



# Indian Detours

## Tourism in Native North America

*edited by*

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-REPRESENTATION

### An Example of Tribal Tourism on the Northern Plains

*Markus H. Lindner*

In July 2014 the Standing Rock Sioux tribe decided to terminate its tourism program and to terminate the contract of the long year tourism director who had held that position for many years.<sup>1</sup> The reason for the measure was simple: the tribe had run out of funds and had to find options to make cuts to the budget. This decision by the tribal government seems to illustrate the opinion of many scholars and businesspeople that tourism is just about monetary investment money or the creation of jobs. This does not take into account that tourism provides also an ideal opportunity for self-representation.

When I began research on tourism on this reservation in 2002 my goal was to investigate the relationship between hosts and guests on this most northern Lakota Reservation on the border of North Dakota and South Dakota (Lindner 2007). Since I had worked on the famous Lakota leader Sitting Bull and the Hunkpapa band before, I decided to spend time with their descendants at Standing Rock instead of going to the Pine Ridge Reservation where most research on the Lakotas has been conducted since the late 19th century.

The story begins before the time when North Dakota got a boost to its economy because of oil fracking. Being situated in a region with the lowest number of leisure visitors, only few tourists spent time on the reservation, situated far removed from any large scale tourist attraction. I encountered a tribe that was preparing for the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial (2003-2006). The people responsible tried to invest the available funding in projects that were expected to be sustainable instead of short termed. Projects of other institutions along the so-called Lewis & Clark Trail impacted the tribal planning and integrated the initiatives at Standing Rock to the national commemoration. Tribally operated projects were usually referred to as “tribal tourism” and often depended on cooperation with or funding by federal or state programs. The representatives mostly understood their activity as a communication tool. “Tell our own story” is a phrase that was heard in many places as a main goal since then, not only in the Upper Missouri region.<sup>2</sup>

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1 The Tourism Office closed on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The Visitor Center remained (SRTO 2015).

2 When talking to the people of “Experience Hopi”, a private tourism organization on the Hopi Reservation (summer 2015) exactly the same phrase was used to indicate the importance of tourism projects.

Being interested in material culture as well I discovered that there were few arts and crafts on offer for tourists, especially in comparison to other places and regions. Only later I realized that it was a museological view that shielded my eyes from all the other manifestations of tourist material culture that surrounded me, such as brochures, road signs or historical monuments. All these can be incorporated into the analysis of tribal tourism.

A glance into the story of tribal tourism on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation will contribute to the clarification of this concept. Where applicable comparisons will be made with other tourism developments, especially in the American Southwest, one of the major regional destinations of tourists. The local situation and the fairly recent emergence of tourism enterprise on Standing Rock provided an opportunity to learn from experiences in other parts of North America and to develop new ideas, geared to local conditions. It also provided a glimpse into contemporary Native American political and economic life.

### **History of tourism on Standing Rock**

After the Wild West was “pacified” Americans wanted to see the natural wonders of the West. Tourism increased rapidly in the late 19th and early 20th century. The Yosemite, the Yellowstone and the Glacier National Parks became major attractions, and Native Americans often worked as tour guides or sold arts and crafts in or near the parks. Usually Native Americans were not a primary reason to visit such a place. Nevertheless, visitors expected their presence as they constituted a significant part of the popular image of the Wild West. However, the Native populations of the parks were sometimes forced to leave by the federal authorities as they were regarded to disturb the natural environment (Keller & Turek 1998:xi, 21-22). Much of the early tourism development in the U.S. was related to the construction of transcontinental railroads between 1860 and 1890. In the beginning travelers felt offended by poor Native Americans begging and selling arts and crafts at railway stations. This attitude changed in the early twentieth century and the railway companies began to pay Native people for performing dances. These entrepreneurs also became involved in selling Native arts and crafts as souvenirs, and organized so-called Indian Detours to bring tourists to Indian pueblos in the Southwest.

The Standing Rock Sioux were hardly affected by these developments. They were far removed from major tourist attractions. However, to some extent they experienced some occasional tourism. The German explorer and naturalist Prince Maximilian zu Wied-Neuwied visited the Northern Plains and the Sioux in 1832, accompanied by the Swiss artist Karl Bodmer. The famous Lakota medicine man Sitting Bull and his people had been visited by adventurous travelers in the 1880s before and shortly after the “Ghost Dance Craze.” The reservation was more frequently visited by tourists on their way to the Yellowstone National Park after 1912.



