



## Sam Noble Museum

### NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGES COLLECTION

#### **PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY**

The Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History is part of the University of Oklahoma and funded by the state of Oklahoma. It is, therefore, a public institution, paid for in great part by the people of Oklahoma. As a public institution, the collections should be open to the public for any educational or personal purposes. However, no items or content can be used for commercial or for-profit enterprises. Violators will be prosecuted. Otherwise, the content should have no restrictions.

Provided here is information about the archives, the restrictions on use policy and the benefits of having open public archives for language materials, especially for Native Americans.

#### **A. The department of Native American Languages**

The following are reasons why Tribes and Tribal people have decided to store Tribal and private collections in the department of Native American Languages archives:

- Central location for Tribal access
- Neutral location from Tribal/family politics
- Long-term, stable organization
- Safe from fire, tornado, heat, humidity
- Copies and originals stored in archival material to aid its lifespan
- Digital information is migrated as technology changes, ensuring its availability
- Permanent, staffed archives to take care of materials
- Conservator on staff for restoration
- Budget to care for materials
- All donors are provided with free copies of audio and visual materials that they donate.

#### **B. Normal public access**

The public may use the collection:

- to conduct scholarly or private research
- to listen to recording/read written documents in the archives
- to have copies made (dubbing, photo-copying) by NAL staff
- by accessing the catalogue via the website

### **C. Arguments for unrestricted access collections**

1. If we look at the user profile in the archives of the Survey of California and other Indian Languages (SCOIL) housed at the University of California at Berkeley and the archives of the Alaska Native Languages Center, far more Native people use the collections than non-Native. We expect the same user profile here. We will be far more likely to restrict Native peoples than non-native peoples from using the language and language teaching materials.
2. Breath of Life – Many Native languages have no speakers. For these people, all that is left of their languages is what has been stored in archives. If this material had never been stored, they would not be able to know about their languages and begin to undertake the process of breathing life back into their languages. Many of the tribes in California and the East Coast are reclaiming their languages from archives.
3. Restrictions may harm our grandchildren. Restrictions based on Tribal membership are, in most cases, based on blood quantum. Due to intermarriage, many grandchildren may not be eligible for the same Tribal rolls as their grandparents (and even parents). Restricting collections to specific Tribal membership has in some cases unwittingly kept direct heirs from using the collection.
4. Restrictions require that the Tribe update who may have access to the collection. This is not up to the archive staff but that of the Tribe or donor. Over the years, and as government employees change, this information often does not get updated. The archive can allow access only to those on the list. If the list changes or the people on the list die without the archive being updated, they cannot let *anyone* into that collection. Therefore, the material may end up not being accessible to anyone in the Tribe if the Tribe does not continually update its information with the archive. It is the experience of archives that this updating usually does not occur.

### **D. Allowed Restriction: Injurious Gossip**

Restriction on public access of content will normally apply only to those parts of collections which contains injurious gossip.

#### *Injurious Gossip*

Injurious gossip is any talk about a third party which is slanderous, libelous or could otherwise cause harm or injury to the third party.

NAL cannot find and/or judge injurious gossip during dubbing. A depositor or patron must direct us to the injurious passage(s). Injurious passage(s) will be removed from the public access version of the recording, but it will not be removed from permanent archived copies. In this way, the public is denied access to that specific portion of a recording. The catalog description of that item will contain a note that sections are left off the public copy. NAL retains the right to reopen these portions after all parties are deceased.

## **E. Sacred or Sensitive Content**

Religious and cultural materials will not normally be taken out of mastered recordings. The Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History respects the fact that some material is accepted by the majority of tribal members as being of a nature too sacred or too sensitive for public access. If material is of this nature, the department suggests referring to Section E. Access Conditions of the *NAL Depositor Packet*. This section outlines the levels of access provided by NAL and the conditions regarding those levels. Access Level 3 allows access to the resource to be controlled by the depositor (or someone else); however, the NAL curator must approve any access restrictions. Two alternative courses than the standard donation are:

1. The collection should be housed with the Tribe. In this case, the division of Native American Languages staff will help Tribes to store collections in the best ways available to them.
2. The collection can be loaned to the museum. In the case of long-term loans, the Tribe or loanee will pay for the storage space. This is usually an upfront fee to pay for the storage materials and space, but may require a nominal yearly fee, in addition to a fee for CO2 treatment (as outlined in the "Permission For Anoxic Treatment Of Objects" document. It is up to the Tribe or loanee to make yearly payments and to keep the archive staff informed on a yearly basis as to the status of the loan and who may have access to the loan. This requires a commitment through the generations to remain in contact with the museum. Because of this, a long-term loan is not recommended.