

ANSS Subject and Bibliographic Access Committee Cataloging Question – February, 2007

Question: What are the best ways to find ethnographies?

Answer: There are a number of ways to locate ethnographic materials but no concise way to locate ethnographies.

The problem is that the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) makes no distinction for materials that were researched using ethnographic field methods. Therefore general ethnologies and ethnographies are given the same subject headings. There are a number of subject headings used on these works, and these are covered below, but the researcher will only find the broader group of works. To distinguish amongst those works, one would need to look at the author, do some research and discern if this author is likely to be writing ethnographies.

The subject headings most frequently used on ethnographic works are as follows:

“Ethnology” subdivided by place is used for works that are general anthropological works on the peoples of a particular place.

Some examples:

Ethnology – Cyprus

Ethnology – Florida

Ethnology – Asia

Another commonly used term is actually a subdivision used under geographic regions, countries, etc. The subdivision is “Social life and customs.”

Some examples are:

Europe, Central – Social life and customs

Paris (France) – Social life and customs

Montana – Social life and customs

The most direct way is by searching for the name of the peoples. LCSH allows for an individual subject heading for each group of peoples. Therefore there are numerous subject headings as follows:

Pashai (Afghanistan people)

Bira (African people)

Lahu (Asian people)

Kamu (Australian people)

Tipura (Indic people) and many, many more

If you don't know the name of the peoples, but you know they are in a particular geographic area, look under “Ethnology—geographic region and/or country” **in LCSH**, and you will find a list of all the peoples already established in that region. For example under Ethnology—Borneo there is the following list:

Dusun (Bornean people)

Iban (Bornean people)
Kayan (Bornean people)
Kedayan (Bornean people)
Murut (Bornean people)
Penan (Bornean people)
Punan (Bornean people)
Taman (Bornean people)

The indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere are set up with the name of the group followed by the word “Indians” or “Eskimos.” For example:

Haida Indians
Chol Indians
Mbya Indians
Nunamiut Eskimos

However there are some exceptions, such as: Aztecs, Mayas, and Incas.

If you don't know if the name of the group has been established, look under the following **terms in LCSH** to find a full list:

Indians of North America
Indians of Mexico
Indians of the West Indies
Indians of Central America
Indians of South America

NOTE: Most of these headings are also subdivided by geographic regions and/or countries, and the list of tribes in that country are under the broader term: “Indians of . . . -- country name.” For example a search in LSCH for “Indians of the West Indies—Cuba” will reveal the following list:

Ciboney Indians
Taino Indians

There are also subject headings for nationalities, such as “Spaniards” and “Danes;” and for nationalities in America, such as “Greek Americans.”

These are some of the most common terms used on ethnographic materials that deal with particular peoples or places.

Addendum: If you know of a group of people that has not been established and you know that materials have been published on them, please fill out the form at:

<http://www.lib.odu.edu/anss/forms/subjectform.htm> and our committee will submit the subject heading to the Library of Congress! We can then add this more specific subject heading to the bibliographic records for this group, as well as ensuring that the more specific term is used on future materials.