The National Anthropological Archives: An Orientation to Collections Access and Resources
Native Land App:
@ https://native-land.ca
National Anthropological Archives
NAA’s Mission
The National Anthropological Archives serves the global community by acquiring and preserving records documenting the history of anthropology and world cultures, ensuring that the public can discover, use, and learn from our collections. The NAA is critically aware of the colonial roots of our organization and discipline, and strives to expand our understanding of how to meet our responsibilities as stewards of Indigenous heritage our collections document in order to better serve these communities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repository</th>
<th>Archives (cubic feet)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIA - SI Archives</td>
<td>41,454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAA - Archives American Art</td>
<td>21,514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAAM - American Art</td>
<td>19,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAA and HSFA</td>
<td>18,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASM - Air &amp; Space</td>
<td>17,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMAH - American History</td>
<td>16,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIL - SI Libraries</td>
<td>11,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFCH - Folklife</td>
<td>4,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMAI - American Indian</td>
<td>3,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSGA - Freer</td>
<td>Sackler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACM - Anacostia</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPG - Portrait Gallery</td>
<td>1,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMAFA - African Art</td>
<td>1,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG - Gardens</td>
<td>891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMAAHC - African American</td>
<td>591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>162,326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Papers of over 300 anthropologists
- Records of over 40 anthropological organizations and major projects
- Over one million photographs
- 20,000 works of art
- 5000 sound recordings
- 8 million feet of motion picture film
Human Studies
Film Archives
Our “ests”: NAA Superlatives

• One of the largest archives in the world devoted exclusively to documenting the history of anthropology and the world’s cultures
• One of the largest collections in the world of Indigenous North American language documentation
• One of the largest collections in the world of photographs relating to Native American peoples
• The largest ethnographic film collection in the world
S. Ann Dunham
Clockwise from left: Omaha baseball team, ca 1905; Kwakwaka’wakw potlach, 1895; Oglala Chief Red Cloud, 1872; Little Kiowa girl with her kitty, ca 1890s.
Clockwise from left: Drawing of reindeer by Wrichtau, Deer by Acee Blue Eagle, Page from ledger drawings by Sitting Bull
Restrictions on Access and Use

- Cultural
- Privacy
- Donor imposed
Visiting the NAA
• **Normal operating hours:**
  Tuesday – Friday
  9:00am – 4:30pm

• Research by appointment only

• Email [naa@si.edu](mailto:naa@si.edu) to schedule a tour

• 1-2 weeks notice for research appointment
  1-2 months notice for tours

• Museum Support Center
  4210 Silver Hill Road
  Suitland, Maryland
How to get here

• By Car: 15-20 min drive from downtown DC, free parking at MSC
• By Metro: 15-20 min walk (0.7 miles) from Suitland station (Green line)
• Complimentary shuttle from Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History Museum in downtown DC: 25 min between shuttle stops, contact us ahead of time for a schedule and to get a pass for the shuttle
How to make an appointment

Request appointment using our online appointment form at:
https://naturalhistory.si.edu/research/anthropology/collections-and-archives-access/anthropology-collections-appointment-request

Or the button on our homepage at:
https://naturalhistory.si.edu/research/anthropology/collections-overview/anthropology-archives
What to expect: Building security

• SI-wide visitor protocols
• Please bring a photo ID, and check in at the front desk
• You will be asked to register your laptop, cameras (except phones), and other large electronics at the MSC security desk when you enter the building
• The security guard at the front desk will call us and an NAA staff person will come meet you at the front entrance and guide you to the NAA reading room
What to expect: Logistics

- Free WiFi is available throughout the building
- Food is available for purchase in our cafeteria, open 8:00am-2:00pm
- Refrigerator and microwave are also available for visitors to use
What to expect: Research room protocols

• When you arrive we will do a quick orientation on handling archival materials and show you where any supplies you might need are located

• Not allowed at the table while doing research:
  • Food, drink, or gum
  • Pens or highlighters (pencils only)
  • Scanners
  • Tripods*
  • Personal items like bags, cases, large coats
What to expect: Research room protocols

