Digital Repatriation as a Decolonizing Practice in the Archaeological Archive[1]

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Abstract: Repatriation of archival materials holds great potential for decolonizing archaeological archives. This paper argues that while repatriation of human remains and cultural objects is required by law under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), traditional manuscript archives can and should be subject to the same standards for repatriation. The entirety of the archaeological archive can therefore be repatriated to descendant communities. In fact, many museums and other institutions have adopted the practice of digital repatriation of both documents and artifacts. By repatriating a facsimile of an important cultural item, institutions may actually perpetuate the colonial perspective that the original item's proper place is with the institution instead of with its community of origin. This paper addresses situations in which it is both appropriate and inappropriate to repatriate a digital copy instead of the original object.

As part of efforts to be more inclusive and to become better stewards of the collections housed at curating institutions, we look to repatriation—the return of cultural heritage to source or descendant communities—as one component in the complex process of decolonizing archives. The concept of "decolonization" has become hypervisible in academic and museum spheres, and we interpret it here as the process of removing or reducing colonial structure and influence to the greatest extent possible. Colonial influences in institutional archival spaces are vast and multifaceted, and repatriation addresses only one piece of this puzzle. Legal requirements for the repatriation of cultural heritage materials exist in the United States through legislation such as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which focuses on historical and archaeological cultural heritage. Here we apply similar concepts to archival collections and present a case study describing such a process.

In this paper we refer particularly to the repatriation of those archival collections which document Native American histories and experiences. Archives of Native American materials are not limited to those found in tribal museums or archaeological repositories. Collections related to Native communities vary drastically and can be found just about anywhere: in 2016, fourteen of seventeen responding units at Indiana University Bloomington self-reported "physical or digital artifacts, objects, images, audio-visual materials, archives, books, maps, manuscripts, and artworks that depict, discuss, or relate to American Indian historical and contemporary issues" (Sievert, 2017). Native American materials were identified in repositories ranging from the Archives of Traditional Music to the campus Herbarium. By identifying Native materials from collections originally gathered without consent, described without consultation, and shared without collaboration and returning them to their source communities, decisions related to use and access are left in the capable hands of those whom the collections represent. We draw upon our personal experiences as a librarian-archivist for a university archaeological laboratory, now anthropological museum, and a university Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) practitioner to explore the benefits and challenges of repatriating archival materials.

We disclose and acknowledge that we are White women who have benefited in various ways from the colonial institutions and systems in which we work. Our particular training in the fields of anthropology and archival studies impacts our understandings of the communities, documents, and artifacts with which we work. This imbalance reflects the critical importance of centering Indigenous knowledge, perspectives,

and priorities when working with Indigenous archival and archaeological materials, and we emphasize this position in our day-to-day work and throughout this paper. In conjunction with this paper, we encourage readers to explore Indigenous practices for the respectful care and curation of archival and archaeological materials (e.g. First Archivists Circle, 2007; Doyle et al., 2015), which have dramatically changed our own perspectives on these subjects. We suggest the practice of returning archival materials to source communities utilizing both voluntary and legal avenues as a step forward in the complex decolonizing process. We recognize that digital and physical repatriation, while useful in different circumstances, are not the same; and we emphasize that partnering with and listening to these source communities facilitates such returns so that they may have control over their own cultural heritage.

Applying "the archive" to the field of archaeology

The term "archive" varies in scope and definition across the disciplines and its definition may seem nebulous to the general reader. In "'The Archive' is Not An Archives", Michelle Caswell (2016) emphasizes this intellectual rift in understanding "archives" between archival professionals and humanities scholars. In thinking about how to decolonize the archives, let us define what an archive may therefore be. For the purposes of this paper, we look to the Society of American Archivists Dictionary of Archives Terminology, which defines an archive as "a physical or digital collection of historical records" that have "documentary evidence of past events"; additionally it has come to mean a "storehouse of recorded knowledge" (n.d.). Archives as collections are not solely made up of paper and other written material. Documents are information resources that can be relayed using paper and ink, as in traditionally conceived manuscript archives; documents can also be objects other than paper. As Koorie author Shannon Faulkhead (2010) points out, a record in an archive "can be a document, an individual's memory, an image, or a recording" as long as it "preserves 'memory or knowledge of facts and events'" (p. 67). For example, information and memory can be relayed through such objects as ceramics or fabrics, or through audio recordings (Buckland, 1991). Through this understanding of information as "thing," collections of pottery and stone tools that are *read* and then *understood* are also collections of records or, in this particular interpretation, archives.

