

Decolonization and the Road to Indigenization Resource Kit

Introduction

In the past few years, the public history field has shifted its focus towards Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) initiatives, from implementing more inclusive hiring practices to expanding stories told in museum interpretation. While this DEIA work is a significant step in the right direction, the field will never truly advance in becoming more diverse, equitable, inclusive, or accessible until we acknowledge the inequitable structures of power and privilege our institutions benefit from as a lasting consequence of colonization and commit to decolonizing our institutions and museum practice. This Decolonization and the Road to Indigenization Resource Kit is intended to assist public history practitioners in the decolonization process. The AASLH conference sessions, webinars, *History News* articles, and books in the kit provide insight into a breadth of topics relating to the central decolonization theme, such as how museums have contributed to the settler colonial project, Native American history and culture from an Indigenous perspective, and best practices for forming Native partnerships built on trust and collaboration. Select AASLH award winners show decolonization in publications, exhibits, and various other projects. Included at the end of the kit are three outside resources for creating a meaningful land acknowledgment that honors Indigenous people, past and present, and works to undo the harmful legacies of colonization by acknowledging that institutions occupy stolen land.

Conference Sessions

2021 Online Conference - [Answering the Call: Steps Towards Decolonizing Your History Organization/Museum](#)

Adapted annotation: In this session, panelists from the Hermann-Grima and Gallier Historic Houses present actions they have taken to do justice TO history through decolonization and provide a number of case studies. They discuss tips for getting started with decolonization work, the imperative of shifting perspectives away from the Eurocentric framework, how to curate for the twenty-first century using virtual programming and staying attuned to racial justice movements, and how to diversify and decolonize collections, exhibitions, and programming. Speakers then outline what decolonizing your museum looks like, touching upon issues such as staffing, board leadership, and DEIA training.

Speakers: Katherine Burlison, Tessa Jagger, and Anastacia Scott, Ph.D.

2021 Online Conference - [*The Impact of Working with Native Communities*](#)

Adapted annotation: Working with Native communities is vital for museums. The Elkhart County Historical Museum partnered with Native groups while developing a new exhibit meant to update dated galleries and better tell the whole story of what became Elkhart County. The result of working with Native partners and making space in the museum to let them tell their story in their own words was a transformation that reached beyond the exhibit objectives. In this session, Elkhart museum staff and one of their Native partners discuss how to form meaningful and collaborative Native partnerships, the importance and impact of forging those partnerships, and lessons learned from developing the exhibit. During the Q&A, panelists discuss how museums can begin to form relationships with local Native tribes, the sustainability of those relationships, and getting started with land acknowledgments.

Speakers: Diane Hunter (Miami Tribe of Oklahoma), Julie Parke, and Patrick McGuire

2021 Online Conference - [*A History of Native American Activism*](#)

Adapted annotation: From the very beginning the United States has dealt with Native Americans with a series of policies and treaties, most of which were aimed at assimilation into a Eurocentric society. For many years Native Americans were forced to live by standards set by the United States that “led to a slow genocide of the Indigenous population.” But with the formation of the American Indian Movement, they started to fight back against genocidal assimilation into a colonized society. In this webinar, learn about the beginnings of the American Indian Movement and the organized protests that they led, including the Occupation of Alcatraz and Wounded Knee, as well as how the activism of the 1960s lives on and how we are dealing with issues in the Native community today.

Speaker: Heather Bruegl (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin and first line descendant Stockbridge Munsee)

2021 Online Conference - [*Reckoning with Manisses: Doing Justice to Block Island's Indigenous and African American Legacy*](#)

Adapted annotation: Bringing together historians, social scholars, and residents collaborating on a public memory project in Rhode Island, this panel models a community-based process for reckoning with unjust local histories while doing justice to the present. The goal of this work is to introduce the island of Manisses (Block Island), unearth lost narratives to re-center Indigenous and African American populations, and make space and a platform for those populations to tell their own stories in a community whose understanding of the past is dominated by the colonizer narrative. The Block Island Historical Society, in collaboration with partners, is sharing these stories through mediums such as programming, exhibitions, and digital content, inspiring community interest in the history of Indigenous people and Black

people on Block Island, and working to decolonize the community's understanding of the island's past.

Speakers: Maryann Gobern Mathews (Manissean Tribe), Amelia Moore, Ph.D., Pamela Littlefield Gasner, Susan Hagedorn, Ph.D., and Marcus Nevius, Ph.D.

