Finding and requesting materials at the APS Library through the Indigenous Subject Guide

prepared by Brian Carpenter, Curator of Native American Materials
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Contents

1. What is the Indigenous Subject Guide?

2. Finding the Guide

3. Useful terms

4. What will I find in the Guide?

5. How can I search for materials in the Guide?

6. How do I place requests for copies of materials?

7. Additional info

1. What is the Indigenous Subject Guide?

The APS [Indigenous Subject Guide](#) is a resource for locating materials in the American Philosophical Society Library's archival collections that relate to the languages, cultures, and histories of Indigenous peoples of the Americas. These materials date from 1553 to 2017 ad include manuscript, audio, and visual materials relating to over 650 Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas.

The Guide contains nearly comprehensive coverage of most aspects of the collections. However, some kinds of materials at the APS Library are not fully represented in the Guide, such as photographs, correspondence, books, and archival materials that have recently arrived at the Library but have not yet been cataloged.

The Guide is also updated several times a year, both with new entries about new archival materials at the APS as well as expanded or corrected information about existing materials.

2. Finding the Guide

- Go to amphilsoc.org/CNAIR
- Click on "Access to Collections"
- Click on "Indigenous Subject Guide"

or

- Direct link: http://search.amphilsoc.org/natam/search

3. Useful terms

Collection:
A set of archival materials collected together by an individual or organization. Some collections can be very large, such as the personal papers of linguist, covering their entire career. In other cases, a collection might be smaller, such as a photograph album, a set of audio recordings, or a set of letters between two people.

Finding aid:
A finding aid is a structured guide to an archival collection. They provide overall information about the contents of the collection, often including a summary of contents, biographical background on the person or organization who created the collection, and information on how the material came to the archival repository. Finding aids also contain an *inventory* section, listing the contents of the collection in fuller detail. Not all finding aids have the same level of detail. They are meant to serve as a general guide, but do not describe all aspects of the individual materials in the collections.

4. What will I find in the Guide?

The Guide contains about 2,000 entries, each of which focus on a specific set of archival materials (a "collection") and provide an overview of materials in that collection relating to a particular Indigenous culture or language.

Each entry has these fields in it:

- Title
  - This field describes the culture or language materials in a particular collection that is covered in the entry. For example, a typical entry will be titled along the lines of "Karuk materials, William Bright Papers" or "Inuit materials, Franz Boas Papers." Some entries cover everything a given collection, in which case the Title will just be the names of the collection.
- Culture
  - This field lists the cultures or peoples that the materials described in the entry relate to. In many cases, this field lists cultures that may only be found in the materials to a limited, such as when a document primarily about one culture may contains a small amount of information on the side about a neighboring people.
- Culture (Alternate Form)
  - This field lists some of the alternate names or alternate spellings of the culture(s) described in the entry. This can include names that are old, obsolete, or pejorative, as well as different ways of spelling any of those names. We use this field so that if someone searches using one of these different names or spellings they will still be able to find the material.
- Languages
  - This field lists the languages that the materials of the collection are *in*, not just about. Like the Culture field, some of the languages listed may be found only in small amounts in the midst of information about another language.
- Dates
  - This field gives information on the years when the materials described were created.
- Contributor(s)
  - This field gives the names of most or all people who were involved in some way in the creation of the materials described in the entry, whether authors, speakers, consultants, researchers or any other major role. <u>This includes names of not only of outside researchers but of Native storytellers, speakers, singers, and other experts whose knowledge forms the basis of the materials.</u>
- Subjects
  - This field gives some broad, general subject matter that the materials relate to. This information is meant to give a general idea about some of the topics in the materials, but <u>it is not comprehensive or highly specific</u>.
- Type
  - This field gives information on the material type(s) described, such as Text, Sound, Still Images, and Video.

- Genre
  - This field gives information on some of the forms of material described in the entry, such as correspondence, notebooks, vocabularies, photographs, etc.
- Extent
  - This field gives information on how much material is being described in the entry, such how many pages, how many folders, or how many linear feet of manuscript boxes.
- Description
  - <u>This is one of the most important fields</u>. It provides a brief, written-out description of the materials to be found in the collection. It also provides information on where to find those materials in the finding aid that is linked to at the bottom of the guide entry, so that if you click on that link you will have some orientation about where to look for it in the finding aid, which sometimes can be very long and complicated. In cases where there is only a small number of things in a given collection, the description will list all of those items. In cases where there is a very large amount of materials, the description will provide general information on the kinds of materials to look for and where to look for more specific information about them.
- Collection
  - This field provides the full name of the collection and the link to the finding aid where you can view the full information about the collection.

