

Shared Stewardship of Collections

Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage



SMITHSONIAN
CENTER FOR
FOLKLIFE
& CULTURAL
HERITAGE

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On cover: A Naxi Dongba at Baishuitai Springs in Yunnan explains a pictographic horoscope to Margaret Lawrence, as Zhao Gang interprets. This field trip initiated a series of training and research programs throughout the Mekong region that included a Folklife Festival program in 2007.

Photo by Frank Proschan, 2004 August 13. Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, Smithsonian Institution.

Table of Contents

Purpose	2
Background	2
Framework and Guiding Principles	5
Definitions	8
Notes	12

Purpose

The Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage acknowledges and respects the right of artists, performers, Festival participants, community-based scholars, and knowledge-keepers to collaboratively steward representations of themselves and their intangible cultural heritage in media produced, curated, and distributed by the Center. This document describes the Center's policy for the shared stewardship of collections and guides its implementation. It affirms the Center's commitment to consult with source communities and defines our protocols for addressing collections-related inquiries and concerns. Our goals in developing this policy are to foster sustained dialogue with source communities; promote greater engagement with their heritage collections; enhance and refine cultural documentation and associated metadata; ensure culturally appropriate collection care and display; and recognize source community interest in digital return and repatriation.

Background

The Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections maintains a wealth of audio and visual documentation of intangible cultural heritage. Most of this documentation derives from Smithsonian Folklife Festival performances on the National Mall from 1967 to the present and from associated research documentation of Festival participants. Other documentation derives from multiple independent record label collections acquired by the Center. Folkways Records & Service Co., for example, was founded in 1948 but includes earlier recordings from ethnographic and ethnomusicological fieldwork in North America, Africa, and Oceania.¹

The Center has long acknowledged a special responsibility for curating the intangible cultural heritage in its care. Anthony Seeger, the first director/curator of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings after the institution acquired Folkways in 1988, was a steadfast champion of the intellectual property rights of performers and a vocal advocate for equitable royalties. "The changing values and attitudes towards the intellectual property with which we deal are at once an emotional issue, a practical necessity,

and a political process in which we must not be at the rear, but should assume the lead....”² In a similar vein, Sita Reddy and D. A. Sonneborn insisted that our archival collections were not mere documentation *of* source communities but documentation *for* source communities:

Archives of recorded music are not only sound sites, they are also contested sites of power, sites of reinvention, and self-determination. If we treat these diverse recordings as mere records or documentation of information about music traditions (some of which were recorded more than 70 years ago), we may end up reifying stereotypes about indigenous groups, denying them some capacity to recover their own traditional resources for creating their own futures. But if we see the full social capacity of recorded songs (in terms of the real *cultural* work that they accomplish), and if we try consistently to redistribute this power and knowledge—to ethically transfer control over use—we will be in a better position to articulate the mission of museum collections such as Smithsonian Folkways: an archive of “music of the people, by the people, for the people.” Seen collectively, the slowly accumulating body of music returns ... begin to tell a powerful story—that activities of restitution can, with all their flaws in practice, serve *both* contemporary archival as well as indigenous social needs, at once documents as well as advocates for sound museum practice.³

The present document fulfills this promise, outlining the Center’s policy for sharing stewardship and authority of the Center’s rich archival collections. Developed by the Center’s archives, research, and curatorial staff, it builds upon protocols for respectful and culturally appropriate care of collections established by Indigenous⁴ and non-Indigenous archivists, historians, anthropologists, and museum professionals;⁵ codes of ethics of archives professional societies;⁶ and best practices of archival repositories with similar cultural heritage collections, both within the Smithsonian Institution and worldwide.⁷ Our shared stewardship policy is further guided by the Smithsonian’s general policies and procedures, particularly Smithsonian Directive 600, *Collections Management*.

In developing this policy, the Center is mindful of the Principle of Equitable Access enshrined in the UNESCO *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, which maintains that “Equitable access to a rich and diversified range of cultural expressions from all over the world and access of cultures to the means of expressions and dissemination constitute important elements for enhancing cultural diversity and encouraging mutual understanding.”⁸ The Center is equally mindful of Article 15 of the UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, which aims to promote “the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain and transmit such heritage, and to involve them actively in its management.”⁹ The Center is further mindful of Article 31 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which asserts that

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.
2. In conjunction with indigenous peoples, States shall take effective measures to recognize and protect the exercise of these rights.¹⁰

Together, this document and the *Center’s Collections Plan* (2019) affirm our commitment to community-engaged policies and practices that

- Ensure culturally respectful collections management
- Enhance community access to a broad range of cultural documentation
- Consider the possible benefits of shared stewardship or an alternative collection custody arrangement such as co-curation, long-term loan, or digital return.

