

# Implementing Reparative Description for Indigenous Collections

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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 et 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

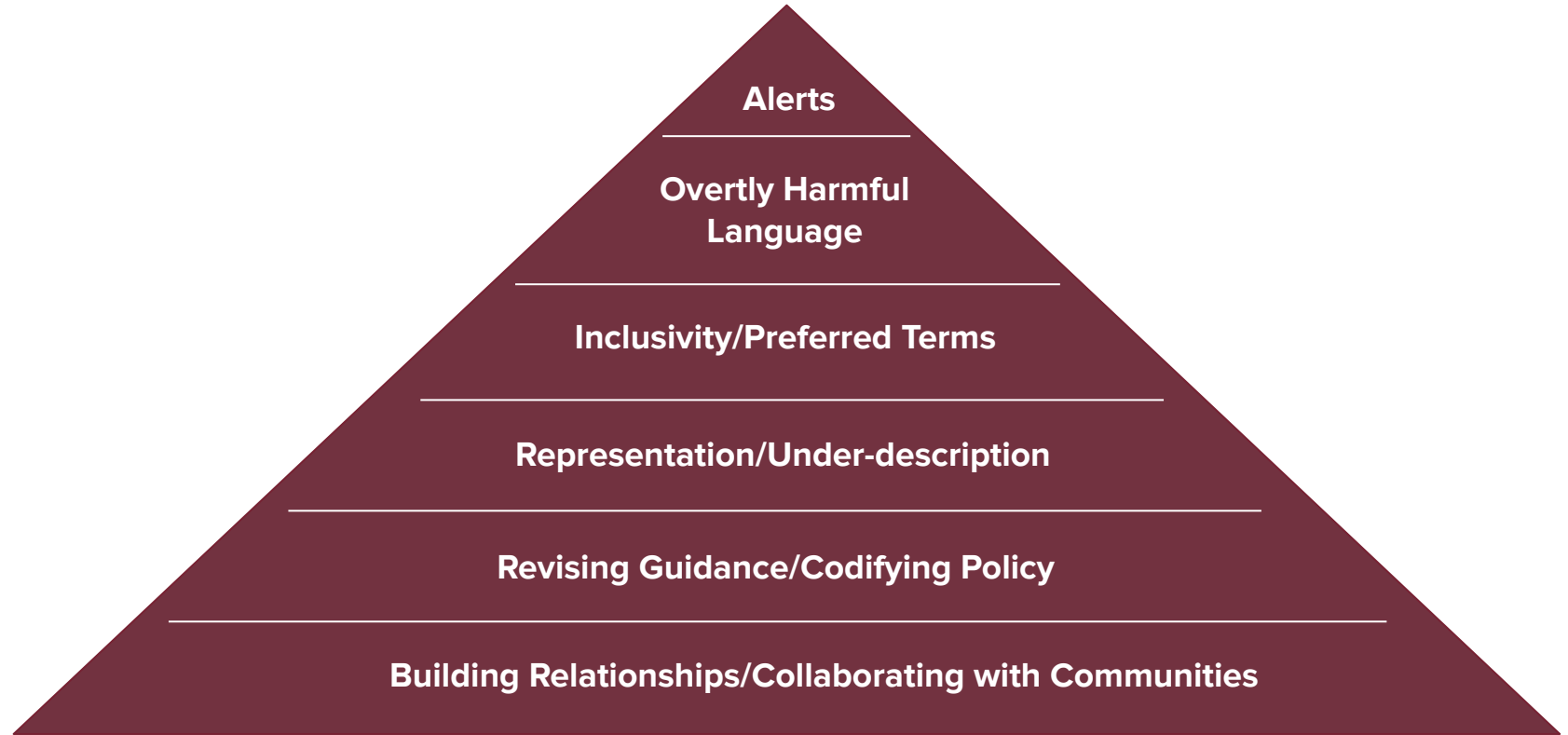
- **Monique Tyndall**, Tribal Archivist (Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin); *Eneq's Kew Wēkeyan Omāēqnomēnew-akihih taeh Omāēqnomēnawak netanohkiqtamowēkok* (I live on the land of the Menominee and work for the Menominee People)
- **Rachel Menyuk**, NAAS Steering Committee & Processing Archivist (NMAI); 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)



# Decolonization & Indigenization

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

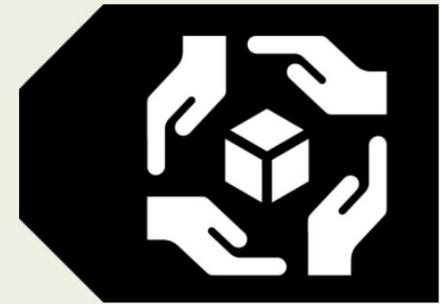
*Indigenization* is the process of naturalizing Indigenous knowledge systems and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts; Indigenization occurs after decolonization.

