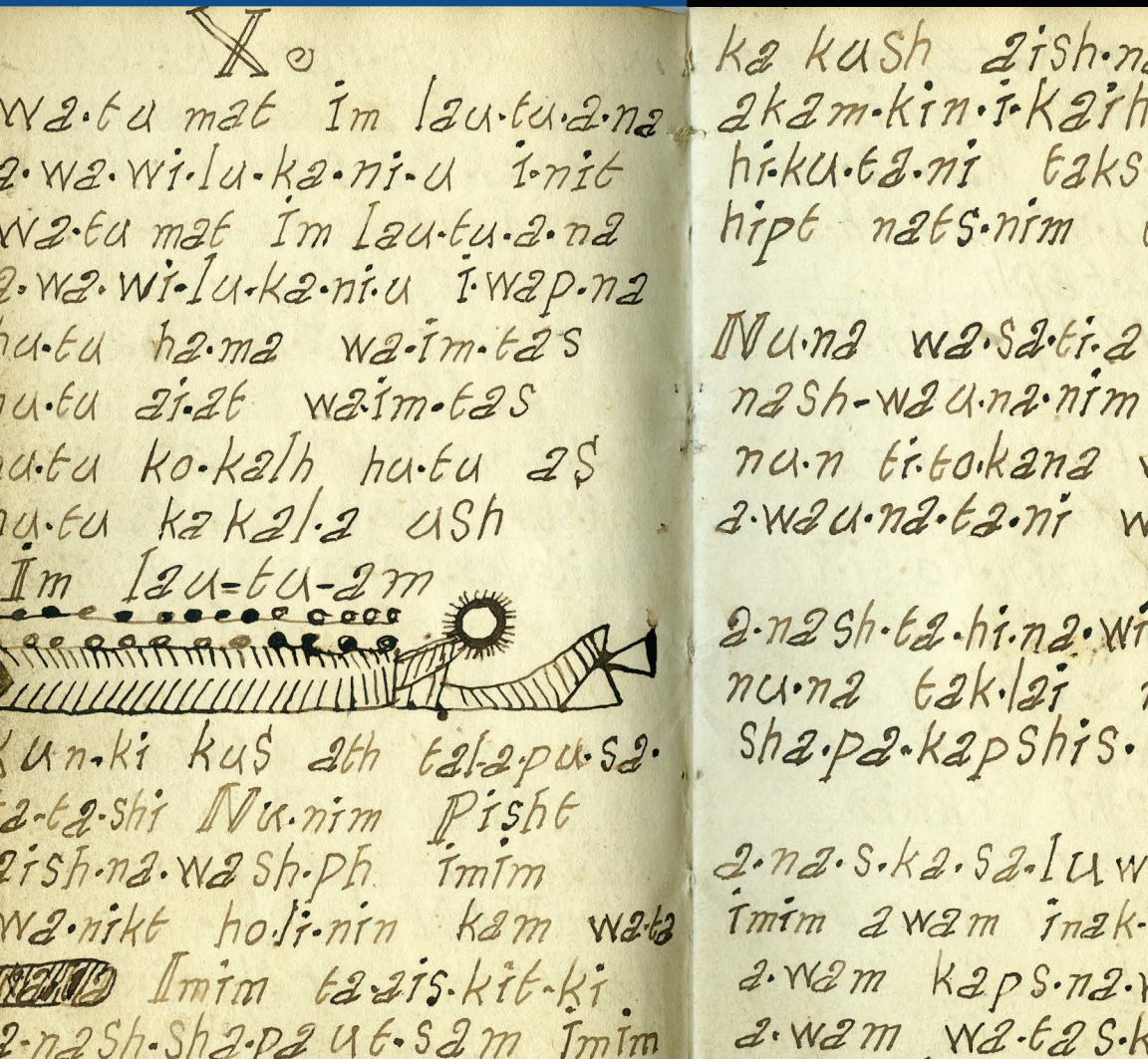
Indigenous Languages and the Promise of Archives

Edited by ADRIANNA LINK, ABIGAIL SHELTON, and PATRICK SPERO



INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND THE PROMISE OF ARCHIVES

New Visions in Native American and Indigenous Studies

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Indigenous Languages and the Promise of Archives

EDITED BY ADRIANNA LINK,
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PREFACE

Brian Carpenter

The American Philosophical Society (APS), located in Philadelphia, resides in the broader region of Lenapehoking, the homelands of past, present, and future generations of the Lenape people. Since its founding in 1743, the APS has benefited from its occupation of this Lenape land. One of the main ways it has done so is in availing itself of the area's long-standing use as a meeting ground and place of exchange for people from many Native nations. This tradition began long before the arrival of European settlers, continued through the early colonial periods (when the APS got started), and continues to this day in gatherings such as the one that brought together the chapters in this volume.

On October 13–15, 2016, the Center for Native American and Indigenous Research (CNAIR) at the APS hosted Translating across Time and Space: Endangered Languages, Cultural Revitalization, and the Work of History, a symposium that drew together university- and Indigenous community–based scholars in multiple areas of expertise, including Indigenous-language speakers, activists, and teachers, from throughout North America. The symposium's themes centered on the reclamation, preservation, and restoration of Indigenous languages, both historically and in the present day; practices surrounding translation and translators over the last five centuries; the work of language and cultural revitalization; and models for collaboration in all of these areas. The

symposium coincided with the APS Museum's 2016 exhibition, *Gathering Voices: Thomas Jefferson and Native America*, which told the history of the study of Indigenous languages of North America through manuscripts, images, and audio from the APS Library.

The APS served as a fitting venue for the conversations that animated this symposium, given its key role in that history, as a site and symbol of settler-colonial intellectual power, and its present-day initiatives in decolonizing its practices through establishing equitable relationships with the Indigenous communities that now constitute the majority of researchers utilizing the Indigenous archival materials it houses.[1] The APS Library is the oldest and one of the largest repositories in North America of materials on the languages, cultures, histories, and continuing presence of Indigenous people of the Americas. Its activities in this area first emerged from the interests of Thomas Jefferson, president of the APS from 1797 to 1815, who created printed lists of words he surmised would be universal to all languages and sent them to military officers, diplomats, and missionaries he knew would interact with Native people. By comparing these lists, he hoped to intuit historical "affinities" among Native nations—in part for purposes of military intelligence—from which he developed federal Indian policies that enabled war and genocide over the coming decades. One of his main successors at the APS, the linguist Peter Stephen Du Ponceau, encouraged Jefferson and others to give manuscripts of this kind to the APS Library, making Du Ponceau the first archivist of documents in Indigenous languages in the United States. As a result the APS became the main repository and research center in North America for information on Indigenous languages of the Americas. After Du Ponceau's death in 1844, a century passed at the APS with little activity in this area, until the collections were next transformed in 1945 by the acquisition of the papers of the influential anthropologist Franz Boas, along with much of the main linguistic and ethnographic manuscripts of many of his contemporaries and students. The collections have continued to grow since then, with the addition of papers by more generations of anthropologists, ethnographers, linguists, and other researchers, as well as materials produced from fieldwork sponsored by APS. The collections now consist

of about 1,900 linear feet of manuscripts, photographs, and audiovisual materials relating to over 650 Indigenous cultures of the Americas, dating from 1553 to 2019.

Settler-colonial expansion, carried out especially through the sustained processes of land theft and resource extraction, generated the presumption of imminent Indigenous disappearance. This presumption motivated—and, in many cases, directly enabled—researchers to document Indigenous languages. The decisions to house this information permanently in an archive often were made separately, and by different people, but with the related rationale that its value as an object of study could be retained over time for researchers active in the ongoing development of Euro-American academic disciplines. Counter to these expectations, Native communities have been using these materials at the APS and other archival institutions for decades, despite formidable barriers to access, including the remoteness of these repositories from the communities where the knowledge originated.

The APS established the CNAIR in 2014 as a division of the library, devoted to assisting people in finding its extensive archival materials and utilizing them in innovative ways that honor Indigenous knowledge, cultivate scholarship, and strengthen languages and knowledge traditions. This work was made possible by the vision of CNAIR's late founding director, Timothy Powell, who emphasized the importance of understanding Native communities not merely as subject matter, but as core constituencies of the library and as intellectual authorities on the knowledge residing within it.

