

# Developing an Ethnographic Lexicon:

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Denver Art Museum

# Denver Museum of Nature & Science

The screenshot shows the ARGIS database interface with the following fields filled in:

- OBJECT NAME: Brace Fragment
- DESCRIPTION: Chert tool
- CULTURE: Anasazi
- PROVENIENCE: Montezuma Co. CO / Colorado

The REMARKS field contains the following text: "EXPLANATION OF SITE LOCATION, PERIOD AND CULTURAL AFFILIATION: Because the remains 1793 1186-1187 were unavailable. The whole of the white collection contained 204 American Indian items which included perforated arrowheads, a specific local Pueblo (PT) site, but display a set of agricultural tools, nearly to the academics in the area, however, it is a no artifact. In 1979, precise site locations for each individual the accession file were three areas of excavation and the area of the site, prior to the excavation, had remained indigenous on an area of the site of the site."

Overlaid on the screenshot is a conceptual diagram with three green boxes: "Opportunity" at the top, "Reality" at the bottom left, and "Problem" at the bottom right. A central white box contains the following text:

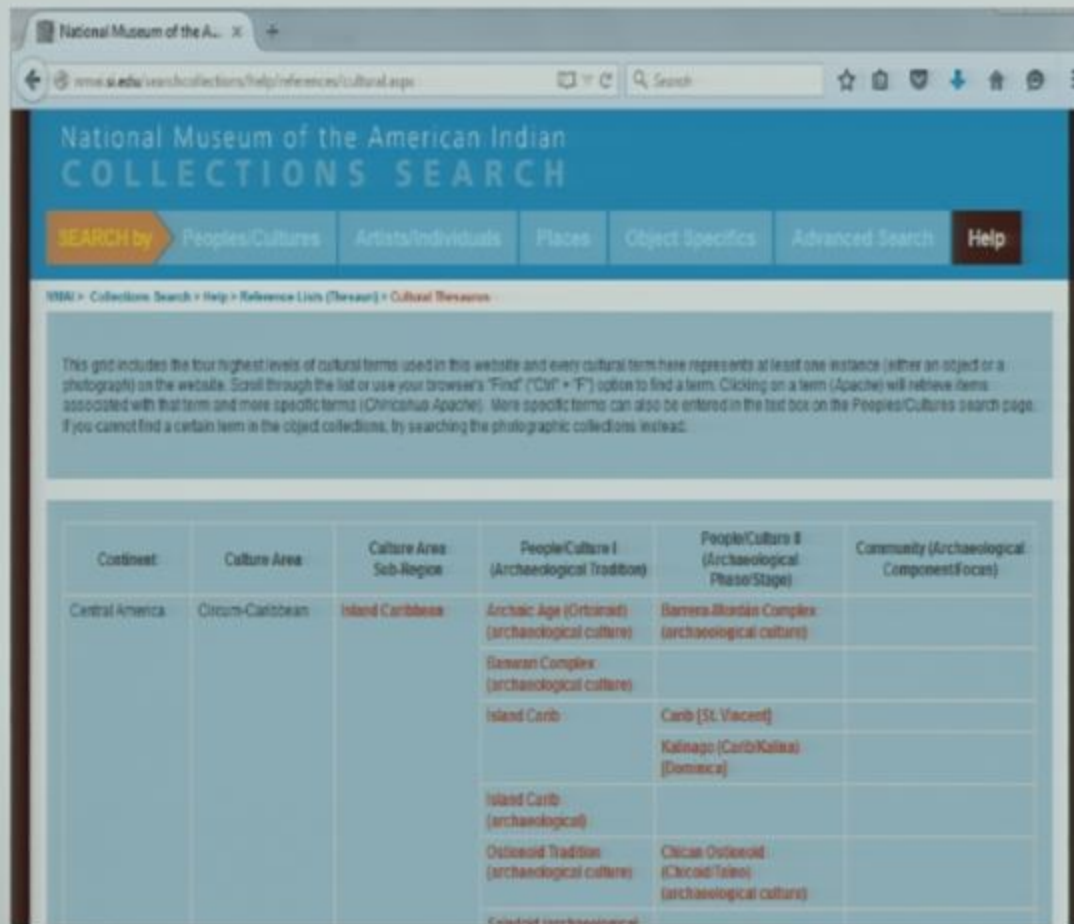
- Organically grown DB and lexicon
- Manual fix
- Migration to KE EMu
- No standard for Culture group

The diagram is connected by curved lines, suggesting a flow or relationship between the Opportunity, Reality, and Problem states, with the central text representing the current state or a specific challenge.

