



Migrating History:

How Digital Asset Migrations Inspire Change

Presentation by Allyce Farino

Presented July 24, 2024

Collection Overview

- **Please be aware that the collections discussed today contain terminology and phrasing that are offensive, racist, and harmful, as well as representations of cultural appropriation of Indigenous communities**
- The DMNS Archives collects artifacts, documents, audio, and visual materials from across DMNS collections, the museum facilities, and the world
- The Colorado Museum of Natural History (current name: Denver Museum of Nature & Science) was officially incorporated on December 6, 1900
- The Archives was founded in late 1977
- 'NetX' was selected in 2023 for the DMNS collections to replace the former DAMS LUNA, selected in 2007
- Collections featured in this presentation include:
 - The Jesse H. Bratley Collection
 - The Gertrude B. Van Roekel and Henrietta Hospers collections
 - The Charles and Catherine Eberhart Collection



Open the DAMS!



The DAMS project (2023-present) opened an opportunity for DMNS to append and expand on our EMu catalog records as we migrate assets to our new DAMS: NetX



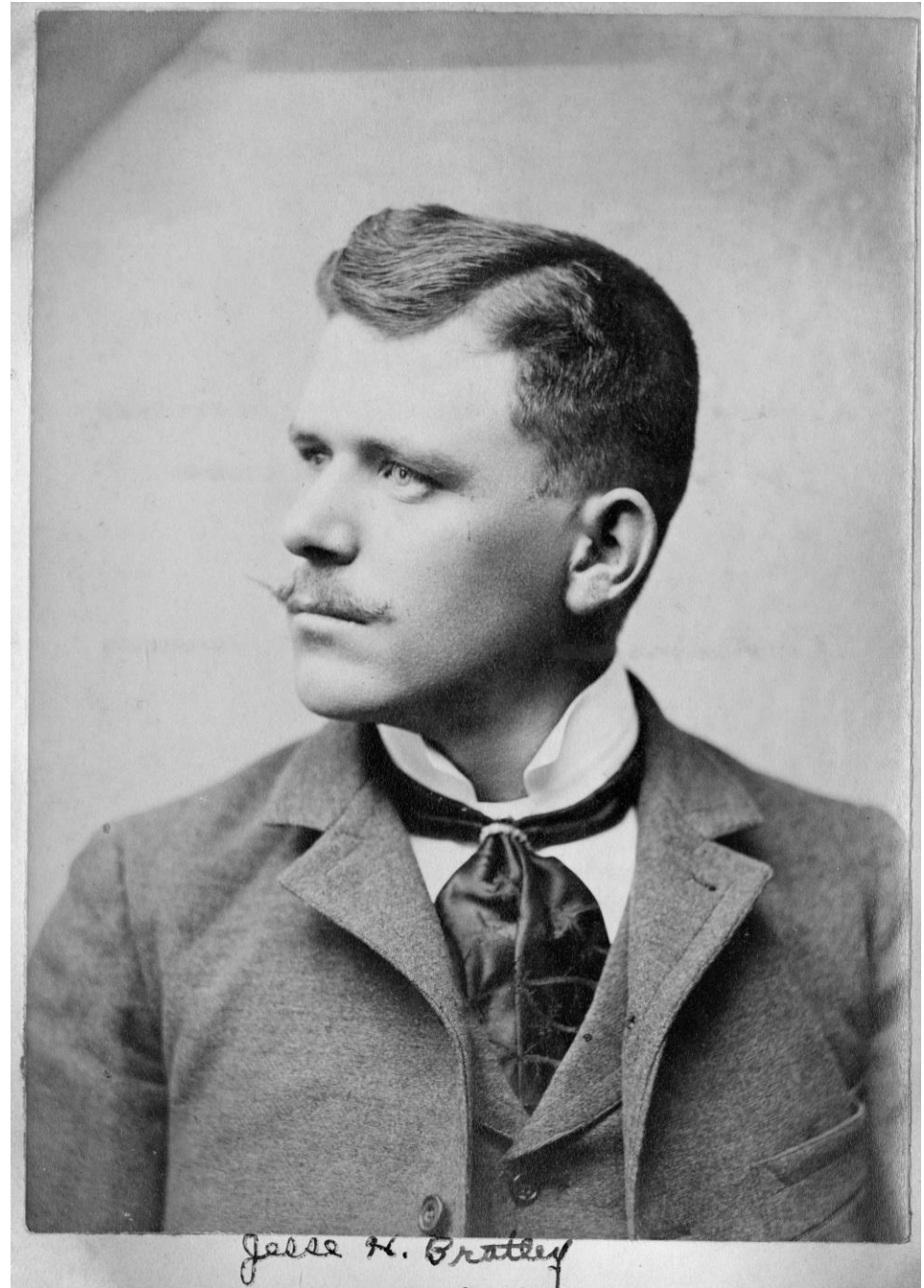
The migration gives the Archives an opportunity to evaluate digital collections, find patterns and inconsistencies with physical collections, and create projects for interns and volunteers



