

RESEARCH GUIDE

Human Relations Area Files

George Mason University Libraries

The Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) is a microfiche collection of information on more than 350 different ethnic, cultural, religious, and national groups worldwide. It is used by social scientists and students studying a particular culture, cultural trait or for making cross-cultural analyses. Included in the collection are more than 3,500,000 pages of text from books, articles, and unpublished manuscripts as well as English translations of foreign texts available exclusively in HRAF. HRAF is located in Fenwick Periodicals Microforms under call number GN378.H7.

HRAF CLASSIFICATIONS

In 1937, under the direction of Professor George Peter Murdock, researchers at Yale's Institute of Human Relations began to design a classification system for organizing cultural, behavioral, and background information on a society. Out of this came the Outline of Cultural Materials and the Outline of World Cultures.

GN345 3 .M87 1983
Fen Ref Desk ***Outline of World Cultures. 6th ed. 1983.*** Classifies all known cultures of the world by geographic region. Assigns alphanumeric designations to cultural groups. The broad classification system is:

A=Asia

E=Europe

F=Africa

M=Middle East (including
Muslim societies in Africa)

N=North America

O=Oceania

R=Former Soviet Union and Russia

S=South America

All texts containing information about a particular culture (e.g., Amish, Hausa) are grouped together. Each culture collection is identified by an alphanumeric code according to the OWC. For example, the OWC codes for Amish and Hausa is NM6 and MS12.

GN345.3 .O95 1982
Fen Ref ***Outline of Cultural Materials. 5th ed. 1982.*** Subject index to HRAF. Assigns a numerical three-digit code designation to more than 700 categories of human culture traits. For example, the OCM codes for "settlement patterns" and "serfdom and peonage" are 361 and 567, respectively. The OCM is used in conjunction with the Outline of World Cultures to locate information in HRAF on cultural traits of particular groups. HRAF materials are arranged by culture.

HOW TO USE HRAF

1. Locate the culture on which you wish to do research in the *Outline of World Cultures* (OWC). Identify the letter/number code (OWC code) for that culture (for example, NT17 for Taos). Note: Not all of the cultures listed in the OWC have been processed for the HRAF archive.
2. Locate your topic in the index of the *Outline of Cultural Materials* (OCM). Note the corresponding 3-digit category number (for example, 593 for family relationships). Check the category description in the text of the OCM to make sure that the category you have selected covers the topic in which you are interested.
3. Go to the HRAF microfiche files and find the set of microfiche on the culture you are researching. Files are arranged in the same order as they are in "Human Relations Area Files Available" (alphanumerically by OWC code). The name and OWC code for the culture appears in the header of each fiche.
4. Find the fiche containing the information on your topic. Subject category numbers are on the upper left corner of each fiche. Categories are arranged in numerical order within each file.
5. Looking at the fiche, you will notice flashers, eye-readable category numbers that tell you where each new category begins. Each category contains pages of text from books and articles on the culture which you are researching. In the sample following, all information on Taos (NT17) family relationships (OCM code 593) will be found after the 593 flasher.

Category 582-621										NT17 Taos	
										Card 039	
582											
			593								
		595		596		597			601		

6. Center the first page in your category on the microfiche reader screen. Only the pages containing information on the topic within your category are located in that category; do not expect to find entire articles or books. Each page is identified by a "source number" (each book or article is a source), followed by the author's name, both located on the upper left corner of each page. This is followed by a code letter indicating author's training (see

key on next page), a code number indicating source evaluation (see key on next page, and other information. See page identification key on the next page.

Author Training Key:

A. Archaeologist, Antiquarian	B. Folklorist	C. Technical Personnel
D. Physician, Physical Anthropologist	E. Ethnologist	F. Foreign Resident
G. Government Official	H. Historian	I. Indigene
J. Journalist	K. Geographer	L. Linguist
M. Missionary, Clergy	N. Natural Scientist	O. Lawyer
P. Psychologist	Q. Humanist, Writer, Editor	R. Artisan
S. Social Scientist, other than designated	T. Traveler	U. Unknown
V. Political Scientist	W. Organizational Documents	X. Economist, Manager
Y. Educator	Z. Sociologist	

Source Evaluation Key (An indication of the quality of the information):

1=Poor source

2=Fair source

3=Good, useful source, but not uniformly excellent

4=Excellent secondary data such as compilations or interpretations based on primary data

5=Excellent primary data such as traveler's accounts, ethnographies, legal documents, autobiographies, etc.

Page identification key for sample page:

Source No.	Author	Author Training-Source Evaluation	Date of Fieldwork	Date of Publication	OWC Code	Name of Culture	OWC Code
20:	Beals & Siegel	E-5	(no date)	1966	NT17	Taos Taos	NT17

Sample Page (partial page):

20: Beals & Siegel

E-5

(no date) 1966

NT17 Taos NT17

Taos

Background of Conflict in Taos

65

children, or the performance of tasks in the family. Quarrels of this sort are deplored, but deference is generally given to the dominance of husbands over wives, unless the latter are physically abused. The low rate of separation or divorce is probably also related to the large number of kindred that spouses share in a highly endogamous community.

The subordination of females to males is reflected in all areas of public life. Girls and women remain closely attached to the home

593
578
586
621

562

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON SOURCES USED IN HRAF:

- OCM category 111 contains a full bibliographic reference for all sources processed for a given file, arranged numerically by source number. Full citations to all documents included in the HRAF can be found in:

GN25 .H86 H2
Fen Ref

HRAF Source Bibliography: Cumulative, 1976-present. Citations to all documents in the HRAF are organized by cultural unit and are updated annually. Arranged in alphanumeric sequence by OWC code.

- OCM category 112 contains bibliographic information on sources consulted by HRAF staff but not processed for that file.
- OCM category 113 contains bibliographic information that appears in texts included in the file, such as footnotes, endnotes or reference lists.
- OCM category 116 contains copies of entire texts (e.g., books, articles, manuscripts) processed for the file. It is especially useful if one wishes to see the entire document from which a given page has been taken. Because of copyright restrictions, not all documents will be found here.

SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY ON HRAF

GN502 .I56 .986
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HRAF HOMEPAGE

HRAF's Web page (<http://www.yale.edu/hraf/home.htm>) provides background information on HRAF and describes print publications for sale as well as electronic files available on subscription. It also describes some of their collections of manuscripts and archives.