2020 Annual Meeting - [#IndigenousLivesMatter: Centering Voices of Indigenous People](#)

Adapted annotation: In this session, Patrick Naranjo facilitates a discussion with Fawn Douglas and Ashley Minner on centering and amplifying Indigenous voices. The panel's discussion addresses a wide range of issues affecting Indigenous people today, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the missing and murdered Indigenous women epidemic of violence, the erosion of rights to land stewardship, and the protests at Standing Rock against the Dakota Access Pipeline. Panelists also talk about the importance of going beyond land acknowledgments to support local Indigenous people and work to undo the settler colonial project, as well as share decolonial awareness through an Indigenous perspective to help others become good ancestors.

Speakers: Patrick Naranjo (Santa Clara Pueblo), Fawn Douglas (Las Vegas Paiute Tribe), and Ashley Minner (Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina)

2020 Annual Meeting - [Indigenizing Our Museum Education Programs](#)

Adapted annotation: Museums are calling for decolonizing of collections, but what about educational programs? In this session, Jenn Edginton and Heather Bruegl discuss how museums can indigenize their curriculum, programming, and interpretation. Panelists touch upon topics such as words and representation, what inclusive history is and how to do it, culturally responsive teaching, land acknowledgments, and forming partnerships with Indigenous communities. This session also provides insight into what inclusive programming and interpretation looks like, provides case studies and learning activity ideas, and explores the concepts of decolonization and indigenization.

Speakers: Jennifer Edginton, Heather Bruegl (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin and first line descendant Stockbridge Munsee), and David J. O'Connor (Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa)

2020 Annual Meeting - [Sacred Objects or Historical Artifacts: Navigating Spiritual Stewardship](#)

Adapted annotation: Museums preserve items of religious significance that may require special sensitivity and handling. This session will address NAGPRA, decolonizing efforts, and how museums can work with communities of diverse religious traditions to provide stewardship of sacred objects. Panelist Jan Bernstein discusses why spiritual stewardship should be incorporated, best practices for consultations to determine what items require spiritual stewardship, and how to implement and codify spiritual stewardship in regards to Indigenous items in museum collections. Panelist Ivy Weingram provides a case study of what makes a

Torah scroll a sacred, holy object and what could make it a decommissioned ritual object suitable for exhibition and educational purposes.

Speakers: Barbara Franco, Jan I. Bernstein, and Ivy Weingram

2020 Annual Meeting - [#Boards So White: Interrupting White Culture in History Organizations](#)

Adapted annotation: Non-profit boards of museums, historical societies, and other organizations engaged in historic interpretation are steeped in white culture. This contributes to maintaining the status quo in board recruitment and retention. Session panelists engage in a collective discussion of how to problem solve this field wide issue at this incredibly opportune time as protests against racial injustice sweep the nation. They address a variety of pressing topics in their conversation, such as the meaning and applications of diversity, inclusion, transactional equity, and transformative equity; the violence of white fragility and the barriers it poses to making change; values conversations; and the systemic power hoarding of white supremacy.

Speakers: Lindsey Baker, Adar Ayira, Chanel Compton, and Dennis A. Doster, Ph.D.

2020 Annual Meeting - [Seeking a Shared Narrative with American Indian Stakeholders](#)

Adapted annotation: In this session, Jen Miller from the National Museum of the American Indian and Rob DeHart of the Tennessee State Museum share how their museums involve American Indian stakeholders in exhibition content development to create a more inclusive interpretation and decolonize their museum's interpretive framework. Chenae Lippard, Executive Officer for the Heritage Preservation Division for the Chickasaw Nation, discusses how the only way a museum can accurately share the history and culture of Indigenous people from a Native perspective is by collaborating with local Native tribes and making space for them to tell their stories in the museum. All three panelists demonstrate the importance of museums forming partnerships with Native stakeholders and best practices for building and maintaining those partnerships.

Webinars

[A History of Native American Boarding Schools \(2021\)](#)

Adapted annotation: The motto throughout U.S. history has been that "The only good Indian is a dead Indian." As Native Nations continuously fought back, the U.S. determined that assimilating Native Americans into the colonized, Eurocentric society was necessary and assimilation became the government's policy in the 1800s. One of the ways the government carried out this assimilation policy was taking Native children from their homes and sending them to boarding schools. "Save the man, kill the Indian" was the saying that these schools used as they stripped Native children of their language, culture, and identity. Learn how the

schools operated, the short- and long-term effects of these boarding schools on Native communities, and what Native Americans did to help overcome the abuse.

