

Editorial Guide for Indigenous Entity Descriptions in SNAC

(Draft V.1)

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1. Introduction

This editorial guide was originally created for participants in the [SNAC Indigenous edit-a-thon](#) and for future editors when considering Indigenous records. This editorial guide considers best practices in the field as they apply to the Social Networks and Archival Context (abbreviated as SNAC) platform but we hope that this may lead to changes in other databases, platforms, and practices. *While we pull from multiple sources, this is not exhaustive, and will change as new protocols, resources, policies, and other documentation becomes available in the field.* As a general note, the predefined choices available in SNAC for certain fields, as well as standards for metadata are deeply rooted in white supremacist and colonial contexts. Therefore, at this time, the following recommendations are limited by what SNAC as a platform can do, and in some cases, we are limited in expanding outward.

If you look through this document or work within SNAC and have suggestions for how this could be improved, please feel free to add suggestions here: [SNAC Suggestions](#).

Following the spirit and intent of the [SNAC Cooperative Ethos](#) statement, we are committed to approaching the complex task of creating demographic descriptions of creators—corporate bodies, persons, and families—in a responsible and humane manner, according to professional archival standards. We acknowledge and understand that demographic categories, such as gender and nationality, are socially constructed labels, and how people and groups self-identity is fluid and changes over time. While current archival standards and practices remain fairly rigid, we hope that as SNAC improves its technical infrastructure, this will allow for increasing flexibility.

The use of demographic categories in SNAC is designed to assist in describing individuals as related to records they created or are the subject of, not to categorize persons, corporate bodies, or families. We capture and express this data publicly to provide researchers with key access points that have often been obscured, conflated, or unintentionally segregated in other previous systems. Demographic data offers valuable and rich information for researchers and allows accurate representation of various communities, including under-represented groups. Again, if you have suggestions for including additional or fewer fields, or suggestions on how to expand options, we hope that you will use the [SNAC Suggestions link](#) to provide these recommendations.

Recognizing the sensitivity and care with which we should undertake creating demographic data, we recognize the following statements, one from SNAC and the other from the Protocols for Native American Archival Materials (PNAAM) .

[SNAC's Demographics Statement](#) (directly quoted below)

- *“We privilege a creator’s self-identification over other evidence, insofar as it does not lead to mischaracterizations.*
- *We strive for transparency and evidence-based description, including citations and notes to document our description.*
- *We recognize description is a complex and iterative process that must change and adapt to the shifting ways humans identify themselves over time. We recognize the value of historic terminologies as well as modern user discovery needs*

- *We strive to avoid making assumptions; there are no default values supplied when creating demographic descriptions.*
- *Lack of a demographic statement is not a statement. We encourage avoiding creating descriptions where a null value implicitly or explicitly equates to “white” or “male”*
- *We will promptly review, modify, or remove any demographic description for privacy concerns, errors, or omissions.*
- *Ultimately, any description provided will be grounded in the context of the collection materials themselves.”*

Protocols for Native American Archival Materials (Taken from the protocol “**Providing Context**”)

“A primary task for libraries and archives is to organize and describe information resources for efficient and effective retrieval. Collecting institutions also wish to share as much context as possible to enhance the value of resources for patrons. However, the use of outdated, inaccurate, derogatory, or Eurocentric language impedes access. Descriptive information can be improved with the addition of culturally appropriate and accurate language—from original titles through finding aids. Native American communities should be aware that offensive language or other injurious perspectives and information may be inherent in the content of some of the original materials.

Archives and libraries guidelines for action:

