

United American Indian Involvement Photo Archival Project
United States of America
Occidental College
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The goal of the United American Indian Involvement Photo Archival Project is to work towards understanding the local and global implications of Indigenous archival creation. In order to pursue this goal, this project aims to foster sustainable community access to an urban Native American archive of more than 4,500 community-produced photographs owned by The United American Indian Involvement (UAI). Additionally, our research team strives to enhance the capacity of similar Indigenous archiving initiatives by sharing the community based methodological approach utilized in this work via conferences, workshops, and any other accessible platform, with the permission of UAI. We actively exchange methodological knowledge with those also working in this field in order to further the creation of reciprocal and equitable relationships between institutions of higher learning and community organizations.

The archival work conducted during the summer of 2019 is a continuation of three years of community based research previously funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Occidental College's Center for Community Based Learning, and Occidental College's Diversity and Equity Board. Although the summer's project did not receive funding from these aforementioned sources, the archive project is at its current point because of the support and investment from these organizations. I am fortunate that all the financial supporters of this work firmly believe in the community based pedagogy that has guided this project's progress since its creation five years ago.

Community based learning and research is founded on the idea that community expressed needs must be at the foundation of the work in order to decenter the academic cannon and to build relationships focused on mutual benefit. Given this framework, it is fitting that this project idea was brought to the attention of stakeholders at The Autry Museum of the American West and Occidental College by The United American Indian Involvement (UAI) once the organization decided to seek professional archival input on how to address a growing collection of community produced photographs stored in their office building.

Though UAI created the project idea nearly five years ago, I did produce this summer's project initiative in collaboration and with the approval of UAI. I identified the need for this initiative after spending my final year in college reflecting on how to make this project sustainable for UAI's community once I graduated. Following many conversations with my community partner and mentor at Occidental, I determined that the best way to pursue this idea was by funding the full digitization of UAI's archive and our research team's travel to the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association in Aotearoa (New Zealand).

The inequities that Indigenous people face is the product of their marginalization in the name of national progress. The erasure of Indigenous people is particularly pervasive in the United States in order to sustain the myths of manifest destiny, the wild west, and the new frontier.

I chose to conduct the majority of this work in Los Angeles, California because that is the location of the United American Indian Involvement and Occidental College where UAI's archive is currently on loan in the College's archives.

Continuing to work out of Los Angeles facilitated face-to-face collaboration with UAI, which maintained the sense of partnership I cultivated over three years of active engagement. Native American communities, like many other marginalized peoples, are frequently exploited by institutions of higher learning through sporadic interactions that are focused more on the benefits of the institution rather than the Native communities. For this reason, working out of Los Angeles was a critical component to the community based methodological practice used in this work.

I was never concerned about the continuation of this project because the work this summer stems from a long-term collaboration that emphasizes the importance of community input and consensus on all new project initiatives.

I am fortunate that I have an existing relationship with my community partner and research mentor that is built on active communication. There were few communication challenges between those I worked closest with, but it is always a challenge to communicate to UAll's broader community exactly what is happening with their community's archive. I am constantly faced with how to articulate why our research team takes the approach that it does and how our work will eventually reach the community's ultimate goal of having an archival resource that tells their accurate story to those within and outside their community.

I define peace as a constant goal that will only be achieved through reciprocal engagement across and within communities aimed at deconstructing hierarchies and addressing community-identified needs. At this point in my life I am unsure if I will ever see peace achieved in my own community, let alone those who exist around me, but I am motivated by the capacity for creativity, innovation, and joy that I see within people who are also dedicated to pursuing peace.

This project contributes to long-term and sustainable peace as it strives to address historic wrongs that situate contemporary Native people as lesser than and worthy of being forgotten. This archive is an educational tool that can be used by UAll's community to begin to address how other non-Native archives have characterized Native people for centuries.

This work has not changed how I think about the world as much as it has affirmed to me the importance of community-led initiatives aimed at righting historic wrongs in order to pursue a more liberatory future. However, this project itself has changed me in innumeral ways. I knew I wanted to be an educator prior to taking on this project, but the three years I spent working with UAll's community demonstrated to me that I want to be an educator who is rooted in community and frames student learning through a lens of reciprocity and partnership.

I am an Indigenous woman, community organizer, and scholar who works every day to create spaces for others to create the peaceful and equitable world that generations before us dreamed of. In this work I strive to make myself obsolete. I borrow this wording from my community organizing mentors who encouraged me to envision how I can foster sustainable social change that is not dependent on one person, but on a shared understanding of what kind of world we as a collective envision.





