



# **Classification from the margins:**

**three alternative  
classification systems,  
1930-1975**



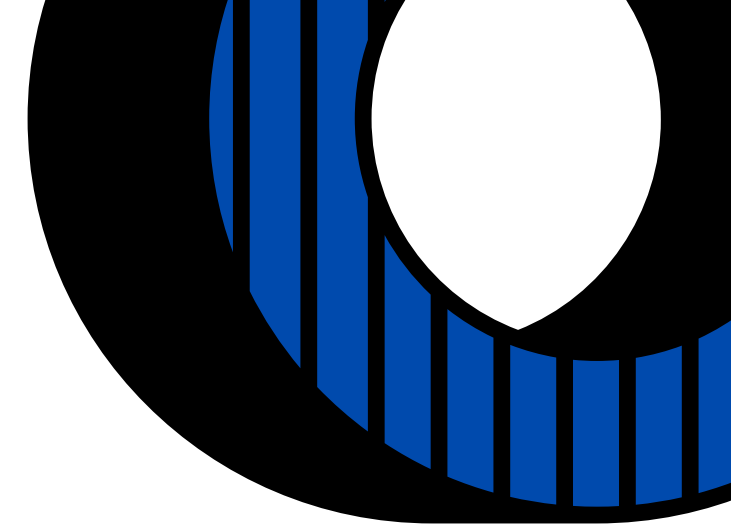
Sasha Frizzell  
Catalog / Metadata Management Librarian  
Binghamton University



