

Introduction to Museum Research

Museums can be a great resource for your classroom! Below you will find information about the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum and Tribal Historic Preservation Office collections and how you can use them in your classroom to develop student's research skills.

What are the advantages of Museum research?

Museums offer great resources that students and teachers can trust. Unlike Google and Wikipedia, museums offer academic research materials.

Museums and libraries allow students and teachers to work directly with primary resources. Historic documents and objects offer a tangible link to the past that other resources can't match. Students can utilize these materials to draw larger historical conclusions and come to understand broader histories through personal narratives.

What is a collection?

Museum collections vary by subject, material, size, and much more. The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum and Tribal Historic Preservation Office have several collections that preserve all aspects of the Seminole story. The value of having a full-fledged collection as opposed to a few items is that each object provides context which helps us to understand the larger story.

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki and Tribal Historic Preservation Office Collections

Permanent Artifact Collection

The Permanent Artifact collection is intended to be a representative sample of the material culture of the Seminole people. For this reason, it is comprised of a wide range of objects that are divided into eleven categories: Baskets, Beaded Objects, Dolls, Fine Art, Glass & Ceramic Objects, Metal Objects, Militaria, Natural History Objects, Southeastern Archaeological Objects, Textile & Leather Objects, and Wooden Objects.

Library Collection

The Library collection consists of approximately 5,000 books and periodicals. The materials cover a variety of relevant subject areas, such as Southeastern and Seminole archaeology, culture, and history; Florida environment and history; and museum studies.

Archival Collection

The Archival collection consists of over 10,000 paper, photographic, and audiovisual materials. The scope of the collection ranges from historic records of ancestral Seminole groups, and the earliest recorded evidence of the Seminole Tribe, to modern oral histories, memorabilia, journalism, and photography.

Oral History Collection

The Oral History collection is a distinct collection housed by the Museum and managed by the Oral History Coordinator. Currently the collection consists of roughly 200 interviews recorded with Tribal members and those non-Tribal members who have direct dealings with the Tribe. There are also field notes, transcripts, and other ancillary materials produced from the interviews which are kept with this collection.

Tribal Historic Preservation Office Collections

The Seminole Tribe of Florida's ever growing archaeological collections give a comprehensive look at what life was like in Florida over the span of thousands of years. The collection includes over 310,000 objects that have been carefully recovered through archaeological surveys on reservation lands. The collection includes physical artifacts, documents, field notes, photographs, and a database.

How can you access collections?

Museum and the Tribal Historic Preservation Office's collections can be accessed in several ways.

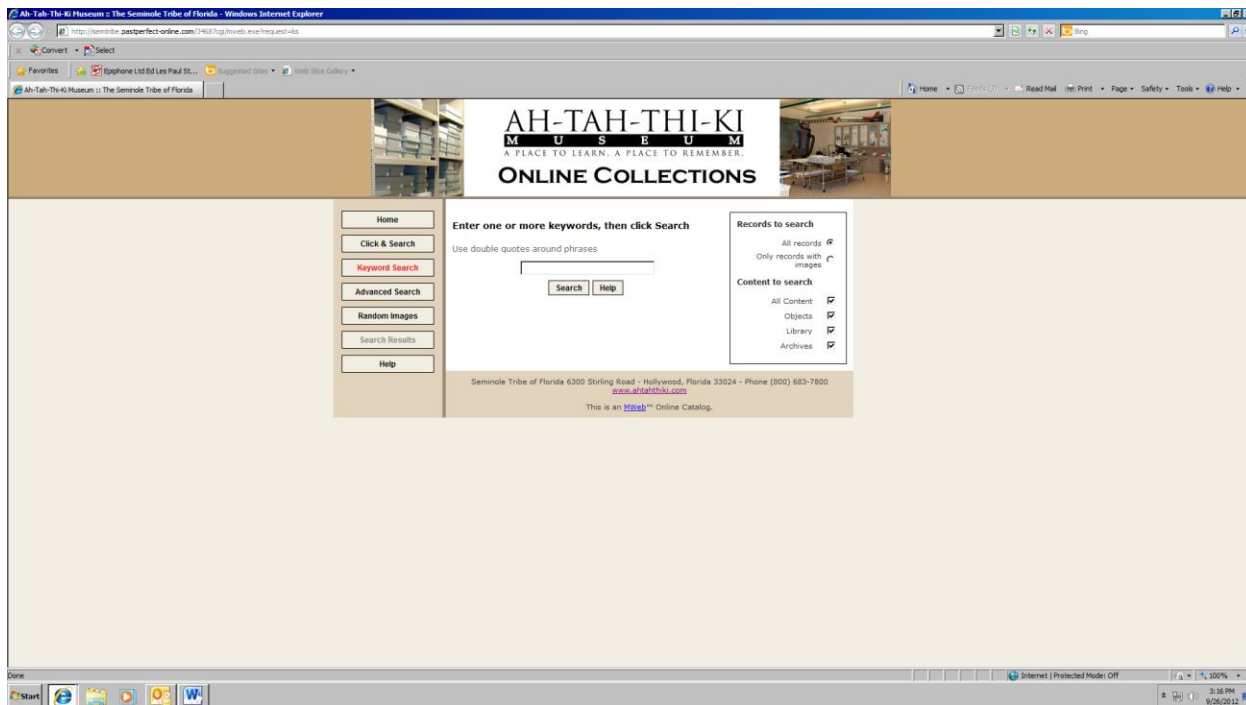
- Find more information about the museum's collections here: (<http://www.ahthiki.com/collections/>).
- **Use PastPerfect** (see below) for more information.
- **Set up a research appointment** to use our library and other materials or **ask a research question** by contacting Mary Beth Rosebrough, our Research Coordinator, at MaryBethRosebrough@semtribe.com.
- Find additional information about the Tribal Historic Preservation Office's collection here (<http://www.stofthpo.com/Collections-Seminole-Tribe-FL-Tribal-Historic-Preservation-Office.html>).
- Find out about specific items with the **Artifact-of-the-Month** (<http://www.stofthpo.com/Artifact-of-the-Month.html>).
- Contact Rechanda Lee, our Research Coordinator for the Tribal Historic Preservation Office, at RechandaLee@semtribe.com with your **research questions**.