The Center welcomes opportunities to collaborate respectfully with source communities. We encourage the contribution of authoritative knowledge about the intangible cultural heritage and associated documentation in our care, particularly regarding matters of proper attribution, context, meaning, interpretation, provenance, and the identity of artists, performers, musicians, and storytellers. We further encourage source communities to request an identical set of the heritage collections in our care for their own local institutions. In very special cases described under *Repatriation*, source communities may request custody of a collection.

Framework and Guiding Principles

The Center endorses the spirit of the Protocols for Native American Archival Materials and adopts its recommendations as a general framework for the ethical and responsible management of Indigenous and non-Indigenous collections in our care.¹¹ We recognize that responsible collections stewardship may take a variety of forms in accordance with the needs, priorities, aspirations, and goals of communities themselves. We further recognize that

1. Shared stewardship of collections must be conducted in a spirit of consultation and collaboration. Initial consultations with cultural custodians and community-based archival repositories will be conducted in person, whenever practicable, to provide a proper opportunity for the Center and community to harmonize their expectations, obligations, and responsibilities.
2. Source communities share authority for collections and associated documentation. We seek their guidance in accurately describing and representing them, and in resolving issues pertaining to their ownership, disposition, online and public access, cultural sensitivity, and cultural privacy.¹²
3. Cultural documentation produced and curated by the Center should be readily available. We commit to depositing an identical set of *current* and *future* curatorial research, cultural sustainability program research, and

Smithsonian Folklife Festival documentation in source community archival repositories *as those programs take place or soon afterward*, recognizing that issues of cultural sensitivity and matters of cultural and personal privacy may occasionally take precedence.

4. Archival resources in our care should be readily discoverable. We will use local and Indigenous terms for ethnicity, language, and place names in our collections documentation. Our response to requests for information will be as comprehensive as possible taking into consideration any legal, ethical or policy constraints to which the materials may be subject. Our response will also, to the extent possible, include relevant information about collections from any Smithsonian museum, research center, or repository that may hold associated or similar collections.¹³
5. Intangible cultural heritage bears an indeterminate relationship to the entities we refer to as communities, cultural groups, ethnic groups, tribes, or nations.¹⁴ We follow the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress and the American Philosophical Society in acknowledging that religious or traditional leaders (rather than their governing body) may be generally recognized as the keepers of a people's traditions,¹⁵ and that individuals, families, lineages, and clans may be the cultural custodians of cultural and historical knowledge.¹⁶
6. Shared stewardship raises ethical questions and practical challenges, as communities are rarely homogeneous. They may have separate cultural protocols governing men and women. They may have multiple cultural custodians with differing perspectives on access and use of a collection following its digital return.¹⁷ Moreover, the traditions preserved in early archival collections may not have living tradition bearers today and may have different cultural custodians in the future.¹⁸ We recognize that our engagement with particular cultural custodians and descendent communities may contribute to contestations over meaning and new terms of ownership.¹⁹

7. Shared stewardship signals our respect for a source community's fundamental and inalienable relationship to its intangible cultural heritage.²⁰
8. Shared stewardship of collections is an ongoing proactive process. We commit to providing opportunities for source communities to meaningfully engage with the collections in our care.

This policy is a work in progress which we expect to refine and develop through continued dialogue with the communities whose cultural heritage we have had the honor and privilege to engage with through collaborative research, cultural sustainability programs, festivals, recording sessions, and other mutually beneficial ventures. We look forward to learning how we can tailor our implementation of this policy to each community's unique interests and requirements.

Adopted by the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

July 2019

Comments about this policy and inquiries about our collections may be addressed to Greg Adams, Interim Archives Director, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (adamsg@si.edu).

Definitions

These definitions are offered to clarify the meaning, scope, and applicability of this policy.

