuse. Conducting these healing events at the traditional houses of their spiritual life imbued them with more meaning, and thus greater effectiveness.[84]

These revitalizations need not be confined to tribal architectures. Reservations are comprised of a number of different building types, any of which can embody their identity, and both Native American communities and Native American architects have begun to more readily express this connection in the form of contemporary buildings. Although these may be seen as drastically different in form and material from historic types, they embody similar values and ideologies as those of the past.

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[83] Parker 1990, 167.

[84] Parker 1990, 169. Barabaras are semi-subterranean wood frame houses covered with sod and are the traditional homes of the peoples who lived on the Aleutian Islands.

Modern administrative facilities such as health centers or educational complexes can be designed to express a specifically Native American identity, as well. The Swinomish tribe has constructed a Social Services building which alludes to a traditional longhouse form. It has a large, open central room, surrounded by bench seating, as well as a long skylight to reference a smokehole.[85] Other tribal buildings exhibit bricks laid in specific basketweave patterns, polygonal shapes reflective of hogans, or rooflines reminiscent of tepees.

Houses on reservations can indicate cultural preferences, as well. They can be multigenerational, reflecting a once communal society, as in recent housing developments on CTGR Reservation. These "grandfamily" houses are intended specifically for Elders who hold legal guardianship over minor children, thus recognizing the growing number of Native grandparents who are rearing their grandchildren.[86] Responding to these unique needs, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has begun to design housing specific to Native American tribes, such as on Port Gamble Reservation in Washington which feature an

[85] Krinsky, 83.

[86] Ron Karten,"Tribal Housing Authority accepting applications for grandfamily units," *Smoke Signals,* December 1, 2012, 7.

open plan without hallways and a wood stove.[87] Therefore, even though they dwell in contemporary houses and work in modern facilities, the ways in which some Native American communities design, utilize and understand these spaces can reflect more of their tribal identity than mainstream culture. Thus the importance of architecture to these communities is as relevant today as it was in the past.

One particular expression of indigenous architecture has been through the construction of tribal museums and cultural centers. As repositories for the valuable material culture of a nation, these places are an essential element in a tribe's expression of their power and identity. They essentially

> provide interior and exterior spaces that accommodate activities that strengthen Indigenous identity. Architectural design shapes peoples' behavior in those spaces. Symbolic architectural expression can communicate tribal identity. Architectural processes that engage tribal members can privilege Indigenous perspectives and styles of communication.[88]

As Marshall discusses, it is not simply enough for such a building to exist; to truly instill a sense of

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[87] Krinsky, 199.

[88] Anne Marshall, *Indigenous Architecture: Envisioning, Designing, and Building The Museum At Warm Springs*, (Thesis—Dissertation, The University of Arizona, 2012), 33.

identity it must involve the support of the entire community. This aspect of collective identity was as important in the past as it is in current renaissances. Howe declares that "tribal architecture is the product of a coherent aggregation of people, constructed within their distinctive cultural context…tribal architecture, then, is from a people by those people, and for those people."[89] The value of the architecture comes not just from its physical presence in the landscape, but from its developed connection to the tribe.

As method of self-determination tribal architectures avoid a mainstream design in order to assert a tribe's unique heritage and continued presence to the larger region. As one of the most visually prominent forms of their material culture, traditional buildings make a strong and overt statement about cultural distinction and community pride. To grasp the true significance of tribal architectures, one must also understand the ephemeral elements of culture which embed it with significance- the ceremonies, oral histories and rituals associated with its use. In order for these architectural revivals to become a meaningful aspect of cultural identity, they must recall

[89] Howe, 19.

the spirit of their ancestors, provide a mutual exchange of values and beliefs, and involve the community.

Tribal architectures usually involve more than an exact replica of a previous form. Through this conveyance of their cultural knowledge, they in turn, reinforce their identity and their connection to the past. Papineau regards this as

> … a cyclical relationship whereby culture builds the structure and the physical structure reinforces the community's historical link from the past to the present. Revelation of this process means that the architecture identifies with the people and their way of living and thus becomes established as a strong cultural representation.[90]

Therefore, architecture, whether in the manner of an historic building, a reconstruction or a contemporary form, is intrinsically evident in the cultural memory of a people. It embodies the tangible and intangible elements of a culture, and if present among today's communities allows them to develop and flourish as a people.

[90] Leslie Papineau, *Rooted in Cultural Expression and Nature's Influence: Interpreting Native American Architecture,* (Thesis (M.Arch.)— Carleton University, 2008), 6.

CHAPTER VI

CASE STUDY BACKGROUND

Plankhouses

As the primary housetype of the Northwest Coast Culture area the plankhouse marked the center of community life and was one of their greatest forms of cultural expression.[91] The houses conveyed social, political and economic aspects of the community and were often given names, reflecting their status as more than just buildings, but important elements of society.[92] Thus, understanding the physical properties of these buildings will grant further insight into the worldview of their inhabitants and highlight the houses' importance to these communities today.

The Northwest Coast Culture area encompasses those groups that resided from roughly Icy Bay, Alaska in the North to Cape Mendocino, California in the South.[93] It is further divided into the north, central and southern areas but each display similar characteristics. It exhibits over forty different languages from over a dozen language

[91] Sobel, Gahr and Ames, 1.

[92] Zucker, et. al., 35.

[93] Ames, Kenneth. 1994. The Northwest Coast: Complex Hunter-Gatherers, Ecology, and Social Evolution. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 23, 209.

families, and the peoples created a highly developed artistic tradition evident in everything from their personal adornment to their architecture.[94] The lush and plentiful landscape created an economy based on primarily on fishing, most notably salmon, but also hunting and gathering of shellfish, berries and other vegetation.[95] They followed a unique and complex social organization established through lineage and material wealth which was often reflected in the design and use of their built environment.[96]

Plankhouses in this area first appear on the archaeological record around 2500 B.C.E. at Hatzic Rock. They developed further during the Middle Pacific Period (1,500 B.C.E. to 0/500 C.E.) into small framed houses arranged in linear groupings along shorelines.[97] By the Late Pacific Period (0/500 C.E. to the historic period) they had become more prevalent throughout the Northwest Coast Culture area and began to reflect the distinct social

[94] Wayne Suttles, "Introduction," in William C. Sturtevant, *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 13, Part 1*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 1.

[95] Suttles, 4.

[96] Nabakov and Easton, 227.

[97] Yvonne Marshall, "Houses and Domestication on the Northwest Coast," in Elizabeth A. Sobel, D. Ann Trieu Gahr, and Kenneth M. Ames, *Household Archaeology on the Northwest Coast* (Ann Arbor, MI: International Monographs in Prehistory, 2006), 41.

organization of their occupants.[98] By the time of European contact the plankhouse was the primary winter dwelling among peoples of the Northwest Coast Culture Area and had come to embody the social and economic positions of their occupants.[99] However, variations in design and form occurred among different tribes.