A key part of the development of CNAIR was the writing and formal adoption of the APS's "Protocols for the Treatment of Indigenous Materials," created by the library's Native American Advisory Board.[2] Through guidance from Indigenous community authorities, these protocols provide guidelines for the identification and protection of culturally sensitive information, as well as for the way the APS can and should consult with and establish relationships with these communities. Since 2008 CNAIR has shared digitized materials with over 150 Indigenous communities and currently maintains ongoing relationships with about 60 Indigenous communities throughout the continent.

These developments are not at all unique to the APS, but indicate a broader—and still quite incomplete—shift in the archival profession, as well as in memory institutions and related academic disciplines. Institutions such as the APS participating in this broader shift should not get credit for coming to these insights independently, as these initiatives in fact reflect an overdue response to a need that has long been expressed by Native communities.

In considering the insights of the scholars in this volume, we should also recognize the agency in archival material themselves, as well as the caretakers of that knowledge who communicated it. The promise and power of archives lies in the fact that the materials that comprise them are not passive, regardless of what we may propose that we ought to do to them or for them. These materials, whatever their documentary form, were created with an original intention (or intentions) about what they were meant to document, and suppositions about what preserving them in an archival setting would signify over time. The subsequent life they have had in an archive might be one in which they have experienced good company or solitude, prestige or neglect, safety or duress, hospitality or confinement, or many other ambivalent combinations of conditions. Nonetheless, in their archival setting, they also garner a power—one we often see them exert—to communicate messages that not only differ from what they were originally thought to convey, but that often directly subvert those original suppositions. We can look at the iconic examples of Jefferson's word lists and Boas's notebooks, recorded in part to chronicle disappearances that were presumed to be imminent and final. As records now used by those same Indigenous communities, they demonstrate instead the perseverance and continuity of those Indigenous intellectual traditions in the midst of the ongoing pressure of settler colonialism. Moreover, in our work as archivists, we frequently witness these communities exercising the authority of their expertise by critiquing the archival record, such as noting gaps and shortcomings in the understanding of the outside researcher who did not convey the context or import of the knowledge that was communicated to them. As many descendants of these knowledge keepers have attested, this knowledge was also communicated through these

unwitting outsiders to future generations of kin who could understand it and use it properly.

Archives, like the materials that reside in them, are not passive entities. However, their agency is different from that of their residents, whose messages they cannot ultimately control, even if they fancy that they should make the attempt. As an archive with materials in over five hundred Indigenous languages, the APS Library is a place where a lot of talking is happening in and among the rows and rows of archival boxes. Rather than thinking solely in terms of people trying to find knowledge in the archives, we should also see another kind of activity: that the knowledge in the archives itself is trying to find the people it needs.

NOTES

1. For a fuller treatment of the scope and outcome of these initiatives, see Brian Carpenter, "Archival Initiatives for the Indigenous Collections at the American Philosophical Society," *Society of American Archivists Case Studies on Access Policies for Native American Archival Materials*, 2019, https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/Case_1_Archival_Initiatives_for_Indiginous_Collections.pdf; and Timothy B. Powell, "Digital Knowledge Sharing: Forging Partnerships between Scholars, Archives, and Indigenous Communities," *Museum Anthropology Review* 10, no. 2 (2016): 66–90.
2. "The American Philosophical Society: Protocols for the Treatment of Indigenous Materials," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 158, no. 4 (2014): 411–20.

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Powell, Timothy B. "Digital Knowledge Sharing: Forging Partnerships between Scholars, Archives, and Indigenous Communities." *Museum Anthropology Review* 10, no. 2 (2016): 66–90.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The chapters in this volume first took shape as part of an international conference on the topic of endangered Native American and Indigenous languages held at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 13–15, 2016. This conference, Translating Across Time and Space: Endangered Languages, Cultural Revitalization, and the Work of History, brought together scholars, archivists, librarians, knowledge keepers, Elders, and community leaders from across the United States and Canada to discuss the ways technology can help archives, scholars, and Indigenous communities preserve and revitalize endangered languages and cultural practices.

We are grateful to the conference organizers and committee members (especially Elizabeth Ellis and Bethany Wiggin), and to all who participated in the event for generating the rich discussions that make up the core of this publication. We additionally thank the Wolf Humanities Center at the University of Pennsylvania, and its director, James English, for partnering with the Society to host the proceedings. We also acknowledge the APS's facilities staff, including Nikolai Goripow, Donna Stumm, Jeremy Schoenrock, Todd Schoenrock, and Christina Schoenrock, for their work in ensuring a smooth conference experience.

The work is also indebted to the curatorial team responsible for the Society's 2016 exhibition *Gathering Voices: Thomas Jefferson and Native*

America. Led by APS museum director emerita Merrill Mason, this team consisted of Andrew W. Mellon Foundation postdoctoral curatorial fellows Lynette Regouby and Diana E. Marsh, who, with invaluable support from Mary Grace Wahl, associate director for collections and exhibitions, and exhibition advisors Margaret Bruchac (Abenaki) and Richard W. Hill Sr. (Tuscarora), researched and developed exhibition content that helped inspire the conference's themes.

Many APS staff members also assisted with this project, including Brenna Holland, assistant to the librarian; Mary McDonald, director of APS Publications; Bayard Miller, head of digital scholarship; and Joseph DiLullo, reference and digital services specialist. The editors are likewise appreciative of Matthew Bokovoy, Heather Stauffer, and Ann Baker at the University of Nebraska Press, who helped push the volume through during its final stages of development.

In acknowledging the contributions of APS staff, this volume would have been impossible without the efforts of Timothy Powell and Brian Carpenter. Under the tenure of librarian Martin Levitt and with the support of grants from the Getty Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, they worked to digitize and share photographs, audio recordings, and other cultural and linguistic materials housed within the APS Library in collaboration with the communities from which they originated—what we now call "digital knowledge sharing." Building on this work, in 2014 the library created the Center for Native American and Indigenous Research (CNAIR) to assist people in discovering and utilizing the library's archival materials related to the languages and traditions of over 650 different cultures throughout the Americas. Now an endowed center, thanks to generous support from donors and the National Endowment of the Humanities, CNAIR staff continue to find innovative ways to honor Indigenous knowledge, cultivate scholarship, and strengthen languages and cultural traditions. May this volume serve as a testament to the lasting impact of CNAIR and its continued work in building relations.

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND THE PROMISE OF ARCHIVES

Introduction

Collaborative Research and Language Revitalization: Toward a Relational Ontology across Time and Space

Regna Darnell

The obligation to consider the world and one's place within it in terms of seven generations from the speaker—or actor, as the Anishinaabeg idiom puts it—is a rich metaphor widely deployed by Indigenous communities across Turtle Island. It firmly situates the present as evolving in continuity with a past that has ongoing consequences and continuously merges into the future. The present is an arbitrary snapshot with a fleeting existence in time, meaningful only when the consequences of present action are framed in reflexive terms across the expanding temporal reaches of personal, community, and global history. Human persons have a unique moral responsibility and accountability to live in harmony with (and, sometimes, to speak for as well as with) "all my relations" across the space of their territories. Each being or species is enjoined to act in accordance with its particular nature—that is, the world is structured spatially as well as temporally in terms of obligations and responsibilities extending from interpersonal behaviour to community sovereignty. This convergence is achieved by extending the metaphors of kinship, in sharp contrast to the entitlement taken for granted by the majority culture of the nation-state to unilaterally impose forms of governance, ownership, and law. Kinship crosses lines of species as well as of culture, ethnicity, race, gender, and other shibboleths that divide potential communities of fruitful interchange. From an Indigenous

perspective, kinship is about the possibilities—indeed, necessities—of effective communication guided by ongoing relationships of respect and negotiation of conflict to produce agreement about the best way to move forward in a spirit of consensus. In Indigenous thought acts of agreement are arrived at through resolution of conflict.

This volume emerged from a conference held at the American Philosophical Society (APS) in 2016 that posed the all too rarely asked question of what Native American and Indigenous research would look like if initially considered, as it is above, from the multiple and complex standpoints of the communities whose very survival is entailed by the decisions we make together. Archives are called upon to cede at least some of their authority as "experts" and learn to listen to unfamiliar and often uncomfortable perspectives arising from a very different, community-based expertise.

