

# 2017 SAA Foundation Grant Application

## Identification Information

Greetings! My name is JoyEllen Freeman, and I am the Outreach/Special Collections Archivist at the Kennesaw State University (KSU) Archives in Kennesaw, Georgia. Kennesaw is located in northwestern Georgia, approximately forty minutes from Atlanta. The KSU Archives was established in 2004, and its mission is to identify, collect, and preserve records that document an inclusive history of Kennesaw State University and also of the surrounding north and northwest Georgia community.

## Abstract

As the Outreach Archivist, one of my main priorities is to help diversify the collections within our repository in order to tell a true history of our school and our region. Of particular importance to me is reconnecting with our community's rich Native American history. Although some museums and repositories in northwestern Georgia have taken initiatives to document Native American history,<sup>1</sup> this narrative remains severely under-documented and under-discussed in the KSU Archives. Hence, in fall 2017, I plan to curate an archival exhibit focused on Native American history in the northwest Georgia area. My goal is to use this upcoming exhibit as a first step toward confronting my repository's gap in documentation of indigenous history and developing long-term strategies to rectify this.

In Jeffery Mifflin's article "Regarding Indigenous Knowledge in Archives," he explains that "archivists in the twenty-first century face dilemmas rooted in the increased awareness and growing assertiveness of Indigenous peoples who believe that they should control or at least participate in decisions about who owns culturally sensitive materials and how access to them should be administered."<sup>2</sup> Reading Mifflin's article inspired me to reach out to Jerry Thompson – the archivist at the Cherokee Heritage Center in Oklahoma and a citizen of the Cherokee Nation. During my conversation with Thompson, he informed me of the tense and controversial relationship between federally recognized Native American tribes and the many Georgians who claim Native American ancestry yet are not members of federally recognized indigenous nations or tribes. This issue stems from the tragic removal of Native Americans that took place in Georgia during the late 1830s, which resulted in a loss of indigenous history and ancestral connections for many Georgians. Since there is no federally recognized nation or tribe of Cherokee, Creek, or any other Native American community in Georgia, there is an air of both tension and confusion that pervades in many areas of our state regarding Native American ancestry, history, and identity. Identifying as "Native American" here in Georgia is packed with many meanings and is not as formally defined as it is in other states. Instead of declaring a judgment on this issue and using history to define

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<sup>1</sup> Example museums and repositories in northwest Georgia that are currently documenting Native American history include the Funk Heritage Center at Reinhardt University (<https://www.reinhardt.edu/funkheritage/>), The Chief Vann House Historic Site (<http://gastateparks.org/ChiefVannHouse>), and the New Echota Historic Site (<http://gastateparks.org/NewEchota>).

<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey Mifflin, "Regarding Indigenous Knowledge in Archives," in *Through the Archival Looking Glass: A Reader on Diversity and Inclusion*, eds. Mary A. Caldera and Kathryn M. Neal (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2014), 61.

who counts as a true Native American and who does not, I want to represent the complexity of northwestern Georgia's indigenous identity through an archival exhibit.

I believe that the first step toward ethically documenting the history of Native Americans in northwest Georgia is to establish a strong and trustworthy relationship with the members of the indigenous community in the surrounding areas. Hence, I seek funding for a day-long summer workshop that will bring indigenous community members into the Kennesaw State University Archives and allow them to participate in a "community curation" initiative in preparation for the exhibit this fall. During the workshop, participants will gain knowledge about the nature, value, and importance of their archives; receive hands-on experience caring for archives; discuss various perspectives and materials they would like to see represented in an indigenous exhibit; and most importantly, begin establishing a healthy and trustworthy relationship with the KSU Archives.

## **Work plan (Methods, Goals, and Expected Outcomes, etc.)**

### Part 1: Outreach, Recruitment, and Advertisement Methods

To make this workshop a reality, the first area of action is outreach. In Cobb County (where the Kennesaw State University Archives is located) individuals of American Indian and Native American descent comprise 0.5% of the county's population. In neighboring counties of northwestern Georgia, the Native American population generally comprises about 0.4% - 1.4% of the total county population, with the higher percentages existing in the most northwest counties of Georgia like Murray County, Gordon County, and Catoosa County, where the Cherokee Nation inhabited prior to their removal in the 1830s.<sup>3</sup> Hence, my first job is to conduct outreach with Native American organizations, advocacy groups, and community members in the northwest Georgia region so our repository can begin to build trust in the indigenous community. I have already made successful inroads with two organizations – the Georgia Chapter of the Trail of Tears Association and the Georgia Council on American Indian Concerns.

