Daitch Heritage Consulting Services

Repatriation
Yukon and Beyond

Cases to Consider with the Digital Launch of Searching for our Heritage

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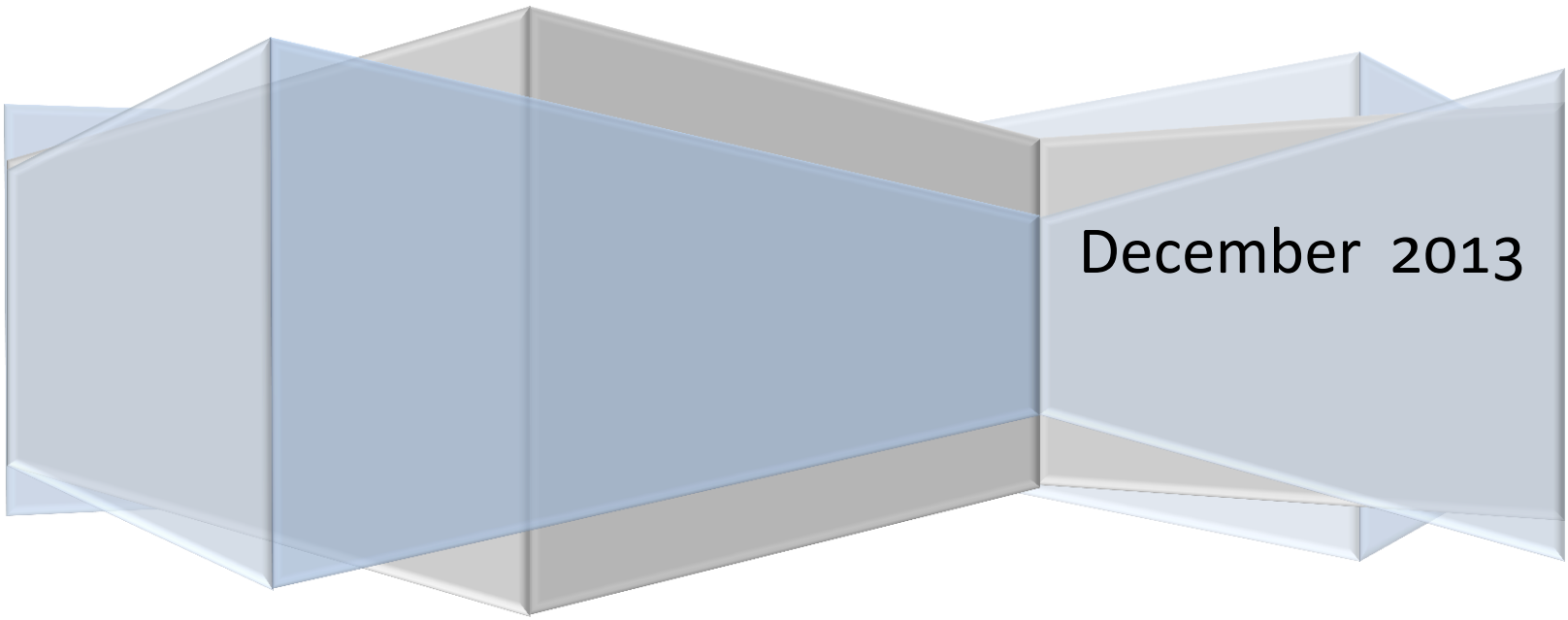

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Introduction: Searching for our Heritage Background

Yukon Government's S*earching for our Heritage (SFOH)* project is a long term initiative to locate cultural artifacts, images and natural history specimens located in museums, archives and private collections throughout the world. The inspiration for the project came from comments made at a 1985 Heritage North Conference in Yellowknife. Smithsonian Institute Curator Nancy Fuller challenged northerners to locate their cultural artifacts scattered around the world (Bielawski, E. Ed., 1985). This inspired Ed Krahn, then Yukon Museums Advisor, to initiate the *Searching for our Heritage* project. A subsequent 1986 Lord Report theorized that upwards of 50% of museum collections were located outside the Yukon, underscoring the need to locate this lost cultural legacy (Charlie S. and E. Krahn, 2007).

The development of the *Searching for our Heritage (SFOH)* project has depended on the availability of funding and personnel, and so progressed incrementally. Initially, using Young Canada Works funding, a summer student wrote to museums to ask whether they had Yukon artifacts in their collections. Twenty five museums responded positively to this initial request. Over the years, ongoing correspondence has identified over 6000 artifacts and images identified in 170 institutions and private collections throughout the world (Daitch, C. & D. Bishop, 2013). While funding sources have varied over the many years of collections research, outreach and information sharing, the project is currently funded through Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement Land Claims Implementation Funding.[1]

When the project began, correspondence was via letter and collections were catalogued manually. Often a museum could identify that they likely had objects of Yukon provenance but it would be too onerous to locate these objects or obtain catalogue records. Two major developments helped move the *Searching for our Heritage* project forward in the 1990s and 2000s. Firstly, there was an increasing recognition of the rights of Indigenous peoples to access their cultural patrimony, which had been removed from communities during times of marginalisation and economic hardship. This is particularly the case in North American museums. Secondly, with improved computer technology, museums were able to digitize collections records into easily searchable databases, often accompanied by digital photographs. In some cases, these records were posted online. Further, the development of Internet communications improved the ability of Yukon-based researchers to correspond with and access information from museums and cultural institutions outside Yukon.

Initially, correspondence and records obtained from institutions regarding Yukon collections were maintained as hard-copy files. In the 1990s, funding from the Museums Assistance Program enabled the

[1] Funding to move the *Searching for our Heritage* project forward came from the following partners over the years: Museums Assistance Program (MAP), Young Canada Works, Yukon Government Museums Program, Yukon Government Arts Branch and Land Claims Implementation Fund.

creation of a Yukon database to store collections records using a searchable interface. The FileMaker Pro database is searchable by institution or object. The *Institution* page includes the institution's contact information, a summary of Yukon artifacts from this museum and a history of correspondence with this museum. The *Object* layout includes fields commonly used by museums with space to enter information about the artifact, the creator, donor, collector and associated publications as well as photographs of the artifact. Additionally, users could generate and save research sets, linking objects from a variety of institutions for their research.

The creation of a database greatly improved access to information about Yukon collections. The database and accompanying user manual was shared with Yukon First Nations and cultural institutions to promote research, education and cultural reclamation work (Searching for our Heritage: Database User Guide, 2011). However, information management challenges persisted. The database was housed on a Yukon Government computer hard drive and staff would distribute copies of the database via CD. As updates were made to the central database, there was no way to ensure they were updated on each First Nations' copy in a timely fashion. Likewise, if a First Nation added pertinent local information concerning an artifact, or a maker of an object, there was no streamlined way to share this information with the central database administrators. As such, it was difficult to incorporated local First Nations information onto the master database. Over time, this led to a situation where multiple versions of the database were in circulation with little control of information and limited opportunity to engage in a larger dialogue regarding the valuable information it contained.

In 2012 Yukon Government began seeking a solution to address the security of the database information and to promote public awareness and dialogue regarding the *Searching for our Heritage* database information. With funding from Land Claims Implementation, planning began to move the database to an online platform. This will have several advantages. Yukon Government will host the online SFOH database on a central server where it is backed up nightly; securing critical information. This Government server will be linked to a public server outside the Government firewall, allowing an internet connection to access the database. Users will no longer need to have the specialized File Maker Pro software installed on their computer to view the information. First Nations community members, cultural institutions and interested researchers will be able to view and contribute knowledge on the collections to the online database, creating an opportunity for dialogue and sharing knowledge about these objects.

Yukon Government and its partners anticipate that launching an online platform for the *Searching for our Heritage* database will generate increased interest in these historic Yukon collections. In anticipation of this increased communication and information sharing, Yukon Government is adding new functionality to the online version of the database. This includes username and password functionality, unlimited ability to add information regarding artifacts, and new fields to input information on artists/creators, collectors and community of origin. It is anticipated that these new field will be populated with information over time, based on user feedback and interaction with the *Searching for our Heritage* database. Overall, these changes are intended to facilitate dialogue regarding these collections.

Searching for our Heritage and Access to Collections

Increased awareness of historic Yukon collections through an online *Searching for our Heritage* platform is likely to also lead to increased First Nation requests for access to historic cultural collections through repatriation.

While the narrowest definition of repatriation refers to the physical relocation of cultural artifacts and/or human remains, I will examine a broader definition of repatriation as it applies to the Yukon context. In addition to the physical repatriation of artifacts, this includes facilitating access to collections through loans, visits and exchanges as well as creating access to visual and intellectual information associated with cultural artifacts. Increasingly, digital media is enabling the repatriation of cultural, artistic and intellectual property associated with cultural artifacts.

The eventual goal of the *Searching for our Heritage* project is to support the repatriation, where appropriate, of cultural artifacts to their communities of origin, facilitating intellectual access is equally important. Increased intellectual access can have mutual benefits both for the museum with respect to renewed relationships with communities of origin and the wealth of information held locally, and for the First Nation in terms of pride and cultural renewal. This paper will provide background and context for repatriation in Yukon, and explore several relevant case studies where repatriation and increased intellectual access to collections has benefited First Nations communities. Specifically, this paper will examine instances of repatriation of human remains, artifacts and associated cultural knowledge by First Nation communities of origin both in the Yukon and other Canadian jurisdictions. By providing this background, this paper is intended to help Yukon Government, First Nations and community museums understand contexts for physical and virtual repatriation as activities of this nature continue to grow.

Legal and Ethical Premise for Repatriation

Repatriation, or the return of cultural artifacts and human remains to communities of origin, is a practice that has become more prevalent since the 1990s. Increasingly, museums have begun to recognize the rights of First Nations to access artifacts from their own cultures held in museum collections. As awareness of collections rise, First Nations groups are contacting museums with requests for repatriation of culturally significant artifacts and human remains. Within North America, requests for the return of human remains are usually taken seriously. Most institutions recognize that human remains were removed from communities under dubious circumstances and for questionable purposes and are willing to return human remains in their collections when information is available as to community of origin.