# NMAI Peoples/Cultures

## Thesaurus Reference List:

<http://nmai.si.edu/searchcollections/help/reference.aspx>



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://nmai.si.edu/searchcollections/help/reference.aspx>. The page title is "National Museum of the American Indian COLLECTIONS SEARCH". Below the title is a navigation bar with tabs for "SEARCH by", "Peoples/Cultures", "Artists/Individuals", "Places", "Object Specifics", "Advanced Search", and "Help". The "Peoples/Cultures" tab is selected. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: "NMAI > Collections Search > Help > Reference Lists (Thesauri) > Cultural Thesaurus".

This grid includes the four highest levels of cultural terms used in this website and every cultural term here represents at least one instance (either an object or a photograph) on the website. Scroll through the list or use your browser's "Find" (Ctrl + F) option to find a term. Clicking on a term (Apache) will retrieve items associated with that term and more specific terms (Chincha/Apache). More specific terms can also be entered in the text box on the Peoples/Cultures search page. If you cannot find a certain term in the object collections, try searching the photographic collections instead.

Continent	Culture Area	Culture Area Sub-Region	People/Culture I (Archaeological Tradition)	People/Culture II (Archaeological Phase/Stage)	Community (Archaeological Component/Focus)
Central America	Circum-Caribbean	Island Caribbean	Archaic Age (Orinoid) (archaeological culture)	Barrera-Blandin Complex (archaeological culture)	
			Sesuan Complex (archaeological culture)		
			Island Carib	Carib (St. Vincent)	
				Kalinago (Carib/Kalin) (Dominica)	
			Island Carib (archaeological)		
			Ostionoid Tradition (archaeological culture)	Chican Ostionoid (Cocod/Tano) (archaeological culture)	
			Colonial (archaeological)		

# NMAI Peoples/Cultures Thesaurus Reference List

Continent	Culture Area	Culture Area Sub-Region	People/Culture I (Archaeological Tradition)	People/Culture II (Archaeological Phase/Stage)	Community (Archaeological Component/Focus)
North America					
	Arctic				
		Central Arctic			
			Inuit (Canadian Eskimo)		
				<i>Baffin Island Inuit</i>	
				Baffinland Inuit (Baffinland Eskimo)	
					Baffinland Inuit (Baffinland Eskimo) [Akuliarmiut]
					Baffinland Inuit (Baffinland Eskimo) [Kingarmiut/Sikosuarmiut]
					Baffinland Inuit (Baffinland Eskimo) [Pilingmiut]
					Inuit [Cape Dorset]
					Inuit [Pangnirtung]
					Inuit [Ponds Inlet]
					<i>Kidlinermiut</i>
					<i>Nugumiut Inuit</i>
					<i>Sikoslingmiut / Sikosuarmiut</i>
					<i>Tununirmiut</i>
				Caribou Inuit (Caribou Eskimo)	
					Caribou Inuit (Caribou Eskimo) [Kamermiut/Qaermiut]
					Caribou Inuit (Caribou Eskimo) [Padliqmiut]

# NMAI Valid and Invalid Terms

1	Valid Term	Used For (Invalid Terms)
2	A:shiwí (Zuni)	She-we-na   Shiwí'ma   Zuni Pueblo
3	A'aninin (Gros Ventre)	Atsina   Astina   Gros Ventres   Grosventre
4	Abenaki [Odanak/St Francis]	Abenaki [St Francis]
5	Abenaki [Odanak/St Francis]	St Francis Abnaki   Saint Francis Abnaki   Saint Francis Abenaki
6	Accomac	Accomack
7	Achagua (Axagua)	Ajagua   Xagua   Guacana   Guacara
8	Aché (Guayaki)	Guayaki-Ache   Axe   Gualaqui   Guayaki   Guoyagui
9	Achomawi (Pit River)	Achomawai   Achumawi   Pitt River
10	Achuar	Maina   Mainas
11	Achuar	Achuar   Achual   Achuara   Achuale
12	Afro-Haitian (Voodoo Haitian Negro)	Haytian
13	Aguaruna (Aguarana)	Aguajun   Ahuajun
14	Ahtna (Ahtena)	Atna   Copper River Indians
15	Ajachemem (San Juan de Capistrano Luiseño)	Juaneño   Juaneno   Ajachema   Agachemem   Acgachemem
16	Akawaio (Acawai)	Acawoi   Acewaio   Akawai   Acahuayo   Kapon   Accawai   Accawoi   /
17	Akawaio (Acawai)	Waica
18	Akimel O'odham (Pima)	Akimel Oodham
19	Akurio (Acuria)	Akoerio   Akuri   Akuria   Akurijo   Akuriyo   Akuliyo   Wama   Wayari
20	Algonquin (Algonkin)	Algonquin
21	Algonquin [Golden Lake/Pikwàkanagàn First Nation]	Pikwakanagan
22	Algonquin [Golden Lake/Pikwàkanagàn First Nation]	Golden Lake Algonquin
23	Algonquin [Kipawa]	Eagle Village First Nation
24	Algonquin [Lac Barriere (Barriere Lake)]	Rapid Lake
25	Alibamu	Alabama

# Denver Museum of Nature & Science

\*Do NOT use special characters

\*Terms in Parenthese are older versions, while the newer term appears before it. For example Ashiwi (Zuni).

