Reconciling the Archive:

Creating Space for Indigenous Structured Systems of Remembrance in Canadian Archives

by

Delia Chartrand

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the

University of Manitoba

in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Joint Master's Program

Department of History (Archival Studies)

University of Manitoba/University of Winnipeg

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Table of Contents

Abstract

Indigenous ways of knowing and situating history have been historically neglected by archival institutions over the vast tradition of archives in Canada. Embodied expressions of history such as orality, storytelling and ceremony hold unique information imbedded within the performative exchanges which needs to be recognized as authentic and valid.

As archives are used to promote our collective conceptions of heritage and identity, their failure to incorporate embodied expressions into their institutional frameworks has contributed to the dismissal of Indigenous histories on a broader scale by the Canadian public.

In recent years, new methods of resituating archival records regarding Indigenous peoples have been explored as a means of addressing our country's colonial pasts. These methods utilize partnerships between archival institutions and engagement with Indigenous source communities to enhance knowledge of archival collections. Conversely, national and international frameworks have recognized the importance of expressions such as oral traditions, oral histories and ceremony to Indigenous communities as valid forms of history in need of protection. While these frameworks are used by archival institutions, often cited as guiding principles in their work with Indigenous peoples, archives in general have yet to accept the embodied expression as an archival record.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report defines reconciliation as an act of mutual respect between two groups. I suggest that reconciliation within archival work can therefore only be achieved if archives acknowledge and incorporate Indigenous embodied records into their institutional frameworks.

Acknowledgments

This thesis was written over the course of several years and as such was written from multiple traditional territories. I began writing this thesis on Treaty Five Territory on the traditional lands of the Ininew peoples. I ended writing this thesis on Treaty One Territory on the traditional lands of the Anishnaabe, Ininew and Dakota peoples as well as the Homeland of the Metis Nation.

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Bak, without whom I would never have applied in the first place. His willingness to find a way to teach a student in northern Manitoba and advocacy to accommodate the distance was no small feat in the days before the pandemic, when remote learning was not the norm. It is the reason why I joined the Archival Studies program. One which I am forever grateful for. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Baader in this same respect for providing the opportunity to join his class, despite the challenges accepting me posed logistically and technologically. Although, I was the only student at that time not truly in your classrooms, you both worked exceptionally hard to ensure I never felt left out. Thank you!

I would like to also acknowledge my family for supporting me through these crazy years. To my baby, Phia who would regularly come into the room where I was working and ask if I was "done my thesis yet," thank you for spurring me on. To my little man Reed, thank you for trying to 'help' with edits only to get chased away from the laptop. To my mom, thank you for all the help with the babies while I wrote.

Finally, to Chris, thank you for holding down the fort while I got an education, for encouraging me and supporting me and at times tolerating me when the stress of my thesis made me a difficult person to be around. Thank you for trouble shooting every IT problem I had. I couldn't have done it without you!

Preface: Terminology and Writing Style

It should be noted, that while I acknowledge the term 'Indigenous' is a pan nation term which in many realms has fallen out of use in favor of more distinctions-based language like First Nations, Inuit and Metis Nation, I have continued to use it throughout this thesis. Its usage in the context of my research most often denotes the cultural ways of knowing of the Metis Nation as well as Cree First Nations that I have gathered teachings from and therefore spans multiple distinctions-based terms. Moreover, it is also more accurately reflective of the broader international frameworks I have based much of my thinking for my theories of archival instruments on. Subsequently, distinctions-based terms at best are likewise representative of a wide range of diverse cultures and communities within their singular terms and in my opinion sole reliance on their usage privileges the colonial relationship these groups in Canada formed with the federal government. For these reasons I have continued with the use of Indigenous rather than only using distinctions-based language throughout as I believe it relates most consistently to the local, national, and international context of this thesis.

I would also like to take this opportunity to request patience in the readers of this thesis. I sometimes take a long road to get to a short point and I was taught to tell stories by taking the scenic route. This body of work is as much a reflection of my personal teachings on cyclical communication as it is an academic expression which I find can be problematic at times for scholarship. Nevertheless, I hope this work offers more questions for archival institutions to ask and tools to consider rather than of an argument and direct solution (as is so often the structure for many academic writings). The intention of this work is not to dictate how archival institutions should implement efforts towards reconciliation but to instead suggest a framework in which archival institutions might begin doing the work themselves. As an Indigenous person, I feel strongly that if we are to work towards meaningful reconciliation the solutions must be

sought by active parties on both sides and the onus need not solely be placed on Indigenous people to indicate and facilitate this process.

Maarsii!

Introduction: Beginning the Narrative

Dedication - This thesis is dedicated to my favourite storyteller, my Dad. I miss your stories.

As a young girl my father taught me that we were proud Metis. Therefore, my identity has always been one that embraces the synergy of aspects of European and Indigenous cultures existing in the liminal space between these two frameworks. Facets of the Metis culture seamlessly blend what at first seems incongruous, into our ways of knowing and coalesce as parts of our unique nationhood. Michif, my father's first language and what he referred to as "Bush French," is an integration of French and Cree that dances effortlessly between the grammar and words of both languages,[1] from ni mooshoom and ki mooshoom, to ma soeur and ta soeur.[2] Metis music, an inspired blend that uses European instruments such as the violin and piano, incorporates elements of First Nations dancing and French and Scottish steps such as the quadrille, reel and jig.[3] Metis bead work blends First Nations beading techniques, and representations of flora and fauna indigenous to the region, with French embroidery techniques.[4] And orality, it should not be understated here, is an integral and important part of our history and how we keep these aspects of our culture alive.

---

[1] Delia Chartrand, "Linguistic Diversity in the Metis Nation," in *Nations to Nations: Indigenous Voices at Library and Archives Canada* (Gatineau, Quebec: Library and Archives Canada, 2021),16-17, Apple Books.

[2] This is an example of how the Michif language switches between Cree and French grammar interchangeably within the same linguistic category using the example of how to discuss family kinship ties. "Ni mooshum, and ki mooshum" is derived from the Cree parent language for "My Grandfather and your Grandfather." "Ma soeur and ta soeur" is derived from the French parent language for "My sister and your sister."

[3] Delia Chartrand, "Music of the Metis Nation," in *Nations to Nations: Indigenous Voices at Library and Archives Canada* (Gatineau, Quebec: Library and Archives Canada, 2021), 51-53, Apple Books.

[4] "Beadwork," Manitoba Metis Federation, accessed May 1, 2021, https://www.mmf.mb.ca/mm-beadwork.

It is from this positionality that I write my thesis.

As an Indigenous researcher, I have lived and worked in northern Manitoba for the majority of my academic and research career. My life in the north informed much of my research and for years I have worked to discern what types of models should be used in the institutional representation of Indigenous cultures and histories through collaborative research methodologies and consultation with regional Elders.

I have always been very interested in how different knowledge systems communicate and disseminate information to one another in various cultural contexts. The first time I was told by an Indigenous scholar that in a traditional Cree context when an Elder is speaking, it's understood that not everyone will listen and learn the same truths but will instead learn what they were meant in that moment or what lesson they were ready to hear was paradigm shifting for me. The concept of multiple truths and cyclical communication was so different from the knowledge dictation I had experienced throughout my education that was grounded in decidedly more western frameworks and epistemologies. Traditional ways of knowing, traditional structures of teaching, resonated with me. Conversely, I realized that storytelling, a practice I grew up with, was a big part of this approach and that orality was in many ways integral to this process. Once something was written down, recorded, committed to something more permanent, *archived*, to my mind it lost the fluidity and flexibility that was fundamental for these teachings.

An Early Career in Research

Over the last decade I have conducted a series of community-based research studies pertaining to the development of theoretical models for establishing heritage institutions. Developing culturally relevant methodologies which promote Indigenous epistemologies as the framework for how these institutions are built and function has always been the goal of these

projects. Subsequently, the majority of this research was based on collaborative approaches that incorporated the voices of Indigenous students, Elders and Knowledge Keepers in the region and their opinions, as to how best to preserve notions of Indigenous culture and history.

Living and working in Thompson, Manitoba, shaped my earlier research in many ways. Known as the 'hub of the north,' Thompson exists as the last urban stop on Highway Six north of the fifty-fifth parallel. The community, which was recently considered to have the highest demographic of Indigenous residents of any city in Canada, is also situated as an epicentre for economic, social, and educational services for smaller surrounding northern communities, many of which are First Nations reserves. For this reason, Thompson also locates itself within an ever-moving framework of migrating populations as well as permanent residents who access the community for various services.[5]

During my early years of research in the 2010's, the apparent dearth of Indigenous focused heritage institutions such as galleries, museums, and archives despite an overwhelming and diverse demographic of Indigenous communities and cultures was one that created an opportunity to address a divide between institutional frameworks for representation and culturally proficient, Indigenous-led ones. As an undergraduate student researcher, I became involved in one of these projects relating to Indigenous histories. Femnorthnet was an initiative that wanted to look at the history of the region, but from an Indigenous and women's perspective. For my part, I was tasked with compiling timelines from supplementary research, and large

[5] Delia Chartrand and Chris Bignell, *'A Bit of Shame or Remorse May Go a Long Way': Exploring the Social Impact of Discriminatory Practices in Thompson, Manitoba,* (Winnipeg: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2017), https://mra-mb.ca/publication/a-bit-of-shame-and-remorse-may-go-a-long-way-exploring-the-social-impact-of-discriminatory-practices-in-thompson-manitoba/.

rolled up sheets of paper with notes scribbled on them derived from previously held Elders' 'think tank' events.

These rolled up poster board notes gave glimpses into histories within the living memory of our region's Elders. They captured comments about the space that I had only ever known as a paved city, as being a swampy muskeg where people used to come to hunt caribou. They transformed my knowledge of my home and stood in stark contrast to the frequent narrative I'd grown up hearing of a mining town where, first there was nothing, then there was the mine, and then people moved in. It was a narrative that seemed to displace and marginalize the First People of the region. Moreover, it was a narrative that promoted space for one of the more heated exchanges I recall having about local history wherein I pointedly asked a man of settler origin to consider the Indigenous oral histories of the region "pre-mine," to which he responded that this history had been "made up" by Indigenous peoples.

These notes from Elders' brainstorms spoke of a time before the Thompson Nickel Agreement of the 1950s where the land and its resources were used in a different way by the Indigenous peoples who had populated the region from time immemorial. This was my first introduction to the importance of oral history and its need for universal acceptance. Although I had not heard it from the Elders first hand, those notes captured my imagination in ways that compelled me to seek out opportunities to learn directly from Elders.

My next opportunity to conduct a research project to this end developed as part of my role on the Aboriginal Art Centre for Northern Manitoba Inc. board of directors. A grassroots initiative that aimed at providing opportunities for northern artists and sharing local Indigenous art with the region, we worked out of partnerships with other local non-profits. Having no art centre to speak of, I proposed a study that would examine the potential for such a building through collaboration with Indigenous artists and Elders. The purposes of this investigation

would discern how a regional Indigenous art centre would function, the physical characteristics of such a building, and various aspects of display. What I came to find through conducting group interviews with Elders circles at the Friendship Centre, however, was a deeper discussion that cut to the heart of what Indigenous art in fact *was*. I had come looking for answers about how to develop the physical structures of a centre, and instead came away with an appreciation for the theoretical underpinnings of art as it was culturally perceived.

For the Elders I spoke with, art wasn't just the finished product, but the cultural activities intrinsic to producing it that were being lost. Traditional hide tanning and sourcing traditional materials such as porcupine quills weren't just important aspects in the formation of art, but also artworks in their own right that needed to be taught in tandem with the overall production and display of Indigenous art. These discussions begged the question of how art institutions or centres might accommodate traditional activities in addition to their artistic mandates in order to promote the holistic and culturally proficient preservation of culture and history.[6] It compelled me to start considering a more inclusive model to heritage institutions that encompassed activities with social undercurrents as their modus operandi. I had learned that, with Indigenous art, the process was just as important as the product, an understanding that had implications beyond art and would eventually translate to other aspects of Indigenous heritage for me.

---

[6] Delia Chartrand, *Place of Our Own- Re-examining the Colonial Paradigm of the Museum Structure by Empowering Northern Indigenous Artists*, (Thompson, Manitoba: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 2016), https://www.criaw-icref.ca/publications/a-place-of-our-own-re-examining-the-colonial-paradigm-of-the-museum-structure/.

The Community Archival Project and Library and Archives Canada

Armed with these lessons, I subsequently became involved with a study that aimed to develop an oral history archive for northern Manitoba. Funded by the Manitoba Research Alliance, this project explored local Indigenous perspectives for direction in its creation. While there was a discernable lack of conventional archival infrastructure in the region, there was not a lack of history. Therefore, consulting with local perspectives on how best to capture and preserve historic narratives by engaging in collaborative dialogue with Elders of various communities from the region was vital. For some time, I coordinated this project from the corner of my desk, while working as a library clerk for the University College of the North's Madeleine and Wellington Spence Memorial Library.

It wasn't until half a year into this endeavour when I was hired with our national archival institution, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), that this project was brought to the forefront of my professional career conflated with the overall goals of my new position. I was one of seven regional archivists of the Listen, Hear Our Voices (LHOV) project, one of two Indigenous initiatives LAC had developed as a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.[7] LHOV was a program with the goal of preserving Indigenous language and cultural materials through providing funding to organizations and communities for their archival projects, as well as free digitization services of their audio-visual collections. Conversely, the Calls to Action which catalyzed the impetus for an initiative like LHOV had implicated LAC directly with Call 69,

[7] "Indigenous Documentary Heritage Initiatives," Library and Archives Canada, accessed May 15, 2023, https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/corporate/about-us/strategies-initiatives/indigenous-documentary-heritage-initiatives/Pages/indigenous-documentary-heritage-initiatives.aspx.

> We call upon Library and Archives Canada to: i. Fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Joinet-Orentlicher Principles, as related to Aboriginal peoples' inalienable right to know the truth about what happened and why, with regard to human rights violations committed against them in the residential schools. ii. Ensure that its record holdings related to residential schools are accessible to the public. iii. Commit more resources to its public education materials and programming on residential schools.[8]

My job was to help facilitate the funding application process for local Indigenous communities and organizations in their digitization efforts as well as search provincial and local archival repositories for collections pertaining to Indigenous culture and language. It was during my training for LAC that I became familiar with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the United Nations Joinet-Orentlicher Principles (UNJOP), and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action in the context of archives. Presented as fundamental texts containing a standard to strive for in addressing our national heritage institution's relationship with Indigenous peoples, they have become an underlying basis for my integration of Indigenous ways of knowing into archival practices.

During this time, I organized multiple group workshops with Elders, where we engaged in discussions about oral history, cultural preservation, land-based teachings and the importance of language revitalization. I was influenced by discussions with Elders on traditional ways of knowing unique to my region, while simultaneously spending my days immersed in institutional archives. Building on my history of working in the university research library and the national archives but feeling as though there was a missing piece to my conceptualization of Indigenous archives, I felt compelled to address this gap.

---

[8] Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Calls to Action*, (Winnipeg: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2015), 8, https://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf.

Archival Training Workshop

In early 2020, just before the world felt the full impact of the global pandemic that was soon to be declared I positioned my role with LAC and our regional partnered organization UCN to coordinate a four-day training event. The purposes of this training was to bring together those same organizations I had worked with during the first Listen Hear Our Voices funding call in order to provide access to capacity building archival training. The impetus behind this was to bring archival training north to a region where these opportunities were admittedly absent in order to reduce barriers for lesser resourced regions in the province. Within the scope of the four days, representatives from grassroots organizations, archival networks such as the Association for Manitoba Archives (AMA), and local Indigenous Elders met to learn and discuss the concept of Indigenous community archives.[9]

'Embodied Records'

Out of these sessions came a number of recommendations that have fueled my thinking since then, but none moreso than the expansion of the idea of the archival record itself. In these sessions we discussed a concept we designated as 'embodied records.' At its core, this term refers to archival records that encompass the person and the intrinsic knowledge of experience and activities as historic records. These include orality, ceremony, land-based teachings and ways of knowing not captured by conventional archival formats such as textual records, and audio-visual media. In these exchanges, the experience *is* the record.

[9] Delia Chartrand, "Housing Our Histories, Creating Capacity," *Signatures,* Spring/Summer, 2021, 12–13.

It is these pieces that contribute to my body of knowledge and understanding regarding notions of Indigenous history, and ceremony. The impetus for this thesis was in part a personal campaign against the lack of acceptance of oral traditions and oral histories that can be used to discredit the value and even presence of Indigenous histories in now settled spaces. It was also in part an exploration to consider the question of how we as Indigenous people see ourselves reflected in and as contributing members of the national heritage of archives when archives in Canada still have yet to recognize many of our forms of remembrance as archival records.

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this thesis is to advocate for the acceptance of Indigenous frameworks of recording and situating history within the archival field, particularly within our nation's archival institutions as a demonstratable step towards reconciliation.

Chapter 1 explores notions of Indigenous history in the context of orality and ceremony and how these are grounded in the plurality and sociality of Indigenous ways of knowing across many Indigenous cultures. Conversely, it examines how western academic and subsequently archival structures differ in their approaches to history and knowledge. It distinguishes between the authentic practices of orality within the cultural context and the transfer of knowledge to static formats in the modern era through the examination of various oral history projects. Finally, it demonstrates how academic institutions accessed by the broader public such as post secondary schools, provide compelling examples of how Indigenous cultural practices are integrated into their programming. This section explores how culturally proficient programming not only enhances academic environments through the presence and promotion of Indigenous cultural activities and teachings but also how academic environments can support cultural

revitalization. It begs the question of how these models might apply to the archival field more directly.

Chapter 2 explores how archival institutions serve as recognized contributors to our conceptions of heritage and subsequently shared national identity. I argue that archival institutions have an immense and internationally recognized responsibility as agents of deciding and promoting which aspects of our history and identity are captured and therefore validated. It looks at how notions of heritage are grounded in western, colonial origins which privilege the voices of the dominant majority in order to promote the authority of the nation. In the second chapter I examine how archival practices evolved within this colonial context in Canada, as a means of reflecting on how the practices of institutional archives subsequently served to marginalize Indigenous peoples and their historic narratives.

I look at more recent examples of how archival institutions have begun the work of addressing their colonial pasts and resituating their records through projects such as Library and Archives Canada's Project Naming and the Hudson Bay Company Archives' Names and Knowledge Initiative. I observe how projects like these demonstrate a willingness within archival institutions to engage with Indigenous source communities through methods such as participatory archives and crowdsourced archives as a means of reconstructing the records they hold.

Chapter 3 looks at the various instruments archival institutions have available to them as a means of working towards reconciliation within Canadian archival institutions. It considers the notion of reconciliation, as characterized within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Reports as a model for how we might implement frameworks that promote mutual respect between Indigenous communities and archival institutions. It argues how incorporating embodied records into the broader archival institutional paradigm is therefore an essential aspect

of archival reconciliation. It examines the Joinet/Orentlicher Principles, the United Nation's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and argues that Canadian archival institutions are contextualized and subsequently implicated within these documents because of their relationship with First Nations, Inuit and Metis Nation peoples in Canada. I then go on to consider how these documents might be applied to the notion of Indigenous embodied records. The third chapter finishes with a discussion on the *Witness Blanket*, as a case study of how heritage institutions are implementing broader aspects of embodied and performative history into their frameworks through engagement with Indigenous communities. It considers the role of the institution, the role of the public, and the role of the community as integral components for a piece which essentially serves as a living archive and embodied record.

The final section looks at how incorporating embodied records into archival institutions might be achieved and suggests a conceptual framework to consider. It examines the traditional archival functions in the context of the embodied record and centres engagement with Indigenous communities of origin as the locus by which all other functions must situate themselves.

Chapter 1: Storytelling and the Archival Record

Perceived Difference in Indigenous and Western Notions of Truth

Indigenous methods of situating identity within the context of history have frequently relied on narrative elements, "…Many rooted in oral transmission supplemented with other memory technologies, such as winter counters, wampum belts, memory piles, pictographs and more."[1] These memory technologies depend on the specific cultural setting of the historical transmission. Similarly, scholars such as Ronald Mason describe how the orality of history within North American Indigenous cultures can be supported by mnemonic devices that range by place and community from such physical items as painted hides to rhythmic chanting and verbal prods by listeners familiar with aspects of the story being discussed. The orality of such histories, however, as it relies on memory, are subject to and reflective of the passage of time itself and the changes time inflicts.[2]

While various Indigenous peoples have used their own strategies to engage with history, scholars such as Jean O'Brien also remark on the proficiency of Indigenous peoples in engaging with and utilizing processes that are decidedly more related to traditions grounded in western European methods often associated with written documentation. While demonstrating the wealth of examples that reflect how Indigenous peoples have been using written methodologies for decades and even centuries in both western forums marked by the use of European writing systems and activities such as university-based scholarship, as well as Indigenous forums marked

---

[1] Jean M. O'Brien, "Historical sources and methods in Indigenous Studies, Touching on the past, looking to the future," in *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies*, ed. Chris Andersen and Jean M. O'Brien (Routledge, 2017), 15.

