



Document-based Research Process

ARCHIVAL RESEARCH PROCESS

Materials held at the state archives for Indian Affairs and Child and Family Services (CFS) were reviewed. Boxes for review were prioritized by consultation between Research Coordinator and Research Assistant based on anticipated relevance for the TRC.

- Indian Affairs: 41 archival boxes reviewed, first reviewing boxes sequentially by index headings, and then prioritized based on index headings.
- CFS: 36 archival boxes reviewed, prioritized based on index headings.

Document review process

- Potentially relevant documents were photographed and later entered into a document record, in which a title was assigned and a brief summary of document contents and relevance to TRC was generated.
- After an initial review period for orientation to the type of material that was present in the archive, the research coordinator identified themes within the logged documents. These themes were refined as needed throughout the archival review process.
- The research coordinator and assistant reviewed the document record entries and identified documents of significance, which were then analyzed in greater depth and included in an annotated bibliography.
- Notes were taken at the archives to retain the provenance of relevant documents, capture questions that arose, and to document the absence of relevant material.

Indian Affairs archive

Materials considered relevant for the TRC were grouped into the following themes:

- Elements of a dominant narrative or counter-narrative about Wabanaki peoples
- Tribal-state relationships in Maine
- Wabanaki child welfare (either specific cases or general issue)
- Wabanaki incarceration experiences (either specific cases or factors that may have contributed to disproportionately high incarceration rates)
- National context related to child welfare or state-tribal relationships

Child and Family Services archive

Relevant materials were considered to be any materials that addressed Wabanaki tribal nations or organizations, Native children, or ICWA with specific attention to

- Statistical reports that documented racial demographics of children in the child welfare system and adoptions system
- Training-related materials (i.e. curriculum, planning, proposals, contracts)
- Working relationship of Wabanaki tribal nations or organizations and the state

- Reports and recommendations related to Native children in the state child welfare and adoption systems

A second round of analysis of documents resulted in the creation of summary documents:

- Tribal-state relationships timeline, including dominant narratives and counter-narratives, and key events
- Documentation of the presence and absence of ICWA in Child and Family Services training, planning and procedural materials
- Documentation of recommendations made by oversight committees and task forces related to Native children in the child welfare system in Maine
- Documentation of ICWA and culturally relevant training efforts and recommendations
- Aggregation of statistical materials related to representation of Native children in the state child welfare system and adoptions

A third round of analysis resulted in the creation of a summary of research findings, which was given to the commissioners to inform their considerations.

OTHER RESEARCH EFFORTS

The research team also identified a subset of 39 pieces of proposed and enacted legislation considered significant to child welfare services for Wabanaki children in Maine, or would further an understanding tribal-state relationships in Maine. These legislative materials were analyzed for their bearing or impact on

- The relationship between tribes and the state
- A Dominant narrative about Wabanaki tribes, communities and families
- Tribal sovereignty

Special attention was also given to exploring and analyzing the impact of the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act and subsequent state legislation on the implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act in Maine.

In addition, the research team conducted an exploration of available data on racial demographics of corrections systems populations in Maine. This included a literature review as well as gathering inmate data directly from the state prison system and county jails.