

*The Protocols for Native American
Archival Materials*



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Protocols for Native American Archival Materials



- Group of 19 met in 2006 at Northern Arizona University; coordinated by Karen Underhill (Head, Special Collections and Archives) with funding from numerous groups and foundations
- Goal: Identify best professional practices for culturally responsible care and use of American Indian archival material held by non-tribal organizations
- Final Document completed April 2007
- Published Online: <http://www2.nau.edu/libnap-p/index.html>



Reasons For *Protocols*

- Native American collections held in non-tribal repositories
- Improve existing relationships and build new relationships
- Collaboration
- Advocate for our values and perspectives to provide culturally appropriate context and understanding



Protocols: Major Goals



- ❑ Building relationships, balancing different approaches to knowledge management
- ❑ Mutual respect and reciprocity through shared stewardship and consultations
- ❑ Expand the nature of the information professions to include Native American perspectives and knowledge.
- ❑ Challenges western European norms of study and traditions that often privilege the rights of mainstream culture, values, and practices

Protocols: Main Concepts



- ❑ Native American communities are sovereign governments
- ❑ Each tribe, community, and band is unique
- ❑ Guidelines (non-binding) for both the non-tribal repository and the tribal community
- ❑ Adopt and adapt the culturally responsive recommendations to suit local needs
- ❑ 10 Sections address issues regarding collections, ownership, intellectual and cultural property, preservation, handling, access, and use of American Indian archival resources

Protocols: Ten Sections



- 1. Building Relationships of Mutual Respect**
- 2. Striving for Balance in Content and Perspectives**
- 3. Accessibility and Use**
- 4. Culturally Sensitive Materials**
- 5. Providing Context**
- 6. Native American Intellectual Property Issues**
- 7. Copying and Repatriation of Records to Native American Communities**
- 8. Native American Research Protocols**
- 9. Reciprocal Education and Training**
- 10. Awareness of Native American Communities and Issues**

Protocols: Endorsement



- American Association for State and Local History
- First Archivists Circle
- Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs
- Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Resource Centre
- Cline Library, Northern Arizona University
- National Museum of the American Indian



NATIONAL
MUSEUM
OF THE
AMERICAN
INDIAN



AASLH
American Association
for State and Local History



NORTHERN
ARIZONA
UNIVERSITY

Society of American Archivists: Response



- August 2007: Authors, via Native American Archives Roundtable, ask SAA for an endorsement
- Fall 2007: SAA created a Task Force to spearhead process and gather feedback from membership and other interested parties
- November 2007: Feedback submitted from SAA subunits and general membership
- February 2008: SAA Taskforce Report Submitted: <http://www.archivists.org/governance/taskforces/0208-NativeAmProtocols-IIIA.pdf>

Perceptions Outside Indian Country



Main Concerns:

- Tribal Representatives
- Questionable use
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Varying Native perspectives
- Copyright and Traditional Knowledge
- Balance: Access and Privacy
- Broad Potential Impact

Society of American Archivists Response



- ❑ Result: **Protocols not endorsed**
- ❑ SAA Council created the **Native American Protocols Forum Working Group** to hold three open membership forums at the 2009, 2010, and 2011 annual meetings. Submitted Final Report in 2012.
- ❑ SAA **Cultural Property Working Group** formed in March 2010

Protocols Case Studies

- National Museum of the American Indian
- National Anthropological Archives
- Northern Arizona University
- Washington State University
- American Philosophical Society
- Yale University



Smithsonian



Next Steps: Where Do We Go From Here?



- **Revisions Needed:**
 - Feedback from groups
 - WIPO: Traditional Knowledge
 - United National Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
- **NAAR has taken lead in next steps**
- **More Gatherings**
- **Dissemination**
- **Ultimate Goal? → Dialog, Education, Implementation, and Endorsement**

THANK YOU!



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