



Karl · May · Museum

Karl-May-Museum gGmbH · Karl-May-Straße 5 · 01445 Radebeul · Deutschland

Cecil E. Pavlat, Sr.
Cultural Division Repatriation Program
531 Ashmun Street
Sault Ste. Marie
Michigan 49783
United States of America

Radebeul, 26.03.2014

Subject: Your Letter of March 10, 2014

Dear Mr. Pavlat Sr.,

Thank you for your letter. We are shocked and also surprised by your accusations because it has never been and never will be the Karl May Museum's aim to show disrespect to any Native American or First Nations culture.

The scalp which is said to be of Ojibwa heritage and that you probably are referring to, has not been on display at the Karl May Museum for 20 years and it is being kept safe in our depot right now.

As you pointed out correctly, Patty Frank, one of the Karl May Museum's founders, collected that particular scalp. It is said that the scalp was taken by Swift Hawk (Sioux). There is only one source labelling the scalp to be of an Ojibwa and the origin of this information is not proven. Neither is any classification and provenience of the scalps that are part of the Karl May Museum's collection clear, nor do we have any scientific verification concerning their authenticity.

It is true, that the current permanent exhibition contains Human Remains to demonstrate a part of Native American cultural history. If you saw our exhibition, you would know that there is a special focus on the misuse of scalps (scalp premiums). To us, this show case has a memorial character to the past when white settlers and trappers did not think anything of human rights.

**Karl-May-Museum
gGmbH Radebeul**
Karl-May-Straße 5
01445 Radebeul
Deutschland

Telefon: +49(351) 837 30-10
Telefax: +49(351) 837 30-55
info@karl-may-museum.de
www.karl-may-museum.de

Amtsgericht Dresden
HRB 21442

USt.-ID-Nr. DE 813613354

Bankverbindung
Sparkasse Meißen
BLZ 850 550 00
Konto-Nr. 30 000 519 28
IBAN DE24 8505 5000 3000 0519 28
BIC SOLADE31MEI

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The Karl May Museum's North American ethnographic collection is one of the most valuable in Europe. Our Exhibition at the "Villa Baerenfett" shows about 800 objects from the main North American cultural regions, dating from the 18th to the early 20th century. They symbolize Native American life, struggle and suffering.

We are aware of Native Americans/First Nations not being extinct, having Native American visitors and guests to our Museum every year who know about and also like the exhibition.

We respect that human remains are sensitive pieces and that displaying them might hurt individual and collective feelings.

We have been working on a new exhibition concept for some time now. The project team reflects critically on ethical questions concerning human remains. It has been decided within the project team that the scalps will not be part of the new exhibition.

On the occasion of your letter, we decided to realize this part of the new concept right away: The scalps will not be on display any longer and we will use replica instead to illustrate that part of the history.

Furthermore, we are very interested in intensifying the dialog with Native Americans. We appreciate critical views on the Karl May Museum's collection and we are looking forward to keep in touch with you.

Yours sincerely,



Claudia Kaulfuß
Managing Director