At a broader level, the archive is also the institution or department's collecting and storing of records. Archives are a type of special collection repository, which can also include galleries, libraries, and museums (collectively making up the acronymous GLAM), and have traditionally held positions of power regarding the materials they collect: power to access materials, power in describing and organizing collections, and power in what is collected and saved (Caswell et al, 2017). As mentioned previously, these collections and repositories contain books and manuscripts as frequently imagined by the public, but also contain recordings, images, drawings, art, and oftentimes artifacts.

Within the field of archaeology, repositories collect objects documenting humanity from the past, usually in the form of what has been left or placed in the ground. According to the Society for American Archaeology, archaeology is the study of the "human past through material remains" (n.d.). These materials are brought together for study and educational use in museums or laboratories in the United States, serving as what European archaeologists refer to as the archaeological archive. Officially, section 4.1 of *A Standard and Guide to Best Practice for Archaeological Archiving in Europe* states:

> An archaeological archive comprises all records and objects recovered during an archaeological project and identified for long term preservation, including artefacts, ecofacts and other environmental remains, waste products, scientific samples and also written and visual documentation in paper, film and digital form. (Perrin et al., 2014)

Together, the artifact and its documentation make up the archaeological archive in their combined efforts to recreate an archaeological site prior to the artifact's removal from its original context. Archaeological archives are slightly different from traditionally-conceived manuscript archives because they include

records *from* a site instead of only records *about* a site. And like a traditional archive, choices are made by those who collect and create these records. Archaeological archives are made up of materials that are preferentially selected, preserved either by human intervention or chance, and then organized according to colonial systems of knowledge and understanding.

In many of America's repositories, collections adhere to colonial descriptive terminology and organizational models that were developed in the nineteenth centuries. They were perpetuated into the twenty-first century with very little change, until recent localized projects (e.g. Turner, 2015; Doyle, 2015). Description practices are actions through which power may be exercised (Caswell, 2016). Naming conventions, methods of categorizing, and hierarchies of organizing information in most American institutions perpetuate the colonizer's way of thinking over Indigenous ones (Cushman, 2013). To easily identify an example of colonial naming practices in institutions, consider most collections' names. In most cases a collection is named for the collector, rather than for the culture being "collected." In archaeology, collections are also frequently identified based on their geographic location; but again, this is typically the colonizer's name for a location rather than the Indigenous one(s). Property and naming rights are the mark of what Anderson (2018) calls a "power differential [between institutions and communities] that can be too easily hidden" (p. 278). Influenced by Indigenous Australian philosophies, Australian archival theorists suggest that those listed as "subject" within the collection be also listed as "co-creator" (Caswell, 2016, p. 15). Policies and practices are slowly changing in many cultural institutions due to calls by Indigenous people for evaluation and alteration of standard practices (Brown, 2003). As Caswell, Punzalan, and Sangwand (2017) quite literally state, "naming is power" (p. 3).

Implementing practices in the archives which move us forward in decolonizing these spaces, especially those which contain Native American materials, is necessary according to our professional code. Archivists are charged by the Society of American Archivists with "preserving essential records that document the cultural heritage of society" while balancing the "principles of stewardship, access, and respect" (2020). Furthermore, the *Protocols for Native American Archival Materials* recognize that "Native American communities have primary rights for all culturally sensitive materials that are culturally affiliated with them" (Underhill, 2006, p. 136). Decolonizing practices in museums have become a major area of study even as some question their very possibility; decolonizing practices in archives, on the other hand, remain nebulous (Lonetree, 2012; Smith, 2012). Due to the very nature of museums and archives being founded as colonial enterprises, perhaps only practices and methodologies can be decolonialized rather than the institutions themselves (Jansari, 2020). Regardless, as Elizabeth Yale (2015) succinctly explains, "no archive is innocent" (p. 332) and every institutional archive is colonial in one or multiple aspects. Returning materials, be they paper documents or artifacts, to their source communities is a step towards addressing the colonial history and framework of the archive.