For cultural artifacts, the reality remains more contested. Generally, museums only consider requests for repatriation when the First Nation can clearly demonstrate that the objects in question were acquired illegally or unethically. With respect to First Nations' culturally significant, religious or ceremonial artifacts, questions as to the original transfer to the museum collection may be difficult to resolve. The museum may assert that it has the documentation to justify that it owns an artifact. However, these objects originated in oral cultures, often during times of great upheaval, and the terms of transfer may not have been fully understood at the time the artifact was acquired. The debate as to

the rightful owners becomes a question of inherent First Nations cultural rights versus documented proof of ownership.

In Canada, there is no federal legislation that mandates the repatriation of artifacts to First Nations communities. As a result, requests for repatriation are handled at the discretion of the institution holding the artifacts. However, several precedents have prompted many Canadian institutions to be open to requests for access to collections and repatriation from First Nations communities.

North American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

The North American Indian Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), US legislation passed in 1990, changed the approach to repatriation within the United States. NAGPRA protects Native American burial sites and provides a process for the return of significant cultural property, such as human remains, funerary objects and sacred materials (Gunn, 2010, 503-504). This legislation has influenced Canadian repatriation requests in two ways. Firstly, American institutions, accustomed to dealing with NAGPRA claims, are often willing to negotiate with Canadian First Nations groups on the same basis. Secondly, while there is no equivalent legislation in Canada, American practices have influenced major institutions across the world in the way they respond to repatriation requests, particularly those involving human remains and sacred funerary objects (Carvajal, 2013).

However, the impact of the NAGPRA legislation is not without criticism. Firstly, the process is slow and the vast majority or human remains held in museums are of unknown tribal origin. As of 2008, there were 118 400 Native American culturally unidentifiable human remains, 828,641 associated funerary objects and countless sacred objects and objects of cultural patrimony of unknown origin in American federal institutions (Gunn, 2010, 518-524). Further, there have been several cases where remains were contested amongst American tribes and conflicts erupted when remains or associated funerary or sacred objects were returned to one tribe when another tribe also had claims to these ancestral remains. The highly publicized case of the Kennewick man discovered in Washington, where four Native American tribes claimed him as an ancestor and sought to have the remains reburied on their land illustrates this type of conflict (McManamon, 2004). NAGPRA legislation gives museums discretion to assign a tribal affiliation to a collection when documentation is unclear and the question of tribal affiliation may be complex. According to anthropologist Michael Brown and repatriation specialist Margaret Bruchac, this can have the unintended consequence of associating culture primarily with tangible objects and consequently, freezing culture and tradition along rigid lines (2006, 206-207). This raises the challenging issue that due to both colonial interactions and historical changes, the geo-political divides that define modern indigenous groups in both the United States and Canada mean they often share common ancestors and it is difficult to exclusively link ancestral remains or cultural artifacts to one contemporary First Nation.

First Nation groups have criticized the legislation in that it only recognizes communal or tribal ownership of artifacts, when in some traditions artifacts and sacred objects may have been owned by individuals, families, clans or sacred societies (Phillips, 2006, 136). Archaeologists have been critical of the legislation, arguing that they are thwarted from studying ancient human remains that are not specifically linked to a modern Indian tribe (Johnson, 1996).

Nevertheless, NAGPRA legislation has changed the approach to dealing with First Nations human remains and associated funerary objects within North America. Since 1990, the legislation has facilitated the return to communities of origin of 31,995 ancestral remains, 669,554 associated funerary objects, 118,227 unassociated funerary objects and 4629 culturally sacred objects. While imperfect, this large scale return of human remains and sacred objects has promoted reconciliation between museums and indigenous communities, fostered community healing and helped indigenous groups renew and revitalize cultural practices (Brown and Bruchac, 2006, 214-217).

Task Force on Museums and First Peoples in Canada

In addition to the influence of NAGPRA legislation, the 1992 *Task Force on Museums and First Peoples in Canada* promoted improved collaboration and consultation between Canadian museums and First Nations (Assembly of First Nations and Canadian Museums Association, 1992).

The Task Force emerged out of several controversies involving museums and ethnic minority groups in the 1980s, most notably *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples,* organized by the Glenbow Museum as part of the cultural events surrounding the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary (Conaty, 2005, 44). This exhibit, brought together over 650 examples of Canadian First Nations art and artifacts from around the world, including many rarely exhibited early-contact period artifacts (Phillips, 2012, 48). However, long before the opening date, the exhibit became enmeshed in controversy, as it was the target of a boycott by the Lubicon Lake Cree First Nation in Alberta. The Lubicon Cree objected not so much to the exhibit's content as its major corporate sponsor, Shell Oil. The Lubicon had never been assigned a reserve and were forced off traditional lands in the 1970s when oil companies began drilling in their traditional territory. Seeking to draw attention to the activities of Shell and other oil companies and to pressure the Governments of Alberta and Canada to resolve their land claims, they organized a boycott of the exhibition (Phillips, 2012, 49). Additionally, in a separate legal action, Mohawk individuals filed an ultimately unsuccessful court injunction to force the removal of a ceremonial false-face mask from the exhibition (Conaty, 2005, 44). While the Lubicon boycott and ensuing controversies failed to prevent the exhibit from opening, they were successful in drawing international media attention and sparking a heated debate. The controversy surrounding the exhibit drew attention to issues museums were only beginning to grapple with, such as the ethics of corporate sponsorship, the appropriate display of ceremonial artifacts, the return of human remains and cultural property and the imperative to consult First Nations regarding the public representation involving their cultures (Phillips, 2012, 48-51).

Emerging from the 1988 Lubicon Cree initiated boycott of the Glenbow Museum's *The Spirit Sings,* the Canadian Museums Association and the Assembly of First Nations jointly established a task force to examine ways to improve their relationship. Together, 25 representatives produced a report entitled *Turning the Page, Forging New Partnerships between Museums and First Peoples*. *Turning the Page* identified three key areas in need of renewed relationships, namely 1) increased Aboriginal partnerships and representation in museums, 2) the repatriation of artifacts and human remains and 3) improved access to museum collections (1992, 15-16). Emerging from the 1992 Task Force, the Assembly of First Nations passed a resolution reaffirming the right of First Nations to seek intellectual access and

repatriation of cultural property from institutions in Canada and abroad (Assembly of First Nations Resolutions, 1999, resolution #36).

Individual Canadian museums responded by opening their doors to collaborations and repatriation requests from First Nations. The University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology (MOA) has been a particular leader in this regard, with a long history of First Nations collaborations and partnerships (Ames, 1992). Likewise, following *The Spirit Sings* controversy, Calgary's Glenbow Museum engaged in active partnerships with First Nation communities. They created policies to facilitate repatriation requests, signed a memorandum of understanding with the Blackfoot Mookaakin Cultural and Heritage Society and participated in a number of ceremonies to repatriate ceremonial artifacts (R. Janes, personal communication, January 12, 2012). They also collaborated with the Blackfoot Nation to create a joint exhibit, *Nitsitapiisinni: Our Way of Life,* on permanent display since 2001 (Conaty & Carter, 2005, 43). Most large Canadian institutions, such as the Canadian Museum of Civilization and Parks Canada, responded to the Task Force by developing policies regarding repatriation from their collections. While the *Turning the Page* report is now more than twenty years old and in need of renewal, the Task Force undoubtedly moved many Canadian museums towards developing a more collaborative relationship with First Nations communities.

Umbrella Final Agreement

In the Yukon context, the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA), signed in 1993 between Yukon First Nations, Yukon Government and the Government of Canada provided an overarching framework from which individual First Nations negotiated their specific Self-Government Agreements. Chapter 13 of the Umbrella Final Agreement addresses heritage, and specifically supports repatriation to Yukon First Nations:

> Government, where practicable, shall assist Yukon First Nations to develop programs, staff and facilities to enable the repatriation of Moveable and Documentary Heritage Resources relating to the culture and history of Yukon Indian People which have been removed from the Yukon, or are retained at present in the Yukon, where this is consistent with the maintenance of the integrity of national or territorial collections. (Umbrella Final Agreement, 1993, Chapter 13.4.3)

This creates a clear governmental obligation to assist Yukon First Nations as they seek to access and repatriate heritage resources. Due to this obligation, Yukon Museums Unit has successfully obtained Land Claims Implementation funding to support the research and development of the *Searching for our Heritage* project. The language of Chapter 13.4.3 remains open to interpretation, both in terms of defining what "practicable" means and what constitutes "the integrity" of a collection. However, the intent is clear that Yukon Government is obliged to provide ongoing support to First Nations in their efforts to access their cultural heritage resources held at institutions within and beyond the territory.

Repatriation in Yukon

This section will examine several cases of repatriation to Yukon First Nations that have occurred to date, including the repatriation of human remains, the return of artifacts and the revival of traditional skills

and knowledge through accessing collections. These cases are not an exhaustive review of all incidents of repatriation in the Yukon. Rather they are intended as illustrative examples of the range and complexities of repatriation cases that Yukon Government and First Nations are beginning to pursue.

Repatriation in Yukon: Human Remains

To date, cases of repatriation in Yukon mainly involve human remains. Due to Yukon's relatively remote location and later contact period with Europeans, there are fewer cases of the removal of First Nation human remains than in other parts of the Canadian and American west, where looting of burial sites was rampant. There are however some known cases where Yukon First Nation and Inuvialuit human remains were removed from their resting places, and Yukon Government Heritage Branch and the current Heritage Resources Unit has worked with the institutions and First Nations involved to facilitate their return since the 1990s (J. Hunston, personal communication, September 20, 2013).

Cases involving repatriation of human remains specifically from museum collections to First Nations communities include the Frank Russell collection of Yukon North Coast human remains, the Dalton Post Shaman's Burial and Marsh Lake grave remains. Ongoing negotiations involve the Stewart Island burial remains, collected by William N. Irving and held at the Canadian Museum of Civilization and skeletal remains held at the American Museum of Natural History in New York (J. Hunston, personal communication, September 20, 2013).