My job is funded by a NEH grant that dedicates me to the DAMS and the migration. My position focuses on asset and metadata clean-up, which can be useful to the DMNS Archives' Minimal DACs project by highlighting the collections that need work

The Jesse H. Bratley Collection

- Between 1893 and 1903, Jesse H. Bratley worked in Native American schools across five reservations in the American West
- DMNS received this collection as a part of a donation from Mary and Francis Crane in 1968
- When analyzing the digital collection for migration into the DAMS, I found the term "Squ___" used to describe Indigenous women photographed by Bratley
- Now that we are aware of the use of the harmful term, we are in the next phase of deciding how to append the descriptions and update our records in EMu, NetX, and beyond



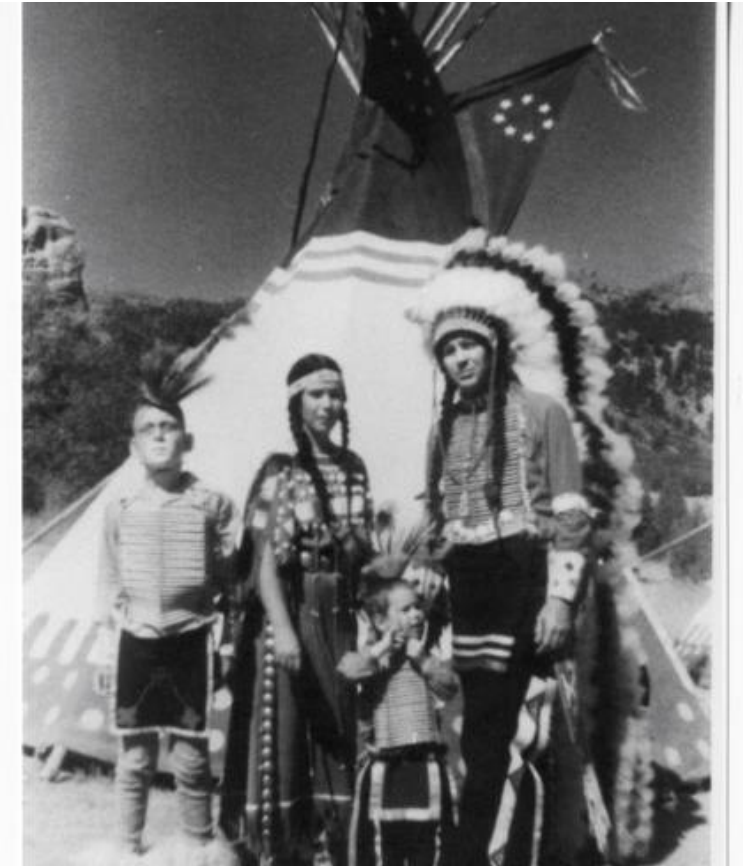
Gertrude B. Van Roekel and Henrietta Hospers Collections

- "The Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) of the U.S. Department of the Interior established the field matron program in 1890. Field matrons were federal employees intended to visit Native American women and encourage and teach them sanitation, nutrition, sewing, laundry, health care, and even religious as well as moral instruction... more like white middle-class women." (Anderson, 2019)
- Van Roekel and Hospers took detailed notes about the names of people they photographed, but this information was not added to some of our records
- We had an intern in the spring of 2024 who was able to research and add more information to NetX
- Now we can say more than "Unknown person" thanks to the notes taken by Van Roekel and Hospers, as well as the work of our intern (thanks Dahlia!)



The Charles and Catherine Eberhart Collection

- This collection contains images of Charles and Catherine Eberhart wearing indigenous clothing that we have now labelled with a cultural appropriation notice
- The term "costume" is used a lot in this collection. We've begun to use other terms and have the Anthropology department to consult with when we're ready to edit
- This collection is also one of the first the new Archives staff has processed in the Minimal DACS description standards project with an up-to-date record in EMu