NAGPRA and the repatriation of archival documents

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) provides a legal process for the repatriation of Native American human remains and cultural items curated by federally-funded museums and institutions. The statute applies specifically to human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony (25 U.S.C. § 3001 *et seq*.). In the sense that the archaeological archive is made up primarily of artifacts, its contents typically fall into these categories. However, the archaeological archive also includes the documentation pertaining to these artifacts, and under certain federal regulations, associated documents are explicitly identified as part of an archaeological collection (e.g. 36 C.F.R. § 79).

This documentation itself does not necessarily fit neatly into one of the categories of repatriatable materials under NAGPRA. This is not to say, however, that they never fit at all. The most likely (but not only) category that documents may fall into is "objects of cultural patrimony." The definition of an object of cultural patrimony under the NAGPRA statute is the following:

> an object having ongoing historical, traditional, or cultural importance central to the Native
> American group or culture itself, rather than property owned by an individual Native
> American, and which, therefore, cannot be alienated, appropriated, or conveyed by an
> individual regardless of whether or not the individual is a member of the Indian tribe or Native
> Hawaiian organization and such object shall have been considered inalienable by such Native
> American group at the time the object was separated from such group (25 U.S.C. § 3001).

It is understandably difficult to apply this particular definition to archival documents, since the vast majority of documents produced about archaeological materials are written by non-Indigenous historians and archaeologists.

NAGPRA's particular definition applies quite well, however, to other forms of archaeological documents. One excellent example of this is the repatriation of wampum belts created by tribes in the American Northeast. Without appropriate context provided by tribal members, wampum belts appear to function like any other type of belt; they are often beautifully decorated with shells, and could serve as personal adornments. Cherokee Nation scholars Karen Coody Cooper and Ellen Cushman note that wampum belts were in fact not typically worn, but served as documents themselves (Cushman, 2013; Henderson, 2016). Wampum belts have a relatively long history of being repatriated to Indigenous communities, relative to repatriation of other materials. In reference to these repatriations, wampum belts are identified as recording historic events and as being "read" (e.g. Fenton, 1989; Bruchac, 2018). Repatriation of such materials sets a precedent for the repatriation of other types of documents; however, both events cited here occurred outside the purview of NAGPRA. Fenton (1989) describes a repatriation that occurred before NAGPRA was passed, and Bruchac (2018) describes the acquisition of wampum belts from Sotheby's auction house (art dealers are not typically subject to NAGPRA—it applies only to institutions that have received U.S. federal funding).

We invite archivists and other readers to consider the importance of repatriating documents both within and outside the purview of NAGPRA. The U.S. Federal Register does identify instances in which wampum belts have been repatriated under NAGPRA, but here we intentionally highlight the ones which were repatriated separately from NAGPRA. Wampum belts fall within the NAGPRA definition of objects of cultural patrimony because they are created by Indigenous people. Documents which are associated with archaeological archives typically are not; however, they are sometimes considered part of the archaeological collection, and may be of great importance to Indigenous communities. Voluntary repatriation of both Indigenous- and non-Indigenous-produced materials is not only possible, but has a standing history in which we encourage archives professionals to participate.

Angel Mounds case study

Angel Mounds is a large Mississippian-period archaeological site located in present-day Evansville, Indiana. The archive of Angel Mounds material is made up of several parts: the archaeological collection from an 80-year period of excavation; the historic images; the head archaeologist's personal papers; and a wealth of published documentation. In the 1930s, the Indiana Historical Society initiated a movement to purchase the lands of Angel Mounds from a private landowner. In 1938 Eli Lilly funded the purchase of the land, and by 1939 a Works Progress Administration (WPA) excavation project began under the direction of Glenn A. Black. The project hired close to 200 men over its three-year span and exposed 13,000 cubic yards of earth (Black, 1967, p. 26). Archaeological work continued at Angel Mounds in the following years as Indiana University used the site for archaeological field school education. In 1971 the collections from Angel Mounds and the Indiana Historical Society were relocated to Indiana University's campus in Bloomington and the newly created Glenn A. Black Laboratory of Archaeology (GBL) (now part of the IU Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology). The GBL functioned as a laboratory, research facility, museum, archive,

library, and ultimately a teaching institution featuring the archaeological collections of Indiana and the surrounding Midwest.

