



Recovering Voices – Community Research Program SI COLLECTIONS SUPPLEMENT

To search all of the Smithsonian’s online collections databases, go to collections.si.edu. Use the filters on the left-hand sidebar to see collections at a certain repository within your search (shown as the ‘catalog record source’).

The Smithsonian uses the term ‘repository’ to discuss both collections and archival facilities. For example, the National Anthropological Archives is a repository separate from Anthropology Collections.

Each repository holds a vast number of objects and materials that may be useful to your research. Please be aware that one day in a repository is usually not enough time to meet most research goals. Plan accordingly, and visit only the repositories that will be most beneficial to your project. A successful proposal will take into account that not everything can be seen in one day. Each repository has its own guidelines, so visiting multiple repositories will take that much more time to orient based on these different rules.

All Smithsonian collections and archives repositories are closed on weekends and federal holidays. The facilities at the Museum Support Center (MSC) and the Cultural Resources Center (CRC) are located in Suitland, Maryland, and are open 9:30am to 4:30pm. There is a free Smithsonian shuttle that transports researchers and staff between the museums on the National Mall in D.C. and the repositories in Suitland.

The first day of Recovering Voices research visits typically begins at 9:30am, but research starts approximately an hour later to accommodate time for introductions and orientation.

Please be aware that many of the collections objects held by the National Museum of the American Indian and the National Museum of Natural History may have been treated in the past with chemicals to discourage pest damage. We ask that visitors wear gloves when handling objects, but it is not always required in collections. There is also a lingering smell from the chemicals, so taking breaks during the day is highly encouraged.

All repositories require that a specific list of objects or materials are identified prior to the beginning of the visit. The exact list does not need to be determined for the proposal, but you should know generally what is in the collection you wish to access at a repository and why it is important to your research so you know which repository to visit.

National Anthropological Archives and National Anthropological Film Collection

The NAA/NAFC maintain extensive documentation of many of the world’s endangered languages. These collections represent the four fields of anthropology: ethnology, linguistics, archaeology, and physical anthropology. Materials include field notes, journals, manuscripts, correspondence, photographs, maps, sound recordings, and film.

- The NAA and NAFC are closed to researchers on Mondays, in addition to being closed on weekends and holidays.
- Holdings that have been digitized are available online at collections.si.edu.

- The John Peabody Harrington Collection includes documentation on over 130 languages and is almost entirely digitized. Materials are discoverable through a special online portal <http://anthropology.si.edu/naa/Harrington/index.html>
- Research at the NAA takes place in its reading room at the MSC. The reading room can accommodate groups of varying sizes.

*The NAFC is formerly the Human Studies Film Archives.

National Museum of the American Indian Archive Center

The NMAI Archive Center collects, organizes, preserves, and makes available materials that reflect the historical and contemporary lives of Native peoples throughout the Western Hemisphere. The archival collections are particularly focused on Native art, culture, knowledge, politics, events, and social and political movements.

- The NMAI Archive Center is closed to researchers on Fridays.
- Many of the Archive Center’s resources are available online through collection descriptions and finding aids here: <http://nmai.si.edu/explore/collections/archive/accessing-collections/>
- Research in the NMAI archives takes place at the Cultural Resources Center. Their reading room can handle small groups.
- Contact the Archive Center staff for more information on the materials available.

National Museum of Natural History- Anthropology Collections

The Anthropology collections include about 3 million specimens in archaeology, ethnology, and physical anthropology. Together, these collections document the cultural and biological diversity of humankind, past and present.

- With the exception of sacred and religious objects, much of the collections are available online through collections.si.edu. Contact collections staff or Recovering Voices for a comprehensive report of collections holdings concerning your community.
- Research in the Anthropology collections takes place at the MSC. Pod 1 is usually where we work, but other Pods in the building store Anthropology collections as well. Each Pod is approximately the size of a football field and is three stories tall. Most Pods have three floors, but Pod 4 is open to the ceiling to safely store over-sized objects.
- It is possible to smudge and/or conduct a blessing at the MSC. Blessing and singing can take place in the Pods and there is a special Ceremonial Room available for smudging.

National Museum of the American Indian Collections

The National Museum of the American Indian has one of the most extensive collections of Native American arts and artifacts in the world—approximately 266,000 catalog records (825,000 items) representing over 12,000 years of history and more than 1,200 indigenous cultures throughout the Americas. Ranging from ancient Paleo-Indian points to contemporary fine arts, the collections include works of aesthetic, religious, and historical significance as well as articles produced for everyday use.

- Very few of the NMAI collections are available online. Please contact collections staff for a comprehensive report of collections holdings concerning your community. Allow at least one week for a response
- Research in the NMAI collections takes place at the Cultural Resources Center (CRC), located next door to the MSC.
- It is possible to smudge and/or conduct a blessing at the CRC. Blessing and singing can take place in the collections area and there is a special Ceremonial Room available for smudging.

National Museum of Natural History- Natural History Collections

The NMNH holds more than 127 million objects and specimens in collections. Every department holds collections that are, in some way, important to Recovering Voices and can be accessed through <http://collections.nmnh.si.edu/search/>. Knowledge and language are deeply intertwined with how people and cultures interact with and adapt to the world around them. If it is relevant to your research, feel free to propose research in the collections of the Departments of Botany, Entomology, Invertebrate Zoology, Vertebrate Zoology, Mineral Sciences, or Paleobiology. Please contact the appropriate collections manager prior to submitting your proposal to determine if a department's collections are available for research. <http://www.mnh.si.edu/rc/>

Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage Ralph Rinzler Folkways Recordings and Collections

The Smithsonian Folkways Recordings is dedicated to supporting cultural diversity and increased understanding among peoples through the documentation, preservation, and dissemination of sound. The Folklife Archives also hold recordings and documentation from all Folklife Festivals.

- The Folkways and Folklife recordings archive is available through collections.si.edu.
- Research at Folklife is done in the reading room at the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (CFCH) located in the Capitol Gallery building near the museums on the National Mall. This reading room is small and can accommodate a few researchers at a time.

Smithsonian Archives

The Smithsonian Archives holds approximately 46,800 feet of records and nearly 3 million photographic images. The collections include official records of the Smithsonian, personal papers of individuals associated with the Smithsonian, oral and video histories, and other special materials that document the staff, research, events, exhibitions, and facilities of the Smithsonian.

- The Smithsonian Archives collection is available to search online through collections.si.edu.
- Research at the Smithsonian Archives is done in the Archives reading room located in the Capitol Gallery building near the museums on the National Mall.

Smithsonian Libraries

The Smithsonian Libraries is a network of 20 specialized research libraries supporting each of the SI's museums and initiatives. In particular, the NMNH Joseph F. Cullman 3rd Library of Natural History, the Anthropology Library, and the American Indian Library hold rare books and manuscripts that may be useful to your research. The easiest way to search the Library's holdings is to search <http://sirius.si.edu>.

- Some books cannot be checked out, but can be used as reference material.
- Books that can be checked out should be requested prior to the research visit to be used as reference material onsite in the other repositories. Recovering Voices staff can have library books available to the group at the research site upon arrival.