- *Encourage culturally affiliated communities to provide context for the collections from their perspective. Supplement descriptive materials with cultural sensitivity statements. The Peabody Museum at Harvard has developed statements which inform researchers of community concerns and the existence of research protocols.*
- *Inform patrons, at the request of a community, of potentially offensive content prior to use by adding a notice to descriptive tools or items such as “The [tribal name] finds information in this work inaccurate or disrespectful. To learn more contact . . .” Amelia Flores, the Colorado River Indian Tribes Library/Archive Director, applies a disclaimer to problematic publications acquired for the library, which states: We do not endorse this publication.*
- *Work with community representatives to revisit indexing terminology, Library of Congress Subject Headings, Anglo American Cataloging Rules (second edition), and classification schemes. Indigenous and non-Indigenous librarians in Australia, for instance, have compiled a national thesaurus for describing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander records.²*
- *Promote changes to established lexicons to allow retrospective conversion or enhancement of antiquated or inadequate catalog records to include contemporary, culturally responsive language. In consultation with communities, add cultural identifiers and information about language and geography.*
- *Add explanations of derogatory words to original titles (e.g., [title created by xxxx in xxxx year]) or remove offensive terms from original titles and provide substitute language (e.g., replace “squaw” or “buck” with [woman] or [man]).*
- *Actively gather metadata to accompany Native American archival collections to reflect the relationship between the creator or researcher and the community of origin.*

Native American communities’ guidelines for action:

- *Provide reviews of archival holdings in order to determine whether or not contextual issues exist in collections.*
- *Assist, based on consultation reviews, in providing preferred language, in identifying people, places, and events, and in sharing additional context for archival materials.”*

Note:

The examples above are starting points. It is important to remember some of the following:

- Even when we use evidence-based description, including citations and notes to documents in our descriptions, we still need to be mindful of inherent biases that exist when the documents were formed, specifically how they fit within current cultural models and support white supremacist ideologies. Ultimately, it is important to consider how archival materials were created in a particular context and were used to dehumanize.
- While in the process of striving towards no assumptions, constructs are still built around some notions of current ideologies (i.e., gender as binary; conceptualizations of race). Keep in mind that oftentimes Indigenous understandings of these concepts are nuanced and fit within different frameworks than SNAC currently provides.
- Within cataloging and descriptive practices, there are many inherent assumptions. For example, differentiation in Library of Congress subject headings has "Women college teachers," but does not include "Men college teachers," since it is assumed that "College teachers" covers this. Be mindful of assumptions certain headings have when contributing and writing demographic descriptions.

2. Broad Areas of Consideration for SNAC Editors

This following section describes considerations for all areas for editors in SNAC for Indigenous entries.

2a. Capitalization

When considering capitalization, it is important to understand the contexts in which capitalization has been used to erase, dehumanize or other groups and communities. One such example is the use of race. As a reminder, race is a socio-organization that has been used to qualify, discredit and erase Indigenous identity through improper racial labeling and the use of blood quantum as a qualification for Tribal identity. For more information on the roles of blood quantum, please check out this episode of [Code Switch from NPR](#).

In Indigenous contexts, we highlight and show importance to these concepts by capitalization of terms such as Native American or Indigenous. As well, when referring to tribal entities, make sure communities and nations are capitalized (**Diné** instead of *diné*, or **Cherokee** instead of *cherokee*).

Reparative description work has sought to highlight these groups by showing importance through capitalization. Throughout, **always** capitalize terms such as **Indigenous**, **Tribal** and **Native**, when referring to someone's identity. "**Do not capitalize "white."** (We recognize that "white" is a race, and white hegemony has shaped archives, however, the capitalization of the term has been co-opted by white supremacists to indicate racial pride). Make sure to use **racial descriptors as adjectives, not as nouns.**" (Lellman et al., 2020)

In addition to the above, the following outlines other examples of terms you should always capitalize. When referring to a leadership role or important person or part of the community, or important spiritual object, make sure to capitalize. Examples include **Chief**, **Clan**, **Creator** (otherwise known as the Great Spirit and not to be confused with a content creator), **Elder**, **Medicine Man/Woman**, **Potlatch** (depending on context), **Sacred Pipe Ceremony**, **Sundance**, **Sweat Lodge**, **Wampum Belt** (Younging, 2018).

If you are unsure whether something should or should not be capitalized, tend towards capitalizing terms or words of importance to **Indigenous contexts**, and remember **not to capitalize the term white**.

3. Specific SNAC Fields and Guidance

This section describes considerations for specific areas of information that are collected in SNAC Authority records.

3a. Names

The following describes the protocols for how to fill out the name section within SNAC.

Name Entries

If you have attended SNACSchool, you learned about formulating a name and how to parse it out using RDA rules. If you have not yet attended SNACSchool, do not remember, or need a refresher, please refer to the modules and the cheat sheets below.

