



PNAAM DRAFTERS, 2006

Reproduced at the National Archives & Seattle

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE

Fort Hall, Idaho.

April 3, 1916.



Dear Mr. Wilson:

We are sending you a number of copies of the 1914 annual report of Secretary Lane. The first ten pages refer to the Indian problem, and indicate his ideas leading up to the competency commission work, in which we are now engaged. This report is well worth very careful study. It is suggested that these extra copies be distributed amongst your most competent allottees, to the end that they may be advised in advance of our mission.

FROM MEMORY TO MANDATE

Indigenous Archival
Sovereignty in a
Global Context

MOMENTUM & MANDATES

This zine supports the session "Indigenous Archival Sovereignty: The Protocols at 20 and Global Perspectives." We are witnessing a turning point in the archival field: one where Indigenous nations, communities, and knowledge keepers are reclaiming space, voice, and power over their materials and intellectual property. From local Tribal repositories to global archives, calls for accountability are growing stronger. The Protocols for Native American Archival Materials (2006) were a starting point —not an endpoint.



Whose Native land are you on?

<https://native-land.ca>



“Archives are not neutral. They are shaped by
power, and they can restore power.”
— From the Protocols

PROTOCOLS AT 20: A BRIEF TIMELINE

1995: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services (Updated in 2005 and 2010)

1998: OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) Principles developed by First Nations Information Governance Centre

2006: Protocols for Native American Archival Materials drafted at Northern Arizona University

2007: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) adopted; Protocols proposed for endorsement by SAA and Council creates Taskforce for review

2017: Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration from the International Council on Archives

2008: SAA Taskforce submits report – Protocols are not endorsed. SAA Council instead creates the Native American Protocols Forum Working Group

2008-2011: SAA Native American Protocols Working Group holds yearly forum listening sessions and submits report in 2012

2015: Protocols International Summit with US and Canadian Archivists and Librarians at ATALM conference in Washington, DC

2018: SAA issues an apology and endorses the Protocols as an External Standard

2019: Tandanya-Adelaid Declaration from the International Council on Archives – Expert Group on Indigenous Matters (EGIM); CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance developed by the International Indigenous Data Sovereignty Interest Group

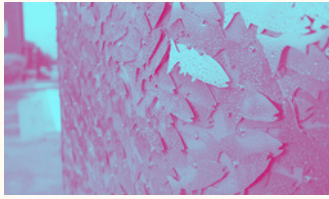
2020: Canada's Reconciliation Framework: Archives and Indigenous communities

2021: National Library of Australia updates ICIP protocols

2024: SAA Repatriation Committee drafted Principles for Native and Indigenous Archival Repatriation circulated for feedback

Each of these milestones reflects growing international recognition of Indigenous Peoples' right to determine how their knowledge, history, and materials are kept, shared, and returned.

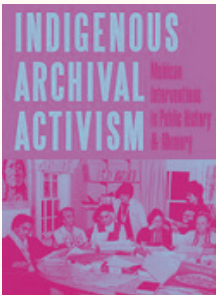
KEY TERMS



Indigenous Archival Sovereignty:

The right of Indigenous Peoples to control the creation, curation, use, and return of their own archival materials.

Repatriation: The physical return of cultural heritage and archival materials to Indigenous communities of origin.



ICIP: Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.

CARE Principles: Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, Ethics—developed to complement FAIR data principles.





VOICES & VISIONS:

Case Studies

1. **Turtle Island (U.S.):** The Protocols have helped guide community archives, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, and mainstream institutions toward more ethical practices. Key challenges remain: funding, trust-building, and ongoing settler archival structures.
2. **Canada:** The Reconciliation Framework emphasizes relationship-building, co-governance models, and shared stewardship. Some national archives have piloted repatriation and community-led cataloging.
3. **Australia:** The Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration and the National Library's ICIP Protocols stress Indigenous authority over both traditional and digital materials, while the Indigenous Archives Collective advocates for a "Right of Reply."

INDIGENOUS ARCHIVAL SOVEREIGNTY IS...

- Reclaiming narrative control
- Protecting ceremonial and sensitive knowledge
- Ensuring respectful description and access
- Returning archives to community stewardship
- Honoring cultural protocols in both analog and digital spaces



“Sovereignty doesn’t stop at borders. Neither should
our commitments.”

— A paraphrasing of principles found in the Protocols for Native American Archival Materials, which challenge institutions to uphold Indigenous rights regardless of legal or geographic limits.