- *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



TK Culturally Sensitive (TK CS)

## 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 <a href="#">Q</a>
CORRESPONDENT AND AUTHOR:	Voegelin, Charles Frederick <a href="#">Q</a>
AUTHOR:	Swadesh, Morris <a href="#">Q</a>
CORRESPONDENT:	Bloch, Bernard <a href="#">Q</a>
	Landes, Ruth 1908-1991 <a href="#">Q</a>
	Satterlee, Joe <a href="#">Q</a>
	Striker, Amos <a href="#">Q</a>
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:	12 linear feet
CULTURE:	Menominee linguistics <a href="#">Q</a>
	Shawnee linguistics <a href="#">Q</a>
	Delaware (tribe) linguistics <a href="#">Q</a>
	Fox linguistics <a href="#">Q</a>
	Cree linguistics <a href="#">Q</a>
	Algonquian Indians <a href="#">Q</a>
	Chippewa linguistics <a href="#">Q</a>
	Mahican linguistics <a href="#">Q</a>
	Indians of North America Northeast <a href="#">Q</a>

### II. Leonard Bloomfield Menominee Notebooks box 4

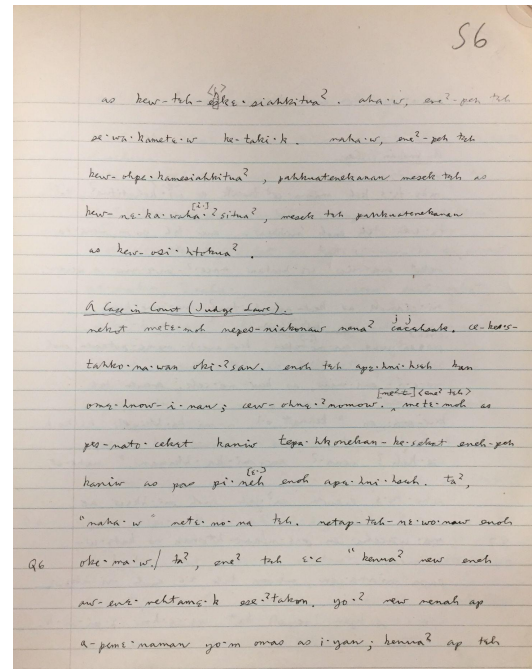
(each notebook from this box has its own table of contents. Indented heading is label of folder that contains notebook)

#### A. [Notebook - texts and words] A (1 of 2)

This is a Chicago notebook (brown) but different from those in box 5. Pages are numbered with letter S first.

B appears to have copied material from Swadesh at the beginning and from A. Striker letters at end (these texts also copied in notebook- texts folder B). LB has some of the words defined. Next to each is page number of letter. Material in middle seems to be from B's 1939 fieldwork (S60-143).

Page Notebook	Title/Speaker	Location in other NBs
S1	Elm Bark Canoe Dictated by Jerome Lawe to M. Swadesh (respelled by LB)	Q1* G94
S1-2	Bow Dictated by Jerome Lawe to M. Swadesh (respelled by LB)	Q1* G94
S2-3	Wild Rice Dictated by Jerome Lawe to M. Swadesh (respelled by LB)	Q1-2* G95-96
S3	Hull Corn Dictated by Jerome Lawe to M. Swadesh (respelled by LB) (Typed in MS notebook)	Q2-3* G96 APS
S3-4	Jerked Venison Dictated by Jerome Lawe to M. Swadesh (respelled by LB)	Q3* G97
S4-5	Dried Sturgeon Dictated by Jerome Lawe to M. Swadesh (respelled by LB)	Q4* G97-98
S5-6	Maple Sugar Dictated by Jerome Lawe to M. Swadesh (respelled by LB)	Q45* G98-99
S6-7	A Case in Court (Judge Lawe) Dictated by Jerome Lawe to M. Swadesh (respelled by LB)	Q5-6* G99-100
S7-10	An Indian Village Dictated by Jerome Lawe to M. Swadesh (respelled by LB)	Q6-9* G100-104
S11-37	Recollections Dictated by S. Gauthier to M. Swadesh respelled by LB	Q10-34* G104-131
S38-39	Ayam omAqnomenew Asekapowet yohpesh sanakat (The Menominee Situation) Written by Amos Striker, corrected by M. Swadesh from dictation	Q35-36* G131-133



# Collaborative Curation: TLAM Student Service Project

Training Future Library and Information Science Professionals to Collaborate with and Actively Consult with TALMs

## 11. Awāēhsaeh (Bear: Speakers)

Share & Engage by uploading content to Mukurtu. Review after upload for any changes.

