MACCULLOCH HALL HISTORICAL MUSEUM: A CASE STUDY ON

DECOLONIZING A HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUM

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Macculloch Hall Historical Museum: A Case Study on Decolonizing A Historic House

Museum

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Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, a historic house museum located in
Morristown, New Jersey is a case study in applying decolonizing practices in an
educational institution without indigenous or minority collections. Using MHHM fills a
gap in Museum Studies literature and addresses the issue of transparency for historic sites
that reside on lands expropriated from native peoples, or on lands that housed a large
number of enslaved people (like southern plantations). Currently, the existing literature
provides a strong framework for large museums and historic sites looking to decolonize
their practices and programming. Little has been done, thus far, to provide models for
museums that do not fall within this classification but still seek to become more
transparent about the history of their sites or collections.

This thesis will first explore the concept of decolonization and what it means to
decolonize. Next, this thesis evaluates the impact of the United States' colonial history
and the Eurocentric practices that have been enforced in historic sites and museums.
Specifically, MHHM's own colonial past and the challenges that exist in this institution's

efforts to decolonize is addressed. Lastly, I will look at additions that can be implemented in MHHM's historic garden, educational curriculum that can be added, historical material that can be included in interpretive tours and exhibits, and avenues for collaboration that can be explored with minority and Lenape groups. By evaluating historic challenges to museum decolonization, and failures in previous attempts by other institutions to decolonize, this thesis will identify steps museums and historic sites without indigenous and minority collections can take to successfully implement positive decolonization practices.

Acknowledgement and/or Dedication

Thank you to all the wonderful people at Macculloch Hall Historical Museum who have

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outstanding Executive Director of MHHM and supportive boss who helped conceptualize

this thesis into its completion. Also, Alfred Giraldi, the archivist at MHHM that provided

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numerous brainstorming sessions and rough drafts, and gave me the push to keep

working to make this thesis better.

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Introduction

Macculloch Hall Historical Museum (MHHM), founded in 1950 by former two-time mayor W. Parsons Todd, sits tucked away from the main road in the historic district of Morristown. A Federal-style brick mansion, it fits right in with the large, single family estates nearby. During open hours or by appointment, visitors can walk up the red cobblestone path, push open the large, creme colored door and step into the Center Hall for a look at Morristown's community museum. Run by a full-time staff of two and a half, MHHM has two exhibition spaces on the first floor, one dedicated to political cartoonist Thomas Nast who lived right across the street and the other that highlights other facets of MHHM's collection. With its period rooms and historic garden, MHHM aims to inspire "visitors to experience everyday American history where it happened."[1]

On an open day, visitors may walk in looking to learn more about the visionary behind the Morris Canal, George Macculloch, wanting a tour of one of Morristown's colonial homes or to take in the work of Thomas Nast. School groups often frequent the halls, completing a fun, educational activity before they go, just as the students from the Latin School for Schools who boarded in the house would've done during their residence. A vibrant, welcoming museum, MHHM is like many small, historic house museums all over the country. From keeping the deer from eating the hostas, to taking steps towards decolonization, MHHM's drive for inclusion and representation has put them on a path towards establishing decolonization practices.

Not far from MHHM, in 1956 a family living in present day West Hanover uncovered the burial site of ten Native Americans after beginning plans to install an

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[1] "Mission Statement," Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, Accessed April 5, 2020, https://macullochhall.org/mission-statement/.

inground pool.[2] The bodies were buried with care, most likely the remnants of a long forgotten Lenape burial site. Morris County, where MHHM resides, has a long, rich history of Lenape settlements. However, like this burial site, the history of Lenape lacks position in current, local educational curriculum after years of European settlement, Lenape having been kicked off their ancestral lands long ago. What MHHM and the decolonization movement seeks to do is to reintroduce these forgotten histories, using the museum as a means to educate the public on this history.

Since the 1980s there has been a movement dedicated to the efforts of decolonizing museum collections.[3] From small institutions to large ones, museum professionals and scholars have been struggling to find the correct way to appropriately engage with collections that contain minority or indigenous artifacts, as well as how to go about explaining the history of the indigenous land their site resides on. As the field of museum decolonization has grown, a few major questions that pertain to this topic have been brought up continuously. Namely, what is decolonization? How do museums go about decolonizing? What aspect of collections need to be decolonized? These questions are still being answered.

In the existing literature, scholars and museum professionals have focused on providing information on positive decolonization practices for large historic sites and museums and the indigenous and minority artifacts that reside in their collections. Though researchers have done an excellent job of creating a framework that can be instituted in facilities that house a substantial collection of indigenous or minority works,

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[2] John Brett Langstaff, *New Jersey Generations: Macculloch Hall, Morristown* (Vintage Press, 1964), 177-178.

[3] Bryony Onciul, *Museums, Heritage and Indigenous Voice: Decolonizing Engagement* (Routledge, 2015), 4.

thus far, little has been done in the way of providing answers to museums that do not fall within this classification, though seek to become more transparent about the history of its site or its collection.[4] However, as it becomes more common place for museums and historic sites that do not fit this classification to be conscious of the way exhibits are arranged and what language is used in their facilities, literature addressing these initiatives is needed direly.

This thesis explores the research on decolonization in the field of Museum Studies and utilizes the framework that researchers have provided to suggest a path forward for the institutions that are missing in the existing literature. Macculloch Hall Historical Museum (MHHM) will be used as a case study to demonstrate how a small institution can go about efforts to decolonize. First, this thesis addresses the concept of decolonization and what it means to decolonize. Then, I will look at the way the United States' colonial past has influenced Eurocentric practices in historic sites and museums, and more specifically, how these established norms were applied at Macculloch Hall Historical Museum. This will lead into an analysis of the issues that have persisted as a result of the Eurocentric museum focus, despite institutional attempts to decolonize. This thesis will identify steps that allow for positive decolonization practices that can be

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[4] For US perspectives, focusing on the Smithsonian, see Claire Wintle, "Decolonizing the Smithsonian: Museums as Microcosms of Political Encounter," *The American Historical Review* 121, no. 5 (2016): 1492–1520; for an analysis of key postcolonial developments that have inspired ethically responsible and cultural appropriate museum practice, see Christina Kreps, "Changing the Rules of the Road: Postcolonialism and the New Ethics of Museum Anthropology," in Janet Marstine, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics: Redefining Ethics for the Twenty-First-Century Museum* (Abingdon, 2011), 70–84. For international perspectives from other settler colonial contexts see, Ruth B. Phillips, "Show Times: De-celebrating the Canadian Nation, De-colonising the Canadian Museum, 1967–92," in Annie E. Coombes, ed., *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa* (Manchester, 2006), 121–139. For a theorization of recent movements to repatriate ethnographic objects as a result of ubiquitous meanings given to ethnographic objects see David Jenkins, "Object Lessons and Ethnographic Displays: Museum Exhibitions and the Making of American Anthropology," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 36, no. 2 (1994): 242–270.

implemented in small institutions by tracing the methods that have been implemented successfully and unsuccessfully.

MHHM is a valuable case study to address three major gaps in the existing literature. First, the existing literature fails to address small institutions without large collections that come from indigenous or enslaved peoples, but still seek to be transparent about their site's colonial past. Second, the issue of land transparency is only addressed when a historic site resides on lands that formerly belonged to large groups of native peoples, or housed a large number of enslaved peoples, like southern plantations. This is despite the reality that the issue of decolonization affects all museums, especially in the United States. Most recognized historic sites have benefited from the acquisition of indigenous lands, in addition to having profited from slave labor. Third, as these two things have allowed for the building and maintenance of historic sites, it has made profitable historic artifacts for the benefit of Eurocentric institutions, like museums and historic sites. By focusing on Macculloch Hall, this paper will provide a structure for other small sites looking to address the issue of colonization, as well as providing ways to institute decolonizing policies throughout these sites.

The Decolonization Movement

The push for decolonization of educational and cultural institutions in the United States emerged as a way to reevaluate the purpose museums serve in society. Most scholars agree this was brought about as part of the aftermath of the social movements of the 1950s and 60s. Decolonization pushed institutions (museums and archives alike) to reconsider their displays, and acknowledge the cultural and political context in which

their artifacts and pieces were acquired and presented.[5] Decolonization as a practice

gained a large support base after incorporating tenets of the human rights movements, as

identified by José-Manuel Barreto and Cinthya Oliveira. This solidified the reality of

decolonization as a persistent issue, rather than one of the past.

