

# North American Indian Sign Language Varieties: Historical and Contemporary Studies

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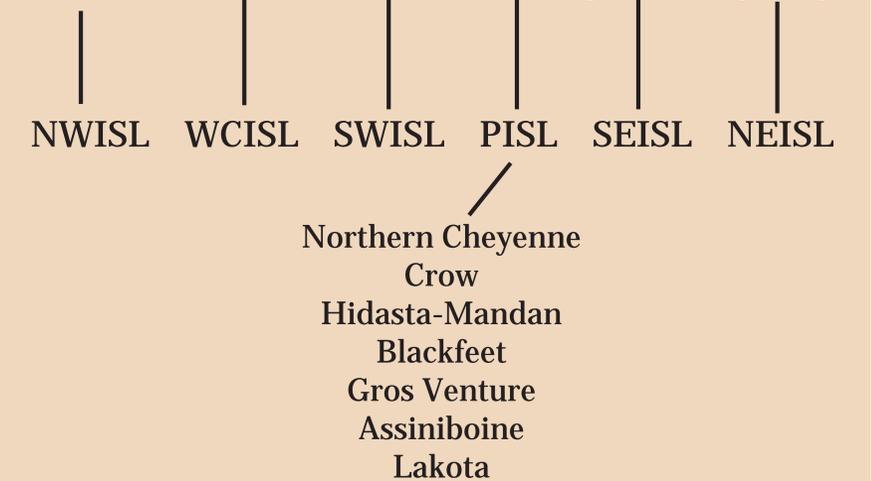
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## Our Research Study

- ▶ Our purpose is to preserve and study Plains Indian Sign Language (PISL).
- ▶ Importance of this endangered language
- ▶ Intertribal signed lingua franca
- ▶ No fieldwork since 1930's
- ▶ No deaf or women signers previously involved

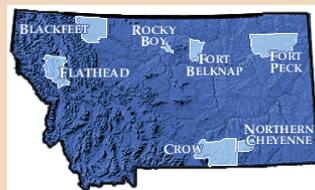
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## North American Indian Sign Language



## Our Research Sites

- ▶ Northern Cheyenne Reservation
- ▶ Crow Reservation
- ▶ Fort Belknap Reservation
- ▶ Blackfeet Reservation



## Our Research Plan

- ▶ Gathering native signers of PISL/Sign Talk
- ▶ Video-recording native signers in storytelling, tell history, in full PISL structure.
- ▶ Documenting all videos in ELAN.
- ▶ Do linguistic analysis of PISL
- ▶ Discover sign dialects among tribes.
- ▶ Preserve videos in our archival digital storage
- ▶ Develop website
- ▶ Gather native signers for more intensive study
- ▶ Develop revitalization plan and curriculum materials for future generations (to be turned over to tribes)

## North American Indian Sign Language (Past/Traditional)

- ▶ Intertribal communication
- ▶ Storytelling
- ▶ Rituals
- ▶ Distance
- ▶ Communication during raids & wars
- ▶ Hunting
- ▶ Deaf Family Members

## North American Indian Sign Language (Present/Contemporary)

- ▶ Storytelling
- ▶ Signing Lord's Prayer/other prayers
- ▶ Tribal Princess performances
- ▶ Entertainment
- ▶ Native American Church
- ▶ Sawmill Industry
- ▶ Deaf Family Members

