

Hahwunnchek/Farewell



Hello. I'm Amelia Bingham, and I want to say that it is very nice to talk to you today about something very special that exists right now in the Indian township of Mashpee, Massachusetts. It's a place called the Mashpee Wampanoag Indian Museum.

You've been looking at photographs of Wampanoag things that are now in many museums in many different places. Remember the bow, the baskets, and Phillip's pipe, bowl and the war club? Of course, there are many many other things that we haven't mentioned that are in museums. We Wampanoag people are very happy that these very old things have been saved, but we are sorry that it is difficult for our people to get to see them. Now there's one place where the Wampanoag people can go to see many of the things of their ancestors and that is at the Mashpee Wampanoag Indian Museum.

I began to dream about our own Indian Museum about five years ago, while I was traveling in Europe. Everywhere that I went in Europe, the people in their own lands knew about their own histories and had museums where they could go and learn and see more about their ancestors and the past. I began to feel sad that there was no special place here for our people to go to find out about their ancestors.

My husband and I came back to Mashpee, to our home town, and I began to talk to other people about starting a museum. Some of the people liked the idea and we started working on it together. We found an old house, bought it, fixed it up and turned it into a museum. It took a long time and a lot of hard work. I won't go into details now. If you're interested, I've included a newspaper article that tells about some of the things that happened.

When we started to put the exhibits together, some people brought us local Wampanoag things that they and their family before them had saved. A few museums in the area also loaned us native Wampanoag items that they had in storage, for us to put on exhibit. Some date back to a time long before the coming of the Pilgrims. The opening of the museum was a most exciting and special day. Frank James gave the Opening Speech which explained why we're all so happy that there is now an Indian museum. We've made a copy of it for you to read.

There was a lot of work involved in putting the exhibits together. We had to decide what we wanted each of the exhibit cases to say, and then pick the objects that would tell the story. We had to place the objects together in a way that looked nice and still made sense. We took some photographs while we were setting up the exhibits. When the exhibits were finished, we took more photographs. Could you match the photographs of the finished exhibits with those of the exhibits in process?

There are now two exhibit rooms in the Mashpee Museum; one tells about life of our people living in the old way — how they got their food, what they ate, where they lived, how they dressed, what they did for a living. The second room shows what a living room was like in a Mashpee home about 1840, and that is over 130 years ago. There is no exhibit that tells about Wampanoag life today because, at the moment, there is no room for more displays. But we know we need one because visitors still ask some strange questions about how Indian people live today.

Now that you've listened to all of us and have heard about what our ancestors did in the past and who we are today, maybe you could put a display together for us. Imagine that you worked at the Mashpee Indian museum. What would you like other people to know about us?

If you make a display that you think we'd like to know about, take some photographs of it or make some drawings or just describe it to us and send it to me,

