



Sam Noble Museum

NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGES COLLECTION

MISSION STATEMENT

The Native American Languages collection at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History consists of a growing number of audio and video recordings (both old and new), manuscripts, books and teaching curriculum, lesson plans and teaching materials. The catalog is available on the website. The collection is a resource center for researchers, educators and language advocates of Native American languages and is intended to be a resource center where the activities of scholars and community members can intersect and develop mutually beneficial relationships. Activities sponsored by the department are designed to assist Native American communities and teachers in the preservation, instruction and revitalization of their languages. The collection participates in the public education side of the museum as well, so visitors can develop an awareness, appreciation and understanding of the rich cultural and intellectual contributions of Native American languages.

The department of Native American Languages has four fundamental goals:

- 1 To build a collection concentrating on oral and written Native languages of Oklahoma.** We are here to serve anyone interested in Native languages. We safely house original and copies of the native language recordings and manuscripts. We have the funding, staff and expertise to record, migrate, archive, conserve and make accessible the materials. None of the language materials housed in SNOMNH may be used for profit. We are a locally-based archive, so people who speak or are learning the languages represented in the museum can easily access the materials. With a Native Advisory Board, we try to develop policies and services that directly benefit the creators and inheritors of the Native languages of Oklahoma.
- 2 To carry out research, especially the documentation of indigenous languages that are facing the rapid loss of speakers, and formulate, implement and evaluate strategies for reversing the language shift.** To help with this, we partner with the Department of Anthropology at OU in creating a new M.A. program in applied linguistics, specializing in documentation, maintenance, and revitalization of Native languages.
- 3 To provide services to Native communities and language programs.** We offer services for dubbing and copying old recording. We also will travel to help communities document their elders or special events. In addition, we have a recording studio at the museum that may be used to document stories and songs or to make teaching materials for language classes. We help with issues of archiving and migrating materials and understanding language policies. We partner with tribes and communities for grant writing and execution. Finally, we are involved in training in linguistics and Native language teaching and acquisition for teachers of Native languages.
- 4 To educate the broader Oklahoma and world community on the history of Native languages and continued importance of language diversity in Oklahoma and the United States.**