[2] Ronald J. Mason, "On Memory," in *Inconstant Companions: Archaeology and North American Indian Oral Traditions*, (University of Alabama Press, 2007), 45.

by the use of Indigenous writing systems that pre-date contact, she critically questions what exactly makes Indigenous systems of remembrance different from western ones, if anything.[3]

Despite the ability of Indigenous peoples to incorporate alternative methodologies like oral narratives within their memory work as being well established, O'Brien also notes that the willingness of western institutional frameworks to accept Indigenous histories as valid is observably lacking. She states that, "… Indigenous voices and agency in producing historical narratives have rarely been accorded a place of legitimacy in the formal discipline of history and have instead been dismissed as 'myth,' 'legend,' 'folklore,' or 'saga.'"[4] Significantly, she places archives squarely within the purview of this disparity explaining that there has been a longstanding tradition within mainstream fields of academia to discount the histories of Indigenous peoples due to a perceived lack of "real archives." She purports that these trends towards marginalizing Indigenous perspectives and histories can no longer be claimed with any serious validity in the advent of discoveries that point to a wealth of lesser known or recently discovered archival resources as well as a gradual proclivity for incorporating Indigenous perspectives in the review of these material resources.[5]

Similarly, scholars such as Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith offer a review on the development of theory within Indigenous Studies as an academic field. Their observations reflect on analogous dichotomies constructed in this theory of study that articulate a difference in western and Indigenous notions of truth. By rooting itself in considerations of how historical and political contexts affect the nature of truth, Indigenous Studies have demonstrated theoretical

[3] O'Brien, "Historical Sources," 18.
[4] O'Brien, "Historical Sources," 15.
[5] O'Brien, "Historical Sources," 18.

structures that recognize plurality. Foundational works in the field like Vine Deloria's *God is Red* account for diverging conceptual frameworks between the west and Indigenous as reflective of cultural and religious differences. Despite drawing later criticisms, this theory illustrates the entrenched idea that western epistemologies were inextricably enmeshed in imperialism, colonialism and Christian ideological frameworks that sought to expand beyond the confines of specific regions and consequently overtake contending perspectives. Indigenous frameworks comparatively were considered spatial in their adherence to regional land-based understandings and the local communities in which they were rooted. Conversely these dynamics exemplify the further compounding of notions regarding the perceived binary between the multiplicity of Indigenous notions of truth and singularity of western ones.[6]

Sherry Farrell Racette's article, "Pieces left along the trail: Material culture histories and Indigenous Studies," critically explores these notions of difference amongst Indigenous research methodologies with respect to Indigenous material culture in contrast with conventional practices in the representation of material culture. She observes that her positionality as an Indigenous historian has oftentimes meant that she must wade through the decidedly myopic conventions of collection practices in the pursuit of discovering Metis cultural materials. These materials serve as an example of plurality in Indigenous identity that becomes increasingly problematic to situate in the context of collections classification systems as they seek to ascribe singular meaning to objects based on region or culture. Much of the scholarship that has dominated discussions in recent decades, on traditionally established conventions into cultural material research has consequently revolved around an impetus for institutions to engage with source communities

[6] Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith, "Introduction," in *Theorizing Native Studies*, ed. Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith (London, Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 3-4.

creating relationships with community groups, Elders and Knowledge Keepers and addressing the problematic legacies of collecting practices established in colonial periods. Through methods such as repatriation and granting community access to specific cultural collections, institutions have begun the work of renegotiating their relationships with cultural materials and subsequently gaining better knowledge of their collections.[7]

While this work is certainly important to undertake on the part of institutions such as museums and archives, it also speaks to a deeper significance regarding the accepted notion that Indigenous cultural knowledge and perspectives provide an expanded understanding of the world of material objects, one that Racette demonstrates is interwoven with notions of listening and visiting and is noticeably lacking in conventional museum and archival practices. She explains how, "The notion that objects are alive and infused with spirit is articulated throughout the Indigenous world." [8] She draws on her discussion with Alan Corbiere, the former director of the Ojibwe Cultural foundation in Manitoulin Island, who is quoted stating,

> …Pipes, drums, scrolls, and pouches have a spirit and some people can feel that, others can communicate with it, and this is why we address these items as N'mishoomis, 'My grandfather."... It is the reflexive process afterward wherein that spirit may inspire you… I have burned tobacco at various museums, if there is a facility to do so, and if not, I will place some outside by a tree.'[9]

These encounters with cultural materials demonstrate methods of communicating with objects through "word, prayer or gesture." They are reflective of a cultural mindset that recognizes spirit

---

[7] Sherry Farrell Racette, "Pieces Left Along the Trail: Material culture histories and Indigenous Studies," in *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies*, ed. Chris Andersen and Jean M. O'Brien (Routledge, 2017), 224.
[8] Farrell Racette, "Pieces," 227.
[9] Farrell Racette, "Pieces," 227.

within the inanimate and the need for interdisciplinary approaches in evaluating Indigenous histories, one that brings together the scattered components of our histories by incorporating multiple approaches. As Corbiere explains, "Not just with collections research but with oral tradition research, with cultural practices, and I always try to include our language. So I collect elders' stories, read old ethnographies, and now material culture research has added another dimension…"[10]

This sense of multiplicity within Indigenous frameworks is reinforced by scholars such as Janice Cindy Gaudet, who explores the significance of both relationality and relationship building in research methodologies. Her development of what she calls "keeoukaywin," or the visiting way, a Cree word with which she was gifted, is grounded in her work with the Omushkego Cree of Moose Factory First Nation as well as Metis Elders and incorporates both Cree and Metis cultural understandings. Gaudet explains, "With relationality at its core, keeoukaywin re-centres Métis and Cree ways of being, and presents a practical and meaningful methodology that fosters milo pimatisiwin, living and being well in relation."[11] Her development of this research approach is one that touches on multiple aspects of social interconnectivity and promotes an exploration of one's own self in relation to the land and history. Furthermore her examination of visiting as an Indigenous research methodology is one that highlights the importance of kinship ties, community relations and social values in general for Indigenous cultures. This

[10] Farrell Racette, "Pieces," 227.
[11] Janice Cindy Gaudet. "Keeoukaywin: The Visiting Way - Fostering an Indigenous Research Methodology." *Aboriginal Policy Studies* 7, no. 2 (2019): 47.

process in turn has the potential to disrupt "historical hierarchies of knowledge and inaccuracies about Indigenous peoples' ways of being, knowing, and doing." She demonstrates the power of exploring knowledge through the lens of Indigenous social frameworks saying,

> Visiting was very prevalent in the community and was often referred to when considering the old ways of learning, the well-being of young people, young mothers, and old people, Cree place names, and going out on the land. The importance of being visited by relatives, and by ancestors and the unseen in ceremonies and dreams, jolted something within me. Everything pimatisiwin was connected to visiting![12]

Within this engagement strategy, Gaudet demonstrates the intrinsic value of and necessity for interacting with research and history through means that recognize the interconnectivity of all aspects of life while promoting the tenets of sociality, hospitality, and orality, which many Indigenous cultures hold in high regard. This is a stark contrast to Western frameworks.

Similarly, scholarly works such as Elmer Ghostkeeper's *Spirit Gifting* characterize the relationship between traditional knowledge and western scientific knowledge as diametrically opposing systems. His description of Metis and Cree ways of knowing is rooted in the context of his upbringing within the community of Paddle Prairie Metis and explores intersecting elements of the sacred world, with the gifts provided by the physical and spiritual. Traditional knowledge was dependent upon subsistence patterns of the land, that was gifted by the sacred,

> …marked by an ongoing round of ceremonies, rituals, and sacrifices. The gifts from Mother Earth were viewed in concrete terms and ownership was viewed as collective stewardship. The essence of this holistic livelihood was

[12] Gaudet, "Keeoukaywin," 50.

> sharing, giving, and receiving in an attempt to keep body, mind, emotion and spirit in balance.[13]

Consequently, he characterizes the adoption of western scientific frameworks as being contingent on the individual's personal relationship with and separation from the land. Rather than a recognition of being part of the interconnected elements of nature, western knowledge models are reliant on an understanding that man exists as separate from the natural world explaining his own transition in thinking and adopting such frameworks saying, "I began to view nature as an object… My relation to the land was characterized by adaptation, domination and individual ownership."[14] While Ghostkeeper's work focuses largely on relations to the land, the same elements of traditional Indigenous knowledge in its promotion of interconnectivity, plurality and collective ownership are prevalent themes. The same distinctions of the western scientific world can also be seen in its representation as compartmentalization through separation of the community from the natural world and of promoting notions of individual ownership.

Nevertheless, the intent of this thesis is not to dissect traditional interpretations regarding the perceived dichotomy of Indigenous and Western frameworks. While it is recognized that both theoretical epistemologies are far more nuanced than binaries afford, they are useful in providing us with a reflection on the foundational underpinnings that have subsequently led to a noticeable absence in one form of historical representation within academic and subsequently archival institutional spaces. Nor do I intend to suggest that Indigenous methods of engaging with history are exclusively oral by nature, and western methods exclusively textual. The work

---

[13] Elmer Ghostkeeper, "Spirit Gifting: the Concept of Spiritual Exchange" (Master's Thesis, University of Alberta, 1995), 100.
[14] Ghostkeeper, "Spirit Gifting," 101.

of Indigenous scholarship in identifying written and material documentation concerning Indigenous histories, and conversely the utility within western scholarship for orality, should not be overlooked in this regard.

More pointedly, the focus of this thesis on Indigenous oral methodologies and ceremony as a means of engaging with the past is one that has been chosen because of the perceived inadequacies of Canadian archival traditions. Specifically, in the failure of Canadian archives to accommodate their use within institutions and the profession as recognized archival records and subsequently recognized perspectives that enhance archival skillsets for evaluating said histories. Therefore, in order to address this absence within archival studies, we must first analyze how orality and ceremony or embodied, performative practices for engaging in history are valuable to various Indigenous cultures and how they differ from and can not be replicated by material documentary forms of memory work.

Reflections on the Importance of Orality in Indigenous Cultures

The practice of oral traditions is one that encompasses histories spanning back to time immemorial for many Indigenous cultures. The telling and retelling of stories is important because they represent the way in which many cultures traditionally impart history and communicate knowledge. Storytelling is considered an artform, that I believe is not adequately captured or preserved through current archival means. It is different from the standard historical exchange obtained from the knowledge gleaned by physical archival records such as textual documents or audio-visual recordings whose information is permanently fixed within the context of the medium.

Each instance of storytelling represents a fluid and participatory-based exchange of knowledge and history that is wholly unique. Attempts to replicate it authentically by using other formats are impossible because of the cultural mindset that is employed in the context of the exchange. Within this learning paradigm, it is often understood that the information imparted to the audience varies by multiple factors including the context of the situation, individual audience members and their current personal interpretation, an interpretation dictated by the individual's need for and readiness to accept certain lessons, and the skills of the storyteller themselves. The story is also unique in its retelling and adjusted to be different each time by the storyteller based on these factors and the audience they are telling it to. Scholars such as Winona Wheeler discuss the intricacies of these issues in the context of Cree intellectual frameworks remarking that, "One of the many differences of oral traditions and literate traditions is that the former are as much about social interaction as they are about knowledge and transmission."[15]

Admittedly, it is this social component that is often contingent on the intergenerational exchange of knowledge that makes the very nature of oral traditions both distinctive and delicately positioned. Peter Nabakov observes the vulnerability of knowledge transference in this traditional cultural context, stating that,

> [The] paradox of memorized history that is spoken and heard is that while it can preserve intimacy and locality over astonishing time depths, it seems to be only one generation away from extinction. It is a fragile linkage of spider strands across time. For it to endure someone somewhere must continue to bear witness, must intuitively resist the demands of media and archive in favor of the interactive, oral narrative.[16]

---

[15] Winona Wheeler, "Cree intellectual traditions in history." in *The West and Beyond: New Perspectives on an Imagined Region,* ed. Alvin Finkler, Sarah Carter and Peter Forna (Edmonton: AU Press, 2010): 51.

[16] Peter Nabakov, "Present Memories Past History" in *The American Indian and the Problem of History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 145.

This explanation demonstrates that in order for orality to persist in its authentic cultural and traditional forms, often we must forgo certain aspects of preservation that are associated with modernity as well as permanency. Nabakov goes on to explain that the accuracy of this form of history which is contingent on memory, is rooted in aspects of place rather than notions of time. He illustrates how this process disregards dates in favor of social processes saying, "It is called into being during and for interpersonal situations. It nurtures the family and community and cosmic continuities of which it speaks."[17]

This aspect of oral stories is one that has become increasingly challenging to maintain due to the various barriers posed by modernity. This rationale is also undoubtedly one that is considered counterintuitive to archival institutional frameworks that favour methods of preservation, employing the use of modern techniques and technologies in order to transfer oral stories to static formats.

Transference to Static Media: Recording Indigenous Oral Histories

Oral history is a branch of historiography that captures various past narratives while embracing the lived experiences of storytellers. It is used for documenting a variety of fields within the history discipline and its applications are not limited exclusively to Indigenous orality. It is considered particularly effective however, in capturing the narratives of marginalized voices. Oral traditions and oral histories therefore are uniquely important to the imparting of historical knowledge and can be observed as intersecting with the discipline of capturing and preserving Indigenous orality in archives. Consequently, we have established thus far how preservation of orality fundamentally changes the knowledge through binding it to archival structures that

[17] Nabakov, "Present Memories," 145.

commit the record to a static format and diverge from the social elements intrinsic to the process of preserving oral traditions authentically.

In recent decades, the increased demands and challenges the modern era has presented for the practice of oral traditions, however, have led to an increased, albeit cautious, concession by many Knowledge Keepers to preserve oral traditions in media that are decidedly more akin to conventional archival practices rather than those demonstrated earlier in this chapter by Indigenous cultural paradigms. Winona Wheeler comments on this growing trend in Indigenous oral history work, stating,

> The fear that oral traditions will be lost in this modern age of literacy, cyberspace, and cable television is very real. During the 1960s and 1970s, a number of Elders were interviewed in an attempt to preserve these teachings before they were lost. At first many were hesitant and worried about recording oral histories, sacred songs, and ceremonial information but most agreed that recording their teachings might be the only way to retain them for future generations.[18]

Similarly, the Counselling Speeches of Jim Nipitehtew reflect an analogous sentiment. In his retelling of the pipestem and the making of Treaty Six he explains the challenges of imparting stories as Elders pass on, as well as oral histories in the context of aging and in fact perhaps lapsing memories. Nipitehtew describes the need to resort to committing oral storytelling to static format through the subsequent loss of those who could speak to the events with more familiarity and the intergenerational gaps between youth and Knowledge Keepers. He depicts this evolving scenario with some sense of urgency, explaining,

> It would have been good if one had worked on this earlier, while they were numerous, so that we would hear them discussing this with their authority on that kind [the audio-recorder]; but now the story is only something from our hearing, how the story had been told to us, now that is all we have to fall back

[18] Wheeler, "Cree Intellectual Traditions," 51.

> upon. That is why I for one am grateful that they are working on this, that they are thinking of our grandchildren and great-grandchildren, because young people do not pay any attention to trying to learn it, how the story is told about this, and this then must be the wish of those who are going to try to record this story…[19]

Conversely, works such as "Narrative Wisps of Ochekwi Sipi Past: Recovering Collective Memories" document the challenges of assembling a complete picture of historical events on subjects where communities have experienced collective gaps in memory and the historical record, as a result of various factors such as the effects of colonization. Wheeler describes her research with the community of Fisher River Cree Nation and her efforts to recreate an encompassed narrative history in the authentic voice of the Elders through incomplete oral histories supplemented by archival textual materials. She explains how, "Efforts to regain community memories pose particular challenges, especially when combining Indigenous oral history methods with European documentary evidence."[20] Her question of, "…How can I write our histories in our own words when most of the information we have about our past comes from journal books written by fur traders and missionaries?"[21] reflects a valid concern amongst Indigenous scholars. It considers how we maintain an authentic historical voice when much of our archival representation is written on behalf of the colonizer and much of our orality is threatened by various pressures of modernity.

These examples of oral history projects emphasize the challenges of capturing orality within the archival model. They demonstrate the necessity to find ways of preserving

---

[19] Jim Ka-Nipitehtew, Freda Ahenakew and H.C Wolfart, *Counselling Speeches of Jim Ka-Nipitehtew* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2007), 109.
[20] Winona Wheeler, "Narrative Wisps of the Ochekwi Sipi Past: A Journey in Recovering Collective Memories," in *The Canadian Oral History Reader*, ed. Alexander Freund, Kristina R. Llewellyn and Nolan Reilly (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 285.
[21] Wheeler, "Narrative Wisps," 293.

Indigenous oral traditions in the face of contemporary impingements. Moreover, they accentuate the weaknesses of utilizing a framework that ignores fundamental social and cultural aspects of the practice of oral traditions and the imparting of oral histories, as they exist within many Indigenous communities.

The Role of Post-Secondary Institutions in Supporting Indigenous Orality and Ceremony: Examples of Programming

Educational institutions provide fertile ground for observing ways in which academic environments accessed by the broader public have adopted and inserted Indigenous practices into their institutional spaces and frameworks. Many universities, colleges and schools of various levels within Canada have incorporated Indigenous cultural centres, visiting Elders programs and various elements of Indigenous knowledge into their service models for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike. These programs serve as models for how Indigenous cultures can be both supportive of and supported by public institutions. Aspects of Indigenous cultures can enhance the education of the public in academic settings while conversely demonstrating how institutions can advocate for Indigenous communities in their efforts to revitalize and preserve aspects of their culture and its practices.

One example of this form of symbiotic programming can be found with the centres of University College of the North's (UCN) respective campuses. UCN is an educational facility that is dedicated to providing Indigenous programming at the post secondary level and has integrated various aspects of Indigenous culture into its institutional frameworks both as part of its governing structures and its infrastructure. The campuses of this institution are decentralized, located amongst various northern Manitoba communities, with its three main campus sites located in the communities of Thompson, The Pas and Norway House. In addition to its main

campus locations, smaller communities throughout the north, many of which are First Nations reserves, host regional sites. These include Bunibonibee (Oxford House), Chemawawin (Easterville), Churchill, Flin Flon, Mathias Colomb (Pukatawagan), Misipawistik (Grand Rapids), Nisichawayasihk (Nelson House), Pimicikamak (Cross Lake), St. Theresa Point, Swan River, and Tataskweyak (Split Lake).[22]

The institution has two Indigenous Centres located on its largest campuses, the Ininiwi kiskinwamakewin Centre ("The people's place of learning") in Thompson and the Mamawechetotan Centre ("Let's all work together and help one another") in The Pas. The role of the centres is described in a statement which explains that their, "…primary mandate… was and continues to be the promotion of Aboriginal culture and awareness as well as to support the incorporation of culturally proficient practices into all structures within the University College of the North."[23] The centres provide space for various cultural activities, workshops and monthly ceremonies as well as a resident Elders program to this end.

Within the scope of this mandate, the university campuses' Indigenous centres provide programming such as, "Traditional drumming, traditional counselling, solstice potlucks, annual powwows, annual Elders gatherings, sharing circles and Traditional Persons Week presentations which support the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge into the classroom." Additionally, monthly Pipe Ceremonies, Feasts following the pipe, Sweat Lodge ceremonies, Full Moon Ceremonies, and cultural camps are offered as well as occasional activities such as baking in

[22] "Community-Based Services Regional Centres Web Page," University College of the North, accessed November 19, 2019. https://www.ucn.ca/sites/commservices/regionalcentres/Pages/Regional-Centres.aspx.
[23] "Kiskinwamakewin Center - University College of the North," University College of the North, accessed November 30, 2022. https://ucn.ca/ininiwi-kiskinwamakewin-centre/.

Cree sessions, sharing circles, and various craft workshops such as beading and moccasin making.[24] They also provide a digital forum for the sharing of traditional teachings by traditional Knowledge Keepers regarding local medicines, their harvesting and how to use them through a series of pre-recorded online videos.[25]

UCN is an institution that serves as an excellent example for the incorporation of Indigenous cultural practices into academic structures and the subsequent benefits. The institution's positionality amongst various locations and Indigenous communities throughout the northern sector of the province provides an appropriate scaffolding in which to observe the role public institutions can play to this end. Providing opportunities for the insertion and promotion of Indigenous cultural activities while simultaneously supporting public education through an innovative combination of regional presences, Indigenous centres and resident Elder's programs, UCN has become a model. It lends credence to the possibility of other public institutions like archives adopting similar systems to offer openings for Indigenous cultural practices such as orality and ceremony within their frameworks.

Similarly, the University of Manitoba has its own iteration of Indigenous programming and an Indigenous Student Centre model that has services reflective of the cultural practices of local Indigenous communities. The university hosts events throughout the year such as Fireside Chats that provide the chance for students to learn a number of topics of traditional knowledge such as star teachings, life stages, various aspects of women's health regarding pregnancy and menopause, and Two Spirit teachings with a number of Indigenous speakers who host their talks

[24] "Current Students- Aboriginal Centre Web Page," University College of the North, accessed November 20, 2019, https://www.ucn.ca/sites/elders/Pages/Elders.aspx.
[25] "Kiskinwamakewin Center."

in real time through digital platforms.[26] Other scheduled activities and programs of the centre include Sharing circles with Elders, Full Moon ceremonies, Sweat Lodge preparation teachings and ceremonies, Tea with Aunty teachings, and Pow Wow practices.[27]

In addition, the University of Manitoba has developed a program which utilizes the land-based learning model as the crux of its educational context. The Land and Water: Indigenous Land-based Education program welcomes both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students as an opportunity to connect them with community members, knowledge keepers and Elders and traditional teachings and ceremonies. It is structured through a seasonal teachings approach and provides participants with the opportunity to learn from and on the land and provides a compelling example for how public educational institutions can provide platforms for the introduction of Indigenous ways of knowing.[28]

Much can be learned from local and regional examples of post-secondary institutions that have devoted resources to supporting the prominence of Indigenous culture and specifically orality within the context of academic spaces. By observing how these programs function we can begin to conceptualize how institutional environments can promote connections between Indigenous communities, Canadian archival institutions, and the broader Canadian public. These examples pose an important question to archival institutional paradigms. If we are comfortable providing opportunities and space for Indigenous ways of knowing such as oral teachings and ceremony within public educational frameworks like universities, why are we not working to

---

[26] "Fireside Chats," University of Manitoba, accessed June 1, 2022, https://eventscalendar.umanitoba.ca/site/indigenous/event/fireside-chats-12/.
[27] "Culture and Protocol | Indigenous | University of Manitoba," accessed June 1, 2022, https://umanitoba.ca/indigenous/culture-and-protocol.
[28] "Land and Water: Indigenous Land-Based Education," University of Manitoba, accessed May 15, 2023, https://umanitoba.ca/community-engaged-learning/land-and-water.

adopt these same structures within archives as a means of expanding and subsequently enhancing the notion of the archival record while building programming that supports cultural resiliency and reconciliation?