The plankhouse was typically a long rectangular building, partially excavated from one to five feet below grade,[100] (Figure 3). The size varied depending on the number of occupants, but ranged from forty by eighty foot, to as long as hundreds of feet.[101] Large circular posts formed the main structure of the house, and were connected at the top with circular beams

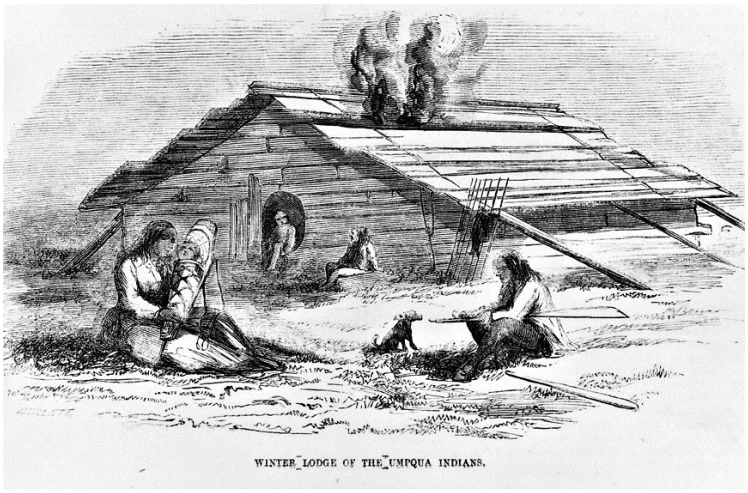

Figure 3. "Winter lodge of the Umpqua Indians" from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* April 24, 1858 (*courtesy of Oregon Historical Society, OrHi 45809a).*

[98] Marshall 2006, 42.

[99] Gahr, Sobel, Ames, 1.

[100] Zucker, et. al., 35.

[101] Ibid, 35.

of a similar size. On top of this framework were wood planks which formed the surface of the walls. Houses of the Lower Columbia, Southern Coast and Inland Valleys most often had vertical wall planks, while those of the Northern Coast had horizontal wall and roof planks.[102]

The roof frame was constructed with smaller beams emanating from a horizontal ridgepole. The Lower Columbia, Southern Coast and Inland Valleys houses were characterized by gable roofs, while the Northern Coast houses displayed shed roofs, all of which were covered with planks, shakes, or bark.[103] The eaves of the roof typically extended far beyond the perimeter of the house, allowing protection from heavy rainfall.[104]

A single round entrance was located on the far side of the main façade. It was small, low to the ground and usually covered with animal skin, a reed mat or wood.[105] The size and shape developed for defensive purposes, making it more difficult for unwanted visitors to enter the house.[106]

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[102] Ibid, 36-37.

[103] Zucker, et. al., 36-37.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Informant B, interview with the author, January 17, 2013.

The interior of the house was lined with wooden or earthen platforms (Figure 4). Southern tribes used these exclusively for storage of food and supplies, while northern groups utilized the space for sleeping and storage.[107] Each family occupied their own space within the house and these were often separated by wood or reed dividers. A notched log ladder provided access to the excavated space in the center of the house. The fire hearths (the number varied depending on the length of the house) located here were essential for warmth, light and cooking and drying food.[108]

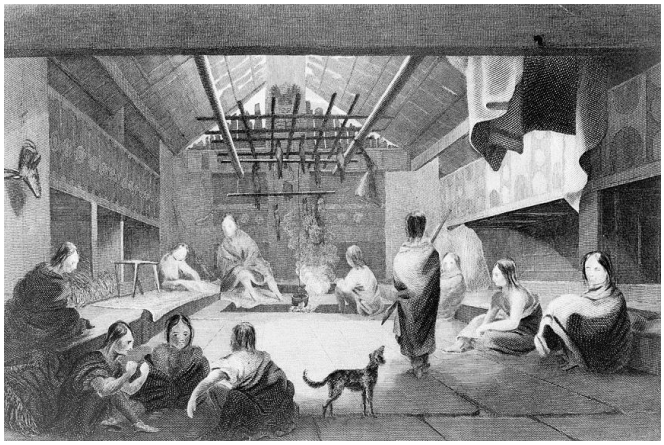

Figure 4. "Chinookans of the Lower Columbia River" by Alfred T. Agate & Richard W. Dodson, 1841 (courtesy of Oregon Historical Society, OrHi 4465a).

Plankhouses were most often built using red cedar, which grew in abundance in the surrounding forests and was utilized for a variety of different purposes. The wood was valued for its straight grain which made for easy

[107] J. V. Berreman, "Background and History of the Grand Ronde Tribes," Stanford University, June 15, 1934, The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde archives, Grand Ronde, OR, 8.

[108] Zucker, et. al., 35.

splitting, its light weight which aided construction, and its natural oil which resisted the rot and decay exacerbated by the moist climate. Every part of the red cedar tree was of worth to many peoples of the Northwest Coast Culture area, providing them with household items, personal adornments and economical tools, incensing the tree with spiritual powers.[109]

Tools used during construction aided in the manipulation of this valuable resource. They consisted of wooden adzes fitted with shells, mauls made of stone, and wedges carved from wood or animal horns.[110] The houses were assembled with "hold binders, tied through holes drilled in the planks."[111]

Plankhouses were communal dwellings, occupied by all members of the community; however, they were divided according to class. The chiefs of the tribe had the highest positions at the rear of the house, typically demarcated by an elaborately carved wooden support post. The commoners occupied the center of the house and defined their space with modestly carved posts. The slaves inhabited the front of the house, nearest the entrance, and

[109] Nabakov and Easton, 228-229.

[110] Ibid, 231.

[111] Zucker, et. al, 36.

their posts were adorned with painted figures. [112] Thus both the people's location and the ornament of their spaces divided and defined the interior of the plankhouse.

The formation of such elaborate and permanent houses attests to the stability of these cultures. As Rapoport confirms, "if social aspects lead to cooperative construction, certain complex or difficult techniques and forms become possible."[113] Such buildings could not have been constructed without a cohesive group working together or without the economy to sustain them. The same holds true for the Grand Ronde community today. Such an investment in time, energy and money into the *Achfa-hammi* plankhouse not only requires, but demonstrates the unified identity of the tribe.

The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde

The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde was originally a composition of various band and tribes from across the state. Although many members still associate with the individual tribes of their ancestors, they have now developed into a single tribe with a distinct identity, customs and traditions. It is this new culture that is

[112] Informant B.

[113] Rapoport, 107.

represented in the *Achfa-hammi* plankhouse, though it contains elements specific to each of the individual tribal cultures. Other individuals have studied the tribe and its cultural identity (Lewis, 2009; Zenk, 1984), but none have examined the role of architecture within the tribe.

The Grand Ronde Reservation is located in northwestern Oregon, and comprised primarily of the peoples that previously occupied the interior valleys of Oregon and the lower Columbia River, namely the Willamette Valley bands, the Umpqua bands, the Chinookan bands and the Rogue River and Cow Creek Valley bands (Figure 5). These diverse cultures, along with individuals from various tribes as well as some French-Indian settlers, would form the new community and cultural identity of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde. [114]

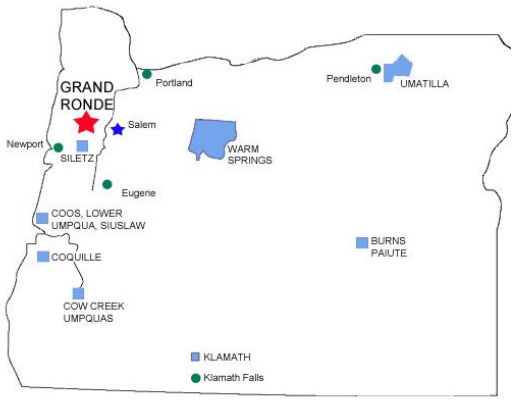

Figure 5. Location of the Grand Ronde Reservation.