*When some Lakota and people from the border town of Mobridge dedicated the Sitting Bull Monument in 1953 it was located directly on Highway 12. Today the memorial is about 4 miles south of the new highway which opened in 1962 after the flooding of Lake Oahe (YTA n.d.b.; photo by the author, 2004).*

The Good Roads movement had reached South Dakota two years before. It promoted the construction of new roads to attract tourists. One of the private associations emanating from this idea was the Yellowstone Trail Association. It built a transcontinental road to the National Park and U.S. Highway 12, that crossed Standing Rock from east to west. It became part of the original so-called Yellowstone Trail (YTA n.d.a; Lee 1989:203-208). The Missouri River bridge in the southeast corner of the reservation was one of the few possibilities to cross the stream.

Travelers who preferred to take the train to go west took the same route. They had to stop at the railway station in the border town of Mobridge on the east bank of the Missouri River, which was a regular stop on the Pacific Coast Extension of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad since 1906. Attached to the depot was an exhibition area where some Sioux performed “twice a day, for the benefit of the passengers on the ‘Olympian’ and ‘Columbian’ passenger trains” in the mid-1930s (photo description Klein Museum, Mobridge).

In contrast to the Pine Ridge Reservation where the Sun Dance was commercialized in the late 1960s (Bolz 1986:216; 2000:11-12), this ceremony was not revitalized at Standing Rock before the 1970s and has not become a tourist attraction. The first tribal attempt to promote tourism on the reservation was the construction of the Land of Gall Inn, a hotel between Mobridge and the reservation town of Wakpala. Opened in 1972 it was particularly promoted



during the centennial of the Standing Rock Reservation one year later (Allard 2005, email).<sup>3</sup> Even being somewhat successful in its early years the inn went bankrupt around 1978 and the Area Youth Treatment Center came to occupy the facility. During the same time the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, in cooperation with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, developed a Recreation Development Potential Plan. This led to the planning of cultural centers and boat ramps for Lake Oahe, created by the damming of the Missouri river in the 1950s. Only the boat ramps were actually built.

During the 1980s little happened with regards to tourism development. In 1992 the tribe followed the trend to engagement in the gambling industry. The first establishment to open on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation was the Prairie Knights Casino in North Dakota. It was followed by the smaller Grand River Casino close to Mobridge, South Dakota. In 2001/2002 an event center and a hotel were added to the Prairie Knights Casino. The hotel of the Grand River Casino opened in 2004. This was two years after both casinos had taken over management of camping sites and boat ramps on the shores of Lake Oahe from the U.S. Corps of Engineers. These sites were frequently used by people for fishing on the lake.

Not included in the tribal tourism planning was hunting tourism although it already existed on the reservation. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe south of Standing Rock used hunting opportunities as one of the major attractions to promote tourism on their reservation. Its tourism office saw unspoiled nature and its wildlife as the strength of their land base. The northern reservation only offered a short hiking path close to the Prairie Knights Casino to visitors, that became the “Lewis & Clark Legacy Trail” in 2006 (SRTO 2006). This reflects the “absence of ecotourists” and the lack of interest in this aspect by current visitors (Hearne & Tuscherer 2007:13).

More important for the development of “tribal tourism” was a decision in June 1999 when Tribal Council Resolution No. 243-99 permitted Sitting Bull College to undertake activities that were not primarily related to teaching. This permission included economic and especially tourist activities:

”WHEREAS, Sitting Bull College sees cultural tourism as a viable means of promoting both the Dakota/Lakota culture and economic development; and

WHEREAS, Sitting Bull College is building a cultural resource center and is jointly funding with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe a proposal for a scenic byway; [...]

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3 The Oglala Sioux Tribe opened a visitor center with a camping facility, restaurant and souvenir shop in the same year (Bolz 1986:141).

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe does support Sitting Bull College in seeking funding for other cultural, education and economic development endeavors and pursuant to its Charter, Sitting Bull College shall continue to deliver annual reports, budget and audit findings to the duly elected Tribal Council” (TCSRST 1999).

Following this permission the college began to discuss opportunities and risks of tribal tourism openly. The former manager of the reservation’s radio station KLND, Dennis Neumann, was one of the organizers of public and internal meetings: ”We advertised [...] to have the public coming to talk about plans and planning for how tourism would be conducted on Standing Rock. There were elders there, there were young people there. There was a good range of people...We did some brainstorming and created [...] ideas and talked about what some of the things were that people liked about the notion of creating tourism and some things about what they want to avoid, what sort of pitfalls and traps there might be, things that they weren’t comfortable with in terms of tourism” (Neumann interview, 2004).