5. How can I search for materials in the Guide?

The Guide provides 3 options for locating information: Browse, Search, and Explore.

<u>Browse</u>

We recommend the Browse option as the first step for many researchers, especially if your goal is to get a full overview of all materials in the Guide relating to a particular culture or language. The Browse by Culture and Browse by Language options will take you to a listing of all cultures or languages in the Guide. Click on any name to pull up a full listing of all entries relating to that category. If you do not see a particular culture or language name listed, it may be listed under an alternate name. In these cases, either search in the list for an alternate name or spelling you know of, or type the name you are looking for into the Search field on the main page of the Guide.

<u>Search</u>

The Search option allows you to do a keyword search for any term found in the Guide. It can be especially useful when searching for names of people and places, or for certain topics. The search results will show entries where that term appears anywhere in the entry.

<u>Explore</u>

With this option you can explore a map containing markers for hundreds of individual locations. Each geographic marker contains links to entries in the Guide that relate to materials that, at least in part, were recorded at or related to that specific place.

<u>The map is not comprehensive</u>, as some materials that are in the Guide cannot be pinned to a specific place and many more materials do not have clear, obvious information with them about where they specifically come from. (For example, in the case of a notebook of Ojibwe words and phrases that does not state which community the speaker comes from, the notebook will be described in the Guide, but there will not a pin for it on the map.) So, <u>if you do not see a particular community marked on the map, that does not necessarily mean that there is nothing at the APS from there</u>.

6. How do I place requests for copies of materials?

To place a request, one necessary step will be to set up a registration account in Aeon, the APS Library's request system. You can set up an account by going to http://aeon.amphilsoc.org and clicking on "First Time Users." Your Aeon account will allow you to place requests, keep track of those requests, and to download digital materials you have requested when they are ready.

You can request copies of manuscripts and other materials through the finding aids they are in. If you see an item in a finding aid that you would like to request, click on the "Request a Copy of this Item" link. This will add the item to a queue of materials you are requesting.

If there is a large number of items you would like to request, or if you are not sure if you are finding all the things you are interested in locating, please email Brian Carpenter, the Curator of Native American Materials, at [bcarpenter@amphilsoc.org.](mailto:bcarpenter@amphilsoc.org) You can send a list, or describe what kinds of things you are looking for.

<u>Important</u>: Even if you have placed all your requests through the links in the finding aid, please also email bcarpenter@amphilsoc.org noting that you have placed requests. This will ensure that Brian and other staff at CNAIR are aware of your request and handle it directly.

Materials being requested by and for Native community-based organizations and initiatives— such as cultural centers, community archives, schools, tribal departments, language programs, and so on—will be copied <u>for free</u>. In order to fulfill requests of this kind at no charge, it is essential to get in touch with CNAIR at the above email so that we know that it is a request of that kind.

<u>Requesting audio</u>

Over 95% of the Indigenous audio collections—about 3,300 hour in 162 languages—have been digitized. Most of these have no restrictions on them and can be accessed directly online at no

charge through a login and password. To obtain a login, register on Aeon as described above and email audioaccess@amphilsoc.org with the name of the audio collection(s) you would like to access. CNAIR staff will then email you back with a login and password and info on how to access the audio.

If you are requesting audio materials for a community-based archive or cultural center, let us know and we will send the files on a data CD or thumb drive so that you have a full directory of the files with clear file names.

If you are requesting for someone, such as an elder, who may not want to login to a website to listen to the audio, let us know and we will be happy to send audio materials in the mail on CD.

7. Additional info

We welcome feedback and guidance from Indigenous communities and scholars on ways to describe and represent these materials in ways that are more accurate, appropriate, and relevant. I can be reached directly at bcarpenter@amphilsoc.org or 215-440-3418.

All Indigenous communities and individuals are welcome at the APS, period. No academic affiliation or credentials are required to access and use materials.

If you do not find materials in the Indigenous Subject Guide that are of interest, or are having difficulty using, please contact me at the above address and I will be glad to assist.

Also please contact me even if you do find materials that are of interest and, especially, if you place a request. I will be able assist directly in making sure that your request goes through the correct channels.

We are able to digitize materials **for free** when they are going back to the community connected with them in support of community-based initiatives and entities such as cultural centers, tribal government departments, archives, language programs, museums, schools, and related programs.

We have developed *Protocols for the Treatment of Indigenous Materials* to provide protections and reproduction restrictions on any materials identified as culturally sensitive or private by the community the information comes from. The APS is eager to work with Native nations on any issues of this kind that arise in the APS collections.

For more information on all of the above, please visit the website for our Center for Native American and Indigenous Research (CNAIR):

www.amphilsoc.org/CNAIR