CREATING AN ARCHIVE OF INDIGENOUS ACTIVISM:
DOCUMENTING THE *LYNG V NORTHWEST INDIAN CEMETERY PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION* SUPREME COURT CASE

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CASE BACKGROUND

The *Lyng v Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association* (1988) case made headlines in national and international arenas as several California Indian tribes were protesting the building of a road between Gasquet and Orleans in Northern California. The sacred spaces, geological and ecological formations and the ongoing practice of traditional ceremonies in the High Country were of little concern to the Forest Service. The Forest Service had already built paved sections in the region and all that was needed to connect Gasquet to Orleans was to pave the six mile section which ran through the High Country.

While the case culminated in the 1987 Supreme Court arguments, it had been fought for many years before through grassroots organizing and lower court cases which had all sided with Native tribes and upheld an injunction that stopped the building of the road. The Supreme Court sided with the Forest Service, overturning the lower court's decision to protect sacred lands. The case set major precedent regarding the First Amendment and Native American religious freedom.

For a discussion and history of the case read: Baldy, Cutcha Risling. "Why we gather: traditional gathering in native Northwest California and the future of bio-cultural sovereignty." Ecological Processes 2.1 (2013): 1-10

Terrian Cover Art, Lang Collection, HSU Library

VISIT THE DIGITAL ARCHIVE TO LEARN MORE

goroad.omeka.net

PROJECT GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Students at Humboldt State University (HSU) worked with Native American Studies Professors and Special Collections Librarians to document and create an online archive of materials about the Gasquet Orleans (G-O) Road.

Over 380 items are publically available on a website to help people explore the history and continued impact of the case. The archive features documents like letters from Ceremonial Leaders, written by hand, that ask for protection of the High Country. It also features a journal kept by Karuk artist and activist Julian Lang, who participated in the protests and fight against the G-O Road.

Students learned from the makers of history, and were able to interview and archive the activists's work. This project included a two day digitization event, symposium and oral history project and culminated in a public presentation of interpretive archive exhibits of the collected materials.

Siskiyou Wilderness Map, McKay Collection, HSU Library

HOW TO SUPPORT THE PROJECT

DONATE TO NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES

SO WE CAN CONTINUE THE WORK

Donate to the Native American Studies Department at HSU. We can continue to hire students to work on the project and even do a limited run of stickers and t-shirts if we get enough donations.
http://www2.humboldt.edu/nasp/giving.html

SUPPORT THE SACRED SITE FUND

DONATE TO THE WIYOT TRIBE

HSU is on the unceded territory and homeland of the Wiyot People. As part of the survival of the Wiyot culture, the Wiyot Tribe established the Wiyot Sacred Site Fund to purchase back sites of religious and/or cultural significance for future generations.
https://www.wiyot.us/186/Tuluwat-Project

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE PROJECTS

SUPPORT INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE SURVIVAL

Julian Lang was instrumental in this project by sharing his work as an activist and his archive related to the G-O Road. Julian is a member of Advocates for Indigenous Language Survival (AICLS) and teaches Karuk language classes. Learn more about his work and how you can help native communities create new speakers. https://aicls.org/

NEWS FROM NATIVE CALIFORNIA

SUBSCRIBE TO THIS MAGAZINE

News from Native California supported the project by including a cover story (Fall 2018) that discussed the history of the case and included information about submitting to the digital archive.
http://newsfromnativecalifornia.com/

Journal Sketch, Lang Collection, HSU Library

INCORPORATING THE PROJECT INTO THE CURRICULUM

STUDENTS AS ARCHIVISTS

The project coordinators worked with Julian Lang to digitize material from his personal collection. Lang was instrumental in the *Lyng v NICPA* case and has collected hundreds of archival materials including newspaper articles, art work, poetry, letters, and various documents.

As part of this project we worked with students in Native American Studies (NAS) classes to help train them on proper digitization and methodologies of working with Indigenous communities. Students reviewed current HSU collections to identify materials for digitization and inclusion in the creation of a digital archive.

STUDENTS AS CURATORS

In March 2019, students completed a research trip to UC Davis to incorporate material from the Jack Forbes Papers and the David Risling, Jr. Papers in the G-O Road digital archive.

NAS majors who worked with the Goudi'ni Gallery to create the exhibit focused on the *Lyng v NICPA* case. They selected materials and helped install the exhibit. Then students led tours of the Gallery for introductory level classes and local area high schools.

