

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

April 10, 1957.

Dr. W. S. Campbell,
School Journalism,
The University of Oklahoma,
Norman, Oklahoma.

Dear Dr. Campbell:

First let me apologize for my failure to answer your letter of February 22 regarding the tipi sewing. The letter got sidetracked and I never caught up with it. I am glad that the fellows at Fort Sill found the information they wanted. But my face is red.

As for the little museum your church is planning. I think the first and biggest step any new museum has to take is to make a decision as to what will be the subject matter of the museum. Otherwise the museum is apt to get filled up rather than built up with a lot of miscellaneous items bearing no relationship to one another and result in a disordered jumble, of interest to few people other than the donors or collectors of particular specimens in it.

So I'd say you people should first make a decision as to the scope of your museum. Will it be Indians? Will it be Indians of specific tribes or geographical area? Will it be primarily ethnological or historical? Or will it concentrate on Indian crafts? Or should it stress missionary efforts among the Indians? Once you have delimited your subject and major emphasis you can start thinking about materials. Too many new museums work the other way around and end up in chaos.

You might also consider what other museums in town and in the vicinity have to offer, and seek an approach or emphasis which is different. I should think the subject of Indian religion - traditional and adaptation of Christianity would be a natural for such a museum. You probably would have some difficulty getting traditional specimens, but you could get photographs and could perhaps bring in photos of early missions, missionaries, ^{specimens of} bibles and hymnals used and other materials relating to church work among the Indians. It should lead to better interracial understanding and it would, I am sure, be a different kind of museum than others in Norman or Oklahoma.