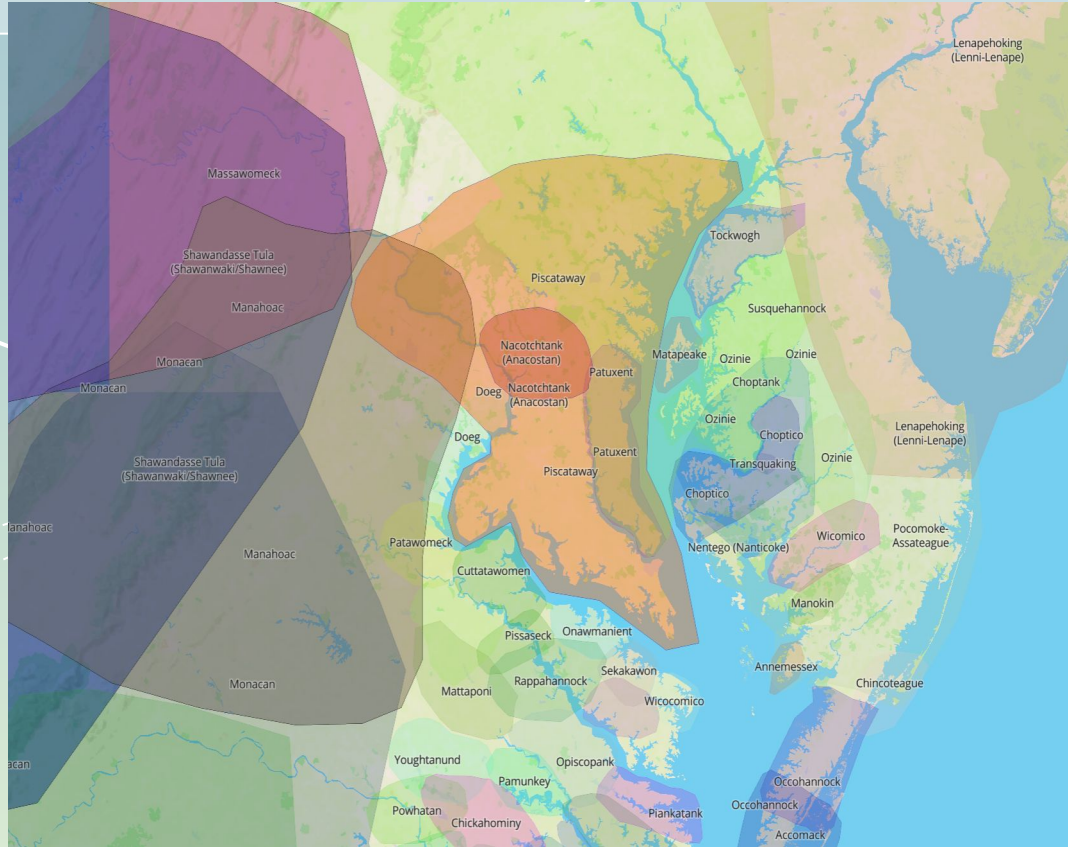# Indigenous Description Group Report 2023

Ia Bull, PhD Student, UMD iSchool

Diana Marsh, Assistant Professor of Archives & Digital Curation, UMD iSchool

Jerry Simmons, SNAC/NARA

ᏓᎶᏂᏍ ᎠᏯ ᏨᎯRT:
Land Acknowledgement

Timeline:

1. Context/Goals
    a. Why SNAC for Indigenous archives?
    b. Previous edit-a-thons

2. IDG, formed March 2023
    a. Team
    b. Four main priorities for 2023-2024
    c. Ongoing limitations

Databases and Embedded Colonial Knowledge

- Cataloging Records (Turner 2020)

- Colonial power and knowledge extraction (Christen and Anderson 2019; Punzalan 2014)

- Misrepresentation and bias within archival description (Gilliland 2011; Jimerson 2009)
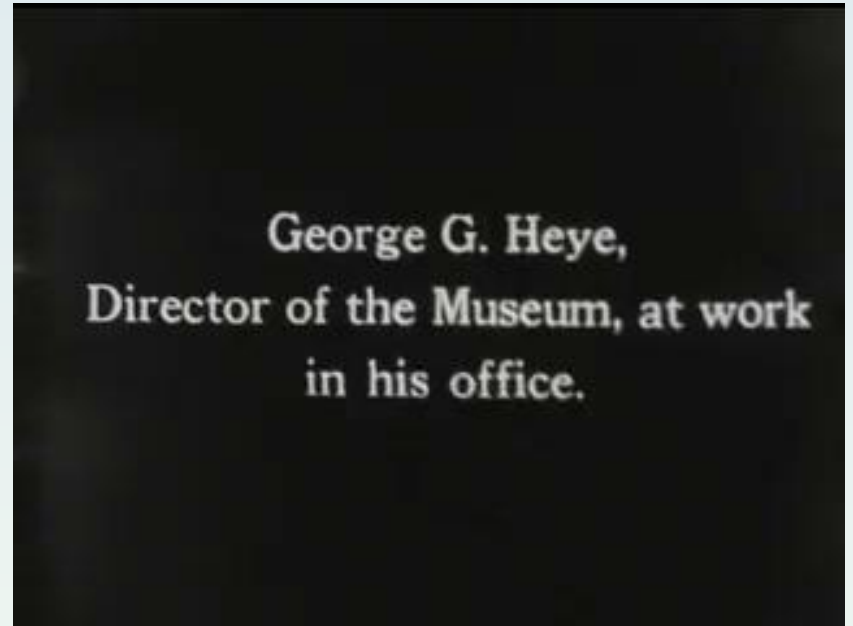
Knowledge Extraction within Archives Histories