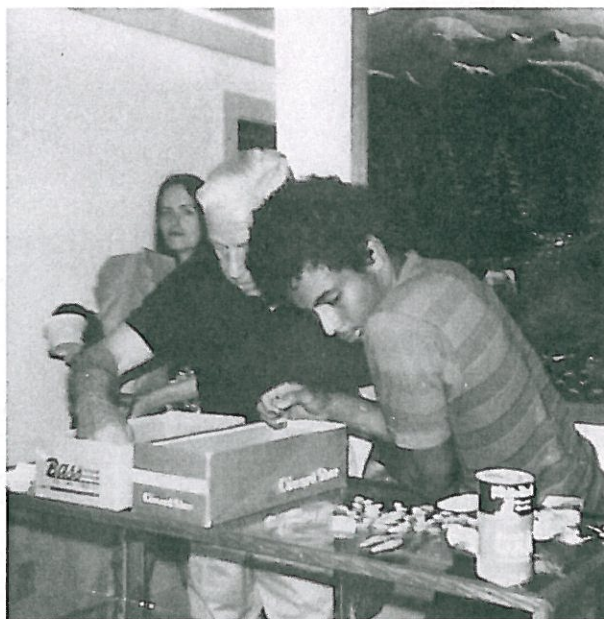
Amelia Bingham

Mashpee Wampanoag Indian Museum

Mashpee, Massachusetts 02649

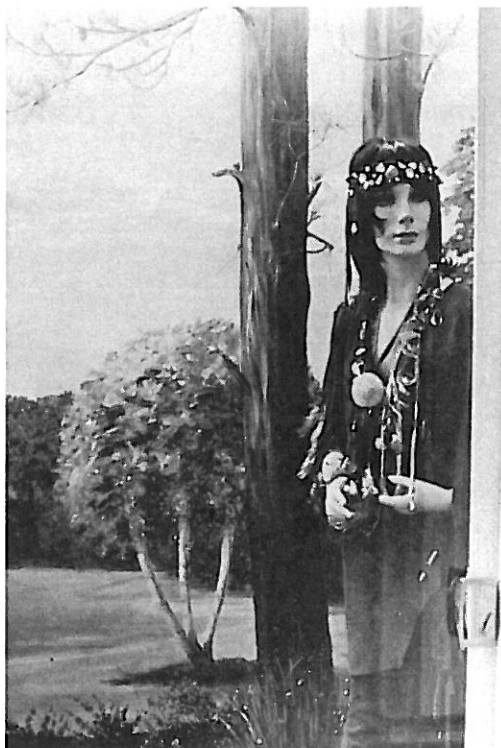
I'm really looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Exhibit Card