In addition to the radio station the Tribal Tourism Partnership Initiative (TTPI) became a cooperation partner. This was a two year program at the United Tribes Technical College in Bismarck, North Dakota. The college is a collaborative institution of the five reservations in North Dakota. The TTPI program was funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. This was reflected in the mission statement: “United Tribes Technical College Tribal Tourism Partnership Initiative provides an intertribal forum and educational programs that promote the economic, social and cultural advancement of American Indians” (TTPI 2002).

The original focus on economic questions and professionalism was expanded by the second program director of the TTPI, Karen Paetz, who thought that it was important to control tourists. She added four other important goals of the program:

1. „have our own people telling our own story”
2. „dispelling the stereotype and misconceptions”
3. „We are not reenacting our culture – it’s alive”
4. „We do not disappear – we are still here“ (Paetz interview, 2002).

The program was one of the possibilities to exchange knowledge and experiences about tourism on reservations. The Three Affiliated Tribes from the Fort Berthold Reservation had the most experience in tourism in North Dakota. Amy Mosset was the tourism director of the reservation who became also one of the leading Native people involved in the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial.

The second cooperative link was, and still is, Standing Rock’s membership in the Alliance of Tribal Tourism Advocates (ATTA), an intertribal non-profit organization in South Dakota that has been promoting tribal tourism in South

Dakota since the 1990s. ATTA is the place where the different tribes meet to exchange ideas and develop plans. The organization is geared to cooperate with the tourism department of the state. Both networks involving both states played an important role in implementing tourism projects on Standing Rock.

In his study of tribal tourism the German geographer Bertram Postner points out that the implementation of tourism projects cannot work on a reservation without acceptance by the host community (2002:147). This was also the case at Standing Rock. In cooperation with the initiators the first official tourism conference was held on the reservation in May 2002. This meeting was broadcasted by Radio KLND, the radio station of the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Indian Reservations. When I arrived on the reservation only a short time later I met a lot of people who were very sceptical about tourists. However, public discussions like this tried to change that attitude. About 75 guests and speakers participated in the conference that brought together people from Standing Rock and other localities to promote the idea of tourism.

It was a common theme to emphasize the possibility to teach visitors about culture and history from the Lakota point of view to correct stereotypes and combat prejudices. The protection of sacred sites was stressed as one of utmost concern and urgency. In fact, a statement of Brant Kary, at that time economic development director at Standing Rock, shows that the focus tended to shift away from the economy: "Tourism is a chance for us to teach, not so much to make money, but first to teach" (Kary 2002, Standing Rock Tourism Conference).

### **Preparing for the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial**

In 2002 the situation at Standing Rock was impacted by the fact that the Bicentennial of the Lewis & Clark Expedition (1803-1806) was only two years away. William Clark and Meriwether Lewis were famous as they had led the first official expedition – called Corps of Discovery – to find a transcontinental route of travel to the Pacific Ocean. The federal government and the organizers of the national event forecasted that millions of travelers would follow an improved Lewis & Clark Trail along the original route. John Beheler, the first program director of the TTPI, announced that Standing Rock had to be prepared for about 30 million travelers between 2003 and 2006 (Beheler 2002, Standing Rock Tourism Conference). The National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial called it a "critical opportunity for all Americans to reflect upon the many timeless social issues faced by the expedition that are still relevant in today's society – tolerance and non-discrimination; teamwork; non-violence; and protecting and preserving the environment" (NCLCB 2003).

The role of Native Americans was important. As they criticized the idea to celebrate an event of colonialism, the official wording became "commemoration" instead of "celebrating" (NCLCB 2004). This differentiation was important and even critics like Karen Paetz (2002 interview) regarded it as an opportunity to

tell tourists about Native Americans, their cultures and their survival. Another positive expectation, not only of Native Americans, was the sustainability of the investments made for the event: “Long after visitors go away, and they have forgotten most of the Lewis and Clark story, they will remember the quality of their experiences on the Lewis and Clark Trail. These will have a great deal to do with human contact, and not much to do with the American history” (Jenkinson 2002:1).

### **The Scenic Byway**

Such promise motivated not only the Standing Rock Reservation but also other reservations in the Dakotas and beyond to initiate programs to attract visitors. One of the most important projects was the creation of a National Native American Scenic Byway. Not directly connected to the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial, it was an addition to a scenic byway that was created on the Lower Brule Reservation in South Dakota in 1996. Its planning is one the examples of the integration of Native life into U.S. American life and vice versa. It was realized by Leasure and Associates, a company from Utah specialized in tourist projects. After finishing it on Lower Brule the company offered to create a plan for Standing Rock. The tribe decided that the college was the place to work on this project (Leasure & Associates 1998:1-2).