In addition to establishing trust with the indigenous community, another initial goal of outreach is to determine the best methods for communicating with the Native American population in Georgia. Knowing this type of information will direct advertisement and recruitment efforts for the workshop. Currently, I plan to engage in advertisement efforts including email blasts, phone calls, local newspaper ads, flyers, and in-person announcements.

### Part 2: Workshop Development Methods

In order for our workshop to be effective and successful, it must be educational and informative, community centered, and hands on. The workshop will achieve these characteristics by engaging in a "give-and-take" learning approach. In other words, participants will be teaching just as much as they are learning.

The first session of the workshop will involve a professional archivist (JoyEllen Freeman) teaching participants about the nature and value of archives, primary sources, and historic preservation. Participants will additionally receive tours of the Kennesaw State University Archives and Bentley Rare Book Gallery. However, in the same session, participants will also be encouraged to teach JoyEllen and other members of the group about indigenous perspectives on archives and preservation. Participants

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<sup>3</sup> "QuickFacts," United States Census Bureau, accessed January 9, 2017, <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/>.

will be encouraged to discuss differences and similarities between the way Native American communities document history and the way other communities document history. Participants will also be encouraged to bring one archival record or item that they own and present this item to the group (participants will be notified prior to the workshop).

The next session will focus on preservation. Participants will learn about basic preservation methods for archives and rare books through a presentation and various demonstrations. Participants will have a chance to practice these techniques by doing simple preservation tasks like surface cleaning, refolding, and removing metal fasteners. Participants will also be asked to share any victories or challenges that they may have experienced while preserving indigenous history.

The final and most robust part of the workshop will be the community-curation session. During this session, participants will first engage in a frank discussion about displaying and representing Native American history, culture, and ancestry. I will display photos and/or advertisements from local Native American exhibits in northwest Georgia, and participants will discuss which parts of these exhibits they find to be empowering, degrading, or something in between. I will also ask participants to discuss ways to represent diversity within the Native American community, particularly since Georgia's indigenous history is so complex. Finally, participants will have the opportunity to discuss the kinds of materials they would like to see represented in the upcoming Native American exhibit at the KSU Archives. I will guide participants through the exhibit space and give them the opportunity to suggest designs, layouts, colors, and even potential outreach methods. Community members will also have the opportunity to consider loaning family archives and memorabilia to the KSU Archives specifically for the exhibit, although there will be no pressure to do so.

### Part 3: Goals and Outcomes

There are three main goals associated with this workshop. The first goal is to form a trustworthy relationship between the KSU Archives and one of the most historically marginalized communities in northwest Georgia –the Native American community. By inviting individuals who identify as Native American into the KSU Archives and involving them in the curation of an upcoming exhibit, I want to show that the KSU Archives desires to document indigenous experiences of all types. The next goal of this workshop is education, both for community members and for professional archivists. During this workshop, community members will receive education about the nature of archives and preservation from professional archivists in the KSU Archives, but they will also educate archivists about appropriate ways to document and showcase Native American history. Both parties will have ample chances to listen to one another and express themselves freely. The third goal is to develop a “community-curated” exhibit, where the Native American community members will assist me in creating the KSU Archives’ fall 2017 archives exhibit focusing on Native American history. I want indigenous community members, no matter how they are defined, to see authentic representations of themselves and their lives in this exhibit.

### **Assessment, Impact, and Sharing**

I will assess the impact of my workshop by providing follow-up surveys that all participants will fill out before leaving the workshop. I will also invite these participants to return to campus for the exhibit opening in the fall, and I will receive their feedback at that time as well. The impact of this outreach project will be significant for the KSU Archives, for indigenous people in the northwest Georgia area, and

for other archival institutions with an unacknowledged and complex Native American history. This project will help the KSU Archives jumpstart its Native American history focus and hopefully lead to the acquisition of new collections in this area. The indigenous people who attend the workshop will learn more about the importance of archives and preservation, but even more importantly, they will get a chance to tell their stories individually and as a community. Finally, the impact of this project has the potential to reverberate among many archival institutions, particularly in the Southeast, whose Native American history may seem too controversial to unpack or too confusing to define. I will use this exhibit to show that while history, culture, and ancestry are often not clearly defined, developing spaces for people to understand their story and the stories of others is of the utmost importance.

I plan to publicize this experience to the archival community through social media, professional literature, and presentation. During the workshop, I will encourage participants to actively tweet and post about their experiences during the event. This will allow for immediate and live sharing of the event. About one week after the event, I will use the Kennesaw State University Archives' blog to write various posts about the development and implementation of this workshop. Once the exhibit opens in the fall, my goal is to write a professional article that demonstrates how community outreach initiatives can lead to successful exhibits. I will submit this article in spring 2018. Ultimately, I hope to make a formal presentation about my experience at a regional or national archives conference in late summer or fall 2018.

The SAA Foundation can expect a final report of my workshop and its impact by December 2017.

