MARCH 1, 2024 SMOKE SIGNALS

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## Watchlist: 'An expression of love'

(Editor's note: It is estimated that there are approximately 149 billion videos on YouTube, and the number continues to grow. Grand Ronde Tribal member and Social Media/Digital Journalist Kamiah Koch sifts through those myriad videos twice a month to recommend a worthwhile Indigenous video to watch. Follow her bimonthly recommendations and enjoy!)

## By Kamiah Koch

Social media/digital journalist

A Smarthistory YouTube video pans to a 19th century cradleboard with bright red wool and colorful beads on display in the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Choctaw Nation Tribal member Dr. Chelsea Herr provides a voiceover in the video with curators Jack and Maxine Zarrow, and art historian Dr. Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank, explaining the materials in a cradleboard, how it is properly used and the potential origins of the 19th century version on display in the museum.

"In this singular object, we can learn so much about daily life of the Koiwe in the 19th century and the knowledge shared among community members," a video narrator said.

Cradleboards, traditionally and currently, are used to hold and transport babies and young children.

According to the video, cradleboards were not specific to one area and the techniques used to make them changed as trade became more common among Tribes. Products such as wool, patterned fabrics, glass beads and silver were popular cradleboard materials.

Cradleboards were intended to securely hold a child, entertain them with elements hanging in front of them and transport a child on their parents back.

"When propped up vertically, this would allow the child to experience the world much like an adult while standing," one of the video narrators said.

The duration it took to create a cradleboard was about the same time as a pregnancy. Cradleboards were created to be used for years and often passed down through families.

"Once a woman found out she was pregnant, then other women in her kinship network would create a cradleboard like this in community with one another," a narrator said.

Cradleboards can be used for newborns and toddlers, with room for the child to grow inside the cradleboard.

Specific Tribal groups would bead the exterior of the cradleboard and the shapes and color of glass beads used made the cradleboard identifiable as belonging a member to that Tribe.

The cradleboard at the Gilcrease Museum that is referenced in the video was created with the intention of being used but was sold and now sits on display in a museum.

"This is representative of how harsh life on the reservation – and in this case on the Kiowe, Comanche and Apache reservations in the late 19th century – would have been," the video narrator said. "This piece was sold at some point and it's possible that it was to deal with those harsh conditions on reservations and to be able to feed your family."

You can watch more on cradleboards in full Smarthistory video on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkab-MPUFic.  $\blacksquare$ 

## **Construction zone**

Now through Dec. 31, 2024, construction is occurring for the new child development center. During this time, there will be construction traffic using the loop road around the old powwow grounds across the street from the Governance Center.

The road surrounding the old powwow grounds will have restricted access to allow the contractor adequate space to access the site, as well as store materials and equipment.

For more information, contact 503-879-2404 or Ryan. Webb@grandronde.org.  $\blacksquare$