Archival institutions, which museums have depended on heavily for source

material, have been especially vulnerable to the underlying influences of Eurocentric

standards of history. Their existence has been, and continues to be, dependent on the

political and financial climates of time, as Patricia Galloway has written.[6] Museums face

similar dependency, sensitive to the beliefs and opinions of members, boards and society.

Given this, it is unsurprising that the introduction of decolonization and rearrangement of

established practices in these institutions has been met with political pushback from the

aforementioned stakeholders.

Rather than concentrating on the relationships between a society and a state, or a

government and its people, decolonization forces the scholarly world to come face to face

with the problematic historic interactions between imperialist nations and their colonies.

This position has been asserted by scholars who have attributed to various aspects in

decolonization literature, including Claire Wintle, who has looked at decolonization

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[5] For a look at human rights movements that shaped social and political upheaval, see José-Manuel Barreto, "Imperialism and Decolonization as Scenarios of Human Rights History", in José-Manuel Barreto (ed.) *Human Rights from a Third World Perspective: Critique, History and International Law* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing), 140-171 and Cinthya Oliveira, "Human Rights & Exhibitions, 1789-1989," *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, no. 29 (2016): 71-94. For case studies of power dynamics between museums and indigenous peoples, see Onciul, *Museums, Heritage and Indigenous Voice*; Ruth B. Phillips, "Show Times: De-celebrating the Canadian Nation, De-colonising the Canadian Museum, 1967–92"; and Patricia Penn Hliden, "Race for Sale: Narratives of Possession in Two 'Ethnic' Museums." *TDR* 44, no. 3 (2000): 11-36. Wintle, "Decolonizing the Smithsonian." For a look on how different institutions have defined decolonization and the attempts made, see Elisa Shoenberger, "What Does It Mean to Decolonize a Museum?" MuseumNext, August 16, 2019. https://www.museumnext.com/article/what-does-it-mean-to-decolonize-a-museum/.

[6] Patricia Galloway, "Archives, Power, and History: Dunbar Rowland and the Beginning of the State Archives of Mississippi (1902-1936)," *The American Archivist* 69, no. 1 (2006): 79-116.

through the lense of the Smithsonian, José-Manuel Barreto, who has studied the way

human rights movements inspire and shape political and social upheaval, and Christina

Kreps, who studies postcolonialism in the field of museum anthropology.[7]

In order to decolonize, museums and other educational institutions need to

address and challenge commonly accepted narratives of museum practices and standards.

This means scholars must come to terms with the reality that certain collections,

particularly those including sacred objects or documenting dispossession and slavery are

not owned, they are merely held. Museums have a responsibility to connect communities

with their material culture, which is currently housed in museum collections. This is why

community consultation is now standard policy in inclusion initiatives. Part of the

contemporary mission of decolonization, Frank Howarth, former Director of the

Australian Museum, asserts, is to connect with community creators and create a platform

for these experts to voice their concerns, their beliefs and their ideas for best practices.[8]

This has allowed for the creation and success of community museums led by community

leaders to not only educate the general public, but members of their own communities

who would not otherwise have had access to this lost knowledge. This is extremely

important as previous attempts at decolonization have been unsuccessful, and in some

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[7] Wintle, "Decolonizing the Smithsonian"; Barreto, "Imperialism and Decolonization as Scenarios of Human Rights History"; Kreps, "Changing the Rules of the Road."

[8] Frank Howarth, "Decolonizing the Museum Mind," American Alliance of Museums, May 6, 2019, https://www.aam-us.org/2018/10/08/decolonizing-the-museum-mind/. For literature on community involvement, see Onciul, *Museums, Heritage and Indigenous Voice*; Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Ellen Hoobler "'To Take Their Heritage in Their Hands': Indigenous Self-Representation and Decolonization in the Community Museums of Oaxaca, Mexico"; Laurajane Smith and Kalliopi Fouseki, "The Role of Museums as 'Places of Social Justice': Community Consultation and the 1807 Bicentenary, in L. Smith and G. Cubitt and R. Wilson K. and Fouseki, (eds.) *Representing Enslavement and Abolition in Museums: Ambiguous Engagements* (Routledge: New York), 97-115; and Jenkins, "Object Lessons and Ethnographic Displays."

cases, even more harmful than previously because of a lack of community involvement. Without it, two ingrained systems of colonialism, external and internal, take over, further enabling unequal representation in museums.

For MHHM and other small institutions, this means establishing relationships with minority and indigenous communities. Before the creation of any exhibition, it would be prudent for institutions to reach out to community collaborators to create culturally accurate and sensitive exhibitions. For MHHM, this raises the question of which indigenous community should be contacted? How difficult would it be to acquire indigenous sources? Which minority community should be contacted? How difficult would it be to engage these communities in MHHM's efforts to decolonize? This thesis will answer these questions below.

Impact of Colonization

According to Tuck and Yang, external colonialism occurs when "fragments of Indigenous worlds" are exploited by colonizers and are subsequently rebranded as "First World." This exploitation includes products (sugar, opium, tobacco), material for technological devices (minerals), land and even people. In order to acquire these fragments, a subset of external colonialism, military colonialism, manifests in order to create war fronts and the idea of enemies to be conquered. This way foriegn land, people and resources can be indoctrinated into the dominant culture as "natural resources."[9] It allows for the dominant culture to strip away the complexity of minority peoples.

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[9] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 4, https://decolonization.org/index.php/des/article/download/18630. For reading on external colonialism's effect on indiengous South Americans, see Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010).

This is commonly seen in museum representations of Native Americans. Indigenous peoples are often portrayed as "blanket Indians," until their assimilation into American culture transforms these peoples as "progressive" and part of a modern nation. Interestingly, this depiction of "modern" often comes after indigenous peoples sell off land or tribal assets to corporations.[10] Though now assimilated and, in theory, accepted, military colonialism, a subset of external colonialism, only benefits colonizers. For indigenous peoples, the "benefit" of military colonialism is a continuous chipping away of land rights, and a lack of autonomy separate from the dominant society. Unfortunately, museums have served as places that perpetuate colonizer-serving images, herolding these practices as positive.[11]

Internal colonialism occurs when divestment and methods such as segregation and criminalization are implemented in a colonizing society to ensure the dominant group's superior position. Methods of internal colonialism are both interpersonal and structural intended to "authorize the metropole and conscribe her periphery."[12] When internal and external colonialism exists simultaneously, Tuck and Yang have dubbed this phenomena settler colonialism, where "the horizons of the settler colonial nation-state are total and require a mode of total appropriation of indigenous life and land."[13]

This has also been enacted through limited representation of indigenous and other excluded groups in scholarly work and institutions. It has enabled the misrepresentation

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[10] Hilden, "Race for Sale," 29.

[11] Hilden, "Race for Sale." Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*. Shoenberger, "What Does It Mean to Decolonize a Museum?" Wintle, "Decolonizing the Smithsonian," 19.

[12] Hilden, "Race for Sale," 5.

[13] Ibid. To be clear, it is not just capitalist societies that exist in the realm of settler colonialism. As indigenous Quecha scholar Sandy Grande wrote, socialist and communist societies are equally guilty of colonialism, both utilizing land and natural resources in exploitative means to the detriment of the indigenous and minority communities occupying it. See Sandy Grande, *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought*, (Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 27.

of peoples in museum exhibitions in the past and on an ongoing basis. This is why community members have pushed strongly for engagement and involvement. Scholars and museum professionals have realized museums can function as places of social justice and as a platform for underrepresented groups to be heard.[14] The success of decolonization can only be made a reality if colonized pasts are understood, and substantial efforts are made to rectify mistakes of the past.

What Does It Mean to Decolonize?