The APS has long historical precedent for a central role in this reimagining of Indigenous-settler relations. To be sure, when Benjamin Franklin established the APS in 1743 "for the pursuit of useful knowledge," or when Thomas Jefferson amassed the world's largest collection of "Indian" vocabularies extant at the turn of the nineteenth century, they could not have envisioned—and would doubtless have been dismayed by—the forms of radical change considered by the contributors to this volume, who are situated in another time and place. Nonetheless, that early work laid a solid foundation on which contemporary scholars and Indigenous communities continue to build, modifying its legacy irreversibly in the process. Continuity and revolution move into the future hand in hand.

The APS is far from the only institution to have followed such a path. Collaborative work on Indigenous language revitalization is sprouting up in many places and with many variations. Institutions discussed in the following chapters include the Beinecke Library at Yale University, the University of British Columbia, the Smithsonian Institution, the Minnesota Historical Society, the American Museum of Natural History, the Milwaukee Indian Community School, and the California-based Breath of Life workshops. This list is arbitrary in the sense that conference organizers selected projects whose abstracts best corresponded with the APS vision of the intersections of language revitalization programs, collaboration

with Indigenous communities, and the changing role of archives and the documents they hold. In the preface to this volume, Brian Carpenter describes the emergence of this perspective at the APS, as does Gwyneira Isaac, in chapter 13, for the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History. Isaac reviews the history of the Museum's collecting and research priorities to illustrate changing relationships of potential users to "the same" material objects. Discrete context and interpretative framework render them different as a result of the relationships they encapsulate. Historicism is needed to avoid distortion of the stories the objects tell over time and the implications for contemporary use.

A critical mass of evidence presented in these chapters suggests that such work is growing rapidly in importance and visibility across Indian country and that the diversity of perspectives exemplified in this volume could serve and perhaps is already serving as a model for others. Archives, libraries, and museums are highly motivated to pursue collaborative projects with Indigenous communities, because funding institutions increasingly insist on prior consent and ongoing participation, as opposed to nominal inclusion at the end of the research. Increasingly, institutions apply their own protocols for the handling of relations with Indigenous communities; many have come to view themselves less as owners than as stewards of Indigenous materials. Such emerging goals, of course, require balancing with the legitimate interests of longer-established non-Indigenous publics and targeting collaborative educational programs. This volume reflects sharing of the experiences of seeking such balance on the part of many institutions and communities.

Ample evidence attests that programs imposed from the top down do not work. In the first chapter Jane Anderson and James E. Francis Sr. describe the fate of Penobscot tapes recorded by linguist Frank Siebert and duly returned to the community only to be shelved as family property, kept separate from everyday life and unable to mitigate the accelerating rate of language loss in the community. The response was totally different when an oral approach to the same textual materials drew upon the revival aspirations of some community members to reinstate the oral transmission of significant knowledge through revitalizing their traditional language. Rather than feel guilty over having lost their

language, speakers could now take pride in their status as language learners, accepting that this is an ongoing process as they grew into roles requiring greater fluency throughout the life cycle. This is the traditional age-graded mode of learning and acquiring knowledge: it applies the principles of Indigenous pedagogies to strengthen the resolve of those who work toward language revitalization.

The variability of the projects designed to "reawaken" heritage languages responds to widely differing local agendas for their urgent preservation. On the surface this diversity may appear somewhat haphazard, but, when participants come together, they recognize a common cause that enables them to share experiences arising from similar historical factors as well as common cultural traditions. Each local context reflects unique ways of tying language to land, and the studies presented here are exemplary of a much wider field. They span the geographic range of North America: Penobscot, Mi'kmaw, Maliceet, Oneida, and Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe) in the Northeast; Cherokee and Yuchi in the Southeast; Nimiipuu (Nez Perce), Menominee, Dakota, and Plains sign language in the interior; Hopi in the Southwest; Diidxaza (Zapotec) in Mexico; Heiltsuk (Bella Bella), Upper St'at'imc (Salish), and Gwich'in in the West.[1]

Each of these languages claims communities and individuals that identify with them and aspire to speak them, or to speak them again. They suffer degrees of endangerment ranging from declining use among young people, accelerating loss of the last generation of first-language speakers, and "reawakening" of languages long pronounced "extinct" by outsiders but understood as merely "sleeping" by the communities and individuals themselves. We must make no mistake: *all Indigenous communities have suffered protracted trauma and loss that cannot be measured in quantitative terms*. Although the challenges of this contemporary reality are particular to each community, each situation is crucially important to speakers and their descendants and thus holds equal significance in the collective project.

The studies brought together here represent the collaborative language revitalization work of community members, local scholars, and both local and national institutions. They range from single-scholar enterprises to

large collaborative teams that draw on emerging technologies to enhance both the programs and the collaborations that sustain them. Many of the contributors are themselves Indigenous, reflecting a gathering momentum of building internal capacity to pursue community goals in locally appropriate ways. Richard A. Grounds (Yuchi) describes how his own work is rooted in his community; Bernard C. Perley, Margaret Ann Noodin, and Cary Miller are themselves Indigenous academics; James E. Francis Sr. (Penobscot), Glenn M. Wasicuna (Dakota), Craig Mishler (Gwch'in); Kayla Begay and Cheryl Tuttle (Wailaki), Jennifer Carpenter, Gerry Lawson, and Kim Lawson (Heiltsuk), and Annie Guerin (Musqueam) collaborate with scholars to interpret and translate older materials, as well as render them accessible. Scholars working on collaborative projects under the direction and priorities of communities include Sarah Carmen Moritz (Upper St'at'imc), Lisa Conathan (Cherokee, Mi'kmaw), Anne Keary (Nimiipuu), Sarah Snyder Hopkins (Cherokee), and Gwyneira Isaac (Hopi, Diidxasa, Wauja, Wanapumin, Anishinaabeg).

The volume sets out a cross-cutting agenda of intersecting variables that operate across time and space; the uniqueness of the collective project consists precisely in these juxtapositions. We call for mindful communication across customary silos of institution, disciplinary training, community identity, and local political alignment on the place of language revitalization in envisioned futures. By putting these variables into conversation with one another, the sum of the contributions belies any simple understanding of what is at stake or an arrival at any single approach that will apply in all cases.

The variability is far from random and lessons can be drawn from one case to another (see Darnell commentary in part 5)—a point to which we will return. Features are shared across cases in recombinant forms that do not fall into simple types; each combination is unique. Learning from the experience of others requires adapting their experience to one's own context and building a collaborative network that includes institutions with resources to support goals of linguistic and cultural revitalization as a route to language sovereignty. Because the language "belongs to" the speakers and their descendants, they claim jurisdiction over both language and its capacity to serve as a systematic mode of thought expressing the

cultural heritage encoded in it as an ongoing resource for communities moving into their future.

Decolonization in the Context of Language Revitalization

The opening chapter by Anderson and Francis frames the task of language revitalization as decolonization, a general label for the dramatic societal changes required in both private and public spheres in pursuit of social equity and historical redress. Systemic discrimination and marginalization continue to operate at all levels of contemporary neocolonial or postcolonial society, often below the level of consciousness. The greatest challenge for Indigenous people may well be the burden of "double consciousness" (a term adopted from pioneer African American sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois), whereby marginalized individuals and communities view themselves through the demeaning eyes of others.[2] The hierarchical categorizing habits of colonialism must be unlearned by both colonizer and colonized.

Turning from decolonization as a theoretical construct to its emergence from grassroots experience, Richard A. Grounds describes in chapter 2 his personal journey to decolonize language revitalization in his Yuchi community in terms of the community's evolving understanding of the role the language plays in contemporary identity. In line with the seven generations admonition to responsibility cited above, he identifies the urgency and lost opportunity he felt twenty-five years ago while working with the last generation of Elders raised by their monolingual grandparents. At that time, many community members were hesitant to speak the language because they felt unequipped to handle the "powerful things" encoded in it. After many years of searching for records of the language in institutions and private hands, Grounds found himself working archivally with linguistic codes that were devoid of authority because they were isolated from the contemporary Yuchi community. Today there is an acute awareness of what can still be recovered, and active collaboration is underway to develop pedagogical materials.