The 80 years of field and laboratory work at Angel Mounds had identified over 2.5 million artifacts, skeletal remains from more than 700 ancestors, an estimated 23,000 pages of associated documentation, 5,000 print photographs, 7,000 slides and negatives, 112 published works, and over 1.35 terabytes of digital data, in addition to the 12 linear feet of Glenn Black's personal archive (Friberg et al., 2020). Administratively, the collections had been split between the traditional manuscript collections that included the correspondence, publications, and administrative paperwork of the archaeologists, and the archaeological archive made up of both the artifacts and scientific documentation related to those materials. This is reflected in how the collections are still organized and accessed: the traditional archives are organized by person and then alphabetically or chronologically by type of record; the archaeological archives, including paper documents, are organized by location and site. The traditional manuscript documents rival, support, and contextualize the vast archaeological collections. The boundaries of the archival and curatorial professions, and therefore between museum and archival collections, blur in this instance.

During early consultation meetings regarding the NAGPRA collections at Indiana University, tribal representatives requested that the university focus on the Angel Mounds collections. The NAGPRA office at IU agreed to the tribes' request with mutual understanding that it would be an enormous undertaking. Identifying and documenting the NAGPRA collections from Angel Mounds, consisting of ancestral remains and funerary objects, has taken several years at the time of writing this paper. NAGPRA requires documentation of all relevant collections in order to report Inventories and Summaries as well as contents of repatriations to National NAGPRA. For Angel Mounds, the ancestral remains and funerary objects were re-inventoried as part of the documentation process to ensure that data were correctly reported to the federal government and to tribal nations. This produced new archival material in the form of new and/or additional information about these collections, adding to the already massive quantity of associated documents pertaining to the site.

The repatriation of Angel Mounds NAGPRA materials does not include the entire archaeological archive for the site. This collection includes human remains and funerary objects, which fall squarely within NAGPRA's purview, but it also contains thousands of non-funerary artifacts to which the law does not apply. As a result, only a portion of the artifact archive for the site is being repatriated under NAGPRA. In addition, none of the documentation or manuscript materials from the archive are being repatriated. This does not mean that collections or materials cannot be repatriated separately from NAGPRA - in fact, we would argue that repatriations which occur outside of NAGPRA (i.e. voluntarily) are even more powerful in their efforts to address the colonial history of collecting. In the case of Angel Mounds, however, this particular issue does not apply; affiliated tribal nations are familiar with the contents of the overall archive, and have been actively involved in the multiyear repatriation process.

The Angel Mounds archaeological archive also includes photographs taken throughout the decades of site excavation, depicting the evolving methods and techniques used at the site, but also documenting Indigenous remains. With the help of an NEH Preservation Assistance Grant awarded in 2015, all slides and negatives were digitized in an attempt to preserve the image collection. Though all are now digitized, only a third of the images were published to an online platform, specifically preserving but restricting access to any images that were deemed culturally sensitive by consulted communities. Images of ancestral remains, captured in the process of being disturbed from their resting places or purposely displayed in academic pursuits such as educational or museum displays, are one such example of content that is not viewable by the public. This was determined through meetings between archives staff and descendant communities in which descendants were invited to share their concerns directly with the staff involved in the project. Consulting with Native communities helped staff to understand why publication of these images might further traumatize descendant peoples.

We would like to highlight the importance of the decision to repatriate the Angel Mounds NAGPRA materials. This work would have happened eventually according to the law, but IU's agreement to focus on Angel Mounds earlier rather than later prioritized the wishes of tribal nations. Assessing and documenting this collection was not quick, easy, or convenient for the institution, but it is critically important that this project was prioritized in spite of this. What was and was not repatriated directly conforms to what the tribal nations valued and wanted returned; for example, associated scientific documentation and images of the excavations were noted and discussed with communities, but they did not request that these be repatriated. The repatriation process reflects a commitment to valuing the wishes of tribal partners over what is convenient for the institution.