Dr. Claire Wintle, historian of museums and collections, exhibitions and the politics of representation, has given one of the most complete definitions of decolonization: Decolonization is "inclusive of formal acts of withdrawal from the colonies, but also acknowledges the impact of anticolonial struggles and neocolonial models of 'freedom,' pointing as well to the social processes of reimagining and practicing European, American, and colonial lives after empire."[15] This requires an understanding of what Wintle calls macrohistories, the formal policies of decolonization adopted by nations, and the cultural and institutionalized microhistories of individual museums. Simply put, scholars must understand how colonialism and post-colonialism shaped society and an institution's norms and practices, and what policies have been adopted to rectify discriminatory practices. Understanding the relationship between these two macrohistories would uncover the permeation of the colonizing mentality in

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[14] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*. Smith and Fouseki, "The Role of Museums as 'Places of Social Justice.'" Terri Janke, *First Peoples: A Roadmap for Enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries*, (Australian Museums and Galleries Association, 2018).
[15] Wintle, "Decolonizing the Smithsonian," 1495.

museums and historic sites in a post-empiralistic world.[16] Further, it challenges an

established Eurocentric mentality in Western museums, dismantling the standards

adopted by museums.[17]

As Bryony Onciul stresses, museums and historic institutions have a large

responsibility in answering the question of who museums are for. These facilities have

the capability of validating "identities, histories, culture and societies" as "keepers of

knowledge and collections about ourselves, others and the world in which we live."[18]

This is why decolonization is so powerful. Decolonization has the unique potential of

revitalizing the societies educational institutions are created in and establishing spaces to

empower indigenous peoples to share their history.[19]

Many contemporary scholars further this definition of decolonization with the

assertion that community involvement and the inclusion of diverse perspectives is the

only way to successfully reveal Eurocentric ideology and replace it with culturally

sensitive exhibitions and institutions.[20] In this way, cultural significance would take

precedence over museum categorization, signaling a significant change in display

practices and in public way of thinking about indigenous and minority objects. Museums

would then no longer be places that reinforce structural colonialism, but places that

connect creator communities with pieces of their cultural history, enabling them to

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Shoenberger, "What Does It Mean to Decolonize a Museum?" Chiara De Cesari, "Memory Voids and the New European Heritage: A Proposal for Studying Transnational Memory," *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, no. 25 (2012): 152-162.

[18] Onciul, *Museums, heritage and indigenous voice*, 3-8.

[19] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums*, 166.

[20] Kreps, "Changing the Rules of the Road." Hoobler,"'To Take Their Heritage in Their Hands.'" Smith and Fouseki, "The Role of Museums as 'Places of Social Justice.'" Janke, *First Peoples.* Onciul, *Museums, heritage and indigenous voice*.

reappropriate collection pieces when necessary.[21] This overhaul of ways of thinking would, ideally, destroy systems of colonialism and exploitation of "colonized" peoples, creating sites able to foster community well-being and involvement.[22]

The progressive work done by international scholars deserves recognition. In Australia, New Zealand and Canada especially, this push towards decolonization has made significant strides beyond the United States. These nations have developed a rich sense of the damages caused to the indigenous groups native to their lands, and, as much, have instituted land right legislation and territory treaties with said groups. Tuck and Yang, and other scholars based in these countries, have articulated definitions of decolonization that include repatriation of the land, as well as the recognition of how relations to land "have always already been differently understood and enacted; that is, all of the land, and not just symbolically."[23] Engaging in land appropriation practices has the ability to enrich the field of decolonization, enabling scholars to analyse a change in relations between indigenous groups and the state, as well the continuation of problems that have yet to be addressed.

Tuck and Yang warn that land acknowledgement and appropriation accomplished by colonialist governments merely as a metaphor as "to not have to deal with this (Indian) problem anymore" can manifest as the single motive, which further perpetuates a colonial mentality.[24] The authors conclude that the presence of indigenous peoples, who have ancestral claim on the land settlers reside on, unnerves the dominant group as they

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[21] Jenkins, "Object Lessons and Ethnographic Displays." Howarth, "Decolonizing the Museum Mind."
[22] Shoenberger, "What Does It Mean to Decolonize a Museum?" Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums.*
[23] Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," 7.
[24] Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," 9.

become aware of the incomplete nature of settler colonialism.[25] Land treaties end up

being implemented more for the comfort of the dominant group, rather than for the

benefit of indigenous groups. Though the dominant group, typically colonialist

governments, may propose decolonization focused ideas, no major steps towards true

decolonization are taken, and there is still a lack of acknowledgement of the harm done

by colonial histories. Tuck and Yang warn that, to completely decolonize, land

repatriation as well as engagement with Aboriginal communities is necessary. Land

repatriation may sound extreme to U.S. scholars, but this practice has been adopted in

Australia, New Zealand and Canada after years of decolonization efforts and scholarship.

While impractical, at the moment, for societies still on the cusp of addressing their settler

pasts, it is valuable to see the changes being pushed in nations further ahead in their

mission of decolonization.

Recognizing MHHM's Colonial Past

First, the history of pre-colonial settlements and peoples in Morris County needs

to be understood in order to know the history of Macculloch Hall Historical Museum and

the importance of the land. Prior to European settlement in the 17th century, Morris

County—as well southeastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and northern Delaware—was

occupied by Lenape.[26] Lenape were some of the first indigenous communities to sign

land transfer deeds and to forge friendships with new European arrivals, which was

pivotal for the establishment of long term trade.[27] Lenape lived in villages along

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[25] Tuck and Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," 9.

[26] Gunlög Maria Fur, *A Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters Among the Delaware Indians*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 5.

[27] Ibid, 8.

freshwater tributaries and along the Delaware and Hudson rivers. Birds and animals were easy prey for hunters near water, and, further inland, the land was ideal for field planting as intense weather conditions were mitigated the further inland they settled.[28]

As European peoples began to establish permanent settlements in the region, they sought out alliances with idigenous groups like Lenape tribes, aiming to understand the culture and ways of life of their new found allies. Some Europeans kept documentation describing their interactions, out of necessity and curiosity, providing valuable primary sources that demonstrated the recipricality of the Lenape and European relationship. There are limitations to these sources, but they make clear that an alliance between Europeans and first peoples was beneficial for both groups. Still, as Gunlög Maria Fur writes, Europeans would have had mere glimpses of the complex societal structures of Lenape groups and had limited, if any, understanding of Lenape beliefs and behaviors.[29]

What we do know about the longstanding relationship between Lenape and European settlers comes from colonial records, which document councils held where the Lenape functioned as arberaters and peacemaking facilitators between opposing European settler groups. From these records scholars have also uncovered that conflict over trade blistered between Lenape, Susquehannock and Iroquious as the European population grew. This resulted in a collapse of Lenape dominance in the region, the Iroquois Six Nations acquiring not only the beaver pelt supply, but almost exclusive

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[28] Ibid, 7. The first white settlers, Swedes, Germans, Dutchmen, Scotsmen and Englishmen, transcribed their name as Renappi, or River Indians, after their first encounters with the Lenape on the Delaware river. Though the Lenape did move seasonally, avoiding harsh weather and taking advantage of the naturally fertile lands and abundant wildlife, they were also repeatedly forced to relocate due to conflict and plunderings of the land by the Susquehannock people. Conflict between these groups increased even prior to permanent white settlements in the region as these tribes fought for optimal trade agreements with European traders, causing frequent relocations of the Lenape.

[29] Ibid, 5-6.

relations with budding state governments. As Iroquois influence spread, and the ever-growing European settlements demanded more land, the Six Nations began selling Lenape occupied regions to the highest bidder.[30]

In the case of New Jersey, approximately 30,000 acres were purchased by an English group of land speculators, led by a Peter Fauconnier. According to the deed, eleven "Indians; Native Proprietors and Sole Rightful Owners of a Certaine Tract of Land called Mackseta Cohunge" sold this acreage, which included present day Morris County, on August 13, 1708 for 200 pounds.[31] Whether these "Indians" were of Lenape or Iroquois ancestry is not known. However, it is not unreasonable to assume that if the land was indeed sold by Lenape, it was due to a realization that European land settlement, by force or by choice, was not far off in the future. Migration to larger settlements in Pennsylvania would have been the safer and more attractive offer considering the political climate.

