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# Archival Diasporas: A Framework for Understanding the Complexities and Challenges of Dispersed Photographic Collections

Ricardo L. Punzalan

## ABSTRACT

It is not uncommon for archival photographs to appear in multiple copies, versions, or formats. Photographs of the same provenance are often found in various locations or housed in several institutions. Format diversity, duplication, and dispersion pose profound challenges for archivists attempting to represent photographic images scattered across many institutions. This article identifies four dimensions of archival dispersion—geographical, temporal, provenancial, and material—that simultaneously act as barriers for providing consolidated representation of dispersed photographs. Understanding the context and nature of dispersion is key to effective representation of photographs in archival custody. “Archival Diaspora” explores the complicated nature of distributed collections.

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## KEY WORDS

Photographs, Dispersed Collections, Provenance

Archival photographic collections are frequently dispersed among multiple locations. At present, we lack appropriate frameworks to understand, describe, and represent the nuances of dispersed collections despite the field's expressed dedication to safeguarding contextual information, authenticity, and uniqueness. The reasons many archival collections may appear in the holdings of several institutions therefore merit further scrutiny. Gina Rappaport, photo archivist of the Smithsonian's National Anthropological Archives, uses the term "archival diaspora" to draw attention to the nature of dispersed photographic collections.<sup>1</sup> *Diaspora*, a word that implies movement, migration, dispersion, or scattering, fittingly captures the case of split and dispersed photographic collections in archival custody. In this article, I wish to further develop the idea of "archival diaspora" to offer up a framework for understanding the complications inherent in dispersed photographic collections.

While the scattering of archival records among various repositories and custodies by no means equates to the experiences of people in diasporic communities, certain distinctive commonalities exist. The scholarly field of diaspora studies has understandably produced rich, comprehensive, and nuanced discussions of diaspora that cannot be thoroughly addressed in this article. In brief, diaspora studies often focus on the movement of an ethnic community from one space or society into another. Exploring the experiences and relationships of diasporic communities across generational, societal, ethnic, spatial, and temporal dimensions are among the salient features of this area of study.

My appropriation of "diaspora" into archival studies is a strategic one. By drawing on diaspora studies, I aim to highlight the complicated nature of dispersed collections and challenges that diasporic archives pose to archivists and scholars. Historian Kim D. Butler identified five major dimensions that constitute diaspora research. These are "1) Reasons for, and conditions of, the dispersal; 2) Relationship with the homeland; 3) Relationship with hostlands; 4) Interrelationships within communities of the diaspora; [and] 5) Comparative studies of different diasporas."<sup>2</sup> While Butler's dimensions primarily address the plight of people in diasporic conditions, they nevertheless resonate in certain cases of dispersed archival collections. Appropriating these five dimensions in the archival domain, we can then ask: What are the reasons for, and conditions of, the dispersal of archival records? What is the relationship of dispersed records to their source communities? How have records come to be understood, used, or assimilated into new collections in the institutions or communities where they currently reside? What is the relationship between the various resultant collections? What do various iterations or cases of dispersed collections tell us about the nature of archives?

Diasporic archival photograph collections present distinct challenges, particularly in cases where the same or similar photographic images are held by

more than one institution and appear in multiple copies or versions and in varying formats. An original print in one repository may have its corresponding glass negative in another institution. Sometimes an image may exist in both print and lantern slide versions. Identical sets of prints may be organized differently depending on the medium and technique used in representing the set. Inherent and profound variations exist between a set of photographic prints loosely kept in a box or glued on cardboard and the same set of prints organized in a scrapbook, which can provide different contextual and interpretive information. Because of this propensity for reproduction, diverse modes of organization, and varied platforms for representation, James O'Toole once declared that when it comes to photographs, "the traditional understanding of originals and copies is largely beside the point."<sup>3</sup> Writing at a time before the age of mass digitization, O'Toole focused our attention on the need for developing ways to articulate the importance and value of archival collections centered on the nature and context of the record's medium. His ideas still ring true in today's digital world, where the heritage sector has experienced a transformation in terms of collections access and preservation unprecedented since the era of microfilming.

Archivists and researchers are well aware of the challenges associated with dispersed and split collections. Consequently, the field has developed several ways to address related issues. Perhaps the development of documentation strategy encapsulates many desires for a more coordinated and comprehensive way of bringing distributed materials into archives. The approach points to the benefits of interinstitutional collaboration, linking of related materials, and creation of a coherent collection development strategy.<sup>4</sup>

Other ways of addressing the issue of dispersed collections include acknowledging the presence of complementary collections in finding aids, expanding the application of traditional archival concepts of provenance and original order, and exploring the role of technical standards and tools in reconnecting and linking collections. For their part, archival scholars have reexamined archival principles and expanded their application to accommodate other contexts and facets of archival collections. The more recent efforts to reformulate archival notions of provenance, ownership, and custody speak to the need for providing greater access to dispersed collections.<sup>5</sup> Examining the case of the dispersed records of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Jeanette Bastian noted the potential role of descriptive standards and online access in the process:

Standards such as Encoded Archival Description now offer the potential of virtually reuniting fragmented collections and relating distributed collections through the on-line linking of finding aids.<sup>6</sup>

Over the years, we have witnessed a number of creative digital projects that represent dispersed rare and special collections.<sup>7</sup> Scholars of digitization predict that the growing trend toward “virtual reunification,” the umbrella term that refers to the process of bringing together dispersed collections using digital and online tools, will continue given its capacity to facilitate compromise and expediency for repositories unable or unwilling to deaccession or repatriate their pieces of larger interinstitutional collections.<sup>8</sup> If the goal of digital reunification is consolidation and reintegration to achieve totality and comprehensiveness, it is important to understand fully the nature and context of dispersed archival collections. It also requires us to think about how we conceive of or represent “the whole” and what constitutes the totality of a collection.

In response, I aim to enlarge archival notions of context for dispersed collections. To do so, I describe the various characteristics and dimensions of diasporic photographic collections. I illustrate this point by focusing on the story and nature of dispersion of the ethnographic photographs of Dean C. Worcester (1866–1924). Worcester served as a U.S. administrator in the Philippines from 1899 to 1913. His photographs are currently dispersed among ten North American and European institutions, and, since the 1970s, they have been the subjects of efforts to provide unified access. Capturing the complex and layered paths of dispersion can present profound challenges in any attempts at consolidation. This article shows that the many paths by which the Worcester photographs have been dispersed shape any attempts to provide consolidated access to this collection. Focusing on this dispersion narrative, I define the various elements to consider in representing similarly dispersed collections. In so doing, I propose a model for untangling the complicated story of dispersion. I also intend the article to assist heritage professionals and administrators in documenting and tracing the various dimensions of dispersion that will in turn enrich the practice of archival photographic representation.