The Willamette Valley groups were what remained of several tribes, mainly Kalapuyan, after two major epidemics reduced their populations by as much as

[114] Henry Benjamin Zenk, *Chinook Jargon and Native Cultural Persistence in the Grand Ronde Indian Community, 1856-1907: A Special Case of Creolization*, (Thesis (Ph. D.)--University of Oregon, 1984, 1984), 83.

ninety percent. They came to the Grand Ronde reservation in 1856 after signing a treaty in Dayton, Oregon,[115] and brought four or five different languages to the reservations, with numerous dialects, as well.[116] The Umpqua Valley groups are distinguished as members of the Umpqua, Calapooia, and Molala who arrived at the reservation in January 1856 after signing the Calapooia Creek Treaty in 1854.[117] Berreman notes that they were of the Siuslawan language family and similar culturally to the Rogue River bands.[118]

The Chinookan bands were a distinct group who and spoke Chinookan language and were related more to tribes of the Columbia River than the Willamette Valley.[119] The Rogue River and Cow Creek Valley groups came from interior southwestern Oregon and they were Athapaskan speakers and culturally related to the tribes of northwestern California.[120] They had previously signed the Cow Creek Treaty of 1853 and the Rogue River Treaty of 1854 and were

[115] Ibid, 84.

[116] Ibid, 84.

[117] Ibid, 85-86.

[118] Berreman, 3.

[119] Ibid, 4.

[120] Berreman, 3.

at Grand Ronde by 1856, although many were removed to the Siletz Agency in 1857.[121] Some 300 people from the Rogue River and Takelma bands had been forced to walk through the cold winter snow to their new location at the Grand Ronde Reservation.[122] Now known among CTGR as the Oregon Trail of Tears, it is said that along this journey, "seven people died and seven babies were born."[123]

Many families and individuals tried to escape the reservation and return to their ancestral territories, but this was a far from adequate solution to their misery on the new lands. Consequently, Fort Yamhill and Fort Hoskins were both established nearby in 1856 to hinder such attempts and prevent possible conflicts with Euro-American settlers, though some continued to come and go freely.[124]

Like the policy on most reservations, within the first year, the government proceeded to force these various cultures to abandon their traditional lifestyles and adopt American ideals. As one account states, "…the agents persuaded them and forced them to… and all government

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[121] Zenk, 88.

[122] Robert H. Ruby, and John A. Brown. *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of the Pacific Northwest*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 47.

[123] As quoted in Lewis 2009, 93.

[124] Ruby and Brown, 47, Zenk, 97.

inspectors and special agents always commented on the fact that they were the most advanced of any in the United States."[125] The definition of "advanced," however, is at the discretion of the dominant culture, and alluded to the peoples' rapid adoption of the Euro-American lifestyle.

Those living on the reservation were not allowed to build plankhouses, and were forced to live in crude, single family houses with dirt floors which were intended to further disrupt the communal aspects of their society.[126] Children were sent to boarding schools where they were punished for speaking their own language, wearing traditional clothes or hairstyles or for practicing their spiritual ceremonies, while women were compelled to learn the roles of Euro-American women.[127] Men were coerced into farming with individual plots allotted as early as 1858 to the Willamette Valley and Umpqua bands. In addition to this, a sawmill and grist mill constructed on the reservation were meant to encourage this occupation.[128] There occurred a widespread adoption of Roman Catholicism

[125] As quoted in Zenk, 142.

[126] Zenk, 92- 93.

[127] Ruby and Brown, 47.

[128] Berreman, 61-62.

which continues into the present day, although the traditional spiritualism also persisted.

Ultimately, however, all of these measures led to a continued loss of traditions and customs among the cultures. As Berreman noted in 1934, "the old culture of this band of Indians died out rather rapidly, and there scarcely remains a trace of it at the present time except in the beliefs of a few old people."[129] While this is may be an exaggeration of actual circumstances, it nonetheless illustrates the dramatic changes that occurred as third and fourth generations became further removed from their traditional lifeways.[130]

On the contrary, these struggles, along with intermarriage among cultures, loose cultural and kinships definitions and reduced populations, all served to dissolve former barriers that existed among the bands.[131] The reservation settlement patterns began as individual bands formed their own isolated enclaves, as opposed to one large settlement. Gradually, however, the association with a specific tribal identity began to wane as assimilation policies progressed and the isolation of the reservation

[129] As quoted in Zenk, 124.

[130] Zenk, 125.

[131] Ibid, 94.

from the broader region became apparent.[132] As time passed, these groups came together to create a larger reservation community and a new cultural identity of the Grand Ronde tribe as a whole.[133] This identity included the use of Chinook Jargon as the native language, the retention of shamanistic ceremonialism, the guardian spirit quest and the "earth-lodge" ceremonialism.[134]

However, life on the reservation continued to decline throughout the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. The Grand Ronde Reservation initially comprised nearly 60,000 acres, however, in 1901 the Dawes Act had allotted a total of 33,468 acres of reservation lands to 274 individuals. This left 25,791 acres unallotted and 440 open for federal use.[135] Monies secured through the treaties were by now depleted, and the promised federal funding often arrived late, if at all, resulting in continued poverty and social issues, both on and off the reservation.[136]

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[132] Ibid, 115.

[133] Ibid, 108.

[134] Zenk, 129.

[135] Lewis 2009, 112.

[136] Ibid, 104.

As a result of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, the tribe gained status as an incorporated, sovereign nation on May 13, 1935.[137] Although they received 537 acres of land, this did not initiate the anticipated benefits such as the return of all ceded lands or enhanced governmental aid. The tribe continued for another twenty years, until August 13, 1954, when it was officially terminated.[138]

Of any action previously imposed upon them by the federal government, this move contributed most directly to the detriment of the community. Their lands were taken, their health care absolved, educational monies eliminated and other governmental services ended, all of which were vital to the strength of the community. Many were forced to abandon their traditional homeland to find work in larger cities. Most damaging, however, was the loss of a cultural identity among both youth and Elders, alike.[139]

Ultimately, however, the community persevered. Through the tireless efforts of a contingency of tribal members, Congress passed the Grand Ronde Restoration Bill on November 22, 1983, officially ending the policies of

[137] Ruby and Brown, 46.

[138] Ibid, 46.

[139] Davis, 136.

termination and granting them the rights and advantages of a sovereign nation.[140] In 1988 they were given 9,811 acres of Bureau of Land Management land for their reservation and for use of timber as a means of income. With monies raised from the sale of timber they were able to purchase more lands to house their administrative facilities, community center and housing.[141]

Today, the CTGR community fosters deep connections to their ancestral roots. Cultural classes are offered in everything from basket weaving to carving to Chinuk Wawa, contributing to the continued expression of their culture. As tribal member David Lewis affirmed, "perhaps the most common desire among tribal members is to understand native traditions. These traditions are present in oral histories, in conversations with elders… and in the fabric of the community."[142] The tradition of their built environment, manifested through the construction of the *Achfa-hammi* plankhouse, provides another link to their past and enrichment for their future.

[140] Lewis 2009, 284.

[141] Davis, 136.

[142] Lewis 2009, 295.

CHAPTER VII

THE *ACHFA-HAMMI* PLANKHOUSE

The idea for a plankhouse emerged nearly twenty years ago among tribal elders, and ten years ago, initial planning began.[143] The financial investment of nearly $1,000,000 is part of the reason for this lengthy planning process, but the time was also needed to garner the support of the entire community of the need for the plankhouse.[144] It took another year to develop a consensus and confirm details of the design. Once construction started, however, the building was completed in just one and one-half years through the efforts of the entire community, and it was officially dedicated from September 17-19, 2010.[145] A naming ceremony occurred on January 30, 2011, giving it the name *Achfa-hammi,* a Tualatin-Kalapuya word that translates to "a house built of cedar planks."[146]

One of the important aspects of the plankhouse is not its exact replication of past forms, but its representation

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[143] Ron Karten, "Tribal Members Finishing Plankhouse," *Smoke Signals*, September 1, 2009, 5.

[144] Informant A.