Peter Fauconnier was the overseeing land speculator of this purchase.[32] Though his job depended on land acquisition and turn around, this 30,000 acre purchase was

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[30] Ibid, 51-57. Through the seventeenth century, Lenape and Susquehannock, who established an alliance with the formation of New Sweden, continued to honor treaties with individual Swedes, maintaining a great deal of independence as the numerically dominant inhabitants of the region. This position was vital for maintaining neutrality as Dutch and English settlements grew. However, trade conflicts eventually challenged Lenape's dominance, embroiling the Susquehannocks, Lenape allies, and the Iroquois in vicious conflict against the English and Dutch for dominance of the beaver pelt supply. Though the Lenape attempted to stem the intruding violence by utilizing their contacts with their Swedish neighbors, aiming to encourage peace talks with colonial administrations, they found themselves more and more involved in dominance struggles. Unfortunately, as smallpox swept through the region yet again, the Susquehannock were hit hard, losing their dominance in the region to the Iroquois Six Nations. As the Susquehannock's allies, this meant the repercussions of the tribal war fell on the Lenape. This is how the Six Nations were able to sell Lenape occupied regions to European leaders. This pushed the Lenape south, seeking out ancestral lands that had yet to be acquired by the Dutch or English.

[31] Langstaff, *New Jersey Generations*, 173-175.

[32] Ibid, 170-172. Fauconnier was one of three commissioners for the office of collector of New York and receiver-general of New York and New Jersey, and arrived in the colonies as a representative of the king of England in 1703.

substantial even for the standards of the time.[33] Fauconnier's purchase was heralded, and

by November, present day Morristown and eighteen square miles around it was sectioned

off and patented to one Peter Sonmans, one of the original proprietors involved in the

August purchase.[34] This land was highly desirable, a long valley with land suitable to

planting.[35] In this way, these European immigrants flourished the same way Lenape tribes

did, utilizing and cultivating the land. It is important to note that through their alliance

with Lenape people, European settlers most likely planted the very same things Lenape

tribes had been planting prior to colonization, nurturing native crops still planted today.

In 1806, George Macculloch and his young family left London for settlement in

the United States. Whether due to prosperity brought about by the end of the

Revolutionary War, a New Jersey statute that allowed imigrees to hold land *in fee simple*,

or upon recommendation of his imperial sponsor Napoleon Bonaparte, the Maccullochs

originally settled in New York City.[36] The first mention of the Maccullochs in

Morristown is a diary entry of Daniel Mulford, an early friend of George's, who invited

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[33] Ibid, 154. In February of 1665, Philip Carteret, the appointed representative of royal proprietors in England, passed the *Concessions and Agreements of the Lords-Proprietors in New England* as one of his first acts in office, attempting to stimulate migration and land settlement in northern New Jersey. *Concessions and Agreements* outlined land dividends standards from 2,100 to 21,000 acres, which could then be subdivided into seven parts, six of those parts for rent and the last for the lord proprietor. For renters, *Concessions and Agreements* provided a unique opportunity. Though it was required they pay due to the lord proprietor and take an oath of fidelity, they retained their autonomy, "full freedom of conscience" and morally imbued rights.

[34] Ibid, 174.

[35] Ibid, 154. This is what attracted German refugees to settle, leaving behind their initial path to New York. As a result of the 1707 Lutheran persecution in Wolfenbruttel and Halberstadt, German refugees were pouring into the country, settling in and around Philadelphia. These emmigrees, determined to create communities in this new country, like the Swedes before them, quickly adapted to their new home, establishing some of the first towns and villages that are still occupied today. These German settlers built the communities that would later be joined by families migrating over from England, as was the case with the Macculloch family.

[36] This stipulation of *fee simple* meant that imigrees could own land in absolute, without restrictions and with no restriction. "Fee Simple," Legal Information Institute, Legal Information Institute, accessed April 2, 2020, https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/fee_simple.

the young family to dinner at Backgammon & Picquet. Here, George was introduced to

the "congenial atmosphere of the New Jersey village and [its] proximity to New York,"

becoming so enamored he purchased a Morris Plains investment home in 1807, and the

twenty six acres of farmland the homestead dubbed Macculloch Hall resided in in 1810.[37]

In the early years, the Macculloch's, like most families living in the country, lived

off their land, owning farm animals and growing a substantial amount of vegetables and

fruit to support the estate.[38] The family home would stay owned by the family until 1949,

when Henry Wise Miller, after acquiring his sisters' interests in the property in 1940, sold

it to the W. Parsons Todd Foundation for its preservation and upkeep. W. Parsons

Todd's, the museum's founder, first wave of restoration lasted a century, and cost over a

hundred thousand dollars.[39] Part of this investment, of course, went to the revival of the

gardens. Beginning in the 1950s, W. Parsons Todd collaborated with the Garden Club of

Morristown to replant and help maintain the beds. In 2015, MHHM added a kitchen

garden which grows a variety of vegetables and herbs that serves as an outdoor

classroom.[40]

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[37] Ibid, 33. Jacob Welsh Miller, born October, 1800 in the broad valley of the Musconetcong, present day Morris County, married Mary Louisa Macculloch, the Macculloch's only daughter, becoming the patriarch of the second generation of the Maculloch family. Miller, a descendent of German settlers and a prominent lawyer of the time, became involved with the Macculloch's as their legal representative against the Morris Canal Company. Though the Morris Canal was George Macculloch's vision, a legal dispute broke out between landowners living alongside the canal line and the company shortly after its formation.# In 1825, Mary Louisa Macculloch, the only daughter of George and Louisa, married Miller, a future senator of New Jersey. Together, they had nine children, all raised in the Macculloch estate, further influencing the development of present day Morristown and New Jersey. Ibid, 57-68.

[38] Ibid, 81. However, as transportation and market goods became more readily available in the late 19th century, the settlement of land became more profitable and the Macculloch's, like others, sectioned off portions of their property for the home building of the Miller children. Mary Louisa Macculloch Miller, having survived her husband, maintained the family home and put in precautions before her passing to preserve "the homestead tract." Upon her passing, the home and its remaining lands were conveyed equally to her children and between the two sons of her late daughter.

[39] Ibid, 190.

[40] "Gardens," Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, accessed April 2, 2020, https://maccullochhall.org/gardens/.

The history of this property traces the growth of land value in a postcolonial environment. This present day museum is an example of how important the land was to a settler family, providing the means of supporting oneself and growing the wealth of a civically engaged family. This land was also incredibly important to Lenape. The 1956 burial discovery shows that this land was not merely a place to pass through. Lenape people built communities in this region, raising families and burying their dead on their homelands. .

John Brett Langstaff speculates that amongst the remains discovered in 1956 could reside the friends and family of some of the original signers of the 1708 land deal, if not the signers themselves.[41] This speculation is legitimate. As mentioned before, the growing numbers of land deals between the Six Nations and European settlers meant that Lenape people kept moving further south to escape persecution. However, it wasn't unheard of to have indigenous peoples still occupying lands that were purchased by white settlers. In the case of Meniolagomekah, the easternmost Lenape settlement in Pennsylvania, indigenous peoples still called this little village home until they were forced out five years after it was purchased by the Pennsylvania government in 1749.[42] It is very possible that after the Fauconnier deed of 1708, Lenape people still lived on the land until European settlers forced them off.

Colonization enabled the acquisition of these lands and the Macculloch's settlement, and the enslavement of African peoples allowed for its profitization. Decolonizing the MHHM entials understanding and communicating the profound links between dispossession and slavery. In the next section, I discuss what is known about the

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[41] Ibid, 178.
[42] Fur, *A Nation of Women*, 53.

enslaved people kept in captivity at the residence, as well as what is known about their relationship with the Macculloch family.

MHHM and the Legacy of Slavery

George Macculloch's account book records three adult slaves owned by the Macculloch family. Susan, who could have been a house servant judging by payments made for her shoe repairs, Cato, who may have held a valet capacity position in the household, and Betty, whose position is unknown. The account book shows shoe repairs for the enslaved peoples dating back to 1811, but prior to this there is no mention of them.[43] Considering the first account book entry was made in 1810, there is no way of knowing if the Macculloch's purchased them during their occupancy in New York or after settling in Morristown.[44] As for enslaved children, the family bible lists four births from 1809 to 1817. Emma (1809) and William (1811) were registered in the Morris County Clerk Records while Henry and Helen were not. From the recordings we know Susan was Emma's and William's mother. No father is mentioned.[45] What is additionally known is that Emma was recorded as being born in September, though the family bible lists her birth as May.[46] It is also worth mentioning that these children were recorded much later after their birth. For William, ten months and for Emma, almost three years.

