Implementing Reparative Description for Indigenous Collections

Native American Archives Section (NAAS)
Society of American Archivists (SAA)
Identity Series – Session #2

Events that celebrate who you are as a person and archivist

Session #1: “Cross Section Discussion on Intersectionality” (hosted by the Archivists and Archives of Color Section and the Accessibility and Disability Section), May 6

Session #2: “Implementing Reparative Description for Indigenous Collections” (hosted by the Native American Archives Section), May 26

Stay tuned for information about future sessions!
Session Overview

This session will:

● Define reparative description work, decolonization, and Indigenization.
● Discuss the importance of this work as well as its limitations.
● Explore how two specific groups are approaching reparative description.
● Contextualize this work within broader conversations happening inside and outside of the archives field.
● Provide additional resources.

We will also have a Q&A at the end. Please add your questions to the chat or Google doc!
Speakers

- **Rose Buchanan**, NAAS Chair & Archivist (National Archives in Washington, DC); Piscataway & Nacotchtank traditional territory

- **Selena Ortega-Chiolero**, NAAS Steering Committee & Museum Specialist (Chickaloon Village Traditional Council); *Ts'tonhna' nene' ghestnaa eł izdaa* (I live and work on Matanuska River land).

- **Nathan Sowry**, NAAS Steering Committee & Reference Archivist (NMAI); Piscataway & Nacotchtank traditional territory

- **Eric Hung**, Executive Director (Music of Asian America Research Center); Lenapehoking (Unceded Leni Lenape Territory)
Speakers

- **Monique Tyndall**, Tribal Archivist (Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin); *Eneq’s Kew Wēkeyan Omāēqnomēnew-akihih taeh Omāēqnomēnawak netanohkiqtamowēkok* (I live on the land of the Menominee and work for the Menominee People)

- **Rachel Menyuk**, NAAS Steering Committee & Processing Archivist (NMAI); Piscataway & Nacotchtank traditional territory

- **Diana Marsh**, NAAS Vice Chair & Asst. Prof. (iSchool, University of Maryland); Piscataway & Nacotchtank traditional territory
Definition (simple)

remediation of practices or data that exclude, silence, harm, or mischaracterize marginalized people in the data created or used by archivists to identify or characterize archival resources

— SAA’s Dictionary of Archives Terminology
Definition (expanded)

- Alerts
- Overtly Harmful Language
- Inclusivity/Preferred Terms
- Representation/Under-description
- Revising Guidance/Codifying Policy
- Building Relationships/Collaborating with Communities
Decolonization & Indigenization

*Decolonization* is the process of deconstructing colonialism ideologies of the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches.

*Indigenization* is the process of naturalizing Indigenous knowledge systems and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts; Indigenization occurs after decolonization.

- *Pulling Together: A Guide for Indigenization of post-secondary institutions*
Positives

- Opportunity for collaboration, local engagement, or participatory approaches
- Improve descriptive information that reflects current terminology
- Culturally appropriate and accurate language
- Culturally appropriate access and use parameters
- Wholistic curation approach
- Enhance the value of resources for all users
Limitations

- Reparative description is just one step in the creation of equitable archives.
  - It does NOT deal with ethical issues related to the creation of the collection, or change the colonial views embedded in many collections.
  - It is NOT reparation, and does NOT resolve ethical issues about how the archives acquired the collection.
  - It does NOT always address issues of power
  - It does NOT address issues of access and use
- Reparative description doesn’t necessarily benefit Indigenous groups represented in the collection
Example #1: Menominee Tribal Archives
Collaborative Curation & Digital Return

Catalog Data

CREATOR:
Bloomfield, Leonard 1887-1949

CORRESPONDENT
AND AUTHOR:
Voegelin, Charles Frederick

AUTHOR:
Swadesh, Morris

CORRESPONDENT:
Bloch, Bernard

Landeis, Ruth 1908-1991

Satterlee, Joe

Striker, Arco

PHYSICAL
DESCRIPTION:
12 linear feet

CULTURE:
Menominee linguistics
Shawnee linguistics
Delaware (tribe) linguistics
Fox linguistics
Cree linguistics
Algonquian Indians
Chippewa linguistics
Mandan linguistics
Indians of North America Northeast

II. Leonard Bloomfield Menominee Notebooks box 4
(each notebook from this box has its own table of contents. Indexed heading is label of folder that contains notebook)

A. Notebooks – texts and words A (1 of 2)
This is a Chicago notebook (browned) but different from those in box 5. Pages are numbered with letter S first.

