The American Indian Digital Audio Repository at the APS

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The Library of the American Philosophical Society houses approximately 4,000 hours of audio recordings from indigenous languages of the Americas, collected by anthropologists, linguists, and ethnologists from the 1910s through the present. The Library is currently in the final year of a 6-year project to digitize the entirety of these recordings, provide detailed cataloging for them down to the individual item level (i.e., each song, story, interview, etc.) and house them in a password-accessible online repository (Islandora) with accompanying infrastructure to ensure long-term sustainability of all digital objects. As part of the project, the APS Library is developing protocols for the appropriate handling of culturally-sensitive materials in its collections and establishing research fellowships specifically for language teachers, elders, knowledge keepers, and other researchers from Native communities. The next goal at the APS is the founding of a permanent Native American Research Center whose programming would include work with tribal archives and schools to enhance the accessibility and ensure archival sustainability of digitally repatriated material (and that already existing in the communities) according to local needs and resources.

The APS Library's audio repository includes materials recorded by:

William Bright
James Crawford
Frederica de Laguna
Mary Haas
Zellig Harris
M. Dale Kinkade
Floyd G. Lounsbury
John Alden Mason
Harvey Pitkin
Frank Speck
Morris Swadesh