Historic Indian Publications by the US Federal Government

Part One: Bureau of American Ethnology

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This is the first of three articles based upon presentations called Historic Indian Publications by the US Federal Government. This first article is on the Bureau of American Ethnology, the second article is on the Commissioner of Indian Affairs while the third one will cover numerous publications from the Census as well as other publications including Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties and the Handbook of Federal Indian Law. Most of the titles that will be discussed from these three articles can be found online from at least one source such as Google Books (books.google.com/), HathiTrust (www.hathitrust.org/) or the Internet Archive (https://archive.org/details/texts). All of these titles are accessible from the Native American Historical Resources webpage (www.se.edu/library/government-information/native-american-historical-resources/) at Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

The Bureau of Ethnology, which was later called the Bureau of American Ethnology in 1897, was established under the supervision of the Smithsonian Institution in 1879 after Congress appropriated funds to study the culture and history of Native Americans. The materials collected by the Geographical & Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region that relate to Native American tribes were transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Smithsonian. Since John Wesley Powell, a geologist and explorer of the American West, initiated research among the western tribes, he served as its first director until his death on September 23, 1902.1

There are five series that were published by the Bureau of American Ethnology: Introductions, Contributions to North American Ethnology, Annual Reports, Bulletins and Miscellaneous Publications. All five of these series have been digitized by the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL). The BHL (www.biodiversitylibrary.org/), which has a partnership with the Internet Archive, is a consortium of natural history and botanical libraries that cooperate in digitizing and making accessible the legacy literature of biodiversity held in their collections.2

The Introductions series of four books was designed to promote research on Native American tribes and includes two editions on the study of Indian languages written by John Wesley Powell. The first edition was published in 1877, while the second edition came out in 1880. The other two publications were also published in 1880. One of them, the Introduction to the Study of Sign Language among the North American Indians, was written by Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Garrick Mallery. The other one is titled the Introduction to the Study of Mortuary Customs among the North American Indians and it was written by Dr. H. C. Yarrow. All four of these publications are accessible from this search link: www.biodiversitylibrary.org/search?searchTerm=bureau+of+ethnology+and+introduction.

Another series called the Contributions to North American Ethnology includes eight volumes that were published from 1877 to 1890. The first three volumes were about Native Americans in Alaska and on the West Coast of the United States. Most of the volumes within the Contributions series contain linguistic materials. A volume eight was not published. The volumes for the Contributions to North American Ethnology are:

Volume 1: Part I Tribes of the Extreme Northwest; Part II Tribes of Western Washington and Northwestern Oregon
Volume 2: The Klamath Indians of Southwestern Oregon (2 volumes)
Volume 3: Tribes of California
Volume 4: Houses and House-Life of the American Aborigines
Volume 5: Observations on Cup-Shaped and other Lapidarian Sculptures in the Old World and in America; On Prehistoric Trephining and Cranial Amulets; and A Study of the Manuscript Troano
Volume 6: The Cegiha Language
Volume 7: A Dakota-English Dictionary
Volume 9: Dakota Grammar, Texts, and Ethnography

All of these volumes are accessible from this BHL link: www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/41404.

The Annual Reports of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution contain not only the reports from the director of the Bureau of American Ethnology, but it also included accompanying papers on Native American anthropology and archeology through the Forty-Seventh Annual Report. The Forty-Eighth Annual Report has an index for the first forty-seven annual reports. The forty-ninth through the eighty-first annual report contain only the director's report. The last director's report was published in 1965. The link for the first fifteen annual reports from the BHL is www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/38077, while the rest of the annual reports are accessible from www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/37968.

There are a couple of interesting titles within these annual reports. One was a paper written by Charles C. Royce titled The Cherokee Nation of Indians: A Narrative of their Official Relations with the Colonial and Federal Governments. It is part of the 1883–1884 Fifth Annual Report that was published in 1887. This paper is not only about the treaties from 1785 to 1868 between the Cherokee Nation and the US government, but it also includes the historical data on the events that led up to the negotiations and the subsequent period connected with the results of each treaty.