It appears he has copied material from Swadesh at the beginning and from A. Striker letters at end etc. text also copied in notebook text folder 01. LB has some of the words defined. Next to each page number of letter. Material in middle seems to be from 1939 (nbook 060/131).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title/Speaker</th>
<th>Location in other NBs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>Elm Bank Cave</td>
<td>Q4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1-2</td>
<td>Bow</td>
<td>Q4*</td>
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<tr>
<td>S2-3</td>
<td>Wind Race</td>
<td>Q5-2*</td>
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<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>Fall Corns</td>
<td>Q5-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3-4</td>
<td>Jeshud Version</td>
<td>Q6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4-5</td>
<td>Deer Stagons</td>
<td>Q7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6</td>
<td>Maple Sugar</td>
<td>Q8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6-2</td>
<td>A Case in Court</td>
<td>Q5-9*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S7-10</td>
<td>An Indian Village</td>
<td>Q6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1-17</td>
<td>Recollections</td>
<td>Q10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S38-39</td>
<td>Aros c.</td>
<td>Q35-50*</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Catalog Search for Menominee Materials
https://collections.si.edu/
Leonard Bloomfield Papers, Full Finding Aid
National Anthropological Archives
Collaborative Curation: TLAM Student Service Project
Training Future Library and Information Science Professionals to Collaborate with and Actively Consult with TALMs

1. Mōs (Moose: Community)
Engage the Tribal Archives to discover their cultural heritage needs.

2. Mahwēw (Wolf: Hunting)
Hunt for materials in external institutions that pertain to cultural heritage needs.

3. Awāēšaeh (Bear: Speakers)
Meet with Tribal Archivist to share findings and learn any cultural protocols that need to be established for next stages of the project.

4. Otsēgīyah (Crane: Construction)
Build a database of Menominee Materials in external institutions to be used for future digital return project planning.

5. Otsēgīyah (Crane: Construction)
Collect resources needed to build digital cultural heritage collections on the Menominee Mukuru site.

6. Mahwēw (Wolf: Gathering)
Gather digital surrogates from Tribal Archives

8. Kenēw (Eagle: Justice)
Ask for access decisions for selected digital heritage items. *This is an act of justice & allyship because external institutions historically have made these decisions without consulting with Menominee Peoples.

10. Mōs (Moose: Community)
Meet with the Tribal Archivist to review metadata.

12. Kenēw (Eagle: Justice)
Advocate for collaborative curation projects with tribes and the digital return of cultural heritage materials held in external repositories.

Menominee Tribal Archives Collaborative Curation Model for Allies

Collaborative Curation: TLAM Student Service Project
Adding Repaired Descriptions to Mukurtu, Learning Outcomes, and Next Steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMUNITY:</th>
<th>Tribal Archives, Awááhsoh (Bear) K</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLECTIONS:</td>
<td>Omááqpenumenwéwaasen (Menominee Language)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ORIGINAL DATE DESCRIPTION:</td>
<td>approximately 1939</td>
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<tr>
<td>CREATOR:</td>
<td>Satterlee, John V., and Satterlee, Joseph</td>
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<td>CONTRIBUTOR:</td>
<td>Bloomfield, Leonard</td>
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<td>Omááqpenumenwéwaasen (Menominee Language)</td>
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<td>RIGHTS:</td>
<td>Omááqpenumenwéwaasen</td>
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<tr>
<td>TK A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TK OD</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TK CV</td>
<td></td>
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<td>TK NV</td>
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<td>EXTERNAL LINKS:</td>
<td>National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>TYPE:</td>
<td>Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORMAT:</td>
<td>Notebook</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Menominee Mukurtu Practice Site
https://menomineeumuseumandarchives.libraries.wsu.edu/

Satterlee, John V., Satterlee, Joseph, and Satterlee, Frank [photograph]. Martha Elizabeth Curtis Family Donation, Menominee Tribal Archives.
Example #2: National Museum of the American Indian Culture Thesaurus

“The NMAI and its policies—including this Collections Management Policy—address responsible and ethical stewardship of Native collections in collaboration and partnership with Native and Indigenous peoples while also considering the Smithsonian’s mandate for the diffusion of knowledge, widely accepted standards of museum practice, and the professional ethics of staff members who carry out NMAI’s mission. Overall, NMAI works in concert with all interested parties to arrive at stewardship solutions that privilege Native values and perspectives.”
Background and Development

Developed in EMu (NMAI’s Collection Management System) starting in 2006

Culture terms in EMu are used for:
- Culture of Manufacture
- Culture of Use
- Culture of Subject (for photos)
- Party (person) records

Terms identical to the legal names of tribes—such as “Choctaw Nation Of Oklahoma”—are used to identify artists and individuals where the tribal nation has stipulated that only enrolled tribal members are entitled to be identified by that tribal name.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1 (continent)</th>
<th>Level 2 (culture area)</th>
<th>Level 3 (sub-culture area)</th>
<th>Level 4 (culture)</th>
<th>Level 5 (sub-culture)</th>
<th>Level 6 (community)</th>
<th>Invalid synonyms (general and specific to NMAI legacy data)</th>
<th>Language info</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>Northwest Coast</td>
<td>Southern Northwest Coast</td>
<td>Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka)</td>
<td>Tla-o-qui-aht (Clayquot)</td>
<td>Tla-o-qui-aht (Clayquot) [Ahousaht]</td>
<td>Maaktusiis Ahousat</td>
<td>Wakashan, Southern</td>
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<td>South America</td>
<td>East Brazil</td>
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<td>Mebêngôkre (Kayapó/Cayapo)</td>
<td>Mebêngôkre (Kayapó/Cayapo)</td>
<td>Xikrin do Cateté Put Karot</td>
<td>Macro-Ge/Ge-Kaingang/Ge/Northwest/Kayapo</td>
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<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>Plateau (no sub-culture area)</td>
<td>Kootenai (Kutenai)</td>
<td>Miccosukee Seminole Seminole (Mikasuki)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Language Isolate</td>
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<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Seminole</td>
<td>Seminole</td>
<td>Seminole [Cow Creek]</td>
<td></td>
<td>Muskogean/Eastern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Seminole - subculture</td>
<td>Seminole</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Muskogean/Eastern</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From EMu to ArchivesSpace