Speaker: Heather Bruegl (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin and first line descendant Stockbridge Munsee)

[A History of Native American Policy: From Removal to Self Determination \(2021\)](#)

Annotation: From the very beginning, the United States has dealt with Native Americans with a series of policies and treaties. Most of the policies were aimed at assimilation. For many years Native Americans were forced to live by standards set by the United States. These policies stripped away Indigenous Identity, tradition, and cultures. Learn how Federal Indian Policy changed the way Native Americans lived, from removal to self-determination. Learning outcomes for this webinar are: learn about the Native American experience through Federal Indian Policy; gain an understanding of the assimilation practices of Federal Indian Policy; and understand how Federal Indian Policy has affected life in Indian Country today.

Speaker: Heather Bruegl (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin and first line descendant Stockbridge Munsee)

[Implementing NAGPRA: The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act \(2018\)](#)

Adapted annotation: Almost 30 years after the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), there is still misunderstanding in the museum community about its requirements and procedures. In this session, Anne Amati and Angela Neller will discuss the basics of NAGPRA, demonstrate the importance of and best practices for consulting with Native tribes, encourage museums not required to comply with NAGPRA to use NAGPRA as a roadmap for repatriation, and share resources, including online databases, grants, and training opportunities. Through case studies, Anne and Angela will also show how museums can build lasting collaborative relationships with Native American communities beyond NAGPRA implementation.

Speakers: Anne Amati and Angela Neller

[Interpreting Native American History and Culture at Museums and Historic Sites \(2016\)](#)

Adapted annotation: Museums and historic sites pride themselves on telling inclusive stories about the histories of the people in the communities they serve. But when there is a history of exclusion within museum framework, as is the case for Native nations and tribes, how can museums cultivate better relationships with historically under-served communities? How can we provide space for the voices of those who have been historically silenced? This webinar will provide strategies for engaging with Native Americans in order to work collaboratively, share authority, and incorporate their history, culture, and perspectives into your institution's interpretation. Raney Bench provides insight on researching Indigenous history, the DOs and DON'Ts of working with Native advisors, the harmful stereotypes of Native people that visitors

bring to the museum space, and how to decolonize your interpretation and the colonizer legacy of non-Native people feeling ownership over Native history, imagery, etc.

Speaker: Raney Bench

History News

All articles can be accessed here: <https://learn.aaslh.org/products/history-news-article-decolonization-resource-packet>

Clary, Katie Stringer, Carolyn Dillian, and Jesse Morgan. “Working for the Community in Tribal Partnerships.” *History News* 76, no. 4 (Autumn 2021): 19–23.

Annotation: This article details the ideation, development, creation, and execution of the exhibit Waccamaw Indian People: Past, Present, Future at the Horry County Museum, which was the culmination of a partnership between South Carolina’s Waccamaw Indian People and students at Coastal Carolina University to tell the story of the Waccamaw people in their own words with them, not for them. The goals for the project included forming a community-centered, collaborative experience and helping the Waccamaw Indian People attain federal recognition by raising local awareness of the tribe and their history through an exhibition that was about the Waccamaw Indian People’s living culture and hopes for the future. The article aims to inspire public history institutions to build similar partnerships and collaborative content.

“Doing History with Cree Language Teacher Belinda (kakiyosew) Daniels.” *History News* 75, no. 4 (Autumn 2020): 40–41.

Annotation: This article is an interview with Belinda (kakiyosew) Daniels about the immersive language revitalization camp she hosts in Saskatchewan, Canada, where students come to learn and practice the nêhiyawewin (or Cree) Indigenous language. She discusses how the language camp began, who students in the program are, what she hopes her students take from the learning experience, how it feels to watch students progress in learning the language, and goals for the program. She also emphasizes that language reclamation is an example of sovereignty and that by reclaiming language connected to the land, learners reconnect with the spirit, sacredness, and kinship of that land.

Macdonald, Brandie, and Micah Parzen. “Pausing to Decolonize: Now is the Time.” *History News* 75, no. 3 (Summer 2020): 6–7.

Annotation: This article argues that museums need to use the present moment, which has been disrupted and paused by the pandemic, to stop, pause, and reflect on how to hold themselves accountable for their colonial past and present and work towards becoming more equitable. Brandie Macdonald and Micah Parzen explain how their own institution, the Museum of Us, enacted decolonization initiatives and collaborated with community stakeholders to change their museum’s practices in order to work towards redressing years of systemic oppression.