Chapter 1 Conclusion

To many Indigenous cultures, modes of historical expression are rooted in social forms of exchange such as orality, storytelling, and ceremony. Western notions of truth and history as depicted in academic scholarship, however, have generally relegated these forms of expression to the margins, dismissing them as invalid. Subsequently, recent efforts to 'preserve' these expressions by committing them to static media have been carried out through oral history projects. These concessions are seen as necessary in many cases, for the continued existence of the histories due to the encroaching pressures of the modern epoch as well as the loss of intergenerational frameworks which the imparting of knowledge in Indigenous communities previously relied on. Unfortunately, the recording of histories to physical, permanently fixed forms of archival documentary heritage removes the form of the expression from its cultural and social context, therefore corrupting the authenticity of the embodied expression.

Consequently, academic institutions provide models for how Indigenous ways of knowing can situate themselves within larger public knowledge forums to the benefit of Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences and communities through various examples of programming. By providing physical spaces for expressions of Indigenous ceremony, orality and other cultural activities to exist, universities such as University College of the North and the University of Manitoba promote Indigenous knowledge through partnership with regional community Knowledge Keepers. Programming such as these illustrate the use of embodied expressions of history, through academic platforms which archival institutions might look to and

learn from as a method of incorporating embodied records into their own environments, serving as a host to those activities.

Chapter 2

Shifting Perspectives: Heritage Institutions and the Evolution of Archival Traditions in Canada

Introduction

Western archival traditions and representations of history have generally excluded Indigenous ways of knowing. By examining and reflecting on the Canadian traditions of archival models which have developed over the past century and a half and looking at methods currently used in public institutions, we can observe how archival institutions have played a major role in contributing to Canadian conceptions of identity as well as perspectives of where Indigenous peoples fit into our national heritage. Contemporary archival theories which are more inclusive of Indigenous narratives such as participatory and community archives models allow us to begin considering the implications for incorporating these methodologies into heritage institutions. We must therefore examine how these theories are being implemented in order to observe what is being done currently to address issues of revisiting Canada's colonial archival past and whether we might apply these theories to new frameworks which concentrate on reconciliation.

Origins of the Conception of Heritage

Heritage is a broadly defined construction with social and cultural implications for the formulation of collective identity. Contemporary notions of heritage are recognizably steeped in Western intellectual frameworks. While this is certainly problematic, it is also worth acknowledging if we are to dissect and confront the way our heritage, and subsequently the

heritage reflected by archives in Canada, have impacted our collective, societal perceptions of Indigenous peoples.

Scholars such as Laurajane Smith define the practice of heritage as,

> …The management and conservation protocols, techniques and procedures that heritage managers, archaeologists, architects, museum curators and other experts undertake. It may also be an economic and/or leisure practice, and/or a social and cultural practice… of meaning and identity making.[1]

She argues that the methods of heritage construction and materiality of heritage itself are further solidified by the discussions concerning these aspects. Similarly, Stewart Hall characterizes heritage as,

> …the whole complex of organisations, institutions and practices devoted to the preservation and presentation of culture and the arts—art galleries, specialist collections, public and private, museums of all kinds (general, survey or themed, historical or scientific, national or local) and sites of special historical interest.[2]

In this sense, heritage may be considered as both the physical elements manifested in the practices of representing, and items reflecting the past, as well as the discourse surrounding its conceptions of the self. Representations of heritage therefore include an array of physical, intellectual, and performative products.

Conversely, Jeannette Bastian examines the constructive elements of collective memory as imbedded within and related to similarly defined activities saying, "The collective memory of a group of people whether a family, a community, or a nation at a particular moment in time is generally manifested through such forms of commemoration as monuments, parades, websites,

---

[1] Laurajane Smith, "The Discourse of Heritage," in *Uses of Heritage,* (Routledge, 2006), 13.
[2] Stewart Hall, "Whose Heritage? Un-Settling 'The Heritage', Re-Imagining the Post-Nation," in *The Politics of Heritage: The Legacies of Race,* ed. Jo Littler and Roshi Naidoo (London: Routledge, 2005), 21.

books, exhibits, storytelling, or traditional gatherings like Thanksgiving."[3] Not unlike heritage, collective memory is represented by differing forms of activity, objects and observances depending on a collective decision of how to commemorate and reflect the past. Many of these expressions arguably overlap with the broadly defined expressions of heritage as well. Collective memory representations, however, can best be distinguished from heritage practices in the formality of their governing structures. Where Bastian characterizes reflections of collective memory as being derived from organic, social constructions of varying groups in their attempts to navigate their understanding and remembrance of history, the narrative of heritage as a concept is decidedly more fraught with the bureaucracy and politics of collective national identity.[4]

While the two concepts of heritage and collective memory are inextricably linked, Hall subsequently goes a step further to suggest that heritage in turn shapes collective memory, saying,

> We should think of The Heritage as a discursive practice. It is one of the ways in which the nation slowly constructs for itself a sort of collective social memory. Just as individuals and families construct their identities by 'storying' the various random incidents and contingent turning points of their lives into a single, coherent, narrative, so nations construct identities by selectively binding their chosen high points and memorable achievements into an unfolding 'national story.'[5]

The central discussion concerning constructions of heritage is widely accepted as relating to the developing trends in nationalism and liberal modernity of the nineteenth century. Scholars

---

[3] Jeannette Bastian, "Flowers for Homestead: A Case Study in Archives and Collective Memory," *The American Archivist* 72, no. 1 (2009): 113.
[4] Bastian, "Flowers," 113-132.
[5] Hall, "Whose Heritage?" 22.

such as Smith explain that our contemporary notions of heritage initially emerged in Europe, specifically Britain, France and Germany during this time period. As discourses on knowledge began to deviate from the religiously affiliated beliefs of the previous Medieval era and increasingly turned towards "Enlightenment rationality and claims about the possibility of objective truth,"[6] conceptions of progress gained considerable weight and contributed to, or rather reinforced, an impetus towards colonial expansion. Consequently, this period which was also characterized by continued colonization and procurement of land mass spurred debate and new ideas regarding race, ethnicity and cultural identity and integrated these concepts with notions of modern science. Emerging theories of evolution and social Darwinism further solidified such beliefs that European intellectual, cultural and technical progress constituted the peak of human achievement in these areas.[7] Hall explains how during this period the cultural and artistic collecting practices of Europe became closely tied to certain aspects of unofficial civic education and in many ways a perceived degree of public intellectual elevation.[8]

Conversely, shifting socio-economic realities inspired by increased urbanization within the context of the industrial revolution and the fluctuating political consciousness of the post French Revolutionary epoch also gave rise to the Nation state. Scholars such as Smith note that,

> It is within this context of the developing narrative of nationalism and of a universalizing modernity that a new, more pointed, concern for what we now identify as 'heritage' emerged. The sense of the new Modern Europe was to be expressed in the monuments that were to be protected and managed for the edification of the public, and as physical representations of national identity and European taste and achievement.[9]

---

[6] Smith, "Discourse of Heritage," 17.
[7] Smith, "Discourse of Heritage," 17.
[8] Hall, "Whose Heritage?" 22.
[9] Smith, "Discourse of Heritage," 18.

This environment inspired the curation and propagation of national collections and gained popularity as a means of consolidating national impressions of civic duty, social and cultural identity.

Scholars such as Jean O'Brien, however, call attention to the problematic nature the field of history situates itself in, and its interconnectivity and dependence to national heritage narratives. They observe this positionality to be largely in exclusion of Indigenous histories, stating,

> … the discipline of history is deeply wedded to national narratives as the infrastructure that channels analysis and interpretation in particular directions to the exclusion of others. The logical outcome is the rise and triumph of the nation-state in the face of internal and external foes.[10]

The Discourse of Heritage provides an overarching consensus which asserts that, "Material or tangible heritage provides a physical representation of those things from 'the past' that speak to a sense of place, a sense of self, of belonging and community."[11] Unfortunately, the concept's emergence within the nineteenth century context means that this symbolic reflection of collective identity is one which centers itself on nationalism as its principal focus. In being primarily associated with the nation and subsequently the collective identity promoted within nationalist frameworks, "… such an emphasis means that other forms of identity are often obscured and or devalued."[12] Consequently, this theoretical framework in fostering a vision of homogenized national identity has in turn rendered more subversive influences and diverse voices to be largely overlooked or disregarded in favour of the mainstream narrative.

---

[10] O'Brien, "Historical Sources," 16.
[11] Smith, "Discourse of Heritage," 30.
[12] Smith, "Discourse of Heritage," 30.

As Hall explains, social memory imposes the selection of historical narratives which are reflective of and reinforce the beliefs and dogmas of the era in which it is situated. In this respect heritage is an invention whose purpose is to encourage 'belonging' in society but only for a dominant majority.[13] This is problematic in that it neglects to include the perspectives and experiences of minority demographics including gender, cultural, social, economic and ethnic communities not adhered to the dominant society and Indigenous peoples specifically. The version of heritage which is therefore promoted is recognized as one which favours the values and principles of the elite social class and privileges the opinions of the appointed heritage expert over those of marginalized communities. To this effect national heritage discourses become largely self fulfilling and reassuring systems which dismiss alternative narratives.[14]

Archives as Heritage in Canada

Conceptions of archives as sites of heritage affirm the role of archival institutions as integral parts of this larger national heritage building narrative. Canadian memory institutions possess immense influence in determining our national conceptions of identity. In the context of Canadian archives, however, their acceptance as unique contributors to national heritage was not accepted until the latter half of the 20th century and instead something which had to be fought for by professionals in the field.

For scholars like Hugh Taylor, the question was not what constitutes a record within an archive nor even what represents conceptions of heritage itself. His assertions made clear a belief that archival records are strictly defined as, "the fullest sense of all that is imaged or

---

[13] Hall, "Whose Heritage?" 26.
[14] Smith, "Discourse of Heritage," 30.

textually written for public and private business."[15] Rather, the question for him was at what point those physical records become elevated to the qualifying ranks of heritage and he argued that previous notions regarding archives meant that documents were not considered heritage to the same degree other cultural goods such as buildings, art, dance and song were.

While Taylor's theories were accepting of the notion that heritage may encompass embodied non-physical representations of cultural goods, they were also firm in their assertion that archives were a form of heritage consisting only of that which was physically documented. Ironically, while his opinions of archives advocated for the acceptance of documents which he characterized as the 'black sheep' of the heritage collective, these assumptions similarly left little room for overlapping theories on what may be accepted as an archival record. Put simply, both non-physical, and embodied expressions as well as physical documents were heritage, however the same could not be said for them both as accepted 'records' in the archival practice. While Canadian heritage consisted of a wide range of both material and immaterial concepts, the archive, once it had earned its place as a unique part of that collection, was significantly more myopic in what it considered an archival record.

Archives as unique contributors of heritage was a position which Hugh Taylor explains was advocated for by the Canadian Dominion Archives in the 1970s. Prior to the 1970s, archives within Canada had largely been overlooked as a distinct heritage resource as initially, though still considered sources of heritage, they were generalized with other associated forms of physical

[15] Hugh Taylor, "The Collective Memory: Archives and Libraries as Heritage," *Archivaria* 15, Winter (1982-83): 119.

heritage such as buildings, historic sites, artifacts and art. Taylor positioned archives alternatively, saying,

> Visually unremarkable, voluminous in quantity, and hidden away in boxes, archives have generally been taken for granted as the information environment of traditional heritage, a collective memory to be ransacked by experts when some element of the past is to be fixed in time and space.[16]

These earlier pronouncements in the field of Canadian archives, illustrate the tendency of the profession to consider themselves exclusively associated with the invention of written records, and positioned in opposition to other forms of physical representations of heritage as well as embodied representations of the past. This inclination to associate the practices of the archival institution as isolated from non-literate forms of remembrance reflects the exact shortcomings of the larger heritage discourse which scholars like Smith, O'Brien and Hall criticized as oppressive and marginalizing to alternative narratives.

Conversely, Taylor describes the past in terms of the non-literate community as,

> Constantly renewed and celebrated through the recreation of tribal myths and legends as part of a collective wisdom communicated in part by the shaman through which they learn abiding truths about themselves. There is no linear sense of increasingly remote time, or historical development which has a way of fragmenting cultural experience in our own society… Customary duties and rights are transmitted through oral tradition.[17]

In this scenario, the "heritage of the tribe" is placed squarely outside of the purview of the dominant narrative of society and is instead relegated to the margins with its community of

[16] Taylor, "Collective Memory," 118.
[17] Taylor, "Collective Memory," 118.

origin reflected in the "Totality of its life and transmitted skills rooted in its land and natural resources."[18]

While admittedly outdated, Taylor's characterization of archives is valuable in that it provides confirmation that the Canadian tradition of archival practices is a recognized and wholly unique aspect of the larger category of Canadian heritage. Consequently, it also supports the assertion that Canadian archives are steeped in western conceptions of heritage which tended to privilege the physical artifact of history and firmly situate it within the institutional hierarchy while the non-physical and non-literate form was relegated to existing outside of the archival tradition.

In more recent years, scholars such as Bastian have begun to question these notions of the archive and the archival record as it relates to cultural and collective memory. She states,

> …beyond terminology and paradigms, is there not a place for the alternative within the Archive itself? While for archivists, the varieties and reach of a theoretical 'postcolonial archive' might suggest a construct for accommodating a multitude of signifiers and expressions that might otherwise be left out of the archival record, it is critical that these expressions are not separated but incorporated within the archive as a whole.[19]

She posits that, rather than separating alternative forms of cultural expression from the archive, archives can begin to integrate these expressions into their theoretical frameworks. She envisions this as the next natural step in the progression of the archival continuum signified by the acceptance of community and cultural archives as they have become more

---

[18] Taylor, "Collective Memory," 118.

[19] Bastian, "Records of Memory, the Archives of Identity: Celebrations, Texts and Archival Sensibilities," *Archival Science* 13 no. 2-3 (2013): 129.

widely recognized as legitimate archival repositories which encompass a new variety of historic expressions.[20]

Consequently, collective memory plays an integral role in understanding and interpreting the past and the archival record. To Bastian, memory is presented as a tool which contextualizes past events and creates a more robust understanding of history. She explains how, "Records can ground an event in facts in tangible documents, while memory can construct and sustain many different connections and relationships. In this way, archives can provide the continuity of a narrative as it moves from the actual event into the fluid space of its remembrance."[21]

For Indigenous communities, however, collective memory and public memory are even more critical to understanding the truth about Canada's past. In the context of the country's colonial history, structures such as the residential school system are observed as being heavily impactful and detrimental to Indigenous memory. Policies introduced by the federal government were specifically aimed at destroying the collective memory of communities and First Nations, Inuit and Metis nations by disrupting the intergenerational connections of children to their families. Subsequently, the expression of collective memory is therefore a reflection of restoring those connections and working towards reconciliation on a larger scale. Volume 6 of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report explains this, stating,

> Reconciliation with other Canadians calls for changing the country's collective, national history so that it is based on the truth about what

[20] Bastian, "Records of Memory," 130.
[21] Bastian, "Flowers," 131.

> happened to them as children, and to their families, communities, and nations. Public memory is important. It is especially important to recognize that the transmission of this collective memory from generation to generation of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis individuals, families, and communities was impaired by the actions of those who ran residential schools.[22]

In this sense, collective memory and public memory are integral to our national conceptions of history and consequently our national heritage. Therefore, exploring and representing collective memory must be an integral aspect of archival work within our institutions as a means of taking meaningful steps towards reconciliation.

The Progression of Canada's Archival Traditions

Archives have developed uniquely within various state contexts and with their own distinct practices across the world. To this effect the Universal Declaration on Archives distinguishes a number of factors which are commonly shared in part or whole by archives such as, "The multiplicity of formats in which archives are created including paper, electronic, audiovisual and other types."[23] Within our own national archival environment, the nature of archival policy and practices have developed over time in a concept referred to as Total Archives. Implicit in this term is both the understanding that Canadian archival institutions maintain an acquisitions mandate for collecting both government as well as private sector records, and an understanding that those records take the form of all media types for documenting heritage.[24] Canada's traditions of Total Archives, however, encompass various

---

[22] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Final Report.* Vol. 6, (Winnipeg: The Commission, 2015), 157.
[23] International Council on Archives, *Universal Declaration on Archives- UDA*, (November 2011), https://www.ica.org/en/universal-declaration-archives.
[24] Terry Cook, "Total Archives," in *Encyclopedia of Archival Science* (Roman & Littlefield: 2015), 397.

facets of collective memory but they do not promote alternative educational epistemologies in their representations.

Total Archives is a term whose initial usage can be traced back to the 1970s, but whose practice was developed and carried out in some semblance over several previous decades in Canada. It has been broadly defined by scholars such as Laura Millar to refer to,

> … Publicly funded archival institutions – such as national archives, provincial archives, and city archives – [which] would acquire, preserve, and make available for public use both government and private sector records in all media, including paper documents and visual and cartographic images, sound recordings, and in more recent years, magnetic and digital media.[25]

Well before the terminology had been coined, the archival work of the early 19th and early 20th century in Canada had already begun to assume a variety of tasks unique to the country. By this time Canadian archivists had started to expand on traditional archival constructs more akin to those of European and United States records management, of collecting merely government records to undertake collection mandates that encompassed that of historical records from other sources as well. Scholars like Millar have argued these early collection practices were formulated out of a perceived scarcity in Canadian documentary heritage and included records from a variety of domestic resources and additionally copies of records from geographies abroad such as Europe pertaining to Canadian history.[26]

This perceived scarcity of documentary heritage is one reflective of pervasive and enduring national ideologies that ignored Indigenous concepts of memory and identity as

---

[25] Laura Millar, "Discharging Our Debt: The Evolution of the Total Archives Concept in English Canada," *Archivaria* 46, no. 46 (January 1998): 104.
[26] Millar, "Discharging Our Debt," 105.

heritage while privileging the physical record of western colonial entities. Scholars such as J.J. Ghaddar have contended that the practice of Total Archives in Canadian archival institutions, specifically within our national archives, was one which was developed by and for settler society as a means of displacing Indigenous customs, laws, histories and peoples. She illustrates how this was achieved through this favouring of written documents over orality as well as the preservation of documentary heritage which reflected invented constructions of European ownership. Ghaddar explains how,

> Many British colonial documents such as registers, surveys, land acts and treaties were created in the mid-19th century to produce evidence of imperial sovereignty and inter-nation agreements where none existed as the Canadian settler state was coalescing. The inconsistent recordkeeping environment of the colonial frontier produced unreliable, culturally relativistic records that demonstrate the uncertainty of colonial legal domains, and the Indigenous jurisdictional and social context that is equally relevant. When archivists treat these records as reliable and authentic documents with a singular judicial and cultural context – the colonial one – they facilitate the institutionalization and legitimatization of the legal fictions designed to subjugate Indigenous nations to western legal orders.[27]

In this sense, the Canadian archival tradition is one which is rooted in processes that intentionally obscured and marginalized Indigenous communities from not only their traditional territories but, subsequently, from their histories and memory traditions more broadly speaking.

Similar observations are made in the TRC's chapter regarding public memory and the impact colonialism has had on the collective memory of our nation. The TRC asserts, "…True reconciliation can take place only through a reshaping of a shared, national, collective memory of who we are and what has come before."[28] As with Ghaddar, the TRC supports the recognition that our national conceptions of public memory have been a tool to reinforce and promote

---

[27] J.J. Ghaddar, "Total Archives for Land, Law and Sovereignty in Settler Canada," *Archival Science* 21, no. 1 (2021): 61.
[28] TRC, *Final Report*. Vol 6: 161.

European settlement as the crux of our national origin stories. The process of rediscovering a balanced recollection of history is therefore dependent on an exploration and revision of our public memory through not just the examination of archival documents but, Indigenous methodologies of remembering as well. The TRC explains,

> Of course, previously inaccessible archival documents are critically important to correcting the historical record, but we have given equal weight and greater voice to Indigenous oral-based history, legal traditions, and memory practices in our work and in this final report since these sources represent previously unheard and unrecorded versions of history, knowledge, and wisdom. This has significantly informed our thinking about why repairing and revitalizing individual, family, and community memory are so crucial to the truth and reconciliation process.[29]

It is therefore essential that we question the tendency of Total Archives in overlooking aspects of embodied records as it focused more narrowly on the documentary heritage of the settler colonial state. If Canadian archival institutions are to engage in reparative archival work where the objective is reconciliation with Indigenous peoples we must first confront the origins and subsequent intent of conceptions within the Total Archives practice which relegated the embodied record to the margins of valid historical documentary heritage in favour of what Ghaddar refers to as 'legal fictions.'

