



MOUNTAIN GATEWAY
MUSEUM

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Regional Museums

•Museum of the Albemarle
1116 U.S. 17 South
Elizabeth City, NC 27909

•Museum of the Cape Fear
P.O. Box 53693
Fayetteville, NC 28305

Dear Colleague,

A sense of history involves visualization. People and events of the past need to be seen in the mind's eye to be better understood. Resources for an informed and accurate visualization of history are primary accounts, works of art, texts, diagrams and photographs. For most cultures of the distant past, these aids to visualization are sparse. For example, the visual evidence of pre-Columbian native tribes of the Southeastern United States, consists of a few written descriptions by early explorers and traders, and even fewer drawings and depictions. Museums are venues for the visualization of historical realities, and rely heavily on source material in these media. Mountain Gateway Museum as a branch of the North Carolina Museum of History and an active museum service agency, has promoted historical visualization and learning in museums since the early 1980s. The museum is now seeking advice and support for an exhibition of bronze sculptures portraying Southeastern pre-Columbian people, along with related maps, texts, and artifacts. Such an exhibition would constitute a powerful opportunity for learning about pre-Columbian Americans. As it becomes available to museums and cultural agencies in the Carolinas and beyond it would offer opportunities for the visualization, understanding and appreciation of those pre-Columbian cultures that existed throughout the region, but are long since gone.

The cast bronze sculptures of Ray Moose of Mt. Pleasant, North Carolina, are accurate and dramatic representations of native Southeastern tribal figures. The anatomy is exquisitely rendered, and the clothing and personal accessories are based on archeological and textual evidence. To stand in the presence of a three-dimensional torso or life-size bronze pre-Columbian chief, shaman, or dancer is to gain an historical perspective that is not available in any other media. Moreover, Ray Moose has been active in teaching public school students about Native Americans. As Artist in Residence, Cabarrus County Schools, 1998-99, he helped students create a tile wall sculpture depicting aspects of Southeastern native cultures. A subsequent award-winning website made this project available on the internet (www.ancientimages.org). The photographs and documents that accompany this letter furnish additional information about the exhibit and Ray Moose's work. I will deeply appreciate responses by mail, e-mail (gateway@wnclink.com) or phone that offer advice, express interest or ask questions about this initiative.

Sincerely,

Sam Gray
Sam Gray, Director, Mountain Gateway Museum

North Carolina
Museum of History
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State of North Carolina

Department of
Cultural Resources