Collections are cultural heritage materials or cultural documentation in any media under the care and maintenance of the Rinzler Archives. They will generally have been produced or acquired by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, or curatorial and research staff conducting pre-Festival fieldwork or cultural sustainability program research. Collections *not* governed by this policy include 1) the Center's material culture collection, which consists largely of gifts from Festival participants; 2) research materials produced by Smithsonian interns, volunteers, research associates, and fellows; and 3) purchased or donated collections acquired via contracts, deeds of gift, or other legal instruments that govern their future disposition. Collections include associated digital assets.²¹

The **Collections Advisory Committee** develops and promotes the Center's collections in line with professional best practices. Among its other responsibilities,²² the committee provides a forum for Center staff and source community representatives to discuss collections-related matters; make recommendations to the Center director regarding shared stewardship of collections; and resolve conflicts of interest that may arise in balancing the archive's mandate to promote public access to collections while respecting personal and cultural privacy. The committee may refer matters to the Center's Advisory Council for additional consideration.

Collections enhancement includes practices that enhance or refine cultural documentation and associated metadata for individual collection items or entire collections. Collection enhancements may provide information that improves the accuracy of our collection finding aids, inventories, online catalogs, and websites (such as the proper attribution of a performer's name to a song) or provide a culturally appropriate interpretation for a collection item. Alternatively, but equally importantly, collection enhancements may also correct errors, omissions, misunderstandings, or culturally inaccurate information that may appear in our collection documentation

(such as incorrect personal names, place names, ethnic affiliations, and language names). Misattributions such as these occasionally appear in the metadata and other documentation that accompany the earliest sound recordings in our archives. See also *Sensitive content*.

Cultural custodian is an acknowledged representative of a source community. Cultural custodians may be artists, performers, participants, knowledge-keepers, or community-based scholars. Cultural custodians are authorized to represent and act on behalf of a community, cultural group, tribe, or nation.²³

Digital return is the process of using digital media to reanimate knowledge by sharing the intangible cultural heritage inherent in collection items maintained by archives, museums, or other public institutions (which may be analog, digital, or both in their original formats). We adopt the perspective that digital objects are not mere copies or surrogates, as “the specificity of digital resources—the ease with which they can be copied, distributed, and revised; their ability to exist in multiple locations at once; and their ephemeral nature—makes them distinct cultural objects....”²⁴ Digital return is one facet of a decades-long practice of repatriating fieldwork materials produced by folklorists, ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, and other field workers.²⁵

Indigenous people, according to the definition adopted by the ILO *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention* (1989) and UNESCO, are

- Tribal people in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations;
- People in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.”²⁶

Intangible cultural heritage, as defined by UNESCO, “includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.”²⁷

Repatriation refers to the transfer of custody of a physical object (rather than a digital surrogate) from the Center to a source community, along with such ownership rights as the Center may possess. For the museums that comprise the Smithsonian Institution, the National Museum of the American Indian Act, passed in 1989 and amended in 1996, governs the repatriation of objects of cultural patrimony and sacred objects to Native American tribes and Native Hawaiian groups. Decisions to return or repatriate collection items outside the scope of the NMAI Act are evaluated in accordance with the criteria for *deaccessioning* and *disposal* described in Smithsonian Directive 600. In principle, according to SD 600, “Deaccessioning and disposal occur for a variety of reasons, such as deterioration of collection items beyond usefulness; duplication or redundancy of collection material; insufficient relationship of collection items to the mission and goals of the collecting unit such that they are judged to be better placed elsewhere; repatriation; and selection for consumptive research or educational use. The Smithsonian disposes of collections by a variety of methods, such as donation, transfer, exchange, sale, repatriation, and destruction.”²⁸ Collections that were acquired illegally or unethically (including under circumstances that cast doubt on the validity of our ownership) are also candidates for deaccession and return.²⁹

Research collections include a wide range of materials produced or assembled in the course of ethnographic and ethnomusicological research at the Center. Research collections may include handwritten or typed field notes, correspondence, interviews, photographs, drawings sound recordings, film and video recordings, and material culture (such as musical instruments). Research collections are ordinarily produced and assembled as cultural documentation to aid present or future research, rather than for commercial purposes.³⁰

Sensitive content, as defined by Smithsonian Directive 609, *Digital Asset Access and Use*, "is defined in different ways by members of individual communities, nations, tribes, ethnic groups, and religious denominations, but usually includes materials that relate to traditional knowledge and practices. Such materials may a) be considered the private domain of specific individuals, clans, cults or societies; b) require an appropriate level of knowledge to view and understand; c) threaten the privacy and well-being of a community when exposed or disclosed to outsiders; and/or d) give offense if inappropriately used or displayed, or when appropriated or exploited for commercial purposes."³¹ Once a collection item has been identified as culturally sensitive, it may be restricted from public use and/or online access. If an item has been repatriated, any associated digital assets may also be restricted.³²