Collections created within contexts of assimilation and genocide (O'Neal 2014)

Long history of colonial knowledge extraction & "archival diaspora" (Punzalan 2014)

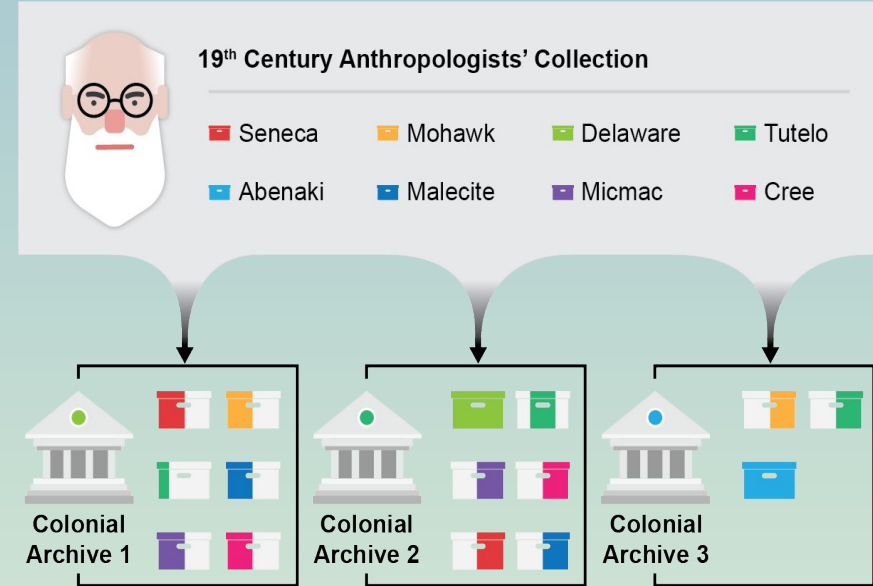**Legacies of the practice of salvage anthropology (Stocking 1988; Hochman 2014; Redman 2021)**

> George G. Heye,
> Director of the Museum, at work
> in his office.

Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation ethnographic film collection:
https://sova.si.edu/record/NMAI.AC.001.001
NMAI Archives Center

Why SNAC for addressing Indigenous Archival Materials?

1. **Long history of colonial knowledge extraction & "archival diaspora" (Punzalan 2014)**
   a. Reconnecting dispersed heritage/knowledge→ Communities want access to all of their materials
   b. Mukurtu and community archives creating Indigenous spaces/digital solutions for holding material
   c. Limitations of institutional subject/lib guides

2. **Accommodates descriptive flexibility**
   a. editors create their own authority records that fit Indigenous needs
   b. using culturally-appropriate descriptive terminologies

3. **Focus on Indigenous people, communities, or entities represented in collections** (rather than white collector or creator)

