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Geographical metadata in the Berkeley language archives

The Berkeley language archives include the Berkeley Language Center (BLC) and the Survey of California and Other Indian Languages (SCOIL) as well as repositories of earlier material. BLC and SCOIL continue to collect, with new contributions mixing analog and digital formats, but most of our collection is “legacy” data where depositors provided only limited (if any) metadata.

Our catalog database includes tables representing languages and people: items are associated with languages, and with people in participant roles (collector, consultant, depositor, researcher, etc.). We also represent locations (common names, latitude and longitude) and so can associate locations with people and items (and roles, e.g., place of birth, place of collection). The resulting geographical metadata will comprise a valuable scholarly resource for studies of socio-historical language dynamics in the U.S. West, and facilitate engaging and intuitive exploration via a map interface where users can select features of interest (audio vs. paper, digital vs. analog).