Shared stewardship refers to sharing authority, expertise, and responsibility for the respectful attribution, documentation, interpretation, display, care, storage, public access, and disposition of a collection item or belonging, including intellectual property rights generally associated with possession and ownership, in accordance with the advice of the source community.³³

Source communities comprise individuals who share a collective identity that may be grounded in their common origin or present location, language, religion, tradition, occupation, beliefs or interests, and a sense of shared responsibility for the stewardship of tangible and/or intangible cultural heritage held in Center collections.³⁴

Notes

1 Examples include the sound recordings Laura Boulton made among the Apache, Diné (Navajo), Hopi, Mohave, Pima, San Ildefonso Pueblo, Santa Ana Pueblo, Taos, Tohono O'Odham, and Zuni in 1933 and 1940 (Folkways 8850), among the Yaqui, Otomi, Mayan, and Zapotec in 1940 (Folkways 8851), and among the Bakweri, Bambara, Edo, Kru, Malinke, and Tuareg on the Straus West African Expedition of the Field Museum of Natural History in 1934 (Folkways 8852); Andre Didier's recordings made on *la mission ethnographique* Ogôoué-Congo in 1946 (Folkways 4402); and A.P. Elkin's recordings in Arnhem Land, Northern Territory of Australia, in 1949 and 1952 (Folkways 4439).

2 Anthony Seeger, "Ethnomusicologists, Archives, Professional Organizations, and the Shifting Ethics of Intellectual Property." *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 28 (1996), 103.

3 Sita Reddy and D. A. Sonneborn, "[Sound Returns: Toward Ethical 'Best Practices' at Smithsonian Folkways Recordings](#)," *Museum Anthropology Review* 7 nos. 1–2 (Spring-Fall 2013): 136. For a thoughtful examination of the varied responses and reactions to the return of repatriated sound recordings in one indigenous community, see Sally Treloyn, Matthew Dembal Martin, and Rona Googninda Charles, "[Cultural Precedents for the Repatriation of Legacy Song Records to Communities of Origin](#)," *Australian Aboriginal Studies* 2 (2016): 94–103; on responses to the digital return of photographs, see Joshua A. Bell, "[Looking to See: Reflections on Visual Repatriation in the Purari Delta, Gulf Province, Papua New Guinea](#)," in *Museums and Source Communities: A Routledge Reader*, ed. Laura Peers and Alison K. Brown (London: Routledge, 2003), 111–122.

4 Throughout this document, we use the word Indigenous in place of terms such as Aboriginal, First Nations, and Native that have specific local contexts of use.

5 First Archivists Circle, [Protocols for Native American Archival Materials](#), 2007; Gillian A. Flynn and Deborah Hull-Walski, "Merging Traditional Indigenous Curation

Methods with Modern Museum Standards of Care," *Museum Anthropology* 25, no 1 (2001): 31–40; Indian Arts Research Center, School for Advanced Research, "[Community + Museum: Guidelines for Collaboration](#)," Accessed May 22, 2019; Museum Ethnographers Group, "Guidance Notes on Ethical Approaches in Museum Ethnography," *Journal of Museum Ethnography* 15 (2003): 157–169.

6 Society of American Archivists, "[Code of Ethics for Archivists](#)" (Approved February 2005; revised January 2012); International Council of Archives, "[Code of Ethics](#)" (adopted 6 September 1996); International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, "[IFLA Statement on Indigenous Traditional Knowledge](#)" (approved December 2002).