4. **Cooperative model:** Indigenous community members and allies as editors

19th Century Anthropologists' Collection

Seneca   Mohawk   Delaware   Tutelo
Abenaki   Malecite   Micmac   Cree

Colonial Archive 1   Colonial Archive 2   Colonial Archive 3
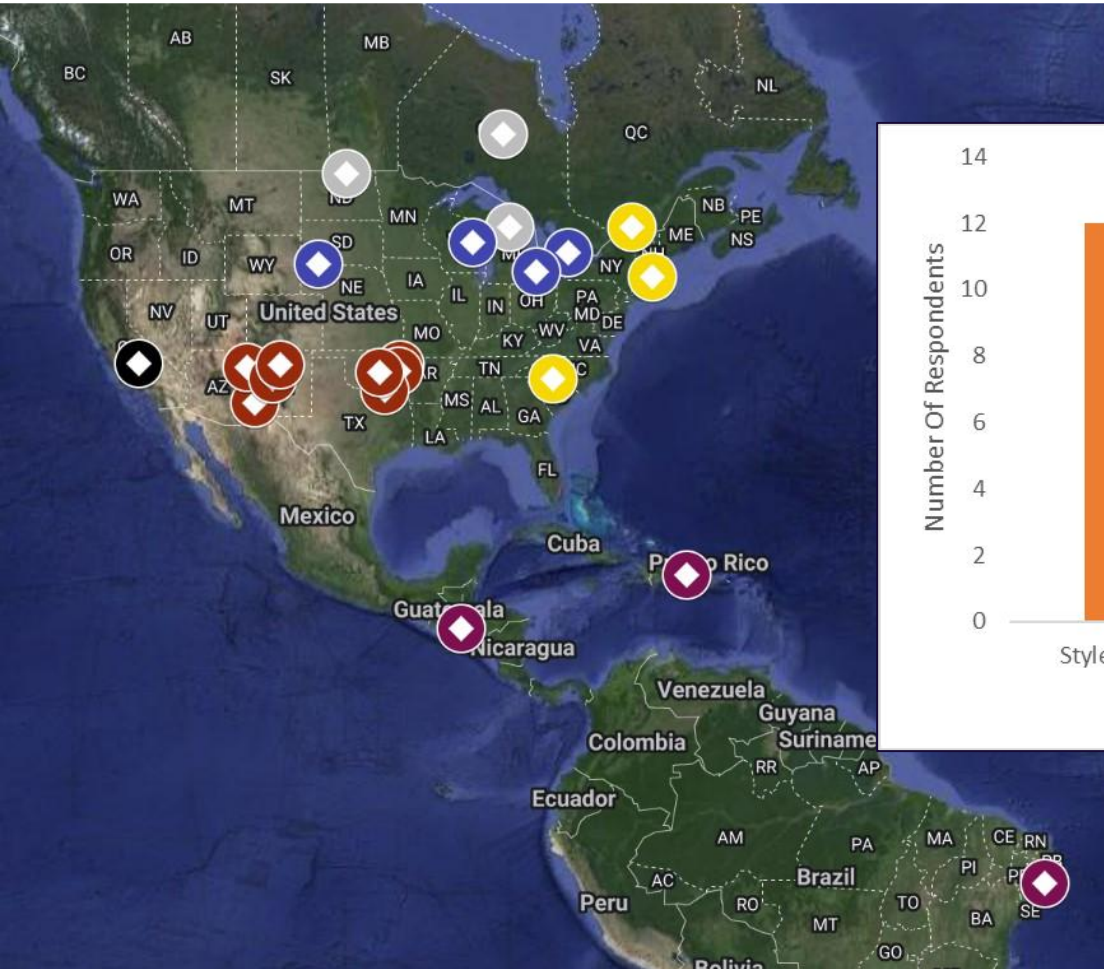
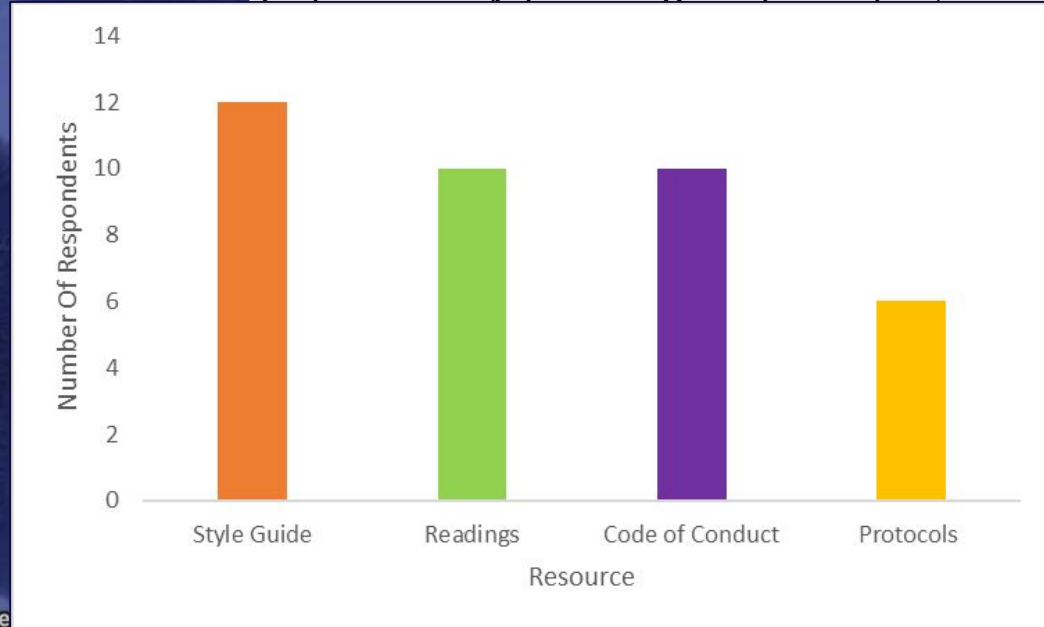# What are we trying to solve?