249. Sámi Stockholm: Negotiations of Urban
Indigenous Resurgence in Practice

Roundtable

1:45 to 3:30 pm K Block: G.09

Chair: Kanako Uzawa,
The Arctic University of Norway

Presenters: Stockholm Sámi Association

Inge Frisk

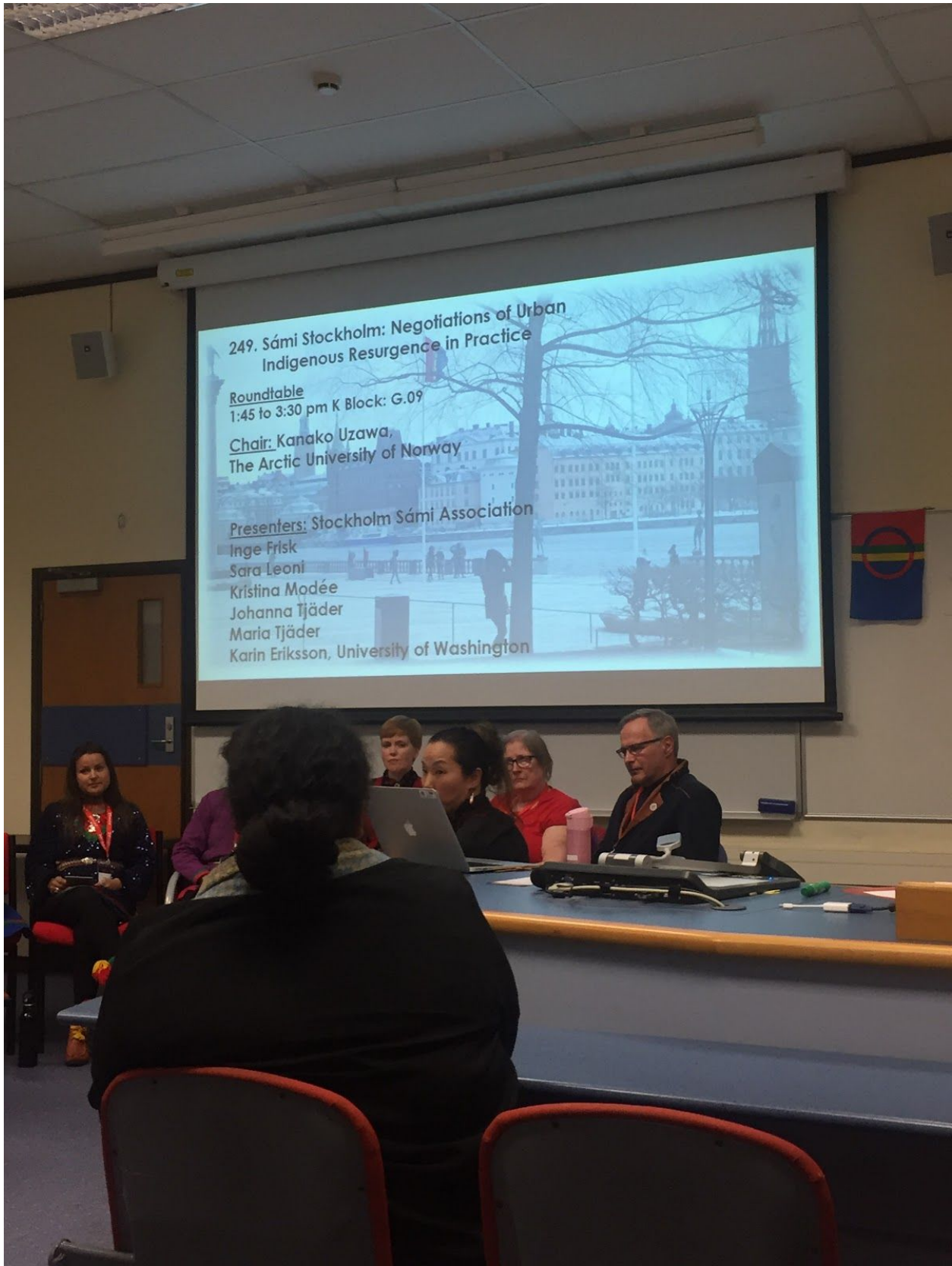
Sara Leoni

Kristina Mødée

Johanna Tjäder

Maria Tjäder

Karin Eriksson, University of Washington



Indigenizing Urban Seattle Podcast →
Decolonial Tool



<http://www.indigenizingseattle.com/>