## Method

This article focuses on the nature and context of dispersion by proposing a framework for capturing the complexities and dimensions of dispersed photographic collections. This proposed framework is a product of a qualitative study conducted from 2010 to 2012 that examined potential barriers to and challenges of reunifying dispersed photographic collections. The research design involved site visits and archival research in ten libraries, archives, and museums that have Worcester’s ethnographic photographs taken from the Philippines in their collections. I conducted semistructured interviews with nineteen heritage professionals and administrators directly responsible for their respective sets of photographic images—photo archivists, librarians, curators, and museum

collections managers—and two researchers deeply embedded in scholarly uses of the Worcester photographs.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Interview transcripts were coded and analyzed following a grounded theory approach. I also wrote memos following each interview to capture their highlights, salient points, areas for further inquiry, and other impressionistic details. The site visits and archival research constituted actual examination of the collections and their descriptive tools and metadata, as well as accession records. Table 1 profiles the institutions involved in the study as well as the titles of participants.

**Table 1. Respondents from Heritage Repositories**

No.	Institution	Position Title	Total (N=19)
1	American Museum of Natural History	• Head of Special Collections and Photo Archivist	1
2	Field Museum of Natural History	• Photo Archivist • Collections Manager • Curator	3
3	National Anthropological Archives	• Archives Team Leader and Photo Archivist	1
4	Newberry Library	• Bibliographer of Americana and Director of Reader Services	1
5	Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology	• Head of Archives and Photo Archivist	1
6	Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum	• Photo Archivist	1
7	U. Michigan Bentley Historical Library	• Head of University Archives Program • Head of Reference Division	2
8	U. Michigan Museum of Anthropology	• Curator • Collections Manager • Past Curator	3
9	U. Michigan Special Collections Library	• Curator and Outreach Librarian • Past Director, Curator, and Outreach Librarian • Associate Director • Consultant Librarian (Southeast Asian Bibliographer)	4
10	U. Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology	• Head of Archives • Film Archivist	2

Every effort has been made to keep the participants' identities anonymous. Each respondent was assigned a unique alphanumeric code. To assist readers in distinguishing among interview participants, I organized the respondents into five categories: Archivists (A), Curators (C), Collections Managers (CM), Librarians (L), and Researchers (R). Thus, A1 stands for Archivist 1, C3 for Curator 3, and R2

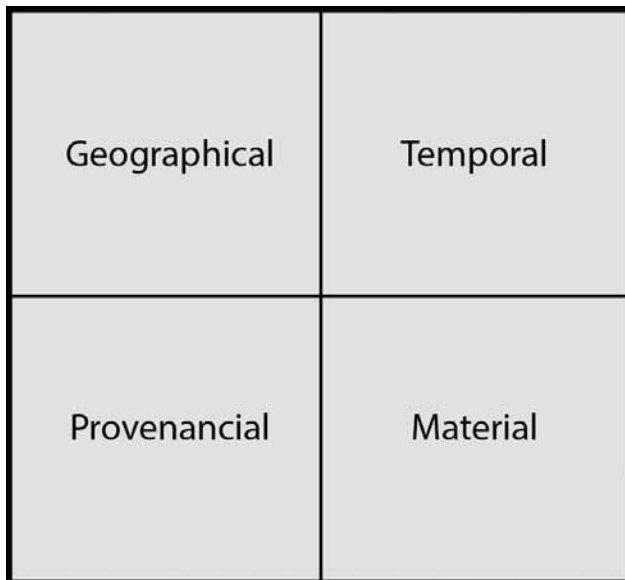
for Researcher 2. All quotes and excerpts from interviews are referenced using these participant codes.

## Story and Nature of Dispersion

Four main dimensions, which present four ways of framing the dispersion narrative of diasporic movement, characterize the dispersion of Worcester's ethnographic photographs: geographical, temporal, provenancial, and material (see Figure 1). These various dimensions not only complicate the construction of a single unified dispersion narrative, they also explain why the Worcester photographs have remained hidden and challenging to discover. These layered dimensions of dispersion complicate efforts at consolidating the photographs and providing a unified representation of them. The variety of elements and dimensions in this dispersion narrative challenges institutions to reach a consensus on how to present the elements of the story necessary to form a sense of the whole from the various Worcester collections.

The following statement from a researcher illustrates the results of the complex paths of dispersion and serves as a good example of its consequences for current and potential users:

At one point, I came across a reference to Worcester photographs at the Newberry Library. . . . When I got to the Newberry, I realized that those photographs [at the Field Museum] weren't the original edition of [photographic]



**FIGURE 1.** These four dimensions characterize the dispersion of Worcester's photographs.

prints that Dean Worcester had sold to Edward Ayer. And I was surprised that the people at the Newberry had no idea of Michigan's collection and I was surprised that the people at Michigan had no idea of the Newberry collection because they seemed to be the two main archives of these images. And as far as the University of Pennsylvania goes, the website archive.org has a film on it that is a film made by Dean Worcester and Charles Martin called *Native Life in the Philippines*. . . . I thought I would just sort of send an email to University of Pennsylvania and ask them questions about it, ask if there are any other films or any photographs. And then, they told me that yes, indeed, they did have the photographs. And then I found my way to the collection at the Peabody Museum in Harvard . . . based, again, on Google Books. (R1)

This researcher's comments reveal the multidimensional aspect of dispersion. Likewise, when describing the story of dispersion, respondents from owning institutions illustrate several dimensions of the diaspora through their *dispersion stories*. At this juncture, it is important to emphasize the plurality of the story of dispersion. Respondents regard their respective sets of photographs as representing one story of dispersion that can be incorporated into a much larger, consolidated dispersion narrative.

### Geographical Dispersion: Where the Photographs Are Located

Dispersion implies spatial scattering. Thus, I will begin with the *geographical* aspect of archival diaspora. Figure 2 shows the geographical dispersion of the Worcester photographs at various locations in the United States and Germany included in this study.

While it is highly possible that more institutions possess Worcester photographs, I focused on collections in nine United States institutions and one German repository. Only a small number of researchers and institutions are aware of all the places where the photographs are known to reside. Attempts have been made since the 1970s to trace the location of the Worcester photographs, but only recently did some repositories become aware of other possible sites. Even respondents in owning institutions themselves were not always aware that they held Worcester photographs in their collections. The various locations of the photographs have gradually come to light through several efforts to conserve, provide access to, and study the photographs.

