May 5, 1937
Chicago, Illinois

George W. Blodgett
New York City

Dear George,

I am glad to hear that your efforts are producing such good results. I am enclosing a very tentative plan which shows in what direction I am thinking. The more I work on this project and find out what other museums have done with Indian material, the more I am convinced that a comparative anthropological approach is the right one. Museums, like the Field in Chicago for example, have really excellent Indian material, but it is shown without any specific plan and in a building so ill-suited for the proper display of exhibits that the result is most confusing. For instance, briefly to illustrate; a glass case of Cree garments will adjoin a case of another tribe's pottery, and adjacent will be the model of a Pawnee sacrifice ceremony. No attempt is made to present a single culture consistently, and to place it for comparison in toto with other cultures. If one could see presented, for example, a fairly complete picture of a Northwest culture such as the totemistic Kwakiutl compared with similar pictures of Navajo, Iroquois, Zuni cultures, one would get a much clearer idea of the variety and richness of Indian life.

So I have begun to see as the central theme of this museum a circular room with a domed ceiling which is divided into sections. Each section would be allotted to a different Indian cultural group and would consist of 1) Model; 2) Chart; 3) Show Case: the model giving an idea of group life, natural surroundings, physical type, etc.; the chart elaborating this specific culture by well worked-out visual material, plus concise commentary; and the show case containing actual examples of costume, ornament, utensils, baskets, etc.

The following list, gotten from pamphlets put out by F. H. Douglas of the Denver Art Museum seems pretty complete: Tribes and Locations---Map, Physique, Houses, Clothing, Food Supply, Arts and Crafts, Basket Materials, Basket Shapes, Basket Uses, Blankets, Dyes, Carving, Metalwork, Games, Totem Poles, Dancing and Music, Tribal Organization, Customs, Religion, Contact with Whites. If all this was presented for each Indian culture in an orderly fashion in a room planned for just this presentation, I think it would go far towards achieving some recognition of the Indians' contribution to the American 'consciousness.'

In the center of this circular room there could be set in the floor a relief map of the U. S. showing the location of all Indian groups with distinctive colors for the cultures, and symbols for the tribes, within these cultures. By the use of these symbols and colors, everything in the museum could be linked together. The models would be partly three-dimensional and partly painted on the walls, with the back wall flowing into the domed ceiling, representing the sky. Real water could be used in the models where called for, adding life to the room.

I need hardly remark, however, that I am not an anthropologist and just what should be included in each model and just how many models there should be, I don't know. If you feel that my thoughts are going in the