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[43] Jane Bedula, *Dining through the Decades*, (Morristown: Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, 2003): 20-22.

[44] "George Macculloch's Account Book & Garden Journal (1810-1856)." Macculloch Hall Historical Museum. Accessed March 17, 2020. https://macullochhall.org/george-maccullochs-account-book/.

[45] "Records Relating to Slaves and Children of Slaves," New Jersey Department of State, Accessed February 6, 2020, https://www.nj.gov/state/archives/catsuslaves.html.

[46] George Macculloch, *Holy Bible* (Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1808).

This delay in recording was, unfortunately, very common. Though the Gradual Emancipation Act of 1804 required slave owners to register the births of enslaved children within nine months of birth, many owners postponed registration, if not outright failed to register children. Pequannock Township, despite having one of the largest populations of enslaved peoples in Morris County, had less birth registrations than Morris and Hanover Township.[47]

An explanation for this can lie in the growth of the interstate slave trade. The 1804 Emancipation Act required that all children born to enslaved women after July 4 to "'remain the servant of the owner of his or her mother,'" with the males held to service until they turned 25, and the females held to service until age 21. This Act, rather than providing a means of emancipation, was meant to protect the rights of slaveholders. These extended "apprenticeships" guaranteed free labor and expanded profit. Therefore, in order to continue to profit off of slavery as a institution, slaveholders would often sell the enslaved down south, either as a way to covertly keep their property, or to receive one last payday before these children aged-out. With these intentions, registering these children's birth would be of no benefit to slave owners. Though further legislation was passed in 1812 to prevent interstate trade, it often went unheeded.[48]

Though the Macculloch's intentions for failing to register Henry and Helen are unknown, one primary source document does shed light on George Macculloch's relationship with one of these children. In a letter dated December 25, 1832, George

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[47] David Mitros, *Slave Records of Morris County, New Jersey: 1756-1841* (Morristown, NJ: Morris County Heritage Commission, 2002): 24.

[48] "Princeton & Slavery | Legislating Slavery in New Jersey." Princeton University. The Trustees of Princeton University. Accessed February 3, 2020. https://slavery.princeton.edu/stories/legislating-slavery-in-new-jersey#3080.

writes to his son Francis: "Our own boy Henry, after receiving our ample provision of winter clothes, a set of new shirts, hat and coat, went off 3 weeks ago and is supposed to be now in New York. Peace and prosperity be with him-we are well rid of him, and did not move a single step to recover him."[49] The tone of this passage suggests indifference towards losing Henry. This suggests that George was not planning to sell Henry down south, and was unwilling to expend energy to bring Henry back to complete his "apprenticeship." This indifference was likely to do with Henry's age. The 1830 census documents one "Free Colored Under 24" living at Macculloch Hall in 1830.[50] Judging by the birth year recorded in the family bible, it is likely that this was Henry.[51] Therefore, if George was not planning to sell Henry, efforts were not made to "retrieve" Henry because the fiscal value he provided to the Macculloch estate was reaching its end.

This is all that is known about the enslaved peoples that resided at Macculloch Hall. No artifacts or evidence remain of the enslaved people that lived on the property. Unfortunately, this lack of information is quite common, especially for small institutions. The intertwinment between dispossession and slavery intended to destroy all humanistic qualities of the enslaved, attempting to wipe away all evidence of their existance as people. Therefore, when museums attempt to address their past, and educate their visitors on past wrongs, it becomes incredibly difficult without artifacts or documentation on their lives. This is why it is so vital that steps are provided for small institutions that face these challenges.

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[49] George Macculloch to Francis Macculloch, December 25, 1832, Macculloch Hall Historical Museum Archives, Macculloch Hall Historical Museum.

[50] Morristown, Morris County, NJ. (1830-1940), Federal Census, Microfilm Census Information for New Jersey, Morris County Library.

[51] George Macculloch, *Holy Bible*.

MHHM as a Museum

W. Parsons Todd established MHHM as a nonprofit museum after its purchase in

1950. He filled the "Old House" with his growing collection of American and European

fine and decorative arts, including porcelain, presidential material and an extensive

antique carpet collection, as well as furniture pieces of local historical significance.[52]

Todd, friends with political cartoonist Thomas Nast's (1840-1902) youngest son Cyril,

further amassed the largest single collection of Nast's original work in the United

States.[53] MHHM preserves the collections acquired by Todd, interpreting New Jersey's

colonial history and providing a means for visitors to glimpse the lives of the

Macculloch-Miller family, "a civically engaged family for more than ten generations."[54]

MHHM is further known for its 2-acres of historic gardens. During their

residence, the Macculloch-Miller family planted a traditional kitchen garden, apple and

pear orchards and extensive rose beds. Today, the gardens still hold 65 varieties of

heirloom roses, a wisteria that was given to the family by Commodore Matthew Perry in

1857, a sassafras tree believed to be the largest and second oldest in New Jersey and a

sundial installed in 1876.[55]

MHHM's collection displays knowledge through, what Londa Schiebinger calls,

the European Colonial Nexus. The European Colonial Nexus explains the experiences

and exchange of culture between European colonizers and indigenous peoples. This dual

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[52] "Creation of the Historical Museum," Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, Accessed April 5, 2020, https://macullochhall.org/about-us/a-vision-for-a-museum/.

[53] "Thomas Nast (1840-1902)," Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, Accessed April 5, 2020, https://macullochhall.org/collections/the-thomas-nast-collection/.

[54] "Creation of the Historical Museum."

[55] Ibid.

exchange of knowledge influenced the nations separated by an ocean throughout history.[56] At MHHM, this exchange is seen not only in the history of the family, but in the decorative arts from the eighteenth and nineteenth century that furnish the home. For example, the presidential china collection traces the change in style from pieces influenced by European trends and manufactured in Europe, to china manufactured in the United States that embodied American culture.[57]

Though MHHM lacks indigenous and minority artifacts, the antique carpet collection, in its own way, demonstrates the effects of colonization. The collection is diverse, with over 65 rugs from China to Morocco dated from the sixteenth through the early twentieth centuries. W. Parsons Todd began collecting in the 1920s, purchasing pieces from top auction houses in New York City.[58] The carpets were a unique commodity, acquired for their aesthetic value and technologically advanced construction. As Cori Hayden writes, "the capitalization of knowledge or life has thus meant, very directly, an intensification of the 'enterprising-up'" of goods exchange and manufacturing.[59] The journey of these carpets demonstrates the omnipotence of settler wealth, built from expropriation of people and lands the United States colonized.

The pieces housed at the museum are all valuable because of the Eurocentric standards placed upon them, depicting the underlying history of colonialism at MHHM. Its location in the historic district of Morristown shadows the institution under a sheet of

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[56] Londa Schiebinger, *Secret Cures of Slaves: People, Plants, and Medicine in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2017): 147.

[57] Wall text, Schoolroom Gallery, *W. Parsons Todd's Collection of Ceramics and Other Elegant Breakables*, Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, Morristown, New Jersey.

[58] "Our Carpet Collection," Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, Accessed April 5, 2020, https://macullochhall.org/collections/the-rug-collection/.

[59] Cori Hayden, *When Nature Goes Public: The Making and Unmaking of Bioprospecting in Mexico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003: 27.

elitism, which can make minority groups wary of visiting. As MHHM states, the institution tells the story of a (white) civically engaged family and the colonial history of the United States through the eyes of the Maculloch-Miller family. This museum, at the heart of it, only exists because of colonization. For MHHM, and other small institutions like it, this is one of the greatest conclusions that must be accepted to fully address their colonial past and to try to decolonize its present. Below, I will identify three historic challenges that museums, like MHHM, have faced in previous attempts to decolonize.