I identified three projects that were instrumental in the discovery of the locations of the Worcester photographs. The University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology (UMMA) initiated two of these. The first, in the late 1970s, consequently led to the identification of a few other sites. Second, UMMA produced and disseminated a CD-ROM in the late 1990s that contained a large sampling of the photographs scanned from the UMMA negatives. This CD is credited with bringing the photographs to wider audiences, including other institutions



**FIGURE 2.** The Worcester photographs are dispersed geographically.<sup>9</sup>



unaware of their own Worcester collections. The third project comprised more recent efforts to upload the photographs online by institutions such as the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, the University of Michigan Special Collections Library, the Smithsonian's National Anthropological Archives, the Field Museum, and UMMA.

### Efforts in the Late 1970s

The first project came from a desire to conserve and study further the more than four thousand negatives at UMMA. A former UMMA curator recalled how very little information was known about the negatives, and museum administrators had tepid appreciation of their role and function:

[When] I came to the university, I was told that the museum had one or two crates full of glass negatives by Dean Worcester which the museum had come into possession of or acquired several decades earlier and which were stored and nobody knew what to do with it. And it was suggested to me that I might want to take an interest in those negatives and see what their value was and to what degree they should be preserved for the future. (C4)

It was, however, the concern over their physical condition that brought attention to the negatives:

What inspired me was the fact that clearly the images had been poorly stored. Many of them were degrading, the emulsion was peeling off the glass plates. Many of the glass plates were damaged by mold and fungus and so forth and discolored. And so, the purpose was to really do a conservation project. To first of all make images. . . . Secondary images of each one of the plates as much as possible and then rehouse the plates and build an archival sleeve and so forth. That was the primary purpose. (C4)

The curator was also curious about the negative plates not found in the UMMA collection:

I knew from the research I did that Worcester truly had set out, as Secretary of the Interior of the Insular Government . . . to do a comprehensive photographic survey of the Islands, of the cultures of the Islands, of the tribes. . . . There was originally a pool of some large number of photographs of which only a portion were in the holdings of Michigan. And even the numbering of the plates indicates that there had been many more before. And I was always puzzled where the rest was. (C4)

Preservation concerns and the desire to account for gaps in the collection encouraged this earliest effort to trace the other locations of the Worcester photographs. From 1977 to 1980, UMMA conducted a project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) with goals to preserve and pursue further

research on the history of the photographs. In his grant letter request to the NEH, then UMMA curator Karl L. Hutterer asserted, "It is conceivable that other bits and pieces are hidden away in other institutions."<sup>10</sup>

By the end of the project, Hutterer had identified four other locations holding Worcester photographs, namely the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago; the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University; the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum in Cologne, Germany; and the Anthropological Archives of the U.S. National Museum (now the National Anthropological Archives of the Smithsonian Institution). The most recent update in the finding aid at the University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library, where a significant volume of Worcester's papers are kept, traces several other Worcester papers and photographs found in different institutions. The Bentley Historical Library now identifies eight other repositories:<sup>11</sup> the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology, the University of Michigan Special Collections Library, the Thetford Historical Society,<sup>12</sup> the Field Museum, the National Anthropological Archives, the American Museum of Natural History, Harvard University's Peabody Museum, and finally, the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum. Thus, the projects of the 1970s set in motion efforts to fully describe the collections, which have resulted in a more complete understanding of the network of institutions with Worcester photographs.

### Production of the CD-ROM in the 1990s

The second project noted comprises early digitization efforts that led to the publication in 1998 of select photographs in a CD-ROM edition by UMMA titled *Imperial Imaginings: The Dean C. Worcester Photographic Collection of the Philippines, 1890–1913*. UMMA undertook this project from 1996 to 1998. This coincided with the years of the Philippine centennial commemorations, which marked the Philippine Revolution of 1896 followed by the country's independence in 1898, and the ensuing commencement of the U.S. annexation of the islands.<sup>13</sup> A current UMMA curator explained how the commemorative atmosphere, coupled with a record of research interests and preservation concerns, became the main motivations to digitize the negatives:

We started on the digitization project in probably 1996 or thereabouts and that was leading up to the 1998 Centennial which was being celebrated pretty widely by Philippine-Americans. There was an organization of Philippine-Americans who wanted to celebrate the brief period of Philippine independence before the U.S., after Spain was kicked out and before the U.S. came in, and I was approached by a national representative from a national organization that was trying to celebrate the Centennial about doing an exhibition on the Philippines. . . . And that got me also thinking about the Worcester

collection and its potential . . . of the Asian collections, the Worcester collection was and still is the one that gets the most requests for images, the most queries about it and so on. So, it was clear to me that there was an interest in that. And our museum publication program had just launched into trying to do some digital publication. So, all those things kind of came together to get me thinking about digitizing the collection or at least a sample of them at that point. And the other concern was really conservation. The negatives we have did make backup film negatives of the glass negatives. But the glass negatives are getting old, and many of them are not in the best of shape, so digitizing them is a way to conserve the images for the future as well. (C1)

The curator also credited the distribution of the photographs in the CD-ROM in 1998 with making the collection more discoverable to a much wider audience. In this quote, the curator emphasized reproduction requests coming from Philippine museums, authors, and enthusiasts:

In the '90s both the digitization and the publication of the collection got the collection out to more people. One of the things that happened quite a lot since that CD was published is at least once or twice a year I get requests from regional Philippine museums who want to use photos in their exhibitions or from Philippine authors. It has made the collection much better known to scholars, and not just scholars, but tattoo artists and all kinds of people who are using that collection. So, I think the getting-it-out-there was probably most important. (C1)

“Getting-it-out-there” also meant that other repositories acquiring the published CDs became aware of the Worcester materials in their own collections. Respondents from other owning institutions admitted that the CD was instrumental in their own realizations that the Philippine photographic images they held were in fact by Worcester. In one of my site visits, a reference librarian at the Newberry Library claimed that UMMA’s published CD was routinely used as a tool to discover and provide access to the prints held at the Newberry. The same reference librarian noted the convenience of using the CD when providing initial introduction to and overview of the four thousand prints in the Newberry’s holdings. Nonetheless, the Newberry Library did not notify UMMA, or other institutions for that matter, of the presence of the Worcester photographs in its holdings. UMMA was completely unaware of the Newberry’s collection until recently.