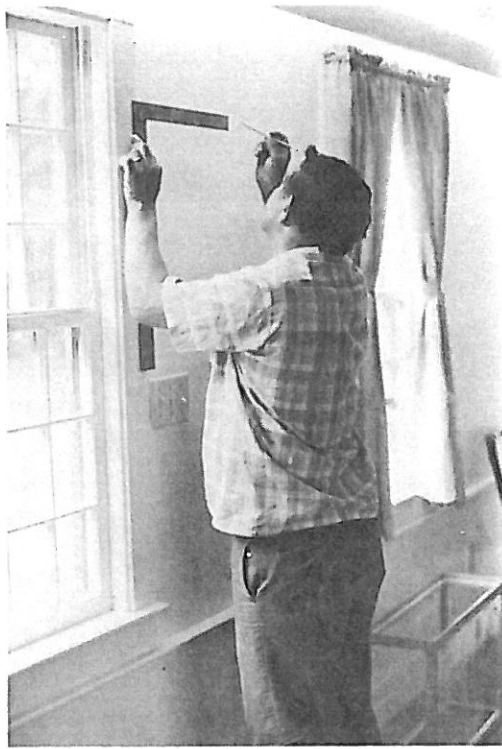




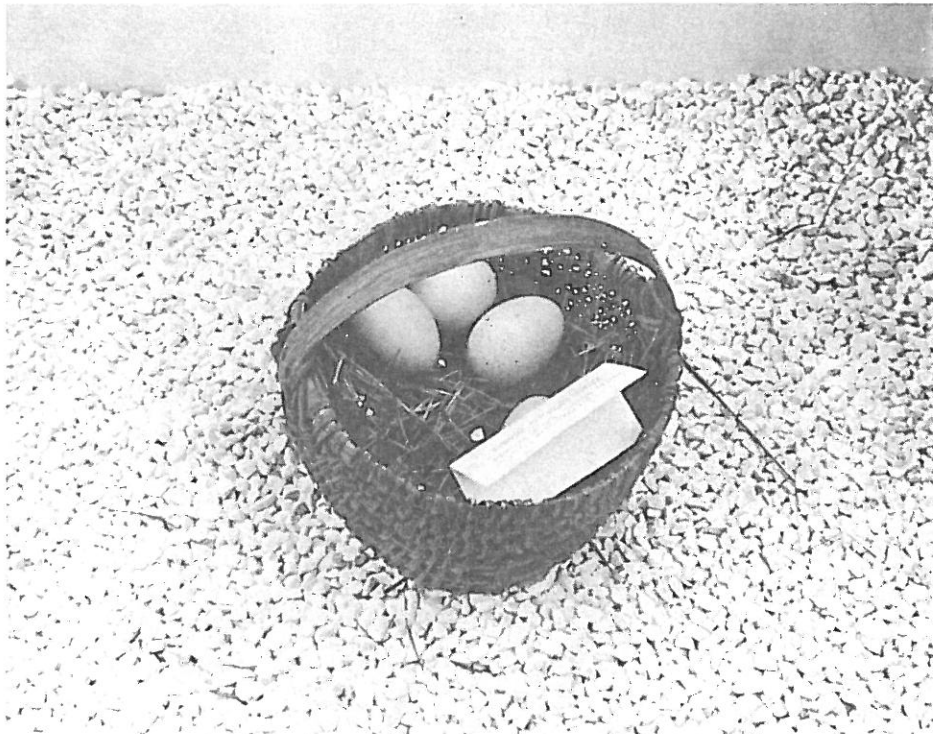
Jill Einstein

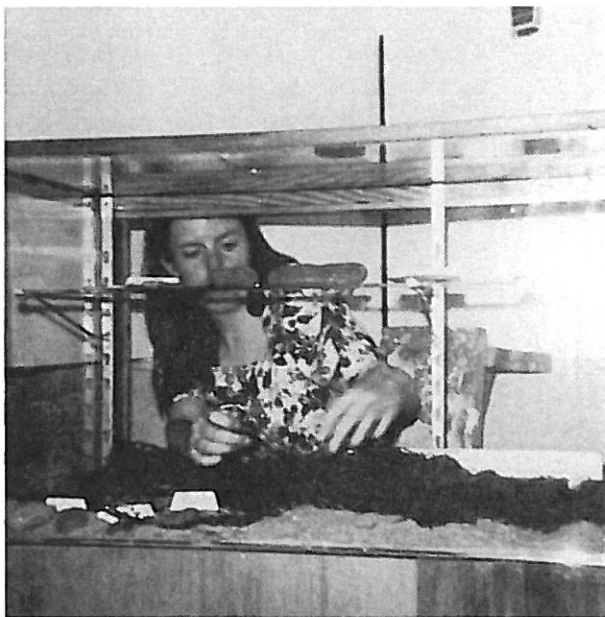


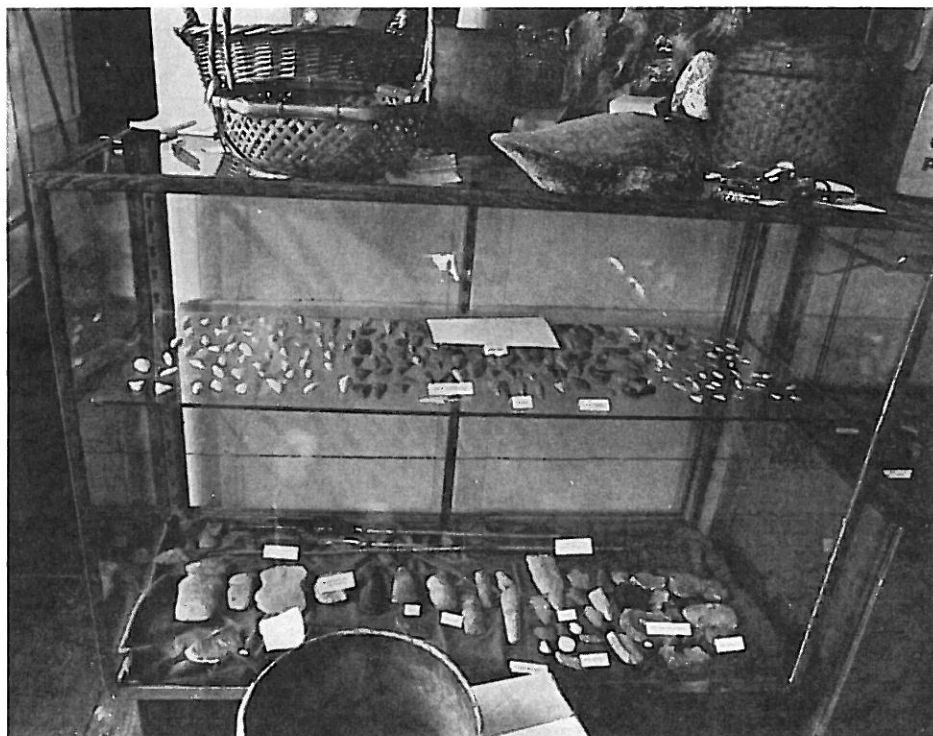
Jill Einstein



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The Opening of the Museum



The Eagles and the Crows

What cheer, Mittark! I am Wamsutta. I am an Indian from Gay Head, Mass. I would like to quote a great leader of the Ogalala Sioux, Sitting Bull, "If the Great Spirit had wanted me to be a white man, he would have made me so in the first place. He put certain wishes and desires in your hearts; he put other wishes and desires in our hearts. They are both great in his sight. It is not necessary for eagles to be crows." For too many years, against the intent of the Great Spirit, the Indians in this part of the country have been forced to live as white men. For too many years, the Indians' wishes and desires have been suppressed by white man's wishes and desires. For too many years, the Indian's culture has been displayed in the white man's museum. For many years, the Wampanoags were the eagles of this part of the country. For too many years, they were forced to be the crows. It is for these reasons that we, the Wampanoags, dedicate this museum to our children and to our children's children to be reborn as the eagle they so rightfully deserve. At this point I would like to ask the children if they would form a line, put their hands on the shoulder of the Indian before them.

Mr. Lorenzo Jeffers, Chief Mittark, will open the door as the children pass through. Thank you.

Wamsutta

The Story of the Museum



After five years, Avant House nears completion

By MELODY LORRAINE

MASHPEE — A project begun nearly five years ago will be completed this coming spring when the Old Avant House on Rte. 130 opens its doors as a museum.

The project was begun in 1968. This particular building was selected because it was an old house within the town, which was once the land of the Wampanoag Indians. It was originally owned by the descendants of early Mashpee settler Richard Bourne.

The town voted in 1969 to expend \$12,000 toward the house, \$4,000 of which was for purchase of the building and land with the remaining \$8,000 for restoration work.

A complication arose when the contractor to whom the project was awarded used the entire \$8,000 in completing only a portion of the work.