Three Historic Challenges in Museum Decolonization

Unsurprisingly, when historic sites and museums aim to create exhibitions and provide context on collections, there are a variety of difficulties that arise because of settler colonialism. One of the longest recognized challenges, first identified in 1952 by Frantz Fanon in his groundbreaking work *Black Skin, White Masks*, is the grounded practice of cultural essentialism- the incorrect belief that inverting the negative language around native artifacts will compensate for eurocentric perceptions. This, as Fanon's contemporary René Ménil pointed out, fails to rectify this incorrect perception of minority groups. As Ménil concluded, "we are not the 'opposite' of our colonial image, we are the *other* than this image."[60] When collections are disconnected from their cultural significance, it ignores the context in which artifacts exist and affects the language in which it is spoken about. As a result, it perpetuates the myth that colonized groups have been wiped out, their cultures lost to modernity and to the dominance of colonization. When modern exhibitions are created without cultural context, it shows little change from

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[60] Rene Menil, *Refusal of the Shadow: Surrealism and the Caribbean* (1996), quoted in Hilden, "Race for Sale."

the mentality of 17th century collectors: acquiring pieces in order to preserve proof of indingeous groups they believed would fade into obscurity.[61] When an institution eschews this understanding, critics can severely call into question their mission statement and overall goals of the institution. Most significantly, it can call into question the legitimacy and credibility of their work.

One example of this, identified by Patricia Penn Hilden, Professor of Native American History and Comparative Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, is the National Museum of the American Indian. She shows how prior to the 21st century hundreds of artifacts were staged to allow visitors to experience perceived ethnicity. The museum was a set "more like Disneyland", allowing visitors "to spend a few hours playing 'Indian.'"[62] Visiting indigenous people issued harsh critiques, and even an outright refusal to engage in community collaboration. They expressed a belief that "this National Museum of the American Indian in reality just sings another, very long, very elaborate death song for American Indian people."[63] This harsh conclusion by the communities that this museum was intended to represent drew into question the validity of work done at the National Museum of the American Indian.

For MHHM, cultural essentialism could easily result from attempts to create exhibitions on the history of Lenape and enslaved peoples without the appropriate and

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[61] Shoenberger, "What Does It Mean to Decolonize a Museum?"

[62] Hilden, "Race for Sale", 24. Similar arguments are made in: Mary Nooter Roberts, Susan Mullin Vogel, and Chris Müller, *Exhibition-Ism: Museums and African Art* (New York: Museum for African Art, 1994). Melissa Rinehart, "To Hell with the Wigs! Native American Representation and Resistance at the World's Columbian Exposition," *American Indian Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (2012): 403-42. "Telling a Spatial History of the Columbian Exposition of 1893," *Modern Drama* 47, no. 3 (Fall 2004). Burton Benedict, "Rituals of Representations: Ethnic Stereotypes and Colonized Peoples at World's Fairs," in *Fair Representations: World's Fairs and the Modern World*, ed. Robert Rydell and Nancy Gwinn (Amsterdam: vu University Press, 1994).

[63] Ibid, 32.

detailed resources to create a culturally sensitive and accurate exhibition. A glimpse of this is seen in the *Dining Through the Decades* exhibition brochure. The enslaved peoples are not mentioned in detail, but when they are these peoples are written about as property and without agency of their own. These people were documented merely as an extension of the Maculloch family history.

A responsible exhibition of MHHM's history of enslavement would require curators to search state archives and develop inter-institutional collaboration to create as detailed an exhibition as possible on the realities of the lives enslaved peoples lived as people, not as property. Their stories would have to be clearly told as intentional and independent from their relationships with their masters.

If the history of Lenape people and culture were to be explored, the biggest step would be acquiring artifacts on loan from other institutions that had been presented to Lenape representatives for contextualization and permission to hold on exhibit. This is important since, without this step, MHHM would be ignoring the context in which the artifacts exist and the artifacts' colonial connection with the institution it was on loan from.

The second error in thinking that undermines efforts to decolonize historic institutions and facilities is Eurocentric belief in multiculturalism and universalism as approaches to presenting history. Shifting to a universalist practice intends to deconstruct established museum practices and deracialize systems of power by presenting artifacts and knowledge without cultural contextualization. Universalist supporters assert that it shows museums as open spaces for all perspectives. However, it unfortunately slips back into a colonialistic grasp when diverse perspectives can not be heard over Eurocentric

opinions. Without appropriate education which can only be provided by the communities

museums seek to represent to the public, curators and museum professionals rely on their

interpretation of their collections, with little change to existing museum discourse.[64] As a

result, collections then face the threat of losing their ethnographic significance, becoming

understood as a highly commodified, European-adapted product. This, again, is a valid

concern. This universalist approach has historically ignored the many racialized practices

that resulted in these institutions acquiring these collections in the first place.

  As Hilden points out, in the 1980s this disturbing result was revealed with much

clarity by David Dabydeen, scholar and filmmaker of *Art of Darkness*, a documentary

that followed the exploitative practices of British high culture, like art and architecture.

Dabydeen demonstrated how Britain's colonial past and history of African slaves had

direct links to "universalist" pieces. He concluded this form of selective memory served

racist practices, the common condition of native art being displayed in a high culture

context.[65] This causes institutions, like the Museum for African Art, to fall back into

Eurocentric practices previously established by the institution.[66] This is because

universalism fails to ideologically separate groups and countries as independent entities.

While the Museum of African Art set out to provide a universalist representation of 10

categories of African Art, which were key to understanding African culture, it instead

produced exhibitions with heavily skewed Eurocentric classifications of African art, with

little information provided on which pieces belonged to which tribes, little expert

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[64] Ibid, 12-13.
[65] Ibid, 13.
[66] Hilden, "Race for Sale", 15.

community involvement and little consideration to art pieces identified as key to cultural understanding by the African nations represented.[67]

At MHHM, a lack of information provided in exhibitions and during tours on MHHM's colonial past can be mistakenly viewed as a universalist approach. Without mentioning, for example, that the survival of the family in the early years depended on the success of each season's crops, crops they only knew to plant because of Lenape European alliances during the early days of settlements, ignores the much larger history behind the land.

Also, failing to acknowledge that the success of the household and family was only possible through the forced labor by the kept enslaved peoples only provides one very narrow view of the complex history of colonial families in the United States. In MHHM's current exhibition, *Living, Learning, Working, Serving: The Women of Macculloch Hall*, a wall text makes this dependency very clear. The wall text clearly states that Macculloch family women were only able to complete their education, serve their various missions and successfully managed a household because of the work done by servants and enslaved peoples.[68] While this is a great instance in which cultural essentialism was avoided, this conclusion, as well as one that acknowledges Lenape influence on the estate, should be on permanent, visible display as well as being incorporated into every interpretive tour.

There is a third challenge institutions come across in efforts to decolonize: the mistakes of its past. In the case of MHHM, previous exhibitions and the language around

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[67] Baldwin, *Perspectives: Angles on African Art*, quoted in Hilden, "Race for Sale", 15-16.

[68] Wall text, Schoolroom Gallery, *Living, Learning, Working, Serving: The Women of Macculloch Hall*, Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, Morristown, New Jersey.

this historic site painted its namesake George Macculloch as a benevolent slave owner. In *Dining Through the Decades*, an exhibition booklet published in 2003 tracing the history of dining customs at MHHM, there are four pages devoted to the history of servants and enslaved peoples at Macculloch Hall. In it is written: "at the same time as Macculloch owned slaves to handle his household needs, he employed a local seamstress to deal with domestic needs."[69] Mrs. Connat, the aforementioned seamstress, would work on clothing for the enslaved peoples as well as the family. The writer of this booklet goes on to list the price paid for each itemized clothing, as well as shoes paid for, arguing that: "the slaves of Macculloch Hall were provided with sturdy footwear on balance with the mistress and master."[70] The language of mistress and master perpetuates the notion that enslaved peoples were property. Further, that their "property" was well cared for under the ownership of the Macculloch's. The writer seems to applaud George on his property investment. Though this is an extremely unfortunate reality on the legacy of slavery, it is important for an institution to take ownership of past mistakes and attempt to rectify the language of the history of enslavement in the future.

Knowing the mistakes that have been made in early attempts at decolonization begs the question, what actually is decolonization and how can it be appropriately and successfully approached? There doesn't seem to be a universal answer, especially when it comes to strategic plans for museums and similar institutions. In recent years, the concept of decolonization, I believe, can be best summarized as an acknowledgement of the cultural harm done by colonial approach to institutional policy, social education and

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[69] Bedula, *Dining through the Decades*, 20.
[70] Ibid, 21.

representation of indigenous and minority groups. This is intended to shine a light on a typically settler bias and ideology which has shaped much of museum collecting to date.