1. Accessibility to archival collections for Indigenous Tribal communities

2. To mitigate harm caused by extractive collecting processes

3. Reparative description across systems/at scale/in interoperable way

SNAC Edit-a-thon 2020/2021

2021

Style Guide: 12
Readings: 10
Code of Conduct: 10
Protocols: 6

Wider call & honoraria for Indigenous participants

64 participants & 50+ records edited

Edit-a-thon 2021

Core Team

Lydia Curliss (University of Maryland iSchool, Nipmuc) | **Irene Gates** (New School) | **Dina Herbert** (NARA) | **Diana Marsh** (University of Maryland iSchool) | **Katherine Meyers Satriano** (Peabody Museum at Harvard) | **Jerry Simmons** (NARA)

Indigenous Advisory Board

Margaret Bruchac (Abenaki), University of Pennsylvania | **Stephen Curley** (Diné), National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition | **Taylor Gibson** (Cayuga), Gāhsronih | **Eric Hemenway** (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians) | **Keahiahi Long**, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa | **Melissa Stoner** (Diné), University of California at Berkeley

Indigenous Participants in 2021 Editathon

In total, we had *18 Indigenous participants* who represented the following Indigenous Nations and Communities:

Anishinaabe| Anishinaabeg, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians| Cherokee| Chiricahua Apache| Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma| Gaduwagi | Catawba| Kahnawake Mohawk| Natchez Nation| Navajo Nation| Nipmuc| Oglala Lakota| Ojibway - Walpole Island First Nation| Oneida Nation of Wisconsin| Pipil Nahuatl| Pueblo of Isleta| Pueblo of Pojoaque| Shawnee| Six Nations of the Grand River Territory| Tabajara | Taino| Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa| Yokuts - Tule River Indian Tribe

Outcomes & Feedback

Over the two days, **around 64 participants** (out of 137 initial registrants) **18 of whom were Indigenous** worked on at least **50 entities**

- Increased # of Indigenous records and Editor (and Editor Allies)
- Greater awareness of SNAC for Indigenous communities across the US
- Reusable model for pre-event protocols & post-event peer review process
- Creation of **Editorial Guide for describing Indigenous Entities in SNAC**
  - This was the most self-reported used document by Participants

11
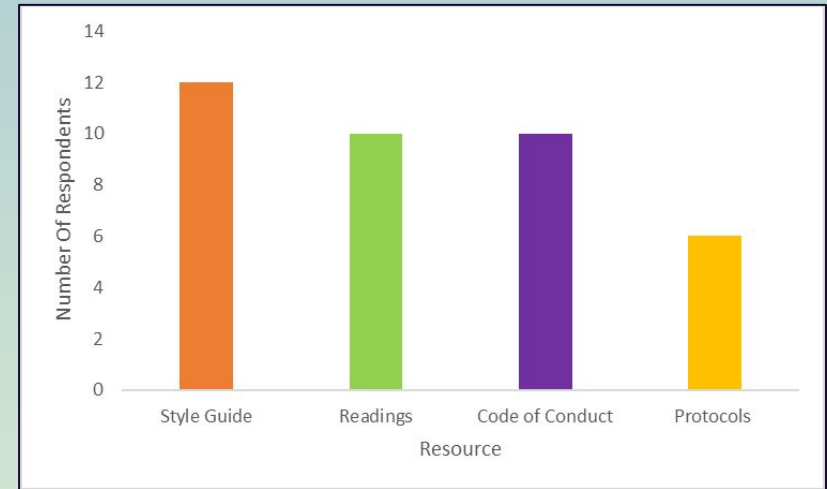
Editorial Guide

- Editorial Guide created as a collaborative effort between the project team, advisory board and Indigenous edit-a-thon participants

- Post edit-a-thon→standardized and is open on the SNAC platform for feedback: https://portal.snaccooperative.org/node/595

- **Notes concerns around describing Indigenous entities** & general issues around Indigenous description in archival records & SNAC

  - Participant feedback showed concerns over adding things like "location," "nationality" to records; Challenges around describing Indigenous languages

IMLS Grant! Project Team

Indigenous Advisory Board

Angie Bain (Lower Nicola Indian Band) Nicola Watershed Governance Project

Tiffany Chavis (Lumbee), University of Maryland, Baltimore

Alan Corbiere (M'Chigeeng First Nation), York University

Stephen Curley (Diné), National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition

Taylor Gibson (Cayuga), Gāhsronih

Eric Hemenway (Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians)

Keahiahi Long, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Melissa Stoner (Diné), University of California at Berkeley

Selena Ortega-Chiolero Chickaloon Village Traditional Council

Kimberly Toney (Hassanamisco Band of Nipmuc), Brown University

UMD Team

Diana Marsh, University of Maryland

Ia Bull (Natchez, � ᏗᏋᏗᎵᏆ ᏍᏍᏓᏯ), PhD Student, UMD iSchool

Amanda Sorensen, PhD Candidate, UMD iSchool

Partners

Jerry Simmons, NARA (SNAC Liaison)

Dina Herbert, NARA (SNAC Liaison)

Katherine Satriano, Peabody Museum, Harvard

Smithsonian OCIO, NAA, NMNH & Many more!