- [Module 2: Archival Authority Control](#)
- [Module 3: Create and Edit](#)
- [Name Elements](#)
- [SNAC Editing Cheat Sheet - Persons](#)
- [SNAC Editing Cheat Sheet - Corporate Bodies](#)
- [SNAC Editing Cheat Sheet - Families](#)

Choosing Preferred Names

Preferred Names should be public names that individuals chose to be commonly known by. This may often, but not always, be an Indigenous name, in which case the Indigenous name should be used. Library of Congress authority records may not always accurately represent names of Indigenous people, including their Indigenous names, and the Library of Congress preferred form of a name does not have to be used as the Preferred Name in SNAC.

You can also change the Preferred Name currently in SNAC. For additional context needed to choose a preferred name, look to community-authored material and to peer reviewers if appropriate. Note that variant names are not currently fully searchable in SNAC but will be in the future.

In general, when seeking out the preferred name of an individual, corporate body or family, make sure to look to see if there are any community resources/information on that person. Additionally in some contexts, where the person is still alive, make sure to contact them or look for information on them, as things like personal websites or other resources will often have their preferred name.

Examples

1. **Preferred Name in LC and currently also Preferred Name in SNAC:** Liliuokalani, Queen of Hawaii, 1838-1917
 - a. *Preferred because in non-Hawaiian languages, this is how she is best known*
 - b. **Alternative Name:** Liliu Kamakaeha Kaolamalii Newewelii Liliuokalani, 1838-1917
2. Preferred Name in LC and currently also Preferred Name in SNAC: Tecumseh, Shawnee Chief, 1768-1813
 - a. *Preferred because of how he is best known in American sources*

- b. **Alternative Name:** Flying Tiger, Shawnee Chief, 1768-1813
- c. **Alternative Name:** Crouching Panther, Shawnee Chief, 1768-1813

3b. History

The following describes the protocols for how to fill out the History section within SNAC.

Biographical History (in SNAC as BiogHist)

Biographical histories should respect and center the people and communities represented. It is important to note that every community has different perspectives on what language is sensitive and respectful, so creating blanket rules is not usually possible. For insight, look to community-authored material and to peer reviewers where appropriate. These types of resources can be found by looking at Tribal community websites, or where appropriate searching for scholars and community members in cases where you know, and individual is an authority. For more information about Federally recognized tribes, visit this website: [BIA Directory](#). Overall, think about how the language you use can humanize people and communities, rather than dehumanize them.

Every community and individual will have their own preference regarding use of broad terms such as Indigenous, American Indian, and Native American. Please reference the [Native American Journalists Association](#) for their designations and explanations for clarification.

In practice

As outlined in the **Elements of Indigenous Style** (2018), please consider the following, which has been adapted for this editorial guide:

When possible, **utilize community and individual names** used by those communities and individuals (i.e., using a tribal affiliation such as “Aquinnah” or “Wampanoag” instead of Indigenous or Native American).

When possible, **use Indigenous language terms** used by individuals or communities that are represented in the record.

Language used by settlers and by those in professions deeply rooted in white supremacist ideologies (such as anthropology, history and kitsch literature), can be problematic and not appropriate for biographical or historical notes. Exceptions include:

- Specifically pointing to such language for the purpose of **contextualizing the terminology**
- Referring to a **proper name**, or the **name of an institution or document**, that contains the terminology (This may be especially prevalent in SNAC.)
- **Quoting from a source that contains the terminology** (e.g., a historical source), or other context in which the language has been used, and the goal is to preserve the original content¹

¹ In cases where the source or record (either SNAC or Resource) quotes from a historical source that uses inappropriate terminology, please report and/or flag this content. This may require including a discussion note somewhere else in the record.

Examples of inappropriate and problematic terms may include the following (**Content Caution/Warning**): *savage, primitive, half-breed, squaw, brave, buck, papoose, peace pipe, tomahawk, tom-tom, rain/war dance, ritual/ritualistic, heathen*

Refrain from and avoid language that perpetuates colonial and white supremacist attitudes. Use language that **communicates Indigenous agency** and **centers Indigenous constituents** rather than the colonizer. The following outlines an example:

“Indigenous Peoples engaged in the new economy of the fur trade, in which they supplied beaver pelts to French and English traders in exchange for European goods such as metal implements and guns”

NOT

“The fur trade swept up the Indigenous Peoples in a new economy based on supplying beaver pelts to French and English traders”

Always use **language that communicates Indigenous resilience** and **continued existence** rather than language that victimizes. **Avoid describing Indigenous Peoples in the past tense** or in a way that **wrongly implies** they “no longer exist” or that they no longer have **individualized cultures, practices, or ways of life**.