How Museums Have Successfully Decolonized

Repairing and addressing the harm done by colonization is the ultimate goal of decolonization. It takes time, but is possible. The Ziibiwing Center in Michigan is a prime example of an institution that has established community trust and has been inclusive of indigenous voices. From its inception in 2004, the Center has worked diligently with the Anishinabek people to create community collaborative exhibits. This institution has gone beyond merely cultivating relationships of trust, they have shared authority over the Center's projects to develop a decolonized institution from scratch.[71] Because of this, they have managed to side step another important factor in decolonization efforts: the language and text used in museum spaces. Language is extremely powerful, influencing the way artifacts are understood by the visitor. Whether intentionally or not, language is political, serving to either strengthen or weaken barriers between minority groups and historic institutions.[72] By sharing the responsibility of how the institution is understood, community advisors help create exhibition labels that reflect what the community deems appropriate. This is merely the tip of this facility's success.

Since 2010, the Ziibiwing Center has assisted in the reburial of 160 people and nearly 400 funerary artifacts to the Anishinabek's ancestral cemetery, in addition to developing a public school curriculum that educates students on the painful history of indigenous children being sent to boarding school for de-Indianization. What is possibly

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[71] Ibid.
[72] Shoenberger, "What Does It Mean to Decolonize a Museum?"

the greatest praise of this institution is the tribal community's use of it to educate themselves on the history of their people. The successes of this facility, Onciul notes, shows why decolonization should be more than repatriation. Done successfully, it recognizes the long struggle by indigenous groups for authority and honors these activists through inclusive decision making practices that include native voices and perspectives.[73]

The Ziibiwing Center, though a great example of community collaboration, is not a widely replicable model for existing historic institutions: it was established as a dedicated tribal museum. For long-standing facilities, the existing systems must be replaced step-by-step with feasible goals in mind. Understanding this challenge, the Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMGA) has instituted The 10-Year Indigenous Roadmap project. The project seeks to change the Australian view of Aborginal peoples through the revitalization of Australia's museums and art galleries and establishing means for indigenous communities to have control and autonomy over cultural artifacts. AMGA, as well as the indigeous groups they consulted during the project, established five "key elements of change" intended to ensure the strengthened relationships with Aborginial groups and a move away from Eurocentric methodologies. Though these steps are for institutions with large aborginal/indigenous collections, the first two are valuable for any institution looking to decolonize. The first step is to reimagine the representation of indigenous peoples in galleries and museums through the inclusion of truth-telling exhibitions that acknowledge indigenous knowledge in order to increase indigenous audiences. The second is to embed indigenous knowledge into these facilities through the institution of reconciliation action plans.[74]

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[73] Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums Representing Native America*, 166.
[74] Janke, *First Peoples*, 3.

These steps can be applied to other underrepresented groups as well. MHHM can use its large exhibit space to highlight the history of slavery at Macculloch Hall as well as in Morris County. Despite MHHM's lack of indigenous or minority collection, instituting reconciliation action plan methods is prudent and could provide an avenue of collaboration between other Morris County institutions to further expand the mission of decolonization. First acknowledging Lenape and enslaved peoples' history would demonstrate MHHM's dedication to support indigenous and minority groups to the local community, and show that the institution is capable of taking steps toward more comprehensive decolonization of the museum. Acknowledging that contact with local communities is just the first step in a long process could help strengthen relations with underrepresented groups and gain support for this mission from the local community.

Community Collaboration

One of the major challenges of community collaboration occurs when the goal of a specific collaboration varies between the minority group and the institution. This frequently happens when institutions aim to meet traditional expectations of what an exhibit is, for financial purposes as well as professional, while the community group focuses solely on the social possibilities of the exhibition. In this case neither are wrong, but it causes strain on curators who attempt to navigate these two priorities. This becomes additionally difficult when the collaborating communities are not homogenous in their approach to collections, or even their approach to social goals. When multiple community speakers disagree on institutional issues, often museum professionals have little choice but to focus on the speakers that are most clear and organized for the sake of efficiency

and timing.[75] This is an unfortunate reality of exhibition creation. Museums function on a general timeline for the sake of the public viewing. Especially if they are receiving outside funding for a community involved exhibition, they need to stick to the terms of the grant.

A particularly successful way to approach these challenges, done first by Eugene Knez upon his 1959 appointment to the Asian collections at the Smithsonian, is to communicate with international embassies, museums, universities and other authority figures and groups to form cohesive and authentic exhibitions. What's more, Knez was conscious of the political sensitivities in Asian nations, applying his anthropological sources in a way that was accepted by his international collaborators.[76] This method should be applied when it comes to working with different community groups in the United States. If institutions were aware of the political relationship between community partners and were considerate of the challenges they have working together, institutions can then provide a stage in which these groups can meet and discuss to offer a few ways in which the exhibition can be approached. After, it is then the responsibility of the museum to incorporate these recommendations in order to create a more diverse institution and become more detailed in the way they provide information to the public.

MHHM could go about this by connecting with the Ramapough Lenape community, a state recognized tribal nation in Mahwah, New Jersey. This community, a less than 40 minute drive from MHHM, not only holds detailed records of indigenous interactions and customs from the 1600s to present, they can provide valuable knowledge

[75] Smith and Fouseki. "The Role of Museums as 'Places of Social Justice,'" 5.
[76] Wintle, "Decolonizing the Smithsonian", 1499-1503.

of the history of Lenape that has not been documented in textual sources.[77] Oral histories are vital to Lenape, documenting their customs and ways.[78] Furthermore, this community stays up to date on recent legislation as it relates to not only the Ramapough Nation, but other indigenous groups in the region. This means they could inform MHHM on recent changes in decolonization legislation.[79] Not only this, but as the nation is experienced fighting for representation federally, state-wise and locally, their unification can help provide a framework for culturally sensitive exhibitions with little controversy, side-stepping one of the major challenges of community collaboration.

Still, as pointed out by Smith and Fouseki it takes time for community consultants to decide what the history of the institution's collection means to them and what is at stake in the way the history is portrayed.[80] Without this consideration given to community partners, museum staff can be seen as insensitive to the people whose histories are being displayed and more concerned about the role of the objects in their facility.[81]

Further, MHHM would also have to consider what the museum currently represents to its visitors, member base and board. Implementing change of any kind is always disruptive, and MHHM's existing audience may feel affronted by this push for decolonization. However, it must be accepted that time needs to be given to the existing community to come to terms with these changes.

[77] "Tputáawii Xúwii-Pambíilak," Tputáawii Xúwii-Pambíilak, Accessed April 6, 2020, http://tputaawii-xuwii-pambiilak.org/.

[78] "History," Ramapough Lenape Nation, April 27, 2019, https://ramapoughlenapenation.org/about/.

[79] Admin, "Ramapough Lenape Nation," Ramapough Lenape Nation, June 14, 2019. https://ramapoughlenapenation.org/.

[80] Smith and Fouseki, "The Role of Museums as 'Places of Social Justice'," 25.

[81] Ibid, 22-23.

Furthermore, it must be stressed that the current collection will not be forgotten. The addition of indigenous and minority representation would be just that, an addition. Just as building trust of community partners is part of the assessment process, so too is building the trust of the existing community so both parties feel heard and their desires represented. As Miriam Kahn, anthropologist at the University of Washington, writes, utilizing the museum as a platform for representation provides community groups the chance "to work out their own internal struggles and agendas…." since the willingness to engage in debates "….is a tacit acknowledgement that people and the issues under discussion matter and are important."[82] With time and consideration, an environment that fosters open and honest communication is created, setting up the possibility for a positive relationship between community members, new and old, and the museum.

Community collaboration would be extremely valuable for MHHM to strengthen its ties with local indigenous groups and the local African American community, two groups with historically low museum visitation rates. According to the American Alliance of Museums, African Americans have the lowest rates of participation across art, science/technology, historic houses/sites, history and natural history museums, averaging 18 to 22 percent. National data provided by the NEA, as well as regional data show similar data, though results were collected 12 years apart.[83] Unfortunately, there is little data on Native American visitation rates nationwide, and MHHM's rates remain low as well.[84]

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[82] Ibid, 25.
[83] Betty Farre and Maria Medvedeva, *Demographic Change and the Future of Museums* (Washington, DC: The AAM Press, American Association of Museums, 2010); 13.
[84] Ibid.

