

Frequently-Asked Questions about the Digital Collections

Why is the Tribe doing this project?

In 1996, the Tribe completed a Cultural Needs Assessment based upon surveys of Tribal Citizens. Some of the conclusions and recommendations of the Assessment were:

- An archival system needs to be established to document existing and future historical information;
- Focus upon the collection and/or copying of the historical documents and photos that exist in the community, emphasizing this as a community project;
- Focus upon the collection and archiving of identified Tribal Center documents, photos, and important information for safekeeping and historical purposes.

Affordable technology, the development of standards and protocols, and the availability of funding for such projects have finally made this a feasible undertaking for the Tribe.

Is this archive only for things that are really old?

No. The history of a people happens every day. Someday, the objects we create and the photographs we take will have as much meaning to our descendants as our ancestors' artifacts have for us.

How can I be sure my objects won't be damaged or lost during the process of archiving?

We know how important your collections are to you. You are welcome to be present during processing. We use high-quality scanners for photographs and documents, and we handle objects with white archival gloves to prevent contamination. Once we have scanned the images or photographed your objects, your originals are returned to you along with a CD of the images.

If I don't want my objects put on the Internet, can I still contribute to the archives?

Yes. Everyone who contributes has the option of designating their collection as "Private—not for public display." Our software allows us to catalogue all the information and then choose whether it is displayed to viewers. We can do this for the collection as a whole, or for individual images within it. While we want to create collections and displays that can be used for educational purposes, our primary goal is to preserve collections from loss or damage.

How can you ensure that people won't copy and misuse the images on the website?

Unfortunately, there are no guarantees. But we have taken some measures to discourage this. First, the images displayed are of lower resolution (quality) than the original file so they don't reproduce well. Second, each image displayed has a watermark through it that prevents the user from obtaining a clean image. Finally, we explain very carefully in our "Copyright and Use Statement" what constitutes fair use and what is a copyright violation under Federal law. Any egregious misuse of images from the website will be met with a Cease and Desist challenge from the Tribe.

I've scanned all my family's photos, isn't that good enough?

Contributing your collections to the Tribal archives is like having a well-organized safety deposit box. Your photos and documents are scanned at extremely high resolutions and stored on secure servers. They will be maintained even as technology advances and changes. The information about the object is saved with the object in a database, so they are identified by names, locations and dates that can be searched and retrieved within seconds. If your home computer crashes or your files become corrupted, if you ever need to duplicate or replace your picture of Auntie at the beach, your archival files are safe, organized and available.

I want to contribute, but I live far from the Tribal Campus and don't want to mail my treasures.

Give us a call and we will work with you to make it happen. It might involve sending copies or scans to us that we will re-scan at higher resolutions. If you are attending a Tribal event, such as the annual picnic, let us know and we will arrange to be present with our equipment. If you live in Western Washington, a limited amount of our grant funds can cover our travel to come to you.

What happens when the grant funding for this project ends?

We continue on. The funding from IMLS enabled us to purchase the equipment and software, to hire the expertise to get the archive established, to create the website, and to train staff to maintain the archive. When the project funding ends, Tribal staff will continue to manage the system and further develop the archives, collections and exhibits. You will still be able to contribute to the collections, even after the formal project period ends. But don't wait--with our funding we have greater flexibility in the amount of time and travel we are able to use to access private collections.