

## **Raphael & Jolene Gruener Research Travel Award Report Summary**

**Title of Research Project:** *“Art Education in Federal Boarding Schools Visual Records from the National Archives”*

**Research Location:** *National Archives & Records Administration  
College Park, Maryland*

**On site Research Dates:** *July 17-23, 2011*

**Research Awardee:** *Marinella Lentis, PhD Candidate  
American Indian Studies GIDP*

I spent the week of July 17-23, 2011 in the Washington, D.C. area and visited the main branch of the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland, to examine photographic records of American Indian schools and educational activities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As I was able to examine these materials in three days, I took the opportunity to also visit the National Anthropological Archives in Suitland, Maryland, and the downtown branch of the National Archives to peruse additional collections related to Indian schools.

At the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park I consulted eight collections of photographs which are part of the Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Here I found numerous pictures of students at work in manual trades, domestic arts, and, more interestingly, class activities such as art and free hand drawing. I also came across many photographs of Indian school exhibits at state fairs in the early 1910s with displays of Native arts and crafts and samples of needlework along with beautiful presentations of agricultural products. In addition to the records of the BIA, I examined photographs of world's fairs and exhibitions in the Records of the Department of the Treasury and the Records of the Public Building Service; here I found pictures of Indian school exhibits at national and international fairs from the late 1880s to the early 1910s which included samples of classroom work, particularly drawing, as well as industrial training.

My visit to the National Anthropological Archives was very short, only one day, but nonetheless fruitful. I was able to examine photographs from three different collections, all of which included materials related to Indian schools. Among the many pictures of school buildings, including the two institutions I am considering, and students working at manual trades, I was pleased to find two photographs of art classes in the early 1900s. Due to time constraints, I

was able to access only a few collections at the downtown branch of the National Archives, namely the Records of the Employee Section, which contained rosters of all employees in Indian schools, and the Circulars issued by the Superintendent of Indian Schools between 1899 and 1908. The few documents found among these records will help fill some of the gaps in my research.

Overall, my time in D.C. was very fruitful and productive; I accomplished what I set out to do, found evidence to support and better illustrate my arguments, and I was also able to access collections I had not plan to examine. All this was made possible thanks to the Raphael & Jolene Gruener Research Travel Award and the generous contribution of their donors. The amount received though this award was used to cover my travel expenses, public transportation within the D.C. metropolitan area, and part of my meals. I am very grateful for the opportunity given me by GIDP because the data collected will strengthen my dissertation through powerful historical images of art education in American Indian schools.