The following considerations are adapted and often directly quoted from [Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia Anti-Racist Description Resources](#):

“Unlearn the “neutral” voice of traditional archival description. Rather than striving for an “objective” voice, which reinforces existing power structures, base description in the question (as posed by Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor): “Is the descriptive language I am using respectful to the larger communities of people invested in this record?” Decenter “neutrality” and “objectivity” in favor of “respect” and “care.”

In cases where a **source or entity has a name**, always **forefront this** in the description. In many cases, descriptions of BIPOC folks in historical documents and sources were written specifically to **dehumanize and decenter humanity**. Instead, make sure you put individual humanity before their identity/ies.

“For example, consider the difference between “**documents the business dealings of a Black woman named Maria in 18th century Mexico**” and “**documents the business dealings of Maria, a Black woman in 18th century Mexico.**”

Make sure to **use accurate and strong language** such as (**Content Warning/ Caution**) *rape, murder, genocide*, etc., **when they are appropriate**, keeping in mind language that is inappropriate (as outlined above). **Do not let your own discomfort or feelings about certain terminology censor** the material. It is okay and understandable to feel discomfort or be uncomfortable with racist sources or content. **It is not okay to privilege your discomfort for the sake of accurate description.**

Describe relationships of power when they are important for understanding the context of records, such as when a record or material is authored by a non-Indigenous person. **Provide context around racism, slurs, white supremacy, colonialism, and histories of oppression** to create a more robust record.

When **replacing racist terms** from institutionally-sourced description, **refrain from removing language, even if it is problematic**, which would help researchers discover Indigenous subjects in archival collections, particularly in collections that are predominantly white (i.e. do not simply delete the word “Indian” without including another descriptor).

Avoid using passive voice when describing oppressive relationships and instead utilize an active voice to embed responsibility within description. For example:

“Members of the Ohio National Guard killed four Kent State University students during a mass protest against the Vietnam War.”

vs.

“Four Kent State University students were killed on May 4, 1970, during a clash between the Ohio National Guard and a crowd gathered to protest the Vietnam War.”

For sources where the creator is currently living or the source points to a Tribal person or community, make sure to **ask them or the community directly about what language or terminology should be used**. However, it is important to keep in mind that this labor should not be the burden of the community and that as researchers, archivists and other informational professionals, we have a responsibility to do this ethically and respectfully.

Additionally, the following is taken from “[Protocols for Native American Archival Materials](#)” and outlines how they consider findability.

“The use of **outdated, inaccurate, derogatory, or Eurocentric language impedes access**. Descriptive information can be improved with the **addition of culturally appropriate and accurate language**”

3c. Existence dates (in SNAC as ExistDates)

For entities, make sure that in cases where there is an exact beginning and end date (or birth/ death date) to use those. However, in many cases, especially with Indigenous historical figures, the person’s date of birth may not be available or not widely known. If you don’t know a birth or death date, please use **unknown**.

3d. Places

At this time, SNAC has not yet expanded its lists of places to be fully inclusive of preferred Indigenous place names. Almost all names listed as options in the “Geo Place Term” are Western or colonially created. Existing lists do include many, but not all, reservations. We and the SNAC staff are aware of this limitation to assigning meaningful place names to historical figures and entities. If there is a place name that you want to use for the edit-a-thon-- for example, the reservation a person was born on-- please notify SNAC staff and it can be added. For the future, we have plans as part of the outcome of this edit-a-thon to work through new technical upgrades to address this issue in a more comprehensive way. We are open to your ideas about appropriate existing controlled vocabularies for place names.

As a reminder, if you have ideas for place names, please let us know your thoughts using our [SNAC Suggestions](#) form.