They offer three questions for museums to consider when examining organizational culture and practices: Whose Indigenous ancestral homeland does your organization operate and reside on? How has your organization replicated, or continued to replicate, colonial practices and contribute(d) to the colonial endeavor, intentionally or unintentionally? Where can you take action, create tangible change, and begin to shape organizations to be accountable and inclusive?

Authors: Brandie Macdonald (Chickasaw Nation) and Micah Parzen

Smith, Melody. "A Combined Effort: Why Museums and Visitors Need Religious Literacy." *History News* 75, no. 2 (Spring 2020): 28–33.

Annotation: This article addresses the importance of religious literacy in museums by first defining religious literacy and then explaining that religious literacy promotes interpersonal communication, a better understanding of the past and present, and respect for the world's diversity. Visitors also bring religious beliefs to museums, and due to what Smith calls "the current Western model of secularization," museums may be one of few spaces that visitors can interact with religion outside of religious institutions and therefore have an opportunity to engage with visitors through interpretation of religion. By de-secularizing their past and integrating cross-cultural perspectives, museums can work towards decolonizing their institution.

Books

Bench, Raney. *Interpreting Native American History and Culture at Museums and Historic Sites*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014.

Annotation from Rowman and Littlefield: *Interpreting Native American History and Culture at Museums and Historic Sites* features ideas and suggested best practices for the staff and board of museums that care for collections of Native material culture, and who work with Native American culture, history, and communities. This resource gives museum and history professionals benchmarks to help shape conversations and policies designed to improve relations with Native communities represented in the museum. The book includes case studies from museums that are purposefully working to incorporate Native people and perspectives into all aspects of their work. The case study authors share experiences, hoping to inspire other museum staff to reach out to tribes to develop or improve their own interpretative processes. Examples from tribal and non-tribal museums, and partnerships between tribes and museums are explored as models for creating deep and long lasting partnerships between museums and the tribal communities they represent.

The case studies represent museums of different sizes, different missions, and located in different regions of the country in an effort to address the unique history of each location. By doing so, it inspires action among museums to invite Native people to share in the interpretive

process, or to take existing relationships further by sharing authority with museum staff and board.

Award Winners

2022

Award of Excellence for Publications: [*Daybreak Woman: An Anglo-Dakota Life*](#) by Jane Lamm Carroll

Annotation from publisher (Minnesota Historical Society Press): Daybreak Woman, also known as Jane Anderson Robertson, was born at a trading post on the Minnesota River in 1810 and lived for ninety-two years in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Canada, and South Dakota. The daughter of an Anglo-Canadian trader and a Scots-Dakota woman, she witnessed seismic changes.

For her first five decades, Daybreak Woman was nurtured and respected in the multiethnic society that thrived for generations in the region. But in the last forty years of the nineteenth century, this way of life was swamped and nearly annihilated as the result of Euro-American colonization and the forced exile of most Dakota and Euro-Dakota people from Minnesota after the US–Dakota War of 1862. Dakota and Euro-Dakota people struggled to reestablish their communities in the face of racial violence, injustice, calls for their mass extermination, abject poverty, disease, starvation, and death. Daybreak Woman and her children survived these cataclysmic events and endured to rebuild their lives as Anglo-Dakota people in an anti-Indian world.

In this extraordinary biography, historian Jane Lamm Carroll uses the life of one mixed-heritage woman and her family as a window into American society, honoring the past’s complexity and providing insights into the present.

History in Progress Award & Award of Excellence: Friends of Wood Memorial Library & Museum for [Nowashe Village](#)

About the village from Wood Memorial Library: The Wood’s Nowashe experience sparks a deeper understanding of, and appreciation for, the Indigenous culture that flourished in South Windsor. Here, artifacts come alive, and are displayed and used in real-time by our educators, docents and guest lecturers.

Award of Excellence: Shiloh Museum of Ozark History Education and Arkansas Archeological Survey for [Native American Days Program and Resources](#)

Award of Excellence: Barona Cultural Center & Museum for [Peyii ‘Enyeway ‘Esekaayches! We Are Still Here!](#)

About the exhibition from Barona Cultural Center & Museum: “Cancel Culture” is the idea that someone or something is ostracized from social or professional circles. Those who are subject to this ostracism are said to have been “cancelled.” The dominant party does the “cancelling.” In Culture Class, we realized that “Cancel Culture” really is not new but the way it manifests is different over time. Modern “Cancel Culture” can happen online or on social media. Today we use the term “PC” to describe things you should and should not say or do. Years ago, it looked like book banning. Racism. In our history, it looks like assimilation strategies and genocide. We have struggled to adapt to each wave of newcomers to our land, each wave wanting to “cancel” our culture.