### Online Discovery in the 2000s

A third important stage in the identification of other locations has been the availability of Worcester information online. In recent years, some repositories started to provide online access to their photographic holdings and

accompanying metadata, allowing researchers to readily discover the Worcester photographs. The important role of researchers in identifying the various locations of the Worcester photographs should be emphasized. In this quote, one academic researcher attributed his multiple discoveries of various sites to Google searches:

[I] was using Google and looking on Dean Worcester photographs, as many different search terms as I could come up with. And not just being satisfied with the first page of hits, but actually scrolling through and getting farther and farther in. (R1)

Few institutions have made their photographs, let alone their metadata, accessible online. An interesting story of rediscovery is that of the Worcester films at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Through an arrangement between the museum and the Internet Archive in 2006, an effort was made to digitize the museum's collection of unknown films. This led to a researcher's discovery of the surviving film stocks of Worcester's *Native Life in the Philippines* (1913), a work believed to have been lost. The rediscovery of the film further prompted the discovery of other Worcester photographs housed in the same museum:

As far as the University of Pennsylvania goes, the website archive.org has a film on it that is a film made by Dean Worcester and Charles Martin called *Native Life in the Philippines*. And so, that's fully online now. I was watching it on archive.org and I thought I would just sort of send an email to University of Pennsylvania and ask them questions about it, ask if there are any other films or any photographs. And then, they told me that yes, indeed, they did have the photographs. (R1)

## Explaining Geographical Dispersion

Several factors help to explain why the photographs are scattered among sites. For the most part, scientific, political, and entrepreneurial motivations account for their dispersion. Foremost is Worcester's academic interest in the "scientific" classification of the various tribal groups of the Philippines. For this purpose, he used photography to document and illustrate his classification system of "non-Christian" Filipinos that resulted from the various ethnological surveys he conducted. Worcester used the photographs to communicate his discoveries and findings not only through publications but also by donating prints to various notable museums of natural history. He was prolific in disseminating the products of his ethnological projects.

Worcester used his scientific training and knowledge politically to advocate for the continued American presence in the Philippines. Toward the end of

his career in the insular government, he toured various “natural science and geographical societies, institutes, colleges and schools, religious societies, alumni organizations, Republican clubs, private city clubs, and professional academic meetings” across the United States.<sup>14</sup> In his campaigns, he lectured about the various indigenous groupings in the islands and the impact of the colonial government’s civilizing mission. During his visits, he sometimes entrusted copies of his prints and lecture slides to his host institutions, such as the American Museum of Natural History in New York, which holds an album of prints and slides.

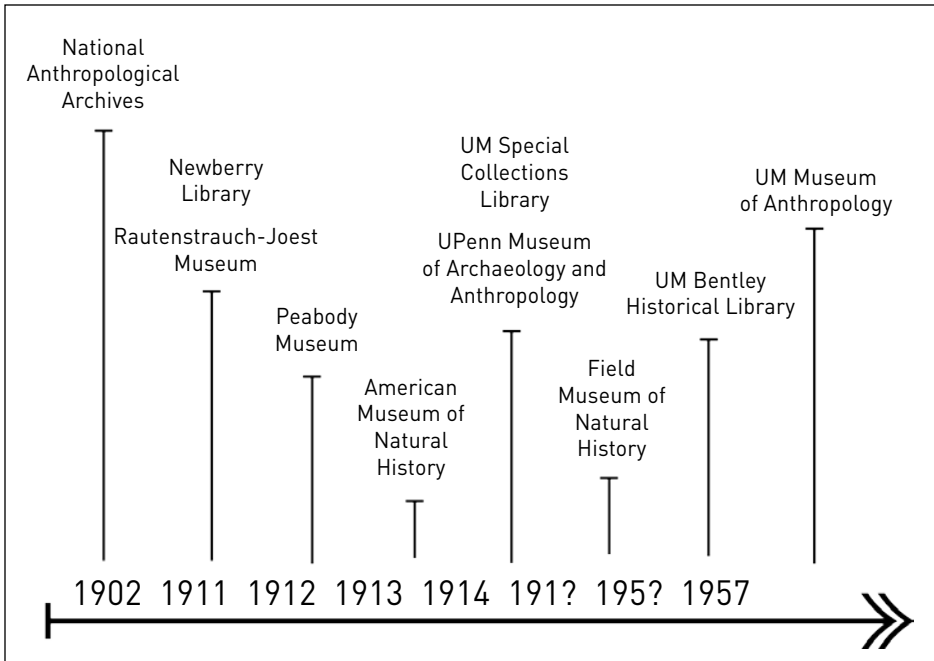
Some accounts describe Worcester as quite enterprising.<sup>15</sup> One curator verified this trait: “Dean Worcester himself was relentlessly commercial in his activities. He tried to make money all the time with everything he did” (C4). He sold copies of his prints and lantern slides to collectors who later bequeathed their collections to libraries, museums, and archives. But it was not only Worcester and collectors of his photographs who distributed the photographs to various institutions. Other photographers and camera operators that Worcester employed for his ethnological surveys either sold or donated copies of the photographs that they personally held. When Worcester died, his family members transferred the remaining negatives and prints they inherited.

Accounting for the various sites where the Worcester photographic materials are held started in the late 1970s. More than thirty years later, repositories are still being added to the list. The combination of several factors—distance, lack of communication and interaction, and the unavailability of descriptions—accounts for the difficulty in determining the various institutions that house the Worcester collections.

### Temporal Dispersion: When the Photographs Were Accessioned

Another dimension to the story of dispersion is *temporal*. A chronological look at dispersion reveals different contextual narratives for each set of photographs in a given repository. Looking at dispersion through time highlights the contexts that shaped the formation and dispersion of the photographs in each institution. Figure 3 provides a timeline for the dispersion of the Worcester photographic images.

The Worcester photographs did not come to institutions simultaneously. Different repositories accessioned the photographs at various times. Of the ten institutions covered in this study, the Smithsonian Institution’s National Anthropological Archives was the first repository to accession prints. According to its accession records, the museum received Worcester’s “collection of 279 photographs of the Native Filipinos” on October 4, 1902. Most institutional accessions were made in the period between 1910 and 1915. This period coincides with Worcester’s retirement from colonial administration in 1913 when he was



**FIGURE 3.** Worcester's photographs were dispersed between 1902 and 1957.

conducting public lectures at various North American universities, museums, and social organizations to promote the continued American annexation of the Philippine Islands. Another period of marked accessions occurred in the 1950s, when Worcester's surviving children facilitated the transfer to the University of Michigan of the remaining materials bequeathed to them by their father.

