

American Indian Libraries Newsletter



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Library Service for Chicago's Native Americans

Lawrence A. D'Urso

Communication lines between Native Americans and agencies serving this unique American ethnic group have been flourishing since the opening of the Chicago Public Library's Native American Information/Referral Center at the temporary central library, twelfth floor, 425 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611; (312) 269-3229.



Photo by Phil Moloitis
Lawrence D'Urso

Chicago, like many urban centers, is a magnet that lures people with hopes of jobs and a better life. Many Native American people have come to the city seeking jobs, educational advancement, and other opportunities. Chicago's Native American Committee estimates that there are currently 20,000 American Indians residing in the city, many of whom have come within the past ten years (the 1970 census enumerated 6,576 persons). More than one hundred tribes are represented in this constantly increasing population, with the largest groups being the Chippewa and the Sioux. Most are concentrated in the Uptown neighborhood on the city's North Side, with the remainder scattered throughout other North Side areas.

Faced with the problem of adjusting to an urban environment, there is a need for many services. There are at least thirteen organizations that provide social services specifically for the Native American population, but adequate library service has been lacking. At the request of the community, the Chicago Public Library sought and received a two-year federal LSCA Title I grant for the purpose of establishing an information service directed toward the American Indian community of Chicago. Known as the Native American Information/Referral Center, the project's goal is to provide accurate information resources reflecting the current concerns of urban Native Americans. In the spring of 1980, the staff was hired and the center's efforts began.

A poetry reading and a demonstration of traditional Indian dances highlighted the official opening of the center.

Lonnie Poco of the Chicago Indian Artist Guild read original poetry, and fifteen dancers in full costume and four singers-drummers from the American Indian Center, 1630 W. Wilson Avenue, performed during the official opening.

Several members of the library's Native American Center's Advisory Committee attended the opening, including Ellen Cortes, an accountant with the American Indian Health Service of Chicago; Louis Delgado, director of the Community Board Training Project for the Native American Educational Services; Francis Jennings, director of the Center for the History of the American Indian at the Newberry Library; Joan Jourdan, director of the Native American Studies Program at the University of Illinois-Chicago Circle; Faith Smith, president of the Native American Educational Services; and Dorene Wiese, director of the Institute for Native American Development at Truman City College.

All of those persons involved in the opening shared the hopes for the continued success of the center's services. One of the primary functions of the center is to establish, through the use of a microcomputer, a machine-readable database of existing organizations, agencies, individuals, and other human resources in Chicago, Illinois, and from around the country, which serves Native Americans. It offers an accurate and rapid referral service that will be available for both telephone and in-person inquiries. It is also expected that this system will enable efficient updating and revision of the database.

Also, the center is establishing a circulating and reference collection of materials, both print and nonprint, that accurately portrays Native American people. Subjects covered include ethnology, anthropology, arts, crafts, history, law, twentieth-century accomplishments, literature, educational aids, social concerns, and current affairs as they pertain to American Indians. There is also an effort to collect printed materials issued by various Indian organizations across the country. Collection evaluation and development is being conducted at four of the library's facilities: Hild Regional Library, Bezarian and Edgewater branches (all located in or near Native American communities), and the central li-

brary. Most of the collection is to be located at the central library.

Center staff, especially Georgiana Paisano Oandasan, assistant project director, also conducts workshops for the library staff in order to facilitate accurate and successful fulfillment of both in-person and telephone reference inquiries. Center staff conducts information searches for more complex questions and will provide guidance for those engaged in research. A major responsibility that is currently under consideration is the coordination of the reference and referral activities of the four library facilities in order to provide the best possible service.

Outreach activities are being undertaken in order to stimulate use of the resources and services provided by the center. Activities include programs, brochures and announcements, and community visits by center staff. Outreach is directed toward individuals, organizations, agencies, and institutions that work with Native Americans, as well as toward the community as a whole. In order to establish a good rapport with the local community and its agencies and organizations, an ongoing process of visits and participation in community activities is being undertaken.

The center is being guided by an advisory committee consisting of interested persons from the Native American community, which meets quarterly to discuss and make recommendations on the progress of the project. The staff is also aided by consultants who provide bibliographic and technical guidance. In addition, the center receives aid from the professional and support staffs of the library.