3e. Gender

At present SNAC only offers male, female, or leaving the field blank. **Please leave the field blank if the historical figure you are describing self-identified as non-binary**, or another gender expression outside of “traditional” gender norms.

As SNAC expands, this field will be updated to include greater gender inclusivity beyond the current binary practice. Binary systems of gender, especially placed upon Indigenous peoples, reflect a settler colonial context, and do not fully represent the full spectrum of gender as it is understood across Indigenous peoples. We acknowledge that this limitation of gender identity is an improvement that needs to be made in SNAC. If you are interested in looking at examples of gender descriptions, please check out the [Digital Transgender Archive](#) and the [Trans Metadata Collective](#).

3f. Languages Used

The SNAC picklist draws from the LC MARC list for languages: https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/code_list.php.

You may find some Indigenous languages represented in this current list, but not many (e.g., Mohawk, but not Seneca). The list also includes codes for language families in some cases, rather than codes for individual languages (e.g., sio= Siouan languages). The names of languages in the list will not always be the names relevant Indigenous peoples use for their languages. As a reminder, if you have suggestions for languages that should be added, please fill out the **SNAC Suggestion** form.

In cases where picking Indigenous names for individual Indigenous languages is not possible, pick the best available option for this field. If it is not the ideal term, in the Biographical History, describe the language spoken by the entity more specifically and accurately. As a reminder, in cases where a dialect of a particular language is spoken (i.e., Massachusetts dialect of Algonquin), make sure to include the dialect.

3g. Occupations

Just as for topical subjects, we have the ability in SNAC to create our own subject authority control for occupations. Be sure to **use descriptors for occupations** that both **humanize, and recognize the expertise** of, Indigenous individuals. We are asking contributors to provide authoritative and trustworthy sources of information alongside names of Indigenous individuals and entities. As written in the “Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia Anti-Racist Description Resources,” “Observe and take cues from the language of current historians, writers, artists, and others who are from (or descended from), specialize in, and have working relationships with the particular communities you’re describing”.

For example

Use “**translator**” or “**linguist**” instead of “**informant**”; “**artist**” instead of “**folk artist**”

As with subject headings (below), it may be preferable to use broad categories or terms rather than more specific ones. For example:

Use “Translator” not “Translators--West (U.S.)”

3h. Subjects

The following describes the protocols for how to write about Subjects within SNAC.

Subjects Available in SNAC

The subject headings currently available in SNAC came into the system through the ingest of finding aids that included subject headings. Some of them may include inappropriate, problematic terminology or reflect a biased, colonial worldview.

“For example, headings that use the terms mythology, tales, and (depending on context) legends to refer to Oral Traditions and Traditional Stories imply that they are insignificant, not based, or not relevant.”
(*Younging, 2018*)

We can create more appropriate subject headings in SNAC when warranted, applying basic subject authority control.

Indigenous thesauri

It is possible to add subject headings from Indigenous-focused and created thesauri on a case-by-case basis². The following section outlines resources and examples from articles to draw from if you are interested in integrating/applying or using Indigenous thesauri and subject headings. In the Additional Resources section, there are multiple examples of Indigenous thesauri that have been created.

Library of Congress Subject Headings

Many of the subject headings ingested into SNAC are Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSHs), due to the standards used by the institutions where these records are housed. In many cases, LCSHs can be problematic as descriptors, often favoring white supremacist regimes. For these cases, we can use LCSH forms as variants if they are useful to finding the information or eliminate them all together.

Changes and additions made to the Library of Congress Subject Headings by the University of Manitoba point to the inherent issues of using LCSHs when describing First Nations and other Indigenous groups. Among these alterations, include such terms as the word Indian, which is replaced when appropriate, as well as making other specific changes such as:

² *As a note from the SNAC team on Indigenous subject terms: It is indeed possible to add new subject terms in the same way we add geographic places, occupations, functions/activity terms. That said, we cannot do it in bulk, and the terms must be requested case-by-case (please reach out to SNAC if you believe you have a subject term that should be added). Once they are added, they are static, and the subject authority record can't be edited. SNAC is close to having controlled vocabulary management functions installed, at which point, editors will be able to manipulate new and existing terms. Furthermore, we can perform traditional subject authority control on the terms, citing Indigenous-focused and created sources, such as the thesaurus from NMAI. It helps that the NMAI source is recognized by LC, but it isn't required. If you would like to follow up with a term, please contact Jerry Simmons: Jerry.Simmons@nara.gov.*

