

# Who We Are: Spotighting Diversity in Government Documents

L.E. Eames | [@liblarrian](#) | Digital version: [bit.ly/EamesALA019](https://bit.ly/EamesALA019)

*Project originally created for the University of Washington Libraries, Government Publications, Maps, Microforms and Newspapers Unit*

## Project Background

In the process of planning an update to another guide, I identified an opportunity to further develop diversity and inclusion in the Government Publications guides. To that end, inspired by a National Parks Service project and using our “Sources by Subject” guides as a launch pad, I created the “Who We Are” guides.

## Project Results

The goal of the project was to daylight alternative ways of using government documents as primary sources, and the final guides are at: [guides.lib.uw.edu/research/whoweare](https://guides.lib.uw.edu/research/whoweare). They are designed to grow and expand as new documents are created and new stories are told in policy and in legal precedent.

## Project Methodology

Organizing principle: “What stories are told here?” A narrative orientation provided a framework for exploring how gov docs represented identity groups speaking for themselves as well as the government imposing policy on those groups without their input.

Scope: United States borders. The items selected deal with American domestic policy (with some exceptions). I made the call not to do a “Who We Are” page on Indigenous Americans, because a “Sources by Subject” guide already existed.

Product: There are 7 sections: African Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Jewish Americans, Latinx Americans, LGBTQ+ Americans, Muslim Americans, and Women. The stories are unique to each group and the guides are unified by shared anatomy, some of which is described below.

## The Making Of: Table of Contents

These allow for quick access to individual stories by using each story’s title as an anchor.

This one is from the Asian American and Pacific Islander guide.



Who We Are: Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

- Table of Contents
- Introduction: Telling All Americans' Stories
- Spotlighted Stories:
  - Pacific Territories
  - Guam
  - The Northern Mariana Islands
  - American Samoa
  - Pacific Outlying Islands
  - Chinese Exclusion
  - The Annexation of Hawaii
  - The Annexation of the Philippines
  - Japanese Internment
- Continue Your Research
- Representation and Anti-Discrimination
- Quantitative Data
- Oral Histories
- Databases

## The Making Of: Transparency

Identity is personal and important. Creating these guides meant making choices about how to represent people, so I made a point to share my process.

### Latino, Latin@, Latine, Latinx?

One of the aspects at the intersection of gender and race is grammatical gender. This is a complicated discussion with many different perspectives, a few of which are linked below. We have decided to use Latinx on this guide, taking our cues from the [UW Latinx Student Union](#), but will preserve the usages of the various gender neutral/gendered language from the resources we quote.

- [Hispanic vs. Latino vs. Latinx: A Brief History of How These Words Originated](#)
- [Latino, Latinx, Latine](#)
- [Latino/a vs. Latinx vs. Latine: Which Word Best Solves Spanish's Gender Problem?](#)
- [The case against 'Latinx'](#)



Stonewall National Monument. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

• [Presidential Proclamation – Establishment of the Stonewall National Monument](#)

## The Making Of: Key Images

To give each guide a visual identity, I chose a celebratory image to represent each group in the guides.

## Religious Attire & The Law

- [Linda Tisby v. Camden County Correctional Facility](#)  
In early 2017 a case found itself before New Jersey's appellate court concerning Tisby's termination for wearing a headscarf which was in violation of the correctional facility's uniform code. The Decision was that the county superior court was correct in ruling against Tisby as it would have been an "undue hardship" to accommodate her "because of overriding safety concerns, the potential for concealment of contraband, and the importance of uniform neutrality."
- [Quebec, Canada: Bill 60](#)  
Perhaps the most controversial part of bill 60, or the Quebec Charter of Values, is the ban on public servants wearing *any* religious symbols in the performance of their duties.

## The Making Of: International Docs

Sometimes including documents from beyond US Borders enriched the story, as in this example from the Muslim Americans Guide.