The first case involved human remains collected along the Arctic Coast in Inuvialuit Territory. In 1892, a University of Iowa graduate student by the name of Frank Russell embarked on a two year solo expedition though the Canadian North. He journeyed along the Mackenzie River to the Arctic Coast, collecting artifacts and specimens along the way. Included in his collections were some skeletal remains from the Arctic Coast, collected in July of 1894. In 1993, the University of Iowa Museum of Natural History identified the remains in their collection as stipulated by NAGPRA and contacted the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC) to facilitate their return. The CMC then contacted Heritage Resources staff with Yukon Government to find an appropriate mechanism and place to return them. Jeff Hunston, Manager of Heritage Resources contacted the Inuvialuit, as these were Arctic Coast remains, to determine the appropriate course of action (Personal communication, September 20, 2013). During pre-contact times, the Inuvialuit, who moved with the seasons in search of food, would bury their dead under driftwood with artifacts added to assist the person in the afterlife. Burial sites such as these are located along the coast in Inuvialuit territory, and due to scant records, it was impossible to know exactly where the remains Russell collected had originated from other than the general localities of Sabine Point, Stokes Point and Herschel Island. Meanwhile, testing was conducted to determine how much arsenic the remains contained, as they had been treated with chemical as a biocide to prevent fungus and mould growth during their time at the University of Iowa Museum of Natural History. Once it was determined that the remains were safe to handle, they were repatriated to the Inuvialuit in 1996. With the assistance of Parks Canada, the remains were returned to Stokes Point in 2006.

A second case of Yukon human remains involved the Dalton Post Shaman's Burial in Champagne Aishihik Territory. This case was sensitive because the remains belonged to a shaman with a powerful reputation. This burial was near the well-used Dalton Post site, and there was concern that the remains

would be pillaged. In 1974, at the request of archaeologist Chuck Hume and Elder Dorothy Wabisca, Dr. Richard E. Morlan, an archaeologist with the Archaeological Survey of Canada at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, removed the remains and associated burial objects to the Canadian Museum of Civilization for safekeeping. While Hume did consult with Elders, the consultation would not be considered an extensive community consultation by today's standards. The decision to remove the shaman's remains was controversial within the community. When Yukon Government Heritage Resources Manager Hunston received repeated requests for the remains from members of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation, he contacted the Canadian Museum of Civilization, who said they had already been returned to the Yukon. Unfortunately, they were nowhere to be found. Eventually he contacted Richard Morlan, who confirmed that he had returned the remains to the Yukon Archives, the only Class A storage facility in Yukon with appropriate environmental controls. Yukon Archives staff at that time had no knowledge of the whereabouts of the remains. Years later, they were traced to a box buried in a storage facility that had been made available for the newly established Heritage Branch of Yukon Government in 1982. Once the location was identified, the remains were promptly returned to Champagne Aishihik First Nation, who returned them to the burial site. The artifacts that accompanied the shaman's burial remain in Ottawa, held in trust for the community (J. Hunston, personal communication, September 20, 2013).

A third case of repatriation of human remains involved the Carcross/Tagish First Nation in the Marsh Lake area. In this case, Dr. Douglas Leechman, an early archaeologist at the National Museum of Canada, the precursor to the Canadian Museum of Civilization, had procured a Chinese tea chest containing First Nation human remains from a spirit house at the Marsh Lake burial site around 1945. Members of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation recalled this and requested its return. Unfortunately, the remains could not be found in the CMC's archaeology collection. Eventually, they were located within the ethnology collection. Upon learning of this, Yukon Government Heritage Branch worked with CMC and the First Nation to facilitate arrangements for their return. Judy Thompson, Ethnology Curator, brought them back to the Yukon, and they were reburied in the Marsh Lake area with a community ceremony (J. Hunston, personal communication, September 20, 3013). Cases of misplaced human remains, or the information as to where they came from becoming disassociated from the remains, are fairly common. In fact, of the estimated 200,000 North American First Nation human remains located in museums around the world, most are of unknown cultural origin (Gunn, 2010, 508-509).

While each of these cases of repatriation was unique and each First Nation involved made their own decisions regarding how to prepare their communities to receive and rebury the remains, there is unanimous agreement amongst Yukon First Nations that human remains should be reburied within their traditional territory whenever possible. This sentiment is widely echoed by First Nations communities in North America, often expressed as the belief that the souls of the ancestors cannot rest in peace until they are returned to their traditional territories and reburied with proper ceremonial respect (McMahon, 2004). Because of the First Nations' strong feelings about this, Yukon Government Heritage Branch collaborated with First Nations to develop guidelines regarding the handling of found First Nation human remains to accompany Chapter 13 of the Umbrella Final Agreement. These were developed through two major workshops involving Yukon First Nations, Yukon Government Heritage

Branch, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and experts in the area. Eight of Yukon's fourteen First Nations as well as the Tetlit Gwich'in First Nation from Fort McPherson, Northwest Territories have signed the guidelines, which created a transparent process for dealing with the repatriation of human remains.

The first trial of these guidelines involved the highly publicized case of Kwäday Dän Ts'ìnchi, meaning Long Ago Person Found, in Southern Tutchone traditional territory. These remains were uncovered by a group of sheep hunters in 1999 in Tatshenshini-Alsek Park in Northwest British Columbia on Champagne Aishihik First Nation territory (CAFN). Kwäday Dän Ts'ìnchi was found with a gopher robe, a woven hat and a number of hunting tools. The remains of the teenager or young man were estimated to be 350 to 500 years old, and represent the oldest well-preserved human remains uncovered in North America (Brooks, 1999). The Umbrella Final Agreement (1993) recognizes First Nations ownership and control of First Nations human remains and ethnographic objects found on their traditional territories (Chapter 13.9.0). Following scientific study, the body was returned to CAFN. Kwäday Dän Ts'ìnchi was cremated and his ashes scattered over the glacier where he was found. He has since been identified as an ancestor to 17 modern CAFN citizens via mitochondrial DNA (Scientists Find 17 Living Relatives of 'Iceman' discovered in BC Glacier, 2008).

There remain four outstanding cases of known human remains to be repatriated to the Yukon. Three of these remains are held at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa. The first involves remains collected by Dr. William N. Irving, an archaeologist with the CMC. During fieldwork on the Yukon River in the 1960s, he salvaged human remains exposed from an eroding bank on Stewart Island and brought them to the CMC for safekeeping. The area where they were found crosses both Nacho Nyak Dun and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in traditional territory. Both First Nations have been informed of their whereabouts and the process of repatriating them is ongoing. The second specimen held at the CMC involves a mandible recovered from a gravel bar along the Old Crow River by the University of Toronto's *Northern Yukon Program*. Originally thought to be from the late Pleistocene era, radiocarbon dating confirmed a late Holocene date for the remains. As this specimen has a more recent origin, the CMC which curates the mandible would be willing to repatriate it to the Vuntut Gwichin First Nation if there is a formal request to do so. The CMC also holds the skeletal remains of an Inuvialuit individual from archaeological site NiVi-4 collected by former University of Calgary graduate student Dr. Bryan C. Gordon. The material was recovered for use in osteological training at the University but subsequently moved to the CMC when Gordon joined the Archaeological Survey of Canada. A formal request for repatriation would likely be positively received, consistent with the CMC's ongoing efforts to address similar claims (J. Hunston, personal communication, October 31, 2013).

The fourth case involves human remains collected along the Arctic Coast by Vilhjalmur Steffasson during the Steffanson-Anderson Expedition in 1907 from Osborne Point along the Yukon Arctic Coast. In response to an inquiry by Jeff Hunston, the American Museum of Natural History indicated that dealing with the issue was not a priority due to their tremendous workload in dealing with NAGPRA repatriations in the United States (J. Hunston, personal communication, October 31, 2013).

Repatriation in Yukon: Council of Yukon First Nations Artifact Collection

Instances of repatriation of artifacts other than human remains to the Yukon are limited. This is partly due to First Nations' lack of information as to where important cultural artifacts are housed, and partly due to a lack of facilities and trained personal. Often museums, as a condition of repatriation, insist that cultural artifacts be returned only to facilities with the capacity to house artifacts with appropriate environmental controls and trained collections staff to care for them. From the museums' perspective, they have invested significant effort and resources into carefully preserving these artifacts, and wish to ensure that a high standard of care will safeguard their preservation for future generations. First Nations may take alternate approaches to the care of their collections, arguing that keeping cultures alive through active use of artifacts supersedes the importance of their preservation to museum standards (Clavir, 2002). Nevertheless, despite differing approaches to engaging with the artifacts, both museums and First Nations generally agree on the importance of valuing and caring for the collections in question. Both sides the debate can come to understand and respect the others' approach through dialogue and engagement with one another.

One significant cultural collection to be repatriated to Yukon involves a collection from the Anglican Church of British Columbia, previously held in the care of the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria. This collection of early contact artifacts includes model toboggans, canoes, articles of traditional clothing and birch bark baskets intricately decorated with quillwork and beadwork. The collection was amassed by missionaries working in Canada's northwest and despite poor provenance, is of historical significance (E. Krahn, personal communication, February 2013).

This particular collection of forty historical First Nations artifacts was gathered between 1860 and 1910 and belonged to the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia. The collection was on display in Victoria's Christ Church Cathedral for many years. In 1965, the artifacts were transferred temporarily to the Royal British Columbia Museum for fumigation. Following this, they were held at the provincial museum in a limbo status as correspondence ensued regarding whether they would be transferred to the provincial museum or returned to the Diocese. Due to the ongoing negotiations, they were never displayed at the provincial museum (A. Hoover, 1965-1980, correspondence). In the mid-1980s, the Diocese decided to put the collection up for sale in order to raise funds for the completion of their cathedral. Due to objections from First Nations and the larger community regarding the potential sale, the Diocese of British Columbia rescinded the sale and instead decided to return them to the Native communities of origin. Their press release included a reconciliatory statement, "we see this decision to discontinue the sale of the artifacts as a symbol of our failure to be sufficiently sensitive to the sensibilities of Indian people, and also of our support of their legitimate pride in their own culture" (Anglican Diocese of British Columbia Press Release, February 10, 1987).