[145] Ron Karten, "Plankhouse opening set for Sept. 17-19," *Smoke Signals*, September 1, 2010, 1.

[146] 'Achfa-hammi," *Smoke Signals*, February 15, 2011, 1.

of the Grand Ronde community as it exists in the twenty-first century. Heath discusses that "if we are to understand the nature of a locale, the record of ongoing change is as relevant as episodic moments of isolated achievement. Change informs us about who we are as eloquently as our past deeds and accomplishments reflect who we were."[147] Therefore, illuminating the changes that have occurred in building design and traditions will aid in our understanding of its significance to the contemporary community.

While the building still retains elements which are characteristic of all plankhouses- wide vertical planks, massive log structure, windowless interior and a round entry door, among others- it also reflects the vast amount of cultural changes that occurred throughout the history of the reservation (Figures 6, 7). The plankhouse is a

Figure 6. Main façade of the *Achfa-hammi* Plankhouse. View looking east (*photo by author*).

[147] Heath, 4.

Figure 7. Main façade of the *Achfa-hammi* Plankhouse. View looking southeast (*photo by author*).

blend of many forms that were adapted to suit the new needs of CTGR. Furthermore, the combination of these elements from the different tribes works to support a unified tribal identity. Many members identify with their individual tribes of their ancestors in addition to the overall Grand Ronde community. Thus, one strength of the building comes not from a strict adherence to traditional forms, but from an embrace of those features which exemplify the plankhouses of their ancestors.

Physical Adaptations

The location, itself, is one of the modifications that has been made. Not directly on the reservation, the

plankhouse is located at Ft. Yamhill State Heritage Area, on the site of the tribe's Uyxat Powwow grounds (Figure 8). Ft. Yamhill was established in 1856 to control the Grand Ronde reservation and ensure that people followed federal policies and did not attempt to escape. Thus the plankhouse stands in the face of the very site once held authority over them. Other locations were considered, but this was the least damaging to existing resources, and allows ancestral cultural practices, such as a giveaway, to occur at the plankhouse, while other events are simultaneously conducted at the powwow grounds.[148] Additionally, as in a traditional structure, the building is oriented west toward a small creek, the nearest source of water.[149]

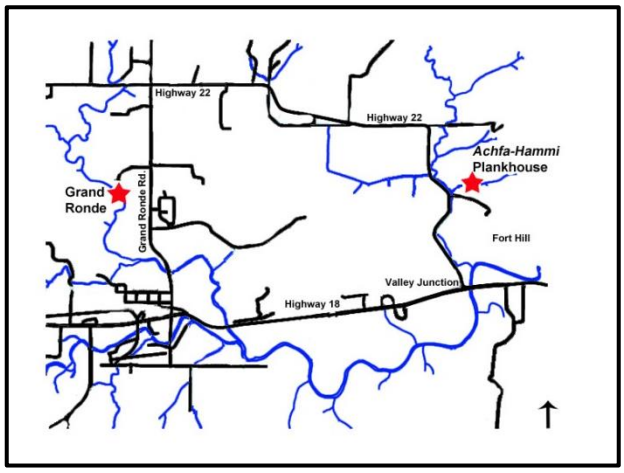

Figure 8. Location of the *Achfa-hammi* Plankhouse.

The approximately 100' by 60' structure sits on a concrete foundation, though traditionally it would have been built directly on the ground. On top of this concrete foundation, the building is made of five main posts across

[148] Informant A.

[149] Informant B.

the front and back, connected with large round beams. These main posts around the perimeter of the house also sit on large concrete piers, which have been obscured on the exterior with wood panels (Figure 9). Because the wood is not in direct contact with the ground it is not as susceptible to decay, adding to the stability and longevity of the structure.

Figure 9. Wood panel designed to cover concrete pier for wood support beam (*photo by author*).

The trees for the building are old-growth logs harvested from nearby forests, some estimated to be 500-600 years old, and as large as 5' diameter.[150] The Douglas fir used for the main beams came from the reservation forest lands, while the Western Red Cedar used for the planks was recovered from Sweet Home District of the Willamette National Forest.[151] They were helicoptered out of the forest, then hauled to the site through the assistance of local loggers.[152]

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[150] Scott Swanson, "Grand Ronde Tribal Elder harvests timber for cedar longhouse," *Smoke Signals*, January 15, 2008, 7.

[151] David Lewis, "A House Built of Cedar Planks," *Willamette Valley Voices: Connecting Generations* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2012), 73-74.

[152] Swanson 2008, 7.

After harvesting, the trees were allowed to season for a year before being shaped into the main structure of the house. The tribe utilized a combination of both traditional and contemporary methods to create the planks and beams used for the structure (Figure 10). A temporary mill was constructed onsite to cut and planks, while tribal members painstakingly hand-scraped and debarked the main beams of the house. The beams were also treated with a bleach and water solution which acts as a preservative, protecting them from rot and bug infestation. Additionally, it was applied to each log five times, both for thoroughness and because the number five is a spiritually significant number to the tribe.[153]

Figure 10. Detail of wood plank wall. Note row of wood peg fasteners near the top (*photo by author*).

The roof of the building comprises a combination of styles from northern and southern traditions. It is sheathed in cedar shakes, though it was originally intended

[153] Informant A.

to be cedar planks and had to be modified during construction due to financial restraints.[154] The roof structure is comprised of multiple layers of plywood and black mesh fabric (Figure 11). This works to create an air pocket, forming a channel from which rainwater can drain, thus removing water more quickly, protecting the roof from rot, and also preventing rain from seeping into the interior spaces.[155]

Figure 11. View of roof structure. Note layers of plywood and water-resistant material (*photo by author*).

The walls were assembled away from the site to ensure the tightest fit. Crew members then numbered the planks, took them apart, and reassembled them to complete the building. The walls of the plankhouse are taller than in traditional structures, and the roof is higher, as well. This feature developed as a means of improving air quality in the building.[156] With two fire pits as the main source of light and the only source of heat, smoke accumulates

[154] Informant A.

[155] Informant B.

[156] Informant B.

rapidly during events. Therefore, having higher a higher ceiling gives more space above the seating area for the smoke to gather and disperse. There has also been discussion of installing large fans to aid in ventilation and smoke diffusion. While this would resolve the issue, it would generate loud and distracting noise that, in addition to interfering with people's voice level, would disturb the integrity of the building as a whole.[157]

The floor is made of a mixture of gravel, cement and dirt. This is a slight variation from the traditional clay floor which brings occupants into a greater connection to the earth.[158]

Regulatory Adaptations

In addition to these changes wrought by new technologies, the plankhouse has also been adapted to suit the safety and comfort standards of today's society. The plankhouse has several more entrances than historically documented. It has the traditional front entrance, a low round door on the south side of the façade. On the opposite side of the main façade is an upright door on hinges built of the same cedar planks and fitted with a

[157] Informant A.

[158] Karten 2009, 5.

branch handle, so that it seamlessly blends into the façade (Figure 12). Two separate entrances are located at the rear of the building, similarly built to disappear into the plank walls (Figure 13).

Figure 12. Comparative view of traditional round entry door (right) and standard upright door (left) (*photo by author*).

Figure 13. East facade of plankhouse with two separate entrances (*photo by author*).

These three upright doors are contemporary elements that not only conform to our standards for comfort, but also comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations for handicap accessibility. They are wide enough for wheelchairs, and lead to the flat upper area of the plankhouse and the main floor, respectively. This gives

those in wheelchairs or other mobility difficulties full view and participation in tribal events. Furthermore, because many of these individuals are Tribal Elders, it further exemplifies the communities' respect and reverence for those who came before them.