Grounds provides a powerful analysis of the contrast between colonial agendas and the priorities of descendant communities. On the one hand, he castigates scholars of prior generations, including Thomas Jefferson's

duplicitous collection of information intended to facilitate alienation of Native lands and Franz Boas's unwavering commitment to the salvage paradigm of the vanishing Indian. On the other hand, he contends that the resulting documents can be decoupled from the "salvage linguicide" of their "racist moorings." Community collaboration enables new ways of thinking about the uses of materials in the archives, and it would be counterproductive not to bring all available resources to bear on the task at hand.

The Canadian national imaginary is somewhat different; Indigenous issues are closer to the surface of public life. Canada's recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) acknowledges an urgent national crisis to repair the broken relationship between Native and non-Native people (see chapters 4 and 9). Activism is never far from the surface, and national research institutions such as Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council facilitate collaborations through its funding priorities and mandatory ethical protocols. Anthropologist Michael Asch argues persuasively that we are all treaty people, "here to stay" and bound by the treaties to live in a civil, orderly fashion with the First People who welcomed settlers to share their land and taught them how to live well alongside their hosts.[3] For Indigenous people, in contrast, the primary issue is healing; they are already well aware of injustices suffered and their ongoing consequences.[4]

Decolonization is the overarching theoretical framework of the volume, but the contributors address it in very particular ways, rendering its abstract workings intelligible through language revitalization programs in specific communities and tracing the relationships of these programs and the state-of-the-art technologies on which they are based to other Indigenous communities and to their settler neighbors. The shared relational and collaborative standpoint supports the efforts of all these individuals and communities to change the circumstances within which they operate and to move beyond the ongoing consequences of shared colonial histories. Transformative action is needed to challenge practices deeply embedded in capitalism and its institutions, and the urgency of language revitalization projects must be seen in this context. *Language is more than itself*: it stands in for the need to respond creatively

and contextually in local terms, to adopt what Audra Simpson calls "an active refusal of the colonial order of things."[5]

The success of any project contains conditions of possibility. It requires language documentation available from a variety of sources, each of which can be assessed for its partial contribution to the intended goals. None of the existing resources can be taken at face value, but assessment of convergent evidence from multiple sources uses the strengths and weaknesses of each source to balance others and to fill gaps in the cumulative record. This can be done by activating knowledge still residing within the contemporary community as well as by making informed inferences from the comparison of prior records and by analogy from closely related languages. A linguistic purist, whether Indigenous or not, might argue that the language can never be brought back in precisely the same form that it was spoken in some idealized golden age in the past. This is of course true, but it does not invalidate the contemporary product. All languages change over time; distinct dialects develop as speech communities are divided by migration, colonial history, or environmental change. To freeze "the language" in some hypothetical form is effectively to declare it dead.

The difficulties of assessing past materials are myriad. The grammatical structures of most traditional languages of Turtle Island are agglutinative or polysynthetic—that is, fluent speakers produce nuanced verbal constructions that would require whole phrases or sentences in English. To consider each newly attested form as a separate "word" entails distorting the combinatorial capacities of these languages when they are spoken well. The expert speaker, usually one whose skills have been honed over a lifetime, marks personal pronouns, tense or modality (the latter being more common and focusing attention on the state of becoming, of action that is fluid and emergent), and location (on land and thus in space) within the verb. An adequate translation must be both linguistic and cultural.[6]

Language has a peculiar status in relation to the discipline of anthropology; it has been subject to far less critique than cultural anthropology or archaeology. Although there is considerable difference of opinion within communities, some members of many communities are willing—indeed

eager—to collaborate with archives, museums, and libraries, despite their status as colonial institutions. The Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums (ATALM), arising from Indigenous initiative, draws together Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars based in tribal archives, libraries, and museums. The Great Lakes Research Alliance for the Study of Aboriginal Arts and Cultures (GRASAC), a research network established by Ruth Phillips in 2012, links multiple partners, as does the California-based Breath of Life language revitalization workshops organized by Leanne Hinton. Growing resources enhance potential communication and innovation for particular projects.

This volume as a whole emphasizes the necessity for bold experiments that take action now on behalf of further generations. The proviso is always in place, however, that "some" members of every community are in strong support, while others are not. The views of those who do not see language revitalization as realistic or as a priority must be respected. Decision-making based on consensus allows space for variability and for each individual's autonomy to decide on what it means to be Indigenous at the present time.

Early in the development of the APS protocols for ethical collaborative relationships (see Miller commentary in part 1, and the preface by Carpenter), one community signed a memorandum of understanding, adding a codicil expressing their belief that, although its wording contradicted their own sense of sovereignty, they were signing because they wanted to pursue the relationship even though the terms were not entirely to their liking.[7] Compromise is often the key to successful collaboration. Not every situation of language loss lends itself to revitalization agendas; other urgent priorities may take precedence in a particular community (e.g., treaty negotiations, land rights, sovereignty, environmental protection). But, surprisingly frequently, language is the primary site of contestation and revitalization. Language stands for all that has been lost through colonial policies of genocide and assimilation, with residential schools punishing children for speaking their language and separating them from their families and communities. Contemporary activists for language revitalization believe that their language expresses an inalienable tie between personal and community identity and the particular

land that constitutes the traditional territory. The underlying concepts cannot be expressed directly in English. Miscommunication abounds, with frustration on all sides.

The language belongs to the community. Consequently, many such programs are open only to tribal members and language teachers. Priorities often have to be set because resources are scarce and must be rationed for maximal effect. Other communities have the internal capacity to be more open to the additional commitment of sharing their knowledge in the interests of enhanced cross-cultural communication. Museum and exhibit partnerships illustrate the potentials (see chapters 10 and 13, and Marsh commentary in part 3).

The Projects

The particular projects are the sine qua non of testing the productivity of collaboration across long-established barriers of institutional cultures holding seemingly incommensurable positions. Chapters were selected to exemplify the myriad challenges attending successful mobilization of language programs through community-level collaboration. Because they are locally grounded, these projects are highly diverse in their details. Limitations and failures are as instructive as the nascent successes. All are immersed in a process whose end point cannot yet be known. Nonetheless, variables recur in the experience of various projects that attest to the potentials for transportable knowledge, for learning from one another's experience (see Darnell commentary in part 5). In a parallel vein, Jennifer R. O'Neal (commentary in part 6) highlights the extensive existing collections and research that preserve "Indigenous history and ways of knowing and thereby leave space for communities to tell their stories for future generations in the way they want them told" as a product of the collaborative language revitalization projects.

Recovering Voices

Telling stories as they are meant to be told by Indigenous users of archives entails hearing familiar words differently, often nonliterally. Indigenous cultural and spiritual knowledge is protected by its holders from inappropriate and potentially dangerous access to powerful forces. Metaphor is

also a mode of explanation for those prepared to adapt literal meanings to other circumstances where their relevance is applicable; Bethany Wiggin identifies an "everyday tactic" available to the disenfranchised to preserve the standpoint at the basis of contemporary identity. Sometimes the writers of the documents encode their understandings in metaphoric terms; in other cases, contemporary Indigenous users call upon the metaphorical richness of their traditional knowledge to render older materials accessible and generative. Many chapters in this volume illustrate the depth of the gulf between Western and Indigenous ways of seeing. All remain optimistic that listeners can learn to see and hear differently to voices of revitalization, even in translation.

Missionaries have often been the source of documents that require contextualization for contemporary use by multiple audiences that may hold conflicting purposes. In chapter 7 Anne Keary describes a Nimiipuu (Nez Perce) language primer superficially created to "share stories to create relationships." Missionaries worked collaboratively on pedagogical materials to teach the language at the local level, intending this as an interim measure to facilitate conversion. Their overall commentary, however, subverted local pride in the language by undermining the local rationale for participation—that is, to preserve the traditional way of life. By relying on the Trickster cycle of Coyote stories, the community was able to link the traditional and the Christian religions. The missionary commentary on these narratives, however, framed them as untrue and therefore emblematic of the limitations of Nimiipuu thought. That "a Coyote is just a Coyote" may have been a position intelligible to those who funded missionary research, but it was deeply offensive to the Nimiipuu community. Contemporary Elders assisted by a linguist are now excavating this material in order to decolonize its layers of evangelical ideology and reinstate the authority of the local knowledge intended by the creators of this material.