- *Off-reservation boarding schools -> Residential schools*
- *Eskimo dogs -> Qimmiq*
- *Sweatbaths -> Sweat lodges*
- *Tribal government -> Band government*

Other changes in the form of additions include things such as:

- **Smudging**
- **Métis scrip**
- **Fishing rights**
- **Sentencing circles**
- **Voyageurs**

Other considerations

SNAC allows for internal authority control of subjects in controlled vocabularies for topics, occupations, and functions/activities. When LCSHs do not offer appropriate terms, contact SNACSchool staff to request new, appropriate terms be added to the controlled vocabularies. We can consult Indigenous communities for appropriate sources for the purpose of controlling our own subject authorities.

The following is directly quoted from [Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia Anti-Racist Description Resources](#):

“Do not rely on Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) exclusively when creating subject access points. Thoughtfully consult appropriate alternative classification schemes as described above.

Consider avoiding **LCSH terms if they are harmful** to the people they describe. If you are uncertain, **do research to determine whether the subject heading is considered harmful**. If terms are not used, consider how this may affect access. **Balance access with language usage** thoughtfully. Consider working with groups such as the Cataloging Lab53 to actively try to change harmful headings.

If you decide to use an LCSH subject heading that is harmful, **explain why you have done this in the processing note**. For example, **you may choose to include a subject heading considered harmful so that you are able to provide access in the short term** and update the heading when it is changed through the cooperative cataloging program.”

The following is directly quoted from the [Harvard Wiki](#) Subject Headings section:

“Given the limitations of Library of Congress Subject Headings, it may be preferable to **prioritize broad subject access over precise identity or medical terminology** when assigning subject headings (A4BLIP, Berry, Bolding, Bolding2, Rinn, Robinson-Sweet). If a **relevant subject heading is harmful or pejorative, consider using a locally-devised heading instead** (Boyd).

Provide context for any outdated or non-preferred terms used in description or as subject headings (A4BLIP). The sample statement below may be used and/or modified as appropriate:

Recognizing that historical medical terms do not always completely or directly map to contemporary terms, that historical terms can be offensive or inaccurately characterize a condition, and that the

presence of both historical and contemporary terms may be useful for researcher discovery, the archivist has attempted to employ historical terms as they appear in the context of the collection in the description, along with contemporary terms in parentheses.

For Example:

- His areas of research included shell shock, dementia praecox (schizophrenia), and the pathologic sources of mental illness. (E. E. Southard papers, processed by Hanna Clutterbuck-Cook)
- Benda's research interests included mongolism (Down syndrome) and cretinism (congenital hypothyroidism), mental retardation (intellectual disabilities), neuropathology, and existential psychology and psychiatry. (Clemens Benda papers, legacy finding aid conversion, processor unknown) (Note: Edited from original)”

3i. Relations

The following describes the protocols for how to fill out the name section within SNAC.

Relationships (Resource Relations, Internal CPF Relations, and External Related CPF):

Resource Relations³(Traditionally, “**ReferencedIn**” vs. “**CreatedBy**”)

Historically, in finding aids and other catalog records and information systems, the “creator” of archival records is limited to the person who recorded, or the corporate body that authored, the information found in the records. In the context of certain fields, such as anthropology or history, the creator was often limited to the anthropologist who recorded Indigenous knowledge without acknowledgement of the Indigenous individuals who were sources for this information. See Brian Carpenter’s blog post for more on this subject: <https://www.amphilsoc.org/blog/finding-mrs-mahone-and-indigenous-experts-archives>.

A document or other material associated with an Indigenous source would traditionally be characterized as “ReferencedIn” rather than “CreatedBy” in relation to an archival collection. However, we propose that Indigenous sources whose knowledge is recorded in an archival collection should be characterized as “CreatedBy”. Remember that you can also add notes to future users and editors under the descriptive notes field; this is a good place to explain a choice, such as the use of “CreatedBy”.

Internal CPF Relations

There are several relation types that can be used to describe an entity’s relationship with another.