## **SAA/SAAF Goal Alignment and Advancing the Archival Profession**

This project aligns with SAA's Strategic Goals as well as goals of the SAA Foundation. In terms of SAA's strategic goals, this project directly supports goals 1.1, 1.3, and 3.3

**Goal 1.1 "Provide leadership in promoting the value of archives and archivists to institutions, communities, and societies."** This project brings archival knowledge and literacy to the Native American community in the northwest Georgia community.

**Goal 1.3 "Provide leadership in ensuring the completeness, diversity, and accessibility of the historical record."** This project strives to document an underserved ethnic group within our community. This project will help north and northwest Georgians understand the diverse experiences and challenges that result from claiming Native American heritage, which is an aspect of history that many local repositories have yet to confront.

**Goal 3.3 "Participate actively in relevant partnerships and collaborations to enhance professional knowledge."** This project can lead to partnerships with indigenous organizations in our surrounding community and hopefully develop into long-term alliances.

This project aligns with the following SAA Foundation goals:

**Support programs to enhance the performance of repositories** – This project will help the KSU Archives to better fulfill its mission to document an inclusive history of KSU and the northwest Georgia region.

**Support efforts to persuade influential external organizations to create or promote archives** – This project will help the KSU Archives gain the trust of local Native American organizations and community leaders who can promote the value of archives among other indigenous people and communities.

Lastly, this project strives to work toward the goal of inclusion that former SAA president Dennis Meissner spoke of during the 2016 SAA Annual Meeting. In his presidential address, Meissner stated that while “diversity is a fact; inclusion is a choice we make.”<sup>4</sup> While focusing solely on diversity often leads to a host of questions and few outcomes, inclusive behavior “is a way of working with diversity to ensure that those outcome are achieved.”<sup>5</sup> One of the main goals of this workshop is to move beyond the mere thought of diversity and instead, engage in inclusive action. This workshop provides a historically marginalized community in our region with an opportunity to have a say in the historic record and in the way we choose to exhibit it at the Kennesaw State University Archives. Instead of simply noticing our dearth of records related to the Native American community in Georgia and attempting to fix it ourselves, our goal is to include the thoughts, ideas, perspectives, and concerns of Native American community members in our solution. Though inclusive practices such as this workshop, our desire is to forge a lasting partnership with an ethnic group whose history and culture is the very foundation of our state and of our nation.

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<sup>4</sup> “Presidential Address,” Society of American Archivists, accessed February 1, 2017, <http://www2.archivists.org/am2016/presidential-address#.WJl8V1UrdU>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

**Budget (for an estimated 20 attendees):**

**Workshop advertisement: \$156**

Flyers printed at Kennesaw State University Library: 100 flyers at 6 cents per page = \$6.00

Newspaper advertisements in local northwest Georgia papers = \$150 (approximate)

**Workshop materials (handouts/binders, archival materials, etc.): \$320.38**

24 Binders from Staples (1.5 inch) = \$120.38

Printed handouts, worksheets, blank notebook paper, and pencils = \$75.00

Extra archival materials (folders, Mylar sheets, record boxes) for participants to use during the workshop: \$125.00

**Parking/transportation for ten cars at Kennesaw State University Visitor Parking Lot: \$120**

**University-catered boxed lunches and afternoon snacks for 20 attendees: \$350**

**Estimated total: \$946.38**

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## Sponsoring Body and Principal Roles

The sponsoring body for this initiative is the Kennesaw State University Archives. The Kennesaw State University Archives is a division of the Department of Museums, Archives, and Rare Books.

**Mission Statement of KSU Archives:** The mission of the Kennesaw State University Archives is to identify, collect, and make accessible records of enduring value to preserve institutional and community memory into the future. These activities further the mission of the university by contributing to research activities, scholarly development, and public service initiatives that enhance the quality of life in our local communities and the wider world.

Kennesaw State University Archives website: <http://archives.kennesaw.edu/>

**Mission of MARB:** The Kennesaw State University Department of Museums, Archives and Rare Books houses the Museum of History and Holocaust Education, Zuckerman Museum of Art, Bentley Rare Book Gallery, Archives, and Records Management. Established in 2010, the department presents public programs, exhibitions, and educational services to KSU and local communities in an effort to promote preservation of primary sources and media and to encourage dialogue about the past and its significance today.

MARB website: <http://marb.kennesaw.edu/about.php>

**Principal Role:** JoyEllen Freeman, Outreach/Special Collections Archivist, developed the idea for this workshop and will take the lead role in implementing it and curating the exhibit that will follow. JoyEllen's resume is included in this application package as a PDF document. A letter of support from JoyEllen's direct supervisor, Dr. Tamara Livingston, is also included as a PDF document.