

Guide to Information Resources
in Ethnic Museum, Library,
and Archival Collections in
the United States

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Preface

Changing population demographics in the United States have led to a recognition and appreciation of the nation's rich variety of ethnic customs, traditions, arts, languages, and literature. Preservation and understanding of each group's cultural heritage and history are directly related to the resources, programs, and services offered at ethnic museums, libraries, archives, and special ethnic collections found in other general cultural and educational institutions. In most cases, resource centers are maintained directly by ethnic communities themselves through historical, recreational, social, fraternal, business, literary, educational, and cultural organizations, including the ethnic press. Some groups have attempted to pass on to their descendants a sense of their ethnic roots and origins through the assembling of cultural artifacts, clothing and costumes, objects of art, and examples of craftsmanship in museums and/or art galleries. Many organizations collect and/or publish books and periodicals related to the ethnic group. Still others maintain archival records that document through personal correspondence, newspaper accounts, census and church records, and other primary sources the group's experience in the United States from first generation pioneers and immigrants who settled the country and developed its industries, to the contributions of their descendants in all walks of life. Also documented is the situation of more recent refugees who have sought asylum from political and economic oppression. Some organizations maintain all of these types of collections, while others maintain only one or two.

These cultural institutions are rich in materials that allow educators, scholars, researchers, interested citizens, genealogists, and information specialists to discover and document information related to each group. Unfortunately, many of the materials housed in these ethnic and other organizations are not indexed by major standard indexing and abstracting services. Researchers are not aware of many of these unique and very valuable resources and, therefore, cannot access or utilize them.

It is important that access be provided to all available information about the groups that comprise American society--especially those fugitive and unknown resources and primary sources held in museum, library, and archival collections sponsored by ethnic organizations or that are contained in major educational institutions or research centers that maintain repositories of an ethnic group's records.

Purpose

Members of ethnic groups gain a sense of identity as they develop a link with their past history and pride in their cultural heritage as they understand how it has contributed to the multicultural mosaic that represents the United States. The purpose of *Guide to Information Resources in Ethnic Museum, Library, and Archival Collections in the United States* is to provide comprehensive and current coverage of the descriptions of these ethnic resources that are authentic sources of information about America's diverse cultural groups. The *Guide* also provides important details about these collections (e.g., their size; type; availability to the public; special features such as guides, reading rooms, and copying facilities; publications issued; and programs and services provided (guided tours, lectures, presentations to schools, loans, exhibits, audiovisual productions, performing arts presentations, in-service programs for teachers, cooperative activities with institutions of higher education, etc.). It is hoped that ongoing requests for additional information can now be more adequately met.

Scope

The *Guide* includes resources representing over 70 ethnic groups arranged in 68 categories, including a multi-ethnic section. The latter category was utilized not only for institutions and organizations which cover several ethnic groups, but also for some selected major research-oriented centers which are not sponsored by ethnic groups or organizations. The latter may also be concerned with various aspects of ethnicity (immigration, urban and social problems, etc.) and ethnic studies programs.

Methodology

Information provided is based on a comprehensive national survey of ethnic and other institutions conducted from 1993-1995. Names and addresses of these organizations and other institutions were identified from the records and previous surveys and publications of the Center for the Study of Ethnic Publications and Cultural Institutions, School of Library and Information Science, Kent State University, as well as from the latest editions of the *Official Museum Directory*, the *Encyclopedia of Associations*, *Subject Collections: A Guide to Special Book Collections and Subject Emphases as Reported by University, College, Public, and Special Libraries*, and *Museums in the United States and Canada* (by Lee Ash), *Directory of Special Libraries and Information Centers*, and *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States*.

Questionnaires were mailed to 2,340 ethnic organizations to determine whether they had ethnic museum, library, or archival collections and to institutions of a non-ethnic nature known to have extensive holdings related to a particular ethnic group or groups. Institutions with modest, but important, collections related to some of the smaller or newer ethnic groups were also included in the survey. With respect to very large groups, such as African Americans and Native Americans, however, inclusion was more selective. Final content coverage of the *Guide* was also dependent on the return

of the questionnaire by the ethnic group or organizational members. Respondents provided information on approximately 676 of the 786 entries; approximately 14% of the entries were constructed from records of the center and other secondary sources.

Arrangement

Institutions are arranged in alphabetical order under 68 categories. These include 62 individual ethnic group categories as well as the multi-ethnic category and other categories which represent clusters of ethnic groups, i.e., Asian American Resources, Czechoslovak American Resources, Hispanic American Resources, Latin American Resources, and Scandinavian American Resources. Complete entries provide information in the following sequence:

1. Name of cultural institution
2. Type of institution (museum, library, archives, art gallery)
3. Address
4. Telephone number
5. Fax number
6. Sponsoring organization
7. Personnel
8. Contact person
9. Date founded
10. Scope
11. Availability (Open to public, hours, Not open to public, Open by appt. etc.)
12. Admission (Free, fee, donation)
13. Visitors (General public, School groups, Ethnic community)
14. Staff (full-time, designated ft; part-time, designated pt; volunteers)
15. Operating budget
16. Publications
17. Collection
18. Comments (brief annotations based on the official statement given in the questionnaire, or, in some cases, published in the institution's official publication or descriptive brochure).

Indexes

An institutional index lists all of the institutions alphabetically by name. It is followed by a geographic index which lists institutions alphabetically first by state and then by city. The Contents serves as a subject index.