

## **Access to Culturally Sensitive Indigenous Materials in the Newberry Library Collections**

This document provides guidance in handling and making available unpublished culturally sensitive indigenous materials such as manuscripts, photographs, art works, and audio-visual materials in the Newberry Library collections. It aims to sustain the library's tradition of free and equal access to collections with respect for the desire of indigenous groups to protect materials created by them and materials created by others which depict their cultures.

This document is based on the following principles:

1. Some Newberry collection materials are culturally sensitive for indigenous communities.
2. Newberry collection materials are owned by and belong to the library.
3. The library is committed to preserving its collection materials and making them freely available for research in its reading rooms.
4. Some collection materials have been donated to the Newberry with restrictions which the library honors.
5. The Newberry does not impose new restrictions on (i.e., does not close) collection materials that have previously been open and available for research.
6. The Newberry welcomes input in determining what collection materials are culturally sensitive.
7. The Newberry treats all readers with respect and aims to provide a welcoming environment for research, consultation, and cultural practice.

Culturally sensitive indigenous materials are defined as “tangible or intangible property and knowledge which pertains to the distinct values, beliefs, and ways of living for a culture. It often includes property and knowledge that is not intended to be shared outside the community of origin.”<sup>1</sup> What is culturally sensitive to one community may not be sensitive to another, but in general such materials include “any indigenous material that depicts a tribal spiritual or religious place (e.g., kiva or Midewinn map), object (e.g., Iroquois masks), belief or activity (e.g., Cherokee

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<sup>1</sup> “Brief Glossary of Terms: Culturally sensitive,” In “*Protocols for Native American Archival Materials*,” April 9, 2007. <http://www2.nau.edu/libnap-p/protocols.html>

sacred formulae). A spiritual or religious activity may include prayers, ceremonies, burials, songs, dances, healings, and medicine rituals.”<sup>2</sup>

Certain Newberry collection items have been identified as culturally sensitive (See Appendix A). (See Appendix B for a fuller explanation of the process by which the library identifies culturally sensitive materials.) Culturally sensitive materials have been flagged for easy identification by Newberry staff, who will inform users of library policy.

The library will not display culturally sensitive materials on the Newberry website, exhibit them publicly, or show them to visiting classes or groups. Readers may continue to request and view culturally sensitive materials in the Newberry Library reading room. There are Newberry collection materials that are potentially culturally sensitive, but have not been formally identified. In selecting materials for exhibiting and showing to classes and general interest groups, the library will strive to omit items that could be classed as culturally sensitive according to the general definition above. Culturally sensitive materials may be digitized for preservation purposes.

The Newberry encourages researchers to respect the sensitive nature of certain materials, whether or not they have been formally identified by the library as culturally sensitive and whether or not they have been previously published. In addition to honoring copyright, privacy, and donor restrictions that may govern the use of library collections, readers should strive to consult relevant indigenous communities if they are considering reproducing or publishing culturally sensitive, or potentially culturally sensitive, materials.

Respect of indigenous cultural traditions and practices guides all aspects of library service. The Newberry consults and develops relationships with communities whose cultures are represented in the collections. It responds cooperatively to tribal requests to view materials or order copies, works to improve descriptive practices for indigenous cultural materials, and is sensitive and responsive to the needs of all readers and visitors.

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<sup>2</sup> “American Philosophical Society Protocols for the Treatment of Indigenous Materials,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 158, No. 4, December 2014, p. 415.

## Appendix A: List of Known Culturally Sensitive Materials

VAULT oversized Ayer Art box 2, folder 1 (watercolor by A. Grossman, “burial place of ‘Cadunce’”)

VAULT oversized Ayer Art box 2, folder 2 (reproduction of Dine/Navajo sandpainting)

[VAULT oversized Ayer Art Augur](#): Box 4, AP 2809; Box 7, AP 2852-2853; Box 10, AP 2925-2927 (photographs of burial sites)

[VAULT oversized Ayer Art Bodmer](#) (sketches of funeral scaffold)

[VAULT oversized Ayer Art Dorfeuille](#), no. 1, 2, 31, 32, 36 (drawings of human remains)

[VAULT oversized Ayer Art Grider](#), “Scrap Album” (depictions of Iroquois false face masks)

[VAULT oversized Ayer Art Hopi Kachinas](#) (drawings of kachinas and masks)

[VAULT oversized Ayer Art Mayer](#) (sketches of burials and dances)

[Ayer Modern MS Wellington](#) (slides of Assiniboine and Gros Ventres (Atsina) dances and ceremonies)

[Ayer Modern MS Weltfish](#) (descriptions of Pawnee ceremonies and dances)

[VAULT oversized Ayer Art Wuxpais](#) (drawings of Cheyenne ceremonies and implements)

Ayer Photographs, [Hillers Collection](#): Box 94, AP 2220 (Hopi dance); Box 95, AP 2251-2252 (Zuni clowns and dance)

[VAULT Ayer MS 366](#) (Herman Haupt drawings and descriptions of ceremonies, death and burial rituals)

[VAULT oversized Ayer MS 3229](#), Cherokee Bread manuscript (descriptions of sacred ceremonies and medicinal formulae)

## Appendix B: Procedures for Identifying Culturally Sensitive Materials

Readers and/or library staff who identify materials that may be culturally sensitive for indigenous people (following the principles, definition, and guidelines provided in this document) are encouraged to report the item(s) to any of the following staff members:

Martha Briggs  
Lloyd Lewis Curator of Modern Manuscripts  
[briggsm@newberry.org](mailto:briggsm@newberry.org)  
(312) 255-3554

Will Hansen  
Director of Reader Services and Curator of Americana  
[hansenw@newberry.org](mailto:hansenw@newberry.org)  
(312) 255-3527

Analú López  
Ayer Indigenous Studies Librarian-in-Residence  
[lopeza@newberry.org](mailto:lopeza@newberry.org)  
(312) 255-3521

Please include the call number, the particular pages or images that may be culturally sensitive, and the nature of the sensitivity.

When materials are deemed culturally sensitive, the following steps will be taken to identify them as such:

- A flag will be inserted in the item(s) notifying readers and staff that the item contains culturally sensitive content.
- Staff will notify the reader of the presence of the material when delivering it for their use in the Newberry's reading rooms.
- A note will be added to the catalog record for the item(s) stating: "Includes content identified by the Newberry as culturally sensitive to indigenous peoples. For more information, please see the library's policy on culturally sensitive materials."
- If and when digital images are made of the culturally sensitive content, metadata will include a similar note.

August 15, 2016 (Martha Briggs, Will Hansen, Patricia Marroquin-Norby, Seonaid Valiant)