In chapter 11 Sara Snyder Hopkins describes a parallel endeavor for missionary Samuel Wooster's Cherokee singing book in which the 1846 text, whether consciously or not, envisioned a two-stage process of adopting traditional Cherokee words while simultaneously incorporating layers of meaning that would gradually supersede the Cherokee worldview.

Power-laden ideological asymmetries reflected the cross-purposes of missionary interpretation and translation. Contemporary Cherokee Elders, however, reclaim the conceptual world of music and sound from the archive. Elder and academic Tom Belt emphasizes the incommensurability of the binary choice the missionaries posed between Christianity and traditional religion and contrasts it to the Cherokee acceptance of plural systems of thought that legitimately vary across contexts and individuals within the Cherokee community. He explains that when medicine men use polyvalent linguistics signs, they are comfortable with pragmatic slippage: "the jagged edges of meaning" implicit in a living language. In Belt's theory of Cherokee sound, metaphors bridge ontological worlds. Sound is water which is liquid and flexible enough to carry plural meanings; the concept of *covenant* evokes a belt, his own name, that can lead to the solidifying and connecting of relations, hence to effective cross-cultural communication. Sounds have life: they seek balance and recognize each other. He teaches this system of musical thought as it manifests in art classes, a medicine garden, and field schools, employing the language through everyday living rather than formal language classes. The relationships implicit in Belt's approach would have startled the missionary who saw the communication as a one-way process in which the Cherokee would inevitably yield to Christian ways of thinking (see also Harvey, chapter 6, and the preface by Carpenter).

In contrast to Snyder Hopkins's collaborative teaching and research in the Cherokee community for many years, Lisa Conathan approaches Cherokee language revitalization as an outsider scholar enhancing the potentials inherent in its "vernacular literacy" (since the invention of the Cherokee syllabary by Sequoiah around 1820). Because Cherokee language is still in active use, the Beinecke Library developed an open corpus with access controlled by the Cherokee collaborators. Multiple genres are represented, and Cherokee concerns for the secrecy of highly sensitive medical and magical formulae are often implicitly protected in archived documents by "arcane word play"; the encoded knowledge is not intelligible to those without the prior esoteric knowledge to interpret it. Interests of preservation and access often appear to be in conflict, and the transfer of control over access to the Cherokee themselves has been

a gradual process. Curators at the Beinecke acknowledge their lack of expertise to manage such materials; a result of the collaboration, therefore, they have learned much about the meaning of the documents in their stewardship. Similar negotiations of relationship are taking place in many institutions today. The growth of tribal museums in part through repatriation and reclamation of "belongings" removed from communities also contributes to a new sense of collaboration on a more balanced and symmetrical basis.

Conathan contrasts the Cherokee situation to that of Mi'kmaw hieroglyphics that come to the Beinecke as a small, closed, esoteric set of materials for Catholic worship. A digitally enabled closed corpus allows for precise and detailed analysis. Each collaboration has its own parameters, to which institutional practices must adapt differently, depending on the circumstances and the objectives of their community partners in revisiting the archived materials. As Brian Carpenter notes in the preface, Indigenous partners are increasingly the primary constituency of the contemporary archive.

Varied documents can be deployed to recover voice for contemporary revitalization agendas. In chapter 8 Gwen A. Westerman and Glenn M. Wasicuna examine Dakota letters written from prison after the Sioux uprising of 1862 and subsequent removal, to explore how images of this group of people, including their self-images, have changed over time. The letters provide a rare glimpse of the standpoint of the Dakota—who are most often represented in the academic literature through the eyes of missionaries and government agents—speaking in their own words to an audience sharing their cultural world. The question of sincerity or good faith was taken for granted by Indigenous parties to the treaties and sometimes by treaty commissioners, even though the latter were likely to be overruled by their political superiors.[8] In the Nimiipuu case, treaty interpreters failed to translate much of what was said during the negotiations, a process Diana E. Marsh (see commentary in part 3) characterizes as "epistemicide." Until quite recently, only the written record has been considered authoritative. Language revitalization—recovering information from oral history—has been vital to acknowledging the knowledge encoded in the stories and teachings that are passed down

through generations. The current Nimiipuu project is grounded on traditional territory, with an advisory board of speakers, language teachers, and a digital archaeologist: a critical mass of expertise producing a first-person narrative accessible to nonspeakers within the community. Wasicuna's fluency in multiple registers in both Nimiipuu and English enables him to provide both a text in colloquial English and a linguistic analysis.

Gwyneira Isaac, in chapter 13, situates the natural history context of collecting at the Smithsonian Institution within a contemporary pedagogical context at the National Museum of Natural History. The work of her Smithsonian colleague Gabriela Perez-Baez on Diidxaza (Zapotec) provides a rich database of botanical specimens that function as "critical stimuli" to recover and generate Zapotec knowledge, which rests on different classificatory principles and is intended for different uses than the standard Linnean system. For example, the architecture of the tree provides a classificatory principle inaccessible to collectors without access to traditional knowledge. The project is an activist one, its "analytic outputs" geared to sensitizing local children to loss of biodiversity, and the "convergent history" of the museum's salvage paradigm intersects with new critical research traditions. This critique allows older materials to bring their encoded knowledge forward into the present in ways accessible to the communities of their origin.

There is an implicit plurality in the museum's project, in that the Zapotec constitute a multisited audience for the recuperation of plant knowledge that cannot be adequately explored in a single research site. In this context, Bethany Wiggin (see commentary in part 2) emphasizes the "reparative" potential of the museum as a site for an ethical redefinition of relations between collections and the descendants of their providers. She argues that translation offers the possibility to create an "equivalence" of status of plural knowledges. Weak parties to power relations are often best poised to lead in ethical transformation.

Drawing on the collections of the Smithsonian Institution, Isaac's oral history project on Hopi pottery documents the physical experience of potting to engage younger generations of learners with the materials and the processes of traditional weaving. In the conference version of this chapter, Isaac describes how Hopi potters from First Mesa think with traditional

conceptual frames and bring them into present-day practice. Pottery actively nurtures the whole person because it is "cosmologically charged." These potters practice the traditional Hopi protocol of "paying back" to underwrite outreach to non-Indigenous audiences through establishing reciprocal relations; they place traditional Hopi theories and practices about pottery, design, aesthetics, ethics, and the social value of shared work into a potential shared space, inviting Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to learn together. Isaac argues that the project transcends locality by using the resources of the national museum to enhance the field of communication beyond the local in an open-ended collaboration.

A different set of pragmatic metaphors is employed by Craig Mishler and Kenneth Frank in chapter 14 to convey the endangered way of life within the migration area of the Porcupine Caribou Herd for Alaskan and Yukon Elders. Bilingual texts present traditional stories about the intersection of human and caribou relations over time. Through "slow reflexive" translation aimed at conveying verbal art consistent with Gwich'in word mechanics and way of life alongside these "intelligent animals," Mishler's base metaphor for translation is that of "tools and grease mechanics." Traditional knowledge is balanced with his personal experience of living on the land. Mishler often consults his wife and finds that she has a different reading of the same traditional material; it is impossible to judge whether her view is an individual variation or more broadly characteristic of Gwich'in women. Working as a team, Mishler and Frank apply a "fix-it" approach to adjusting translation until it works in both languages for each of them. The pedagogical lessons are in the details—for example, body parts of the caribou were initially awkward in translation because they worked from naturalistic anatomical diagrams. But the Gwich-in do not understand caribou anatomy in natural science terms; rather, they meet and deal respectfully with flesh and blood of the recently living prey. A reconstituted anatomical diagram more accurately reflects the Gwich'in conception.

Transforming Relationships

Although most of the chapters primarily address particular projects, generalizations emerge, primarily from overlaps and contrasts. Many

authors also attend to theoretical context and the role that Indigenous languages of the Americas have played in the American national imaginary and in the way the New World has been perceived by the Old. Contemporary interest in indigeneity extends beyond the Americas, and former colonial subjects around the globe are eager to explore the implications of linguistic revitalization in both old and new homelands.