Another title is the Indian Land Cessions in the United States, which was compiled by Charles C. Royce. It was published in 1899 in part two of the 1896–1897 Eighteenth Annual Report as well as part of the US Serial Set Number 4015, which is House Document Number 736. This comes from the 1st Session of the 56th Congress. The Indian Land Cessions contains information on the Indian policies of the French, Spanish, English, and the United States as well as the original thirteen original colonies. It also has the schedule of Indian land cessions, a list of land cession by tribes and sixty-seven cession maps. The schedule of Indian land cessions contains the date of the land cession, the name of the tribe, the description of the cession or reservation, the historical data, and remarks and the designation of the land cession on a map. These cession maps can be seen in great detail from the US Gen Web Archives website (usgwarchives.net/maps/cessions/). The numbers on a cession map represents the Indian land cession number for each tribe. There are a total of 720 cession numbers. There is also an interactive website called The Invasion of America: How the United States took over an Eighth of the World (invasionofamerica.ehistory.org/). This is an ehistory.org project and Claudio Saunt, a history professor from the University of Georgia, is the project director. By clicking on a land cession, the name of the tribe, the date, and the land cession number can be found within a box. These boxes have two links to other websites. The first one has a related treaty link that goes to the corresponding treaty of the land cession from Indian Affairs: Law and Treaties by the Oklahoma State University Library Electronic Publishing Center (digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/). The other link gives a description of the land tract from the Internet Archive's version of the Indian Land Cessions of the United States (https://archive.org/details/annualreportofbu182sm). The Library of Congress also has the Indian Land Cessions of the United States (memory.loc.gov/ammen/amlaw/lwss-ilc.html) online from the A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates 1774–1875 website.

The next series is called the Bulletins. It began in 1887 and was similar to the Annual Reports because it also has papers on anthropology and archeology, but there were also a lot of reports on linguistics, music, and other subjects as well. There were 200 Bulletins that were published and it was superseded in 1965 by a new series called Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology. The link for the first twenty-four Bulletins is www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/37878, while the link for Bulletins 25–200 is www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/37999.

There are some titles that pertain to history and culture. Bulletin 30, the Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, was edited by Frederick Webb. This two part handbook has information on Indian tribes, people, and places. The last part of part two includes an alphabetical listing of synonyms that can be used as cross references on the names of Indian tribes and a bibliography. The next four titles were written by an anthropologist named John Swanton. Bulletin 43, Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and Adjacent Coast of the Gulf of Mexico, was published in 1911. Bulletin 73, which was published in 1922, was titled Early History of the Creek Indians and Their Neighbors. It contains a section on population from the 1700's through the year 1919. The Indians of Southeastern United States published in 1946 is Bulletin 137. An interesting map from this title is called Locations of Indian Tribes in the Southeast at Different Periods. Bulletin 145, The Indian Tribes of North America, was published in 1952. This book divides the tribes by each state in the United States as well as Canada, the West Indies, Mexico, and Central
America. It describes the location of where the tribes lived as well as their history and population. It also has four maps that illustrate the locations of Indian tribes in North America. Due to the large size of these maps, they are much easier read from the physical book than they are from the BHL.

The last series is called Miscellaneous Publications. The BHL has a title called Miscellaneous Papers Relating to American Indian Languages (www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/41408) that contains several titles and two maps. It begins with Linguistic Families of the Indian Tribes of North America with a provisional list of the principal tribal names and synonyms. Next is a map called Linguistic Stocks of American Indians North of Mexico by J. W. Powell, which was published in 1891, and can be found on the BHL by clicking on “Foldout” after page 55. The following two titles are reprints of the Bibliography of the Athapascan Languages from Bulletin 14 and Bibliography of the Chinookan Languages from Bulletin 15. The other map with a slightly different title called Linguistic Families of American Indians North of Mexico by J. W. Powell was published in 1906. It can be found by clicking on the word ‘Foldout’ after page 81 of the previous title. The 1915 version of the map of Linguistic Families of American Indians North of Mexico by J. W. Powell can be found from the BHL at www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/43838. This map can also be found in print from the Census publication called Indian Population in the United States and Alaska—1910. The last items are three article reprints from Bulletin 30, the Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico. The articles were titled “Bureau of American Ethnology with List of Publications,” “Mission Indians of California,” and “Missions.” This search link gives a list of eight Miscellaneous Publications in the BHL: www.biodiversitylibrary.org/search?searchTerm=bureau+of+ethnology+and+miscellaneous+publication. Other than the 1915 map and the miscellaneous papers volume, the other six volumes in the BHL are: List of Publications of the Bureau of American Ethnology: With Index to Authors and Titles (1956 and 1962 editions); Proof-sheets of a Bibliography of the Languages of the North American Indians; Circular of Information regarding Indian Popular Names; A Collections of Gesture-signs and Signals of the North American Indians, With Some Comparisons; and Dictionary of American Indians North of Mexico.

The Smithsonian Institution has a website based on Bulletin 200 called List of Publications of the Bureau of American Ethnology (www.sil.si.edu/DigitalCollections/BAE/Bulletin200/200title.htm). This website has a list of all of the titles from each of these five series: Annual Reports, Bulletins, Contributions to North American Ethnology, Introductions, and Miscellaneous Publications. It also has an index to authors and titles for these series as well.

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References
2. Biodiversity Heritage Library “About” page, biodiversitylibrary.org/About.