IMLS Grant - Project

1. **IMLS grant - Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program** (https://www.imls.gov/grants/awarded/re-252311-ols-22)
   a. **Expanded Indigenous Advisory Board**
   b. **Focus groups/ testing SNAC with Indigenous users** from range of perspectives
      i. Indigenous participants in the 2021 Edit-a-thon (who know SNAC well)
      ii. Indigenous LAM professionals
      iii. Indigenous students within MLIS and other related disciplines
      iv. Indigenous community members (who have never used SNAC)
   c. **Indigenous SNAC Training**, SNACSchool and/or other educational modules/webinars/training material
   d. **Community outreach**:
      i. Emphasize role SNAC can play in facilitating repatriation by helping to locate relevant archival records, especially in service of Indian Boarding School & repatriation efforts
      ii. Community-based presentations

Grant + → Indigenous Description Group

SNAC Indigenous Description Group, begun March 2023

- Maintain the new Editorial Guide
- Develop controlled vocabularies ongoingly
  - Indigenous subjects, placenames, languages/orthographies
- Ways to describe and link communities
  - e.g. Mohawk versus Kanien'kehá꞉ka

Yellowtail, Robert, 1889-1988 Variant names

Detailed View | Revision History | Sources | Export | Edit | Reserve for Editing   Hide Profile

Biography | Resources | Relationships | Places | Subjects | Occupations

Activities

Robert Yellowtail was a leader of the Crow Nation. Separated from his mother at the age of 4 years old, Yellowtail was culturally assimilated into a reservation boarding school. When he was 13 years old, he went to the Sherman Institute, in Riverside, California, graduating in 1907. He then attended the Extension Law School in Los Angeles, transferring to the University of Chicago Law School, where he gained his Juris Doctor degree. Yellowtail's first official position, in 1912, was as a district representative on a tribal business committee where he negotiated grazing leases and gave the tribe a voice during land disputes. Initially, Yellowtail was in this committee to fight disputes related to Crow land, but caught the attention of other political leaders like Plenty Coups. Less than a year later he made his first trip to Washington D.C. He attended the National Indian Memorial in New York City as an interpreter for Medicine Crow, Plenty Coups and other leaders. In 1920, he helped to draft the "Crow Allotment Act" that protected Crow lands, and was instrumental in obtaining voting rights for Native Americans in 1924. From 1934 until 1945, Yellowtail was the Superintendent of the Crow Indian Reservation, the first superintendent to administer his own tribe. During this time, Yellowtail was able to get white ranchers to return 40,000 acres of land to the tribe, built a Crow Hospital, brought horses and cattle from Canada, and buffalo from Yellowstone National Park.

Image from Wikimedia Commons
Official government photograph of the subject while he was in office. - Public Domain

Person

Exist Dates: Birth 1889-08-04
                Death 1988-06-20

Medicine Crow, Joseph, 1913-2016 Variant names

Detailed View | Revision History | Sources | Export | Edit | Reserve for Editing   Hide Profile

Biography | Resources | Relationships | Places | Subjects | Occupations

Activities

Filters: [icons] ✖

Show 10 entries   Search: Relation or Name   ✦ Connection Graph ✦ Radial Graph

Relation	Name
associatedWith	Conner, Stuart W.
associatedWith	Plenty Coups, Chief of the Crows, 1848-1932.
associatedWith	Toineeta, Joy Yellowtail.
associatedWith	Yellowtail, Robert, 1889-1988

Showing 1 to 4 of 4 entries (filtered from 7 total entries)   Previous 1 Next

Image from Wikimedia Commons
US Government - Public Domain

Person

Exist Dates: Birth 1913-10-27
                Death 2016-04-03
Nationality: Americans
Languages Used: Siouan languages,
                English

Plenty Coups, Chief of the Crows, 1848-1932 Variant names

Detailed View | Revision History | Sources | Export | Edit | Reserve for Editing   Hide Profile

Biography | Resources | Relationships | Places | Subjects | Occupations

Activities

● View Collection Locations

Archival Resources

Show 10 entries   Search: Title, Role, Repository

Role	Title	Holding Repository
referencedIn	Albright, Peggy. Peggy Albright papers, 1881-1996 (bulk 1881-1930).	Little Big Horn College Library
referencedIn	Fred E. Miller photograph collection	National Museum of the American Indian (U.S.) Archive Center

Image from Wikimedia Commons

Person

Exist Dates: Birth 1848
                Death 1932

INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES

IDG! Project Team

Members

Veronica Pipestem

Worthy Martin

Rose Buchanan

Mik Hamilton

Eden Orelove

August Brave Heart Sanchez

Ugoma Smoke

Lindsey Chapman

Jerica Scullawl-Gates

Lina Ortega

Jerrid Miller

Tiffany Chavis

UMD Team

Diana Marsh, University of Maryland (UMD) iSchool

Ia Bull (Natchez, ᏌᏅᎵ ᎤᎾᏗᎸ ᏍᏍᏪᏯ), PhD Student, UMD iSchool

Amanda Sorensen, PhD Candidate, UMD iSchool

Liaisons/Facilitators

Jerry Simmons, NARA (SNAC Liaison)

Dina Herbert, NARA (SNAC Liaison)

+   **Bernetiae Reed** (EDG)

SNAC Indigenous Description Group (IDG)

The image from Wikimedia Commons shows Emmet Starr - Public Domain; a table of languages with columns A–F plus Source, and a biography panel.