**Sasha Frizzell**

**Catalog / Metadata Management Librarian**

**Binghamton University, Binghamton, New York**



# Overview

01

Background

02

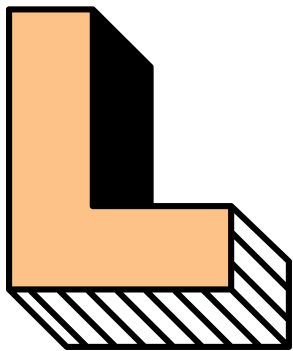
Dorothy Porter  
Wesley

03

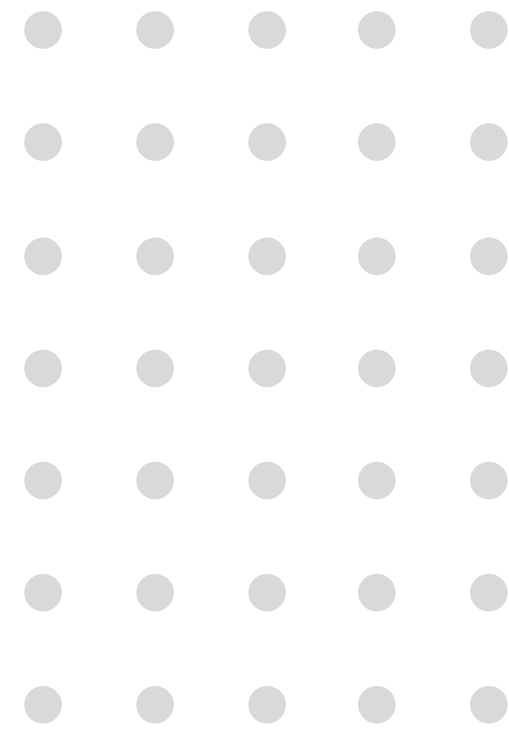
Alfred Kaiming  
Chui

04

A. Brian Deer







# Background

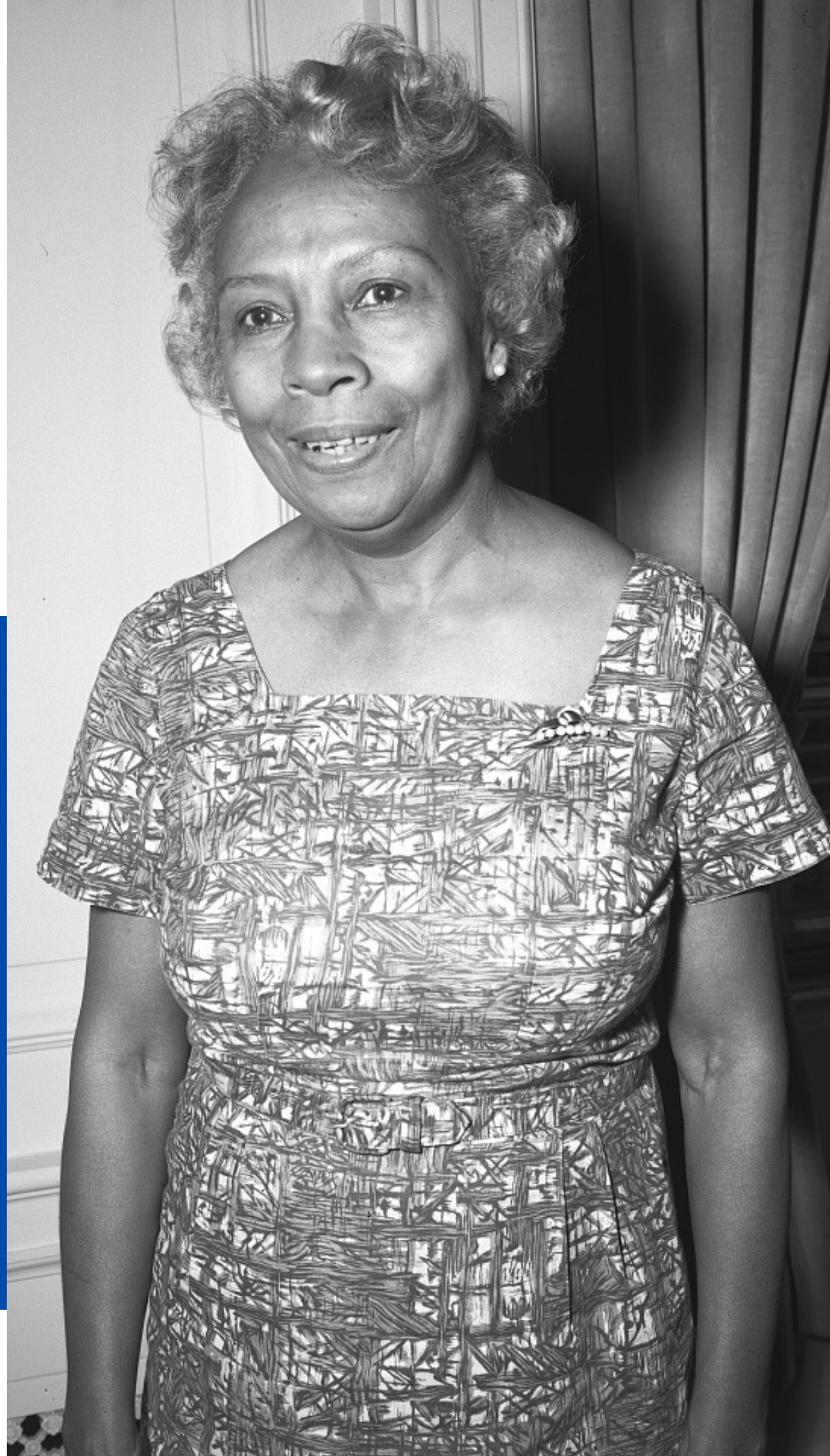


**Classification systems  
are biased**



**Librarians, as they are  
known to do, found  
solutions**





# Dorothy Burnett Porter Wesley

**Librarian, curator, archivist, and  
bibliographer**

Moorland Foundation, Howard  
University, 1930–1973

Photograph source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division,  
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“

In the Dewey Decimal System they had number 326 -- that meant slavery -- and they had one other number [...] that meant colonization.

Every book, whether it was a book of poems by James Weldon Johnson, who everybody knew was a Black poet, went under 325.

And that was stupid to me.

**Why not take the whole Dewey Decimal System and put a book by James Weldon Johnson, the poet, under the number for poetry? You see? So that's what I did.**

”





# **Solution**

Restructure  
classification

Subject first,  
author second  
hierarchy

- **Art**
- **Anthropology**
- **Communications**
- **Demography**
- **Economics**
- **Education**
- **Geography**
- **History**
- **Health**
- **International relations**
- **Linguistics**
- **Literature**
- **Medicine**
- **Music**
- **Political Science**
- **Sociology**
- **Sports**
- **Religion**



# Alfred Kaiming Chiu (裘開明)



**Librarian and bibliographer**

Harvard-Yenching Institute, Harvard  
University

Photograph source: Columbia University Chinese Students &  
Scholars Association, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



“

It was a period of transition during which three trends were dominant. The first was to cling tenaciously to the old sì kù (fourfold) classification of the eighteenth century.

