History and Formation of NAGPRA

CRISTINA GONZALES
The Beginning

• Doctrine of Discovery
  • Any land not inhabited by Christians was available to be “discovered”

• 1823 Samuel Morton, the founder of physical anthropology in the USA, began collecting skulls

• 1839 published the Crania Americana which claimed that Native Americans were intellectually inferior to whites because of a smaller skull size
The Collecting

- Sites of massacres were desecrated, soldiers ordered to take anything of ‘value’
- 1900's skeletal remains had gained a dollar value
- The Great Depression only added to the looting and grave-robbing
- Curio collectors and museums contributed to grave goods robbing
- By the 1930's Native American skeletons had become tourist attractions and burial sites had been opened for public viewing and taking
The Rising Up

• 1960’s Civil Rights, Pan-Indian and Red Power Movement

• 1976 Native American Heritage Commission created
  • Identify and catalog places of cultural significance to Native Americans
  • Prevent irreparable damage to designated sacred sites
  • Prevent interference with the expression of Native American religion in California

• 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act
Protecting and Repatriating

• 1978 Zuni Ahayu:da repatriation via ethical means
• 1971 Finding/1979 Iowa first state to enact grave protection and repatriation law—several states followed
• 1988/1989 Ohlone repatriation from Stanford
• 1990 Passage of NAGPRA
• 2001 Passage of Cal-NAGPRA
  ◦ AB-52, 2015
  ◦ AB-275, 2020
Thank you