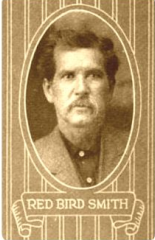| Language	Variant(s)	MARC code	Region	In SNAC?	LC subject	Source
Achumawi	yes	no	California		Achomawi language	https://www
Acoma-Laguna	yes	no				https://www
Ahtna	yes	no				https://www
Alabama	yes	no				https://www
Aleut	yes	ale		ale	Aleut language	https://www
Alutiiq	yes	ypk		ypk	Pacific Gulf Yupik language	https://www
Arapaho	yes	arp		arp	Arapaho language	https://www
Arikara	yes	no	North Dakota		Arikara language	https://www
Assiniboine	yes	no	Montana/Sask.		Assiniboine dialect	https://www
Atsugewi	yes	no	California		Atsugewi language	https://www
Caddo	yes	cad	Oklahoma	cad	Caddo language	https://www

bIhW, VdG, 1850-1918 Variant names

Detailed View | Revision History | Sources | Export | Edit | Reserve for Editing   Hide Pr

Biography | Resources | Relationships | Places | Subjects | Occupations

Activities

VdG bIhW / Redbird Smith (1850–1918) ᏥᎦᏏ* was a Cherokee traditionalist and political activist in the Cherokee Nation in Indian Territory. He helped found the Nighthawk Keetoowah Society, whose members revitalized traditional spirituality among the Cherokee from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century and avidly opposed allotment and the Dawes rolls. *ᏥᎦᏏ tsigesv is an honorific for esteemed Cherokees that have passed away.

Priorities Identified 2023

1. **Languages**
   a. **Expanding MARC alpha-3 code list for languages to include Indigenous languages / new Indigenous language subject headings (LCSH)**

2. Boarding Schools
   a. possible partnership with the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition & their Digital Archive

3. Tribal Nations
   a. Starting with federally recognized (while understanding limitations!)

4. Relationship types
   a. Working with Enslaved Description Group (shout out to Bernetiae Reed)

SNAC Indigenous Description Group

ᏏᏳᏩ, ᎤᏓᏅ, 1850-1918
Computed Name Heading

Na...

Surname : ᏏᏳᏩ

Forename : ᎤᏓᏅ

Date : 1850-1918

Preference   Preferred

Language   che

Script   Cher

Sequanitah, To-Juwah, 1850-1918
Computed Name Heading

Name Components

Surname : Sequanitah

Forename : To-Juwah

Date : 1850-1918

Preference   Not Preferred

Language   che

Script   Latn

Smith, Redbird, 1850-1918
Computed Name Heading

Name Components

Surname : Smith

Forename : Redbird

Date : 1850-1918

Preference   Not Preferred

Language   eng

Script   Latn

**Language Project #1:
(started August 2023)**

**New alpha-3 language codes
to better represent Indigenous
languages in Library of
Congress' alpha-3 MARC
Codes List**

ᏏᏳᏩ, ᎤᏓᏅ, 1850-1918 Variant names

⇄ Detailed View   ⟲ Revision History   ☰ Sources   ⬇ Export ▾   ✎ Edit   🔖 Reserve for Editing   Hide Pr

Biography   Resources   Relationships   Places   Subjects   Occupations

Activities

ᎤᏓᏅ ᏏᏳᏩ / Redbird Smith (1850–1918) ᎯᏂᎯᏫ* was a Cherokee traditionalist and political activist in the Cherokee Nation in Indian Territory. He helped found the Nighthawk Keetoowah Society, whose members revitalized traditional spirituality among the Cherokee from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century and avidly opposed allotment and the Dawes rolls. *ᎯᏂᎯᏫ tsigesv is an honorific for esteemed Cherokees that have passed away.
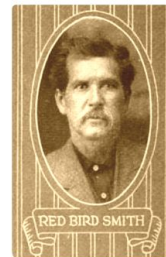
RED BIRD SMITH

SNAC Indigenous Description Group

A	B	C	D	E	F	
Language	Variant(s)	MARC code	Region	In SNAC?	LC subject	Source
Achumawi	yes	no	California		Achomawi language	https://www
Acoma-Laguna	yes	no				https://www
Ahtna	yes	no				https://www
Alabama	yes	no				https://www
Aleut	yes	ale		ale	Aleut language	https://www
Alutiiq	yes	ypk		ypk	Pacific Gulf Yupik language	https://www
Arapaho	yes	arp		arp	Arapaho language	https://www
Arikara	yes	no	North Dakota		Arikara language	https://www
Assiniboine	yes	no	Montana/Sask.		Assiniboine dialect	https://www
Atsugewi	yes	no	California		Atsugewi language	https://www
Caddo						

Plenty Coups, Chief of the Crows, 1848-1932   Variant names

⇄ Detailed View ↻ Revision History ⊞ Sources ⬇ Export ▾   ✎ Edit ⚑ Reserve for Editing   Hide Pr