The two entrances at the rear also created another necessary divergence from historic forms that were semi-subterranean on all sides. In order to accommodate doors on the lower level, the plankhouse is semi-subterranean on the west, north and south sides, sloping as it approaches the rear with a fully exposed east wall. From the front it resembles historic designs, though from the back, these modern adaptations reveal themselves.

Another entrance to the building is less obvious, but equally as important to sustaining the traditions of the tribe. It is the funerary custom of the tribe to bring the deceased into the plankhouse through the main entrance, but they must not exit through this same door. In traditional houses people would remove planks along one side of the house to create an exit, and the body was laid upon these planks as it was carried out.[159] Upon designing the building, it was decided that this could be too cumbersome

[159] Informant A.

and onerous, therefore, an alternative was needed. Along the south side of the plankhouse are two large doors which extend the height of the walls and slide along metal tracks (disguised on the exterior with wood) (Figure 14). These doors allow for easier egress of the deceased bodies while keeping with the cultural taboos of the community.[160] They have added benefits, as well, which facilitate the new uses of the building.

Figure 14. Sliding wood doors on south elevation. Note metal sliding track near the top (*photo by author*).

The plankhouse has been adapted in other ways to comply with the building codes and ADA regulations. As previously mentioned, the doors provide handicap access to the top and bottom floors, while handrails around the main beam provide safe passage down the steps to the dance floor. Around the perimeter of the floor are rope lights, which illuminate the beginning of the platform seating, while separate fixtures provide

[160] Informant B.

directed light along the stairs. Perhaps the most obvious and divergent lighting are the standard red "EXIT" lights located above each of the doorways to the dressing area and above the main entrance on the west wall. Each of the three main exit doors are also fitted with pushbars to comply with fire codes which stipulate that doors must have proper egress functions.

The capacity for the building was fixed at 299 individuals. This was to eliminate the need for a sprinkler system which is required if occupancy will exceed 300 people. It also would have required running water and plumbing for the building, which would have further diverged from the traditions of the building.[161]

Functional Adaptations

Plankhouses were the ancestral homes for the people that comprise CTGR. Because the people no longer live their daily lives in such houses, the function of the *Achfa-hammi* plankhouse has changed dramatically. It is now used for ceremonies, celebrations, funerals, as well as for culture camps and other tribal events, as opposed to a residence. It is the site of their annual Restoration

[161] Informant B.

Ceremony which marks the time in 1983 when they were, once again, officially recognized by the federal government. Each of these events are marked by specific customs such as drumming and dancing which enhance the community spirit and as Tribal missionary minister John P. Cayou, declared provide "medicine for our hearts."[162] Furthermore, these events instill in tribal members, particularly the youth, a sense of their shared heritage and values which are inherent to the cultural identity of the tribe.

But these functions are not always limited to tribal members, and the longhouse has become a teaching tool for the tribe. In warmer months local school groups frequently visit to learn the history of the tribe and their ongoing cultural traditions. In addition the tribe has hosted delegates from around the world including New Zealand, London and China. These visits reflect the role of the plankhouse to the larger region and the goal of education of the general public as a means of self-preservation. As Informant A related,

> we're asking for people to go out of their way to advocate for a group that only compromises 1.5% of the overall populations' special interests. We have to make people feel invested in us that don't necessarily belong to our group… We are trying to fight the system by teaching people

[162] As quoted in Ron Karten, "Plankhouse Opens," *Smoke Signals*, October 1, 2010, 6.

> that diversity is good and that we are one of the diverse groups that need to be kept around.[163]

Each summer, culture camps are held for the youth in the community. These week-long events take place at the plankhouse and draw young members to learn about the customs and lifeways of the CTGR heritage. The large doors on the south wall are also opened at this time to allow for a greater flow of people into and out of the house.[164] These and other traditional classes are beneficial to cultural revitalization because, as Informant A stated, "experience is a greater learning lesson than sitting in a classroom… Change it back to traditional educational modes… to educate tribal members about traditional methods of doing things, traditional mindsets, traditional value systems."[165]

In addition to the building, itself, the tribe is in the process of constructing a cooking area at the rear of the building. This concrete structure will have drying racks for fish, an enclosed fire pit and serving counters all of which will facilitate community meals which are an integral part of any celebration.

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[163] Informant A.

[164] Informant B.

[165] Informant A.

Community Involvement

As emphasized before, for cultural revitalization efforts to be most successful, they must be the result of community endeavors in order to create a stronger connection between individuals and their heritage. The collaboration between different families, various individuals and multiple generations instills a stronger sense of identity and community pride. Therefore, further significance of the plankhouse comes not from its physical architecture and design, but from the feelings and ideas it evokes among community members. Because they are the true beneficiaries of its renewed power, their involvement in the construction process and their perceptions of the structure are essential to understanding its value, and how it contributes to the field of Historic Preservation.

Community involvement was present from the beginning, as it was tribal members who initially proposed the idea. Outreach to tribal members helped to inform the design, although it did not occur without some compromises. Some wanted a completely traditional building with no electricity, a hard clay floor and built entirely with traditional methods. Others, however, wanted modern conveniences such as indoor plumbing, full-scale lighting

and wood floors. The final design ultimately resulted from the financial and temporal feasibility of the endeavor.[166]

Approximately eighty members had a hand in constructing the plankhouse, some through volunteer work, some through hire, and others through service requirements. In the earliest stages of the project, one team harvested the logs and split many by hand. Tribal Elder Jan Reibach led the construction crew who completed the work, who were hired through CTGR P.L. 102-477 Employment and Training and Voc Rehab programs.[167] Still others dedicated themselves completely to the project through daily participation.

Through each stage of development tribal members performed ceremonies and blessings as an integral part of the plankhouse construction, thus providing a means for perpetuating this element of their cultural traditions. During construction, the work crew placed a small offering of feathers and beads on a rawhide string on one of the walls and began each day with a prayer circle.[168] Upon completion, CTGR invited tribes from across Oregon and Washington to celebrate the opening of the plankhouse. This is in keeping with traditions which, according to

[166] Informant A.

[167] Karten, 2009, 5.

[168] Ibid.

Lewis, held that "other tribes had to be there to welcome a new plankhouse into the community and their members conducted much of the traditional opening." He goes on to discuss how "many tribal members took responsibility for learning practices so the house would be opened appropriately."[169]

At the recent 29th Restoration Celebration Powwow held in November of 2012, a number of participants expressed the importance of the plankhouse. Mariann Mell, wife of the Tribal GIS coordinator avowed "I could feel the ancestors there."[170] Another individual Beate Becker, a German visitor with no comprehension of either the Chinuk-Wawa or English languages, could, just the same, feel the importance of the ceremony and the space.[171] She "felt the respect for (Tribal) ancestors in the building. It's important to have respect for Elders and to pass that on to the children."[172] If the significance and history of this building can be perceived even without words, then it can undoubtedly be considered of value to all peoples who encounter the space.

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[169] Lewis 2012, 75.

[170] As quoted in Ron Karten, "A People coming together," *Smoke Signals*, December 1, 2012, 8.

[171] These are the two primary languages spoken by tribal members.

[172] As quoted in Karten 2012, 8.

Tribal member Travis Mercier summarized the views of many when he stated that

> We have been told that a people can never truly lose their culture as long as we remember how to listen to our ancestors. Many of these teachings will lay waiting for as long as it takes for the people to be ready for them. I think that some of these things have been shown to us lately and it is truly amazing to see it happen. Our children are speaking in the language of their ancestors, dancing, singing their songs and asking for more. In the tradition of the great houses that our people once lived in, the first plankhouse to be built in Grand Ronde is now under construction. The land and the trees, our ancestors, are asking for it. This house wants to be built, to help the people here to heal and strengthen our community. I have seen the faces of all who have participated in its building: young, old, Tribal and nonTribal people working to create something that they feel is much larger than themselves. Everything happens for a reason, and in its time.[173]

In this statement he calls attention to an often unrealized purpose of Historic Preservation – to revitalize not just a building, but the entire culture that created it.