7 Association for Cultural Equity (ACE), "[Repatriation](#)," Accessed May 22, 2019; British Library (prepared together with the World Intellectual Property Organization), "[Ethical and Permitted Usage of Recordings](#)," Accessed May 22, 2019; International Library of African Music, "Guidelines on Reproduction and Sale of Digital Heritage and on the Repatriation of Digital Heritage," *African Music* 8, no. 3 (2009): 178–181; Krisztina Laszlo [University of British Columbia, Museum of Anthropology], "[Ethnographic Archival Records and Cultural Property](#)," *Archivaria* 61 (2006): 299–307; National and State Libraries Australasia, "[Working with Community: Guidelines for Collaborative Practice Between Libraries and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities](#)," Melbourne, 2013; National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, "[Repatriation](#)," Accessed May 22, 2019; Newberry Library, "[Access to Culturally Sensitive Indigenous Materials in the Newberry Library Collections](#)" (August 15, 2016), Accessed May 22, 2019; Timothy B. Powell, "[The American Philosophical Society Protocols for the Treatment of Indigenous Materials](#)," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 158, no. 4 (2015): 411–420; State Library of South Australia, "[Indigenous Protocols and Policy](#)" (Last updated: Aug 21, 2018). For a compendium of additional codes, see Martin Skrydstrup, "[Towards Intellectual Property Guidelines and Best Practices for Recording and Digitizing Intangible Cultural Heritage: A Survey of Codes, Conduct and Challenges in North America](#)," World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), Oct. 2006.

8 [UNESCO](#) (2005).

9 [UNESCO](#) (2003).

10 [United Nations](#) (2007). [Endorsed by the United States](#) January 2011.

11 The Protocols articulate guidelines for the culturally responsive care of American Indian archival holdings in non-tribal repositories, including “the recognition of the sovereign governments and associated rights of Native American communities; collection, ownership, preservation, handling, access, and use of American Indian archival resources; the importance of building relationships, balancing different approaches to knowledge management, and mutual respect; and the need to expand the nature of the information professions to include Native American perspectives and knowledge.” First Archivists Circle, Protocols, 2007. For an overview of the Protocols see, Karen J. Underhill, “[Protocols for Native American Archival Materials](#),” *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 7, no. 2 (2006): 134–145. For a discussion of the Protocols from the perspective of group privacy and restorative justice, see Kay Mathiesen, “A Defense of Native Americans’ Rights over Their Traditional Cultural Expressions,” *American Archivist* 75 (Fall/Winter 2012), 456–481.

12 Anne Gilliland “has proposed a platform that foregrounds several ‘ethical’ acts that do not appear in the mainstream rhetoric of information organization but that should lie at the centre of participative description: *Acknowledging, Respecting, Enfranchising, Liberating and Protecting* [...] This set of rights might include (and here ‘one’ could refer to an individual, a group or a community):

- The right to have one’s role vis-à-vis archival description or archival content acknowledged (e.g., creator/author, co-creator, community of origin).
- The right to be consulted when one is the creator, co-creator or the subject of the archival content.
- The right to describe or name oneself/self-identify in any archival description.

- The right to challenge or to correct archival description or archival content.
- The right to respond or to annotate any archival description or archival content.
- The right to annotate and delineate relationships involving oneself or one's records through archival description.
- The right to request take-down of any archival description or archival content.
- The right not to have descriptive information about oneself disseminated beyond the local or specified archive.
- The right to exercise one's belief systems through archival descriptive practices.
- The right to protect one's traditional cultural expressions through archival descriptive practices."

Quoted in Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland and Sue McKemmish, "The Role of Participatory Archives in Furthering Human Rights, Reconciliation and Recovery," *Atlanti: Review for Modern Archival Theory and Practice* 24 (2014), 84–85. The principle of consultation is enshrined in the Society of American Archivists' Code of Ethics, which states that "As appropriate, archivists place access restrictions on collections to ensure that privacy and confidentiality are maintained, particularly for individuals and groups who have no voice or role in collections' creation, retention, or public use. Archivists promote the respectful use of culturally sensitive materials in their care by encouraging researchers to consult with communities of origin, recognizing that privacy has both legal and cultural dimensions." SAA, "[Code of Ethics for Archivists](#)" (2012).

13 A 2018 report on connecting communities and collecting institutions from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) notes that "Researchers and archivists working with Indigenous communities and large collections have different priorities and different ideas about how to represent and store material. One issue raised was the multiple way in which records are stored and categorised across varying institutions, which can make it difficult for community archives to collate the information they need. Many institutions arrange

material by researcher or depositor, and then further by media. While this may make sense from a collection management position, these layers of categorisation add complexity (while disaggregating contextual information) and may not be relevant for community archives. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities, language or place may be more relevant categories, for instance. In the interest of engaging with an accessible and possibly national collection, it was suggested that large institutions rethink metadata in a holistic manner.” AIATSIS, [“Preserve, Strengthen, and Renew in Community.”](#) Workshop Report. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2018.