Much of our difficult history has been glossed over, forgotten over time, or it has been interpreted by others without our input in very ethnocentric ways. Despite terrible hardships and destruction of our once-idyllic lifestyle, we persevered. We adapted. We survived. We are still here!

Although it is hard for us to put this timeline of seemingly never-ending destructive events together, to be immersed in the uncomfortable feelings and thoughts about how our ancestors barely existed at times, there is catharsis in educating others and finally being able to tell our story without the fear of cancellation. Our history is not adequately taught in schools. You might learn something about us today that you did not know before your visit. You might have heard bits of our history told a little differently. Explore our way of knowing who we are and the course of events that bring us to where we are today.

Award of Excellence: Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County and Native American Advisory Group for [Ihdago Manipi: Clay County at 150](#)

About the exhibit from HCSCC: Before Clay County took form on the western edge of Minnesota 150 years ago, its tallgrass prairies and forested rivers supported a unique ecosystem that included bison, wolves, beaver and communities of Dakota, Ojibwe, and Métis people. These communities thrived, using extensive trail and waterway systems to build an economy that spanned the continent and soon crossed the Atlantic. However, their lives were soon caught up in a period of tremendous change. By the 1880s, wars and treaties with federal and state governments forced the remaining Dakota, Ojibwe, and Métis from the land.

Ihdago Manipi explores the dramatic transformation that occurred in the early years of Clay County, Minnesota, including the arrival of railroads and immigrant families, the dispossession of Indigenous people, an ecological revolution, and the construction of modern American life.

Award of Excellence: Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation for the [MHA Interpretive Center](#)

Purpose and Mission of the Interpretive Center from the MHA Nation:

Purpose: The Interpretive Center Department is responsible for the on-going development and sustaining this unique educational and tourist attraction for the Three Affiliated Tribes. This

unique attraction offers the traveler from the state, region, national and global with an experience that is embedded in the culture, oral tradition and history of the MHA Nation.

Mission: The MHA Nation Interpretive Center values excellence; accessible and affordable arts experiences; diversity; a broad spectrum of programs; our unique environment and fiscal responsibility. The MHA Interpretive Center strives to be the premier center for integrating cultural and performing arts, education and community.

Award of Excellence: The Waccamaw Indian People and Coastal Carolina University for [*Waccamaw Indian People: Past, Present, Future*](#)

About the exhibit from the digital exhibition website: For generations, the Waccamaw Indian People of Horry County have lived on this land that we now call home. The modern-day tribe members trace their lineage through the many descendants of the Dimery settlement located near the Dog Bluff township, South Carolina. No formal recognition was received by the tribe until their formation in 1992, and in 2005 they were the first Native American tribe to be recognized by the state of South Carolina. Through this exhibit, we explore the traditions, culture, community and struggles faced by the members of this descendant community.

2021

Award of Excellence: The Library Company of Philadelphia for [*Ghost River: The Fall and Rise of the Conestoga*](#)

About the exhibition from the Library Company: During the Paxton massacres of 1763, a mob of white settlers, the so-called “Paxton Boys,” murdered 20 unarmed Conestoga People in a genocidal campaign that reshaped Pennsylvania settlement politics. *Ghost River: The Fall and Rise of the Conestoga* reimagines this difficult history through an educational graphic novel that introduces new interpreters and new bodies of evidence to highlight the Indigenous victims and their kin.

2020

Award of Excellence: Heard Museum for the exhibit [*Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Stories*](#)

About the exhibit from the Heard Museum: *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Stories* is the updated installation of the long-running Boarding School exhibition at the Heard Museum. Since opening in 2000, *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience* has become the Heard Museum’s most thematically powerful exhibition. Over the past two decades, interest in American Indian boarding schools and scholarship about the subject has increased. It is a story that must continue to be shared and one that is central to remembering the nation’s past and understanding its present.

Away From Home examines an important and often unknown period of American history. Beginning in the 1870s the U.S. government aimed to assimilate American Indians into “civilized” society by placing them in government-operated boarding schools. Children were taken from families and transported to far-away schools where all signs of “Indian-ness” were stripped away. Students were trained for servitude and many went for years without familial contact—events that still have an impact on Native communities today.