## 9. Mahwāēw (Wolf: Gathering)

Gather metadata for digital heritage. \*Reach out to the Tribal Archivist if there are any questions/concerns.

## 7. Awāēhsaeh (Bear: Law)

### Mōs (Moose: Security)

Review content of selected digital heritage items.

## 5. Otāēqciāh (Crane: Construction)

Collect resources needed to build digital cultural heritage collections on the Menominee Mukurtu site.

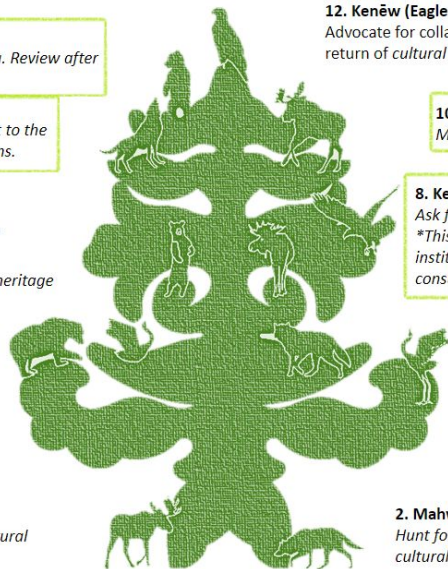
## 3. Awāēhsaeh

### (Bear: Speakers & Law)

Meet with Tribal Archivist to share findings and learn any cultural protocols that need to be established for next stages of the project.

## 1. Mōs (Moose: Community)

Engage the Tribal Archives to discover their cultural heritage needs.



## 12. Kenēw (Eagle: Justice)

Advocate for collaborative curation projects with tribes and the digital return of cultural heritage materials held in external repositories.

## 10. Mōs (Moose: Community)

Meet with the Tribal Archivist to review metadata.

## 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.

## 6. Mahwāēw (Wolf: Gathering)

Gather digital surrogates from Tribal Archives

## 4. Otāēqciāh

### (Crane: Construction)

Build a database of Menominee Materials in external institutions to be used for future digital return project planning.

## 2. Mahwāēw (Wolf: Hunting)

Hunt for materials in external institutions that pertains to cultural heritage needs.

## Menominee Tribal Archives Collaborative Curation Model for Allies

Tyndall, Monique. "Menominee Collaborative Curation Model for Allies." Menominee Tribal Archives, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin. 2021

### Menominee Tribal Archives' Process for Reporative Description

These processes are internal to the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin

#### Attribution

Is there a need to correct historical mistakes or exclusions?

#### Reparative Description

Apply the correct attribution. Community protocols and ongoing cultural relationships.

#### Not Verified

Does the material look like it has not been verified by the community? Reasons for this could include, there are mistakes, omissions, derogatory language, lack of informed consent, or its process of creation was through dishonest research which did not follow proper community protocols.

#### Reparative Description

Add notation about its inaccuracy and who/how it fails to represent this community. Contact tribal cultural heritage worker for assistance.

#### Verified

You can affirm that the representation and presentation of this material is in keeping with community expectations and cultural protocols. There is documentation of this in the archival description that lets you know that for the individual, family or community represented in this material, use is considered fair, reasonable and respectful.

#### Reparative Description

Tribal cultural heritage worker MUST be contacted and supplied materials in order to ensure that verification can be provided. Remain open to further advice from the community's cultural heritage worker to improve or enrich the description of the material

#### Culturally Sensitive

Does the material have special sensitivities around it and should be treated with great care. These sensitivities could include: that it has only recently been reconnected with the community from which it originates, that the community is currently vetting and spending time with the material, and/or that the material is culturally valued and needs to be kept safe. Are there are cultural sensitivities around this material arising from legacies of colonialism, for instance, the use of derogatory language or descriptive errors within the content and/or content descriptions?

#### Reparative Description

Correct any derogatory language or errors that are in the description. Contact tribal cultural heritage worker to determine any recommendations for description, access, use, or other areas that need attending to.

