

# Native American past chronicled

■ An Exhibit explores the history of government-run boarding schools through displays and panels

By Ben Romano

Oregon Daily Emerald

The experience of Native American children who were forced to leave their homes and families, abandon their cultures and required to attend government boarding schools is chronicled in "They Sacrificed For Our Survival," a temporary exhibit at the University Natural History Museum.

"There are a lot of interesting angles to this exhibit," said Eliza Schmidkunz, museum publicist. The exhibit will be on display through Dec. 23.

Photographs and testimonials describe the federal boarding schools. It was the mission of the schools to "civilize" Native Americans.

This topic will be explored further during a speech and panel discussion by Tsianina Lomawaima, University of Arizona Native American Studies professor and author of a book on Oklahoma's Chilocco Indian School, which her father attended.

Lomawaima's visit is sponsored by the Oregon Humanities Center as the 1999-2000 Cressman Lecturer, an annual lectureship dedicated to humanities issues.

She will speak on "Education By Indians vs. Education for Indians: Native Responses to Boarding Schools," Julia Heydon, assistant director of the Oregon Humanities Center, said.

Lomawaima will also join a

## 'Carrying the Song'

The first part of a three-exhibition series called "Carrying The Song," about the survival of Native American cultures in the Pacific Northwest will begin with the following events:

"They Sacrificed For Our Survival," a temporary exhibit at the University Natural History Museum, will be on display until Dec. 23.

In conjunction, Tsianina Lomawaima will speak on "Education By Indians vs. Education for Indians: Native Responses to Boarding Schools," on Thursday, Nov. 4 at 7 p.m. in Room 175 of the Knight Law Center.

Panel of Native American boarding school students Sunday, Nov. 6 at 3 p.m. in the lobby of the University Natural History Museum. All events are free and open to the public.

SOURCE: Eliza Schmidkunz, museum publicist.

## Native American Boarding School facts:

The first exclusively Native American boarding school was opened in Carlisle, Pa., in 1879.

Early boarding schools emphasized labor, housekeeping, uniformity and military discipline.

By the 1960s, many of the large boarding schools in Oklahoma, Kansas, the Dakotas, Washington and California had either closed or changed.

Two schools remain today: Sherman Institute in Riverside, Calif., and Chemawa Indian School in Salem.

Chemawa is now a four-year, fully accredited high school with students representing tribes from 17 states.

Curriculums at the boarding schools have changed drastically. Students take courses in Native American literature and history, dancing, drumming and traditional arts.

SOURCE: University Museum of Natural History

panel of current and former Native American boarding school students to discuss their experiences. The panel discussion will be held Saturday, Nov. 6 at 3 p.m. in the lobby of the museum.

Both events will be free and open to the public.

The exhibit is part of "Carrying The Song," a series of three related exhibitions focusing on the survival of Native American cultures in the Pacific Northwest.

"Sagebrush, Cedar, and Tule,"

the second part of the series, will examine the 10,000-year history of Oregon basketry.

The last exhibition in the series, "A Song to the Creator," will focus on traditional arts of Native American Women of the Plateau.

The exhibits will be on display winter and spring of 2000, respectively.

"One of the things we and our Native American consultants wanted to do is paint the theme [of the series] as overcoming struggles



Jeffrey Stockton Emerald

Eugene resident Mary Jaqua browses the new Native American exhibit at the Natural History Museum. The exhibit will run through March.

— surviving," Schmidkunz said. "Native American cultures weren't destroyed; they didn't end. They're a living group of people."

The museum staff is conscious of the claims of some critics who wonder why the cultures of indigenous peoples are displayed in "natural history" museums while white, western culture is displayed in "art" museums, said Museum Director Mel Aikens.

"The reality is that all human beings are part of nature and appropriate subject matter for the Natural History Museum," Aikens said.

The museum has permanent and rotating exhibits on geological, biological and cultural history.

"We are a museum of natural and cultural history," Aikens said. The staff is considering a name change to reflect that.

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