Following this controversy, Joanne Meehan, then Director at the MacBride Museum in Whitehorse, learnt of the collection. During a visit, she identified artifacts that may have Yukon origins. The Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) was also informed of this collection, and in 1997 Grand Chief Shirley Adamson visited the collection in Victoria and also identified items that she believed were from Yukon First Nations. CYFN proceeded to make arrangements with the Diocese to have 17 artifacts repatriated to Yukon, with the proviso that they be kept at the MacBride Museum for safekeeping until an

appropriate First Nations facility was available to care for the collection. At the time, there were no Yukon First Nation cultural centres with an ability to properly care for the artifacts. Yukon Government Heritage Branch assisted by providing funds to hire a conservator to document the artifacts' condition, pack and prepare them for transfer north. The official transfer of the Council of Yukon First Nations Collection (CYFN) took place in 1998 (J. Trapnell, 1998, September).

Aside from the fifty year time span in which they were amassed by missionaries (1860-1910), some cursory notes written by curators at the Royal British Columbia Museum and the condition reports, there is little to explain the artifacts aside from cultural style. In 2006, Judy Thompson, Curator of Ethnology at the Canadian Museum of Civilization and an expert in Athapaskan clothing, had the opportunity to view the collection and offer her professional opinion on its origin (J. Vicksten, 2006, December). Thompson's assessment was that many items in the CYFN collection displayed particularly fine craftsmanship and were likely from the mid to late 1800s. The style of many artifacts, the decorative motifs using quillwork and traditional dyes such as ochre and donjek berries were indicative of their historic provenance. These decorative techniques were used in the pre-contact period before glass beads and commercial dyes were widely adopted among Athapaskan First Nations. During the early contact period, artifacts using these "traditional" decorative methods were sometimes created for trade and sale, even when newer techniques had been readily adopted. Thompson also noted that some items in the collection likely originated in places outside the Yukon, namely, a pair of hide baby slippers (likely Iroquois), a rogan-style birch bark basket with a lid (possibly Chipewyan) and a pair of model snowshoes (J. Vicksten, 2006, December). While Judy Thompson's review of the collection certainly provided a greater understanding of its context and origins, it also underscores the challenges created when provenance is limited.

Although the collection belongs to CYFN, as of 2013 it is housed in storage at the MacBride Museum. Since the repatriation in 1998, there have only been private viewings of the artifacts. No public exhibition has been organized despite an increased demand for cultural displays from emerging First Nations cultural centres, their communities and the public at large. (E. Krahn, personal communication, February 2013). This is in part because individual First Nations rather than CYFN, an umbrella organization, have built cultural centres. The provenance of the collection is unknown, and so it cannot be definitively linked to any modern Yukon First Nation. As a result, there is no clear answer to the question of where it should be displayed.

In Yukon, the cultural landscape is changing and a growing number of First Nations are actively involved in heritage revitalization and building their own cultural centres. Cultural centres are operated by seven independent Yukon First Nations, many with custom built facilities.[2] The Da Kų Cultural Centre, owned and operated by the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation, is the first facility in the Yukon designed to

[2] Yukon Cultural Centres are the Big Jonathan House, run by the Selkirk First Nation in Pelly Crossing, Da Kų run by Champagne and Aishihik First Nation in Haines Junction, Dänojà Zho run by the Tr'ondëk Hw'ëchin in Dawson City, John Tizya Centre, run by the Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation in Old Crow, the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre run by the Kwanlin Dun First Nation in Whitehorse, Tagé Cho Hudän Interpretive Centre run by the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation and the Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre run by the Teslin Tlingit First Nation. All but two are in custom built facilities.

meet Class A standards for museum environmental controls. Officially opened in June 2013, this facility will change Yukon First Nations' ability to safely care for artifacts and could open the door to further artifact repatriation requests.

Repatriation in Yukon: Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the Repatriation of Knowledge

Another approach to accessing collections has been adopted by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, based in Dawson City. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation are also known as the Hän, or Hän Gwich'in, based on their language, Hän. They have used the *Searching for our Heritage* database to identify objects of possible Hän origin and to find out more about their origin, collectors and how they were made. Presently, they do not have an interest in repatriating these artifacts to their community, but rather, gaining as much knowledge as possible to reclaim the skills and pride associated with this cultural heritage (S. Parsons, personal communication, September 17, 2013).

A northern Athabaskan people, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in moved with the seasons to established hunting and fishing grounds. Their material culture was light, as they had to carry it with them. An emphasis on the decorative arts, such as quillwork, moose hair tufting and later, beadwork characterizes Athabaskan material culture over the ornate, carved objects produced by the more southerly and coastal-influenced Inland Tlingit. The Klondike Gold Rush of 1898 was the beginning of particularly abrupt and devastating period of colonial contact for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. They suffered from their lands being rapidly populated and torn apart by outsiders, an onslaught of epidemics and their relocation from traditional hunting and fishing grounds. Due to these factors, much of the traditional material culture of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in was lost. Moreover, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in are perhaps unusual compared to other Yukon First Nations as they do not have strong cultural protocols with respect to the handling and care of artifacts, such as the designation of sacred artifacts or clan owned objects. This is partly due to their historically light material culture, and partly due to the devastating effects of Gold Rush history (S. Parsons, personal communication, September 17, 2013).

Sue Parsons, Collections Manager for the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, has been working with the *Searching for our Heritage* database over the past decade to help facilitate a process of cultural renewal within the community. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in have researched objects on the database for design, patterns, dimensions, proportions, colours and materials in order to share this information with community members. According to Parsons (2013, May), "we hold workshops and traditional camps to reawaken both the skills required to create Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in specific objects and to reawaken the objects by collecting traditional knowledge about them". They have held workshops to make babiche bags, snowshoes, hide tanning tools, moccasins, mittens, drums, bows and arrows, based on traditional models researched through the database. Community artisans have also been able to incorporate historic Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in decorative motifs into their quillwork, beading, moose hair tufting and clothing patterns. This reawakening of historic Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in designs and skills builds community knowledge, pride and well-being.

This use of information from the *Searching for our Heritage* database is part of a larger interest in sharing cultural knowledge within their community. Through projects independent of SFOH, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in have built relationships with national institutions such as the Royal Ontario Museum,

the Canadian Museum of Civilization and local institutions like the Dawson City Museum and Yukon Archives. They have assisted these institutions in enhancing their records by identifying the maker of an artifact or people in historic photographs. Through these projects, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in have been able to create a reciprocal exchange with several institutions, whereby the community gains access to valuable information about the collections and the museum is able to establish a link to the present-day community, bringing context and traditional knowledge regarding the significance of the objects in their care (S. Parsons, personal communication, September 23, 2013).

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in have used the SFOH database to discover which institutions have significant Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in collections. In the future, they hope to build relationships with museums that care for historic Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in collections. Unlike the museums Parsons has contacted as a result of previous collaborations, the museums she has contacted solely as a result of information in the SFOH database have been unwilling to share further information. This hesitation to collaborate is likely due to fears of repatriation requests. It is Parson's hope that museums will become more responsive to building powerful and enriching exchanges between the museums that care for the artifacts and their source communities. The community could benefit through renewed cultural knowledge and ties to their history, and the museum could benefit from learning relevant information related to the artifact, such as the artifact's function and cultural role, the identity of the maker and to what family or region the object's design belonged. This is one of the strong potentials of the SFOH database that has yet to be fully realized (S. Parsons, personal communication, September 23, 2013).

While repatriation may be an avenue that some First Nations wish to pursue, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in have focused on creating a dialogue and exchange with the museums that care for their artifacts. According to Parsons, "We have not become embroiled in ownership issues with museums… possessiveness was a trait that led to hardship historically for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. The concept of belonging, identity, stewardship or guardianship is more in step with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in ideology" (2013, May).

Overall, access to the SFOH database has enabled Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to renew material cultural knowledge within the community. This has been beneficial not only for reviving traditional designs, material culture and artistic practices within the community, but also for overall community health and wellbeing. Through research, workshops, cultural camps, and renewed relationships with institutions holding their collections, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in have been able to use the information in the database to create a "tangible and meaningful force of change for a community" (S. Parsons, 2013, May).

Repatriation and Cultural Reclamation beyond Yukon

The examples of repatriation of human remains undertaken by a number of Yukon First Nations with the support of the Yukon Government Heritage Branch, repatriation of a cultural collection from the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia to the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation reclamation of cultural knowledge and pride associated with historic collections represent three approaches or types of repatriation. Each creates its own challenges, as well as opportunities for renewed community pride, skills and knowledge associated with reclaiming a rich legacy that was taken

from First Nations during colonial contact. Here I will explore examples of repatriation of human remains, repatriation of artifacts and reclaiming material cultural knowledge to First Nations in Canadian jurisdictions outside the Yukon. These case studies will provide an enriched understanding of the community context, challenges and benefits for First Nations working to reclaim cultural patrimony.

Repatriation of Human Remains to Haida Gwaii

The Haida Repatriation Committee, with two community subsets, the Skidegate Repatriation and Culture Committee and the Old Massett Repatriation and Culture Committee was established in the 1990s in response to reports of unethical removal of human remains from an archaeological digs. The initial work of the Old Massett Council and the Haida Gwaii Museum ensured these 23 ancestors were returned to the community. Concurrently, they began investigating an unethical archaeological dig that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s where 45 Haida ancestors were surreptitiously removed and brought to California. This resulted in an RCMP investigation and the remains were seized and returned to the Haida. These incidents prompted Andy Wilson, co-founder of the Haida Repatriation Committee to begin researching Haida ancestors that had been removed and were stored at museums. His disturbing findings prompted the Haida Repatriation Committee to create a letter writing campaign to identify Haida human remains and other cultural treasures at museums around the world (Andy Wilson and the Haida Nation, 2013, January 26). They received responses from institutions around the world, and identified ancestral remains at a twelve institutions worldwide.[3] The Haida Repatriation Committee identified the human remains of 460 individuals that were stored in institutions, in addition to countless cultural treasures (Skidegate Repatriation and Cultural Committee, repatriation.ca). The vast majority had been removed from Haida Gwaii in during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a time of epidemics and cultural decimation, when an estimated 90% of Haida died from smallpox and other epidemics in the aftermath of colonial contact (McMahon, 2004).