The Enlightenment project of comparative linguistics was designed as an entrée to classifying the presumed unilinear evolution of complex societies on the assumption that such complexity would be reflected directly in so-called primitive languages. Such outdated theories are less important today than acknowledging the imperialist assumptions that drove scholarly networks on both sides of the Atlantic. In the period of most intensive collection, Peter S. Du Ponceau was the European face of the APS and solidified its reputation in Britain, Germany, and Russia. The universalist impetus of the language work spurred by Catherine the Great depended on American colleagues for information on Native languages; in chapter 6 Sean P. Harvey weaves a fascinating narrative of their jockeying for relative prestige. Du Ponceau, the APS's armchair linguistic philosopher, deployed information from missionaries, traders, and government officials to support his claim for peer status with European scholars. Retired Moravian missionary John Heckewelder aspired to a similar reputation as an independent scholar, but remained subordinate to Du Ponceau because of the latter's access to European correspondents. Similarly, the colonial hierarchy of authoritative knowledge marginalized gentleman-intellectual-turned–Indian agent Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and virtually ignored the knowledge implicit in the information he obtained from his Ojibwe wife, Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, based on her insider expertise. Authorship at this time and in this institutional context was the prerogative of relative cosmopolitan status as measured by European standards; it was indeed Harvey's "republic of letters."

Fast-forwarding several generations, Harvey turns to Franz Boas, who collaborated extensively with language speakers. In some—although not all—instances, Boas attributed authorship to George Hunt, his long-time collaborator among the Kwakwaka'wakw. Neither of them could have done their work without the other, and their roles were distinct. The

potlatch ceremony was illegal under the infamous Potlatch Law that applied from 1885 to 1954, but both men were determined to record the event for future generations, each for his own reasons. Although Boas came out strongly against the universalist hierarchy of the older evolutionary paradigm, his own salvage paradigm retained the imperative to record languages and cultures of the "vanishing savage" in the face of manifest destiny. The founding generation of the APS would also have embraced this position, though their agenda had more to do with settler access to Indian land than with the ostensible scientific purposes.

Each position is deeply grounded in its own time and place. In our own time it is patently obvious that "they" are still here, and recognition of the fact that Indigenous people have a legitimate claim to control over the study of their own languages and cultures is growing. To jettison the material amassed by Boas and his students along with the then-unquestioned hierarchical and patriarchal assumptions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would, however, be counterproductive; such documentation can be and is being repurposed to contemporary ends. Although Boas's own audience was academic, Michael Silverstein argues that Boas's commitment to the importance of a permanent record of the knowledge that was available in his time remains an enduring legacy in developing "local practical consciousness" for multiple contemporary audiences. Regardless of intended audience, most early Boasians believed their work to be a calling, an obligation to record major forms of human expression before they were lost. "Language" means something quite different to linguists, anthropologists, and Indigenous communities envisioning "reimmersive uses in creative projects focused on heritage" (see commentary in part 4).

What I have called the "Americanist Tradition" established by Boas set precedents for the symbolic understanding of culture, accessible through spontaneous texts recorded in the traditional language (rather than elicited forms alone); language and culture cannot be separated.[9] These precedents continue to guide anthropological and linguistic work, although emerging new standards for collaboration and Indigenous control have built on them in ways that Boas and his contemporaries did not—indeed, could not—have imagined in their time and place. For

example, the Franz Boas Papers Project,[10] in which the APS is a formal partner, is governed by an Indigenous advisory council mandated to oversee community control over culturally sensitive material, to return archive materials to descendant communities through digital knowledge sharing, and to build capacity in the descendant communities.[11] This structure emerges directly from the efforts of the APS and its Native American Advisory Council, on which I serve (see the preface by Carpenter, and Miller commentary in part 1) to devise more equitable protocols that transfer decision-making power over access and dissemination to the communities and honor their mechanisms for evaluation of relevant and ethically appropriate research. For this author the design also drew on protocols devised locally through long-term collaboration with Walpole Island First Nation (Three Fires Confederacy of the Anishinaabeg, Potawatomi, and Odawa).

Transforming the Archives

Employing this revisionist approach to updating and repurposing archival materials, in chapter 9 Sarah Carmen Moritz explores the value of Franz Boas's professional correspondence at the APS not only for contextualizing the linguistic and ethnographic texts, but also for revealing the networks and relationships underlying the assembly of such a record in order to better evaluate their reliability and validity. Authority still travels in the grooves explored by Harvey, and it still requires mindful reflexive strategies to counteract it. Moritz draws on Indigenous "metaphorical and metonymic lore" that embeds the language in a rich relational social ontology. For the Upper St'at'imc, the stories told in the language tie together and strengthen the fish, the water, and the inextricable bond between the people and the land; the "laws of the land" provide protocols that govern contemporary actions and decisions about desirable futures in a rapidly changing environment.

Rainer Hatoum provides an elegant example of the need for meticulous examination of these old records based on original documents now held in archives and still largely inaccessible to community members. He compares the field notes (meticulously deciphered from Boas's idiosyncratic shorthand system) to the published version of "the Kwakiutl

potlatch."[12] Boas moved from the particulars of a single potlatch that he sponsored and George Hunt organized in 1894 as an occasion to pass hereditary titles to his son David to a generic account that omits many of the details of participants, locations on land, and names and titles held and transmitted. These details, however, are the most significant information for the contemporary community in its aspirations to revitalize potlatch institutions and the system of hereditary titles on which it is based. This kind of meticulous scholarship in the original field notes and letters facilitates new uses of existing archival materials.

Revitalization Tools

Technology has made possible a sharing of materials and experiences across Indigenous communities, often facilitated by collaboration of scholars and institutions as well by networks of community leaders and language teachers. In chapter 4 Mark Turin and his coauthors review the rapidly evolving state of available technologies, the technoscape of contemporary language research, first in relation to Turin's own work with Heiltsuk (Bella Bella), undertaken with community initiative and stewardship, and, by extension, offer a model that can be adapted elsewhere. The project aims to balance external metrics transferable in principle to the study of other colonial languages with the locally contingent knowledge of the Heilsuk. Interestingly, the chapter contends that much of what needs to be done is not "research" in the conventional understanding of that term; as such, it is not easy to obtain financial support to build human capacity within a community, never mind the research infrastructure to support a language revitalization program on a long-term basis. The Indigenous research funding priorities of Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council encourage experimentation, but have not provided a mechanism for ongoing operational funding.

In chapter 5 Jeffrey Davis reports a decades-long study of Plains Indian Sign Language (PISL) as distinct from American Sign Language (ASL) and reflective of what he believes to be precontact forms of communication among unrelated people meeting in the same territory to exploit similar resources. It is another powerful example of the distinction between local knowledge and global application, as people grounded in particular

land-based traditions come into contact and adapt what is relevant in the storied and shared experience of others. The global remains anchored in the autonomy of its local constituents.

The implicit assumption that a single case is inherently limited in its generalizability is belied by Mark Turin's exemplar of digital knowledge sharing at its most productive. Turin and his coauthors emphasize that trickle-down approaches to systemic injustice are ineffective in "Indigenizing colonial thinking." Nonetheless, the question is still not posed from the standpoint of how Indigenous communities, as creators of the linguistic and cultural materials under consideration, perceive their own needs. We still do not have the needed flexibility to negotiate "epistemological and ontological boundaries." Turin identifies a significant information gap in the evaluation of language revitalization programs that might facilitate the sharing of effective (and not so effective) strategies; the comparative dimension of such a project would, of course, require a third party outside the perspective of any given local program. He cites an array of promising possibilities now available for comparison across languages and language families, and he simultaneously emphasizes the inevitable time lag. The technoscape is changing so rapidly that no published review can possibly be definitive or up-to-date; consequently, the direct and fluid communication customary in Indigenous relational protocols is—and will likely remain—maximally effective across programs and language specialists.