The repatriation of ancestral remains and funerary objects from Angel Mounds is a critical step in attempting to decolonize this archive. Collection, research, and display of Indigenous ancestral remains and funerary objects is an explicitly colonial endeavor. Removing these remains and objects from the archaeological archive is a purposeful move toward addressing the historical trauma caused by these practices. We must remember that if the wishes of descendant communities were supported from the beginning, ancestral remains and many objects would never have become part of these archives in the first place. The documentation and repatriation process has also opened doors for interpretations of the site and its archaeological archives by our Indigenous colleagues. The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at IU will feature a prominent Angel Mounds exhibit, and the content and interpretation of this exhibit involves heavy consultation with tribal partners. These partnerships exist in part due to conversations that were started as part of NAGPRA work focusing on this archive.

Physical versus digital repatriation

 Many museums and other institutions have adopted the practice of digital repatriation of both documents and artifacts. Digitizing a document creates a facsimile of the original. We believe that by repatriating a facsimile of an important cultural item, institutions (perhaps unintentionally) perpetuate the colonial perspective that the original item's proper place is with the institution instead of with its community of origin. Boast and Enote (2013) thoroughly discuss the issues surrounding the concept of "virtual repatriation" as well as its inherent contradictions. They describe the processes used to facilitate many virtual data sharing efforts—often presented as synonymous with repatriation—to be "highly circumscribed, reductive, and commensurating" (107). Virtual data sharing must inherently limit the recipients of the data (circumscribing), selectively accommodate the various needs of these recipients (reducing), and assume that the meaning of both the object being "repatriated" and the information used to describe it is identical across all recipients (commensurating). Boast and Enote (2013) assess the literal and interpretive meaning of the term "repatriation," claiming that since repatriation specifically refers to transferring physical custody of the object, digital data sharing in lieu of this process "not only misunderstands the meaning of 'repatriation' but also misrepresents the process and intent" (p. 109). Cushman (2013) notes that digitization poses the questions of "what can be mediated, especially digitally mediated, and by whom" (p. 130).

We support and encourage Boast and Enote's (2013) interpretation of the process and intent of repatriation, and we advocate for the transfer of legal control of the physical archive, ancestor, or object whenever possible. However, we argue there may also be instances where "digital repatriation," or virtual data sharing from the perspective of Boast and Enote (2013), is appropriate either instead of or in addition to physical repatriation. For example, if an artifact or document is considered to be the cultural patrimony of multiple source or descendant communities, it may be impossible for all of them to co-curate the original object (Alpert-Abrams, 2019). We strongly encourage source communities and archivists and other practitioners to develop curation agreements for such digital data as they would for loans of physical materials, including specifying intellectual property rights, allowable and unallowable research, ownership of data, and other applicable long-term curation concerns.

In the case of multiple source or descendant communities, each might receive a separate digital version of the object; however, the fate of the original artifact must still be addressed. Christen (2011) argues that while some may think that the digital object is meant to replace the physical object, "instead, digital (or digitized) cultural materials provide an alternative form of and dynamic life for many physical objects" (p. 187) by stimulating conversation, storytelling, or new art. The digital object may be more easily curated and shared than the physical object. Digital objects can also be manipulated more easily than their physical counterparts. Restricting access to the original in these cases of digital repatriation might be an appropriate compromise with the institution, if that is the wish of the communities involved.

Digitization of materials often occurs as part of efforts to increase accessibility, including remote access, and for the conservation and preservation of the physical object. Over the past few years, the Indiana University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (IUMAA) has partnered with various tribal nations whose homelands include parts of the Midwest, including the Shawnee and Potawatomi communities who have worked with the museum's archives (described below) and the many nations involved in the Angel Mounds project (described above). Together we have worked to digitize, preserve, and disseminate photographic and archival materials documenting the heritage of the region's Indigenous peoples. Of particular note is the Great Lakes-Ohio Valley Ethnohistory (GLOVE) collection, whose finding aid we have included in the References section. The GLOVE collection features facsimile materials compiled in the 1950s and 1960s as documentation for land claims lawsuits brought before the Indian Claims Commission.