Award of Excellence for Publications: Hawaiian Mission Houses Historic Site and Archives for [*Kōkua Aku, Kōkua Mai: Chiefs, Missionaries, and Five Transformations of the Hawaiian Kingdom*](#)

Annotation from publisher Hawaiian Mission Houses (HMH): *Kōkua Aku, Kōkua Mai: Chiefs, Missionaries, and Five Transformations of the Hawaiian Kingdom* is a series of essays which develop the HMH site theme: Collaboration between Native Hawaiians and the American Protestant missionaries resulted in, among other things, the introduction of Christianity, the development of a written Hawaiian language and establishment of schools that resulted in widespread literacy, the promulgation of the concept of constitutional government, the combination of Hawaiian with Western medicine, and the evolution of a new and distinctive musical tradition with harmony and choral singing. The authors of the essays in *Kōkua Aku, Kōkua Mai* are among the leading scholars in their essay topics.

Award of Excellence: Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community for the exhibit [*Mdewakanton: Dwellers of the Spirit Lake*](#)

About the exhibit from SMSC: Hočokata Ti’s 3,805-square-foot public exhibit, called *Mdewakanton: Dwellers of the Spirit Lake*, provides visitors with a cultural experience that enhances their knowledge and understanding of the Mdewakanton Dakota people and their history. Tours are offered to guests, where an assortment of Dakota Sioux artifacts can be viewed in the public gallery.

Award of Excellence: National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum for the exhibit [*Caballeros y Vaqueros: The Origin of Western Horse Cultures*](#)

About the exhibition from the National Cowboy Museum: The iconic Western cowboy actually can trace its roots to north and west Africa, up through Spain and then over to the New World. Caballeros y Vaqueros will tell this story using the decorative traditions of New World husbandry as they developed in New Spain and Colonial Mexico from a fusion of Native American, European, African and Islamic traditions. This magnificent exhibition will focus on working objects as sculptural art, allowing visitors to see and learn how global traditions manifested into a unique Western visual tradition.

The decorative traditions of cow- and horse-gear provide some of the most enduring motifs and icons of Western culture. *Caballeros y Vaqueros* traces these decorative traditions as they

developed in Colonial Mexico from a fusion of Native American, European, African and Islamic traditions.

2019

Award of Excellence: Sheila Goff for a distinguished career nurturing intercultural partnerships and championing the rights of Native Americans in museums

About Sheila from AASLH: During her years as History Colorado's NAGPRA Liaison and Curator of Archaeology and Ethnography, Sheila worked with forty-eight tribes to repatriate cultural objects and human remains and to develop interpretation that centered Native expertise and perspectives. Her dedication to building and maintaining respectful intercultural relationships has had an incalculable effect both within the state of Colorado and on the larger role of NAGPRA in United States museums.

Award of Excellence: Museum of Indian Arts and Culture for the exhibit [Lifeways of the Southern Athabaskans](#)

About the exhibit from AASLH: In the nation's first show to examine the stories and material culture of the six distinct Apache tribes of North America, *Lifeways* shares a comprehensive view of a group united by language through photos and objects. By offering a nuanced discussion of the history and challenges of the tribes, this exhibit counters oversimplified and stereotypical views of the Apache with sound scholarship and cultural sensitivity.

2018

History in Progress Award & Award of Merit: Atwood Resource Center at the Anchorage Museum for the [AFN Photo Identification Project](#)

About the project from AASLH: The Alaska Federation of Natives Convention is the largest representative annual gathering in the U.S. of Native peoples, drawing roughly 6,000 attendees and being broadcast to 70 countries worldwide. The Atwood Resource Center partners with attendees to gather information about unidentified historic photographs from the collection, preserving the knowledge of Alaska Native elders and reasserting their voices in the archival record.

Award of Merit: Marcia G. Anderson for the publication [A Bag Worth a Pony: The Art of the Ojibwe Bandolier Bag](#)

About the book from the publisher (Minnesota Historical Society Press): Bandolier bags, or gashkibidaaganag—the large, heavily beaded shoulder bags made and worn by several North American Indian tribes around the Great Lakes—are prized cultural icons here and around the world. From the 1870s to the present day, Ojibwe bead artists of Minnesota have been

especially well known for their lively, creative designs. Neighboring Dakota people would trade a pony for a beautiful beaded bag.

Over the years, non-Indian collectors and ethnographers, struck by the bags' cultural significance and visual appeal, bought them up. Today, there are hundreds of bags in museums around the world, but not so many in the hands of community members. In *A Bag Worth a Pony*, Marcia G. Anderson shares the results of thirty years of study, in which she learned from the talented bead artists who keep the form alive, from historical records, and from the bags themselves.

Anderson examines the history, forms, structure, and motifs of the bags, giving readers the tools to understand a bag's makeup and meaning. She also offers a tour of Minnesota's seven Ojibwe reservations, showing the beautiful beaded bags associated with each along with the personal insights of seven master beadworkers.