The Haida decided to focus on the repatriation of human remains as a priority over cultural treasures, as Haida cultural beliefs stipulated that the souls of the ancestors could not rest until they were returned home (McMahon, 2004). Identifying where the human remains were located was the first step in a long process of bringing those ancestors home. The Committee undertook significant fundraising in order to repatriate their ancestors. At the community level, the Haida Repatriation Committee consulted with Elders and hereditary leaders, who were insistent that the community needed to honour and respect these ancestors by adapting cultural protocols to the ceremony of repatriation. This included sending a delegation to receive the ancestors from the institution, wrapping them in button blankets, laying them in cedar mats inside bentwood boxes, speaking to them in Haida, and accompanying them on the journey home. Once they arrived in their community, they were reburied with traditional ceremonies and a feast to honour the ancestors. It was necessary to revive traditional skills in order to follow the cultural protocols needed to honour the ancestors. For example, they needed to revive the art of

[3] These institutions were: The American Museum of Natural History, The British Museum, Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Field Museum, Oakland Museum of California, Pitt Rivers Museum, Royal British Columbia Museum, Simon Fraser University Department of Archaeology, Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, University of British Columbia, and University of Oregon Museum of Natural History.

making bentwood boxes, a cedar box traditionally used by the Haida (Aboriginal Repatriation of Ancestral Remains and Artifacts, 2013, January 15). Local high school students researched the family crest of each ancestor, which they then painted onto the boxes. Elementary school students made miniature blanket to wrap the remains in. As there was no cultural protocol in place for repatriation and reburial, the Haida drew on their customs to create an appropriate ceremony to honour their ancestors in this unique situation. Thus for the community, the process of repatriation involved cultural revival and a generational transfer of knowledge.

For the Haida, working with the museums to bring home human remains was a learning experience. Many museums were initially skeptical of their requests but once reassured they were seeking to repatriate human remains rather than artifacts at this point, they were generally willing to collaborate. Additionally, several private citizens, who heard of the repatriation campaign through the media, came forward and anonymously returned remains. The largest repatriation effort occurred in 2003, when a delegation of Haida visited the Chicago Field Museum to repatriate the remains of 160 Haida ancestors, collected by George Dorsey and Charles Newcombe between 1897 and 1903. This was the largest repatriation conducted by the Field Museum to a First Nation outside the United States. The Haida Delegation's trip to the Chicago Field Museum included visits to view other cultural treasures, ceremonies to repatriate the remains, public dances and cultural displays at the Museum and a public session, open to the press where they signed the repatriation agreement. Upon their return to Haida Gwaii, staff from the Field Museum joined them for the reburial ceremony and community events. This negotiation and rich cultural exchange epitomizes the Haida approach to repatriation, and has enabled them to be highly successful in achieving their goals without resorting to litigation (Bourgon, 2013, 64).

By 2005, the Haida had repatriated the 460 remains, representing all known Haida Gwaii ancestors from institutions within North America (negotiations are ongoing for the return of human remains from European institutions). Consistent with Haida tradition following the death of a community member, they declared an end of mourning ceremony when the 460 remains had been repatriated. This three day ceremony included Elders placing memorial plaques to honour the dead, the arrival of canoes from other islands, a food burning ceremony, gift giving, a feast, singing and dancing. This ceremony concluded over ten years of dedicated effort on the part of Haida Repatriation Committee members. In the Haida experience, dealing with the difficult history by bringing home human remains helped them strengthen their community, renew and revitalize traditions, and build lasting collaborative relationships with museums worldwide (Skidegate Repatriation and Cultural Committee).

Contested Claims: The Challenges of Artifact Repatriation

Few would argue with the ethics of returning First Nations human remains, often removed from burial sites without permission during an epoch of colonial contact, disease and cultural onslaught. However, when moving beyond human remains to cultural artifacts, questions of repatriation become increasingly complex. Clause 13.4.3 of Yukon's Umbrella Final Agreement (1993) supports the repatriation of heritage resources where it is practicable, and consistent with the integrity of national and territorial collections. However, defining what is practicable and what constitutes the integrity of a collection remains challenging.

The first question to consider is the ethics of removal. In cases where the cultural item was removed without permission of the First Nation and this can clearly be demonstrated, the case for repatriation is strong. This was evident in the case of a carved totem pole, examined in a feature length documentary directed by Gil Cardinal (2003). The G'psgolox Totem Pole was commissioned in 1872 by Chief G'psgolox (Dan Paul Sr.) of the Haisla Nation on British Columbia's North Coast. The pole commemorated Chief G'psgolox's encounter with the spirit, Tsooda, who consoled him for the terrible grief of losing all of his children during an epidemic and bestowed healing medicine powers upon him. Chief G'psgolox, a member of the Eagle Clan commissioned two carvers from the Raven Clan to carve the pole. Once completed, it stood in the now abandoned village of Misk'usa. Haisla and other Northwest Coast traditions stipulate that totem poles, which are often sacred mortuary poles, should stand in the place where they are erected until they succumb to the elements and are returned to the earth. This counters the western approach to managing cultural treasures, which aims to preserve these artifacts permanently.

Rather than return to the earth, the G'psgolox Pole fell victim to the salvage anthropology of the early Twentieth Century. In 1929, Iver Fougner, a Department of Indian Affairs representative sold it to Swedish Consul Olof Hanson. He expressed his rationale for selling it in a letter to the Department of Indian Affairs, "chances are that the pole, if not removed, after some time will fall down and be destroyed" (as cited in "G'psgolox pole," 2006). Instructions from the Department of Indian Affairs to Fougner in 1928 granted him permission to sell and export the pole, "provided that the Indian owners are willing to dispose of it" (as cited in "G'psgolox pole," 2006). The pole was removed from Misk'usa, which had been abandoned in the wake of epidemics, and shipped to Sweden where it became a treasure in the collection of the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm. Even by the standards of the time, it is unclear that Fougner received permission to sell it from the pole's heriditary clan owners (Cardinal, 2003).

Despite the strong ethical case for repatriation, as the pole had been removed without permission from its owners, it took the Haisla Nation 15 years to negotiate the return of the pole from the Government of Sweden. The negotiations involved three trips to Sweden, intervention from the Premier of British Columbia, the gift of a replica pole made by Haisla carvers to the Swedish Museum of Ethnography, and the assurance that it would be kept in an environmentally controlled facility. In 2006, the pole was officially gifted from the Government of Sweden back to the Haisla Nation and returned to their territory (Cardinal, 2003). The Haisla's repatriation of the G'psgolox Pole was the first successful overseas repatriation of a totem pole in Canada. This case clearly illustrates that despite the strong ethical rationale for its return, this repatriation took many years of concerted efforts and skilled negotiations from the Haisla Nation. Even when ethically justifiable, repatriation can be a time-consuming and costly process, requiring a strong commitment from the First Nations involved.

A second question to consider is the nature of the material itself. A strong case can be made for the repatriation of artifacts that are considered sacred and subject to significant cultural protocols, regardless of the circumstances of their removal. The Siksika, one of four First Nation groups belonging to the Blackfoot Confederacy in Alberta and Montana, have had considerable success with negotiating the return of sacred medicine bundles from museum collections (Scalplock, 2006, 65). Beginning in

1996, with the advocacy of the Sikiska Nation, nine Horn Society ceremonial bundles were repatriated to the Nation. The passage of Alberta's First Nations Sacred Ceremonial Objects Repatriation Act in 2000 has helped facilitate the return of more ceremonial medicine bundles from museum collections (Scalplock, 2006, 65). The Siksika have taken the approach of engaging directly with museums, advocating for the return of ceremonial artifacts. Simultaneously, they have worked collaboratively with museums to promote the culturally appropriate care of non-ceremonial Siksika artifacts not subject to repatriation requests. Some of the ceremonial bundles that have been repatriated were sold or given to museum in the past. However, the Siksika have successfully argued that these ceremonial objects belong with the First Nation, regardless of the legitimacy by which a museum acquired them. According to Scalplock (2006) of the Siksika Museum, the return of these sacred objects has resulted in increased membership in sacred Horn Societies and "a revival of traditional teachings and practices," (65).

The Siksika approach of actively engaging with museums to advise them on culturally respectful treatment of Siksika objects in storage and display, has had positive impacts on museums in Alberta and beyond. This has influenced changes to collections management policies at some major museums in Canada. In particular, the Siksika have worked closely with the Glenbow Museum. In 1998 they signed a Memorandum of Understanding that has facilitated a long-term collaborative relationship. Among other things, the *Memorandum of Understanding between the Glenbow Museum and Mookaakin Society* has promoted the repatriation of sacred objects, ensured Blackfoot access to their cultural collections, promoted culturally respectful treatment of collections and fostered a collaborative exhibit development process (R. Janes, personal communication, January 12, 2012). Notably, a large, permanent exhibit entitled *Niitsitapiisinni: Our Way of Life,* opened in 2002, was created through a four year collaborative process with both Blackfoot and Glenbow curators (Conaty, 2003, 230-231).

The final question to consider may be most relevant to the majority of historic Yukon collections located in museums; what is the imperative of museums to return collections that are not human remains or sacred artifacts, but are historically and culturally significant nonetheless? In order to consider the ethical and practical implications of this, I will examine the case of a Mi'Kmaq coat as described by art historian and scholar Ruth Philips in "The Global Travels of a Mi'kmaq Coat: Colonial Legacies, Repatriation, and the New Cosmopolitanism," (2012, 132-154). In the Nineteenth Century, amongst the Mi'kmaq people of eastern Canada and the United States, chiefs commissioned elaborate coats, which were worn on ceremonial occasions. Surviving coats are fine examples of Mi'kmaq textile art of the era, and include elegant silk ribbon applique and complex beaded motifs (Philips, 2012, 133). One such coat, located in a museum in Australia, has been subject to a repatriation request by the Mi'kmaq community in the Millbrook First Nation in Nova Scotia.