• You are allowed (and encouraged!) to photograph materials
  • No flash
  • Please keep track of materials photographed using form provided
  • Any photos taken are for your research purposes

• If you want to publish (including online) images of NAA materials please reach out to us first – probably fine but we like to track publication usage and can let you know of any copyright issues we’re aware of
Our ceremonial room is a private space near the collections storage that is available for your use. Visitors have used this space for individual and group prayer, smudging, blessings, discussion, and rest.
Recovering Voices

Recovering Voices (RV) is a collaborative program of NMNH, NMAI, and the CFCH that partners with communities around the world to revitalize and sustain endangered languages and knowledge.

- Interdisciplinary research
- Community collaboration
- Public outreach

Community Research Program
- Provides funding & logistics support

More info at: https://naturalhistory.si.edu/research/anthropology/programs/recovering-voices

Wanapum community researchers studied a variety of fishing materials in collections including this fishing net.
Native American Community Scholars Awards

- Formally or informally affiliated with a Native American community or tribe
- Must be interested in pursuing a project related to Native American resources

More info at: [https://www.smithsonianofi.com/fellowship-opportunities/native-american-community-scholars-awards/](https://www.smithsonianofi.com/fellowship-opportunities/native-american-community-scholars-awards/)

Native American Visiting Student Awards

- Current graduate students
- Formally or informally affiliated with a Native American community or tribe
- Must be interested in pursuing an independent research project related to Native American resources

More info at: [https://www.smithsonianofi.com/fellowship-opportunities/native-american-visiting-student-awards/](https://www.smithsonianofi.com/fellowship-opportunities/native-american-visiting-student-awards/)
Searching online
How to search online:
Smithsonian Online Virtual Archives

- SOVA.SI.EDU
- Searches all archival materials at the Smithsonian’s 14 archives
- Only archival material*
How to search online: Collections Search Center

- COLLECTIONS.SI.EDU

- Searches all collections at the Smithsonian – archives, museum artifact collections, & libraries
Normally we are able to make a limited amount of research copies for people – our capacity for this depends on staff time so can vary throughout the year.

If you’re interested in requesting copies of materials, send us an email!
Digitization
Why we digitize collections

- Mission driven
- Reach newer, bigger audiences
- Expectation of public
- Feasibility
- Goodwill relationships with source communities
- Reduce handling, increase access to fragile collections
More than “slap & scan” or “point & press”

Before beginning a digitization project the Archives needs to consider these guiding questions:

- **WHAT** are we digitizing? (Are there different types of materials with specific conservation needs or layout issues?)
- **WHY** are we digitizing? (For preservation and access? Access only?)
- **WHO** are we digitizing for? (Who will use these files? What are best technical specifications are required for this use?)
- **HOW** will digital assets be managed and stored?
- **WHAT** are barriers to Open Access? (copyright, cultural patrimony, cultural sensitivity? Other ethical or legal issues?)
- **HOW** are we digitizing? (In-house or outside vendor?)
And then consider...

- Staff and Time
  - Pre-digitization conservation or other treatment
  - Digitization expertise and testing OR
  - Evaluating and selecting vendor
  - Project management

- Imaging environment
  - Space
  - Lights
  - Monitor and CPU
  - Digitization hardware and software

**BOTTOM LINE:** TIME AND $$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$$
Access to digitized collections

• Small, on-demand requests for existing high-resolution image files fulfilled as staff time and technological limitations allow
• There’s a form for that!

• If you don’t see it online, it usually means no high res file currently exists - but always ASK!
Loans
Loans

The Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), loans objects from its collections for temporary exhibits to qualifying museums. While the Department’s goal is to accommodate
Get in touch!

Gina Rappaport  
*Photo Archivist*

Katherine Crowe  
*Reference Archivist*

Daisy Njoku  
*Media Archivist*

RappaportG@si.edu  
CroweK@si.edu  
NjokuD@si.edu  
NAA@si.edu  
301-238-1310