Curators and researchers are hard-pressed to interpret Worcester's self-representation and intentionality concerning the historical dispersion of his work. Interestingly, the photographs donated while Worcester was alive differ from those accessioned after his death in 1924. The differences between the photographs that Worcester himself distributed and those that went to institutions much later inspire interest among institutional owners and researchers alike.

One curator, for instance, talked about the level of control that Worcester exercised in distributing print versions of his photographs versus the negatives that were donated in the years following his death:

It's interesting that he was aware, presumably, of the offensiveness and the difficulty of, the unpopularity of some of those images that are the ones [the glass negatives] that we got that he didn't want publicly distributed in the same way. So, I think it would be fascinating in a scholarly study to better understand that story. (C1)

Similarly, one researcher was curious to understand how collections that Worcester himself prepared to represent his body of ethnographic work were different from those that remained outside his watch:

I'm very interested in that sort of distinction between what are the images that he himself said are part of my corpus, my body of work, and then what else is there that he didn't have control over? (R1)

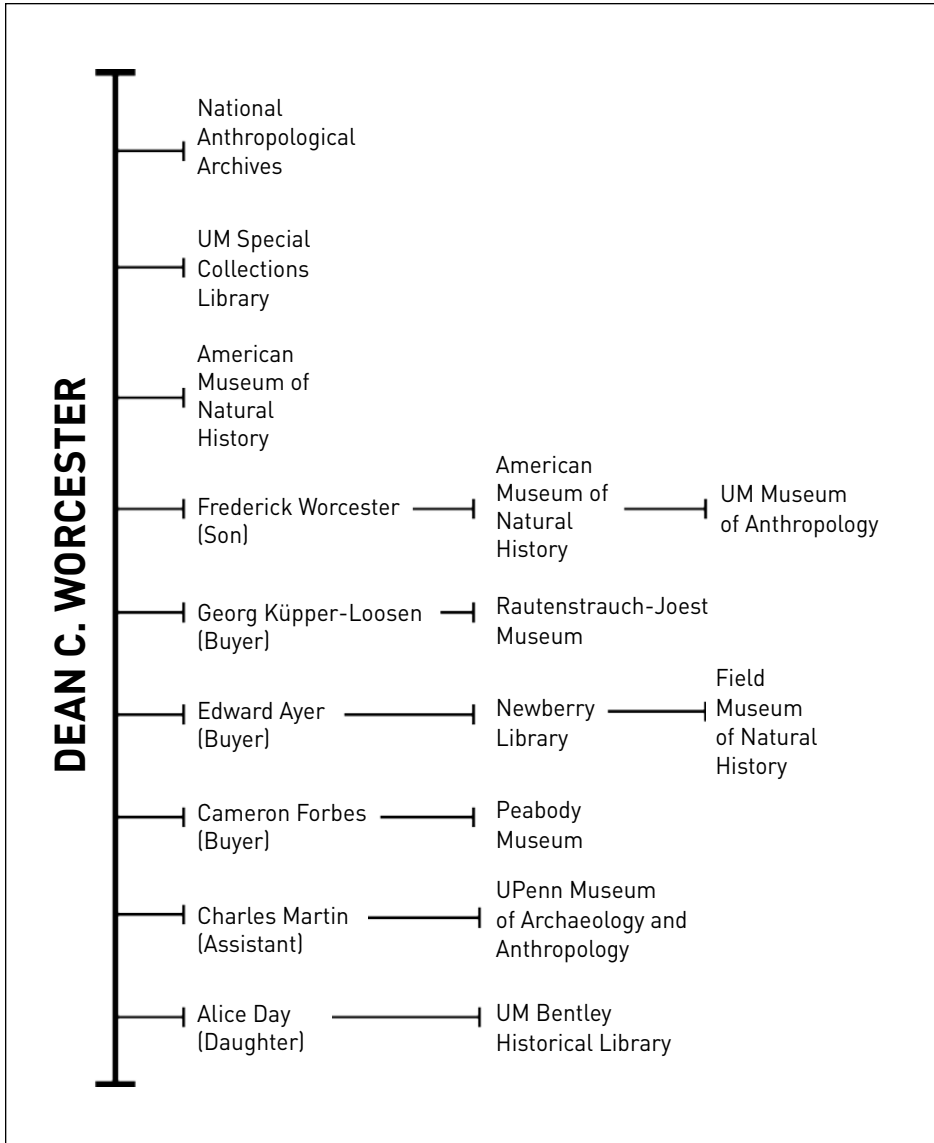
The distribution of the photographs occurred at various times. Investigation into the dispersion of the Worcester photographs over time reveals the various motivations that shaped the direction and subsequent movement of the collection.

### Provenancial Dispersion: Creators and Owners of the Photographs

Dispersion does not only happen in the context of time and space; it also involves various actors, who at various times, were considered to be the rightful creators, owners, and donors of the photographs. The unclear and at times shifting *provenance* and attributions of creation and ownership thus form another dimension of dispersion. The case of the Worcester photographs opens up complicated issues of ownership and provenance. Figure 4 provides an overview of the personalities involved in the dispersion of the Worcester photographs.

As previously mentioned, Worcester sold or donated his photographs to several institutions (the University of Michigan Special Collections Library, the National Anthropological Archives, and the American Museum of Natural History). Other personalities also contributed to the dispersion of the Worcester photographs: collectors of his photographs (Cameron Forbes, Edward Ayer, and Georg Küpper-Loosen), his children (Frederick Worcester and Alice Day), and those who worked with him on his various ethnological surveys (Charles Martin). Part of the difficulty of tracing the story of the photographs is their context as material possessions, as objects previously held and owned by private collectors. Some photographs came to institutions as part of donations. To trace these exchanges is to trace the photographs' provenance. In following the principle of provenance, archivists have often subsumed and attributed the photographs under other collectors, which has obscured their origins in Worcester's work. In other words, applying the principle of provenance to individuals who donated collections obscured the provenance based on origin (Worcester).

Provenance of the photographs can be difficult to determine when they are held within a larger collection and not described as a discrete, separate collection. Prints sold to prominent collectors like Edward Ayer, Georg Küpper-Loosen, and Cameron Forbes were later donated to several institutions. Ayer was an



**FIGURE 4.** Many entities and individuals were involved in the dispersion of Worcester’s photographs.

American business magnate who supplied timber to the railroad industry in the nineteenth century. He was widely credited for his substantive monetary and material donations to prominent institutions in Chicago, namely the Newberry Library and the Field Museum. Georg Küpper-Loosen was a businessman from Cologne, Germany, whose ethnographic collections came to the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum after his death in 1911. Cameron Forbes was governor-general of the Philippine Islands from 1908 to 1913. He donated his personal collections of artifacts to Harvard’s Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.