The Conceptual Development Plan of 1998 was not written by the company alone, but tribal members were very much involved. The historical section tells the history of the place and of the Lakotas, and was written by Ladonna Allard, a trained historian and tribal member. She played an important role in the whole process and later became the Tribal Tourism Director. The plan states that the byway can create income and economic development on the reservation. It also mentions the possibility to teach and talk about Lakota culture and history. This argument was used before and became even more important later. To resolve existing doubts within the Lakota community it is pointed out that “the byway will enable the tribe to direct where visitors travel and how the Lakota/Dakota culture is presented to them” (Leasure & Associates 1998:4).

The concerns of the people were not based on actual experiences with tourists, but on experiences from other regions of the U.S., especially the Southwest, where different forms of so-called visitor etiquette were developed since the early twentieth century to protect villages and their inhabitants from misbehaving tourists. Talking to people I realized that their main prejudice was that all tourists were be digging for bones in graves on the banks of the Missouri. According to Tribal Archeologist Byron Olson this was not true (Olson 2002, interview). Mark White Bull, Management Specialist of the tribe, saw the problem in the fact that “the people are not used to the concepts of tourism” (2002, interview). Even if it is hard to know how strong the faction of opponents really was, the control of tourists became one of the main issues, as Ladonna Allard (2002,

interview) pointed out: “I would [...] say we have people who are very scared of tourism. We have people here that look at it as a violation of culture, and my position is, I am trying to teach that it will not violate our culture if we do it in a good way. That’s why we’ve developed the scenic byway and keeping people on the scenic byway. We don’t want people travelling to our sacred lands and traditional gathering spots.”

When the scenic byway opened in 2002 it connected most of the places tourists would like to see during their visit: Sitting Bull’s grave, the Sitting Bull Monument, the casinos, and the Standing Rock Monument. The Conceptual Development Plan had included additional attractions like a Sitting Bull Historic Center, a Prairie Knights Interpretive Center, and a replica of Fort Manuel Lisa, but only the latter was under construction at this time. The fur trade fort from the 1810s was important for the bicentennial as it is said that Sacagawea, the Shoshone guide of the expedition and best-known Native American woman from history, had died there.

### Visitors

While the scenic byway existed regionally and just waited for federal recognition, tourists crossed the reservation regularly. Tribal chairman Charles W. Murphy (2002, Interview) noted that they usually just stopped at one of the casinos or at the two Sitting Bull sites: the Grave of Sitting Bull in Fort Yates, ND and the Sitting Bull Monument west of Mobridge, SD at the border in the southeast of the reservation.

The latter was also one of the few places for the researcher to meet tourists; but even there they were usually in a hurry and not open for longer interviews. Most of them stated to have some interest in Lakota culture, but none of them really did anything to learn about it, except stopping at the monument, because “it was on the map” (Cindy 2002, pers. com.). Most tourists enjoyed the “amazing” plains (Bob & Shirley 2002, pers. com.) or the “real pretty country” (Cory 2002, pers. com.) In contrast, some found the same a “waste land” not worth to come back to (Ronda 2002, pers. com.).

None of the tourists was longer on the reservation than necessary to cross it, and it was never a travel destination. Some people just drove the Lewis & Clark Trail, while others were on their way to Yellowstone National Park. Only one family stayed longer and got in touch with people on the reservation. The couple from California was not on a vacation trip but their daughter participated in a healing ceremony of a Lakota medicine man. But even these two were staying outside the reservation and spent their time fishing on Lake Oahe (Bob & Shirley 2002, pers. com.).

Tourists with some interest in the Native people, in general Europeans, usually stopped at the radio station KLND where they were welcomed as warmly as I was on the first day of my fieldwork. The station invited people on air to take a



*The Standing Rock Wacipi was the only powwow on the reservation with signage on one of the main roads. While the painting of the dancer was already in poor condition in 2002, it was destroyed a few years later (photo by the author, 2002).*

break there, and some people used that opportunity. Usually, these travelers were on a more extensive tour through Lakota country, visiting not only Standing Rock but also the Black Hills and the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

Exceptional was a group of five women and three men from Catalonia and one Italian. The tour was organized by a Spanish travel agent and guide who was specialized in such tours. They camped south of the reservation border on the Cheyenne River Reservation and stayed for about a week in South Dakota. They all were keenly interested in Native Americans. Visiting the radio station was one of the major activities. Guided by Vaughn Three Legs they wrote down whatever he told them about contemporary Lakota life, not only about the radio station. They listened to stories about everyday life, history and religion and took countless photographs, demonstrating the typical *tourist gaze* (Urry 1996). It was obvious that they enjoyed having direct contact with Lakota people and culture. They were very unhappy when they realized that they could not buy any souvenirs from the radio station as the room with the mugs, pins, caps and other merchandising was locked on that occasion.