2010: NMAI Archives staff begin using Archivist Toolkit

2014: NMAI Culture Terms are added as “local” Subject::Culture terms in AT, to be used instead of LOC subject terms.

2017: Smithsonian archival units migrate over to ArchivesSpace

2020 (May): Applied for an LOC Subject Source code: NMAICT

https://www.loc.gov/standards/sourcelist/subject.html

2020 (August): Full ingest of the NMAI CT into ArchivesSpace, for use by all Smithsonian Archival Units
NMAI CT is now available to all Smithsonian Units who use ASpace
N12656: Group at Nanticoke Festival

Date(s): 1919-1925

Physical: 1 Negatives (photographic)

Description:

Scope and Contents: Group portrait of Nanticoke and Rappahannock attendees at the Nanticoke annual festival in Milford, Delaware. From left: Howard Johnson, Eliza Anne Johnson, unidentified Rappahannock (possible) man, Leon Johnson (seated), Rappahannock Chief George L. Nelson, wearing NMAI catalog number 265403.000, Rappahannock Councilor Robert W. Ollverte, and unidentified boy.

Culture: Rappahannock, Nanticoke
National Anthropological Archives Merge Project

The NMAI and NAA Merge Project sought to identify outdated terms and merge them with the NMAICT’s preferred terminology.

This project not only improved the searchability of our collections, but also ensured that indigenous autonyms were respected whenever possible.
Project Results

November 2020 – January 2021

Over 7 workdays, we made 7569 updates to resources, archival objects or accessions.

We averaged 529 updated finding aids per workday. There were, total, 3704 new finding aids produced over the 7 workdays.

In the end, counting the total distinct records, we have 2486 updated finding aids (3704 updates, 2486 distinct updates).

In total, 1620 headings merged into 465 preferred terms.
Next Steps

In response to updated information, requests from tribal communities, changes in the legal names of tribes, or refinement of archaeological interpretations, NMAI continues to update and refine its cultural thesaurus.

- Finding an online home for the NMAI CT.
- Reaching out to other Smithsonian Units for similar merge projects.
- Sharing the NMAI CT more broadly.
Broader Issues

● Global repatriation movements and policies, e.g.:
  
  Protocols for Native American Archival Materials
  NAGPRA
  UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
  Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples
  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services

● Indigenous Sovereignty
● Black Lives Matter
● Language revitalization
● Community archives
● Participatory archives
Additional Resources (General)

- Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia - Anti-Racist Description Resources
- Guidelines for Inclusive and Conscientious Description – Harvard
- Blackivists Five Tips for Donating Your Materials
- Dismantling White Supremacy in Archives
- Moving Toward a Reparative Archive: A Roadmap for a Holistic Approach.. - Yale
- The Power of Words: Cultural Humility as a Framework for Anti-Oppressive Archival Description
- Viewing Subject(s) as Creator(s): The Need to Reexamine and Redescribe Civil Rights Collections for Pluralist Provenance
Additional Resources (Indigenous Collections)

- Canadian Federation of Library Associations’ Truth and Reconciliation report
- GVPL (Greater Victoria Public Library) Local Indigenous Headings
- The Xwi7xwa or Brian Deer Classification System
- Xwi7xwa names for BC First Nations (updated Sept 2019)
- Indigenous Librarianship @ UBC resources
- Local Context TK Labels
- MAIN (Manitoba Archival Information Network) LCSH Subject Heading Mappings
- NIKLA (National Indigenous Knowledge Management Alliance) Ontology
- Native American Journalists Association’s Reporting Guides
Additional Resources ("Decolonizing” practice)

Genovese, Taylor 2016. *Decolonizing Archival Methodology: Combating hegemony and moving towards a collaborative archival environment*


O’Neal, Jennifer 2015 "The Right to Know’: Decolonizing Native American Archives


Fraser, Crystal, and Zoe Todd. "Decolonial Sensibilities: Indigenous Research and Engaging with Archives in Contemporary Colonial Canada."

Ghaddar, J. J., and Michelle Caswell. "‘To Go Beyond’: Towards a Decolonial Archival Praxis."

Questions?

Please add them to the chat or the Google doc!
Contact Information

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