As of May 2021, the list of relation types can be found in this document:

https://portal.snaccooperative.org/system/files/media/documents/Public/SNAC%20Relationship%20Types_0.pdf . As a note, a new relations vocabulary will be coming to SNAC soon based on the RiC standard.

³ *As a note on the Resource field.* This is where you link directly to finding aids and collections of the holding institution. This is likely the section in the editing process where you are most likely to come across information that is sensitive or inappropriate as outlined in our content protocol. If you do come across anything that falls under these protocols, please fill out the [report form](#).

As you're working on your entity, you may want to describe a relation type that doesn't exist on the list. If that's the case, let the project team know. New relation types can be proposed to the SNAC Editorial Standards Working Group.

In the meantime, select the catch-all "associatedWith" relationship and use the descriptive note field to further describe relationships with more nuance.

External Related Authorities

Existing records will likely already have linked external related authority records, such as to LOC (Library of Congress) and VIAF (Virtual International Authority File) authorities. For existing and new records, check this list for authorities, and if your entity is represented in them, you can create a link:

<https://portal.snaccooperative.org/system/files/media/documents/Public/AuthorityFilePortal.pdf>

Some of the authority records you will link to may contain errors and/or limitations and misrepresentations about the Indigenous entity you are working on. The authority file used here, Wikidata, is a free, collaborative, multilingual, secondary database, collecting structured data to provide support for Wikipedia, Wikimedia Commons, the other wikis of the Wikimedia movement, and to anyone in the world (from the Wikidata website, <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Introduction>). Editors must be careful when using Wikipedia, but the Wikidata database allows SNAC to use Wiki Commons images (if they exist) and provide linked data among other authorities.

3j. Sources

Sources are an excellent space to link external articles, finding aid descriptions, and other resources that provide reliable information about the entity you are editing. Evaluate the perspective and biases of the sources that you are using before using them and look to use and privilege Indigenous-authored sources whenever possible. Be mindful that often, and especially with early colonial publications, there is bound to be harmful and problematic information or misinformation. Use your best judgment around accuracy and the information sources you choose to use. Please consult Citations in SNAC: Sources and Format <https://portal.snaccooperative.org/node/358> to learn more about sources and citations in SNAC. SNACSchool [Module 4](#) is another good resource for answering questions about sources.

Additional Resources for Working with Indigenous Records

Appendix A: Identifying Tribal Contacts

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Directory:

<https://www.bia.gov/service/tribal-leaders-directory/federally-recognized-tribes>

Native American Journalists Association:

https://najanewsroom.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/NAJA_Reporting_and_Indigenous_Terminology_Guide.pdf

Appendix B: Articles for Further Reading

Bosum, A., & Dunne, A. (2017). Implementing the Brian deer classification scheme for Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute. *Collection Management*, 42(3-4), 280–293.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01462679.2017.1340858>

Carpenter, B. (2019, June 5). *Finding Mrs. Mahone and indigenous experts in the Archives*. American Philosophical Society. Retrieved March 3, 2022, from
<https://www.amphilsoc.org/blog/finding-mrs-mahone-and-indigenous-experts-archives>.

Cherry, A., & Mukunda, K. (2015). A case study in indigenous classification: Revisiting and reviving the Brian Deer Scheme. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 53(5-6), 548–567.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2015.1008717>

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Appendix C: Resources for Alternatives to LCSH and Other Description Terms

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Thesauri:

<https://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/>

Digital Transgender Archive:

<https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/>

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit – Indigenous Ontology:

<https://www.nikla-ancla.com/post/first-nations-metis-and-inuit-indigenous-ontologies-fnmiio>

Homosaurus:

<https://homosaurus.org/>

Lau Ā Lau Ka ‘Ike, World Indigenous Nations University Hawaii Pasifika:

<https://www.laualaukaike.org/>

Ngā Upoko Tukutuku, Māori Subject Headings Project:

<https://natlib.govt.nz/librarians/nga-upoko-tukutuku>

Trans Metadata Collective:

<https://transmetadatacollective.org/>

University of Manitoba Changes to LCSH:

<https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/xmlui/handle/1993/31177>

Xwi7xwa Library and Deer Classification System:

<https://xwi7xwa.library.ubc.ca/collections/indigenous-knowledge-organization/>

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