The key to success in this project will be with a staff that is sensitive to the concerns of the Native American community. Library Commissioner Donald J. Sager stated at the



Photo by Gary Degnan

The unique microcomputer providing information on organizations, agencies, and individuals serving Native Americans gets a workout at the Native American Information/Referral Center. Lawrence D'Urso and Georgiana Paisano Oandasan query the microcomputer for medical services, educational resources, employment agencies, senior citizen centers, child welfare groups, and family counseling sites. Replies to questions are available almost instantly.

official opening: "Most of us are aware of the increasingly complex society in which we must function. For the Native American in our society, existence is even more complex. . . . We know that the typical Native American will be at a disadvantage in terms of education, job skills and experience and the type of contacts necessary to survive in any complex society, especially an urban society. . . . I believe we will realize a tangible improvement in library service for the Native American in Chicago. . . . This center is not solely for the Native American. It is for everyone seeking accurate and current information on the Native American in modern society."

It is important that there be an awareness of the needs and desires of the people served. Only then will an information and referral service be successful. The Native American Information/Referral Center is committed to providing an effective service in accordance with the needs of the community.—LAD'U, Director, Native American Information/Referral Center, Chicago Public Library.



Photos by Gary Degnan

Lawrence D'Urso, project director, and Georgiana Paisano Oandasan, assistant project director for the center, providing information in person and on the phone.

The *American Indian Libraries Newsletter* is published periodically by the ALA OLOS Committee on Library Service for American Indian People, Virginia Mathews (Osage), Chairperson. The newsletter is sent free of charge. Newsletter editor: Dr. Cheryl Metoyer-Duran (Cherokee). Mailing list additions and address changes should be sent to Jean E. Coleman, Director, OLOS, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; (312) 944-6780. Manuscripts and letters pertaining to editorial content should be sent to Cheryl Metoyer-Duran, Ph.D., Editor, *American Indian Libraries Newsletter*, OLOS, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

Special News

New Ethnic Library Periodical

The Center for the Study of Ethnic Publications (School of Library Science at Kent State University), and the Intercollegiate Academic Council on Ethnic Studies have initiated a new periodical, *Ethnic Forum: Bulletin of Ethnic Studies and Ethnic Bibliography*. *Ethnic Forum*, published twice a year, offers scholars, educators, librarians, media specialists, and archivists a responsive forum for the analysis and discussion of all aspects of ethnicity and ethnic bibliography. The founder and editor of this periodical is Dr. Lubomyr R. Wynar, professor of library science and director for the Center of Ethnic Studies at Kent State University.

Subscriptions (\$10 for institutions, \$8 for individuals) should be sent and checks made payable to: Ethnic Forum, School of Library Science, Kent State University, Kent, OH 44242.

Louise Giles Minority Scholarship

Lorraine Helean Bigman, Tsaille, Arizona, is the recipient of a \$3,000 Louise Giles Minority Scholarship, which was awarded at the 1980 Annual Conference of the American Library Association in New York City on June 30.

Bigman has been a student at the University of Arizona and will graduate in September 1980 with a BA in elementary education.

Her introduction to library work began in 1971 when she worked as secretary to the librarian at Navajo Community College. Transferred later to the technical services department, she has worked variously as a cataloger, book processor, and college work-study supervisor and in acquisitions. The collection of American Indian Books at Navajo Community College is the second largest in the United States.

After library school, Bigman plans to return to the Navajo reservation after reaching her goal as an American Indian librarian. She will attend the University of Oklahoma School of Library Science.

Native American Information Center Opens at Bacone College

For the first time, Indian leaders, educators, researchers, and others will have at their fingertips valuable information on Indian people and organizations nationally.

This information will be available through the Native American Information Center at Bacone College in Muskogee, Oklahoma, which opened September 1980, according to Dean Chavers, Bacone president.

The information center is an information bank and referral center developed as a service to the national Indian community, according to Chavers. "Users of this service will have over 2,400 names and addresses of Indian organizations and individuals available to them," he stated.

The total information bank will initially include more than 220 pages of information on twenty different lists, many of which are suitable for reproducing on mailing labels. Users of the service can order all lists, or any individual list. Five of the lists are free, and the other fifteen range in price from \$1.00 to \$4.50.

Of the twenty address lists now available, thirteen are new lists, Chavers added. Among these new lists are 231 Indian counselors, 191 Indians who have the doctorate degree, 55 federal Indian offices, 45 national Indian organizations, and 61 tribal and Indian-operated scholarship programs making annual grant awards of more than \$14 million.

The new lists were developed by the information center during the past two years, since the inception of the center in the fall of 1978.

In addition to the lists in the information bank, the center will provide references to some nine other related documents which are too bulky to reproduce. These include Johnson-O'Malley and Title IV Indian education programs, more than 2,100 Indian churches, foundations making total annual grants to Indians of more than \$4 million, and opportunities for federal employment.