It was no surprise to meet the same group again at one of the local powwows on the reservation a couple of days later. At this event the group passionately watched the dances and ceremonies. They were enthusiastic about the fact that

they were told to come into the circle.<sup>4</sup> Being very interested in Lakota culture a major problem for the group was their insufficient mastery of English. At KLND the tour guide had translated, at the powwow he explained a little bit, but almost nobody of the group was able to get in touch with the local population.

Powwows were one of the few opportunities to see tourists and Lakotas interacting to a certain degree. Usually the number of interested visitors was low and they did not really receive negative attention from their hosts. At giveaway ceremonies they received gifts like everybody else, and if they were willing to talk to people they did. Even visitors with cameras who acted immodestly and unfriendly were tolerated.

My own experience at a powwow in Little Eagle provides insight into pseudo-negative attitudes towards visitors. I was looking for a seat on the white painted, shaded seats for the spectators that surrounded the dance arena. I took a space next to an old man, greeted and sat down. The situation was uncomfortable as he was obviously not very happy to have a stranger sitting there. He asked me a lot of questions showing his rejection. I told him that I was working on tourism and tourists but he remained negative in attitude. It was hot that day and I offered some water to him. He enjoyed it and only a couple of minutes after our first "Hello" he became very open and talked freely and friendly.

This little story is exemplary of my experiences. If somebody proved skeptical at first, he or she could be very friendly and hospitable as soon as it was realized that the stranger was open-minded and interested. However, this did not change the general attitude towards tourists. Joan D. Laxson (1991:368) observed a similar phenomenon in the American Southwest. Here tourists are not called "tourists" anymore when they do not fit into the negative stereotype. In this case Pueblo Indians often call them "Whites." However, there was no official encouragement by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to get in touch with tourists. If such interethnic exchanges happened it was by chance or because individuals were personally interested.

### **The Lewis & Clark Bicentennial at Standing Rock**

During the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial in South Dakota in 2004 I did not encounter the negative attitude anymore. Possibly because the continual information campaigns had an impact or because nobody was affected by tourists directly. Except for the opening of Fort Manuel Lisa and new signage for the not yet nationally recognized Native American Scenic Byway the situation had not much changed in general. Even the number of travelers seemed not to be very different from two years earlier. More important was the fact that in 2003

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4 What they expected did not happen as long as I followed the powwow, even some of them gave me their cameras in expectation of the event.

the tribe had surprisingly decided to hire a tourism director. It is unclear why the tribal government changed its mind after they had given the responsibility to the college initially.

Unfortunately, the working conditions for the first tribal tourism director were quite poor and she eventually failed. The tribe did not support the low paid job with any additional funding, not even for traveling, except for some funds from the Office of Economic Development. Even if it is not clear what the expectations of the tribe were, it is obvious that these did not correspond to those of the director who wanted to establish relationships with visitors. She planned to give information, to have signage, to print brochures, to advertise. Since she did not see how to do this without any support she resigned and the tribe had to find a new person to fill the position after only six weeks (Bear Catches 2004, interview). It required five job advertisements until Ladonna Allard was hired in 2004. Being well experienced because of her involvement in the tourism projects of the college she had much more power to change things, as economic development director Brent Kary pointed out: “Finally Ladonna came. And I think the big reason that it’s working with Ladonna now is because of her commitment and her passion. She’s had been doing this for free anyway. So, for her this is a 9 dollar an hour raise. Where anybody else feels like they’re being underpaid, she feels like ‘I’m getting paid for now’. So, she’s willing to do it for the price, because she believes in it, she wants to do it and it’s her passion in life“ (Kary 2004, interview).

Although tourism was a tribal task now, the development of the Scenic Byway was still part of the college’s responsibilities in 2004. Pam Ternes who was in charge there was a friend of Ladonna Allard, and this created new opportunities. As the position of the tourism director had been vacant for a year, the saved money could be used for a program. Brant Kary was sure that it was most important to help private people to open businesses for tourism, but the political and economic situation was constricting: „We’re set up closer to socialism as a tribe than we are to capitalism: The tribe owns everything, it’s expected to run everything, it pretty much controls everything. So we’re a lot closer to communism and socialism than we are to capitalism. As Indian people and enrolled members we expect the tribe to do things, as Non-Indian people here in the region they expect tribal government to do things, as a tribal government they expect to do things, as a state, as a federal government you will get the tribal government to do things. That’s socialism“ (Kary 2004, interview).