#### Secret/Secret

Does the material contains secret/sacred information and that it has specific conditions of access and use. These conditions potentially include restrictions upon access. Material is traditionally and usually not publicly available because it contains important secret or sacred components. It is important to correct any misunderstanding about the significance of this material and therefore its description, access, and use conditions. It is important to understand that because of its secret/sacred status it is not, and was never free, public and available for everyone at anytime. It is important to respect different cultural values and expectations about description, access, and use.

#### Description

Contact tribal cultural heritage worker for assistance. Ask if there are cultural values and expectations about description, access, and use that the community/non-community members/institution need to respect.



# Collaborative Curation: TLAM Student Service Project

## Adding Repaired Descriptions to Mukurtu, Learning Outcomes, and Next Steps

**COMMUNITY:**  
Tribal Archives, Awāēhsaeh (Bear) IK

**PROTOCOL:**  
Menominee Tribal Archives Community Only, Awāēhsaeh (Bear) IK Community Only

**CATEGORY:**  
Language

**COLLECTIONS:**  
Omāēqnomenēweqnaesen (Menominee Language)

**ORIGINAL DATE DESCRIPTION:**  
approximately 1939

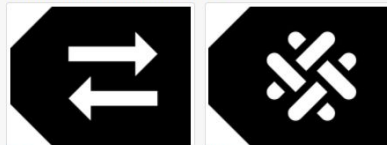
**CREATOR:**  
Satterlee, John V., Satterlee, Joseph

**CONTRIBUTOR:**  
Bloomfield, Leonard

**LANGUAGE:**  
Omāēqnomenēweqnaesen (Menominee Language)

**RIGHTS:**  
Omāēqnomenēwak

### TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE LABELS:



TK A

TK CO



TK GV

TK NV

### SOURCE:

Notebook 1, Folder A, Box 4, Leonard Bloomfield Menominee Papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

### EXTERNAL LINKS:

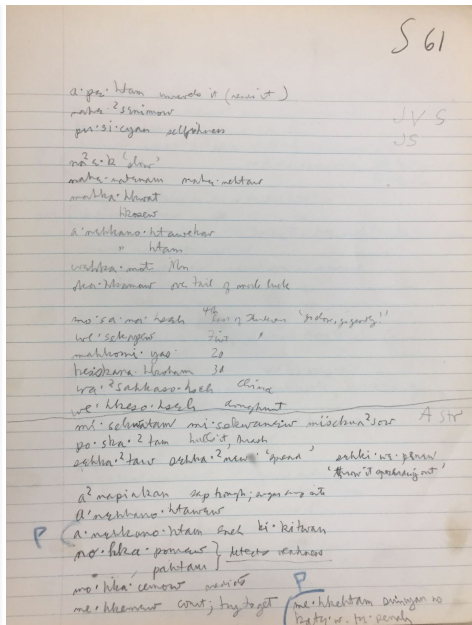
- National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

### TYPE:

Text

### FORMAT:

Notebook



Satterlee, John V. and Satterlee, Joseph (1939). Words [text]. Leonard Bloomfield Papers, National Anthropological Archives



Satterlee, John V., Satterlee, Joseph, and Satterlee, Frank [photograph]. Martha Elizabeth Curtis Family Donation, Menominee Tribal Archives.

Menominee Mukurtu Practice Site

<https://menomineemuseumandarchives.libraries.wsu.edu/>

## 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.

NMAI Legacy Data: Hierarchical Classification and Synonymy							
Level 1 (continent)	Level 2 (culture area)	Level 3 (sub-culture area)	Level 4 (culture)	Level 5 (sub-culture)	Level 6 (community)	Invalid synonyms (general and specific to NMAI legacy data)	Language info
North America	Plains	Central Plains	Lakota (Teton/Western Sioux)	Hunkpapa Lakota (Hunkpapa Sioux)	Hunkpapa Lakota [Standing Rock]	Standing River Sioux Stand Rock Sioux	Siouan/Siouan Proper/Central/Mississippi Valley/Dakota
North America	Northwest Coast	Southern Northwest Coast	Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka)	Tla-o-qui-aht (Clayquot)	Tla-o-qui-aht (Clayquot) [Ahousesat]	Maaktusiis Ahousesat	Wakashan, Southern
South America	East Brazil		Mebêngôkre (Kayapó/Cayapo)		Mebêngôkre (Kayapó/Cayapo) [Xikrin]	Xikrin do Cateté Put Karot	Macro-Ge/Ge-Kaingang/Ge/Northwest/ Kayapo
North America	Plateau	Plateau (no sub-culture area)	Kootenai (Kutenai)				Language Isolate
North America	Southeast	Florida	Seminole	Miccosukee Seminole (Mikasuki)			Muskogean/Eastern
North America	Southeast	Florida	Seminole	Seminole - subculture	Seminole [Cow Creek]		Muskogean/Eastern