DMNS next steps



Find and document patterns and inconsistencies



Create finding aids that capture preferred language and descriptions



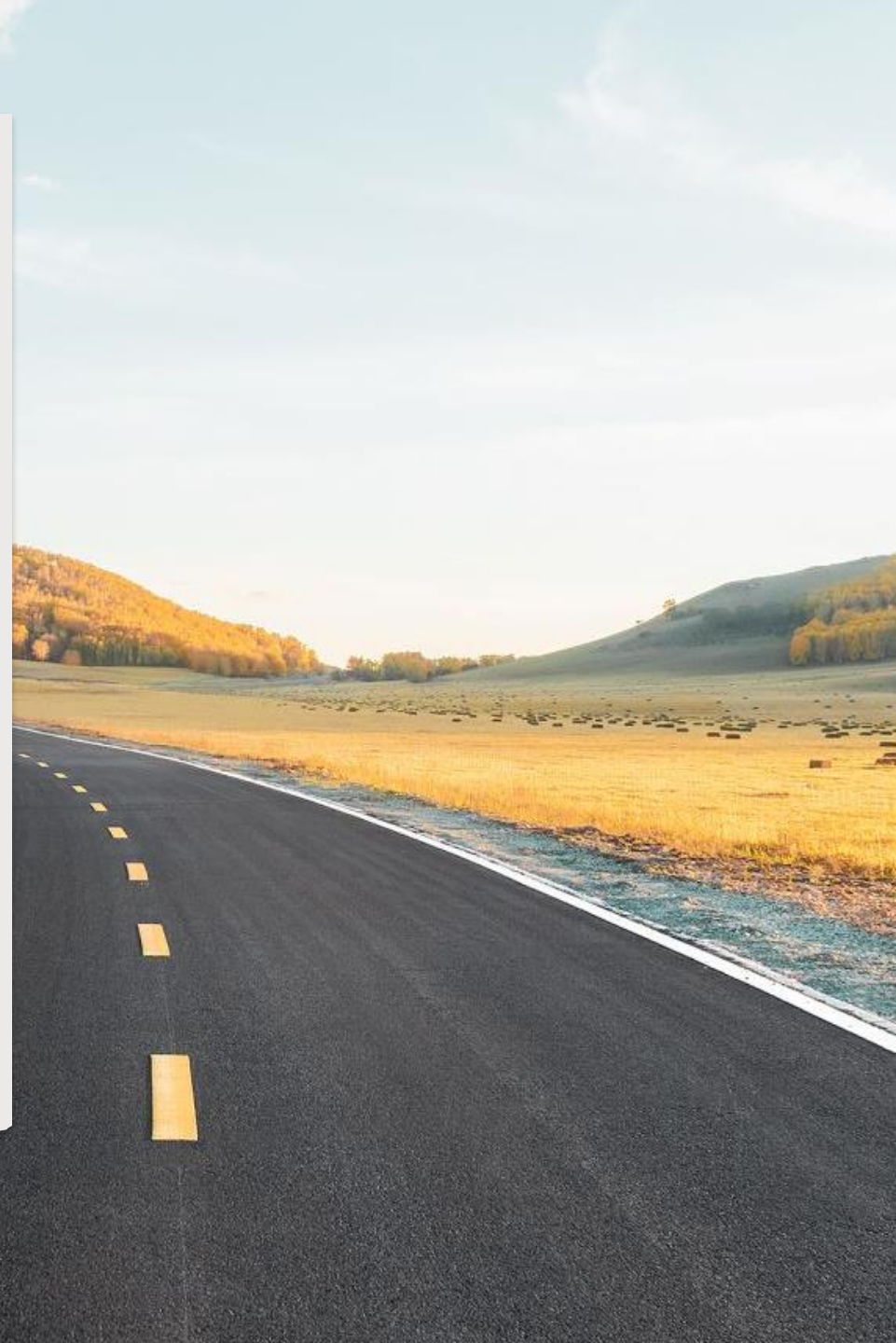
Link outdated EMu records to up-to-date EMu records



Invite tribes and communities to visit or consult with over the materials we have

Long Road Ahead – Advice I've Received

- Determine your guiding principles before starting a reparative description project
- This is a long road, create small projects and tackle at your own pace
- Advocacy from management is helpful to get this type of work added to your everyday
- Don't worry about your archival debt
- When identifying people and adding names, have a takedown statement prepared, saying something like "if you know this person and don't want this photo up, please contact us at..."
- Listen and be present when inviting groups and individuals to view materials – it's okay not to know everything



Thank you!

Contact information:

- Allyce Farino
- Assistant Archivist for Digital Assets
- Denver Museum of Nature & Science Archives
- My email: allyce.farino@dmns.org

Have a research request?

- Submit a request form!
 - <https://www.dmns.org/science/archives-research-request/>
- Or email Archives@dmns.org



Resources

- Yale University Library. *Reparative Archival Description Working Group: Standardized descriptive notes*. <https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=1140330&p=8382205>
- Kempton, A. (2022). A Case Study: Reparative Description in Archival Settings. <https://doi.org/10.17615/5518-7064>
- Wilson Special Collections Library. (2022) "A Guide to Conscious Editing at Wilson Special Collections Library." The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill University Libraries. First Edition. <https://library.unc.edu/reckoning/conscious-editing-initiative/>
- Anderson, Douglas Firth (2019) "'Are You White or Dutch?': Hendrina Hospers and Living among Apaches," *Northwestern Review*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 1 , Article 2. Available at: <https://nwcommons.nwciowa.edu/northwesternreview/vol4/iss1/2>
- MONTGOMERY, L. M., & COLWELL, C. (2019). *Objects of Survivance: A Material History of the American Indian School Experience*. University Press of Colorado. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvs09qsd>
- [National Archives Lifecycle Data Requirements Guide Appendix: Reparative Description Preferred Terms](#)
- Denver Museum of Nature & Science Archives and [Annual Reports](#)