Materials in the GLOVE collection cover the history and land use of Indigenous people in the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes region. They document the movements of peoples throughout the region as well as providing significant historic details, geographic information, and Indigenous names of people and places from the 1600s through the 1900s. Digitizing this collection is particularly impactful for the tribal communities who were historically removed from the region, and whose heritage is documented in these materials. The physical collection is housed at Indiana University while most researchers from descendant communities live across the country. Making the digital facsimiles accessible online helps to restore the histories described within these pages to the communities they most directly represent, while also protecting the fragile physical copies from further handling damage. These partnerships have so far included work with the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, Citizen Potawatomi Nation, and Wyandotte Nation to fund and support the digitization of GLOVE documents (ESTO, 2017). As part of the partnership, the tribes fund the digitization work at the museum; the results of the work, including high-quality images and bibliographic metadata, are hosted on IU collections' platforms with tribal permission as well as sent to the funding nation(s) to use as they see fit.

Working with these tribal partners generates new (to IU) best practices for vetting and handling culturally sensitive information. Any materials considered sensitive in nature by Native communities will be handled as each community wishes; as archivists, we may submit our suggestions for consideration, but ultimately the decisions rest with tribal nations themselves because they know their culture best. If archival materials reveal cultural practices or songs that the community believes should not be shared with outsiders, it is our duty as stewards of the collections to respect those wishes and restrict access to the materials as requested. Conversations with community partners will help the IUMAA and the broader academic community better understand how to manage digital heritage projects in an environment that increasingly embraces open access policies. Returning such materials allows for more meaningful knowledge production - that which can only be produced via Indigenous interpretation unhindered by institutional policing (Anderson, 2018; Tuck & Yang, 2012). These conversations and collaborations will not be without challenges, but they will bring a lasting impact on institutional practices in higher education.

Potential concerns for digitizing materials

Digitization also comes with drawbacks and challenges. With greater access and discoverability, Christen (2011) notes "a new set of tensions for communities" (p. 197) who seek to be part of the archival process. The first complication is that digital objects take up space, and this space costs money to maintain. Repatriating digital objects assumes that tribes have the same access to technological and financial resources—in perpetuity. Colleges and universities maintain a large operating budget and highly skilled staff that are renewed and/or replaced each year. New technologies and all-encompassing databases are specifically marketed toward these sprawling institutions. Tribal museums and small non-profit organizations for the most part cannot match the resources of universities, and cultural institutions' staff should not assume solutions on behalf of their Indigenous partners.

Complicating matters, of course, are federal and state laws and other legal standards. When a document or collection is digitized, copyrights can be generated concerning the newly created digital objects. Existing copyright laws may even prevent institutions from choosing collections to be digitized, and thus fail to potentially identify source communities through exposure. For example, the microfilm series within the GLOVE collection cannot be digitized and shared widely at this time because microfilm reels, through the selection, ordering, and arrangement of documents on film, are thought to be sufficiently original to be subject to copyright by the curating institution. Physical ownership of materials, like these purchased microfilm reels, does not necessarily mean that an institution has the rights to share them. Materials can be published anywhere in the world, meaning that international copyright laws may need to be referenced. Other property laws come into play when collections are donated to an archive. The donor may request that certain materials remain restricted until the end of their lifetime, leaving source communities unable to access them before then. Interested communities therefore "remain subjected to the Western institutional logics of ownership, access, and control" which "affect how Indigenous peoples are able to make claims to this material, develop strategies for negotiating shifts in access" and eventually change the narrative (Anderson, 2018, p. 279). Institutions and source communities are forced to play within the rules and laws of the colonizer even while attempting to adopt decolonizing strategies. This fact does not eliminate the need for such efforts, but rather emphasizes the necessary restructuring of these spaces.