# 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

Edit Merge ▾ Delete

## A'aninin (Gros Ventre) Subject

### Basic Information

Source National Museum of the American Indian Culture Thesaurus

Scope Note North America - Plains - Northern Plains - A'aninin (Gros Ventre)

Created by admin 2017-11-17 17:05:01 -0500 | Last Modified by admin 2020-11-23 12:53:40 -0500 | URI: /subjects/38955

### Terms and Subdivisions

Term	Type
A'aninin (Gros Ventre)	Culture

NMAI CT is now available to all Smithsonian Units who use ASpace



## Frank Gouldsmith Speck photograph collection

- CREATOR:** [Speck, Frank G. \(Frank Gouldsmith\), 1881-1950](#) [Q](#)
- SOURCE:** [Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation](#) [Q](#)
- FORMER OWNER:** [Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation](#) [Q](#)
- EXTENT:** 1428 Negatives (photographic)  
40 Photographic prints (black & white)
- CULTURE:** [Mushuaunnuat \(Barren Ground Naskapi\)](#) [Q](#)  
[Mistassini Cree](#) [Q](#)  
[Lorette Huron](#) [Q](#)  
[Mohawk](#) [Q](#)  
[Montagnais Innu](#) [Q](#)  
[Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg \(Maniwaki Algonquin\) \[River Desert\]](#) [Q](#)  
[Maliseet \(Malecite\)](#) [Q](#)  
[Mi'kmaq \(Micmac\)](#) [Q](#)  
[Iroquois \[Six Nations/Grand River \(Brantford, Ontario\)\]](#) [Q](#)  
[Penobscot](#) [Q](#)  
[Passamaquoddy](#) [Q](#)  
[Abenaki \(Abnaki\)](#) [Q](#)  
[Wampanoag](#) [Q](#)  
[Nauset](#) [Q](#)  
[Mohegan](#) [Q](#)  
[Niantic](#) [Q](#)  
[Pequot](#) [Q](#)  
[Nanticoke](#) [Q](#)  
[Rappahannock](#) [Q](#)  
[Chickahominy](#) [Q](#)  
[Pamunkey](#) [Q](#)  
[Mattaponi](#) [Q](#)  
[Nansemond](#) [Q](#)  
[Catawba](#) [Q](#)  
[Eastern Band of Cherokee](#) [Q](#)

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[Resource Link](#)

Series 8: Delaware: Nanticoke and Rappahannock

### N12656: Group at Nanticoke Festival



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 Millsboro, 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. Clarke, and unidentified boy.

**Culture:** [Rappahannock](#)  
[Nanticoke](#)

Collection Level Tagging  
<https://collections.si.edu/>

Item Level Tagging  
<https://sova.si.edu/>

# 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](#)

[Luke & Slover, Reparative and Inclusive Metadata: UTA Libraries Reevaluate Its Practices](#)

[Schweitzer, I., & Henry, G. D. \(Eds.\). \(2019\). Afterlives of Indigenous archives: Essays in honor of The Occom Circle. Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press.](#)

# Additional Resources (“Decolonizing” practice)

Genovese, Taylor 2016. [Decolonizing Archival Methodology: Combating hegemony and moving towards a collaborative archival environment](#)

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies*. Zed Books, 2012.

Lowry, James. *Displaced Archives*. Routledge, 2017.

Tuck, Eve & K. Wayne Yang. "R-Words: Refusing Research." In *Humanizing Research: Decolonizing Qualitative Inquiry with Youth and Communities*, Sage, 2014.

Younging, Gregory [Elements of Indigenous Style A Guide for Writing By and About Indigenous Peoples \(2018\)](#)

O’Neal, Jennifer 2015 ["The Right to Know": Decolonizing Native American Archives](#)

Hill Sr, Richard W, and Daniel Coleman. "[The Two Row Wampum-Covenant Chain Tradition as a Guide for Indigenous-University Research Partnerships.](#)"

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.](#)"

Buchanan, R., George, K., Gibson, T., Hung,E., Labinsky, D ., Marsh, D., Menyuk,R., Norton-Wisla, L., Ortego-Chiolero, S., Sowry, N., Tyndall, M. "[Toward Inclusive Reading Rooms: Recommendations for Decolonizing Practices and Welcoming Indigenous Researchers.](#)"

# Questions?

Please add them to the chat or the Google doc!

# Contact Information

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