Lewis embodied these sentiments when he wrote that

> the plankhouse is one of the major elements that enable the return of tribal traditions. The environment of the house, its spirit and power, gathered from the spirit of the community- a community that has endured so much loss only to find a way to return from a final precipice is strong. As the community relearns and restores its spirit, the house will gather more power and other traditions will return. We are seeing the

[173] Travis Mercier, "Letters," *Smoke Signals*, June 1, 2009, 2.

> revitalization in the return of tribal oral histories, of its language and history, and the development of a museum complex to tell its own story. Without the foundation of the plankhouse much of this would not be possible.[174]

As emphasized before, the significance of a place can only be truly perceived by those who live it. In this statement Lewis relates that the importance of the plankhouse comes not simply from the building itself, but from those values and ideals which it strengthens and perpetuates for the Grand Ronde community.

Additionally, the materials themselves are more than just a piece of history, but a living legacy of the tribe. The trees used for the plankhouse came from lands that previously were occupied by their ancestors, allowing tribal members to connect in yet another way to their heritage. Kathleen Tom recalled: "what a great feeling to have an ancestor tree in there with us to honor us and to make sure that we can do our prayers and ceremonies."[175] Gladys Hobbs emphasizes these ideas when she stated that her "great grandma…was around when those trees were small

[174] Lewis 2012, 75.

[175] Minutes of The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Tribal Council Meeting, (April 2 2008), 6.

and I welcome that one tree to be the center post of it [the plankhouse]."[176]

A resurgence of traditional building techniques also helped to spur the construction of the plankhouse, underscoring its significance. Not only did they make these building more "authentic," to conform to Historic Preservation principles, but more importantly, they mark yet another renaissance of traditions. Tribal Elder Don Day spearheaded efforts supporting traditional plank splitting and other building techniques. Although these customs had not been practiced since 1856, Day reviewed accounts of early explorers, reading the literature of ethnographers and visiting museums that hold historic tools to understand how work was performed in the past.[177]

Reflecting on the motivation and deeper meaning of his endeavors, Day commented that "every time I split one of these (logs) the work of my ancestors is that much more amazing to me…they could look at a snag and tell you if it could be made into a canoe. I can't do that. It comes with experience."[178] The knowledge of traditional building methods, not just the physical product of those traditions,

[176] Ibid.

[177] Swanson 2008, 7.

[178] Ibid.

therefore, is an essential factor in the ongoing renaissance of Native American peoples. As Day stated, "when my people were rounded up and put on a postage stamp (reservation), they lost the knowledge of how to do this. This is the revitalization of an art that once everyone knew how to do. If you go to my reservation today, you'll find five people who remember how to do it."[179]

The plankhouse has become a way for the tribe to share their culture on a new level. They can reach out to other communities and begin to correct some of the misconceptions that exist about CTGR and Native American cultures in general – that they are only in the past, or worse, non-existent. By having such a place which embodies not only their historic traditions, but also their contemporary culture, the tribe can now express their identity on their own terms.

The *Achfa-hammi* plankhouse is a marriage of new and old traditions, highlighting CTGR's continuing and ever-changing culture. As Tribal Council Chair Reyn Leno affirmed, "For a tribe that at one time had just a name and a small cemetery, now along with everything else, this is one more thing bringing our culture back."[180]

[179] Ibid.

[180] As quoted in Karten 2010, 6.

CHAPTER VII

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Many Native American communities understand the importance of tribal architectures as facet of their culture, and have expressed it in various ways. Although not a feature of every reservation among the Northwestern Coast tribes, plankhouses are not wholly unique buildings among Native American peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast today (Figure 15). Other communities have constructed longhouses or traditional structures while also adapting them to modern standards and customs. Numerous examples exist throughout the country, and exhibiting varying degrees of "authenticity," as related to historical forms. Similar to the CTGR longhouse, each of these traditional buildings were constructed based on historical models, while the function,

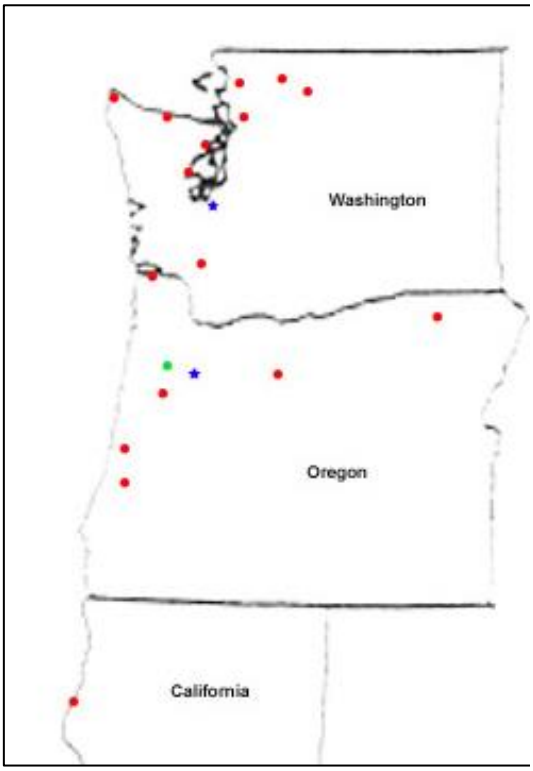

Figure 15. Distribution map of select longhouses in the Pacific Northwest, United States.

location and purpose has changed dramatically, reflecting the identity of its people. From these select examples, it is clear that such buildings are a form of cultural expression that exists throughout the larger Native American community.

In northern California, the Yurok tribe developed Sumêg Village as part of Patrick's Point State Park (Figure 16). Funded by a 1984 State Park Bonds Act and completed in 1990, it showcases a collaboration between the California State Parks and the local tribes.[181] This replication of their summer villages includes several traditional houses, a sweat house, a dance pit and a dugout canoe. In addition to this are several changing houses used by members of the local tribes in preparation for their celebrations.

Figure 16. Family house in Sumêg Village at Patrick's Point State Park, California (*photo by the author*).

The buildings are constructed with redwood trees which

[181] Patrick's Point State Park brochure, California State Parks, 2. http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/417/files/patrickspoint.pdf (accessed March 7, 2013).

fell in from nearby state parks and are held together with hazel saplings. Both Yurok tribal members and state park staff performed initial construction work which began 1988.[182]

Restoration work on the village from 2003-2004 has reaffirmed the significance of the Sumêg Village to the perpetuation of their heritage. The traditional building techniques that were used instructed state park personnel, but more importantly, tribal members from the Yurok, Hoopa and Karok tribes in the methods of the past.[183] Furthermore, much of the work was performed by the Hoopa Tribal Civilian Conservation Corps, instilling the knowledge in this younger generation. In addition, work was undertaken to record oral histories from Tribal Elders about the land and its use throughout time as part of a potential TCP nomination.[184]

The Sumêg Village has become a place for tribal members to practice their annual ceremonies and celebrations, underscoring its cultural value. In addition, its public accessibility and location in a state

[182] Patrick's Point State Park brochure, California State Parks, 2. http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/417/files/patrickspoint.pdf (accessed March 7, 2013).

[183] Kathleen Lindahl, Stewardship at the Sumeg Village of Patrick's Point SP, http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=23577 (accessed March 8, 2013).