The second, diametrically opposed to it, was to abandon the old system completely and to adopt some Western scheme such as Dewey's.

The third was to divide old and new books into watertight compartments, using the sì kù scheme for the old and some modern system for the new. ”



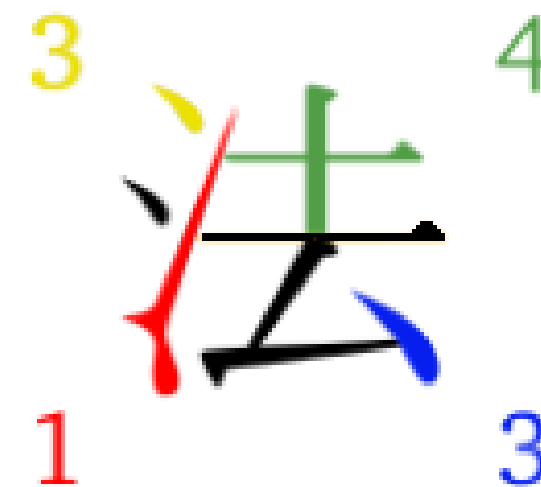
Source : Wu, Eugene W. (1993), p. 66



# Solution

Created a four digit classification system based on merging ideas from Dewey & modified sì kù methods

100-999	Chinese Classics
1000-1999	Philosophy and Religion
2000-3999	Historical Sciences
4000-4999	Social Sciences
5000-5999	Language and Literature
6000-6999	Fine and Recreative Arts
7000-7999	Natural Sciences
8000-8999	Agriculture and Technology
9000-9999	Generalia and Bibliography





# Tionerahtoken Alec Brian Deer



**LIBRARIAN, SCHOLAR, AND VIDEO STORE OWNER**

National Indian Brotherhood, Ottawa

Lecturer, Concordia University, Montreal

Otiohkwa Video, Kahnawake

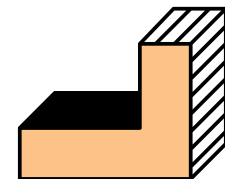




# Solution

Build a system that  
focuses on the needs  
of Indigenous patrons  
and decentralizes  
European worldviews

Created to be  
reorganized and  
customized



- A - Reference
- B - History & Culture, British Columbia
- C - History & Culture, North America
- D - History & Culture, International
- E - Education
- F - Economies & Financial Systems
- G - Governance
- H - Colonizing Government Policy Research
- J - Justice System
- K - Indian Government
- L - Law
- M - Rights & Titles
- N- Nature & Ecological Knowledge
- P - Community Resources
- S - Health
- V - Religion
- W - Arts & Crafts
- X - Language
- Y- Literature

# LCC E Schedule

# BDC Classification

Indians of North America		BC	HAIDA
Tribes and cultures, A-Z -- Continued		BD	TSIMSHIAN
99.G67	Gitksan see E99.K55	BDA	TSIMSHIAN - COASTAL
	Gitxsan see E99.K55	BDC	GITXSAN
99.G82	Gosiute	BDE	NISGA'A
99.H15	Gros Ventre (Montana) see E99.A87	BE	KWAKWAKA'WAKW
99.H2	Guale	BF	NUU-CHAH-NULTH
99.H23	Hackensack	BG	NUXALK (Bella Coola)
99.H26	Haida	BH	HEILTSUK (Bella Bella)
99.H28	Haisla		
	Han		
	Hasinai		



# BDC Classification & Tribal Geography Map

BC	HAIDA
BD	TSIMSHIAN
BDA	TSIMSHIAN - COASTAL
BDC	GITXSAN
BDE	NISGA'A
BE	KWAKWAKA'WAKW
BF	NUU-CHAH-NULTH
BG	NUXALK (Bella Coola)
BH	HEILTSUK (Bella Bella)



Map source: A Country By Consent. (1993). Northwest Coast Native Territory. Canada History Project



**One-size rarely fits all**

**Center patron experience**

**Amplify voices from their  
own communities**



# **Takeaways**



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# Thank you!



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