

Sacred Encounters Exhibit

Fact Sheet



The 5,000 square foot museum at the visitor center houses the exhibit: *Sacred Encounters: Father DeSmet and the Indians of the Rocky Mountain West*. This exhibit tells the story of the coming together of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and Jesuit Priests (Blackrobes). Over a hundred years before Father DeSmet met the Coeur d'Alene Indian Tribe, their chief, Circling Raven, prophesied of the coming of the Blackrobes and encouraged his people to watch for them. When Father DeSmet encountered the Schitsu'umsh people (today known as the Coeur d'Alene Tribe) they welcomed him.

This exhibit details the lifestyles of the Coeur d'Alene and other Salish speaking people during the 1840s and their introduction to the Catholic World and how the two became blended together. The exhibition had nine different areas with displays, video, and music. Drawings and displays illustrate the lifestyles of the tribes of the Inland Northwest. Text describes Coeur d'Alene and Bitterroot Salish prophecies of fair skinned men with long black shirts that would bring a new religion and change the lives of the people forever. Artifacts represent the tools, clothing and items used during the time period of 1840 to 1877, plus a sampling of vibrant Coeur d'Alene beadwork from the turn of the century are on display. In the final exhibit people express their opinions about the past, their thoughts about the relationship between Christianity and Native spirituality, and about the continuing survival of Indian tradition and identity.