14 See Dorothy Noyes, [“The Judgment of Solomon: Global Protections for Tradition and the Problem of Community Ownership,”](#) *Cultural Analysis* 5 (2006): 27–56.

15 See Timothy B. Powell, [“The American Philosophical Society Protocols”](#); Judith Gray, [“Returning Music to the Makers: The Library of Congress, American Indians, and the Federal Cylinder Project,”](#) *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine* (December 1996). Reflecting on the Federal Cylinder Project, Gray writes, “As would be the case in any community, however, the local government is not necessarily the entity that has an interest in or is the logical recipient of historical materials belonging to a religious society or a particular family. In some situations, the Cylinder Project personnel made efforts to reach not only the most visible cultural agencies, but also the smaller or more traditional settlements on a reservation.”

16 While we tend to discuss ethical issues concerning intangible cultural heritage in binary terms (Native/non-native, repository/community, online-offline), the reality on the ground is more complex and dynamic. As Kim Lawson, a First Nation librarian from British Columbia, has written, “Indigenous people create, organize, use, and manage knowledge and information resources differently from Western libraries and archives. Privileged access to information based on gender, initiate status, age, clan, society, and role can be a form of protection for a community, in contrast to the American democratic traditions of open access to information resources and intellectual freedom.” Kimberly Lawson, “Precious Fragments: First Nations Materials in Archives, Libraries, and Museums” (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 2004) v–ix, 1.

17 On ethical questions and practical challenges, see Jocelyne Dudding, "Visual Repatriation and Photo-elicitation," *Journal of Museum Ethnography* 17 (2005): 218–231; Judith Gray, "[Audiovisual Archives: Bridging Past and Future](#)" in *The Oxford Handbook of Musical Repatriation*, ed. Frank Gunderson, Robert C. Lancefield, and Bret Woods, 2018; Robert C. Lancefield, "On the Repatriation of Recorded Sound from Ethnomusicological Archives" (M.A. thesis, Wesleyan University, 1993); Robert Leopold, "[Articulating Culturally Sensitive Knowledge Online: A Cherokee Case Study](#)," *Museum Anthropology Review* 7, nos. 1–2 (2013): 85–104.

18 A useful summary of these and related challenges is discussed in the AIATSIS workshop report, "[Preserve, Strengthen and Renew in Community](#)" (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, July 2018); see especially the section, "How Do You Connect Community and Collecting Institutions?".

19 Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza and Andrew N. Weintraub, "The Audible Future: Reimagining the Role of Sound Archives and Sound Repatriation in Uganda," *Ethnomusicology* 56, no. 2 (2012): 206–233.

20 On the concept of inalienability in relation to collections, see Elizabeth B. Coleman, "Repatriation and the Concept of Inalienable Possession," in *The Long Way Home: The Meaning and Values of Repatriation*, ed. Paul Turnbull and Michael Pickering (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 82–96.

21 The Smithsonian Institution defines digital assets as "text, still images, moving images and sound recordings, research datasets and other types of media originally created in digital format (i.e., born digital) or digitized from another format or state (i.e., a digital surrogate) that are created, stored, or maintained by the Smithsonian. For the purpose of this directive, digital assets also include metadata (also known as cataloguing and collections information) used to describe the digital asset and its content. Digital assets, for purposes of this policy, may be collection objects (e.g., digital art), reproductions of collection items, or content generated in digital form as a result of the research and programmatic activities," Smithsonian Directive 609, [Digital Asset Access and Use](#), (July 15, 2011).

22 The committee is further described in the Center's *Collections Plan* (2019).

23 We recognize that some communities may not speak with one voice and so may have multiple cultural custodians.

24 Kimberly Christen, "[Opening Archives: Respectful Repatriation](#)," *The American Archivist* 74, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2011): 187. See also Paul Conway, "Digital Transformations and the Archival Nature of Surrogates," *Archival Science* 15, no. 1 (2015): 51–69 and Ricardo L. Punzalan, "[Understanding Virtual Reunification](#)," *Library Quarterly* 84, no. 3 (July 2014), 294–323.