On Memorial Day 2004 Fort Manuel Lisa opened next to the small town of Kenel with its 200 inhabitants. While some tribal members expected that “Fort Manuel could really be a money maker” (Bear Catches, 2004 interview), most people “looked at it as an opportunity to have an attraction of something that they could actually talk about in a cultural way with people. And meet and greet people in a sense that in a way would be more of a cultural and human relations kind of interaction rather than a concession to earn money. And I think in that





*Fort Manuel Lisa at Kenel, South Dakota with a visitor group from Sitting Bull College (photo by the author, 2004).*

respect they've created something that has the potential for that: of creating an interpretive and informational narrative that they can give to people who come through there" (Neumann 2004, interview).

It had never been in doubt that economic success was important, and the expectation was that the replica fur trade fort would create new jobs, and become an outlet from which to sell local arts and crafts, thus contributing to the development of the town (Neumann, interviews 2002, 2004). That the number of visitors was very low that first summer<sup>5</sup> was not only a result of the lack of advertising, but also of the number of travelers in general, which had not really increased despite the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial. However, the community was happy with the project and planned additional attractions like a prairie walking path, wagon tours, etc. Nevertheless, the fort never became a real money maker, and was destroyed during a storm in early 2010. It has not been back in operation since as the town lacks the funds to rebuild it.

### **The material culture of tourism**

In an introduction to the study of material culture Christian Feest (2006:249) urges that cultural anthropologists while they are doing field studies should also focus on stationary material culture like buildings and everything else that

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<sup>5</sup> The numbers were about eight a day (Thompson 2004, interview) or 300 in total in 2004 (St. John 2006, email).

cannot be easily transferred (in)to a museum. Maybe we should regard the reconstructed Fort Manuel Lisa as material culture of the Lakota or of Kenel. When it comes to tourism the study of material culture usually is limited to souvenirs and arts and crafts, but being on the reservation it is obvious that it is much more.

We have seen that the majority of the Lakota people regard tribal tourism not so much as an economic opportunity, but as an opportunity to meet and greet people, and to tell their own story about their culture and history. They did not want to leave that to Euro-American historians, anthropologists or tourism agents. However, the souvenir and arts and crafts “industry” did not play a major role in this tourism concept at that time.

Since 2005 the Alliance of Tribal Tourism Advocates (ATTA) has been planning the large “Hé Sapa Black Hills Center for Northern Plains Indian Arts and Performance” in Rapid City, South Dakota. Being in an off-reservation town but close to one of the major Interstates, this venue is scheduled to include space for performances, cultural interpretation, and arts and crafts: “Honoring the spirit and cultural heritage of the Plains Indian tribes, Rapid City’s new HéSapa Black Hills Center for Northern Plains Indian Arts and Performance will capture the character and spirit of a proud people, and explore their past, present and future through a diverse array of interpretive offerings, dance, oral history, art and crafts” (ATTA 2012a).

The financial planning for the venue includes funding by tribes in the region, the Rapid City council, and private sponsors. Funding was secured in January 2015 when the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community and the Oglala Sioux Tribe guaranteed financial support (Chasing Hawk 2015). ATTA will partner with the United Tribes Technical College “as they carry with them a consistent history of sound management and providing educational and technical educational opportunities for students.” This cooperation is planned to create a “Native educational institution in the Black Hills” (ATTA 2012b:4) in addition to its function as tourist attraction.

Tourist constructions like the Hé Sapa Black Hills Center are proof of the will of Indian people for autonomous cultural and historical interpretation, and show that external self-representation and internal education are frequently combined in tribal initiatives. This is also the case for the cultural centers on reservations. They often serve as visitor centers, museums, and venues for cultural and social gatherings. Depending on their concept they can be a meeting point or a place to teach visitors (Mauzé 2003:514). Sometimes they confer a very specific message, like the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center that opened in 1998 and is very much focused on demonstrating historical continuity of the tribe (Bodinger de Uriarte 2003:550).

As the relationship between visitors and hosts is often complicated these institutions can also work as a welcome sign to travelers, like the Makah Cultural and Research Center at Neah Bay in Washington State (Erikson 2003:523,526).

At the same time such centers can be used to establish a degree of control over tourists, and manage their movements. The Zuni Pueblo Department of Tourism recommends to “check-in at the Visitor Center to receive an orientation, obtain current information, schedule tours, purchase photo permits” (ZPDT n.d.). What seems like a good service also helps to keep visitors away from protected sections of the pueblo.

With the tribal visitor center that opened in May 2013 the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe also created a location where a small collection of artifacts, photos, books, and such provide information about the tribe and the reservation to visitors. Like others it is a place where tourists can stop and get in touch with their hosts. The interpretational focus of the tribal tourism office had also resulted in road signage with explanations at places of interest along the Scenic Byway and electronic information desks at the tribal casinos.