\*Terms in black font appear in ARGUS while terms in red font do not. The red terms were kept or added if they were determined to be immediately necessary or if the Native group actively uses the term and the use of special characters is not prohibitive.

Level 1: Continent	Level 2: Region	Level 3: Sub-Region or People / Culture	Level 4: People / Culture II	Level 5: People / Culture III
	Northwest Coast (Alaska (southern coastal), British Columbia (coastal), Oregon (coastal), Washington)			
		Northwest Coast Indians		
		Northwest Coast Microblade Tradition		
		Pacific Northwest Indians		
		Chinook		
		Coos (Kusa)		
		Haida		
			Kaigani Haida	
	keep	Heiltsuk (Bella Bella)		
		Kalapuya		
	keep	Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakiutl)		
			Kwakiutl, adoptive	
	keep		Namgis Kwakwaka'wakw (Nimpkish band)	
		Makah		
	keep	Nuu-chah-nulth (Nootka)		
	keep		Hesquiaht Nuu-chah-nulth (Hesquiat Band)	
	keep		Nitinat Nuu-chah-nulth (Nitinaht) (Nitinaht band)	
	keep		Tla-o-qui-aht (Clayoquot) (Clayoquot Band)	
	keep	Nuxalk (Bella Coola)		
		Quileute		
		Salish		
			Central Coast Salish	
			Coast Salish	

# Denver Art Museum

## Lexicon

Select a record to display navigation.

- ▼ culture name
  - ▶ African, TL-02489.2, 1952.496, TL-19868, 2005.72, 2007.72
  - ▶ Alaskan
  - ▶ Asian, RA.555.1987, RA.1979.331, RA.109.1989, RA.109.1990
  - ▶ Australian, 1994.21, 2007.48
  - ▶ Caribbean
  - ▶ Central American
  - ▶ European, 1976.388, 1980.413, 1980.384, 1976.663
  - ▶ Mesoamerican
  - ▶ Middle Eastern, PTL-12355
  - ▼ North American
    - ▶ Acadian
    - ▶ American, TL-33359, 2004.142.1-2, 42.2015, TL-33359
    - ▶ Canadian, 1967.133B, H1998.21.6, HL1998.4.39B
    - ▶ Creole, 1.2008
    - ▶ North American Indian, 68.2003, 2012.281, 2012.281

Organically  
grown

Manual fix

We are NOT  
migrating

Still have the  
problem of no  
Culture standard

# General thoughts





# My wishlist. What is yours?

Available in easy to access format

Tackle invalid/historic/incorrect terms

Universality of use

Built off existing standards

Collaborative process

# Where are we now?

Lexicon Task Force

Gathering examples

Gathering help

In our first round:

AAM, ATALM, AASLH, ARCS

Possibility of applying for grants

# <http://www.rcaam.org/about/task-forces/lexicon/>

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Registrars Committee of the American Alliance of Museums

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### Task Forces

### LEXICON TASK FORCE

#### Statement of Purpose

To identify the issues around accessibility to anthropological collections that are based in the collections management lexicons. To create a solution that will aid collections management professionals in sharing their data and increasing access to their collections.

#### History

The origins of this Task Force can be found in the archives of the RCAAM listserv when a question about classification terms for anthropology collections led to a conversation of thesauri development. There was a general recognition that, lacking a standard list for ethnographic materials and cultural names, many museums develop their own independent thesauri, which can be counterproductive to the larger museum goals of improved data sharing. The discussion continued beyond the initial listserv posting and it was decided to launch a collaborative effort to develop a set of standardized terms for ethnographic collections. This led to the creation of the AAM Session "Developing an Ethnographic Lexicon," which was presented at the 2015 Annual Meeting in order to raise this topic within the community at large.

#### Survey

A survey was developed in conjunction with the AAM session in order to gather information on general museum practices regarding standardized ethnographic terminology. The information includes:

- museum size and governance
- distribution of ethnographic and archaeological materials

# Questions for the group and THANK YOU

- 1. Who are the users/participants in this project?
- 2. What are possible outcomes for this project?
- 3. Feedback on discussion regarding what the Task Force name is. Are we "anthropology" or "culture"? Are we something else?
- 4. Thoughts on technical issues?
- 5. Please sign up to be added to our list of participants.