Also included in the information bank is an Indian awareness test designed for Indian teachers, counselors, and trainers. This seventy-question test is on basic knowledge of cultural, political, social, and physical facts about Indian people, and is available in multiples of 100.

Five of the lists now in the information bank are copyrighted.

In addition to the twenty lists now available, Chavers added, twelve other lists are being developed, including Indian research institutes, terminated tribes and bands, state Indian commissions, and intertribal councils.

Inquiries and orders from the Native American Information Center should be addressed to the center at Bacone College, Muskogee, OK 74401. — *News release from Native American Information Center.*

Community Board Training Project: Chicago Indian Community

The CBTP is a community organizational training and development program, which relies entirely upon the cooperation of the various Chicago area American Indian community organizations' boards of directors, personnel, and resource people for the successful implementation of its services.

The project is devoted to the development of professional operational systems among Indian community boards and staff members. The improvement of their work capabilities will enhance the overall function and effectiveness of their affiliated agencies. This goal is sought through six different service approaches.

For additional information contact: Louis Delgado, director; Beatrice Chevalier, administrative assistant for community affairs; Florence Dunham, administrative assistant for academic affairs: NAES College, 4550 N. Hermitage, Chicago, IL 60640; (312) 728-1662.

American Indian Library Association

Persons interested in joining the American Indian Library Association (AILA) should contact Virginia H. Mathews, Treasurer, c/o American Library Association, Office for Library Outreach Services, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; (312) 944-6780. Annual dues: \$10 (individuals); \$25 (institutions); \$5 (students).

A membership meeting of AILA will be held during the ALA Annual Conference in San Francisco on Tuesday, June 30, 1981, from 2:00-5:30 p.m. The meeting will be cosponsored by the OLOS Committee on Library Service to American Indian People. An all-Indian program is planned in conjunction with the business meetings. Dr. Sam Deloria, former deputy assistant secretary for Indian affairs, U.S. Department of Interior, will be the main speaker. American Indian people from the San Francisco area are cordially invited to attend.

Job Announcement

NATIVE AMERICAN CENTER RESEARCH VOLUNTEER. The Native American Information/Referral Center of the Chicago Public Library is searching for a volunteer who will aid staff members in gathering information of current interest to American Indians.

The volunteer will work a minimum of four hours a week as a research assistant at the Native American Center located in the Social Sciences and History Division of the temporary central library, 425 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611. Responsibilities will include searching bibliographic materials for titles to be considered by center personnel and preparing order forms for selected titles. Lawrence D'Urso is project director and Georgiana Paisano Oandasan, a Laguna Pueblo Indian, is assistant project director.

Leona Hoelting, director of the library's Volunteer Services Of-

office, says the volunteer will broaden his or her research experience, develop skills using library materials, and learn about American Indian history. Orientation to library services and resources will be provided.

Qualifications for the position, which will be needed for six months to a year, include a willingness to learn basic knowledge of research techniques and bibliographic style, legible handwriting, and enthusiasm for detailed assignments.

To apply for the volunteer position, contact the library's Volunteer Services Office at (312) 269-3091.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Dr. Metoyer-Duran:

The Spring/Summer 1980 issue of the AILN is a real storehouse of useful information. (I am recommending the newsletter to Indian-oriented resource centres at every opportunity; it is constantly helpful.)

In particular, the current issue has given me the chance to contact Leith Peterson of the Ojibway & Cree Resource Centre in Timmins, and hopefully to establish an exchange agreement.

Her letter to you contains four questions to which I would also like the answers. If you are planning to publish some information on them in a future issue, I will be happy to wait till then.

Otherwise, would you be willing to send us photocopies of the information you gather for her?

Best wishes.

(Mrs.) Kitty Toews, Librarian

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Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Canada

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Profile



Georgiana Paisano Oandasan
(Laguna Pueblo)
Assistant Project Director
Native American
Information/Referral
Center

Georgiana Paisano Oandasan is the assistant director of the Native American Information/Referral Center of the Chicago Public Library. Born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Oandasan graduated from the University of New Mexico with a bachelor of science degree. She still calls the American Southwest her home. She lives on the North Side of Chicago with her daughter, Annie, who is in first grade, and her husband, William, a published poet and editor of *A*, a journal of contemporary Native American literature.

"It is commendable that Chicago and the Chicago Public Library have sponsored NAIRC and recognize the need for such a center, especially since 20,000 Native Americans are Chicagoans," Oandasan said. "Information is now available to document the Indian heritage. Too many books and movies portray the Indian as a wild savage. But it wasn't like that at all in history."

It is hoped that the center will assist in offering the information needed to provide an accurate picture of Native American people.