The exact provenance of this Mi'kmaq Coat is unknown; it is impossible to confirm who it was made by or for whom it was made. What is known is that in the early 1840s it was obtained by Samuel Huyghue, a young man with an avid interest in local Aboriginal cultures. Based on research conducted by Phillips, it is probable that a New Brunswick Mi'kmaq community presented the outfit to Huyghue or an acquaintance, as part of an adoption ceremony. These ritual adoption ceremonies were part of a Mi'kmaq strategy of gifting coats and conferring "chief" status to influential non-Aboriginals who may be able to help their people. As a friend of the Mi'kmaq people, who was interested in their culture and

sympathetic to their interests, Huygue was adopted in such a manner. Later in his life, Huygue emigrated to Australia. Upon his death in 1891, he arranged for his Canadian First Nation collections, including the coat, to be donated to the National Gallery of Victoria, in Melbourne, Australia (2012, 133-154).

At the time that the National Gallery of Victoria acquired Huygue's collection, museums were focused on acquiring objects that represented cultures from around the world. During the Victorian era, many institutions obtained collections from other countries; amassing an eclectic world collection rather than focusing on one particular culture or geographic region. Norms have changed since this time, and many museums now focus on expanding breadth and depth of a specific collection rather than amassing objects from across the globe. Today, the exhibits at the National Gallery of Victoria are focused on Australian Aboriginal people, in keeping with their national focus on the Indigenous peoples of their own country. It is unknown whether the Mi'kmaq coat was ever on display during the over 100 years it was at the museum. It has not been displayed in recent history and is unlikely to be displayed in the near future as it falls outside the gallery's contemporary curatorial focus. The coat did travel to Canada briefly as part of *The Spirit Sings* exhibit in 1988 and was included in the accompanying catalogue (Phillips, 2012, 149).

In the case of the chief's coat, the repatriation request came from the Mi'kmaq Millbrook First Nation in Nova Scotia. They became aware of the coat in the 1990s, possible from the aforementioned exhibit catalogue, and two community members later travelled to Melbourne to see it. In the 2000s the Millbrook First Nation built the Glooscap Heritage Centre, outside Halifax. The centre opened in 2007 and is the first Mi'kmaq facility built to modern museological standards that could adequately house and care for an object such as the chief's coat (Phillips, 2012, 149). As part of the process of building the museum and designing the displays, the Millbrook First Nation requested the museum lend them the object, with the hopes that this would lead to a more permanent transfer. Indeed, they built one of their displays around the chief's coat. A display entitled "Ceremonial Clothing," was prepared as part of the opening exhibits, with a full-size, dry-mounted colour reproduction of the coat displayed in the case in lieu of the actual coat. The accompanying label made it clear that the community expected the Melbourne Museum to return the coat (2012, 149-150).

The Mi'kmaq claims for the chief's coat in the Huygue collection illustrate the potential complexities of artifact repatriation requests. The Mi'kmaq Millbrook First Nation framed their repatriation request to the Australian museum with the argument that the chief's coat would be highly valued by contemporary Mi'kmaq. They acknowledged that the National Gallery of Victoria legally owned the coat, but argued it would serve a better purpose in their community, which does not have ready access to these types of historic collections (Phillips, 2012, 149). As Phillips points out, there are a number of issues to consider with this request. Firstly, although it is unknown precisely which Mi'kmaq community the coat originated from, research suggests it came from a community in New Brunswick, rather than the Millbrook First Nation in Nova Scotia. Following the introduction of NAGPRA legislation, there have been several cases of ambiguous provenance, where an artifact or human remains was returned to a community despite contested origins, to the objection of other communities with competing claims. The museum, which had invested in caring for and preserving this coat for over a hundred years, may not

readily part with the artifact. On the other hand, the coat is in storage at the Australian museum with no plans for study or display. Arguably, it would serve a more useful purpose displayed at the Glooscap Cultural Centre. Further, collector Samuel Huygue, a man highly sympathetic to the Mi'kmaq and other indigenous peoples may have supported the coat's return to the Mi'kmaq. Australian Aboriginal communities are expressing a parallel desire to repatriate their cultural patrimony from around the world and so the Melbourne museum may be sympathetic to Mi'kmaq interests.

In the end, the Museum Victoria agreed to loan the coat to the Mi'kmaq community, but not to repatriate the object. This is a reasonable outcome of this type of situation, where the artifact is legally and ethically owned by the museum and the precise community of origin is unknown. This is the category into which the majority of historic Yukon First Nations artifacts stored in museums around the world fall. Cases such as the Mi'kmaq chief's coat illustrate the difficulties with repatriating historically significant cultural collections. In these instances, creative solutions, such as long-term loans, visits to collections and increased digital access can help communities promote the historic knowledge, cultural connections and healing though accessing these collections.

Digital Access and the Revival of Skills and Knowledge: The Inuvialuit

The Inuvialuit are one northern group have taken an alternative approach to accessing a historic collection. Since 2009, the Inuvialuit of the western Arctic, have been actively pursuing a relationship with the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, in order to renew ties to their traditional material culture, document Elders' knowledge and engage youth through an interactive educational website. The Inuvialuit, a nation of approximately 5000 Inuit people in the Northwest Territories, reside in western arctic communities in Aklavik, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk and Ulukhaktok. Inuvialuit first met white explorers with the arrival of Scottish fur trader and explorer Alexander Mackenzie, who journeyed down the Mackenzie River to the Arctic Coast in 1789 (Alunik, Kolausok & Morrison, 2003, 58). Sustained contact began in earnest in the mid 1800's with fur traders, missionaries and later whalers establishing themselves in Inuvialuit Territory. The end result of this influx of outsiders, particularly the fleets of whaling ships that overwintered in Inuvaluit Territory between 1890 and 1910 was devastating to the Inuvialuit. Epidemics introduced by whalers decimated the Inuvialuit population by an estimated 90% between the 1890 and 1910 (Alunik et al., 82-89). This had a profound impact on traditional Inuvialuit lifestyles and the material culture they created.

In 1860, Hudson Bay Company clerk Roderick MacFarlane established the Fort Anderson trading post on the Anderson River, the first post aimed specifically at attracting Inuit trade (Alunik, et al., 2003, 67). In 1862, when visiting Fort Good Hope, MacFarlane met Robert Kennicott, a young American naturalist sent by the Smithsonian Institutions to collect natural history specimens from what is now Arctic and Subarctic Canada. Encouraged by Kennicott, MacFarlane became an avid collector of early natural history and ethnographic collections. Between 1860 and 1879 he sent over 5000 natural history specimens and approximately 550 ethnographic artifacts to the Smithsonian. MacFarlane also recruited many unnamed Inuvialuit and Dene to assist with collecting and preparing zoological specimens for shipment. As was customary for the era, a significant portion of the MacFarlane Inuvialuit collection was traded to other institutions, including the Danish National Museum, the National Museum of Scotland and various American Institutions. Numbering close to 300 artifacts, the MacFarlane collection at the

Smithsonian is the most extensive Inuvialuit ethnographic collection in the world. It is particularly rare, because it was collected at the cusp of sustained cultural contact with Europeans that impacted Inuvialuit culture and the objects they created. Although the Inuvialuit had limited direct trade with Europeans prior to 1860, they did have access to trade goods through intermediaries, Dene to the south and Alaskan Inuipiat to the west. The MacFarlane collection contains metal, glass beads and objects fashioned with trade cloth. Unfortunately, the collection had never been fully described, photographed or published in the 150 years it was stored at the Smithsonian Institution. As a result, there was limited knowledge that the collection existed among Inuvialuit communities until the mid-2000s (Daitch, 2007, 26-27).

Awareness of the collection led to an interest from Inuvialuit to view and access the artifacts, made by their ancestors 150 years prior. Stephen Loring of the Smithsonian Institute, Catherine Cockney of the Inuvialuit Cultural Centre, Charles Arnold, retired Director of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre and heritage consultant Natasha Lyons collaborated to raise funds to bring a group of Inuvialuit to conduct a week long workshop to connect with the collection at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. The goal was to facilitate greater access to the collection, document Elder's knowledge and engage youth. In November 2009, the group consisting of Inuvialuit Elders, Youth, a seamstress, Inuvialuit Communication Society members, community organizers and non-Inuvialuit anthropologists, visited the MacFarlane collection. During the week-long workshop, they looked at artifacts, and discussed their materials, where they came from, how they were made, uses and shared stories about life on the land inspired by the objects. Youth members interviewed the Elders' and documented their experiences. Inuvialuit Communication Society members filmed and interviewed group members for a documentary on the project for the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) (Lyons, Hennessy, Arnold & Joe, 2011, 1-4).

Elder Albert Elias reflected upon the experience, "a lot of the objects we saw, we haven't seen before. I think (the collection) is a living document: a living project" (as cited Lyons et al., 4). Invigorated with knowledge and a connection to this historic collection, group members began in 2010 to share their experience with their communities through outreach and education activities. They gave public presentations and visited schools in Inuvik and Tuktoyakuk. Based on the questions they received and feedback from educators, a website was developed, Inuvialuit Pitqusiit Inuuriarutiat/Inuvialuit Living History to share images of the collection and the living legacy of the project with the community and beyond. This website includes teachers' guides and lesson plans for downloading. These were developed based on the interests of teachers and students in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region and compatibility with Northwest Territories curricula. Collections information was also uploaded to Reciprocal Research Network, a website developed by the UBC Museum of Anthropology and four northwest coast First Nations (Reciprocal Research Network). Education kits for schools are in production, with pamphlets describing and illustrating a number artifacts (skin clothing, tools and snow goggles), replicas of these artifacts made by Inuvialuit seamstresses and patterns and instructions on how to create them (Lyons et al., 2011, 10).

The nature of the MacFarlane Collection makes it an unlikely candidate for repatriation. Firstly, there is clear documentation showing that the items were traded, bought or commissioned from Inuvialuit.