WHY THESE PROTOCOLS Matter

Decolonizing the Archives

- The protocols address the need for respect, responsibility, and reciprocity in managing Indigenous materials.
- Advocates for ethical practices that center Indigenous sovereignty, intellectual property, and cultural values.
- Disrupts hierarchical power structures that have impeded the transmission of Indigenous cultural knowledge and self-determination

TAKE ACTION:

Archivists

Take These Steps:

1. Read and adopt the Protocols into your repositories and institutions.
2. Build long-term relationships with Indigenous communities.
3. Evaluate your collections for materials that need review or repatriation.
4. Advocate for ethical description and access practices.

Checklist:

- Review your current access policies with your team and make necessary changes to reflect the Protocols.
- Learn about local Indigenous nations, reaching out to local Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs) or Cultural Resource offices to initiate relationships.
- Create a spreadsheet or database of potentially sensitive or ceremonial items for review.
- Partner with Indigenous communities to update catalog records with accurate, community-informed descriptions.



TAKE ACTION:

Institutions

Commit to Change:

1. Formally adopt and integrate the Protocols into policy
2. Allocate funding for Indigenous collaboration and compensation
3. Establish inclusive governance structures
4. Support Indigenous staff and leadership development

Checklist:

- Pass a formal resolution or board vote to adopt the Protocols
- Set aside annual budget for community consultation, travel, and honoraria
- Establish an Indigenous Advisory Council with voting power on major initiatives
- Hire Indigenous professionals or interns to create opportunities for empowerment within your organization.



TAKE ACTION:

All Participants

Engage in Meaningful Solidarity:

1. Educate yourself on Indigenous sovereignty and history.
2. Use your influence to amplify Indigenous voices.
3. Push for change in your networks and organizations.
4. Support Indigenous-led education and archival projects.

Checklist:

- Use tools like Native Land Digital to identify Indigenous territories and share land acknowledgments meaningfully.
- Cite Indigenous authors, archivists, and thinkers in publications, presentations, or syllabi.
- Speak up at conferences, committee meetings, or classrooms about protocol adoption and repatriation commitments.
- Donate to community-based archives, language programs, or educational funds.



Our Culture Isn't a Checkbox: FAQs Native Communities Never Asked For

1. "Why can't we just make everything open access?"

Why it's problematic: Assumes Western ideas of information freedom are universal. Ignores protocols around sacred, sensitive, or community-specific knowledge.

2. "Do you have any real archives, or just oral histories?"

Why it's problematic: Devalues oral tradition as a legitimate form of recordkeeping and memory work. Assumes value only in written, Western-defined records.

3. "Why does your community want to keep this restricted? We paid for the digitization."

Why it's problematic: Treats archives like property instead of responsibility. It disrespects Indigenous sovereignty and consent-based access.

4. "Can you help us translate this so we can make it accessible to more people?"

Why it's problematic: Assumes translation is neutral and desirable. Ignores the politics of language loss and the sacred nature of certain terms or stories.

5. "Can we borrow your regalia or photos for our exhibit?"

Why it's problematic: Reduces cultural items to display objects. Often requested without proper protocol, ceremony, or understanding of the item's significance.

6. "Can you tell me exactly what's sacred so I can label it?"

Why it's problematic: Puts the burden of explanation on Native people. Assumes there's a universal checklist for sacredness, rather than complex relational knowledge systems.

That's the Native way of teaching...we have this traditional pedagogy of, "just get out there and learn, f&\$@#!"





FURTHER READING & Resources

- [Protocols for Native American Archival Materials](#)
- [CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance](#)
- [ICA Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration](#)
- [UNDRIP](#)
- [Reconciliation Framework: Archives and Indigenous Communities \(Canada\)](#)
- [Indigenous Archives Collective \(Australia\)](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives, and Information Services](#)
- [SAA Native American Archives Section Resources Page \(linked on their microsite\)](#)

notes, thoughts, reflections & connections...



This zine is a call to action and reflection. It honors 20 years of work while looking toward a future where Indigenous peoples fully control how their histories and cultural materials are preserved, accessed, and shared.



What commitments will you carry forward
#IndigenousArchivalSovereignty #ProtocolsAt20

IMAGE CREDITS:

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Page 2: PNAAM drafters photo courtesy of Jennifer O'Neal.

Page 4: Atwood Resource Center (Anchorage Museum) and CVTC Archives, Chitina visit.

Page 7: 2024 IAT in-person training at IAIA.

Page 9: Back entry hall, NMAI.

Page 13: Dallas Goldtooth as William Spirit Knifeman from *Reservation Dogs*, Shane Brown FX

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