Award of Merit: Coronado Historic Site and the Friends of Coronado Historic Site for the public program [Dig Kuaua](#)

About the program from AASLH: This community project engaged more than seventy-five local volunteers with archaeological investigations that identified previously unknown rooms at Kuaua Pueblo and changed the site's interpretation. By building relationships with diverse stakeholders and challenging colonial preservation practices, *Dig Kuaua* recenters Native people in the Pueblo narrative and serves as a model for future inclusive archaeology programs.

Award of Merit: Oshkosh Public Museum for the exhibit [People of the Waters](#)

About the exhibit from AASLH: Through community outreach, teacher input, and Native partnerships, the Oshkosh Public Museum created a new long-term main exhibit that interprets the Ice Age and Native history of the Lake Winnebago region with artifacts, replica structures, and interactives. Linking geographical, cultural, and political histories, *People of the Waters* is a Native-centered regional history exhibit that makes a unique contribution to local communities and provides a model for decolonizing museum practices.

2017

Award of Merit: Hawaiian Mission Houses Historic Site and Archives and Awaiaulu Inc. for the project [Letters from the Ali'i](#)

About the project from AASLH: This project drew from three different institutions to digitize, transcribe, translate, and share over two hundred letters from forty-two Hawaiian chiefs, written from 1820 to 1907. The history of Hawaii's missions has long been dominated by the voices of Western missionaries, so these letters shed new light on this crucial period from the point of view of Native people. Through public symposia and graduate student training, *Letters from the Ali'i* brings historic Hawaiian voices to the foreground for a new generation.

Award of Merit: Michigan History Center for the public program *Rock Your Mocs*

About the program from AASLH: This three-part programming series helped visitors understand diverse Native perspectives on Michigan history, from the statehood era to today. Through a film festival, workshops, and panels, the museum expanded their relationships with Native groups and helped bring Indigenous voices to the forefront in discussions of culture, racial equity, and environmental issues

2016

Award of Merit: Oakland Museum of California for the exhibit [*Pacific Worlds*](#)

About the exhibit from the Oakland Museum: Celebrating the vibrant historic and cultural relationships, past and present, between the Pacific Islands and California, *Pacific Worlds* examines the deep and many-layered histories of this region's interactions with the Pacific, and explores the on-going connections between Pacific Islanders and Native Hawaiians, along with Filipinos, Native Californians, and American collectors and colonists.

Turning the familiar idea of California as the western frontier on its head and re-positioning the State as "the East Coast of the Pacific," *Pacific Worlds* weaves together never-before-seen objects and ephemera from the Oakland Museum of California's collections along with contemporary California Pacific Islander artwork and community voices. Through the exhibition, visitors will experience how Pacific Islanders in California today maintain cultural practices including dance and music, food, fiber arts, tattooing, surfing, and other practices.

Award of Merit: Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site for the project [*Wetlands & Waterways: The Key to Cahokia*](#)

About the project from AASLH: The project explains an important yet neglected aspect of American history: how pre-Columbian Americans coalesced into an urban complex in the Midwest over 1,000 years ago, and supported a population of 10,000+ people for about 400 years. It tells the story of the symbiotic relationship of the inhabitants and their environment, and the impact of the extensive waterways on the success of the settlement. *Wetlands & Waterways* is the first comprehensive exhibit that merges all aspects of the interconnectedness of Mississippian settlement and landscape.

Award of Merit: Brenda J. Child (Red Lake Ojibwe) for the publication [*My Grandfather's Knocking Sticks: Ojibwe Family Life and Labor*](#)

Annotation from the publisher (Minnesota Historical Society Press): When Ojibwe historian Brenda Child uncovered the Bureau of Indian Affairs file on her grandparents, it was an eye-opening experience. The correspondence, full of incendiary comments on their morals and character, demonstrated the breathtakingly intrusive power of federal agents in the early twentieth century.

While telling her own family's stories from the Red Lake Reservation, as well as stories of Ojibwe people around the Great Lakes, Child examines the disruptions and the continuities in daily work, family life, and culture faced by Ojibwe people of Child's grandparents' generation—a generation raised with traditional lifeways in that remote area. The challenges were great: there were few opportunities for work. Government employees and programs controlled reservation economies and opposed traditional practices. Nevertheless, Ojibwe men and women—fully modern workers who carried with them rich traditions of culture and work—patched together sources of income and took on new roles as labor demands changed through World War I and the Depression.

