

HISTORY OF SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY NATIVE  
AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL/ETHNOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS:  
1949-2017

Jeffrey Boland Fentress, Ph.D.

The following timeline lists significant events in the history and status of SFSU Native American/archaeological collections.

1949

Adan Treganza founded the SFSU Department of Anthropology. The SFSU campus was located at Buchanan and Waller. The first SFSU archaeological excavations were conducted in 1949 at Ca-Ala-328 in Newark. Field classes at Ca-Ala-328 continued until 1968.

1953

The SFSU Anthropology Department moved to Lake Merced campus. Treganza started the SFSU Archaeological Survey and Anthropology Museum. Archaeological field projects were conducted throughout California. Anthropology and Classics collections were housed in the HLL (later HSS) basement-“steamroom.” Classics collections included the Egyptian mummies from Sutro Baths.

Late 1950s

Treganza began archaeological work at dams and reservoirs for government agencies. This work by Treganza and others presaged the cultural resource management archaeology (CRM) of the modern era. SFSU became a principal repository in central California for both Native American and historic archaeological materials. Often collections had been stored at various locations including private homes, universities, and government agencies prior to being received at SFSU.

Early 1960s

Treganza and his colleagues began accepting Native American “ethnographic collections” (baskets, clothing, etc.) from donors during the 1950s. The first ethnographic catalog was started in 1963. Eventually, collections from across the US and around the world were curated by the Anthropology Department.

1968

Adan Treganza died. The Treganza Anthropology Museum (TAM) was named after him and included both archaeological and ethnographic collections. TAM managers in succeeding years included James Dotta, Robert Schenk, Robin Wells, and finally Miko Yamamoto in 1988.

1969-1978

Michael J. Moratto was hired as archaeology professor to replace Treganza. Archaeology

at SFSU moved towards environmental impact work with passage of CRM laws (e.g., National Environmental Protection Act 1970). Moratto and Tom King conducted major CRM projects in California.

1978

Gary Pahl was hired to replace Moratto. Pahl conducted SFSU field classes in Marin, Contra Costa, and Santa Clara counties.

1980-1982

The Anthropology Department moved to Science Building. Collections were divided between HLL basement and Treganza Museum rooms. Pahl built an archaeology facility at Romberg Tiburon Center (RTC) Building 36. Pahl moved most collections from the HLL “steamroom” to RTC. Pahl and Miley Holman (assistant curator of TAM) started the Tiburon Archaeological Research Group (TARG). TARG began housing collections from private archaeological companies.

1992

A landslide at RTC Building 36 destroyed an unknown number of collections. Pahl got a grant from Marin Foundation to salvage the remainder of the collection. The remaining collections were moved to RTC Building 50, SFSU Science Building Room 2, and Lakeview Center basement. SFSU continued as a collections facility for the central California.

1996-1999

The SFSU NAGPRA Program began in 1996, with Julie London as NAGPRA Coordinator. NAGPRA Program was part of Anthropology Department. In 1996, SFSU Native American collections were located in Science rooms 2, 271, 273, 391, 395, HSS (HLL) basement, RTC Building 50 (WWII barracks), Lakeview Center basement, and various Anthropology department offices. The NAGPRA office was established in Science 115. The HSS (HLL) basement collections were moved to Science 115. Pahl wrote the first SFSU NAGPRA Documentation and Consultation grant in 1998 (\$90,000.00). Jeffrey Boland Fentress was hired in 1998 as ethnographic consultant under the grant and became NAGPRA Coordinator in 1999.

Administrative responsibility for Treganza Museum collections was divided between the Treganza Museum and the NAGPRA Program during this time. Native American and historic archaeological collections were placed under the aegis of the NAGPRA Program. The Treganza Museum retained responsibility for collections of Native American objects such as baskets and pottery.

2000

SFSU NAGPRA Program artifacts and facilities were tested for contamination in conjunction with an SFSU conference on museum contamination put on by Dr. Lee Davis. Mercury and arsenic were found throughout the collections and collections

facilities in the Science Building.

2001

SFSU NAGPRA Program was ordered to stop accepting archaeological collections for storage by the university administration. The last collections were accepted by SFSU in 2001.

2005

After action by the NAGPRA Program and the Anthropology department, RTC Building 50 storage rooms were painted, the roof and windows were patched, and lead paint remediated. Prior to the cleanup, the roof leaked, rain came through broken windows and all areas were covered in lead paint which had fallen off ceilings and walls.

2007

Lakeview Center was scheduled for destruction. Science 115 underwent renovation for 6 months in order to house existing collections plus Lakeview Center materials. Science 115 collections and office were moved to the Hensill Hall rooftop greenhouse. Lakeview Center collections were moved to Science 212. After Science 115 renovations were complete, collections at Hensill Hall and Science 212 were all moved to Science 115. By the end of 2007, SFSU archaeological collections were consolidated in Science 115, Science 2, and Romberg Tiburon Center Building 50.

2008-2010

The NAGPRA Program was transferred from the Anthropology Department to the Provost's Office under Assistant Vice President Enrique Riveros-Schäfer. The Program implemented the first computer database system for archaeological collections and a document scanning project. Katherine Wallace (Hupa, Karuk, Yurok) was hired as Cultural Liaison for the Program on temporary basis. In 2009, archaeological collections stored at SFSU by private archaeological firms were taken under the legal control of SFSU, following a process designated by University council. In 2009, RTC Building 50 collections were tested for contamination; lead contamination was found throughout the storage areas.

2010-2012

In 2010, Fentress wrote the 2<sup>nd</sup> SFSU NAGPRA grant (\$90,000.00) to fund inventory and consultation work on 39 site collections from Marin and Sonoma with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. The grant report was completed in 2012. In 2012, the NAGPRA Program was transferred to the Dean's Office of the College of Liberal and Creative Arts, under Dean Paul Sherwin. The NAGPRA Program was given responsibility for all Native American collections in the Treganza Anthropology Museum.

2013-2014

In 2013, Fentress wrote the 3<sup>rd</sup> SFSU NAGPRA grant (\$87,289.00). The grant funded

inventory and consultation work on 23 burial site collections from Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties stored at SFSU by private archaeological firms. In January 2014, the Science building was shut-down due to toxic contamination including lead paint, asbestos, and the previously reported mercury and arsenic. A temporary NAGPRA office and lab was set up in Humanities Building. The Science Building was reopened in May 2014 following remediation. In July, 2014, Paul Sherwin retired and was replaced by Daniel Bernardi, Interim Dean of College of Liberal and Creative Arts.

2015-2017

Katherine Wallace was given .50 permanent staff position. Non-Native American collections were moved out of TAM rooms in Science building by the Museum Studies department. The Native American ethnographic collections were organized by tribal area. In 2016, the 2013 NAGPRA grant was completed. In June 2016, the NAGPRA Program was transferred to the American Indian Studies Department in College of Ethnic Studies.