25 Robert Baron writes that "'The return' speaks to a movement that gathered steam in the last quarter of the twentieth century; as [Alan] Lomax noted in a letter to Burt Feintuch in 1980, the 'new groundswell in anthropology, folklore and the humanities is concern about the RETURN of tapes, photographs, information of all sorts to its sources—the tribes and villages of the planet from which our centers of learning have enriched themselves.' He indicated that he was developing a plan for ethnomusicologists to return copies of documentation they collected 'in various third world countries, to set up recording and filming centers and then to work with all sorts of media and living event modes to feedback the collection to the cultures from which it came, in order to give them media status, the educational standing, and the sense of professional competence in the arts that will enable them to face the pressure of the media and to grow from their own roots' ([Feintuch] 1908)." Robert Baron, "'All Power to the Periphery': The Public Folklore Thought of Alan Lomax," *Journal of Folklore Research* 49, no. 3 (September/December 2012), 309. As Stephen Winick recalls, "In the early 1980s, AFC repatriated copies of the Fewkes cylinders to the Passamaquoddy, so that tribal linguists, singers, and elders could learn from them" — a highly consequential result of the Federal Cylinder Project begun in 1979. Winick, "[Honoring Vernacular Sounds: AFC Recordings on the National Recording Registry](#)," *Folklife Today* (April 2015). Anthony Seeger maintains that the most important audiences for sound recordings are the communities in which they were made; see "The Role of Sound Archives in Ethnomusicology Today," *Ethnomusicology* 30 (1986): 261–276.

- 26** International Labor Organization (ILO), [Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989](#) (No. 169); UNESCO (1997).
- 27** UNESCO, [“What Is Intangible Cultural Heritage?”](#) In the usage we adopt here, intangible cultural heritage includes both traditional knowledge (TK) and traditional cultural expressions (TCEs).
- 28** Smithsonian Directive 600, [Collections Management](#). “Deaccession and Disposal” (3.a), page 12.
- 29** Smithsonian Institution Policy on Acquisition of Art, Antiquities, Archaeological and Ethnographic Material, and Historic Objects. Adopted by the Board of Regents April 13, 2015.
- 30** See also Anthony Seeger, [“The Challenge of Rights Management Research-Generated Recordings,”](#) *IASA Journal* 20 (2002): 28–34.
- 31** Smithsonian Directive 609, [Digital Asset Access and Use](#).
- 32** Smithsonian Directive 609, [Digital Asset Access and Use](#), Section VII.A.3.
- 33** Shared stewardship may be usefully considered alongside related museological practices such as co-curation (also known as collaborative curation and indigenous curation) and participatory archiving. On co-curation, see, Field Museum, [“What is Co-curation?”](#) Accessed May 22, 2019; Gillian A. Flynn and Deborah Hull-Walski, “Merging Traditional Indigenous Curation Methods with Modern Museum Standards of Care,” *Museum Anthropology* 25 (2001), 31–40; Eric R. Hollinger et al., [“Tlingit-Smithsonian Collaborations with 3D Digitization of Cultural Objects.”](#) *Museum Anthropology Review* 7, nos. 1–2: 201–53; Jennifer Kramer, “Möbius Museology: Curating and Critiquing the Multiversity Galleries at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia,” in *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies: Museum Transformations*, First Edition, ed. Annie E. Coombes and Ruth B. Phillips (London: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 489–510; Christina Kreps, “Indigenous

Curation, Museums and Intangible Cultural Heritage," In *Intangible Heritage*, ed. Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa (London, Routledge, 2009), 193–208. On participatory archiving, see Joanne Evans et al., "Self- determination and Archival Autonomy: Advocating Activism," *Archival Science* (2015) 15:337–368.; Isto Huvila, "Participatory Archive: Towards Decentralized Curation, Radical User Orientation, and Broader Contextualization of Records Management," *Archival Science* 8: 15–36; Thanwadee Sookprasert and Sittisak Rungcharoensuksri, "Ethics, Access, and Rights in Anthropological Archive Management: A Case Study from Thailand," *International Journal of Humanities and Arts Computing* 7 (2013) Supplement: 100–110. DOI: 10.3366/ijhac.2013.0063; Mary S. Linn, "[Living Archives: A Community-based Language Archive Model](#)," in *Language Documentation and Description* 12: Special Issue on Language Documentation and Archiving, ed. David Nathan and Peter K. Austin (London: SOAS, 2014), 53–67.

34 See Emma Waterton and Laurajane Smith, "The Recognition and Misrecognition of Community Heritage," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16, no. 1 (2010): 4–15. DOI: 10.1080/13527250903441671.

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