Ultimately, digitization and digital repatriation are not equivalent to physical repatriation (Boast and Enote, 2013). An institution which maintains physical objects without offering legal control to the source community continues to "exert their power as property" (Anderson, 2018, p. 279). Any potential researchers seeking to use the materials for projects, exhibits, or marketing platforms must contact the curating institution rather than the source community. Even if the Indigenous community obtains digital facsimiles, there may be a written agreement required by the curating institution before the community can actually use those facsimiles. There is still a power imbalance which favors the institution. Cultural institutions, including archives, need to "learn to let go of their resources, even at times of the objects [themselves]" in order to make the necessary change (Boast, 2011, p. 67). Give communities control over their own heritage.

To those cultural heritage professionals who argue that source communities will not know how to take care of repatriated materials, we wonder: have you ever asked them? Those materials were created and cared for by Indigenous peoples long before museums and archives collected them (Mihesuah, 2000). Because we as anthropologists, museum directors, and archivists have studied (in a westernized, colonial institution) our (westernized, colonial) discipline, we often act in a manner suggesting our superiority over Indigenous peoples, to whom we must provide guidance regarding these collections. Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2012) foundational work *Decolonizing Methodologies* points out that those of us trained in Western institutions rely on and are biased by rules and values supporting the Western system of knowledge, which dominates over Native knowledges. Cushman (2013) argues that to decolonize the archive, we must "consider ways in which the archive … as well as the materials inside, work within communities" (p. 131). This requires the

return of these archives or materials to those communities. We must break down our roles as the sole caretakers and gatekeepers of these materials by returning the physical archive or conferring control over the digital archive.

Importance of case-based decision making

Throughout this paper, we encourage the repatriation of archival materials both through the NAGPRA process and outside of it. This is due in part to the unique histories and collections of institutional archives. Every situation will be different; each collection, each institution, and each Indigenous community will bring different questions and solutions to the table. NAGPRA is often criticized for its lack of explicit instructions for consultation with descendant communities; however, this is partly intentional due to the vastly different ways in which tribal nations address consultation and repatriation projects. There is no cut-and-dry method by which to collaborate with sovereign tribal nations. Therefore, it is absolutely critical that any close consultation and collaboration between institutions and descendant or source communities be approached on a very unique, individual basis. Amy Lonetree (2012) notes that "each project is firmly rooted in the institutional history of the particular museum and is dependent on the relationships that develop between [museums and] … community advisory boards" (p. 36). Archives must pay close attention to the specific needs and concerns of each relevant community and how these pertain to archival collections.

Consultation with and repatriation to Native nations raise critical questions that may not have been considered by archivists and related professionals in the past. We note here, for example, that while digitization and open access are wonderful tools for disseminating archival and artifactual information, these may not be appropriate for some materials that make up archival collections. Archivists must be aware of potential concerns related to cultural sensitivity for the materials that they curate, and they must take an active role in the stewardship of these materials - even if that means relinquishing control. This is only possible through consultation and other forms of engagement with descendant and/or source communities.

Through this paper we emphasize archivists initiating consultation and repatriation processes with source communities; however, it is equally important to acknowledge again that Native people have been reaching out to archives and museums for decades already. Amy Lonetree (2012) points out that in the United States "Native activists have worked to change museum practices" since the 1960s (p. 33). The 1990 passage of NAGPRA added legal ramifications for institutions that do not consult tribal nations, yet, 30 years later, consultation and repatriation are not common practice in all cultural institutions with Native materials. A truly decolonizing practice will be to let tribal partners lead the negotiations, set the methodologies, and address timelines when consulting with archivists and museum professionals.

In turn, these discussions spark conversations about what is important to these communities. By identifying not only which materials and topics are sensitive, but also which might be of further community interest, consultation results in new partnerships that may develop collaborative work such as museum exhibits, research projects, and repatriation of Indigenous materials. Each of the projects that we provide here as examples of collaborative archival work—in particular, the Angel Mounds and GLOVE projects—would not have been possible without the active consultation of and participation from tribal nations. Centering and prioritizing Indigenous interests and goals serves as an important and necessary step in the long, slow process of decolonizing archival collections.

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