Consequently, the era of archival work spanning the mid 20th century to the 1970s reflected the societal desire to distinguish a cohesive national identity, informed by the previous period's collection of documentary heritage. The pursuit of an established national heritage which played out within Canada's archival institutions was additionally compounded by the institutional requirements to accommodate an ever-expanding number of records from the public

[29] TRC, *Final Report*. Vol 6: 162.

sector. Additionally, progressively intricate bureaucratic processes and government activity following the First and Second World Wars as well as the Great Depression, and the emergence of new communications technologies subsequently necessitated records creation at an increased volume. Archivists continued to fulfill both roles of managing the records created by those public institutions they served as well as records from additional sources which represented historical significance to the broader Canadian public. During this era of archival work the number of repositories in Canada also expanded, compelled by this mandate to collect both institutional and non-institutional records.[30]

These features of Canadian archiving continued more or less unexamined until 1970 during the 12th international conference in Jerusalem of the Archival Round Table. This event exists within the larger mythos of the Canadian Total Archives legacy for being the first recognized instance of the term being distinguished and an attempt made to define its parameters. During this event, Robert-Henri Bautier fleshed out the emerging trends which had expanded on traditional European notions of archiving, primarily concerned with public records of textual mediums as marking an evolution in the conceptual framework by which other countries operated their archives. These changes which archival theory and practice had undergone in the previous decades were reflected in the answers provided to Bautier by 36 colleagues from 25 countries and marked by an increased accommodation of archival material, "whatever their form- printed, photoduplicated, sound, film, plans and technical drawings," and no longer limited to public administration but additionally encompassing, "para-public

[30] Millar, "Discharging Our Debt," 106.

organizations, collectives, economic enterprises, families and individuals," as records producing sources.[31]

While aspects of these themes were seen to be present in some form from all of the various responses Bautier received, he acknowledged in his report that the practice was not something that had been homogenously implemented across all archival institutions, nor would it be, due to certain economic and social proclivities present within the contexts of different states. Canada, by contrast, presented an alternative narrative to the perceived challenges of fully implementing a Total Archives paradigm, when representatives of the country explained the collection mandate of the national archives had always been one which included a broader definition of historical documents since its inception in 1872.[32]

Remarking on this development and its impact on the Canadian archival profession, Wilfred I. Smith explained,

> Once a label had been applied to the traditional mandates of Canadian government archives, national, provincial and local, it quickly became a part of the national archival terminology and a subject for professional discussion. While it is unlikely that the conditions which permitted its development in Canada will be duplicated elsewhere, the comprehensive system which has emerged should be of interest to members of a profession which collectively is committed to the preservation of the entire archival heritage of mankind.[33]

---

[31] Wilfred I. Smith, "'Total Archives': The Canadian Experience," in *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance*, ed. Tom Nesmith (Metuchen, N.J. & London: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1993), 134.
[32] Smith, "'Total Archives," 133-135.
[33] Smith, "'Total Archives," 135.

Smith continued in his observations regarding the impacts of Bautier's assessment, remarking that the characteristics of the Total Archives system had grown and would continue to grow in popularity and to some extent had been adopted by a variety of Canadian archival institutions.

More recently however, these practices have shifted away from an emphasis on provincial and national archival institutions assuming the responsibility of maintaining records of importance to Canadian heritage, and increasingly gravitated towards an archival system which favours records being kept closest to their places of origin. This evolving archival system began to develop in the 1990s and placed the onus of records acquisition and preservation of Canada's documentary heritage generally on the smaller more local institutions which had created those records such as corporate, municipal and community archives. This new practice in archival systems admittedly created problems for yet another characteristic of the Total Archive's concept which focuses on the multiplicity of media formats assumed within the collection mandates of repositories. One example is that the nature of localized collections and the collection of multiple mediums is problematic due to its potentially impractical nature. Simply put, as technologies advance and various formats face increased obsolescence, the cost and resources required to adequately preserve the records of all media types can often exceed the resources of the smaller repository. The larger provincial and national institutions, however, which could theoretically serve as centralized repositories within the terms of the Total Archives paradigm for the housing of more problematic material records in turn begs the question of whether this practice violates the removal of the location of origin impetus of the archival systems practice.[34]

[34] Millar, "Discharging Our Debt," 104.

Perhaps more significantly however, is the conflict this poses within the culturally diverse landscape of the Canadian archival framework when considering the removal of records from communities of origin. This is a facet of the Total Archives methodology which has been called into question by authors such as Edward Laine in his exploration of immigrant Finnish archives in Canada. As Laine explains,

> …From the perspective of the champions of locally kept archives, the national acquisitions programmes of these Finnish-Canadian archives have torn or seek to tear locally generated archival materials out of the hands of their immediate creators. But, in having done so, the Finnish Canadian Archives and the Finnish Canadian Historical Society Archives were able to secure and preserve a great deal of archival material which probably would have been lost without their intervention. Also, in turning over their respective collections to the Public Archives of Canada and the Multicultural Historical Society of Ontario respectively, they have performed the ultimate service in encouraging the growth of Finnish-Canadian studies not only among scholars of Finnish origin, but also among others of wholly non-Finnish backgrounds.[35]

In this account Laine explores the development of the Finnish archival tradition in settler Canada as it progressed in contrast to the evolution of the Total Archives movement by the broader Canadian archival community. Demonstrating an understandable degree of protectionism over the Finnish settler communities' records in the context of the larger national collecting practices, removal of records from their communities of origin and acquisition by national archival institutions was met with a great deal of hesitancy and resistance Alternatively, he notes how adoption of these records into the larger national archival environment has in many ways resulted in the enduring preservation of those records as well as the accessibility and interest in their histories to a broader scholarly audience.

---

[35] Edward P. Laine, "'Kallista Perintöä–Precious Legacy!': Finnish-Canadian Archives, 1882-1985," *Archivaria* 22, no. 22 (January 1, 1986): 93-94, http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/article/download/11303/12243.

Similarly, my own research and discussions with Indigenous Elders in previous studies have elicited responses parallel to Laine's example of Finnish immigrant society, which illustrate the dichotomy of opinion in the collection practices of cultural items. On the topic of Indigenous artistic representations in northern Manitoba, an opinion was held that representation within larger geographically distant repositories was a positive indication of bringing cultural teachings to a broader audience. Conversely, other respondents believed that this prompted an impetus to create closer centres for the housing and display of cultural and artistic items as a means of maintaining the authenticity of those items. For some, removing an item from its place of origin was not 'preserving' the culture but rather 'commercializing' it.[36] Not unlike the conflicting dynamics of these examples, the discussions of the collections mandate and methodologies of the Total Archives model have taken place in the Canadian archival field as well with particular relevance to First Nations, Inuit and Metis Nation communities.

Other perceived challenges and questions confronting the Canadian archival tradition of the modern epoch have largely been attributed to the advent of the digital era. As Terry Cook frames it,

> In the digital world, the custodial and curatorial model of institution-based Total Archives will need to be further transformed into a virtual total archive system of shared functions, skills, resources, networks, and standards, community-centred and collaborative. In such a framework, archivists will focus more on archiving as a participatory total process in society, rather than necessarily acquiring the total archives in their institutions.[37]

While some of the emphasis may be placed on the digital for inspiring this reconsideration of archival theory as a pragmatic response to the obstacles and opportunities created by new

---

[36] Chartrand, *Place of Our Own*, 6.
[37] Cook, "Total Archives," 399.

technologies in the field, there are other perhaps more significant factors contributing to this revaluation of models of archiving in Canada. More specifically, this collective archival identity crisis has opened the door for considerations other than what it means to archive simply within a specific technological paradigm but, what it means to conduct archival work in a particular cultural and societal context.

Millar identifies these inquiries, explaining how records themselves are a reflection of the people who create, use and subsequently preserve them. Consequently, an archival record is derived from a series of decisions made by people who intentionally choose to create and preserve a memory. These decisions are neither devoid of connection with the social and cultural frameworks which the individuals who make them are situated in nor are they absent of affecting the wider archival community. Millar explains this stating that,

> The role of the archivist, and the archival community, is critical to an understanding of what Canada values as archival and how Canada has chosen to preserve its documentary heritage. Even though archivists claim they must respond to society's needs and wishes, archivists themselves play a significant role in guiding society's decisions about such issues as whether or not to pursue Total Archives or seek to develop an archival system.[38]

What, then, becomes of our Canadian archival traditions when we instead shift the attention from the practical challenges and changes catalyzed by the digital which have largely occupied the focus of the profession for decades now and instead concentrate on our archival reframing on the societal incentive of reconciliation within Canadian society? We have demonstrated thus far that both Canadian archival theory and the theories placed on archival records specifically are malleable constructs, subject to change over time and the current social contexts of the era. We

[38] Millar, "Discharging Our Debt," 105.

must now consider what this characteristic of Canadian archival traditions means in the wake of emerging movements and renegotiations regarding Canada's domestic relationships with Indigenous peoples and in the wake of critically impactful resources such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work and how these factors can contribute to new archival theories.

Scholars such as Ghaddar have demonstrated how the initial development of total archive practices in Canada proved colonial and settler in origin and must therefore be revisited and replaced in order to address the gap they have caused in supporting Indigenous expressions of history.[39] Her exploration of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's efforts to compel the federal government and national archives to produce records regarding the residential school system further compounds the notions of archives as sites which 'decide' the fates of our nation's histories and subsequently 'hide' those histories in certain cases. She remarks,

> The commission's efforts to force the government to produce records reveal not a simple desire to record the colonial truth, but rather the desire to expose the fiction or myth making that transforms the records of injustice into a narrative of settler innocence and pride. Often we archive what we would otherwise have to remember. In a sense, archives and other information systems are a means of forgetting what we otherwise would have had to memorize in order to know at some point in the future. Consigned to the archive for so long, accumulated over vast stretches of time, scattered across collections, fonds, and repositories, the IRS records can be easily forgotten…[40]

For Ghaddar, the TRC's efforts to collect and repatriate the dispersed records of residential school history was seen as an effort to reclaim that legacy through recontextualizing its records. The space of the Canadian archive in the context of Indigenous histories is summarily viewed as

---

[39] Ghaddar, "Land, Law and Sovereignty," 59-82.
[40] J.J. Ghaddar, "The Spectre in the Archive: Truth, Reconciliation, and Indigenous Archival Memory," *Archivaria* 82, no. 1 (December 2, 2016): 25.

a haunted setting where records documenting colonial outrages are stored to be easily forgotten. While the return of records to Indigenous-led repositories like the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation has certainly made those records more discoverable through better contextualization and therefore their histories more visible, I would posit an additional concluding thought to the concept of the haunted archive and the forgotten record. Indigenous expressions of history and collective memory practices must not be overlooked in the archival record and within the environment of the archival institution either. Histories are far more difficult to forget when they are represented not by boxes of paper tucked away in fonds, but by living breathing representations of that history which can be supported in their continually renewed expressions by archival institutions as well.

In the Canadian experience, as with many colonial states, this means undertaking work which reconsiders the original motivations of archives and interjects Indigenous voices while incorporating the thoughts and methodologies of Indigenous community archives. Scholar Kimberly Christen Whithey remarks on navigating this process, stating,

> Archives were established as places where official records became anchors for nations in the making as they documented the accepted demise of their first peoples. As a result, the archival imagination is both a process of political work and ideological maneuvering. In the post-colonial imagination, archives have become hotbeds for revising the historical fictions and fantasies that allowed for the erasure and presumed demise of Indigenous peoples. As archives shift to include Indigenous voices, and as Indigenous archives assert their own prominence in the landscape, the archival imagination expands.[41]

It is within this expanding reality that we can begin to contemplate how Canadian archival traditions like Total Archives and archival systems can contribute aspects to the next phase in

[41] Kimberly Christen Withey, "Sovereignty, Repatriation, and the Archival Imagination: Indigenous Curation and Display Practices," *Collections* 11, no. 2 (2015): 115.

archival evolution; one that incorporates Indigenous perspectives through methodologies derived from community and participatory archival theories.

Resituating Current Archival Work: Dissecting the Internationally Recognized Responsibilities of Archives as Heritage Institutions

Presently, within modern conceptions of archives it is well established that archives play a crucial role in supporting world heritage. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Universal Declaration on Archives proclaims the practice of archival work to be an essential facet in the protection of collective memory. It recognizes that archives occupy an influential position in reflecting historical information. Operating within this internationally accepted definition, archival work and institutions are therefore acknowledged as crucial in the authentication of what constitutes a society's collective history. The Declaration asserts,

> Archives are a unique and irreplaceable heritage passed from one generation to another…They play an essential role in the development of societies by safeguarding and contributing to individual and community memory. Open access to archives enriches our knowledge of human society, promotes democracy, protects citizens' rights, and enhances the quality of life.[42]

If we are to interpret this statement, as a reflection of general and collective international beliefs about the roles and responsibilities of archives, then archives are a substantial contributing factor in deciding what qualifies as a legitimate historical narrative or fact. Subsequently, it is not a stretch to therefore say that archives have assumed the authority, whether intentionally or by

[42] International Council on Archives, *Universal Declaration*, https://www.ica.org/en/universal-declaration-archives.

default, to determine whose histories and consequently whose historical claims and privileges are respected and safeguarded.

In a national context, this means Canadian archives play a critical part in legitimizing or conversely disqualifying Indigenous histories through their representation in Canadian institutions. This is a responsibility which should be recognized for its implicit legal and constitutional consequences within the purview of First Nations, Inuit and Metis Nation rights and the immense responsibility Canadian archives assume in preserving documentary heritage.

To this end, archives are recognized for "[Their] unique quality… as authentic evidence of administrative, cultural and intellectual activities and as a reflection of the evolution of societies."[43] Archival institutions within Canada, specifically those housing government records pertaining to Indigenous histories, are subsequently a reflection of the evolving relationship between the larger Canadian society and its government structures as well as the government's obligations and responsibilities to Indigenous peoples. The relationship of archives to its records is consequently adapting to societal changes in the relationship between the state and Indigenous peoples also. It is therefore not unreasonable to assume that as we continue to progress as a society tasked with reconciling the inequities created by our shared colonial past, that Canadian archives must begin to re-evaluate their methodologies and traditions in records keeping. In many ways, institutions have begun to do some of this work already by revisiting the current records that exist in archives.

[43] International Council on Archives, *Universal Declaration*, https://www.ica.org/en/universal-declaration-archives.

Examples of Reconstructing: Archival Projects in Canadian Institutions

We have observed the evolution of our national archival institutions, their responsibilities towards collective identity and their relationship to Indigenous communities thus far. Reimagining archives and archival methodologies, however, to encompass more diverse approaches which better represent historically marginalized communities has been initiated within the body of work that comprises archival theory in more recent years. Scholars such as Bastian point to a renegotiation of the theoretical underpinnings of what constitutes an archive or an archival record. She states,

> Over the past several decades, scholars concerned with post-colonial and indigenous populations have focused on archives as one method of excavating the cultures and lives of marginalized peoples. The limitations of textual and bureaucratic records, combined with the recognition that an archive can consist of interrelated knowledge constructs composed of many different kinds of documentation, have led these scholars to seek 'archives' beyond the walls of official buildings. For archivists likewise engaged in documenting post-colonial and other communities, expanding the definitions of what an archive could be, and suggesting new ways of seeing 'records', offers the potential of creatively representing and preserving the cultural expressions of these communities.[44]

Where scholars such as Bastian envision the expansion of archives and archival records outside the walls of the institutional archive, however, concurrent work is taking place to re-envision or reinvent the archival records which already exist inside the walls as well, through various projects underway within our Canadian archival institutions. These projects serve as examples of contemporary attempts to redress the inadequacies of archival work from the previous epoch in preserving and reflecting the records of Indigenous peoples, and use techniques which have been deemed 'participatory archives' in the contemporary archival literature.

---

[44] Jeannette Bastian, "'Play Mas': Carnival in the Archives and the Archives in Carnival: Records and Community Identity in the US Virgin Islands," *Archival Science* 9, no. 1–2 (2009): 113.

The term "participatory archives" speaks to a shift in the current archival practices to engage non-archival professionals in archival processes. Contemporary iterations of participatory archives can sometimes refer to the use of crowdsourced technologies, frequently taking place in an online forum. These platforms facilitate the construction and collection of citizen-led information regarding historical knowledge but can also denote more personalized methods of community-based knowledge sourcing. Earlier deliveries of participatory archives conversely relied on more organic strategies of resourcing information to create more robust descriptions such as hosting social events like naming parties in communities of origin or in the archives themselves to consult with community members regarding records depicting them. The array of measures employed by participatory archives can be seen as a means of addressing and even somewhat dismantling the monopoly that archival professionals have long held over archival collections by creating methods of interacting and using the knowledge sourced from a broader public on collections. This subsequent use of strategies which now afford archives the ability to engage with multiple perspectives, including those typically marginalized by the historical record, has been interpreted as a new shift in archival work, one which fosters an increasingly democratic use of archival materials sometimes as a means of addressing social inequities, while simultaneously encouraging increased awareness of archival collections.[45]

One such example of a project which demonstrates new archival trends in participatory archiving, is the Project Naming initiative of Library and Archives Canada's (LAC). This project began in 2002, and aimed at redescribing selected records of LAC's collection that contained Inuit content. The impetus behind Project Naming included a recognition that many of

[45] Alexandra Eveleigh, "Participatory Archives," in *Currents in Archival Thinking*, ed. Heather MacNeil and Terry Eastwood, 2nd ed. (Westport, 2017), 299-300.

LAC's current photographic records reflecting Indigenous content did not adequately or appropriately describe those represented in its images. In many instances, records labelled people or places in general, non-descript ways and used injurious, prejudicial, and outdated terminology no longer deemed appropriate, to describe their content or relied on the original inscriptions which reflected the biases of non-Indigenous society. Recognizing this, Project Naming was developed by Nunavut Sivuniksavut and conducted in collaboration with the Government of Nunavut and LAC. It employed the use of Elders and community knowledge from four Nunavut communities to appropriately identify the names and places contained in 500 photographs. This initial effort was successful in identifying three-quarters of individuals in the first collection.[46]

In subsequent years Project Naming continued to expand in its methods of outreach to Indigenous communities and has since been successful in adding more accurate descriptive data for the records of LAC to several thousand of approximately ten thousand digitized images of First Nations, Inuit and Metis Nation content. Initially, however, the project originated from arguably more humble and personal roots which utilized and even promoted traditional structures of intergenerational knowledge exchange through the work of youth who sat with Elders in the communities of Igloolik, Kugluktuk, Padlei and Taloyak from Nunavut Sivuniksavut. It employed digital copies of photographs placed on CD-ROMs which students would then take to the Elders of these communities as methods of encouraging memory prompts.[47]

---

[46] "Aboriginal Heritage- Project Naming," Library and Archives Canada, accessed June 1, 2021, https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/project-naming/Pages/introduction.aspx.

[47] Greg Bak, Danielle Allard, and Shawna Ferris, "Knowledge Organization as Knowledge Creation: Surfacing Community Participation in Archival Arrangement and Description," *Knowledge Organization* 46, no. 7 (2019): 505.

The initiative in its current phase constitutes one example of LAC's implementation of crowdsourcing technologies as well as engagement of source communities through social media platforms like Facebook, and Twitter to rectify their record's descriptions.[48] Consequently, it still gives Indigenous communities an opportunity to learn about the collections pertaining to them located at the national archives as well as a means of addressing harmful records descriptions that do not appropriately represent Indigenous communities and individuals. It is worth noting, however, that more recent versions of the project have made concessions through adopting technologies and platforms which promote a broader and, one might argue, less personalized relationship between the institution itself and the communities of origin LAC holds records concerning than previous iterations of Project Naming.

Similarly, scholars such as Stephanie Lett are critical of Project Naming's selection of photographic materials for digitization. She reflects on the content of the Arthur Tweedle fonds and how removing the photographs from the original context of their placement within the fonds impacted their associated representation. Lett argues that by not digitizing the associated textual materials of the collection, a significant amount of information was not captured, which speaks to how these photographs were in fact used as tools for marginalizing the Inuit people depicted. Within the related textual documents are articles written on Tweedle's perceived notions regarding the physical differences of Inuit people and their facial characteristics. This oppressive context of the othering rhetoric associated with these photos is, however, lost when viewing the image as an isolated object. Likewise, Tweedle's photographs promoted imagery reflective of

---

[48] Library and Archives Canada, *Indigenous Heritage Action Plan*, (Gatineau: 2019), 6, https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/initiatives/Documents/indigenous-heritage-action-plan.pdf.

his romanticized view of gender roles which he believed Inuit men and women observed. In the absence of the associated written documents from this fonds being available for digital access Lett posits how the photographs which were digitized for Project Naming, "may be misinterpreted as truthful depictions of the lives of men and women in the North," rather than the images Tweedle chose to capture for their reinforcement of his own personal stereotypes.[49] Her analysis serves as an example of why participatory archival work must be cautious of the methodologies it employs in records selection and subsequently decontextualization.

More recently, in 2018, LAC launched their Co-Lab initiative, a project which engaged solely in the use of crowdsourcing technologies to allow members of the public to add information to LAC's digital collections. Through the implementation of the Co-Lab technology, the public was given tools to "transcribe, translate, describe, tag, and add other information,"[50] which would expand the information reflected in the archival record. While Co-Lab was not exclusively developed to reconstruct Indigenous collections, the technology it employs has the potential to be used to garner community-based knowledge, albeit without the oversight ensured from working in a more personalized relationship with communities of origin as reflected in other examples of participatory archives such as earlier versions of Project Naming. Consequently, unlike Project Naming, Co-Lab's inception uses exclusively crowdsourced methodologies to garner information about its records. And while many of the challenges launched by the Co-Lab initiative have been aimed at addressing collections specifically pertaining to First Nations, Inuit and Metis Nation communities, there is little if any

[49] Stephanie Lett, "The Arthur H. Tweedle Collection, Project Naming, and Hidden Stories of Colonialism," *Past Imperfect* 20 no.1 (October 20, 2017): 84-85.
[50] Library and Archives Canada, *Indigenous Heritage Action Plan*, 6.

semblance of the personalized and social aspects to the delivery of this archival tool which is so entrenched within Indigenous research methodologies and participatory archives.

It is also worth noting that the use of such technologies and their reliance on stable internet connections is problematic for the participation of Indigenous communities across Canada. While more research is necessary to determine the scope and scale of barriers to internet access in First Nations reserves specifically, the limitations of access in rural and northern communities in Canada is well documented.[51] The critical challenges of implementing this technological infrastructure therefore impact the ability of many source communities to fully participate in the applications of this form of crowd sourced archival work.