This was in 1970. Town meeting did not vote any additional funds for the project that year, so the house just stood. The following year at a special town meeting voters approved appropriating \$6,500 for repair and restoration of the Old Avant Homestead.

Another sum of \$2,000 was voted at 1972 town meeting to continue the

restoration efforts, but "it was so little we couldn't do much," Mrs. Bingham pointed out.

Then an idea occurred to Mrs. Bingham. Otis Air Force Base personnel were happy to donate manpower and time for worthwhile community projects when resources allow it, and the Air Force was approached. Three men were released to work on the project: S. Sgt. George Peters, who was born in Mashpee, Sgt. Michael Walker and Sgt. Frank Willis.

Besides renovating a house, which many felt was beyond repair, an acre of land had to be cleared for use as a parking lot as well as property which was too overgrown with brush to even get into the house. The three men began their work by clearing the land with equipment loaned by the base. Before long they were joined by other Air Force and civilian personnel from Otis — "men from civil engineering, the carpentry shop, shipping and receiving and pavement and ground crews all helped whenever they could and were most cooperative," Sgt. Peters said.

With the exception of Sgt. Peters, few of the men had any carpentry know-how. Sgt. Walker admitted that he didn't even know how to pound a nail when he started the work.

A bulldozer, a front end loader and dump trucks were provided by the base, in addition to the manpower, which Mrs. Bingham estimated resulted in savings to the town of about \$20,000. At times, manpower was lower at the Avant House as men were required to perform specific Air Force duties. Some men overcame this obstacle by working on the base during weekdays while helping out on the Mashpee restoration work on weekends.

According to Mrs. Bingham, numerous local merchants and organizations have made contributions toward restoring the house: lumber, shingles, sod grass, a glass partition to separate the building's display area, insulation, dry wall materials and labor, a portion of the electrical materials and labor, stone for the front step, architectural work on drawings for the house and other donations.

In any case, the Old Avant House will open to the public in the spring, with persons admitted on an appointment basis at first, due to the lack of a staff.

The townspeople will at last be able to display parts of Mashpee's Indian heritage, of which many descendants are justly proud.