The Newberry Library describes its Worcester prints as the “Edward Ayer Collection of Philippine Photographs.” Worcester is mentioned as the creator of the photographs and compiler of their index under “additional information” in the library’s catalog. The prints at the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum are acknowledged as photographs from the Bureau of Science, which oversaw the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes, a colonial agency under Worcester’s supervision as secretary of interior. The Harvard Peabody Museum describes the prints under their donor, Cameron Forbes.

Subsequent institutional actions also directly influenced the conditions of the collection beyond that of the donor’s intentions and actions. Some museums historically treated photographic materials differently. For instance, the photographs at the National Anthropological Archives (NAA) of the Smithsonian Institution came directly as donations from Worcester himself. When the prints reached the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), the scientists there divided them between its Division of Physical Anthropology and the Division of Ethnology. When NMNH established the NAA, all the prints were subsequently transferred to this new unit. The collection, however, remains divided to this day. In this instance, the photographs assumed new roles and contexts that thus complicate their provenance in the institution housing them.

Some photographs moved from one institution to another. Such is the case with the negatives that are currently kept at the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology. The negatives were first under a long-term deposit with the American Museum of Natural History from 1926 to 1957. In 1957, Frederick Worcester requested the transfer of the same negatives to the Michigan Historical Collections (now the Bentley Historical Library), which subsequently transferred the negatives to UMMA. Another notable institutional arrangement occurred between the Newberry Library and the Field Museum of Natural History. The Field Museum currently holds copy negatives (as well as prints from those negatives) taken from the print collection at the Newberry Library. It is unclear exactly when the copy negatives were created. According to the biography of Edward E. Ayer, benefactor of both institutions and first president of the Field Museum from 1894 to 1899, Ayer “sent them to the Museum and had them copied there.”<sup>16</sup> From these copy negatives, the museum also produced several prints that are now bound, together with other Philippine photographs, in several volumes of scrapbooks. The photographs at the Field Museum illustrate a case of interinstitutional borrowing whereby, over time, copies assumed completely new institutional roles and functions.

Intellectual ownership and attribution of the photographs are problematic. It is difficult, if not almost impossible at this point, to determine whether all the photographs that are attributed to Worcester by each institution were actually created by him. Several camera operators, scientists, and collectors worked

with Worcester on various expeditions and often as government employees. His published biography claims that Worcester encouraged, and sometimes demanded, that other ethnographers deposit copies of their photographs in his office. Worcester claimed ownership of the photographs produced with his camera and equipment regardless of who operated them.<sup>17</sup>

No master list of every photograph and its respective photographer exists. If Worcester created a consolidated inventory, it has never been found. In some of his published works, Worcester acknowledged the contributions of other photographers. However, he did not identify or cite the specific photos that they took. His articles, “Head-Hunters of Northern Luzon” and “The Non-Christian Peoples of the Philippine Islands,” which appeared respectively in 1912 and 1913 in *National Geographic*, both attributed the photos to either Worcester or the government photographer working under his supervision, Charles Martin. Similarly, the two-volume index that accompanied the prints donated by Cameron Forbes to the Peabody Museum at Harvard says, “Catalogue of Photographs by Dean C. Worcester.” But the bottom of the page also acknowledges other photographers involved: “Prints by the Bureau of Science, Manila, P.I. Negatives by Dean C. Worcester, Charles Martin (Photographer Bureau of Science), and Others.” His article “Non-Christian Tribes of Northern Luzon” in the *Philippine Journal of Science* identified other contributing photographers:

- Dr. Merton L. Miller (chief of the Division of Ethnology of the Bureau of Education)
- Mr. William Allan Reed (of the Ethnological Survey)
- Dr. Albert Ernest Jenks (chief of the Ethnological Survey)<sup>18</sup>

The general listing of the prints at the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum cites the photographers with their respective photographs, but a significant number of prints lack such attribution. In addition to Worcester, Martin, Miller, Reed, and Jenks, the photographers identified in this list are

- J. Diamond
- Frank S. Bourns
- Dr. Sherman
- ESB<sup>19</sup>
- Dionysio Encinas
- Georg Küppers-Loosen
- Gibbs Aeronaut
- Roy Franklin Barton
- Murphy
- Emerson Brewer Christie
- Ball

Among the photographers, Charles Martin further circulated the photographs from the Worcester ethnographic surveys. Martin possessed a collection of lantern slides that he later sold to the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. After serving as government photographer in the Philippines, Martin became the first chief of *National Geographic* magazine’s photo laboratory.<sup>20</sup>

The dispersed Worcester photographs open up complex issues of ownership and provenance. The involvement of various personalities in their creation, movement, and distribution, including the various institutional exchanges and actions, contributed to this complication. Provenance in this case is best understood as a way to uncover the multiple and changing notions of ownership. To remain useful and relevant in this context, the concept of provenance must help account for this variability instead of obfuscating the various actors involved in the creation of the Worcester photographs in favor of fixed and immutable attribution.

### Material Dispersion: Seeing the Photographs in Their Various Formats

The Worcester photographs appear in a variety of formats within and across institutions. The *material* characteristics of photographs add to the complex nature of dispersion that is entirely peculiar to archival photographic images. The same photograph may appear as a print in one repository, a lantern slide in another, or a copy negative in yet another. Depending upon the owning institution, a collection of Worcester photographs may comprise a set of glass negatives or copy negatives. It may also be a set of hand-tinted lantern slides. A collection of prints may come either unmounted or loose, mounted on cardboard, or glued to the pages of a scrapbook. Accompanying textual descriptions are integral parts of the photos and they appear in various ways. Captions may appear alongside a print on a scrapbook page or as a note written on the back of the photo. In some institutions, accompanying texts come as typewritten intensive indexes that can range from a few pages to a multivolume compilation. Table 2 shows a summary of the collections held in various institutions by format.

The reproducible nature of photography as a medium and its openness to being represented, organized, and configured in several ways also facilitates the dispersion of photographic images. The Worcester photographs have been reproduced and circulated among people and between institutions. While no definite number is available, accounts claim that Worcester had accumulated about eight thousand unique photographs throughout his colonial career.<sup>21</sup> None of the owning institutions possesses this quantity of photographs, thus researchers and those in charge of the collections assume that the universe of the photographs is possibly scattered across all the sites. The heritage professionals and administrators and the researchers interviewed also observed that the organization and sequencing of photographs vary by institution, thus narrative and emphasis may shift by repository.