While Co-lab presents a national example of the archival efforts to renegotiate records in the digital era by crowdsourcing descriptions, it also presents a critical consideration for scholars like Alexandra Everleigh. Despite a perceived lack of investment in personalized relationship building between the host institution and the communities of origin, crowdsourcing may still offer meaningful connections in its archival applications. She explains,

> Crowdsourcing in cultural heritage is ultimately all about making connections – in its different guises these may be connections between traces of the past or between people in the present. Perhaps its enduring legacy will be in fostering the participants' perspective of the digitised cultural heritage realm, encouraging professionals in these fields too to transcend their own view of the world – to focus then not inwardly on narrowly defined disciplinary goals, but to look outwards, embracing complexity and uncertainty, but also opportunity.[52]

---

[51] Michael Haight, Anabel Quan-Haase, and Bradley A Corbett. "Revisiting the Digital Divide in Canada: The Impact of Demographic Factors on Access to the Internet, Level of Online Activity, and Social Networking Site Usage," *Information, communication & society* 17, no. 4 (2014): 503–519.

[52] A. Eveleigh, "Crowding out the Archivist? Locating Crowdsourcing within the Broader Landscape of Participatory Archives," in *Crowdsourcing our Cultural Heritage,* ed. Mia Ridge (London: Routledge, 2014), 226.

Another example containing a provincial iteration of a similar project, which attempts to re-address and reconstruct archival institution's relationships with the colonial nature of their records through Indigenous engagement, is the Names and Knowledge Initiative of the Hudson Bay Company Archives in Manitoba. This project was established in 2014 and similarly sought to take photographic records, specifically of northern communities, individuals, and content primarily from the 1930s to 1970s which had been labelled incorrectly or unidentified, and employ the help of Indigenous community members to identify various facets of the photographs. The Names and Knowledge Initiative worked with Elders and communities by hosting several community naming events in the communities of origin for the records in question. These events were seen as an opportunity to build relationships with source communities as well as increase access for Indigenous communities to records pertaining to them. In addition to this, information gleaned through the project's activities increased contextual knowledge of the records themselves and was subsequently added to the original captions along with the name and community of the individual who provided the additional information. While original captions were also preserved as part of the record's information, despite being incorrect or outdated, the archivists of the Names and Knowledge Initiative reflect on this choice to integrate new information into the record rather than overwrite it entirely, explaining,

> While original captions often contain outdated terms or incorrect information, it is important that they continue to be included with the photographs. Far from being discarded, this information provides evidence of not only the views and opinions of the creator but, oftentimes, society as a whole. What photographers said about the images they created is as much a part of the archival record as the photographs themselves. The Names and Knowledge Initiative seeks to include Indigenous perspectives that were not seen as

> valuable or needed at the time the historic photographs in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives were taken.[53]

This conscious decision to include both descriptions, one which reflects the legacies of the archives' and/or creators' decidedly colonial attitudes alongside descriptions which illustrate the Indigenous knowledge regarding the records' content, provides a concrete example of how archives can simultaneously acknowledge themselves as representatives of colonial inheritances while working to create space to accommodate the narratives of those marginalized by that history.

LAC's Project Naming initiative similarly preserves the colonial origins of their records' descriptions. Including the archival descriptions derived from their participatory efforts in the title field of the record in square brackets after the original title, Project Naming commits not only to creating a more robust record description but to avoiding concealing the institution's colonial legacies. Scholars such as Greg Bak, Danielle Allard and Shawna Ferris observe,

> This practice ensures that the original colonial history and descriptive practices of Library and Archives Canada are not erased or obscured even as LAC strives to decolonize the colonial and often offensive descriptions that LAC staff and in some cases the original photographers, or other non-archival custodians of the records, had assigned to the photos in the first place. This use of square brackets is intended to account for and acknowledge community input and to signal those places that communities have contributed to the record, as is made apparent in the archival descriptions themselves.[54]

Conversely, while the project does indicate the augmented descriptions as being associated with Project Naming itself and therefore, we may surmise, derived from community knowledge,

---

[53] Michelle Rydz and James Gorton, "The Names and Knowledge Initiative- How the Names and Knowledge Initiative is helping to reveal Indigenous peoples, places, and understandings in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives," *Canada's History*, Sept. 14, 2020, https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/first-nations-inuit-metis/the-names-and-knowledge-initiative.

[54] Bak, Allard, and Ferris, "Knowledge Organization" 509.

scholars Bak, Allard and Ferris note the project's lack of acknowledgement of those specific community individuals who supply the subsequent information for descriptions. Subsequently, they reflect on the implications such participatory and crowdsourced information has with regard to Indigenous knowledge, explaining,

> the Indigenous "ownership" of the traditional knowledge and personal information recorded in the photographs, despite "possession" of the photographs by Library and Archives Canada, can be understood as an instance of multiple provenance. In other words, Indigenous rights to and knowledge of Project Naming records significantly informs how they should be contextualized and understood. However, the complexity of this multiple provenance is not addressed or even signalled in the description, the interface or the larger Project Naming website.[55]

Comparatively, the Names and Knowledge Initiative of the HBCA addresses some of the observed shortcomings of its national counterpart by including the names of consenting individuals who have provided information that contextualizes their records. Additionally, this initiative neglects the use of square brackets, further validating the information provided by participants regarding communities of origin. The project, however, has been critiqued similarly by scholar Jesse Boiteau for its perceived lack of transparency concerning "how HBCA gathers and releases the information provided by the knowledge keepers of the North."[56]

These projects illustrate how archival institutions have begun to implement new strategies in revisiting their archival collections and re-evaluating their relationships with their records containing Indigenous subject matter. They also demonstrate ways in which Canadian archival institutions have begun to engage with Indigenous communities in order to improve and rectify their records by utilizing Indigenous community-based knowledge. They are not,

---

[55] Bak, Allard, and Ferris, "Knowledge Organization," 510.
[56] Jesse Boiteau, "The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and the Pursuit of Archival Decolonization" (Master's Thesis, University of Manitoba, 2017), 111.

however, without their flaws, which likewise reflect the various missteps of Canadian archival institutions as they explore methods and attempt strategies to implement Indigenous knowledge into their archival frameworks and collections. This is significant in that it reflects the ability of archives themselves to evolve beyond the practices and policies which they have established as standards in favour of improving relationships between institutions and their Indigenous source communities. It is also significant in that it exemplifies why archival institutions need to continually re-evaluate their processes and think critically about their methods of engaging with Indigenous histories and peoples for the continued improvement to these approaches.

Consequently, we can take these initiatives a step further and ask ourselves if Canadian archival institutions have expressed a willingness to reconstruct their collections through activities such as redescription, guided by Indigenous knowledge, as a means of promoting more positive relationships with Indigenous communities, then why can institutions not also reconstruct their perceptions regarding the very nature of what constitutes an archival record based on Indigenous knowledge? In recent years it has become a recognized component of archival work that archives no longer confine themselves to stagnant institutional practices but, instead, continue to re-evaluate their relationship with the field's standards. Archival work in a contemporary context needs to reflect on what changes need to be made in order to accommodate alternative ways of knowing that utilize Indigenous communities and their unique information frameworks.

Conversely, in failing to reflect on and enact needed changes, Canadian institutions risk contributing to the continued marginalizing of the Indigenous people their current collections document. As archives have long since established and acknowledged themselves as institutions which promote and articulate collective heritage, this role in turn encumbers them with the

responsibility of creating our conceptions of national identity. It stands to reason then that an archival framework which continues to tolerate records collections that largely occupy solely one side or type of heritage, that of the physical record, will continue to propagate a national consciousness which dismisses the Indigenous knowledges derived from alternative forms of non-physical, embodied representation as they have not been codified and thus validated by the very institutions, we ground our conceptions of collective identity in.

Community Archives and Participatory Practices

As previously discussed, Canadian archival institutions have undergone significant developments over the latter half of the twentieth century. Significantly, the shift away from Total Archives to an emphasis on archival systems in the 1990s which favoured a records approach that allowed records to remain in their place of origin, can also be observed as supporting and aligning neatly with the emergence in previous years of the community archives movement. The community archives movement, which has become popular in recent decades, however, is one which often stands in contrast to the traditional, European frameworks of the archival institutional context for its location outside of conventional archival networks. Within these formal contexts, concerns regarding professional standards and issues of intellectual, physical, and legal control over records have frequently spurred an uneasy acceptance of the communal archival entity which is alternatively concerned with community agency. Rebecka Sheffield explains,

> Whether community archives identify themselves as cultural or political endeavors, the very act of taking control over the documentation and storytelling about one's own community calls attention to issues of power and

> politics manifest in our traditional approaches to creating and maintaining archives. [57]

Whatever the cause for establishing a community based archival entity, the development of these facilities largely came into popularity in the mid 1970s and early 1980s parallel to the popularization of the Total Archives model in Canada. Observed as a response to various social and political protests of the 1960s and a subsequent growing awareness within the archival profession that there was an inherent bias within the preservation of larger archival institutions to privilege the narratives of the mainstream elite, community archives were seen by some archives professionals as a means of promoting the voices of marginalized peoples.[58]

The community archive is structured around notions that grassroots initiatives empower members of a designated community in ways that the traditional heritage society or institution has not. By giving members of a community the opportunity to engage in the processes that determine what is deemed important for preservation and consequently how they would like their collective narrative represented historically the community archive model provides meaningful ways of addressing historic discrimination.

Marginalized voices are central to the community archive as noted by scholars such as Michelle Caswell, who explains that the communities which utilize this model are ones that materialize around a common sense of historic exclusion or injustice. She notes how,

> These community-based archives serve as an alternative, grassroots venue for communities to make collective decisions about what is of enduring value to them and to control the means through which stories about their past are constructed. Power is central to this conversation; the need to uncover and

[57] Rebecka Sheffield, "Community Archives," in *Currents of Archival Thinking*, ed. Heather MacNeil and Terry Eastwood, (Westport, 2017), 352.
[58] Sheffield, "Community Archives," 352-353.

> provide a platform for previously marginalized voices distinguishes community archives from local geographically based historical societies, in this estimation.[59]

Unfortunately, community archives have in the past been viewed as distinct and mutually exclusive to professional archival practices. While community archives were generally seen to be associated with volunteers, who lack formal archival education and complete projects in casual or unestablished organizational settings, the latter is believed to be conducted by professionally trained archivists in formal institutional settings such as government and university archives.[60] The fact that these two archival models exist in isolated conceptual as well as physical settings reinforces the idea that Canadian archival institutional frameworks have typically been inadequate or even reluctant in their efforts to incorporate a plurality of voices in archival representation, specifically when those voices challenge the mainstream ideals of heritage. Scholar Terry Cook observes this distinction within archival theory as having evolved in a broader process defined by four phases: "from juridical legacy to cultural memory to societal engagement to community archiving,"[61] with each subsequent movement signalling a re-negotiation of the role of the archivist. Cook writes,

> The archivist has been transformed, accordingly, from passive curator to active appraiser to societal mediator to community facilitator. The focus of archival thinking has moved from evidence to memory to identity and community, as the broader intellectual currents have changed from pre-modern to modern to postmodern to contemporary. Of course, there is overlap. Strands from all four mindsets are interwoven. This discussion is

---

[59] Michelle Caswell, "Toward a Survivor-Centered Approach to Records Documenting Human Rights Abuse: Lessons from Community Archives," *Archival Science* 14, no. 3–4 (2014): 310.
[60] Caswell, "Survivor-Centered," 310-311.
[61] Terry Cook, "Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms," *Archival Science* 13, no. 2–3 (June 2013): 116, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-012-9180-7.

> about emphasis, not rigid definition. In each new phase, aspects of its predecessors often remained strong.[62]

While these distinct phases of archival theory represent the evolving conceptual frameworks of the practice, Cook notes how they are reflections of societal changes. As such, each new phase is capable of borrowing elements from or being influenced by the previous iterations of the practice.

Recently this impression has been indicative of and perhaps responsible for a shift, as the archival profession begins to adopt methods of community outreach. Caswell notes, "…The boundary between community and institution is shifting, as many professionally trained archivists are involved in community work, and many government and university repositories engage in community outreach."[63]

This welcome and necessary transition in our archival institutions has been demonstrated thus far in our discussion regarding the establishment of community engagement projects taking place in larger institutional settings such as our national and provincial archives. These projects create tentative bridges between communities and archival institutions. Connections between the two, however, seem to be temporary and generally based on the longevity of the project goals themselves, as well as contingent on collections owned by the archival institutions implementing those projects. These are factors which must be readdressed if we are to create meaningful changes within Canadian archival institutions which enable space for embodied records and subsequently facilitate efforts towards reconciliation. Most significantly, we must implement

[62] Cook, "Evidence," 116-117.
[63] Caswell, "Survivor-Centered," 310.

sustained partnerships with Indigenous communities, the characteristics and dynamics of which are dictated by those communities. In this context of participatory practices Caswell states,

> In community-based discourses, archives are not led by outsiders imposing their views on communities, but instead are grassroots efforts from within. In collaborations between community archives and government or university repositories, the role of professional archivist shifts from selector of materials to facilitator of memory work, from all-knowing authority to expert among experts.[64]

These methods of participatory archives can be employed as a means for allowing institutional archives not necessarily to create but to access and subsequently promote embodied records as part of their expanding archival repertoire. Community archives and collaborations are essential to this end. Without engaging in community partnerships, the assumption would be that public institutions neither possess the knowledge or means to facilitate the creation and recreation of authentic embodied records pertaining to Indigenous histories on their own. Public archival institutions, however, can and should begin to look for ways to accommodate and promote these records as a means of reconciliation.

Chapter 2 Conclusion

Archival institutions are recognized as unique contributors to our conceptions of national heritage. Their methods and traditions, however, are rooted in western, colonial frameworks which marginalized Indigenous voices and histories as a means of promoting and solidifying a collective identity which privileged the dominant majority. In recent years, scholarship in archival theory has developed new approaches in archival work such as community archives as a means of reflecting diverse voices. These methods built on engagement and consultation with

[64] Caswell, "Survivor-Centered," 311.

source communities have been applied by archival institutions as a means of readdressing the colonial pasts of their current records regarding Indigenous peoples.

Consequently, archival practices have evolved over time, responsive to the societal, cultural, and even practical, technological environments of its context. While the institutional conception of the archival record has long been characterized as captured only on physical media, what might an archival record created within a context centred on reconciliation with Indigenous communities look like? How might archival institutions adopt and implement the notion of the embodied record into their current frameworks?

Chapter 3

Moving Forward: Implementing a New Model for Archives in Canada

Introduction

In the first chapter, we explored the notion of Indigenous ceremony and oral traditions as vital reflections of history. Works produced by both national and international bodies provide insight into how Indigenous traditions are the basis for Indigenous identity and provide further inspiration for the consideration of embodied records as valid historical resources. In recent years, various archival groups have proposed documents and declarations which strive to address the unique needs of Indigenous communities across the globe in their pursuit of culturally appropriate representation within an archival context. Consequently, this chapter focuses on how institutional frameworks can provide a pathway to supporting, implementing, and promoting Indigenous ways of knowing within Canadian archives as a means of achieving reconciliation. Moreover, we will begin to move beyond our analysis of the contemporary archival strategies of decolonization discussed in previous chapters within Canadian archives and consider the space as well as the functions of archives as providing a potential model for demonstrating reconciliation as both a physical and conceptual entity.

Reconciliation as a Conceptual Model

Reconciliation is the decided approach which this thesis argues archival institutions must employ in order to constructively advance their relationship with Canada's Indigenous peoples in a way that creates meaningful change for both parties. In order to do this, however, we must first dissect what reconciliation means as an abstract concept.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) work in defining reconciliation can arguably be considered the essential blueprint for working towards resolution within Canadian society's current era. The research and subsequent reports developed as part of Canada's residential schools' class-action lawsuit are the result of perhaps the most comprehensive study of one of the most detrimental experiences of our country's colonial impacts on Indigenous peoples. Such work was a multilayered approach to its research which utilized both the collection of textual media records from the archives of the federal government and churches pertaining to schools as well as a massive undertaking of six years spent travelling across Canada conducting and collecting testimonies from over six thousand witnesses, most of whom were survivors of the residential school experience themselves.[1]

The thoroughness with which the TRC undertook its research regarding the impacts of colonialism in Canada, specifically the impact of Canada's residential school system, instructed its design for a pathway forward. Subsequently, its comprehensive approach to understanding history serves as a great example of the value placed on both physical textual records as well as oral records through their conduction of various discussion forums. It implies that similar methodologies would be most effective in the space of the archive and suggests a need to accommodate alternative representations of history, especially Indigenous ones, if we are to truly commit to reconciling.

---

[1] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,* (Winnipeg: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2015), V, https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf.

In their consultations with a vast array of Indigenous and non-Indigenous witnesses to the residential school system, the commissioners defined a survivor-centred perspective of how to heal and reconcile a fractured national society in the post-school era. These various characterizations of reconciliation not just as a theoretical concept but, as a concrete means of implementing strategies that promote healing is rooted in the culturally diverse influences of First Nations, Inuit and Metis Nation individuals and communities. These discussions are the basis for why the TRC's literature may be considered the quintessential authority on reconciliation and approaches thereof; it is a working model which is informed and constructed by not only by survivors but by the diverse Indigenous voices, cultures, and teachings of Canada.[2]

Despite the diverse cultural representation encapsulated by the contributing Indigenous voices of the TRC's discussions on reconciliation, common themes began to emerge within the literature, including: the importance of Indigenous ceremonies and spirituality, the pillars of Indigenous laws and governance and the need for Indigenous orality as an expression of history. Furthermore, while forgiveness and healing are also important trends within the dialogue, the explicit link between reconciliation and moving towards a place of mutual respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is overwhelmingly expressed. Therefore, the Commission explains, "Reconciliation is an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships."[3]

While initial approaches to reconciling Canada's past relationships with Indigenous people must proceed with repairing damage and correcting past offenses through apology and

---

[2] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth,* 16-19.
[3] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth,* 16.

reparation, further actions must be taken which empower a more encompassing vision of social changes. Engaging Canada's collective public in approaches to reconciliation must include the revitalization of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Nation ways of knowing. The utilization and subsequent understanding by all Canadians of traditional knowledge which is grounded within diverse Indigenous cultural perspectives is seen as integral to the successful implementation of a reconciliation process.[4] Within the context of Canada's archival institutions it is therefore essential that approaches towards reconciliation not only focus on correcting past mistakes within archival practices and core functions such as acquisition, appraisal, arrangement and description, and outreach and advocacy. While it is recognized that archival practices and functions have previously been carried out with a lack of consultation or utilization of Indigenous community knowledge we must also include the implementation of entirely new processes which are currently unknown to the archival profession as a whole.

As mentioned previously, one of the prevalent themes expressed was the employing of oral tradition and ceremony specifically. The Commission explains,

> Traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders have long dealt with conflicts and harms using spiritual ceremonies and peacemaking practices, and by retelling oral history stories that reveal how their ancestors restored harmony to families and communities. These traditions and practices are the foundation of Indigenous law; they contain wisdom and practical guidance for moving towards reconciliation across this land.[5]

Additionally, as the larger Canadian society begins to accept, understand and embrace the methodologies of Indigenous traditions as legitimate and equally valid ways of capturing history so too can archival institutions begin to embrace these means of expression.

---

[4] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth,* 17.
[5] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth,* 17.

The use of these embodied expressions of history is critical for the enactment of reconciliation processes as during the course of consultations the Commission's findings repeatedly revealed that the implementation of these methodologies was essential to confronting the past. As Elder and survivor narratives repeatedly explain, there are often no concise words or concepts within many Indigenous cultures and languages equating to the modern concept of reconciliation. There were however certain actions and protocols put in place in order to carry out processes when in need of re-establishing order and preserving balance which are still practiced within communities. These can serve as a means of approaching current efforts for reconciling in a culturally relevant way. Thus the developing characterization of reconciliation established through these discussions is an instrumental tool in contemporary reconciliation efforts, to date unparalleled within our society. The TRC's report summarises the thoughts and sentiments of Elders explaining,

> Elders and Knowledge Keepers across the land have told us that there is no specific word for "reconciliation" in their own languages, there are many words, stories, and songs, as well as sacred objects such as wampum belts, peace pipes, eagle down, cedar boughs, drums, and regalia, that are used to establish relationships, repair conflicts, restore harmony, and make peace."[6]

Embracing the diverse ceremonial rites of Indigenous cultures is depicted as a clear path forward in this endeavor. And for reconciliation to occur within the larger national context, the way in which it must be addressed is not just through the personal actions of survivors and Indigenous communities but by parties of both sides of the colonial paradigm as an expression of equality and mutually respectful engagement.

---

[6] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth*, 16.

The TRC's discourse on reconciliation relies heavily on a vision of reciprocated respect. This is one which finds its roots in the initial encounters between Canada's Indigenous peoples and the Crown, reflected in both historical and legislative texts and the respective oral histories preserved and held by Indigenous communities regarding these agreements. A depiction of reconciliation is derived from this model of the mutually beneficial relationships based on support and respect which were initially fostered during the earliest epochs of contact and understood by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous parties alike. The TRC report states,

> Aboriginal peoples have always remembered the original relationship they had with early Canadians. That relationship of mutual support, respect, and assistance was confirmed by the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Treaties with the Crown that were negotiated in good faith by their leaders. That memory, confirmed by historical analysis and passed down through Indigenous oral histories, has sustained Aboriginal peoples in their long political struggle to live with dignity as self-determining peoples with their own cultures, laws, and connections to the land."[7]

Although early relations were significantly damaged by an evolving and increasingly oppressive series of colonial actions it is this representation of respectful co-existence which is envisioned as a means forward within the TRC's reconciliation framework.

To better understand how the matter of reconciliation is conceptualized by the TRC we can observe the following analogy,

> …'Reconciliation,' in the context of Indian residential schools, is similar to dealing with a situation of family violence. It is about coming to terms with events of the past in a manner that overcomes conflict and establishes a respectful and healthy relationship among people going forward…To the Commission, "reconciliation" is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. For that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour[8]

---

[7] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth,* 184.
[8] TRC, *Final Report,* Vol. 6: 3.