When doing fieldwork I was interested in the question which souvenirs tourists were purchasing in the region, if they did at all. In reality, there are not many possibilities to do so, even today. The main places to buy souvenirs close to or on Lakota reservations are tribal or mission museums and cultural centers, the Five Nations Store in Mandan, North Dakota, and Prairie Edge Trading Co. & Galleries in Rapid City, South Dakota, the Klein Museum in Mobridge, and the two casinos on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Other major galleries and museums selling arts and crafts are in Mitchell, Sioux Falls and Vermillion, South Dakota, and at the tourist attractions of the Black Hills, particularly at the Crazy Horse Memorial. I visited many of these places but want to focus on the two tribal casinos on the Standing Rock Reservation. Contrary to other Lakota casinos both have gift shops with every kind of typical commercialized souvenir like mugs, caps, pens, T-shirts, and so on with the logos of the casinos. But at the same time both shops also sell arts and crafts from the reservation: star quilts, bracelets, key chains, ear rings with glass beads and porcupine quill, baby moccasins, and so on.

Charles Archambault (2004, interview), sales director of the Prairie Knights Casino, stated that the casino shop does “pretty significant business ... , but if you look over there [to the shop], it isn’t much the artwork that we sell versus the mass produced products: T-shirts, things with Prairie Knights Casino logo.” The ignorance of tribal arts and crafts by the gambling public fits the prevalent view of Archambault and other casino managers that their casinos should not be marketed as something “Indian” or “Lakota” but just as a gambling establishments (*cf.* Berthier, this volume). Tourist activities on the reservation were not relevant to him, and asked about intercultural interaction and communication between visitors and guests, he said: “Our guests are very respectful [to] our people when they come here. ... They relate to us in a very business sense. ... It’s never a cultural type of thing” (Archambault 2004, interview).

Despite this approach both casinos are communicating and marketing Native American or Lakota culture in a modest way. Like casinos of other tribes they include murals or other contemporary art by Native artists. It is not always easy to detect the relationship between features of the building and its interior design to traditional culture, except for paintings and sculptures by Indian artists as interior decoration. The casino shops do offer a modest number of arts and crafts. And even commercial products like mugs, caps or jackets can be message bearers. As souvenirs they remind the owners of their visit to the casinos, and the logos may remind them that they were on an Indian reservation (*cf.* Berthier, this volume).

The privately operated Klein Museum which is only about one mile outside the reservation also sells arts and crafts of varying quality. It offers Lakota pottery from the Black Hills and art prints by Hunkpapa artist Del Iron Cloud. However, it also includes glass bead products and other commercial merchandise from China. Diane Kindt (2004, pers. com.), the curator of the museum, told me that tourists do not buy handcrafted souvenirs very often, and in most cases these artifacts may “only” be souvenirs for most visitors, even if they incorporate the message that Lakota people are still around.

Not much arts and crafts are sold to tourists on or close to Standing Rock, but it is important for the makers to have places where they can go to sell their work if they need that income. The Klein Museum and the Grand River Casino buy arts and crafts often without the aim of profit but more with a view to support the local craftspeople. This has also been true for other places like some of the missions on other reservations. Peter Strong, the director of the Red Cloud Heritage Center on the Pine Ridge Reservation told me that the large collection of the museum was not so much a result of the drive to collect but of buying whatever somebody had offered when he or she needed money (2010, pers. com.).

Kathleen Ann Pickering (2000:53, 128) remarks that this kind of business is not generating much income. The arts and crafts are not specifically made for tourists but also for the local community that uses star quilts for ceremonies and beadwork for powwow regalia or as everyday jewelry. These kinds of customers do not have much money to spend. Therefore prices stay low locally. They only rise if an artist is able to sell to institutions or stores in Rapid City, South Dakota or Mandan, North Dakota, in other cities or even in Denver, Colorado. The lack of capital makes an advance on commission work necessary in order to be able to buy the raw materials.

Typically, arts and crafts are produced in microenterprises by household producers. They are very flexible and can join ceremonies or powwows whenever they choose. Often craftsmen and women have seasonal jobs in the summer time and produce crafts during the winter season (Pickering 2000:20-21, 56). While smaller arts and crafts like beadwork or moccasins usually are made individually, the creation of other things can impact and include the whole family of an artist.



*Baby Star Quilt, Mary Ann Helper 2002. While others use quilting machines, Mary Ann Helper is sewing and stitching her star quilts by hand in the middle of her home. Like her mother she is usually, but not always, tagging her quilts on the back (collection of and photo by the author, 2015).*

Pickering (2000:61) states that “the household is a collective, integral economic unit, producing together, consuming together, and transmitting necessary skills and labor from one generation to the next.”