Biography   Resources   Relationships   Places   Subjects   Occupations

Activities

Show 10 ▾ entries   Search: [   ]

Subject   ▲

Crow language

Mankiller, Wilma Pearl, 1945-2010 ✎

Name Entries   History ▾   Demographics ▾   Relations ▾   Corporate Description ▾   Sour

Languages Used

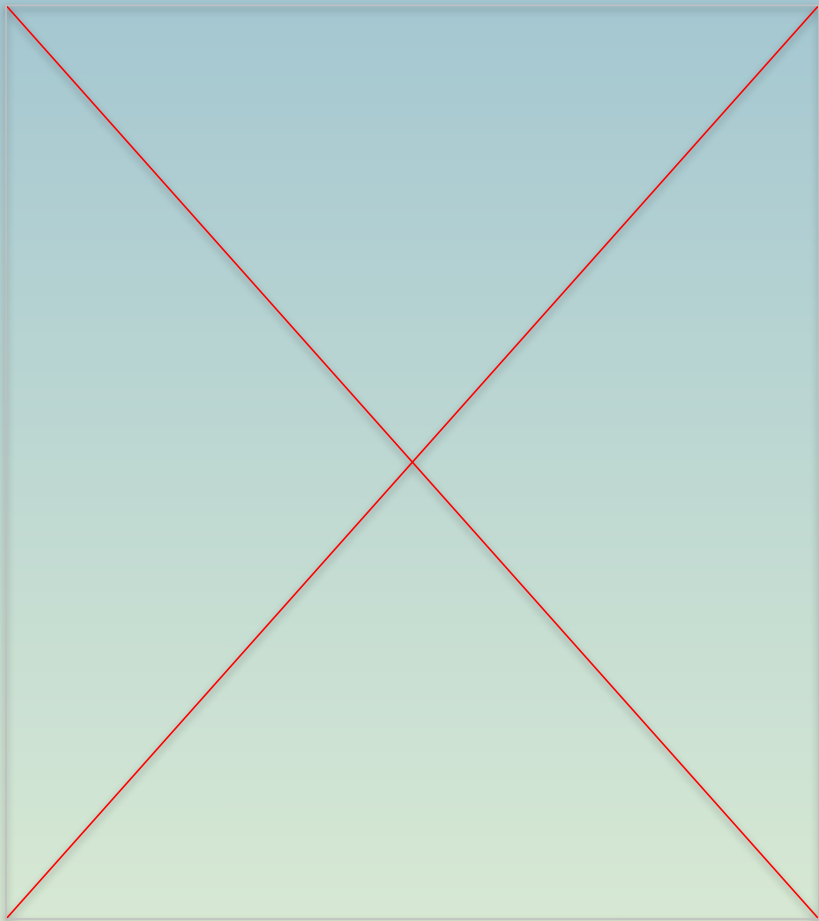➕ Add New Language

Language   che

Language project #2

()

August 2023, NARA's SNAC Liaisons started leading an effort to submit new Indigenous language subject heading proposals via LC's Classification Web

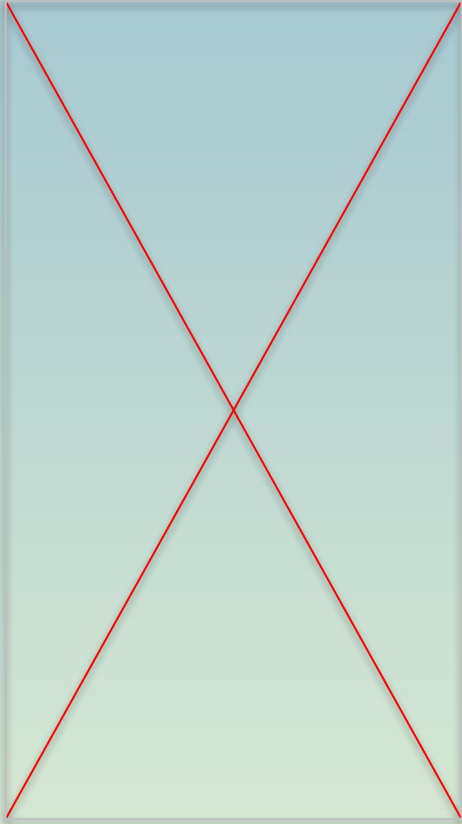# SNAC Indigenous Description Group: Language Project

- At request of Library of Congress, IDG will make proposals in batches
- Batch proposal #1: 39 new alpha-3 language codes requested on August 9, 2023
- Batch proposal #2 : Pending completion of Batch #1
- Support from **Paul Frank** (LC Policy, Training, and Cooperative Programs Division)
- Support from **John Zagas** (LC-Network Development and MARC Standards Division)

} These and many more covered currently by **nai** / "North American Indian" language code

}

These and many more covered currently by **sai** / "South American Indian" language code

SNAC Indigenous Description Group

Language project #2

(starts October 2023)