Secondly, it consists of everyday objects, such as clothing, tools and pipes, rather than sacred materials and so does not fall under the terms of NAGPRA legislation. Further, it is held in another country and cross-border issues would make repatriation more challenging. The collection has been well-cared for in climate controlled conditions for over 150 years and there is no institution within the Inuvialuit Territory that could provide the same level of care. While there is interest in organizing an exhibit of the collection to travel to the Northwest Territories in the future, project team members acknowledge that the collection is best permanently housed at the Smithsonian where they can be properly cared for (Lyons et al., 2011, 14). According to Stephen Loring, "As a Smithsonian curator there is no greater honor or responsibility than that of caring for and respecting the cultural treasures in our custody. Even the most mundane objects – a dull knife, a broken doll, a harpoon head or stone pipe – carry stories of long ago days and bear witness to the lives of extraordinary people if we only know (or learn) how to listen… These old things are really gifts of the ancestors and they serve as powerful means of connecting the past with the present and the future" (as cited in Lyons et al., 14). The multifaceted Inuvialuit-Smithsonian project is an example of how communities can build relationships with museums and use new technologies to connect and renew interest in their material culture heritage. This demonstrates how activities can use historic collections to revive cultural knowledge and pride even in cases when physically repatriating artifacts is impractical. The Inuvialuit case is just one example in a growing number of projects that use digital media to allow communities increased access to collections from their homelands.

Digital Return

The emerging concept of digital return reflects projects such as the Inuvialuit Smithsonian Project, where digital technologies are used to facilitate First Nations community access to their historic collections. Kim Christen, an anthropologist and self-described digital humanist who has worked with Australian Aboriginals to create a digital archive, first coined the term. The technological solution innovated, Mukurtu, is a free, mobile and open source platform built with indigenous communities to manage and share digital cultural heritage (Mukutru Project). Mukurtu is a Warumungu word meaning "dilly bag," referring a woven Australian Aboriginal bag that was often used to store cultural treasures.

Mukurtu Project

The Mukurtu Project began in 2007 in the remote Central Australian town of Tennant Creek with the creation of the Mukurtu Wumpurrarni-kari Archive. This project was born from the needs of the Waragungu Aboriginal community who wanted an archival platform that allowed them to organized, manage and share their digital cultural materials in keeping with cultural protocols. Using new technologies, Project Director and anthropologist Kim Christen facilitated a process whereby they used new technologies to develop a user-friendly and culturally relevant system embedded with Warmungu social and cultural protocols. The project was so successful that they developed it into a free open source platform for others to use the content management system (CMS) to manage their own materials and distributed under a general public license. The CMS is meant to be 'a safe keeping place' for cultural knowledge and a catalyst for ongoing dialogue about reproducing and sharing cultural materials and knowledge. They have also developed several Traditional Knowledge (TK) license options to enable Indigenous creators to control how sensitive information is accessed and shared by third party

users, in keeping with cultural protocols (Mukutru Project). The CMS has been adopted and adapted by many users that create, digitize and share cultural content relevant to Indigenous communities, including the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island data archive, and in Canada, the Reciprocal Research Network (Mukurtu Project).

Reciprocal Research Network

The Reciprocal Research Network (RRN) was developed by the University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology (MOA) in collaboration with the Musqueam Indian Band, the Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council and the U'mista Cultural Society. The network has uploaded Northwest Coast First Nations artifacts and materials from 21 partner institutions, including renowned institutions such as the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Royal Ontario Museum, the Smithsonian Institution, New York's American Museum of Natural History, and Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford University. There are over 450,000 items on the site, but what makes it unique is the built in research, networking and sharing capabilities (Reciprocal Research Network). Any user can search the approximately 100,000 public artifacts and images by categories such as type, culture, date created, holding institution, collector or object creator. To take full advantage of the network's capabilities, one has to request an account. With an account, users can search the full collection, save projects, join other projects for those with shared research interests, and participate in online discussions regarding their projects or individual artifacts. In addition to serving as an excellent research tool, the RRN facilitates knowledge generation by linking researchers, cultural creators and holding institutions. Under the section, *Knowledge Creation,* users have added information such as the meaning of totem crests, information regarding the manufacturing techniques or an artist's culture, clan and lineage. Access to the visual and descriptive information in the RRN benefits community members who gain access to historic collections from around the world that they cannot easily visit. It also enriches the holding institutions which can share in conversations and gain missing knowledge regarding their collections from cultural communities from which these artifacts initiated.

A truly collaborative model, the Reciprocal Research Network took a decade to develop. The process began in 2000 with funding from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI), which provided 40% of the 41.5 million budgeted for the project (Phillips, 2012, 284-288). The RRN recognized that "museum collections have assumed dramatically renewed significance in the contemporary world," in particularly for primarily oral cultures that created these artifacts (as cited in Phillips, 2012, 287). The visual information stored within collections scattered around the globe is pivotal to triggering memories, stories, latent skills and techniques within First Nations communities as they prioritize cultural revitalization in the twenty-first century (Philips, 2012, 284-285). Launched in 2010, the Reciprocal Research Network stands as an example of "digital repatriation" that links First Nations, museums and researchers into a mutually beneficial network. While digital repatriation cannot replace the physical access and transfer of cultural property associated with "physical repatriation" it is an important way of facilitating access to cultural artifacts, images and text in a way that restores a community's historical knowledge and cultural pride. Co-developed and co-managed between the MOA and Northwest Coast First Nations, the RRN uses new, interactive technologies to undertake community-building (Ivarson et. al, 2008).

Great Lakes Research Alliance for the Study of Aboriginal Arts and Cultures

Another notable Canadian project that facilitates digital repatriation, albeit on a smaller scale, is the Great Lakes Research Alliance for the Study of Aboriginal Arts and Cultures, or GRASAC (Philips, 2012, 289). Spearheaded by Ruth Phillips, the former Director of the Museum of Anthropology and an initiator of the Reciprocal Research Network, GRASAC brought together university researchers, First Nations communities and museums and archives to create a network of researchers focused on Great Lakes Indigenous material culture (Philips, 2012, 290). As part of their process, cross-disciplinary teams visited North American and European museums with significant First Nations Great Lakes collections to study, photograph, update information and assemble the catalogue information associated with many items on the network. They went beyond harvesting from existing collections databases, to researching and curating the collections for the research alliance website (Great Lakes Research Alliance for the Study of Aboriginal Arts and Cultures).

Designed using specialized software created by Idéeclic Inc., a Quebec-based "cybermuseology" firm, the alliance incorporates open-source components into the database, while allowing customization, interactivity and information control for cultural protocols and copyright concerns. As of 2011, there were 3000 records available for study and 200 members in the network. GRASAC was conceived as a research network and all members are expected to be active contributors to the network. In contrast to the RRN, which has a public searchable interface, the GRASAC is "closed" and searchable by members only. According to their website, access to the site is controlled for the three reasons. Firstly, some of the materials housed in museums and archives, and posted to the website are considered sacred within the First Nations communities. As protocols to protect sacred cultural material in the Internet age are still evolving, GRASAC decided to limit public access. The second reason concerns copyright laws. Some of the material on the website, such as digital photography of artifacts, is protected under copyright and GRASAC has obtained permission to share this material with its members, but not the public at large. Finally, GRASAC operates on the principle of reciprocity and expects site users to contribute their knowledge as well utilizing it as a research tool. As such, they have chosen to limit broad public access (Great Lakes Research Alliance for the Study of Aboriginal Arts and Cultures).

While the Reciprocal Research Network and the Great Lakes Research Alliance for the Study of Aboriginal Arts and Cultures share the goal of facilitating "digital return" of material culture knowledge, there are some key differences in how they were conceived and operate, worth considering in context of the Searching for our Heritage Project. Firstly, the RRN mines records from existing museum databases. Members add to the collections data over time by interacting with the information. GRASAC takes a more time consuming approach, where members review, correct and supplement existing information by studying the collection before entering it into the database. Secondly, GRASAC goes beyond material culture, and includes all "heritage items", such as historical documents, photographs, prints and painting. They are also adding a language module to incorporate First Nations terms and concepts. Through connecting all these forms of data, the GRASAC approach enriches the ability of scholars, First Nations community members, and museums and archives to study and engage with cross-disciplinary material relevant to Great Lakes Indigenous culture (Phillips, 2012, 290-291). According to Philips, "finding ways of naming, presenting, and structuring Aboriginal heritage that privilege neither

Aboriginal or Western traditions at the expense of the other is one of the major underlying challenges of projects such as the GKS[GRASAC] and the RRN," (2012, 293).

Conclusion and Considerations for SFOH Project

This report has employed a case study approach to examine three aspects of repatriation to First Nations communities within the Yukon and other jurisdictions of Canada. This includes the repatriation of human remains, the repatriation of artifacts, and the repatriation of skills and knowledge associated with historic cultural collections.

Within the Yukon, most repatriation to date has involved the return of human remains, either collected inappropriately by today's standards or salvaged as part of attempts to prevent looting and damage. Since the 1990s, human remains have been repatriated from the Museum of Iowa Natural History and Canadian Museum of Civilization to the Inuvialuit, Champagne and Aishihik First Nation and the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. There are four outstanding cases of known human remains of Yukon origin. These are held at the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the Museum of Natural History in New York. With these cases, Yukon Government's role has been to coordinate with the museums and First Nations to help facilitate the return of human remains to the communities of origin. Further, Yukon Government has worked with First Nations to develop guidelines regarding the repatriation of newly found First Nation human remains. This is consistent with Government's mandate under Chapter 13 of the Umbrella Final Agreement, to support Yukon First Nations with their repatriation of heritage resources when feasible (1993, Clause 13.4.3).

Likewise, *Searching for our Heritage (SFOH)*, a longstanding project initiated and supported by Yukon Government's Museum Unit, further supports the repatriation goals of the Umbrella Final Agreement by identifying where artifacts of Yukon cultural patrimony are located. To date, researchers have identified over 6000 artifacts in 170 institutions worldwide. Information and images of these artifacts have been entered into a database that is easily searchable by categories such as type of artifact, holding institution or cultural origin. SFOH broadly supports the goals of repatriation by making knowledge about Yukon's material culture accessible and searchable by Yukon First Nations and interested researchers.