When I ordered my first star quilt on the Standing Rock Reservation, Mary Ann Helper, who had learned making such quilts from her mother, changed the living room into a working space. Her husband and the whole family had to help cutting the fabric diamonds that were needed for the quilt.

In the 1980s Mary Jane Schneider wrote that Kiowa tourist items were “those which are easily and quickly made, require little outlay in materials, and have a fairly rapid turnover” as there was “a difference in status and training between those who produce for non-Indian consumption and those who produce for Indian consumption” (1983:238-240). This is not automatically true for the Lakotas in the beginning 21st century, even if it may be true that tourists tend



*A selection of tourist material culture from Standing Rock that is not arts & crafts (collection of and photo by the author, 2015).*

to buy lower priced objects which may of less quality. Arts and crafts as material culture are usually not only produced explicitly for tourists but also for internal consumption as has been pointed out. They are also sold and bought as souvenirs for tourists but they are not very important for the marketing of a reservation as a travel destination.

Other contemporary material culture seems to be much more important to support tribal tourism and its conception. Like the offices of other tribes the Standing Rock Tourism Office was responsible for a much tourism related material. In the case of Standing Rock it is brochures with information about the Scenic Byway and the reservation, a visitor center, computer terminals with relevant information, printed and online maps, and the interpretive signage along the National Native American Scenic Byway, and internet representations. All these information and marketing tools are important elements of contemporary tourist material culture at Standing Rock. These belong to the life at Standing Rock and they have an important function: they can guide visitors through the reservation, and through them the people of the reservation have the opportunity to tell their own story. I would commend more research on this kind of self-representation. The selection of logos (here the “Standing Rock”, “Sitting Bull”, and the tribal seal), the selection of topics, and the way the information is gathered, edited and published would provide insight into economic and cultural life on a reservation.

## Conclusion

More than a century ago, American travelers “discovered” Native Americans and their cultures as tourist attractions in the Southwest. Travelers interpreted the sedentary Pueblo tribes as more or less civilized. Tourists and collectors appreciated their art, and visitors crowded ceremonies in such numbers that tribes had to close them for guests. That they were able to do this proves that Native Americans were not helpless victims of this development. They were able to minimize the negative impact of tourism while they tried to retain the economic advantages. Throughout the decades they have been able to adapt tourism to their daily lives. Long experience has resulted in different kinds of visitor etiquette, restriction and prohibition of photography, or degrees of control of tourists’ movements within Indian communities.

In other parts of North America the situation has been different. The development of “Indian tourism” in the southwestern United States more than 100 years ago was also related to the new interest in nature and the wilderness. The sedentary Pueblo cultures created a strong contrast to the hostile Plains tribes popularly known from the Indian wars of the 1860s and 1870s. Even the image of the latter changed positively in the late 19th century after the campaigns of the federal army resulted in the settlement of the last hostile Indians on reservations. During this period Blackfeet and others began to play an important role in national parks. One hundred years later the situation changed again and the reservations and the people on the Plains and Pacific Northwest themselves came into focus with the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial.

The (erroneous) expectation to see millions of travelers crossing the reservations made it necessary to prepare for this event. In the beginning it was understood as an opportunity for local economic development, but within a short time-period the attitude changed into a non-economic perspective. What became important was the use of tourism as a possibility for self-representation. The Standing Rock Reservation is a particularly good example. In the 1990s the tribe had no interest in tourism and transferred the responsibility for this subject to Sitting Bull College. The tribal government did not spend any money until it changed its mind in 2003. Outside and inside pressure made it necessary to get involved. Activities of the Alliance of Tribal Tourism Advocates, of the United Tribes Technical College and other institutions, advertising campaigns of the States of North and South Dakota, and the whole Lewis & Clark Bicentennial created momentum that was grasped by both the college and Economic Development Director Brent Kary.

Having learned from the experience in other regions of North America, the community was involved into the process of implementation. The protection of the land was one of the first issues to talk about. Economic questions very soon became unimportant in relation to the opportunity to tell the tribal cultural and historical story. This is also reflected in the fact that the casinos have not played

any role. Whatever has been built up reflects this approach of self-representation, even Fort Manuel Lisa. But when the tribe closed the tourism office in 2015 it demonstrated that self-representation is not only a question of the will of the people, but also of budget.

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<sup>6</sup> The Standing Rock Tourism Conference was recorded by Radio KLND. Copies of the recordings are in the archive of the author.