The TRC's final report summary describes the evolving processes of reconciling Canada's history with its colonial past, specifically with the legacy of its residential school system. It defines this process stating, "…Healing and reconciliation must continue. The ultimate objective must be to transform our country and restore mutual respect between peoples and nations."[9] This concept of mutuality between peoples and nations is in my opinion integral to models of reconciliation and one I should like to embrace as the fundamental cornerstone for reconciliation within Canada's archival institutions as well.

Understanding Archives and their Obligations to Indigenous Peoples: Declarations Provided by the International Community and How they Pertain to Domestic Archival Work

Within the modern international context, key documents exist which have been proposed by the global community by which contemporary nations and their respective governments have codified their relationships with and their responsibilities to certain communities throughout the world. These texts are viewed as a mandate which dictates the accepted standards that a country's governments must abide by in their recognition of the unique rights and freedoms of specific communities and peoples. In Canada, the First Nations, Metis Nation and Inuit people's relationships with the national government is contextualized through the lens of the human rights violations endured by these communities as well as their recognition as Canada's three distinct Indigenous peoples. The most significant of the proposed declarations which apply, then, are the 'Joinet/Orentlicher' Principles and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Canada, like other nations, has embraced the proposed principles of these

[9] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth,* 183.

and used them as guiding theories for how it frames many of its institutional approaches and practices in navigating its obligations with Indigenous people. These fundamental documents are therefore, not surprisingly, referenced in archival institutional pronouncements both nationally and internationally, as providing the conceptual impetus for how we characterize our commitments to Indigenous people and their heritage materials within the archival community. Our national archives, for example uses both UNJOP and UNDRIP in their Indigenous Heritage Action plan when situating how Library and Archives Canada acknowledges their responsibilities and commitments to Indigenous peoples.[10] It is consequently vital that we understand these important declarations.

Joinet/Orentlicher Principles

The Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights Through Action to Combat Impunity, are more widely referred to as the Joinet/Orentlicher Principles. These principles were first proposed in 1997 by Louis Joinet in a final report to the UN Subcommission which addressed questions regarding justice and impunity. A later version of the principles was then developed almost a decade later in 2005 by Diane Orentlicher and the Commission on Human Rights. The resulting revision is a cumulative set of values which recognize state accountability in the right to redress for victims of human rights violations. As such the principles do not specifically lay out legal guidelines but instead provide a framework for addressing the past through the suggested implementation of various strategies in order to enable processes of reconciliation. Thus, the principles themselves do not speak specifically to

[10] Library and Archives Canada, *Indigenous Heritage Action Plan,* 3.

Indigenous rights or Indigenous archives, but instead frame archives in the context of human rights violations. Indigenous rights in Canada therefore are implied insofar as First Nations, Inuit and Metis Nations peoples have historically been victims of human rights abuses.[11]

Within the context of the Joinet/Orentlicher Principles, archives play a significant role in the process of combating human rights violations and fulfilling actions towards reconciliation. Archives are defined within the text as,

> collections of documents pertaining to violations of human rights and humanitarian law from sources including (a) national governmental agencies, particularly those that played significant roles in relation to human rights violations; (b) local agencies, such as police stations, that were involved in human rights violations; (c) State agencies, including the office of the prosecutor and the judiciary, that are involved in the protection of human rights; and (d) materials collected by truth commissions and other investigative bodies.[12]

This description of archives does not necessarily distinguish the use of documentary heritage outside of "collections of documents" as archival collections themselves. The implications of this definition point to an overwhelming emphasis on the recognition of physical documents as constituting archival materials rather than embodied records like storytelling and ceremony. It does, however, discuss the potential for considering archival collections as those, "Materials collected by truth commissions and other investigative bodies." Although not clearly demarcated within the context of the principles, materials collected by institutions for the purposes of truth

---

[11] Jonathon Sisson, "A Conceptual Framework for Dealing with the Past: A Holistic Approach to Dealing with the Past," *Politorbis* 50, no. 3 (2010): 12.
[12] United Nations, *Updated Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity* (February 8, 2005), http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/impu/principles.html.

commissions can serve as a definition with the potential to encompass broader and possibly more culturally relevant conceptions of the archival record itself.

Consequently, truth commissions are defined within the context of the Principles as, "Official, temporary, non-judicial fact-finding bodies that investigate a pattern of abuses of human rights or humanitarian law, usually committed over a number of years."[13] Given this theoretical framework for addressing Canada's colonial legacy with its Indigenous peoples, the assertions made by our national truth commission, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in their work expressing the residential school narrative and subsequently demonstrating a vision for reconciliation through defining it, is an integral piece of how we as an archival community must respond to the impetus for reconciliation. Additionally, the TRC's use of non-document related materials, for example its efforts to collect oral histories, conduct instances of sharing circles and retain items like the bentwood box decidedly open the door to expanding the archival profile of what constitutes a record.

The Joinet/Orentlicher principles place significant emphasis on the role of archives in democratic states and societies and the duties of the archival community in addressing human rights violations in order to provide meaningful pathways to redress in their segment of principles regarding the 'Right to Know.' For Canadian archives, this means in order to address archival institution's relationships with Indigenous people we must first recognize that this relationship has been characterized by a legacy of rights violations. Archives are arguably the most fundamental institutional structure which assumes the duties outlined in the general principles of Principle 2, the "Inalienable right to the truth," and Principle 3, the "duty to

[13] United Nations, *Updated Principles*.

preserve memory." As institutions dedicated to the preservation of documentary heritage and thus society's collective memory, their obligations to Indigenous peoples in Canada are firmly situated within these Principles 2 and 3 of the text.

Principle 14, "Measures for the preservation of archives," Principle 15, "Measures for facilitating access to archives," Principle 16, "Cooperation between archive departments and the courts and non-judicial commissions of inquiry," Principle 17, "Specific measures relating to archives containing names," and Principle 18, "Specific measures related to the restoration of or transition to democracy and/or peace," specifically mention archives and their role to this end under section C the "Preservation of and access to archives bearing witness to violations."[14] Within this discourse the state's responsibility to protect the critical role of archives in ensuring the right of people to access the truths about historic injustices is explored.

In the Canadian instance, archives therefore have a significant responsibility to ensure the legacy of their relationship with First Nations, Inuit and Metis Nation peoples is captured through institutional preservation of the archival record pertaining to it. The principles do not, however, delineate what kinds of records are essential for retention and preservation for these purposes. I would argue here that, while the preservation of state records is an important part of this process, including the voices of those referred to as 'victims' of injustice in the principles is equally so. Consequently, in many First Nations, Inuit and Metis Nation communities these records must also take the form of traditional culturally relevant representations of history.

[14] United Nations, *Updated Principles.*

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

For resources which discuss culturally relevant representations of history, we can look to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). UNDRIP was implemented by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007 and solidifies a set of principle rights which are recognized internationally as being inherent to Indigenous peoples and their respective communities.[15] Further to the Joinet/Orentlicher Principles which encompass Canada's Indigenous peoples insofar as they have demonstrably fallen under the purview of the principle's definition of 'victims of human rights violations' by colonial processes, and that focus on the responsibilities of the state and subsequently archives specifically, UNDRIP considers Indigenous rights in a broader context.

UNDRIP recognizes the rights of Indigenous peoples as being intrinsically connected with aspects of their cultural and traditional teachings and the consequent responsibility of states to promote these rights asserting the declaration to be,

> Recognizing the urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of indigenous peoples which derive from their political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources.[16]

This statement implies that states and their institutions such as archival institutions should affirm the significance of spiritual traditions and histories in order to protect Indigenous rights.

---

[15] United Nations, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, (September 13, 2007), 1, https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf.
[16] United Nations, *Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, 3.

Critically, we must then consider how archives as institutions representing the state should promote Indigenous knowledge systems as a means of respecting Indigenous rights.

Article 5 of the declaration recognizes rights, which arguably provide a framework for how Indigenous knowledge systems might be integrated into archival institutional spaces, asserting, "Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State."[17] The critical suggestion provided within this article is the aspect of autonomy it affirms for the participation of Indigenous peoples in state affairs. "If they so choose," offers the option of Indigenous participation in matters of the state without imposing the necessity of contributing. Broadly speaking this statement is meant to affirm that Indigenous communities have the agency to maintain and carry out their own cultural activities within their own institutions but also the opportunity to participate in the cultural activities of state institutions. And while the state must accommodate such efforts to incorporate Indigenous participation, Indigenous peoples are by no means equally encumbered.

Applying this principle to archival institutions offers an important justification for the implementation of community-led archives models within state run institutions. While community-based archival theories support the rights of the community in choosing records of importance to their archives and which represent their community best, when we apply this theory to the article of UNDRIP which offers but does not impose on Indigenous communities the right to maintain both their own cultural activities as well as participate in the cultural

[17] United Nations, *Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, 9.

activities of the state, the result is an interesting hybrid model which promotes Indigenous knowledge systems from those communities choosing to offer their participation within institutional spaces.

UNDRIP further acknowledges the rights of Indigenous peoples to both practice as well as revitalize their cultural traditions including ceremony and the requirement for states to provide effective mechanisms for redress.[18] Furthermore, the declaration secures the rights of Indigenous peoples to "[r]evitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures..."[19] and to "[t]he dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information."[20] Of the latter declaration, states are noted for their responsibly in ensuring that appropriate measures be taken in order to facilitate this process as a means of encouraging, "Tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous peoples and all other segments of society,"[21] through collaborative consultation with the relevant Indigenous communities involved.

These particular articles are important for providing a number of considerations. Firstly, they declare that cultural activities such as ceremony, transmission of histories, oral traditions, languages, knowledge systems and the like are all encompassed as fundamental expressions of Indigenous peoples which must be promoted and protected as important methods of cultural revitalization and education. Thus, states must provide appropriate supports to facilitate these activities and, if we are to accept that archives are institutions which have a public service

[18] United Nations, *Rights of Indigenous Peoples,* 11-12.
[19] United Nations, *Rights of Indigenous Peoples,* 12.
[20] United Nations, *Rights of Indigenous Peoples,* 14.
[21] United Nations, *Rights of Indigenous Peoples,* 14.

mandate, then the aforementioned rights of Indigenous peoples as they pertain to the promotion of specific cultural expressions undoubtedly extends to these public forums.

Article 33 again affirms the rights of Indigenous people to maintain and protect their cultural heritage as it pertains to traditional knowledge. Included in this article is a list of examples of cultural expressions such as oral traditions and the recognition of the right to uphold intellectual property over these expressions. States are similarly incentivised to "[t]ake effective measures to recognize and protect the exercise of these rights,"[22] in collaboration with Indigenous peoples, meaning states must adequately provide platforms for such activities which not only allow for the continued expression of those activities but also promote recognition of Indigenous ownership within these theoretical spaces. Significantly, UNDRIP also offers assurances regarding the carrying out of all rights in the most pragmatic sense through financial and technical state provided support.[23] The country's eventual endorsement of UNDRIP in 2010 implies that our national institutions, which include our national archives, have committed themselves to providing effective means for the expression of embodied records. It is also worth noting that the country's more recent efforts towards UNDRIP passed through Senate in June of 2021. Bill C-15, which received a final vote of 61-10 with 9 senators abstaining, ensures that Canada must implement the principles of UNDRIP in a meaningful way by implementing legislative frameworks to guarantee Canadian laws are aligned with the declaration. Thus, the passing of this bill arguably may provide an opportune moment within the national landscape to implement meaningful change for archival institutions to begin the work of resituating

[22] United Nations, *Rights of Indigenous Peoples,* 23.
[23] United Nations, *Rights of Indigenous Peoples,* 26.

themselves in order to accept and accommodate alternative forms of histories, as recognized within UNDRIP.[24]

Some archival professionals have begun this process of reflecting on UNDRIP's implications for archives by exploring ways to "bring together traditional European archival practices with Indigenous traditions of community memory."[25] Archivists such as Raymond Frogner have proposed various methods of UNDRIP's archival implementation such as new descriptive practices which promote Indigenous epistemologies through traditional naming protocols, the use of Indigenous languages, and hierarchical arrangements that consider traditional knowledge. Additionally, Frogner suggests that engagement with communities in the determination of meaningful preservation practices and Indigenous sovereignty over cultural expressions are all ways in which the archival field can begin to support UNDRIP's adoption in Canada. He illustrates how the recent legal impetus of Bill C-15 means that Canadian archives are at the precipice of an immense ideological and social shift, saying,

> We have lived through a time when our archival institutions supported the capacity to build and sustain privileged truths about certain communities, peoples, homelands, and identities, while conceptually marginalizing and even physically erasing others. Acknowledging and purposefully engaging these marginalized understandings requires innovation, humanity, and even daring and risk. The time has come for our public institutions of culture and identity to reimagine our foundational principles of identity such as homeland, belonging, community, and family.[26]

---

[24] The Canadian Press, "Senate Approves Bill to Implement UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," *CBC*, June 16, 2021, https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/undrip-declaration-passes-senate-1.6068524.
[25] Raymond Frogner, "The train from Dunvegan: implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in public archives in Canada." *Archival Science* 22, no. 2 (2022): 212.
[26] Frogner, "Train from Dunvegan," 234.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

While the Joinet/Orentlicher and UNDRIP texts set out a series of articles and declarations by which domestic archival institutions should navigate their relationships with Indigenous peoples within the purview of specific situations, yet another document exists which was implemented by the international community pertaining to specific forms or mediums of heritage, both from Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Released in 2003, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), while not exclusively focusing on Indigenous peoples or archives as a practice, alternatively provides a context for situating embodied records within the larger international diaspora of cultural heritage. It is therefore unfortunate that, although Canada participated in the initial drafting of the ICH Convention, and despite it having been ratified by numerous UNESCO participatory countries since this time, the country has neglected to ratify it.[27] It is, however, worth noting that despite Canada's failure to ratify the convention at the federal level, Quebec's Cultural Heritage Act contains clauses inspired by the convention making the province a leader in recognizing intangible cultural heritage at the provincial legislative level.[28]

---

[27] Gerald L. Pocius, "The Government of Canada and Intangible Cultural Heritage: An Excursion into Federal Domestic Policies and the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention," *Ethnologies* 36, no. 1–2 (2014): 63, https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1037600ar.

[28] Robert Frechette, "Municipalities at the Forefront: Protecting Intangible Cultural Heritage," *Canadian Commission for UNESCO*, December 10, 2019, https://en.ccunesco.ca/blog/2019/12/municipalities-at-the-forefront-protecting-intangible-cultural-heritage.

Regardless of the lack of broader adoption at the national level, however, UNESCO's ICH Convention is still useful in its treatment of what the convention refers to as 'intangible cultural heritage.' This is because what I have referred to as 'embodied records' and what has primarily been the focus of this thesis fits directly within the context of intangible cultural heritage. Having been largely accepted by the international community thus far, and in more recent years advocated for adoption domestically by groups such as the Canadian Network for Intangible Cultural Heritage (CNICH), we can view the ICH Convention's as the standard building blocks by which we may interpret facets of embodied records, the terms of which are commonly accepted by both Canadian and international society.[29]

Within the Convention, intangible cultural heritage is observed as being that which includes expressions such as "oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; [and] traditional craftsmanship."[30] It recognizes that contemporary global processes including societal prejudice put these forms of heritage at increasing risk. It furthermore identifies Indigenous communities as having a unique and elevated role in the protection and preservation of these heritage forms, explaining,

> …In particular indigenous communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and re-creation of the intangible cultural heritage, thus helping to enrich cultural diversity and human creativity.[31]

---

[29] Folklore Studies Association of Canada, "Canadian Declaration for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage," *Ethnologies,* 2017, https://www.acef-fsac.ulaval.ca/en/about/canadian-declaration-safeguarding-intangible-cultural-heritage.
[30] UNESCO, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage,* (Paris: 2003), 2, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001325/132540e.pdf.
[31] UNESCO, *Intangible Cultural Heritage,* 1.

Within the Convention's framework there is a notable sense that the protection of intangible heritage is reliant on increasing awareness among subsequent generations regarding its value and that this work be done in cooperation with domestic states supported by the international community. Accordingly, if we are to accept the assertion that archives are in fact integral sites of heritage making as discussed in previous chapters with scholars such as Hugh Taylor and Jeannette Bastian, then we must also accept that archives have an obligation as well as an invaluable role to play in efforts to preserve intangible heritage.

Arguably, one of the most significant ways in which this goal may be achieved by archives themselves is simply by acknowledging that these forms of heritage serve as legitimate records in the eyes of the archival community by establishing ways of and providing access to intangible heritage records through institutional resources. Similar to UNDRIP, the Convention delegates to states the responsibility of providing practical means of supporting the implementation of strategies for protection, imploring them to,

> Adopt appropriate legal, technical, administrative and financial measures aimed at: fostering the creation or strengthening of institutions for training in the management of the intangible cultural heritage and the transmission of such heritage through forums and spaces intended for the performance or expression thereof; ensuring access to the intangible cultural heritage while respecting customary practices governing access to specific aspects of such heritage; [and] establishing documentation institutions for the intangible cultural heritage and facilitating access to them.[32]

The ICH Convention itself places particular emphasis on the 'space' in which intangible cultural heritage is expressed and situates this territory in relation to communities of origin. Scholars such as Tullio Scovazzi and Laura Westra recognize that the concept of the cultural space as it is

[32] UNESCO, *Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 6.

designated within UNESCO's framework, rather than being tied to a fixed space, is instead more accurately attached to a custodial community with potential to relocate or change overtime. They explain that, within this context, cultural spaces are not necessarily determined by legally recognized state territories but instead transcend national and even continental boundaries. As with several examples from the Representative List of the UNESCO Convention, intangible cultural heritage oftentimes is continually reconstructed by communities of origin as they adapt and change due to numerous factors, including historical, environmental, and natural factors. Simply put, the cultural space as a notion can be both a physical but more importantly an abstract space, which symbolizes the place of interactions for the purposes of expressing and communicating cultural concepts. In this way,

> The heritage is strictly linked to the natural and historical context in which it is created and transmitted. A cultural space cannot be identified by lines drawn on maps…A cultural space must be intended more for social practices than for its geographical character.[33]

This assertion is significant if we are to consider how the space of archival institutions functions in relation to national heritage. It is likewise important if we are to consider how archival institutions may provide strategies for facilitating or offering the place of cultural spaces as a means of demonstrating their commitment to Indigenous expressions of intangible cultural heritage.

---

[33] Tulio Scovazzi and Laura Westra, "The Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage According to the 2003 UNESCO Convention: The Case of First Nations of Canada," *Inter Gentes* 1, no. 2 (2017): 34.

Examples of Proposed Strategies Responding to International Declarations

In recent years, examples of archival plans have been developed in response to these international declarations which advocate for the implementation of Indigenous knowledge systems**.** Many of these proposed strategies for creating more culturally relevant spaces within archival institutions reflect on the need for recognition and preservation of alternative forms, outside of the traditional archival paradigm of the written textual document and increasingly explore oral histories as a means of doing this.

One such example is the Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration produced by the International Council on Archives (ICA) Expert Matters Indigenous Group. The Adelaide Declaration was created during an ICA Summit in October of 2019 and advises archival institutions across the global archival community to implement methods which explore the various critical issues for Indigenous communities identified and discussed in the declaration.[34]

More significantly, the second section of the document's issues for immediate action, which contains considerations regarding property and ownership, addresses the need for Indigenous ownership of their traditional knowledge within institutions. The first subsection of this particular action characterizes aspects of traditional knowledge as embodying facets of orality and communal representations or performances, saying,

> 2(a) This Declaration recognizes Indigenous cultures and philosophies are embodied and lived through oral tradition, artwork and other forms of collective expression; the continuity, growth and revival of Indigenous communities is dependent on Indigenous control and ownership of these cultural expressions of identity…[35]

[34] Expert Group on Indigenous Matters, *Tandanya- Adelaide Declaration*, *International Council on Archives,* (2019), 1, https://www.archivists.org.au/documents/item/1545.
[35] Expert Group on Indigenous Matters, *Tandanya- Adelaide Declaration*, 3.

Furthermore, discussions on the intellectual property rights of Indigenous communities recognize Indigenous peoples themselves as stewards of their own representations of traditional knowledge. The need for control of these embodied aspects of cultural heritage which may exist within archival frameworks is paramount to this recognition and respect of ownership even in cases where control includes a community's legal claim to archival materials. The declaration states,

> 2(b) This Declaration recognizes the process of defending intangible cultural heritage must be placed in the stewardship of the elders, knowledge keepers and Indigenous representatives from the communities where the "practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills" originated, not the nation states responsible for the assimilation and erasure of their cultures; this recognition includes the replevin of archival materials when requested by the originating community…[36]

It should, however, be noted that while this section of the declaration explores aspects of asserting community-based control over the intangible cultural heritage existing in archival institutions to include pursuits such as legal repatriation of archival materials to communities of origin, this claim can also be used as the basis for an alternative argument. Namely, if we accept that Indigenous peoples must be the stewards of their own cultural heritage by asking archival institutions to engage in measures such as the return of materials to communities of origin, and if we accept that cultural heritage also consists of embodied and intangible expressions as well as physical, then it stands to reason that we must also acknowledge cultural control does not only encompass bringing materials back to communities of origin. Conversely this can also extend to

[36] Expert Group on Indigenous Matters, *Tandanya- Adelaide Declaration*, 3.

bringing Indigenous communities of origin to the space of archives to promote and express their cultural heritage.

More recently, the Response to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Taskforce, compiled by the Steering Committee on Canada's Archives, was published in 2022. This document provides an example of a proposed framework in which archival institutions can support and promote Indigenous cultural heritage within the Canadian archival context. The report is the result of collaborative work amongst the various archival and Indigenous contributors who comprised the steering committee and identifies seven main objectives and strategies. Additionally, it serves as one of the most recent examples for how archival communities are responding to the question of Indigenous involvement in archives and reflecting on aspects of reconciliation.