NARA's SNAC Liaisons will lead an effort to submit new Indigenous language subject heading proposals via LC's Classification Web

SNAC Indigenous Description Group

The time for healing is now
boardingschoolhealing.org

Federal Indian Boarding School Sites

Priorities Identified 2023

1. Languages
   a. Expanding MARC alpha-3 code list for languages to include Indigenous languages / new Indigenous language subject headings (LCSH)

2. **Boarding Schools**
   a. *partnership with the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition & their Digital Archive*
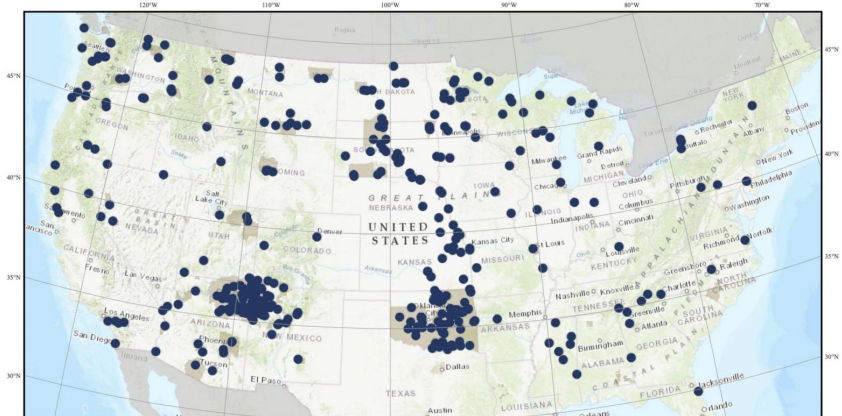
3. Tribal Nations
   a. Starting with federally recognized (while understanding limitations!)

4. Relationship types
   a. Working with Enslaved Description Group

SNAC Indigenous Description Group

Voronoi Map of Federally Recognized Tribes

Map by Anders Sundell (@sundellviz) for the Decolonial Atlas
Source: BIA, 2021

Priorities Identified 2023

1. Languages
   a. Expanding from MARC list for languages to include Indigenous languages (Ethnologue or others)

2. Boarding Schools
   a. partnership with the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition & their Digital Archive

3. **Tribal Nations**
   a. *Starting with federally recognized (while understanding limitations!)*

4. Relationship types
   a. Working with Enslaved Description Group

SNAC Indigenous Description Group

controllerOf / controlledBy [Domain: CPF / Range: CPF]
    BT: associatedWith / associatedWith
    NT: contractorOf / contractedBy
    NT: conscriptorOf / conscriptedBy
    NT: emancipatorOf / emancipatedBy
    NT: enslaverOf / enslavedBy
    NT: gifterOf / giftedBy
    NT: hirerOf / hiredBy
    NT: incarceratorOf / incarceratedBy
    NT: indenturerOf / indenturedBy
    NT: overseeerOf / overseenBy
    NT: ownerOf / ownedBy
    NT: purchaserOf / purchasedBy
    NT: sellerOf / soldBy

Priorities Identified 2023

1. Languages

2. Boarding Schools

3. Tribal Nations

4. **Relationship types**

    a. *Working with Enslaved Description Group*

    b. *Using controlled vocabulary to manage the growing list of relationship types*

Connect with Us!

1. *(**Right now!**) Recruiting for Focus Groups*
2. *Year 2: **Hiring Developer** + **Indigenous MLIS student** focus on developer/metadata work*
3. *New website:* IndigenizeSNAC@umd.edu
4. *Twitter:* @IndigenizeSNAC
5. *Email:* IndigenizeSNAC@umd.edu
6. **ATALM & more!**
7. *SNAC Info table in SAA registration area*

INSTITUTE *of*
Museum *and* Library
SERVICES

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND 18 56
COLLEGE OF
INFORMATION
STUDIES
CAFe | CENTER FOR ARCHIVAL FUTURES

Ongoing SNAC Limitations & Future Work

Concerns about SNAC content:

● SNAC is a discovery tool, but it also directs users to colonial institutional content (e.g., Inappropriate or culturally-sensitive material available online)

Reaching out & further involving communities:

● Goal of project to move authority to communities

Culturo-Technical limitations:

● Variant name searching
● Desire to search by community autonym:
  ○ Better searching by subject terms?
  ○ Centering community names as entities
  ○ contemporary political entities [e.g. fed recognized tribes vs. historical communities

Limitations of SNAC for Indigenous description/representation:

● Incorporating best practices for description/representation of Native and Indigenous content in archives and in SNAC specifically
● Indigenous naming practices (how to align RDA naming standards with Indigenous names)
● Only scratching surface of Indigenous placenames, subjects, and many other fields

Other feedback which could be addressed in future work:

● SNAC front page - how to make more welcoming for Indigenous community users (inclusion of BIPOC figures)
● Better representation of Indigenous figures throughout the platform
● Creating educational material on commonly misunderstood types of Indigenous materials
● Translating entire SNAC records into Indigenous languages