

Archives as Cultural Heritage, Folk Materials as Cultural Heritage, and the CNMI as a Case Study

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Abstract: Archives, as cultural institutions, hold materials and resources that are a critical component of a community's cultural heritage. Archives, as cultural heritage institutions, seek to organize, preserve, and provide a format for understanding cultural heritage resources. Archivists, archival educators and scholars embrace the increasing diversity in the profession, including diversity in the conceptual framework about archives. Furthermore, they have become cognizant of the rise in the establishment of community archives throughout the world. Communities are entrusting their cultural heritage materials to these community archives, rather than to traditional, archival institutions. These community archives are not necessarily "archives" according to the traditional definition; they may be cultural centers or community centers, and they may be physical or virtual entities. The research described here began with my initial investigation of what constitutes archival and cultural heritage resources in the Pacific Islands, particularly the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the group of islands in the Western Pacific that are a commonwealth of the United States. Indigenous groups in the CNMI seek to preserve their cultural heritage resources, which may not fit traditional notions of "archival" materials. My current research expands my initial study. Specifically, I seek to: 1) Identify and compare and contrast the mission, focus, and themes of materials and collections in archives, community archives, and community cultural centers in indigenous and marginalized communities; 2) Identify some of the similarities and dissimilarities in the discourse about cultural heritage resources, and identify the place of "folk" heritage in this discourse, and 3) Describe the place of diverse "cultural heritage" resources in archival literature and archival education programs.

About the author:

Cecilia Lizama Salvatore (C.A., MLS, Ph.D: The University of Texas at Austin) develops and teaches the archives and cultural heritage courses at the School of Library and Information Science at Dominican University in River Forest, IL. She had developed the archives curriculum at Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas. She was formerly Territorial Librarian/Archivist for the U.S. Territory of Guam and Reference Librarian for the Pacific Collections at the Micronesian Area Research Center at the University of Guam. Recently, she conducted a year-long assessment of the state of cultural heritage resources and services in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) as part of an IMLS' *Connecting to Collections (C2C) Planning Grant*. Dr. Salvatore's research interests are in discourse and hegemony in archives, libraries and cultural heritage institutions in underserved communities and emerging and developing countries.