



Smithsonian Institution

Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections

Cultural Conservation Narrative Stage: Balladry continued: Conserving American Indian Culture

Extracted on Jan-29-2023 05:54:10

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WEBVTT

00:10:57.000 --> 00:11:04.000

<i>Neddy Watt</i>: Well um, it's been kind of hard to keep up the tradition of good death.

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<i>Neddy Watt</i>: The other generation are not very interested, so far.

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<i>Neddy Watt</i>: We've taught them to do basket work, but they would prefer to do bead work,

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<i>Neddy Watt</i>: which is a little bit easier. Ha, Ha *[[laugh]]*.

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<i>Neddy Watt</i>: But we keep trying, for some of them to learn.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: You have been teaching. Both of you have been teaching in the Tribal Museum at the Seneca-Iroquois, uh, with workshops there?

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<i>Neddy Watt</i>: I have. *[Cross Talk]*

<i>Speaker 2</i>: You have.

<i>Neddy Watt</i>: Yes, I know--

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: Ruth, when did you learn -- did you always do basket making with your mother? Did sh--

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{SPEAKER name="Ruth} No, not always. I, uh, started to make the whole basket about 20 years ago, *[[background singing]]*

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{SPEAKER name="Ruth} and there I almost gave up because it was it was, it took a lot of patience to start from the beginning, *[[background singing continues]]*

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{SPEAKER name="Ruth} and so after awhile I did get enough courage to finish a whole basket Ha Ha *[[laughs]]*,

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{SPEAKER name="Ruth} but I don't do it continuously. I only do it when I have time. *[[background singing]]*

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: *[[mic real loud]]* Do you think now that you see generations coming up behind you will preserve the tradition that your mother now represents, and that you now represent?

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{SPEAKER name="Ruth} Oh yes. I -- my nieces -- I have three nieces who are quite interested in learning.

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{SPEAKER name="Ruth} In fact, one of my nieces has worked with my grandmo -- with my mother at the Seneca Museum,

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{SPEAKER name="Ruth} and I think they are all quite interested to carrying on.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: One of the things that has struck all of us as we worked with the tribal museums,

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: and something I think you need to know is that many of the tribal museums which are relatively new

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: have a great struggle simply to have artifacts that other major museums, even like the Smithsonian, especially like the Smithsonian,

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: have in their collections. And so the tribal museums are now struggling to have objects in them

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: which people see all over the country but which now our own tribal people cannot see.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: And so crafts people, like the Watts, are, and like Greg Colfax, and Greg Arnold who runs the tribal museum at Makah,

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: are essential to the good health of the tribal museums because, otherwise, the reproduction of artifacts which are now the oldest ones,

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: maybe not available to tribes because they are elsewhere, and in other hands.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: It's essential that these arts survive and flower, and that younger people are, in many cases, like Ruth, who learned at a later point, who came back, and now feel committed and want to, want to teach and learn.

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: So this is an important thing. I'd like to ask Greg Colfax, as a wood carver, a mask maker, why are you so deeply involved in this?

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: Did this come as a part of growing up, or is it relatively new for you?

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<i>Speaker 2</i>: And what, what, what does it, what does it entail for you to, to keep on preserving this tradition; working with it? Are you teaching other people?



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