**Table 2. Material Dispersion**

Institution	Formats Held
American Museum of Natural History	Two-volume scrapbooks 83 lantern slides
Field Museum of Natural History	Over 4,000 copy negatives (of Newberry prints) and positive prints from these copy negatives, glued in scrapbooks
National Anthropological Archives	279 positive prints Typewritten index
Newberry Library	5,340 positive prints Five-volume typewritten index
Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology	5,175 positive prints Two-volume index
Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum	3,778 positive prints Typewritten index
U. Michigan Bentley Historical Library	About 200 positive prints
U. Michigan Museum of Anthropology	4,662 glass negatives Acetate copy negatives Lantern slides Two-volume typewritten index Prints from glass negatives
U. Michigan Special Collections Library	About 800 positive prints in scrapbooks
U. Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology	About 200 lantern slides Silent film

To verify these claims, I compared the digitized versions of the complete glass negatives found at UMMA with the positive prints at the Newberry Library. The goal of the comparison was to see how available prints and existing negatives mapped with one another. From June to July 2010 in the Newberry Library's special collections reading room, I did the comparison manually by holding a print on one side and projecting the digitized versions of a negative on the other using a laptop computer. A total of 1,923 (out of 5,340) prints were analyzed and compared with digitized versions of the negatives. This number covers series 1 to 7 of the Newberry index of the photographs that Worcester himself prepared. Each series represents a particular indigenous community under the classification scheme developed by Worcester himself. The seven groups, from Worcester's classification scheme in the accompanying index, are Negritos, Ilongotes (Ibalois), Mangyans, Tagbanuas, Kalingas, Tinguianes, and Ifugaos.

This comparative analysis revealed two main findings. First, not all negatives have corresponding prints and, similarly, many of the positive prints are without negatives. Of the Newberry positive prints examined, only 930 (48.36%) have corresponding negatives in UMMA collections. Thus, 51.64 percent of prints examined appear to be lacking negatives. Second, there is no one-to-one

correspondence in the numbering system between the UMMA negatives and the Newberry prints and index. Sometimes a photograph under series 3 of the prints, for example, would be found under a completely different series in the negatives.

The variety of formats in which photographs exist is another form of dispersion. Redundancy and duplication are attendant characteristics of the dispersed Worcester collections. While the existence of multiple versions can be a formidable challenge to institutions, these variations also reveal, as one respondent argued, “original intent” (A7). However, beyond Worcester’s intent to reproduce and distribute the photographs, subsequent actions by custodians and repositories add another layer to the history of the photographs. Heritage professionals and administrators in owning institutions face the challenge of capturing these layers of the collections’ history.

## Conclusion

The four dimensions outlined here—geographical, temporal, provenancial, and material—offer a useful framework for constructing a dispersion narrative. Tracing the movements of archival diaspora illuminates some of the most complex issues that face archival photographic collections. In the case of the Worcester photographs, the framework helped identify factors that can challenge any effort to reconnect the various pieces of this dispersed collection. Worth noting are the limitations of the application of archival principles that consequently form barriers to providing consolidated access to the Worcester photographs. Adherence to the archival principle of provenance meant that various owning institutions attributed the Worcester photographs to different individuals at various times. With the prevailing attitude of many heritage professionals and administrators of prioritizing and ascribing greater value to unique and original items, the presence of duplication and format diversity effectively relegates photographic materials to be, at best, second-class items in their respective holdings. Thus, the relative application of two important archival concepts—provenance and uniqueness—effectively contributed in making the Worcester photographs a hidden collection for several decades.

Archivists have long established provenance through the lenses of custody and by tracing lineages of ownership of collections. For projects that aim to provide accurate, comprehensive, and consolidated representations of dispersed archival collections, however, there is a need for detailed background on additional dimensions to provide context for a collection. In planning, institutions must clearly articulate the goals of consolidated representation by defining the means by which they capture and represent the various dimensions of

dispersion. In short, more complete and detailed context is required to trace archival diasporas.

The various dimensions of dispersion can illuminate and provide profound understanding of the context and value of archival photographs beyond claims of uniqueness and originality. Replication, in the case of photographic images, is essential to understand. Knowledge of duplication and redundancies should not be construed as threats to the value of dispersed archival photographs. Instead, archivists responsible for such collections must understand these dispersion patterns and represent them accurately and usefully for users so they can better understand these collections and make them more valuable. Uniqueness is often contextual and cannot solely be justified by rarity or an item's status as "the one and only" in the world.

The dimensions of archival diaspora laid out in this article will benefit from further validation as a framework. The model proposed here is a first step and an invitation to others in the field to examine the power of this proposed model by testing it while planning projects on similarly dispersed collections. The diaspora concept will affect not only access and description, but also other key archival functions. To this end, I wish to leave readers some questions to ponder: How can archival diaspora inform practices of appraisal? Can the four dimensions of dispersion provide a path for preservation management? How can we represent the temporal, provenancial, geographical, and material aspects of collections in creating online exhibitions? Indeed, we can further test and challenge how archival diaspora can help us transcend the barriers and understand the complexities of dispersed photographic collections.

Archivists should consider archival diaspora not only in valuing their photographic collections, but also in establishing linkages and collaborations with their peers in other institutions. Investigations of similarly dispersed collections following the archival diaspora framework can lead to better understanding of context and a fuller approach to archival representation. As in the case of the Worcester photographs, tracing the dimensions of dispersion can lead to a better understanding of the myriad layers of relationships between the scattered photographs over space, time, formats, and entities.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> While Gina Rappaport is credited for coining the term "archival diaspora," ideas expressed in this article are mine alone. I truly benefited from the insightful comments and suggestions of my mentors at the University of Michigan School of Information: Margaret Hedstrom, Paul Conway, Beth Yakel, and Brad Taylor. Jesse Johnston and Michelle Caswell provided invaluable advice in the conceptualization of this paper.
- <sup>2</sup> Kim D. Butler, "Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 10, no. 2 (2001): 195.
- <sup>3</sup> James M. O'Toole, "On the Idea of Uniqueness," *The American Archivist* 57 (Fall 1994): 657.