The impetus for the formation of the steering committee emerged from the TRC's Call to Action #70, which identified the need for support from the Canadian government to fund collaborative efforts between Canada's Indigenous peoples and the Canadian Association of Archivists in order to undertake a critical analysis of archival policies in Canada and best practices. The resulting document was formulated by representatives from the Canadian Council of Archives, the Association of Canadian Archivists, Library and Archives Canada, l'Association des archivists du Quebec, and the Council of Provincial and Territorial Archivists and attempts to propose practical solutions for how archives across the country can begin to "redress its colonial legacy."[37]

[37] The Steering Committee on Canada's Archives, *Reconciliation Framework- The Response to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Taskforce*, (2022), https://archives2026.files.wordpress.com/2022/02/reconciliationframeworkreport_en.pdf, 19.

Similar to the characterization of Indigenous knowledge outlined in the Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration, the Draft Report on the Response to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Taskforce identifies collaborative work with Indigenous peoples as one of the document's guiding principles. Engagement with communities is one of the text's recognized means of revitalizing "history, memory, language, governance systems, legal systems and cultural identities."[38] The third listed objective of 'Professional Practice' describes how the archival community at present must acknowledge the dissonance between the established colonial roots of archives that has created a subsequent need to train archival professionals in improving the contextualization of archival records where Indigenous subject matter is concerned. This is described as a need to recognize the lack of and need for the insertion of Indigenous perspectives in the contextualization of their collections and the subsequent exclusion of oral histories possessed by communities of origin and their Knowledge Keepers.[39]

In the fourth listed strategy pertaining to the objective of professional practice, public education plays an integral role in the promotion of Indigenous cultural and historical perspectives. Here there is an expressed need to reimagine archives within Canada to include Indigenous ways of knowing by implementing new strategies within the conceptual space of archives and assigning safe spaces within this framework for increased cross-cultural exchange. One designated approach for furthering this endeavour is providing space for storytelling activities.[40] While this is certainly a welcome suggestion in my opinion and would be considered a vast improvement to the ways in which archival spaces are currently underutilized in promoting Indigenous perspectives, the report falls short in this section of specifically declaring

[38] The Steering Committee on Canada's Archives, *Reconciliation Framework*, 34.
[39] The Steering Committee on Canada's Archives, *Reconciliation Framework*, 38.
[40] The Steering Committee on Canada's Archives, *Reconciliation Framework*, 39.

these activities within the archival framework as recognized records or collections unto themselves.

In later sections of the response concerning objectives in education, this distinction between archival conceptions of cultural heritage and Indigenous perspectives is further distinguished as being two separate, mutually exclusive concepts. The document defines strategies for the integration of these different perspectives into the curricula of archival studies programs saying that education aimed at training new professionals in the field can,

> …include relevant discourse from libraries, museums, galleries, and other heritage institutions. The Traditional Knowledge, cultural expressions, and documented heritage of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis governments and communities are often stewarded collectively and holistically rather than within a distinct discipline or within a space solely dedicated for use as an archives, library, museum, or gallery. While Traditional Knowledge and knowledge-sharing practices fall under the guidance and care of a community's Elders, documented heritage is often stewarded by a community's heritage or cultural branch or by a natural resources office.[41]

The assertion that Indigenous cultural heritage both tangible and intangible is collectively stewarded by communities and safeguarded by Elders, and that documentary heritage is often shared in alternative community spaces such as centres and offices, provides a compelling insight into how and where cultural heritage exists within the space and context of the Indigenous community. This characterization, however, still squarely places the space of Indigenous cultural heritage with the Indigenous community and outside the structure of the archival institutional framework, rather than advocating for a model which respects and recognizes the autonomy and integrity of the former while proposing the promotion of integration within the latter.

---

[41] The Steering Committee on Canada's Archives, *Reconciliation Framework*, 59.

Suggesting a Paradigm That Empowers Embodied Records: The *Witness Blanket* as Case Study

The biggest challenge of creating space within the archival institution for embodied records is arguably how these records are perceived. In order to confront archival and public perspectives of embodied records we must first consider how these records are accepted in an academic forum. Although promoting these records in the space of archival institutions as displays of public interest is one way in which we can begin to address the stigma attached to non-physical records, we must go further as an academic and archival community in treating these experiential records with the same degree of legitimacy and validity as we do their tangible counterparts.

Steps in achieving this, which archival institutions can take, can be implemented by institutions and within the work plans of archivists today. In order to accomplish this we must first consider what actions are employed in the care, stewardship, and preservation of records within the physical archival paradigm. For example, how do we perform the core archival functions demanded in the care of physical records, which include Records Acquisition and Appraisal, Arrangement and Description, Preservation, Outreach and Advocacy? Secondly, we must then consider how to apply the theories of community archives, and Indigenous-led approaches to these core archival functions. Subsequently we must ask what we can learn from the Indigenous-centred, culturally proficient programming already available in our academic institutions such as universities and colleges and how that might by applied to the lens of archives. In doing so, we can begin to reframe these tools and apply them to the act of incorporating the embodied record into the archival institution.

The point of this model is not to suggest that Indigenous cultures throughout Canada use exclusively embodied forms of recording their histories such as oral traditions and ceremony. The emphasis on embodied records therefore should not negate the presence or the importance of written systems and physical items developed by various cultures, that have captured the historic narratives of their Indigenous creators. While I acknowledge that these forms of historic records exist within the Indigenous context as well, the archival process has already developed well-established traditions of preserving textual and physical records as these are the records which archives were originally established to protect and promote.

While these processes for documenting physical records are also currently being reassessed in order to adequately capture and reflect more culturally sensitive means of working with Indigenous records through the implementation of collaborative methods as discussed in previous chapters, we must also recognize that no such processes currently exist within the Canadian archival context for working with embodied records. This gap is the impetus for suggesting a new archival model which resituates embodied records as equally relevant within the archival framework as a means of promoting reconciliation through mutually respectful representation. Scholars like Jeannette Bastian have begun to explore the potential within this framework. She states,

> For archivists likewise engaged in documenting post-colonial and other communities, expanding the definitions of what an archive could be, and suggesting new ways of seeing 'records', offers the potential of creatively representing and preserving the cultural expressions of these communities.[42]

[42] Jeannette Bastian, "'Play Mas': Carnival in the Archives and the Archives in Carnival: Records and Community Identity in the US Virgin Islands," *Archival Science* 9, no. 1–2 (2009): 113.

As an example of how institutional frameworks have been slow to recognize the place of embodied records, however, within the normative practices of cultural preservation we can again observe the UNESCO ICH Declaration of 2003. The Declaration's late formulation and adoption, occurring several decades after that which addressed physical cultural heritage is reflective of this tradition and parallels the tendencies of heritage institutions in a broader sense to overlook intangible cultural heritage. The UNESCO Declaration itself observes this omission:

> Noting the far-reaching impact of the activities of UNESCO in establishing normative instruments for the protection of the cultural heritage, in particular the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 1972, Noting further that no binding multilateral instrument as yet exists for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, Considering that existing international agreements, recommendations and resolutions concerning the cultural and natural heritage need to be effectively enriched and supplemented by means of new provisions relating to the intangible cultural heritage…[43]

The exclusion of these record types among the broader archival community and amongst Canada's institutions is counterintuitive when we reflect on prior discussions regarding reconciliation. As we have acknowledged previously, formulating a framework which demonstrates reconciliation as depicted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is the decided strategy for addressing Indigenous archival content in Canada in this thesis. This is due to the underlying and unavoidable legacy of human rights violations which have characterized Indigenous relationships with Canadian institutions including archival ones, thus far.

Located as such, we must accept that Indigenous peoples of Canada navigate the roles of survivors, survivor communities and victims of human rights abuses and that theories pertaining to these areas are therefore applicable and necessary for reframing Indigenous archival materials.

---

[43] UNESCO, *Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 1.

Within this framework scholars such as Michelle Caswell have argued for "The incorporation of community archives principles into human rights work [which] rightfully positions survivors of abuse at the center of archival theory and practice"[44] By centering survivors and survivor communities within archival theory, Caswell suggests that community-based frameworks are ones which favour local approaches to confronting and understanding the past, stating that, "Survivors should maintain control over the decision-making processes related to records documenting their abuse, regardless of the nature of the institution—intergovernmental, governmental, or non governmental—that maintains custody over such records"[45] Further to this, I would postulate that not only when considering records pertaining to human rights abuses specifically, but also those pertaining to Indigenous communities more generally, we must take a 'survivor centred' and consequently an 'Indigenous centred' approach to record stewardship, control and representation. It is therefore imperative that records adequately reflect the modes of historical documentation assumed by their communities of origin.

Primarily, we must consider the fact that Canadian archives exist within the context of trauma, for their part in recording Indigenous communities and their histories. Notably, trauma theorist Cathy Caruth considers the implications of expressing trauma through performative means rather than descriptive or representative ones. Her notions on trauma provide meaningful context for evaluating Indigenous archival representation and creating a case for promoting embodied records more widely.[46]

---

[44] Caswell, "Survivor-Centered," 308.
[45] Caswell, "Survivor-Centered," 308.
[46] Cathy Caruth, Romain Pasquer Brochard, and Ben Tam, "Who Speaks from the Site Of Trauma?': An Interview with Cathy Caruth," *Diacritics* 47, no. 2 (2019): 48–71.

To unpack this theory, a useful example of historic representation which intersects several aspects of physical as well as performative and interactive characteristics can be found in the *Witness Blanket*. The *Witness Blanket* is a large-scale artwork which remains on display at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, however full-sized reproductions of the *Witness Blanket* also travel across Canada periodically. Although it is characterized as a contemporary piece of Indigenous art created by Kwakwaka'wakw and Coast Salish artist Carey Newman, the various facets of the blanket can arguably be thought of as an example of both a collective archive of past objects as well as an embodied record consisting of performative and interactive features. Similarly, Jeannette Bastian has argued the interpretation of Carnival in the Caribbean islands started as a counter-narrative of colonialism by enslaved and freed Africans. Carnival can be considered a cultural archive through an "Embodied continuum of a local culture through a variety of non-traditional records that transmit genealogies, folkways, food customs, and histories."[47] The *Witness Blanket* can be viewed as a cultural archive in many of the same ways through not only its collection and assemblage of items, but through the performative aspect of the audience it draws as well the practices observed in its overall care and stewardship.

Inspired by the imagery of a woven blanket, the *Witness Blanket* was constructed from hundreds of items reclaimed from various sites of significance and trauma in the historic narrative of Canada's Indigenous peoples. The items were collected from various residential schools, churches, government buildings and traditional and cultural structures such as friendship centres and band offices across Canada.[48]

---

[47] Bastian, "Play Mas," 113.

[48] "The Witness Blanket," Canadian Museum for Human Rights, accessed May 1, 2021, http://witnessblanket.ca/#!/project/.

The symbolism behind the chosen form of this art piece is that the blanket is considered synonymous with the concept of protection. Newman explains, "For many of us, blankets identify who we are and where we're from – we wear them in ceremony and give them as gifts. Blankets protect our young and comfort our elders.*"*[49] During the creation and assemblage of this piece of art, Newman and his team travelled over 200,000 kilometres across the country to acquire items and learn the stories attributed to those items. The artwork's construction entailed visiting 77 communities and meeting over 10,000 people. In the end they incorporated over a thousand objects into the care and construction of the *Witness Blanket*.

A diverse array of items that are representative of the residential school experience and significant in different ways to individual survivors make up the body of this piece. The *Witness Blanket* contains objects such as doors, windows, vents, and bricks of schools as well as educational items like rusted protractors, pieces of piano keys, hockey equipment, prayer books, textbooks, school photographs, newspaper clippings, report cards, diplomas and Christian religious icons. It also contains cultural and ceremonial items like sweetgrass braids, medicines like sage and cedar, Metis sashes, painted drums and beaded moccasins representative of the diverse Indigenous cultures which were impacted by the residential school system. The process for the selection of items entailed visiting abandoned residential schools with survivors and having them pick out the items that would be contributed to the "blanket." In this way, the

[49] "Stories- Picking up the Pieces: The Making of the Witness Blanket," Canadian Museum for Human Rights, accessed May 1, 2021, https://humanrights.ca/story/picking-up-the-pieces-the-making-of-the-witness-blanket.

process involved extensive community engagement, and specific acts of healing through ceremony while collecting the objects.[50]

The artist situates his responsibility in its assemblage, explaining,

> As a carver I have been taught to respect the materials I use, a concept imbedded within the traditional teachings of respecting the past, honouring the present and taking responsibility for the future… But as residential school Survivors and community members entrusted me with their personal keepsakes and memories, I could see that by changing my medium from raw material to gathered objects, and my process from solitary carving to community engaged assemblage, I had taken on a different responsibility… I was responsible to each of the multiple stories held within each piece gathered, to the people who entrusted them to me, and also to the collective truth that together they would represent.[51]

The distinction of community involvement and its impact on the perspective not only of the artist's role but of what the materials themselves become embodied representations of, is an important one to consider as we explore embodied records in their various forms. As Newman reflects on his changed role within the context of carver to steward, archivists can also reflect on what the changing nature of the record might mean for them as records professionals. Similarly, we can consider how aspects of community collaboration subsequently influence a broader revisioning of historical narratives.

Carey Newman reflects the spirit of how objects are viewed in this holistic conceptual framework, explaining, "My role as an artist is to bear witness. The pieces themselves are witnesses. The people giving us the pieces are witnesses, and at some level we all are – or we

---

[50] "The Witness Blanket."

[51] Carey Newman, "Changing Relationships," in *Promoting and Protecting the Arts and Cultural Expressions of Indigenous Peoples: A Compendium of Experiences and Actions*, ed. Tony Belcourt, Heather Igloliorte, and Dylan Robinson (PCH, 2021), 63-64.

should all be – witnesses."[52] This exemplifies how these objects are conceived of as having their own agency by acting as a witness to the things which unfolded in residential schools as pieces of the buildings and the environment.

The *Witness Blanket* items are not just imbued with meaning and agency; they're also imbedded with trauma because they were once the sites of traumatic experience. Significantly, Caruth also speaks about this performative act of bearing witness as a way to unpack trauma. She discusses how trauma and traumatic experience often exist beyond the confines or boundaries of language and words and for this reason are better expressed or processed through the movement/art experience. This is a process which mirrors the construction of the *Witness Blanket* if we consider how the artist integrates the meaning of individual objects into a much larger woven narrative and in turn considers the viewers of the piece, the audience, as participants who continue the cyclical act of "witnessing."

Newman talks about how in the Salish tradition they ask people to stand and speak about what they have witnessed and the act of listening and integrating the truth into our own individual lives and narratives becomes this act of living remembrance. Conversely Caruth speaks about how giving speech to witnessing trauma is not always possible for the traumatized. These two theories or traditions are not irreconcilable and in fact complement each other. In the context of the *Witness Blanket*, we can see the interactive process of experiencing a piece of history in the way the artist has framed it to be a meta-expression of what Cathy Caruth explores as physical repetition. The trauma of the residential school experience is re-experienced by the

[52] "The Witness Blanket."

audience's participation and thus a cyclical act of remembrance ensues. Therefore, if we observe this installation in those terms, the role of the audience in the display of the *Witness Blanket* is also an integral performative component and an embodied record in its own right. Representative of the collective and nationwide processing of residential school trauma and healing, the audience symbolizes an entity which serves as its own embodied record of sorts.

Moreover, the agreement the museum and artist made in cooperation regarding the stewardship and conservation efforts around the blanket is also unique for its integration of Indigenous protocols and beliefs. As Newman explains, when drafting the agreement, he reflected heavily on his traditions rather than treating it as a transactional relationship. Both artist and museum were seen as "partners in stewardship," as it was agreed that "all rights rest with the Blanket." Newman explained that by shifting the discussion and language from rights to responsibilities, "the negotiation became less positional and… developed a collaborative method for making decisions in the best interest of the artwork and the stories it carries."[53]

Interestingly, Newman also reflects on the shortcomings of committing the formal stewardship agreement to a static format such as a textual contract, saying, "Once written on paper, language has a way of changing its meaning when read by a different person, in a different context or time."[54] In order to address concerns regarding potential misinterpretations of the forthcoming stewardship agreement, Newman drew on the traditions of oral storytelling and ceremony. Concurrently, as the agreement was being drafted in writing it was decided that it be enacted and activated through traditional ceremony as well. The agreement as a whole would

[53] Newman, "Changing Relationships," 64.
[54] Newman, "Changing Relationships," 65.

be formed by both written and oral components, neither of which would exist without the other, thereby integrating western and Indigneous frameworks. As Newman recounts,

> On October 16th, 2019 in a Big house named Kumugwe on the K'omoks First Nation, a ceremony was held to uplift the stewardship agreement between me and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. The words spoken there… were reflected upon by witnesses called. We Danced, we feasted, and together we now share the responsibility of looking after the *Witness Blanket*.[55]

The Witness *Blanket* is a useful example of Indigenous histories represented within the setting of a heritage institution that uses Indigenous-led solutions, community engagement and the principles of Indigenous ownership to present aspects of embodied records in different possible variations. It does this as a means of confronting traumatic historic memories by putting Indigenous survivors at the forefront of this representation and simultaneously challenges notions that documentary records are merely physical depictions, or merely imbedded in the past. Records can instead be a delicate and intricate interaction between their representations, whether they be physical or embodied, that are grounded in the past as well as the current individuals and communities which these narratives originate from. Conversely, in the context of the negotiations to discern a stewardship arrangement for the Blanket, committing information to static format was seen as leaving the integrity of the intentions open for potential misinterpretation. In this sense, orality and ceremony were viewed as complimentary parts of the agreement that represented Indigenous ways of knowing, remembering and recording that captured and secured the intent of agreement. The Blanket's agreement, therefore, exists as an excellent example of, and case for the consideration of orality and ceremony in the context of the archival institution.

---

[55] Newman, "Changing Relationships," 65.

This is a phenomenon which is similarly explored by scholars such as Jeannette Bastian. Although she explores the connections between, "collective memory, records, community and identity," represented through the act of cyclical celebrations, her work on the cultural archive can arguably be applied to a diverse range of expressions like that of the Blanket. She postulates that if,

> … an annual celebration can be considered as a longitudinal and complex cultural community expression, then it also can be seen dynamically as a living archive where the many events within the celebration constitute the numerous records comprising this expression. While some of these records may be the traditional fixed variety, others may be mobile, transient, ephemeral—dances, oral performances, costumes, folklore—but all belong, have a place and may be completely comprehended within a coherent past and present understanding of the social dynamic in which the celebration resides. The celebration and the community are one.[56]

We may then similarly consider Indigenous orality and ceremony within the context of the cultural archive paradigm. While not necessarily possessing the analogous setting of annual celebration, the activities which represent the cultural archive can be reflected through an array of parallel expressions. The cultural archive therefore provides a compelling intellectual framework within archival studies through which we may connect the concepts of the archive, the archival institution and the embodied record. What's more, aspects of the cultural archive can be fluid or permanently fixed in nature.

[56] Bastian, "Play Mas," 122.

Weaving it Together: The Core Archival Functions as they Relate to the Embodied Records Model

Let us now circle back to the original query posed and consider how we begin to apply the modes of thinking proposed by Indigenous representations of history, the institutional methodologies of archival theory and national and international frameworks of previous chapters to the core archival functions of Records Acquisition and Appraisal, Arrangement and Description, Preservation and Outreach and Advocacy in considering how we implement embodied records. I would posit that critically we must invert these functions and place outreach and Indigenous community engagement at the forefront of all other activities in pursuit of achieving an archival paradigm which makes possible embodied records. Similar, to the construction of the *Witness Blanket*, which initiated numerous community-based relationships in the acquisition of its items, institutions must initiate relationships with Indigenous communities which enable the acquisition, appraisal, arrangement and description of embodied records while employing Indigenous notions of ownership. Consequently, with community being placed as the focal point by which all other aspects of the archival functions are manifested, preservation becomes not about preserving a physical vessel or conduit for information, but about preserving the archive's institutional relationship to community.

Relationships with Indigenous communities must consequently be the basis for determining which embodied records to house or, more accurately, host in the context of institutional archives. They must also be the primary factor in determining how, when, where, and which historic narratives will be encompassed in embodied records and subsequently made available for public access. While institutions can offer archival spaces to facilitate the presentation of these records, they must do so in a way which does not impose or impede local

community autonomy or traditions. Conversely, institutions may consider themselves as taking an intermediary role between the public and researchers they serve, to communities of origin in granting access to embodied records whether they occur within the confines of the institutional space made available to communities or within community spaces themselves if this is preferred. Acquisition therefore does not take place in the traditional context of the archival institution wherein a collection is acquired by the archive assuming some degree of permanent residency within the institution itself. It instead takes place in the context of outreach and engagement and exists only insofar as the institution hosts the embodied records acting as a platform for access.

This concept is not unlike the idea of the Human Library, a non-profit organization which uses people as 'books' in order to promote discussions that challenge stereotypes. The notion of the human library consists of individual volunteers with lived experience regarding specific topics hosting events which serve as a platform for educational discussions.[57] Where the concept of embodied records diverges critically, however, lies in the function of the cultural community of origin. While the human library relies on volunteers to offer knowledge as living receptacles in a variety of environments from conferences to libraries to schools, the concept of embodied records relies on Indigenous communities to dictate the content and conduit of the living record. Whether hosted in the archival space or the community space, the archival institution serves as the mere platform by which the record is accommodated. Appraisal takes place in the context of the archival institution by creating space for the record and by working with the community. Subsequently, appraisal takes place in the context of the community through their selection and

[57] "Unjudge Someone," The Human Library Organization, accessed on January 10, 2023, https://humanlibrary.org/.

decision of the record to be embodied whether that be through orality, ceremony or other performative means.