Researchers have provided a variety of possible explanations for this phenomena. First, pre-existing cultural barriers can cause museum space to feel exclusionary and difficult to permeate. Coupled with a lack of museum-going habits in one's community and childhood, social networks play a role in dissuading one from changing these accepted norms. Further, the lack of cultural capital can further create an atmosphere of exclusion, especially in art museums where the collections are perceived as elite art forms.[85] As African Americans are more likely to attend events with black themes, presented, serviced and attended by members of the black community, it is unsurprising that African Americans continue to be one of the least served communities by historic sites and museums. In fact, historic patterns of racism in museums have resulted in a unique cultural psychology with the African American community in which members are hypersensitive to perceived or real racism.[86]

This shows an additional benefit to decolonization. As political institutions with large social impact, shaping an environment in which community members can feel comfortable becoming involved strengthens museums' overarching goal to be places of inclusion that promote diversity and equality. Small institutions have a capability that surpasses the ability of large institutions. At large institutions, underrepresented groups may feel overwhelmed, that the facility is too large and involved in separate aspects of museum management to focus its full efforts on decolonization. Also, as was mentioned before, museums can feel unapproachable to communities who have historically avoided these institutions. Small museums have the potential to feel more accessible to groups who may feel overwhelmed becoming involved with a large institution. Hopefully,

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[85] Farre and Medvedeva, *Demographic Change and the Future of Museums*, 13.
[86] Ibid, 14.

attempts at decolonization would show underrepresented groups, like African Americans, that museums are ready to face the exclusionary practices of the past and address their mistakes through decolonization measures.

Decolonizing MHHM

While many US institutions may not be ready to adopt territorial or land acknowledgements in the current social environment, incorporating robust recognition and display of pre-colonial and ongoing colonial histories at a museum is a necessary first step to changing the mainstream narratives presented to US publics. Macculloch Hall Historical Museum (MHHM) is in a unique position to do even more with its site. Though much of the orginal estate was sectioned off to descendants to build private properties, it still maintains two of the original twenty six acres of farmland. Moreover, the historic garden maintains the tradition of planting crops as well as various native flower beds.

According to the Official Site of the Delaware Tribe of Indians, Lenape gathered wild plant foods and grew beans, squash, sunflowers, herbs and corn in their settlements. These very same crops are grown in MHHM's garden as part of their summer program *Dig It! Plant it! Eat it!* This program is meant to inspire communities and families to start their own gardens and eat fresh produce. By creating an education program focused on imbuing participants with the knowledge of the importance of planting for Lenape and for European settlers, an opportunity to discuss the history of Lenape on the land is created.

Further, *Dig It! Plant It! Eat It!* engages participants in an activity specific to the theme of the summer. If MHHM incorporated the tradition of drying, storage and rehydration in its sessions, it would provide further opportunity for participants to learn about Lenape practices. Lenape women often dried their crops for immediate storage and in preparation for winter. Holes were dug into the earth and were used as storage pits. When the time came to utilize their stores, Lenape women would cook the dried product in water until it was soft enough to eat.[87] MHHM could demonstrate and have program participants engage in modern rehydration, whether through soaking or through the introduction of a dehydrator. Incorporating these activities allows for not only recognition of Native American history, it puts it in the spotlight and educates the public in a unique and engaging way on the history of indigenous peoples in Morris County.

This garden could further be utilized as an alternative space for outside exhibitions, a common practice born out of the 1950s and 60s left wing activism and counter-culture movements. If MHHM collaborated with Lenape and African American communities to demonstrate their historical connection to the land, it could offer a creative medium for indigenous and minority artists and allow for the museum to engage in ecologically sensitive practices. Growing relationships with community curators and indigenous artists would allow for the presentation of diverse perspectives and the continuous development of thematic exhibitions.[88]

When it comes to implementing decolonization focused programs, the first step is to acknowledge the past and to make active choices moving forward to include the

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[87] "Foods Eaten by the Lenape Indians," Official Site of the Delaware Tribe of Indians, Accessed February 24, 2020, http://delawaretribe.org/blog/2013/06/27/foods-eaten-by-the-lenape-indians/.
[88] Oliveira, "Human Rights & Exhibitions, 1789-1989," 77.

histories of Lenape and enslaved people. This should be done by shifting the language used at MHHM. This means referring to the Lenape as Lenape—not generic Native Americans; it means calling enslaved peoples enslaved peoples, or, when possible, by their names. Historically used terms such as Indians and slaves are damaging and further perpetuate Eurocentric practices. Therefore, this shift in language would need to be enforced in institutional research, in conversation between staff and volunteers, and in interpretative tours to make it known to visitors why and how these steps are being taken. This not only shows the appropriate respect to the cultures that shaped MHHM's history, it further asserts the transnational history that shaped the US. As Chiara De Cesari, anthropologist and lecturer at the University of Cambridge, writes, this "open[s] up a space for imaging new forms of belonging and citizenship," allowing for history to be pluralized through the exploration of trans-continental connections.[89]

Second, the histories of first peoples and enslaved peoples must be made visible. At the very minimum, this means incorporating the stories of Lenape and enslaved peoples in the general tour. When information isn't known, interpretive guides and museum staff should provide information that pertains to the experiences of these peoples in the region, as according to primary source documents. If this fails to provide answers, staff and volunteers should explain truthfully that they don't have the answers. This transparency not only demonstrates MHHM's dedication to historic accuracy and cultural sensitivity, it provides an opportunity to educate visitors as to why these records don't exist, whether due to cultural significance placed on oral histories or due to historic dehumanization and dispossession.

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[89] De Cesari, "Memory Voids and the New European Heritage," 159.

What is known, specifically in regards to the enslaved peoples that lived at Macculloch Hall, should be made visible through the historic home. For example, mounting the names of the enslaved peoples, what is known of their lives (ex: birth date and County record registration), and the position they may have held in the home. Princeton University can be looked to for a good example of how this can be done. In front of the "President's House," which flanks the University, a memorial plaque was installed for permanent display which commemorates the enslaved peoples who served in the home. It acknowledges the harm done by the institution of slavery as well as profitization of forced labor.[90]

In the historic garden, planting native plants and creating clear signage throughout that informs visitors of the intentionality behind cultivars to acknowledge Lenape culture of agriculture should also be instituted. With this, it would create an avenue for discussion on the importance of Lenape collaboration, which enabled successful settlement of the land. This not only educates on MHHM's land, but the formation of the United States and the importance of Indigenous alliances.

Lastly, MHHM, and other similar institutions, should keep an eye out for opportunities for community collaboration and exhibition creation. By establishing connections with Ramapough Lenape Nation and the local African American community, MHHM would have an opportunity to create a platform for indigenous and minority creators to demonstrate their work, and expand MHHM's reach. By taking this first step, this could open the door to long-term grant opportunities. If funding could be acquired

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[90] "Princeton & Slavery | Memorial Plaque at the President's House," Princeton University, The Trustees of Princeton University, Accessed February 3, 2020, https://slavery.princeton.edu/sources/memorial-plaque-at-the-presidents-house.

that would enable the formation of an exhibit once every few years that is dedicated to MHHM's colonial past, it would allow for growth and solidification of decolonization practices and goals.

Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated how MHHM is a unique institution with its own challenges, but is in many ways similar to other educational institutions and historic sites. MHHM's decolonization faces challenges. Without indigenous or minority collections, the existing literature provides little guidance on how to successfully implement policies in pursuit of this mission. However, like other museums and historic sites, MHHM only exists due to the effects of colonialism, and has grown and succeeded through the exploitation of minority peoples and their cultural material. Therefore, the call for decolonization applies to MHHM as it would a large institution with collections of indigenous and minority artifacts. This thesis has shown how colonialism has historically benefited museums, and how the redressing of historic repression is a problem that needs to be tackled by every institution. By first understanding an educational institution's connection to its greater colonial past, and the many facets of colonialism it has benefited from, appropriate steps can be taken to rectify existing policies and structure. From this, the steps provided above can be implemented, providing a framework on addressing the historic colonization of indigenous lands and enslaved peoples.

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