Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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For Immediate Release: May 19, 1968
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Robert L. Bennett, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, announced today a Washington exhibit of a series of 17 Indian dance paintings by Phyllis H. Kellar of Lead, S.D., and Santa Fe, N.M., together with a display of turn-of the-century photographs, reproduced from original. "negatives" so old they are printed on glass slides.

The showing will be free to the public in the lobby of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Building, 1951 Constitution Avenue, N.W., from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, May 20 through June 7, except for the Memorial Day holiday.

The paintings by Mrs. Kellar include authentic portrayals of dances by the Zuni, Hopi, Sioux, Mohawk, Iroquois and other tribes, and feature the hoop, buffalo, scalp and other traditional dances of the various tribes.

Mrs. Kellar paints many subjects using varied media, but has primarily dedicated herself to the portrayal of Indian culture. Five years ago she began preliminary research and sketches, working closely with the National Museum of History and the Bureau of Ethnology, and drawing from National Geographic and American Heritage research sources.

During the past three winter seasons, at her studio in Santa Fe, she put on canvas the result of her personal observations of the dances, together with the background she had gathered. The work is a continuing one and will include other tribal groups in addition to the Sioux, Five Nations and Southwest Indians included in the present exhibit.

The glass-slide collection which will be shown as a complement to the colorful paintings, was recently discovered among old Department of the Interior files and was turned over to the Smithsonian Institute for identification. Labeled, "Indian Faces; Turn of the Century," the photographs include portraits of Indian chiefs, braves, women and children, as well as graphic portrayals of Indian life.

This will be the first time that either exhibit has been shown to the general public.