Multimedia Experiments

Technology also offers new forms of communication for the multimedia expression of Indigenous art, poetry, and storytelling, and the mutual enrichment of traditions. Bernard C. Perley (Maliceet), Margaret Ann Noodin (Anishinaabeg), and Cary Miller (Anishinaabeg), three Indigenous academics located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, designed an interactive exhibit for symbolic expression of the commonalities across their traditions, alternating interior spaces of Indigenous experience with exterior spaces of colonial incursion.[13] "Living languages, landscapes, and histories" come together in an installation piece titled *Experiencing Native North America*. Perley shares a personal metaphor linking theories of fractal

causality to the "unfolding fiddleheads of cause and effect": drawing on his experience of a salient plant resource of his Maliceet home territory enables deep emotional comparison of patterns applicable to other natural environments in the place where he now lives and works.

What the late Vine Deloria Jr. called "experiential history" (see chapter 4) also speaks to the viewer's emotions rather than solely to the intellect by creating "an immersive epistemic space" for teaching alternative ways of seeing and being. "Parallel experiences" coexist, balancing exterior colonial pressures with internal interconnectedness. The pedagogical effect for viewers comes through expressing trauma and exploding "prevalent historical myths . . . of benign empire." Decolonization acquires a human face. Without the technological breakthroughs used in the exhibit and in its dissemination to a variety of audiences, such a project would be limited to local effects, if it could indeed be conceived at all.

Conclusion

The themes that recur in the ground-up methodologies of Indigenous language revitalization, as well as collaborative research and practice, can be summarized by the Canadian government's statement of the principles of ownership, control, and possession (OCAP), a simple mnemonic to maintain focus on Indigenous priorities and provide guidelines for information use. *Ownership* by Indigenous communities or organizations ensures their control of use and mitigates against research that returns nothing to the community. *Access* to research-generated information collected for the communities and their members benefits the communities and generates internal capacity. *Possession* of research data in addition to interpretations placed on it by scholars, institutional users, policy makers, and the general public facilitates the much-needed work of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. The OCAP principles, taken together, balance the structural inequalities of power that plague language revitalization agendas and hinder decolonization.

Moreover, the knowledge from single projects does not stand alone. Communities and institutions alike are developing mechanisms to share their experience and adapt it to local conditions. Such dissemination and circulation of enriched information is a critical by-product of the

collaborative methodologies developed at the local level. Theory, method, and practice intertwine in the shared experience of collaboration across communities, researchers, academic disciplines, and supporting institutions. As allies, they add its particular strengths and balance the limitations of understanding and relevance that are lost when it stands alone.

Language revitalization is a critical site for decolonializing work because its expertise necessarily resides with speakers and their communities. Without Indigenous collaboration, little meaningful new research can be done. Quantitative methodologies that rely heavily on statistics mask Indigenous relational ontologies that render information culturally appropriate and reveal the meaning of otherwise illogical practices. Spiritual and emotional resonances are inseparable from their physical embodiment. Positivist science too often claims its purely cognitive or rational ontology to be objective and universal, thereby justifying dismissal of alternative ways of knowing as unintelligible and thus meaningless. *The archives now being accessed by the projects described in this volume offer a remedy*. Archives have maintained materials in a state of stasis, waiting for users to reawaken their potential. That awakening is now well underway. It has enriched archives by teaching those who come in contact with linguistic and cultural materials to respect and learn from community agendas, and to perceive these documents from the standpoint of their creators and their descendants.

NOTES

1. Additional languages were discussed at the conference or discussed in more detail than in the revised versions selected for this volume. Contributors whose chapters were not included: Kelly Wisecup, Sin Hay Kin Jack, Elizabeth Ellis, Angie Bain, Mandy N'zinek Jimmie, Jenny Davis, Christopher Cox, L. G. Donovan, Sergio Romero, Gabriela Perez-Baez, Rosalyn LaPier, Mary Linn, and the late Timothy Powell.
2. See Baker, *From Savage to Negro*; and Baker, *Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture*.
3. See Asch, *On Being Here to Stay*; and, Asch, Borrows, and Tully, *Resurgence and Reconciliation*.
4. As this volume goes to press, naming the systemic intergenerational atrocities as "genocide" in the Final Report of the National Inquiry on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls has been met with considerable backlash

from a Canadian public prepared to acknowledge past failures of social justice but not to embrace an ongoing colonial legacy of "slow cultural genocide" that contradicts the complacency of the national imaginary, despite congruence of the evidence with international definitions.

5. Simpson, "On Ethnographic Refusal."
6. Darnell, Smith, and Westman, *Land, Language, Locatives*.
7. Personal communication, Timothy Powell to Regna Darnell, August 8, 2012.
8. Asch, *On Being Here to Stay*.
9. Darnell, *Invisible Genealogies*.
10. Franz Boas Documentary Edition, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Partnership Grant, 2012–20.
11. Darnell, "Anthropological Legacy of 'Useful Knowledge.'"
12. Hatoum, "I Wrote all My Notes in Shorthand."
13. I cite this to Perley et al. (chapter 10) as Indigenous artist, corresponding author, conference presenter, and public voice in the formation and exegesis of the exhibit.

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PART 1

Decolonizing Archives

Commentary by Robert J. Miller

In chapter 2 Richard A. Grounds lays out a strong case for the negative impacts that colonial and ethnocentric thinking and methods have played in the study, collection, and ownership of language materials gathered from Indigenous people in general, and the Yuchi people in particular. Prompted by Thomas Jefferson, the president of the American Philosophical Society (APS) for seventeen years, the APS began focusing on collecting American Indian language materials. Grounds states that Jefferson instigated the APS's creation of the Historical and Literary Committee under Peter S. Du Ponceau and thereafter developed the world's largest collection of American Indian language manuscripts. He also states that the APS reasserted its dominance in the field by acquiring materials from Franz Boas and some of his students. Grounds alleges that the legacy of "hunter-gatherer" language collectors—here the students of Boas whose Yuchi materials are held by the APS—"elevates the collectors above the communities." He argues that language collection was based on colonial assumptions about the inevitable extinction of Native people. Grounds echoes concerns that Vine Deloria Jr. stated long ago about anthropologists: "The fundamental thesis of the anthropologist is that people are objects for observation, people are then considered objects for experimentation, for manipulation, and for eventual extinction. The anthropologist thus furnishes the justification for treating Indian people like so many chessmen available for anyone to play with."[1]

Jane Anderson and James E. Francis Sr., director of the Penobscot Nation Cultural and Historic Preservation Department, describe that nation's ongoing efforts to revive its language. In addition, they make similar points as Grounds about the colonial interpretive framing of language and the power imbalances between colonizers and the colonized. They focus most closely, however, on how intellectual property laws around the world, and in particular in the United States, leave Indigenous people asking repeatedly who owns materials that were gathered from Native people and what kinds of permissions Natives have to obtain from collectors and archives in order to access and use their own historic cultural knowledge and tools. The authors highlight the impact of intellectual property law on the Penobscot Nation and the Penobscot materials held by the APS and other archives. These laws, they contend, "bind Native communities to institutions that hold and own such important collections of cultural materials." Their chapter also reminds me of a comment by Vine Deloria Jr.: "The implications of the anthropologist [linguist?] . . . should be clear for the Indian. . . . We should not be objects of observation for those who do nothing to help us."[2]

I am not an archivist or a language researcher. I have no specific expertise with which to debate the extent of colonialism and ethnocentrism in the field of linguistic research and archival collection and management. But I do have one question as a layperson in this field, and Grounds, Anderson, and Francis all recognize this as well: Even if these materials were collected in the wrong way, for the wrong reasons, and intellectual property law actually prolongs those abuses today, aren't we all thankful that these materials were collected, archived, and preserved? As these authors amply demonstrate, the Yuchi and Penobscot materials at the APS are being put to excellent use and are helping these nations to study and revitalize their languages and their cultures.

Led by then–APS librarian Martin Levitt and a staff that included Daythal Kendall and Timothy Powell, the APS has worked since at least 2006 to digitize its Native American collections to make them more widely available, to become more sensitive and responsive to American Indian concerns, and to handle and share its Native American holdings on a more equal basis with Indian nations, and Native people and

scholars. Over a four-year period Levitt and the APS convened the Native American Advisory Board to consider and debate some of the issues and concerns identified by Grounds, Anderson, and Francis, as well as by many others; the board then drafted and finalized the groundbreaking APS "Protocols for the Treatment of Indigenous Materials" in 2014.[3] The APS now follows these protocols in handling its Native American collections, consults and negotiates with Indian nations and religious and traditional leaders, enters into written agreements with tribal nations, shares its materials widely, and works with tribes and Native scholars in defining and providing extra protections for culturally sensitive materials. But, as Anderson and Francis correctly point out, the APS is still sometimes restricted by legal rights and intellectual property law in what it can do. Maybe amendments to federal copyright law should be proposed?