Further to this end, institutions must consider all elements of the description and arrangement of embodied records to be determined by Indigenous communities. This means that individual communities of origin would determine the standards for description which instruct their discoverability as well as their citation as information resources in an academic context. Archivists and institutions must then work in cooperation with the relevant communities to ensure their records are reflected appropriately. For some, this may mean working within the context of rules of archival description to create descriptions discoverable in a searchable interface where the hierarchical arrangement structure is maintained in some semblance. Perhaps the item level is the traditional story imparted, the extent is the individual Knowledge Keeper, the higher-level description is the community of origin or the nation more broadly speaking. For others, this might mean throwing out standards of archival description altogether and that the embodied record's description is not captured in a traditional archival environment at all but that instead the institution validates the expression as an embodied record through supporting partnership with the community of origin through some other means. This may be done by supporting the community in their endeavour to recreate the cultural expression in a number of ways such as financial or promotional. In both instances of the spectrum of acknowledgement of embodied records through description however, the record is discoverable in some way for the enhancement of public or community knowledge, understanding and cultural acceptance and the archival institution serves as the broader public's point of access.

In terms of discovery, different communities will likely have different standards for how they would like their embodied records to be described which are no doubt informed by various

linguistic, cultural and local factors unique to that group. For example, certain aspects of orality and ceremony are only made available to certain genders or during certain times of the year or season. These traditions must still be maintained and respected within the paradigm of the institutional embodied record. In order for them to truly be an expression of reconciliation within our country's archival institutional frameworks, however, it must be accessible to be shared with a larger audience outside of the community of origin, but within the confines of and respecting those cultural protocols engrained in the record's origin. In order to truly embrace Indigenous ways of knowing as equal and mutually respected, embodied records must be promoted to a broader Canadian audience as a means of educating the general public on their importance.

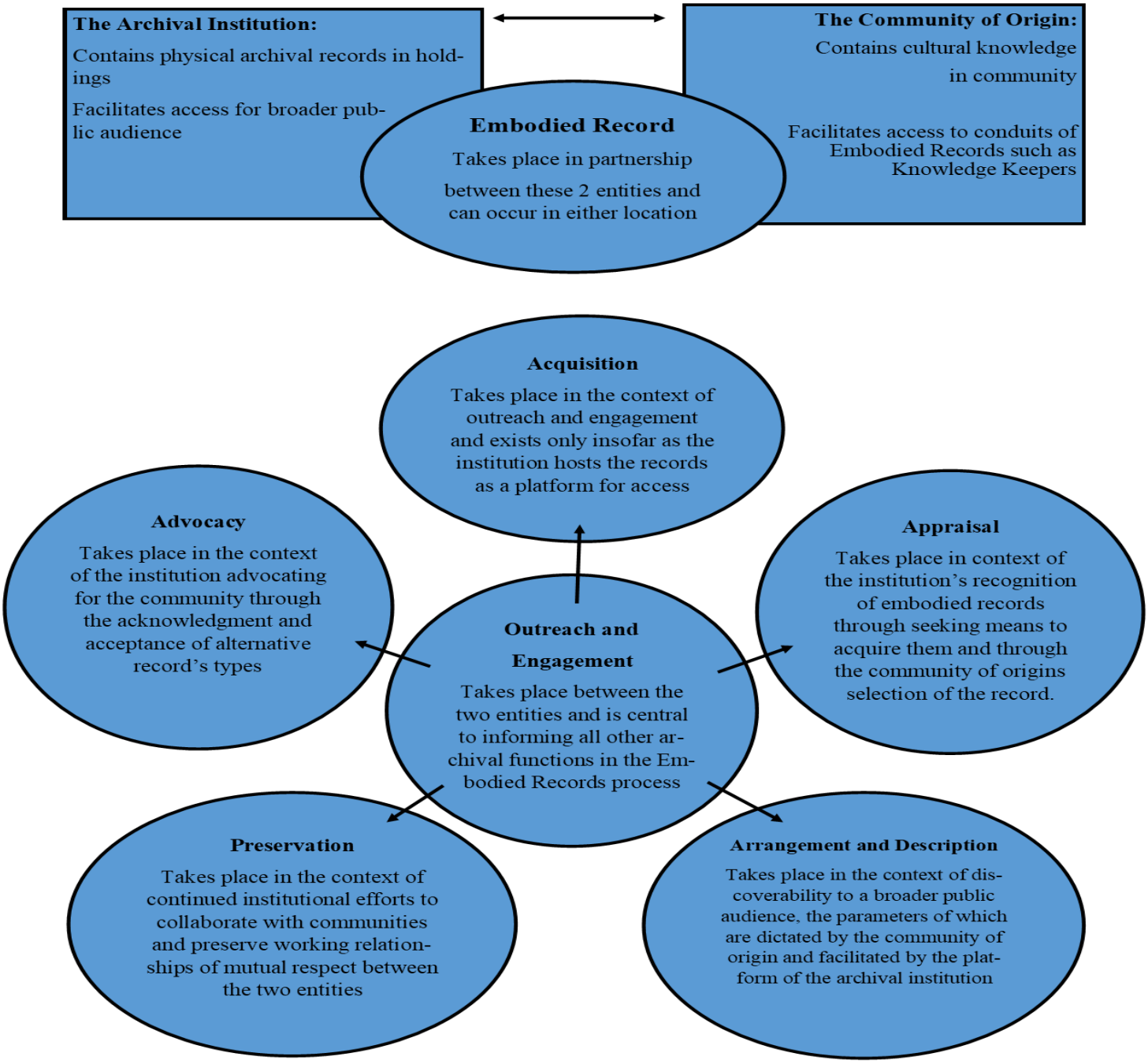
Preservation exists in the context of preserving not a physical record but instead of preserving and maintaining relationships between the archival institution and the community of origin. Therefore, Canadian archival institutions must implement appropriate strategies within the work plans of archivists that instruct how to facilitate community informed engagement to this end. This requires institutional apparatus which would enable archival professionals proficiency training in navigating and maintaining respectful relationships with Indigenous communities.[58] In some instances, this may require the re-education of workplace staff who require introduction to alternative ways of knowing from the preferred or established traditions of the conventional archival paradigm. In others, this may require the revision of institutional policies which privilege western frameworks such as individual or institutional ownership, and

[58] It should be noted that the assumption is not that all archival professionals are non-Indigenous. While Indigenous archivists certainly represent a minority of the work force, both non Indigenous and Indigenous archivists alike can benefit from cultural proficiency training. When I write about the archival profession, I do so as a whole and do not distinguish between Indigenous and non Indigenous professionals because as archivists we still exist in an environment and are still integrated into the systemic processes that relegate embodied records to the margins.

record permanency in favour of the introduction of entirely new policies which honor Indigenous and community-based constructions and fluidity.

Finally, Advocacy can and does take place in the context of archival institutions advocating for Indigenous communities when they begin to accommodate the embodied records of Indigenous communities into their institutional frameworks. The simple act of recognition through accommodation and integration of the embodied record into the archival record, whether this be storytelling of oral histories, oral traditions in their authentic embodied format, or ceremonies is one that advocates for mutual respect of alternative cultural expressions of history and thus the histories of Indigenous peoples themselves.

Diagram: Embodied Records Model for Archival Institutions



Chapter 3 Conclusion

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Reports recognize reconciliation is a complex concept, the notion of which varies depending on the individual, community and nation. I have chosen to tie my model of reconciliation in archives, however, to the characterization of reconciliation as one which promote mutual respect between two entities. Furthermore, several national and international documents provide frameworks for consideration of how archival institutions can navigate their work with Indigenous communities. These documents offer insights into the obligation of archival institutions to Indigenous peoples, and the role of embodied expressions in the Indigenous community. Connecting these two concepts, which are typically distinguished as separate notions, seems like a natural progression that can be accomplished through the adoption of the embodied records model. In working towards the goals of integrating the concept of the embodied record into the core archival functions, archivists and archival institutions can therefore take meaningful steps towards reconciliation.

Ending the Narrative: Coming Full Circle

Orality, Storytelling and Ceremony are distinct and integral expressions of history imbedded in many Indigenous cultures, including my own. As a child, I was captivated by my father's stories of growing up in the bush, riding horses, hunting and hilarity. As I began my career in research I continued to seek out stories from Elders and Knowledge Keepers in my region with a specific reverence for the historic knowledge they possessed. As I continued through out my academic career, however, I became increasingly aware that there was a significant difference from my growing up in how expressions of orality and ceremony were traditionally perceived in the scholarly field and by the broader public.

Canadian archival institutions have long been contributors to this narrative which dispels the legitimacy of embodied expressions and therefore the communities which lay claim to these histories. In recent years, archival institutions have engaged in collaborative work with source communities as a means of appropriately contextualizing their records regarding Indigenous peoples and as attempts towards reconciliation. National and international frameworks likewise provide opportunity for archival institutions to navigate their relationship with, and obligation to, Indigenous communities.

If we are to address reconciliation within the archive, however, we must first address the the very way history is captured in our public memory institutions. We can not have reconciliation, characterized by mutual respect, where there is a staggering lack of mutual reflections of history.

I cannot dictate this process for any institution or what it might look like. I only want to point out that it needs to take place and provide a conceptual framework in which it may happen. How institutions choose to commit to this work of recognition and integration of embodied records is part of their process of reconciliation, one that they must own, one that I believe has the power to transform public opinion, validate the marginalized histories of Indigenous peoples and support orality and ceremony as an enduring form of history for subsequent generations in Canada.

Embodied records are integral to many Indigenous cultures, including mine. I hope to 'hear' them in our archival institutions someday soon. I hope to 'see' the fonds in which they'll 'live.'

Bibliography

Bak, Greg, Danielle Allard, and Shawna Ferris. “Knowledge Organization as Knowledge Creation: Surfacing Community Participation in Archival Arrangement and Description.” *Knowledge Organization* 46, no. 7 (2019): 502–21.

Bastian, Jeannette. “Flowers for Homestead: A Case Study in Archives and Collective Memory.” *The American Archivist* 72, no. 1 (2009): 113–32. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40294598.

———. “‘Play Mas’: Carnival in the Archives and the Archives in Carnival: Records and Community Identity in the US Virgin Islands.” *Archival Science* 9, no. 1–2 (2009): 113–25.

———. “The Records of Memory, the Archives of Identity: Celebrations, Texts and Archival Sensibilities.” *Archival Science* 13, no. 2–3 (2013): 121–31.

Boiteau, Jesse. “The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and the Pursuit of Archival Decolonization.” Master’s Thesis, University of Manitoba, 2017.

Canadian Museum for Human Rights. “Stories- Picking up the Pieces: The Making of the *Witness Blanket*,” Last modified 2020. Accessed May 1, 2021. https://humanrights.ca/story/picking-up-the-pieces-the-making-of-the-witness-blanket.

The Canadian Press. “Senate Approves Bill to Implement UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” June 16, 2021. https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/undrip-declaration-passes-senate-1.6068524.

Caruth, Cathy, Romain Pasquer Brochard, and Ben Tam. “Who Speaks from the Site Of Trauma?’: An Interview with Cathy Caruth.” *Diacritics* 47, no. 2 (2019): 48–71.

Caswell, Michelle. “Toward a Survivor-Centered Approach to Records Documenting Human Rights Abuse: Lessons from Community Archives.” *Archival Science* 14, no. 3–4 (2014): 307–22.

Chartrand, Delia. “Housing Our Histories, Creating Capacity.” *Signatures,* Spring/Summer, 2021.

———. “Linguistic Diversity in the Metis Nation,” In *Nations to Nations : Indigenous Voices at Library and Archives Canada*, 16-17. Gatineau, Quebec: Library and Archives Canada, 2021. Apple Books.

———. “Music of the Metis Nation,” In *Nations to Nations: Indigenous Voices at Library and Archives Canada*, 51-53. Gatineau, Quebec: Library and Archives Canada, 2021. Apple Books.

———. *Place of Our Own- Re-Examining the Colonial Paradigm of the Museum Structure by Empowering Northern Indigenous Artists.* Thompson, Manitoba: Canadian Research Institute for

the Advancement of Women, 2016. https://www.criaw-icref.ca/publications/a-place-of-our-own-re-examining-the-colonial-paradigm-of-the-museum-structure/.

Chartrand, Delia, and Chris Bignell. *'A Bit of Shame or Remorse May Go a Long Way': Exploring the Social Impact of Discriminatory Practises in Thompson, Manitoba.* Winnipeg: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2017. https://mra-mb.ca/publication/a-bit-of-shame-and-remorse-may-go-a-long-way-exploring-the-social-impact-of-discriminatory-practises-in-thompson-manitoba/.

Cook, Terry. "Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms." *Archival Science* 13, no. 2–3 (June 1, 2013): 95–120. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-012-9180-7.

———. "Total Archives." In *Encyclopedia of Archival Science*, 397–400. Roman & Littlefield, 2015.

Eveleigh, A. "Crowding out the Archivist? Locating Crowdsourcing within the Broader Landscape of Participatory Archives." In *Crowdsourcing our Cultural Heritage*, edited by Mia Ridge, London: Routledge, 2014. http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1429960/.

Eveleigh, Alexandra. "Participatory Archives." In *Currents in Archival Thinking*, edited by Heather MacNeil and Terry Eastwood, 2nd ed., 299–326. Westport, 2017.

Expert Group on Indigenous Matters. *Tandanya- Adelaide Declaration. International Council on Archives*, 2019. https://www.archivists.org.au/documents/item/1545.

Farrell Racette, Sherry. "Pieces Left Along the Trail: Material Culture Histories and Indigenous Studies." In *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies*, edited by Chris Andersen and Jean M. O'Brien. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2016.

Folklore Studies Association of Canada. "Canadian Declaration for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage." *In Ethnologies.* 2017. Accessed May 1, 2021. https://www.acef-fsac.ulaval.ca/en/about/canadian-declaration-safeguarding-intangible-cultural-heritage.

Frechette, Robert. "Municipalities at the Forefront: Protecting Intangible Cultural Heritage." *Canadian Commission for UNESCO*, December 10, 2019. Accessed March 8, 2023. https://en.ccunesco.ca/blog/2019/12/municipalities-at-the-forefront-protecting-intangible-cultural-heritage.

Gaudet, Janice Cindy. "Keeoukaywin: The Visiting Way - Fostering an Indigenous Research Methodology." *Aboriginal Policy Studies* 7, no. 2 (2019).

Ghaddar, J.J. "The Spectre in the Archive: Truth, Reconciliation, and Indigenous Archival Memory." *Archivaria* 82, no. 1 (December 2016): 3–26.

———. “Total Archives for Land, Law and Sovereignty in Settler Canada.” *Archival Science* 21, no. 1 (2021): 59–82.

Ghostkeeper, Elmer. “Spirit Gifting: The Concept of Spiritual Exchange.” MA Thesis, University of Alberta, 1995.

Haight, Michael, Anabel Quan-Haase, and Bradley A Corbett. “Revisiting the Digital Divide in Canada: The Impact of Demographic Factors on Access to the Internet, Level of Online Activity, and Social Networking Site Usage.” *Information, communication & society* 17, no. 4 (2014): 503–519.

Hall, Stewart. “Whose Heritage? Un-Settling ‘The Heritage’, Re-Imagining the Post-Nation.” In *The Politics of Heritage: The Legacies of Race*, edited by Jo Littler and Roshi Naidoo, 3–13. London: Routledge, 2005.

International Council on Archives/ Conseil International des Archives. *Universal Declaration on Archives - UDA | International Council on Archives*, November 11, 2011. https://www.ica.org/en/universal-declaration-archives.

Ka-Nipitehtew, Jim, Freda Ahenakew, and H.C. Wolfart. Counselling Speeches of Jim Ka-Nipitehtew. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2007.

Laine, Edward P. “‘Kallista Perintöä–Precious Legacy!’: Finnish-Canadian Archives, 1882-1985.” *Archivaria* 22, no. 22 (January 1, 1986): 75–94. http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/article/download/11303/12243.

Lett, Stephanie. “The Arthur H. Tweedle Collection, Project Naming, and Hidden Stories of Colonialism.” *Past Imperfect* 20 no.1 (October 20, 2017):84-85. https://doi.org/10.21971/p71q17.

Library and Archives Canada. “Aboriginal Heritage- Project Naming.” Accessed June 1, 2021. https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/project-naming/Pages/introduction.aspx.

———. “Indigenous Documentary Heritage Initiatives,” Accessed May 15, 2023. https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/corporate/about-us/strategies-initiatives/indigenous-documentary-heritage-initiatives/Pages/indigenous-documentary-heritage-initiatives.aspx.

———. *Indigenous Heritage Action Plan*. (Gatineau: Library and Archives Canada, April 2019). https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/initiatives/Documents/indigenous-heritage-action-plan.pdf.

Manitoba Métis Federation. “Beadwork,” Accessed May 1st, 2021. https://www.mmf.mb.ca/mm-beadwork.

Mason, Ronald J. “On Memory.” In *Inconstant Companions : Archaeology and North American Indian Oral Traditions*. University of Alabama Press, 2007.

Millar, Laura. “Discharging Our Debt: The Evolution of the Total Archives Concept in English Canada.*” Archivaria* 46 (January 1, 1998): 103–46.

Nabakov, Peter. “Present Memories Past History.” In *The American Indian and the Problem of History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Newman, Carey. “Changing Relationships.” In *Promoting and Protecting the Arts and Cultural Expressions of Indigenous Peoples: A Compendium of Experiences and Actions*, edited by Tony Belcourt, Heather Igloliorte, and Dylan Robinson, 63–66. PCH, 2021.

O’Brien, Jean M. “Historical Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies, Touching on the Past, Looking to the Future.” In *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies*, edited by Chris Anderson and Jean O’Brien, London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2016.

Pocius, Gerald L. “The Government of Canada and Intangible Cultural Heritage: An Excursion into Federal Domestic Policies and the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention.” *Ethnologies* 36, no. 1–2 (2014): 63–92. https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1037600ar.

Rydz, Michelle and James Gorton, “The Names and Knowledge Initiative- How the Names and Knowledge Initiative is helping to reveal Indigenous peoples, places, and understandings in the Hudson’s Bay Company Archives,” *Canada’s History*, Sept. 14, 2020, https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/first-nations-inuit-metis/the-names-and-knowledge-initiative.

Scovazzi, Tulio, and Laura Westra. “The Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage According to the 2003 UNESCO Convention: The Case of First Nations of Canada.” *Inter Gentes* 1, no. 2 (2017): 24–44.

Sheffield, Rebecka. “Community Archives.” In *Currents of Archival Thinking*, edited by Heather MacNeil and Terry Eastwood, 2nd ed., 350–76. Westport, 2017.

Simpson, Audra, and Andrea Smith. “Introduction.” In *Theorizing Native Studies*, edited by Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith, 1–30. London, Durham: Duke University Press, 2014. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1220pr6.4.

Sisson, Jonathon. “A Conceptual Framework for Dealing with the Past: A Holistic Approach to Dealing with the Past.” *Politorbis* 50, no. 3 (2010).

Smith, Laurajane. “The Discourse of Heritage.” In *Uses of Heritage*. Routledge, 2006.

Smith, Wilfred I. “‘Total Archives’: The Canadian Experience.” In *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance*, edited by Tom Nesmith, 133–50. Metuchen, N.J. & London: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1993.

Taylor, Hugh. “The Collective Memory: Archives and Libraries as Heritage.” *Archivaria* 15 (1982): 118–30.

The Steering Committee on Canada’s Archives. *Reconciliation Framework- The Response to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Taskforce,* 2022. https://archives2026.files.wordpress.com/2022/02/reconciliationframeworkreport_en.pdf.

Canadian Museum for Human Rights. “The *Witness Blanket*.” Accessed May 1, 2021. http://witnessblanket.ca/#!/project/.

The Human Library Organization. “Unjudge Someone.” Accessed January 10, 2023. https://humanlibrary.org/.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Calls to Action.* Winnipeg: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2015. https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Canada’s Residential Schools: Reconciliation: The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Volume 6.* McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015. https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Volume_6_Reconciliation_English_Web.pdf.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.* Winnipeg: National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2015. https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf.

UNESCO, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.* Paris, October 17, 2003. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001325/132540e.pdf.

United Nations. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.* September 13, 2007. https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf.

———. *Updated Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity*. February 8, 2005. Accessed May 1, 2021. http://www.derechos.org/nizkor/impu/principles.html.

University College of the North. “Community-Based Services Regional Centres Web Page.” Accessed November 19, 2019. https://www.ucn.ca/sites/commservices/regionalcentres/Pages/Regional-Centres.aspx.

———. “Current Students- Aboriginal Centre Web Page.” Accessed November 20, 2019. https://www.ucn.ca/sites/elders/Pages/Elders.aspx.

———. “Kiskinwamakewin Center - University College of the North,” Accessed November 30, 2022. https://ucn.ca/ininiwi-kiskinwamakewin-centre/.

University of Manitoba. “Culture and Protocol | Indigenous | University of Manitoba.” Accessed June 1, 2022. https://umanitoba.ca/indigenous/culture-and-protocol.

———. “Fireside Chats.” Accessed June 1, 2022. https://eventscalendar.umanitoba.ca/site/indigenous/event/fireside-chats-12/.

———. “Land and Water: Indigenous Land-Based Education | University of Manitoba,” Accessed May 15, 2023. https://umanitoba.ca/community-engaged-learning/land-and-water.

Wheeler, Winona. “Cree Intellectual Traditions in History.” In *The West and Beyond: New Perspectives on an Imagined Region*, edited by Alvin Finkler, Sarah Carter, and Peter Forna. Edmonton: AU Press, 2010.

———. “Narrative Wisps of the Ochekiwi Sipi Past: A Journey in Recovering Collective Memories.” In *The Canadian Oral History Reader*, edited by Alexander Freund, Kristina R. Llewellyn, and Nolan Reilly. McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015.

Withey, Kimberly Christen. “Sovereignty, Repatriation, and the Archival Imagination: Indigenous Curation and Display Practices.” *Collections* 11, no. 2 (2015): 115–38.