It is important to note that some parts of the collections are restricted to Tribal Member usage only.

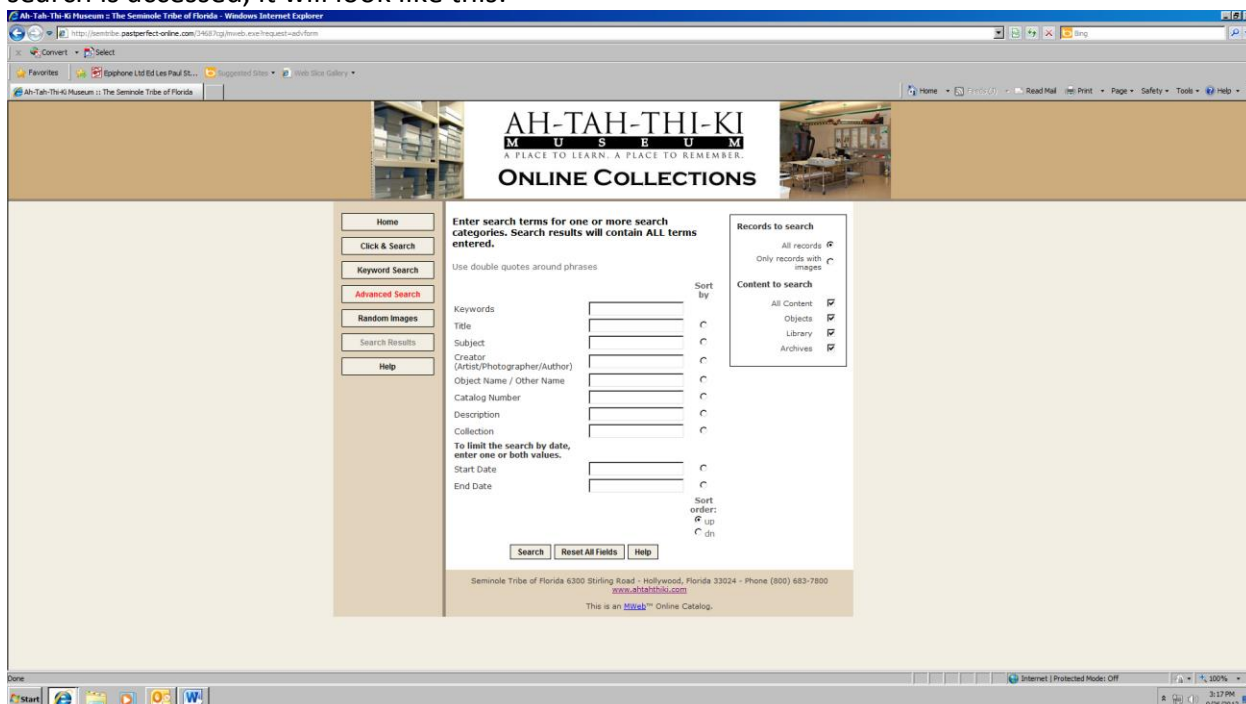
Using PastPerfect for research

The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum uses the PastPerfect database system to record artifacts. Some parts of this system and our collections can be accessed here: <http://semtribe.pastperfect-online.com/34687cgi/mweb.exe?request=ks>.

The initial screen will look like this:



From here, a researcher can initiate a keyword search, pull up random images, or conduct an advanced search. The advanced search will allow a person to research in several different ways. When the advanced search is accessed, it will look like this:



From here, you can research by keyword, author, creator, date range, catalog number, and more. Please make sure to properly document your sources.