[184] Ibid.

park has the added benefit of informing the general public about local Native American cultures and provides an experiential educational opportunity for local school groups.

Closer to the Grand Ronde reservation is the Cathlapolte Plankhouse in the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge in Washington (Figure 17). Completed in 2005, this is a reconstruction based on archaeological findings from the Chinookan village of the same name dating from 1000-1840 C.E.[185] Lewis and Clark visited the village in 1806, leaving documentary records, while the site as a whole has changed little since it was abandoned in the early-mid nineteenth century. Additionally, through the five year "Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, the Cathlapotle Archaeology Project," conducted by Portland State

Figure 17. Main façade of the Cathlapotle Plankhouse (courtesy of *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*).

[185] K. M. Ames and C. MacP. Smith, 1999 *The Nature and Organization of production in an Early Modern Northwest Coast Plankhouse*. Ms. on File, Portland State University, 1.

University with collaboration from the Chinook Tribe and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), extensive data about the village and its inhabitants was uncovered, thus leaving a breadth of information from which to create the plankhouse.

Planning for the site began in 2002 as part of an initiative for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Committee of Vancouver/ Clark County's Legacy Project, and to provide an interpretive mechanism for the refuge. The design for the plankhouse involved collaboration between the Chinook tribe and FWS, among others, and was created using both archaeological and ethnographic data.[186] Issues arose, however, during initial phases of design, when the desire for an "authentic" plankhouse was met with the reality of building codes. Compromises were made through the inclusion of a wheelchair ramp, exit lighting and egress doors.[187]

Like the CTGR plankhouse, ceremonies were an important aspect from the earliest stages of development, with a

[186] Timeline of the Cathlapotle Site Plankhouse Project, 2. http://ridgefieldfriends.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/timeline-of-the-cathlapotle-site.pdf. Erica Lynn Boyne, *The Realization of the Cathlapotle Plankhouse: Reflections on Cross-Cultural Collaboration in the Post-NAGPRA Era,* Thesis (M.A) -- Portland State University, 2011, 62-63.

[187] Boyne, 87.

Hearth lighting ceremony held prior to the commencement of construction, as well as a ceremony when they raised the first post. Community involvement was also widespread, and included fund-raising projects, hands-on workshops headed by the Chinook Indian Nation and efforts to hire tribal members for obtaining the cedar materials and subsequent construction work.[188] In addition to the plankhouse, traditional skills are also perpetuated through the carved cedar sculptures that adorn the interior of the house.[189]

Understanding the significance of this structure to the vitality of the community, Chinook Tribal member Tony Johnson related that "it is an important opportunity for us to exercise our cultural knowledge and gain experience for future plankhouse construction."[190] Paralleling the principles behind Historic Preservation, Adam McIsaac stated that "it is important that people have something tangible to better understand that these people (Chinook) are very talented."[191]

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[188] Boyne, 65-66.

[189] Toby McClary, "Chinookans Bring Traditional Plankhouse to Life," - *Smoke Signals Chinook Tribe's Traditional Plankhouse Dedication Pullout,* April 15, 2005, 3.

[190] As quoted in McClary , 1-2.

[191] Ibid, 2.

Like the Yurok village, this reconstructed house is generally open to the public, and used by the Chinook tribe today for their ceremonial events and celebrations. For these people, however, it has added value as they struggle to gain federal recognition as a tribe. As McClary concluded, "the plankhouse is more than just a link to their past. It could be a valuable tool in proving their identity, and like federal recognition the plankhouse will provide groundwork for their future."[192]

Additionally, constructing a plankhouse based on archaeological evidence and at this known village site imbeds the building with more legitimacy in the realm of Historic Preservation. The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Reconstructions state that, among other guidelines, such undertakings must "be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction."[193] Thus, the recognized value to both the revitalization of the tribe and to the broader history of our country exemplifies this Chinookan

[192] Ibid, 4.

[193] Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer, "The Secretary of the Interior's standards for the treatment of historic properties: with guidelines for preserving, rehabilitating, restoring & reconstructing historic buildings," (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Heritage Preservation Services, 1995), 166.

plankhouse as a means of fulfilling the stated goals of the profession.

The Suquamish Tribe, located on the Puget Sound in Port Madison Indian Reservation, Washington, built a longhouse in 2009 that reflects a more contemporary design aesthetic. It was the first longhouse to be constructed, 139 years after their former house, Old Man House Park, was burned by a United States Indian agent in 1870 in an attempt at assimilation. The longhouse is known as *sgwedzadad qe ?altxw* a Lushootseed phrase for "House of Awakened Culture," emphasizing the greater purpose of this space.[194]

However, this longhouse does not as closely follow the traditional appearance and form as the CTGR longhouse. Funded in part by state grants and fundraising through the Suquamish Foundation, the 13,169 square-foot building was designed by Mithun, an architectural firm from Seattle.[195] In addition to a 6,200 square-foot performance area, the building houses a staging room, lobby, restrooms and a

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[194] Derek Sheppard, "New Building Puts Tribe in Touch With Old Ways," *Kitsap Sun*, March 10, 2009.

[195] Babette Herrmann, "Suquamish tribe debuts community house," *Indian Country Today,* March 16, 2009. http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/ictarchives/2009/03/16/suquamish-tribe-debuts-community-house-84564 (accessed March 8, 2013).

commercial kitchen, which allow many different types of events to occur in this one location.

The performance area was designed with bench seating and a complete wood interior. Divergent from historic longhouses, this area also has four expansive double doors that offer a view of the Puget Sound and Cascade Mountain range. Additionally, the exterior of the building does not have vertical planks, but horizontal redwood siding applied to the concave surface of the structure. It also features eight posts that are carved in the traditional Coastal Salish style.[196]

Nevertheless, it significance to the strength of the community is still palpable. As Tribal Elder Marilyn Wandrey expressed at its dedication in 2009 "our spirits are excited and our ancestors are here and celebrating with us. It's been a long, long time since we've had a home to call our own."[197] This longhouse exemplifies the contemporary culture of the Suquamish, while at the same time providing a tangible link to their past traditions.

In addition to these contemporary examples of "reconstructions" of traditional forms, archaeological evidence shows that the reproduction of historic artifacts

[196] Hermann.

[197] Sheppard.

and symbols is not a new concept in the cultures of Northwest Coast peoples. Ostrowitz points out that

> near copies or creative translations of ancestral works are routinely produced in relation to an enduring tradition in which the right to display specific imagery,… is ceremonially transferred from one generation to the next….providing a physical support for enduring but intangible prerogatives.[198]

The Chief Shakes house in Wrangell, Alaska is an example of a house form that has been continually replicated by the Tlingit people. Each subsequent reconstruction has served to reinforce prestige among the various clans. Ultimately, it was created to ensure the status of each clan in the face of a dramatic influx of new settlers into their territory.[199] The reconstructions of this house continued into the 1930s when the house was rebuilt on site to the same dimensions, and reusing the main historic posts.[200] Thus, repeating specific elements of a culture is not seen as a mere copy of past forms, but a continuation of the living heritage. It enables a community to honor their ancestors while ensuring the

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[198] Judith Ostrowitz, *Privileging the Past: Reconstructing History in Northwest Coast Art*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 22.

[199] Ostrowitz, 26.