The APS also created its Center for Native American and Indigenous Research (CNAIR) in 2014 and received an NEH challenge grant to endow it. The current APS librarian, Patrick Spero, has strongly supported these endeavors and worked to create a program for American Indian scholars to visit the APS. The initial grant to commence the Native American Scholars Initiative was donated by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in late 2016; the program will support research in Native American studies for the next five years. American Indian scholars, tribal college faculty, and researchers who work closely with American Indian communities will be granted internships and fellowships to work at the APS.

Moreover, in chapter 3 Lisa Conathan teaches us much about the challenges archives face in making their collections more available and more valuable for Indian nations, communities, and cultures, and for Native and non-Native scholars. She describes the efforts of the Beinecke Library at Yale University to work more closely with Native communities and scholars and to create modern-day applications for two disparate collections. She relates how the library went through its own learning curve on how best to use two different sets of materials: rare Mi'kmaw hieroglyph writing, primarily created in the sixteenth century in the context of Catholic worship, which only a few people can work with at the present time; and Cherokee syllabary from the early twentieth century. The materials created different challenges because the Cherokee body

of language materials is large and represents a writing system still in use today, while the Mi'kmaw hieroglyphic manuscripts represent a closed corpus and an esoteric system that is not well known today.

The Cherokee materials had been with the library since 1979, but were not cataloged until 2013. The trend of using archival materials to help modern-day Native communities combat language loss led the Beinecke to digitize its Cherokee collection and open it to community comment and interpretation, as well as to support classroom and researcher use. In doing so the library engaged in research and consultation to tap into the remote expertise of research communities and scholars and to promote the collection to Cherokee language teachers. The library engaged in outreach to get its materials to Cherokee country and funded Cherokee language scholars to visit the collection and help the library catalog it.

The Beinecke staff lacked the expertise necessary to describe these materials, to find specific manuscripts, and to answer questions about them. Thus, visiting Cherokee scholars assisted the library with reviewing the materials and consulting on the best way to promulgate them. Ultimately the scholars and staff created a finding aid in 2015, and the library was ready to make nonsensitive materials accessible online. Today the library continues to work with the Cherokee community, making these materials available digitally to Cherokee-speaking individuals as well as to university and tribal language programs.

In contrast, we can perceive some of the unique issues created by dissimilar language materials in what the Beinecke has planned to do with the Mi'kmaw materials: in this case it is not planning on creating a machine-readable text, because there are so few scholars of this language. However, the library is hopeful that, just by holding the materials and publicizing them, it might open an entirely new arena of linguistic research and help create new scholars of the language.

These chapters, and the endeavors mentioned above, raise important questions, point to promising research and archival methods and projects, and demonstrate the potential for archives to get their collections off the shelves and to become "living things" again. In the process, archives and their collections can assist American Indian nations and communities in their modern-day efforts to revitalize their languages and cultures.

NOTES

1. Deloria, *Custer Died for Your Sins*, 81.
2. Deloria, *Custer Died for Your Sins*, 94.
3. The complete protocols have been published as part of the APS *Proceedings* and are available online at https://www.amphilsoc.org/sites/default/files/2017–11/attachments/aps%20protocols.pdf (accessed August 20, 2020).

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CHAPTER 1

Decolonial Futures of Sharing

"Protecting Our Voice," Intellectual Property, and Penobscot Nation Language Materials

Jane Anderson and James E. Francis Sr.

What kind of legal and social orders need to fragment in order to create the possibility for decolonial futures?[1] Are such futures even possible, and can they ever be really free from the colonial mentalities of rule and technologies of governing of which we are deeply—and uncomfortably—still enmeshed? As a range of activists and scholars across multiple contexts have observed, we are embedded in a predicament that emerges from current modern liberalism.[2] Of this predicament Wendy Brown asks, "What reactive political formations [can] emerge . . . in an era of profound political disorientation?"[3] Alyosha Goldstein refines this line of questioning by asking which of the available elements and conjunctures for addressing the colonial present are most salient and significant. By this he means to point to how the "current moment is shaped by the fraught historical accumulation and shifting disposition of colonial processes, relations and practices."[4] This disorientation is prompting a critical rethinking of some of the core assumptions embedded within our conceptual, legal and political interpretations of the world; as a result, there is perhaps a different kind of awareness of the intertwining of history, politics, and the multiple forms of colonial exclusion that are still lived and carried in minds and bodies, in processes and practices, ingrained within the very infrastructures of key institutions.[5]

A key element of the decolonial project is the development of options for overcoming the colonial conditioning of the present. Decolonial thinking requires a double movement: both of identifying continued sites of power imbalance brought about through colonial regimes of organization, *and* developing practices that can transform thinking, knowing, and moving away from this interpretive framing. In this chapter we offer thoughts on this double movement. From our collaborative standpoint, decoloniality needs to be understood as an epistemic and political project of scale.[6] The experience of the Penobscot Nation in Maine illustrates the extent of the challenges within this kind of project, especially what it takes to resist and recast the legacies of legal exclusion from the archive, the relationships between these exclusions and the dispossession of lands and languages, and the ongoing assertions of non-Native control and possession over representations of Native cultures.

This chapter examines the discrete problem of colonial *legal* practices embedded within cultural institutions like museums, libraries, and archives. It follows the thinking of scholars Amy Lonetree and Robin Boast, who seek to move beyond the metaphor of the "contact zone" to explain the operation of the settler-colonial archive in the present.[7] This involves looking more deeply into the infrastructure of the archive that maintains and distributes settler-colonial instrumentality.[8] We are interested in asking about the possibility for developing decolonial futures for sharing collections of Native American cultural materials assembled through uneven and unequal research practices. Collections of such materials have not been not neutrally produced and assembled.[9] They are foundationally implicated in settler-colonial property and capitalist endeavors, especially in the efforts to control, subordinate, and disenfranchise Indigenous people.[10] The intents, the productions, and the exchanges that mark these collections trace a settler-colonial logic of inquiry and privilege. In this chapter collections of language materials are our primary focus, because they remain a key site of concern within the Penobscot Nation and also aptly illustrate the ongoing settler-colonial property relations that are foundational to any kind of collections of Native American cultural materials and their ongoing institutionalization.

To decolonize these collections and the institutions that hold them is to start by acknowledging their production and function within the settler-colonial project and then to actively tease out the indices of settler-colonial power that continue to organize them and their various relationships in the present. Tracing these indices is not a straightforward task; rather, it must move simultaneously forward and backward. Locating power in the present can be a useful tool for identifying where it installed itself in the past. Identifications of property and ownership in these collections and the continued exercise of possession is one place to start thinking about how to reorganize relationships between communities and institutions, and the relationships of property that bind Native communities to institutions that hold and own such important collections of cultural materials is one of this chapter's primary themes.

The decolonial future offers itself as an ambition, a place that we strive toward, that we commit ourselves to trying to achieve. But some things can never be undone, and some things should never be forgotten. The coloniality in and of our present remains thick and heavy; its patterns of order and organization are so deeply inscribed into thought, memory, and action. Settler colonialism has produced habits and traditions that are hard to identify, hard to shed, and hard to think beyond; a specific consciousness is needed to maneuver around the settler-colonial privilege that exerts itself within the archive. Here we seek to identify certain legal threads knitted tightly into institutional logics of operation and governance that continue to affect engagement with communities. The decolonial project demands attention to the ongoing hidden exertions of settler-colonial legal power.[11]

The chapter is divided into two sections that loosely follow the three-year grant awarded to the Penobscot Nation in 2012 by the Administration for Native Americans (ANA). Titled "'Recovering Our Voices': Language Immersion Project," this grant focused on stabilizing, protecting, and enhancing Penobscot as a spoken language of the Penobscot people. As Penobscot language collections are largely held outside the Penobscot community in collecting institutions such as the American Philosophical Society (APS), the University of Maine, and the Library of Congress, one important element of this project was to address the intellectual property