- <sup>4</sup> See Helen Samuels, "Who Controls the Past?," *The American Archivist* 49, no. 2 (1986): 109–24; Larry Hackman and Joan Warnow-Blewett, "Documentation Strategy Process: A Model and a Case Study," *The American Archivist* 50 (Winter 1987): 12–47; Richard J. Cox, "A Documentation Strategy Case Study: Western New York," *The American Archivist* 52 (Spring 1989): 192–200; Timothy Ericson, " 'To Approximate June Pasture': The Documentation Strategy in the Real World," *Archival Issues* 22, no. 1 (1997): 5–20; Joan Warnow-Blewett, Joel Genuth, and Spencer R. Weart, *AIP Study of Multi-Institutional Collaborations: Final Report Highlights and Project Documentations* (College Park, Md.: American Institute of Physics, 2001); Joseph Anderson, "Difficult to Document: The History of Physics and Allied Fields in Industrial and Government Labs," *Journal of Archival Organization* 3 (Winter 2005): 7–21; Robert Horton, "Cultivating Our Garden: Archives, Community, and Documentation," *Archival Issues* 26 (2001): 27–40; David Danboom, "Rethinking Rural America," and Dean Carlson, "Reflections from the Land," in *Documenting Change in Agriculture and Rural Life: Perspectives on the Issues* (North Dakota State Historical Records Advisory Board and Minnesota State Historical Records Advisory Board, 2001); and Doris J. Malkmus, "Documentation Strategy: Mastodon or Retro-Success?," *The American Archivist* 71 (Fall/Winter 2008): 384–409.
- <sup>5</sup> Jeanette Allis Bastian, "Reading Colonial Records through an Archival Lens: The Provenance of Place, Space and Creation," *Archival Science* 6 (2006): 267–84; Tom Nesmith, "The Concept of Societal Provenance and Records of Nineteenth-Century Aboriginal-European Relations in Western Canada: Implications for Archival Theory and Practice," *Archival Science* 6 (2006): 351–60; and Joel Wurl, "Ethnicity as Provenance: In Search of Values and Principles for Documenting the Immigrant Experience," *Archival Issues* 29, no. 1 (2005): 65–76.
- <sup>6</sup> Jeanette Allis Bastian, "A Question of Custody: The Colonial Archives of the United States Virgin Islands," *The American Archivist* 64 (Spring/Summer 2001): 114.
- <sup>7</sup> Anne Marie Austenfeld, "Virtual Reunification as the Future of 'Codices Dispersi': Practices and Standards Developed by e-codices—Virtual Manuscript Library of Switzerland," *IFLA* 36, no. 2 (2010): 145–54; Helen Shenton, "Virtual Reunification, Virtual Preservation and Enhanced Conservation," *Alexandria* 21, no. 2 (2009): 33–45; Zeki Mustafa Dogan and Alfred Scharsky, "Virtual Reunification of the Earliest Christian Bible: Digitisation, Transcription, Translation and Physical Description of the Codex Sinaiticus," in *EDCL 2008: Proceedings of the 12th European Conference on Research and Advanced Technology for Digital Libraries*, ed. B. Christensen-Dalsgaard et al. (Denmark, 2008), 221–26; Jessi Stumpf et al., "Digital Reunification of the Parthenon and Its Sculptures," in *Fourth International Symposium on Virtual Reality, Archeology and Intelligent Cultural Heritage*, ed. David Arnold, Alan Chalmers, and Franco Niccolucci (Aire-La-Ville: Eurographics, 2003), 41–50; Ekkehard Henschke, "Digitizing the Hand Painted Bible: The Codex Sinaiticus, Its History and Modern Presentation," *Libri* 57 (2007): 45–51; Elisabeth Eide, "Dispersed Collections Virtually Rejoined?" (paper presented at the World Library and Information Congress: 76th IFLA General Conference and Assembly, Gothenburg, Sweden, August 10–15, 2010), <http://conference.ifla.org/past-wlic/2010/99-eide-en.pdf>.
- <sup>8</sup> Clifford Lynch, "Special Collections at the Cusp of the Digital Age: A Credo," *Research Library Issues* (December 2009): 5; and Jeanette Greenfield, "Homecomings: Real and Virtual," in *The Return of Cultural Treasures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 364–443.
- <sup>9</sup> The map in this illustration is protected by copyright. This particular use is not in copyright violation as expressed in the terms and conditions of use outlined in the creator's website. For more information, see <http://d-maps.com/conditions.php?lang=en>. This map may be freely downloaded at [http://d-maps.com/carte.php?num\\_car=33815&lang=en](http://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=33815&lang=en).
- <sup>10</sup> Karl Hutterer, letter to NEH, April 26, 1976, University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology.
- <sup>11</sup> Finding Aid, Dean C. Worcester Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/b/bhlead/umich-bhl-86354?rgn=main;view=text>.
- <sup>12</sup> This institution has Worcester's family papers and manuscripts. The historical society does not have copies of Worcester's ethnographic photographs.
- <sup>13</sup> Ricardo L. Punzalan, "Archives of the New Possession: Spanish Colonial Records and the American Creation of a 'National' Archives for the Philippines," *Archival Science* 6, nos. 3–4 (2006): 381–92.
- <sup>14</sup> Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 358.

- <sup>15</sup> Rodney J. Sullivan, *Exemplar of Americanism: The Philippine Career of Dean C. Worcester* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991).
- <sup>16</sup> Frank C. Lockwood, *The Life of Edward E. Ayer* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1929), 87.
- <sup>17</sup> See Sullivan, *Exemplar of Americanism* and Karl L. Hutterer, "Dean C. Worcester and Philippine Anthropology," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 6, no. 3 (1978): 125–56.
- <sup>18</sup> Dean C. Worcester, "The Non-Christian Tribes of Northern Luzon," *Philippine Journal of Science* 1, no. 8 (1906), 791–875.
- <sup>19</sup> The initials appeared in this form in the materials supplied by the Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum.
- <sup>20</sup> See Sullivan, *Exemplar of Americanism*.
- <sup>21</sup> See Lockwood, *The Life of Edward E. Ayer* and Sullivan, *Exemplar of Americanism*.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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**Ricardo L. Punzalan** is an assistant professor of archives and digital curation at the University of Maryland College of Information Studies. He holds a PhD in information from the University of Michigan School of Information. In addition to an MLIS from the University of the Philippines, he completed two certificates of graduate studies at Michigan, one in science, technology, and society (STS) and another in museum studies. His current research examines "virtual reunification" as a strategy to provide integrated access to dispersed ethnographic archival images online. His articles have been published in *Library Quarterly*, *Archives and Manuscripts*, *Archivaria*, and *Archival Science*.