[200] Alison K. Hoagland, "Totem Poles and Plank Houses: Reconstructing Native Culture in Southeast Alaska," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture.* 6, (1997), 177.

perpetuation of their culture into the next generation. A conceptual difference such as this is one of the fundamental problems inhibiting the relationship between preservationists and many Native American communities.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The benefits of cultural revitalization projects such as the *Achfa-hammi* plankhouse are an essential part of enhancing a tribe's cultural identity. As Lewis explains, "the recovery of the knowledge of the history of the tribe by a significant population of the tribal members will help efforts for restoration of the tribal culture, restoration of the tribal community, and facilitate the development of a stronger tribal government."[201] The construction of their traditional house is one step in this process because it is not only their history in tangible form, but it also embodies their intangible history.

Howe avows that "first and foremost, tribal communities themselves must reassert their inherent authority to determine the nature of their built environments. This is an exercise of tribal self-determination, of tribal sovereignty."[202] The plankhouse expresses a strong statement about the longevity of the culture and community and shows triumph over the federal

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[201] Lewis 2009, 311.

[202] Howe, 113.

policies of assimilation. It has become a way for CTGR to signify their power and strength as a nation to the surrounding region. Echoing these ideas, Bobby Mercier, Tribal Cultural and Language Specialist even "compared the planning and building of the plankhouse with the work it takes to bring a people back from Termination."[203] The completion of this building is yet another way that the tribe is recovering from the harsh realities of their past and asserting control as a sovereign nation.

Using the model for cultural conservation set up by Loomis, the *Achfa-hammi* plankhouse and similar tribal architectures embody both the *preservation* and *encouragement* strategies. From the preservation approach, a building ensures the maintenance of specific design and constructions practices. The encouragement aspect arrives with the ceremonies and activities that occur within the completed space. Therefore, this and other forms of tribal architectures embody both strategies for cultural conservation, increasing its importance in forming a cultural identity.

Representing the vast array of Native American cultures depends upon more than just historic buildings, it

[203] As quoted in Karten 2012, 8.

requires the people and practices that accompany them. One fundamental aspect of the cultural significance of the plankhouse is the building techniques used during its construction. When people can work directly with the materials and create the house using traditional methods, they can feel the presence of their ancestors. Despite not having been physically transmitted, knowledge of their traditional building techniques was kept alive and passed down through generations over the past 150 years. Tribal Elder Don Day initially led these efforts that developed into a group of people who traveled throughout Oregon teaching the plank splitting methods to other tribes. Reviving this art creates a deeper connection to their ancestors, and exemplifies the determination of the community.

Ultimately the historic significance of the *Achfa-hammi* plankhouse comes from both its physical representation of their material culture, and also from its demonstration of their cultural practices. Having community members involved in the procurement of logs, the design and construction, and now the celebrations and ceremonies ensures a greater connection between the building and the individual and collective tribal identities. If preservation were to recognize and support

endeavors such as traditional building practices and technologies, then it would be advancing one step further in its efforts to identify and preserve historic the processes of a community rather than only the physical products.

The field of Historic Preservation needs to not only acknowledge, but strengthen the role that tribal architectures play in the perpetuation of Native American communities. The standards and regulations currently in place do not always allow for the unique circumstances of these buildings which are at the same time contemporary and historic. Although the plankhouse is on the tribal registry as a religious site, to ensure its protection through Section 106 of NHPA, it does not qualify for recognition at the national level. If the profession truly wants to promote the living heritage of our county, then it must adapt and amend some of its perceptions to include the dynamic elements of a culture.

Informant A stated that the current goal for the CTGR Preservation program is to complete a comprehensive inventory of their "culturally vital places" specifically places with religious significance. In doing so, the desire is to create a cultural connection to place and put

"people back in place."[204] To succeed in this endeavor, this individual sees the larger purpose of the program as cultural education and awareness. "For tribal communities, identity is intrinsically tied to our past…we are the ones that need those places for us to help continue our culture. It's a complete cycle, you can't disconnect people from place."[205]

Identifying the building as a TCP could be an option for national recognition because the NHPA states that its purpose is to protect "the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation" as "a living part of our community life."[206] Based on the NRHP regulations, however, TCPs must be fifty years old, or they are considered ineligible for inclusion. Because of the criterion for age, the *Achfa-hammi* longhouse cannot be a TCP due to the fact that it is only two years old, however, the ceremonies, construction techniques and cultural practices, the living history of the tribe, that occurs within the longhouse have been a part of the culture for well over fifty years old. More than just events in the space, though, these activities proliferate because of the

[204] Informant A.

[205] Ibid.

[206] National Historic Preservation Act, Secton 1 (b), 1966.

inherent character of the place. Informant A stated that "when forced to do [ceremonies] elsewhere it is difficult to create the ambiance of sheer importance of that event"[207] that having their own plankhouse generates. Therefore, it is no less important despite its physical presence in the landscape only dating to 2010.

Parker states that "to American Indian people historic preservation is no less than the perpetuation of living cultural traditions… as well as the *places and properties* associated with them"[208] (emphasis added). Such places and properties should not necessarily be viewed through the lens of history, but culture. The *Achfa-hammi* plankhouse provides such a place for the members of the Grand Ronde community and is implicitly tied to the heritage of their people. The fact that they may not meet the determined fifty year mark for historical significance is irrelevant when considering their value to the enrichment of a community's identity. Sites such as this should be offered the same protection, recognition and distinction as other properties of historic significance.

Thomas King speculates on this contradiction of age and significance in the objectives of Historic Preservation

[207] Informant A.

[208] Parker 1990, 1.

when he asks "do we advance on this purpose [of NHPA] by declining to consider impacts on traditionally grounded beliefs and practices that are important parts of a community's life simply because they don't happen to take place in "authentic" historical locations?"[209] It is not necessarily possible to construct a plankhouse in an authentic historical location because of the tribes' removal from their ancestral homelands to the reservation, and the government-imposed suppression of plankhouse construction. However, these circumstances do not make this place any less historic or valuable to the community. The reason for its significance derives not solely the building, itself, but the intangible elements of CTGR culture which are perpetuated within its walls.

The field of Historic Preservation has made great advances in its concerns for Native American communities. It emphasizes thorough and proper consultation, attempts to recognize all aspects of culture, and promotes the preservation efforts of tribes through the Tribal Historic Preservation Program. However, it still has far to go in the realm of constructions of traditional Native American buildings. While such buildings clearly align with the

[209] King, 225.

theories and principles behind the profession, they hold no ground in regards to the policies and procedures.

History can only be viewed through the eyes of a contemporary people who review and interpret past events. The significance of the *Achfa-hammi* plankhouse derives not solely from its representation of historic forms and traditions, but from its representation of the values of CTGR present in our own time. It expresses a powerful statement about the longevity of the culture and community and shows triumph over federal policies of assimilation. The plankhouse is a testament to honor the legacy of their ancestors, to show the strength of the present community and to create a healthy environment for future generations.

By having such a place which embodies not only their historic traditions, but also their contemporary culture, the tribe can express their identity on their own terms. As Informant A declared

> place defines who you are; it shows where you belong. It is your home, but if you can't go to it, how does it define who you are? And if somebody else is allowed to tell you who you are on your ancestral homeland how does that change your perception of self? And how can you be a fully-actualized individual making coherent choices and valuable choices when you don't know who you are?[210]

[210] Informant A.

More than just a building, this space encompasses both the intangible and tangible elements of their heritage, and through the ceremonies and rituals performed in this place their values and beliefs are able to proliferate.

Historic Preservation needs to both preserve and maintain the dynamic traditions of the Native American cultures as they are manifested in the places of their built environment. Furthermore, the profession should develop programs to aid in the continuation of such activities and encourage the construction of these places which both allow and cultivate the rejuvenation and continued renewal of cultural practices. The *Achfa-hammi* plankhouse provides such a place, therefore, its age should not set such an exacting precedent in the measurement of its cultural significance.

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