Child writes of men knocking rice at wild rice camps, work customarily done by women; a woman who turns to fishing and bootlegging when her husband is unable to work. She also recounts that one hundred years ago in 1918-1919, when the global influenza pandemic killed millions worldwide, including thousands of Native Americans, a revolutionary new tradition of healing and anti-colonial resistance emerged in Ojibwe communities in North America: the jingle dress dance. All of them, faced with dispossession and pressure to adopt new ways, managed to retain and pass on their Ojibwe identity and culture to their children.

Award of Merit: Anton Treuer (Ojibwe) for the publication [*Warrior Nation: A History of the Red Lake Ojibwe*](#)

Annotation from the publisher (Minnesota Historical Society Press): The Red Lake Nation has a unique and deeply important history. Unlike every other reservation in Minnesota, Red Lake holds its land in common—and, consequently, the tribe retains its entire reservation land base. The people of Red Lake developed the first modern Indigenous democratic governance system in the United States, decades before any other tribe, but they also maintained their system of hereditary chiefs. The tribe never surrendered to state jurisdiction over crimes committed on its reservation. The reservation is also home to the highest number of Ojibwe-speaking people in the state.

Warrior Nation covers four centuries of the Red Lake Nation's forceful and assertive tenure on its land. Ojibwe historian and linguist Anton Treuer conducted oral histories with elders across the Red Lake reservation, learning the stories carried by the people. And the Red Lake band has, for the first time, made available its archival collections, including the personal papers of Peter Graves, the brilliant political strategist and tribal leader of the first half of the twentieth century, which tell a startling story about the negotiations over reservation boundaries.

Outside Resources

Land Acknowledgements

[U.S. Department of Arts and Culture - *The Honor Native Land Guide* and *The Honor Native Land Virtual Resource Pack*](#)

About the guide from USDAC: Created in partnership with Native allies and organizations, the Guide offers context about the practice of acknowledgment, gives step-by-step instructions for how to begin wherever you are, and provides tips for moving beyond acknowledgment into action.

Acknowledgment by itself is a small gesture. It becomes meaningful when coupled with authentic relationships and informed action. But this beginning can be an opening to greater public consciousness of Native sovereignty and cultural rights, a step toward equitable relationship and reconciliation.

About the pack from USDAC: We are eager to share this #HonorNativeLand Virtual Acknowledgement Pack as an effort to renew our commitment to acknowledging place and the ancestral and contemporary stewards of these irreplaceable resources of land, air, water and cosmos.

With this release of these digital tools, we encourage folks to find creative ways to weave in acknowledgment as they host events and staff meetings in the digital space.

In this pack you will find: a series of virtual backgrounds to upload to your online meeting platform. To use we encourage you to navigate your platform's settings to upload; a series of images formatted to share as a series on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or elsewhere, which reinforce why it is important to continue the practice of acknowledging space, even in the digital world; and our #HonorNativeLand poster series.

[Native Governance Center - A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgment](#) [2019]

About the guide from NGC: Native Governance Center co-hosted an Indigenous land acknowledgment event with the Lower Phalen Creek Project on Indigenous Peoples' Day 2019 (October 14). The event featured the following talented panelists: Dr. Kate Beane (Flandreau Santee Dakota and Muskogee Creek), Mary Lyons (Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe), Rose Whipple (Isanti Dakota and Ho-Chunk), Rhiana Yazzie (Diné), and Cantemaza (Neil) McKay (Spirit Lake Dakota). We've created this handy guide to Indigenous land acknowledgment based on our panelists' responses.

[Tomaquag Museum - A Guide for Land Acknowledgments](#) by Lorén Spears (Narragansett Niantic) [2020]

Introduction to the guide from the Tomaquag Museum: Land Acknowledgements (LA) are complex, location specific, yet there is no distinct formula for the creation of a LA. Land Acknowledgements are different if presented by Indigenous people versus non-Native people. If presented by Indigenous people, they often will do it as a welcome to their homelands and if by non-Native people it is done to acknowledge the traditional land stewardship, contributions and continuation of the First Peoples. Creating a land acknowledgement can be difficult to fulfill all needs or goals. However, it is important to start somewhere and refine as needed. It is also

important to know a Land Acknowledgement is the beginning of the inclusion of Indigenous voice, diversity exploration, incorporation in all fields, supporting Indigenous nations and organizations, empowering Indigenous peoples (economic justice), supporting Indigenous-led grassroots campaigns, environmental justice, land and water rights and ultimately land return to Indigenous nations.