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ONEIDA TRIBE OF
INDIANS OF WISCONSIN

Gordon McLester
Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin
Oneida, Wisconsin 54155

Dear Gordie:

I enjoyed our telephone conversation last week. I am always impressed with your spirit and optimism. This letter will formalize some of the items we discussed and communicate them to other interested parties.

As I told you, I met on Thursday April 2 with Mr. Max J. Maldacker of the German Consulate in Chicago, and Mr. Felix E. Becker, Director of Public Relations--Midwest USA for Lufthansa German Airlines. Dr. Bernd Peyer, currently a Ford Foundation fellow at the McNickle Center, sat in on our meeting as well.

I understood from Mr. Becker that Lufthansa is generally interested in supporting significant cultural and educational programs that reflect positively on the airline. His office is not concerned with ticket sales or tourism, per se. Instead, his mission is to guide the airline's activities as a "good citizen" in our region of the country.

In general, Mr. Maldacker's office wishes to promote better understanding between the citizens of his country and ours. He is happy to support and facilitate programs that come to him from groups with ideas that are compatible with his official objectives. His office is not envisioned as a principal sponsor of this activity.

With regard to the idea of a visit to West Germany by a group from Oneida, Mr. Becker indicated that he would welcome such a trip if it fit within his broad mission as public relations director. In other words, he felt the airline would be most comfortable with an educational or cultural presentation. He also made clear that his office could not contract with an individual for such a program; it would need an institutional sponsor. In this connection, he raised the possibility of Newberry sponsorship of the Oneida visit.

I responded to Mr. Becker's suggestion by stating that the library (and the Center) did not contract as an institution to sponsor educational activities. All of our programs in Indian history are organized by individuals. Our summer institutes for teachers, for example, are directed by an individual who submits a project proposal to us and which we in turn submit to a funding agency in her name. We work closely with this person, and offer technical support in the development of budgets and so on, but the project is hers. The same is true

for research projects, conferences and publications. Funding agencies grant program funds to the library in the name of a project director or a principal investigator who carries out a specified program.

It does not strike me that an Oneida presentation in Germany would fit easily into our pattern of sponsored programs. Certainly we have been associated with the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin in a number of important activities. We consulted with you in the organization of your 1986 Oneida history conference. Several speakers at that conference were present or former Newberry fellows and staff. We have also been proud to have at least two members of your tribe here as McNickle Memorial fellows and I have worked with both Bob Smith and Charlene Cornelius, your tribal records manager, in the development of the pending NHPRC grant for archival training. As I have often said, your tribe is a model of a group which has worked tirelessly to record and present its own history; to make the past a part of a living present. For these reasons, I would have a great sympathy for the idea of taking the message of Oneida culture--past and present--to Europe. You would have a great deal to teach there. At the same time, I find it difficult to see where such a program fits in to the agenda of McNickle Center activities.

Based on these conversations, I suggest that you and Mr. Becker determine if there is a sufficient overlap between what you have suggested and what he feels is appropriate to justify Lufthansa sponsorship. I understand that you feel an informal invitation has already been extended to you, but the time seems to have arrived for both you and the airline to develop a specific program of activities.

I would be glad to participate in a meeting on the subject, but it would seem to me that you and Mr. Becker need to agree on a specific program before anyone else can know where and how they might be helpful. As your friend I am always ready to offer my advice or to hear your thoughts, but as the director of the McNickle Center I find it difficult to evaluate an abstract proposal. I should add that Dr. Peyer would also be willing to assist you, so long as his participation does not conflict with his obligations as a fellow.

I hope these comments are useful to everyone involved in the proposed visit. I stand ready to discuss the matter further with anyone involved and I am happy to support further work on the idea where my participation might be useful.

Sincerely,



Frederick E. Hoxie
Director

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714-61-22

cc: Mr. Max J. Maldacker
Mr. Felix E. Becker
Dr. Bernd Peyer
Dr. Richard H. Brown, Academic Vice President, Newberry Library
Mr. Karl Stocker