



PAUL DYCK PLAINS INDIAN BUFFALO CULTURE COLLECTION

SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West's \$350,000 award from Save America's Treasures provided the funds necessary to continue processing the collection, making it accessible to researchers, tribal members, and scholars, as well as to improve storage conditions for its proper care and preservation. In addition, the grant funded a research associate position to coordinate the cataloguing and storage of the collection as staff moved forward with exhibition and publication plans.

In awarding the grant, the National Park Service, which administers Save America's Treasures in partnership with several federal cultural agencies, recognized the breadth of the collection in time period, object type, and representation of Plains tribes.

"With many individual pieces of exceptional artistry and historic significance, the collection as a whole includes works from every Plains tribe," adds Emma I. Hansen, curator. "Through exhibition, study, and interpretation, this collection will illustrate and commemorate tribal cultures and lives which form a significant component of the heritage of the American West."

PAUL DYCK BIOGRAPHY:

Paul Dyck (1917 – 2006), a descendent of Flemish painter Sir Anthony Van Dyck (1599 – 1641), was born in Chicago. The collection was started by Dyck's father in 1886 and was, according to family sources, "systematically *collected*, rather than haphazardly *acquired*."

The young Dyck lived with his family in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, near Blackfeet reserves. Later, Dyck was sent to Europe to apprentice with an uncle who was a successful artist. By age 15, he was on his own, studying at the Munich Academy. He served in World War II, and then settled onto an Arizona ranch where he became an author, illustrator, lecturer, and painter of western subjects. Over time, Dyck developed many friendships with Blackfeet, Crow, Cheyenne, Lakota, and other Plains Native people.

HISTORY OF THE BUFFALO CULTURE ERA:

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Plains Native people were living as buffalo hunters and farmers, pursuing the resources of the region through seasonal migration. In the previous century, their lives had been enhanced through the acquisition of horses which allowed for longer and more extensive travel, and provided greater opportunities for trade. Tribes formerly living in the Great Lakes region, such as the Lakota and Cheyenne, had moved into the Plains, and they became full-time buffalo hunters.

The Crow had earlier left their Hidatsa relatives and farming traditions in the Upper Missouri River region of present North Dakota, and began a migration and eventual settlement in southern Montana and northern Wyoming. By the end of the nineteenth century, the major resource of the Plains—the once great buffalo herds—had been destroyed, and tribes were no longer able to travel beyond reservation boundaries to hunt or collect other traditional foods.

THE COLLECTION'S ARCHIVES:

Along with the Historical Center's acquisition of the Dyck Collection, the Paul Dyck Foundation donated Dyck's library and archives. Those materials included photographs of tribal members with whom he worked, as well as other historical images and his own research and documentation of collection objects. Project planners consult these resources along with those available through other libraries and archives, including the Historical Center's own McCracken Research Library. In addition, the Plains Indian Museum curatorial staff has completed extensive curatorial research on Plains cultural materials.