The repatriation of cultural artifacts to First Nations communities remains limited to date. This report examined the case of the repatriation of a cultural collection from the Anglican Church Diocese of British Columbia to the Council of Yukon First Nations. This historically significant collection was amassed by missionaries between 1860 and 1910. However, this particular repatriation highlights a number of issues to consider with respect to the repatriation of cultural artifacts to Yukon. The documentation surrounding this collection is weak, creating a situation where little is known about the history, makers, origins and uses of the artifacts, aside from what can be gleaned through visual interpretation. Some of the artifacts in the collection likely did not originate in the Yukon. This makes it difficult to interpret cultural history through these artifacts or align any of them with a modern Yukon First Nation. Rather than an being anomaly, this situation is typical of many historic collections in outside institutions; poor provenance information could create ambiguities or competing claims as to which modern Yukon First

Nation they should be returned. In this particular case, the collection is owned by the Council of Yukon First Nations, an umbrella organization, and stored for safe-keeping at the MacBride Museum in Whitehorse. Since their return, there have been extremely limited opportunities for First Nations or the general public to view or learn from this collection. It has not yet been displayed in a public exhibition. This underscores the point that in order to reclaim cultural knowledge, the act of repatriating a collection is only as meaningful as the process of engaging with the collection.

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, an Athabaskan Yukon First Nation based in Dawson City, have taken a different approach to accessing cultural collections. Instead of pursuing repatriation, they have chosen to focus on seeking information from cultural collections in order to revive cultural skills, knowledge and pride associated with cultural collections. They have done this using a twofold approach. Firstly, they have researched the data stored in the *Searching for our Heritage* database to find collections of Hän cultural origin, in order to study the types of material cultural objects in these collections and the decorative techniques and motifs. Secondly, they have engaged in exchanging information and learning from the Hän collections in institutions such as Yukon Archives, the Royal Ontario Museum and the Canadian Museum of Civilization. These collections have been the basis for workshops to revive traditional skills and craftsmanship by making items such as babiche bags, snowshoes, hide tanning tools and moccasins. Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in have not focused primarily on questions of ownership or repatriation of cultural collections, but rather with how they can enhance their community and promote pride and cultural healing through engaging with their historic material culture. It is their hope that more museums will demonstrate a willingness to open themselves up collaborations and exchanges with First Nations in a mutually beneficial manner.

In order to gain a broader understanding of the opportunities and challenges of engaging with repatriation, I have examined a number of cases involving repatriation from museums to First Nations in jurisdictions outside the Yukon. With respect to the repatriation of human remains, the experience of the Haida Nation in British Columbia is informative. They experienced rampant looting of human remains and associated funerary objects in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, during an intense period of contact that resulted in the loss of 90% of their population through epidemics and the abandonment of many villages. Beginning in the 1990s, they initiated a quest to bring home the remains of Haida ancestors from museums and private collections in North America and Europe. Over a period of 15 years, they repatriated 460 ancestral remains, representing all known Haida remains in North American institutions. The repatriation effort took ongoing dedication from two community based repatriation committees that comprised the Haida Repatriation Committee. In addition to raising considerable funds and undertaking delicate negotiations with museums, the committees consulted with Elders to create a culturally appropriate repatriation ceremony for returning ancestors. This necessitated reviving numerous cultural traditions, such as carving bentwood boxes, making button blankets, using songs, dances, the Haida language and ceremonies. As a result, the Haida not only successfully repatriated their ancestors, but revived traditions in order to honour the ancestors properly. This strengthened and promoted healing amongst Haida citizens.

As there is no federal legislation in Canada mandating repatriation, museums generally use their discretion when responding to repatriation requests. Influenced by the introduction of American

NAGPRA legislation, the ethos among Canadian institutions has been to repatriate human remains to communities of origin, when the First Nation community can be definitively identified. When considering the repatriation of artifacts to First Nation communities of origin, the factors museums consider include whether an artifact was obtained ethically, the nature of the material in question, the ability of the community to adequately care for the artifact, and the value of the artifact to the community versus the museum. Further, all cases of successful repatriation examined in this report hinged on the First Nation involved building a respectful relationship with the museums holding the artifacts, and undertaking complex negotiations, often involving compromise. In 2006, the Haisla Nation of British Columbia successfully repatriated the G'psgolox pole from the Swedish Museum of Ethnography, representing the first repatriation of a totem pole from outside of Canada. In 1929, this totem pole had been taken from a village that had been abandoned in the wake of epidemics. It was sold to the Sweden Consul to Canada, with the permission of the Department of Indian Affairs. Despite evidence that this pole was removed without consultation with its hereditary clan owners, it took the Haisla Nation 15 years of negotiations and compromise to secure its return. This demonstrates that the time consuming and often costly process of repatriation requires a firm commitment from the First Nations involved.

Generally, a strong case can be made for the repatriation of artifacts considered sacred or ceremonial, even when they were legitimately obtained by the museums involved. The Siksika, a Blackfoot Nation in southern Alberta, have had success with negotiating the repatriation of medicine bundles from a number of museum collections. The Siksika have taken the approach of negotiating directly with museums, advocating for the return of their ceremonial bundles, while respecting the integrity of the museums' overall Blackfoot collections. This strategy has paid off not only in terms of the successful return of medicine bundles, and the revival of traditional ceremonial practices, but in opportunities to collaborate directly with museums on exhibit development and respectful collections management practices.

The last case examined in this report involved a chief's coat collected in the 1840s from the Mi'kmaq First Nation, curated by the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia. While the exact provenance of the coat is unclear, it was likely gifted by a New Brunswick Mi'kmaq group to a non-aboriginal person in a ritual adoption ceremony. Regardless of exact origins, this coat, while culturally significant for its age and decorative style, is not considered a sacred object. It was acquired both legally and ethically by the Australian museum and preserved in fine condition for over 100 years. In this case, the Mi'kmaq claim to the coat revolved around its cultural value to the First Nation versus its limited use it in storage in the Australian museum. Further, the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq's assured the Australian museum that they would be able to care for the coat professionally in their new heritage centre, built with museum standard environmental controls. While this particular case was resolved with a loan of the coat to the Millbrook Mi'kmaq First Nation, it highlights the complexities and competing claims surrounding repatriation requests for objects that are not human remains or sacred artifacts and were legally and ethically obtained.

Based on research using the *Searching for our Heritage* database, the majority of Yukon collections housed in museums elsewhere fall into this latter category; collections with historic and cultural

significance, gaps in the provenance information, ethically obtained and legally owned by the museums who have carefully preserved the artifacts for long periods of time. In such cases, repatriation may not be the most expedient solution for communities seeking to obtain the cultural knowledge and revive skills and traditions associated with these artifacts. Rather, creative solutions, such as facilitating digital access, museum visits, collaborations with museums and artifact loans would serve the purpose of increasing access to collections and promoting cultural revitalization. To this end, this report examined a number of projects that, like *Searching for our Heritage,* use digital technologies to facilitate First Nation access to museum collections.

In the north, the Inuvialuit of the western Arctic have been working directly with the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History to gain access to the MacFarlane Inuvialuit collections, collected in the 1860s on the cusp of dramatic social change. The project has involved an extended visit to the collection by community representatives, community outreach, curriculum development, the creation of replica objects, and a website highlighting the Inuvialuit's engagement with the collection, *Inuvialuit Living History/Inuvialuit Pitqusit Inuuniarutait.* The effective use of digital access is demonstrated by the Reciprocal Research Network, a large interactive website developed by UBC Museum of Anthropology in collaboration with Northwest Coast First Nations, which features 450,000 First Nation artifacts and materials uploaded from 21 partner institutions. A further example is the Great Lakes Research Alliance for the Study of Aboriginal Arts and Cultures (GRASAC), based in Ontario. It facilitates digital access to Great Lakes First Nation collections through a web-based network. Unlike the RRN, GRASAC goes beyond simply mining existing collections data to re-curating the collections. As part of their design process, interdisciplinary teams visited collections to study, photograph, and assemble the information ultimately uploaded to the network. Another significant difference is that the GRASAC website does not have a public interface, but is closed to a controlled user community. Their justification for this is based on emerging cultural protocols with respect to digital information and the fact that many images and material on the website are subject to copyright restrictions.

As the *Searching for our Heritage* project prepares to extend its reach by launching its database through a web-based platform, it is important to consider the successes and challenges of current digital technology projects in increasing First Nations access to historic cultural collections. The models provided by RRN and GRASAC are those that most closely fit SFOH in terms of stated aims and process. As such, they should be examined closely as the SFOH project launches its online, collaborative platform. In particular, the SFOH project should ensure permissions have been granted by museums to share information online and consider how information from museums will be shared, how contributions from First Nations, researchers and interested public members will be vetted for accuracy and incorporated into the database, and how copyright material is to be treated. Careful attention must also be paid to cultural protocol surrounding artifacts, some of which may be considered sacred or ceremonial by the First Nations involved. The two emerging models of digital databases for First Nation museum collections, open and closed, both have advantages and disadvantages. Open databases have the potential for broad reach and social engagement, but have the disadvantage of some museums declining to participate due to copyright concerns, less community control of how cultural protocols are applied in a digital age and finally, less control over the accuracy of information posted to the online

platform. Closed databases, while limited in terms of scope, can control for copyright, cultural protocols and the accuracy of collections' information.

In summary, the repatriation of human remains, artifacts and the reclamation of associated cultural knowledge from museums and related institutions to First Nations communities is a complex and multifaceted issue. As the case studies of repatriation to First Nations communities of origin have shown, there is no one size fits all answer to the issue of repatriation. The likelihood of First Nations successfully negotiating repatriation requests depends on a number of factors including the nature of the material in question, the ethics of how it was originally obtained by the museum, the ability of the First Nation to care for the artifacts and the perceived relative value to the First Nation versus the museum. Emerging digital technologies promise great potential for increased access to information, and associated cultural knowledge, community pride and healing associated with historical artifacts in museum collections. However, a number of questions remain regarding how the information is accessed and used. Community cultural protocols surrounding sensitive artifacts in an online space will need to be developed as projects of this nature emerge. Regardless of the type of repatriation, be it of human remains, physical artifacts or digital information, the First Nations who have successfully used repatriation for community healing and cultural revitalization have demonstrated great negotiation and mediation skills and a willingness to find creative solutions that best respond to their community circumstances.

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