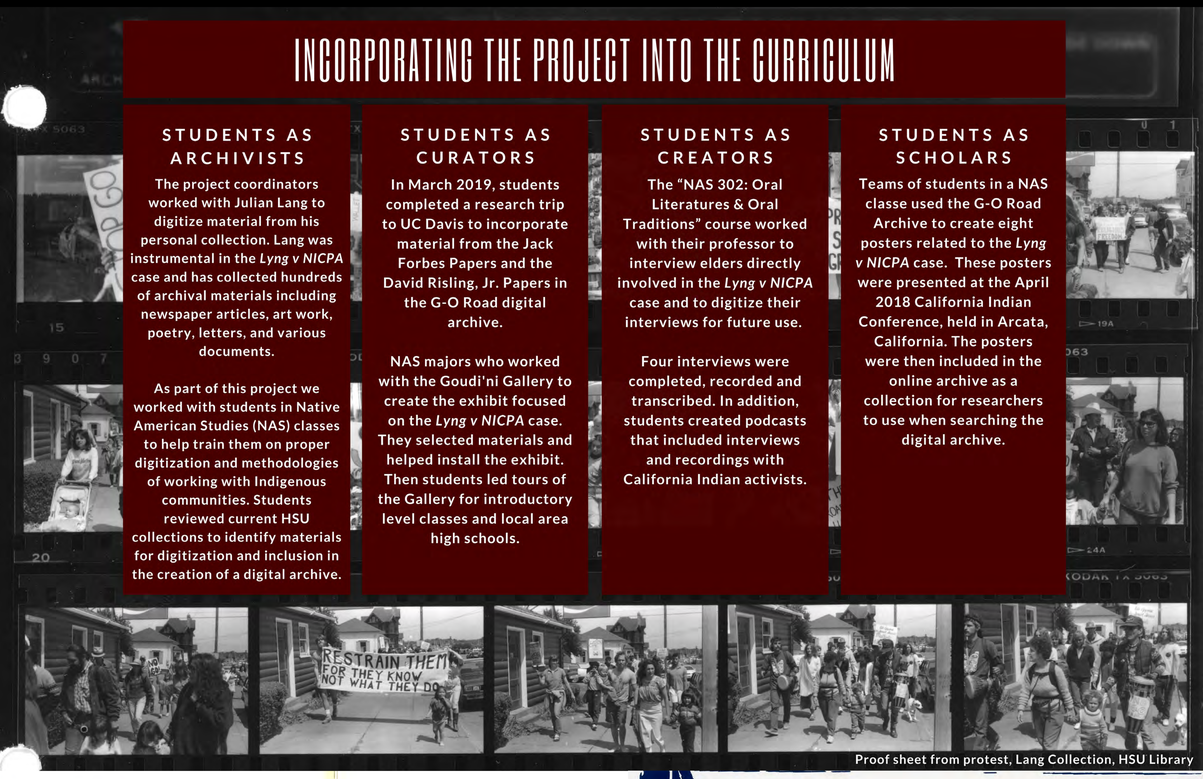
STUDENTS AS CREATORS

The "NAS 302: Oral Literatures & Oral Traditions" course worked with their professor to interview elders directly involved in the *Lyng v NICPA* case and to digitize their interviews for future use.

Four interviews were completed, recorded and transcribed. In addition, students created podcasts that included interviews and recordings with California Indian activists.

STUDENTS AS SCHOLARS

Teams of students in a NAS classe used the G-O Road Archive to create eight posters related to the *Lyng v NICPA* case. These posters were presented at the April 2018 California Indian Conference, held in Arcata, California. The posters were then included in the online archive as a collection for researchers to use when searching the digital archive.



Proof sheet from protest, Lang Collection, HSU Library

PRIORITIZING NATIVE VOICES

The project provided a means and resource for people to interact with Indigenous based digital scholarship. The process of producing and disseminating the digital material can unintentionally reproduce colonial systems of objectification.

Our project aims to create space for Native peoples to inform the classification and description of materials, to share their own stories, and to robustly curate their own collections of material that focus on their concerns.

Furthermore, access to these collections can prove prohibitive to Indigenous or remote community members. Frequently, these archives require institutional licenses or only accept materials from donating institutions, not collaborative team-based groups or even individuals.

Our project created an open access digital archive that offers new possibilities for interaction and digital curation, we think that Indigenous communities can teach scholars and institutions how to do better -- how to increase access, expand contributions, and re-assemble information in innovative ways.

Magazine clipping, Buckley Collection, HSU Library

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

STUDENT ARCHIVISTS

Vicente Diaz (Hualapai)
Jenifer Hailey (Hoopa Valley Tribe)
Emily Watkins (Yankton Sioux)

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Thank you to all the contributors, students, elders and activists who supported the creation of this archive. Thank you to the Trinidad Rancheria for hosting a digitization day.

"Protect Indian Religion. NO-GO. Fix the Earth. NEVER SAY I'M NOTHING. If you fix the Earth you ARE somebody! Stop the Gasquet-Orleans Road in Northern California. STOP THE ROAD." ~an entry from Julian Lang's journal

Daily Diary, Lang Collection, HSU Library

Library
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES