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National Museum of African Art

Ann O'Hear Collection, EEPA 2016-004

Eden Orelove

July 2019

Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
Title:	Ann O'Hear Collection
Identifier:	EEPA.2016-004
Date:	1980-2015
Creator:	O'Hear, Ann (Photographer)
Extent:	34 Slides (photographs) (color; 35 mm) 2 Digital images
Language:	English .
Summary:	Photographs taken by Ann O'Hear of leatherworking and pottery technology in Ilorin, Nigeria, from 1980 to 2015.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated by Ann O'Hear, 2016.

Related Materials

Additional archival and art collections by Ann O'Hear are held at the following locations:

Ann O'Hear Collection: Research on Master Weaver Yahaya Kalu Olabintan of Ilorin. A digital collection including an introduction, a research note with bibliographical references, images with captions, and an appendix, deposited in the National Museum of African Art Library, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

The Dr. Ann O'Hear Archive, The Hull History Centre. An annotated collection of articles, books, interviews, research notes, correspondence, archival materials, etc., on slavery and related subjects.

The Ann O'Hear Collection, Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM), Exeter. A collection of lantana beads from Ilorin (Nigeria).

"Additions to the Lovejoy-Adesiyun Collection." A digital collection including interviews, a research note, images, etc., Harriet Tubman Resource Centre, Harriet Tubman Institute, York University, Toronto, Canada. See <http://digital.tubmaninstitute.ca/collections/show/11> .

The O'Hear Collection of West African textiles, presented to ULITA—An Archive of International Textiles (University of Leeds). Handwoven cloths, dyed cloths, mostly Nigerian, collected by Ann and Hugh O'Hear, 1960s-1980s.

Processing Information

Titles and notes provided by Ann O'Hear.

Slides digitized in 2019.

Preferred Citation

Ann O'Hear Collection, EEPA 2016-004, Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Collection digitized and available online. Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.

Conditions Governing Use

Permission to reproduce images from the Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives must be obtained in advance. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

Biographical / Historical

Ann O'Hear is a professor specializing in Nigerian material culture. Following graduation from college, she worked as a graduate volunteer teacher in Nigeria (1965–1967) and in 1969 received an MA in African Studies from the Centre of West African Studies, University of Birmingham, UK. In 1976, she returned to Nigeria and worked as a lecturer at the Kwara State College of Technology, Ilorin, and researched the economic history of Ilorin. Studying under Professor J. D. Fage, she received her Ph.D. in History/African Studies in 1984 from the University of Birmingham. She left Kwara State College of Technology in 1985, and moved to America, where she became Coordinator of Intercultural Studies at Niagara University. She also worked in publishing, including as co-editor of the *African Economic History* journal. She authored the book *Power Relations in Nigeria: Ilorin Slaves and Their Successors* (1997), edited a new edition of *Letters from Nigeria, 1899#1900 of David Wynford Carnegie* (1992), and has published numerous articles.

Scope and Contents

The collection includes photographs taken by Ann O'Hear of leatherworking and pottery technology in Ilorin, Nigeria, from 1980 to 2015.

Images in Series 1 (Leatherworking in Ilorin) depict a saddle, including details of tooling, bridle, triangular decorations for horses, Alh. Imam Idiario weaving and cutting out a template for use on saddle blankets, and a horse in ceremonial trappings waiting to welcome the Emir of Ilorin, Alh. Sulu Gambari, on his return from a trip abroad. Photographs were taken in Ilorin, including in the areas of Ile Onigaari and Balogun Alanamu.

Series 2 (Pottery Technology in Ilorin) includes images of potters, including Madam Fatimoh, constructing pots at the Ebu Dada pottery center, and in Ile Babaoye, Okelele, and Ile Mulabi, Ilorin.

Arrangement

Images arranged in two series:

- Series 1: Leatherworking in Ilorin, 1985-1989 (15 slides)
- Series 2: Pottery Technology in Ilorin, 1980-2015 (29 slides, 2 digital images)

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Blacksmithing
- Hides and skins
- Leatherwork
- Pottery
- Weaving
- Yoruba (African people)

Cultures:

- Yoruba (African people)

Types of Materials:

- Color slides
- Digital images

Occupations:

- Potters

Places:

- Africa
- Nigeria

Container Listing

Series 1: Leatherworking in Ilorin , 1985-1989

36 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria

EEPA 2016-004-0001: [Alh. Abdullahi Abdul-Salami, Imam Idiario, of Ile Onigaari, Balogun Alanamu Ward, Ilorin, 1988](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: Imam Idiario was a leatherworker and Ann O'Hear's most important informant on leatherworking in Ilorin. In 1988, he was an imam and ran an Arabic school (in which he is standing in the photograph). The office of imam for the immediate area passes down through the male members of Ile Onigaari. The name of the compound translates from Yoruba as "saddlemakers' compound" and it has had close connections with the horseowning warrior elite. Although the compound had been important for leatherworking, by 1988 it would appear that no one there was still engaged in the craft.

Topic: Nigeria

EEPA 2016-004-0002: [Saddle \(gaari\), Ile Balogun Alanamu's compound, Ilorin, 1985](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: Alh. Imam Idiario took Ann O'Hear to Ile Balogun Alanamu to view an old saddle (*gaari*) and other items, which had been made in Ile Onigaari and apparently mostly by Alh. Imam Idiario himself. The photograph shows the high pommel and cantle of the saddle, following the usual type of saddle that was used in West Africa, reaching Yorubaland from the north. Indeed, Alh. Imam Idiario tells a story that his ancestors learned their craft from the north, although they came originally from Old Oyo. The photograph also shows that cloth was used (rather than leather) to secure the stirrups to the saddle. The cloth used is *etu* ("guineafowl cloth"), a type of cloth that was woven in the area around Ile Onigaari.

Topic: Nigeria

EEPA 2016-004-0003: [Saddle \(gaari\), Ile Balogun Alanamu's compound, Ilorin, 1985](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria

EEPA 2016-004-0004: [Saddle \(gaari\), detail of padded underpart, Ile Balogun Alanamu's compound, Ilorin, 1985](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria

EEPA 2016-004-0005: [Triangular decorations \(paro\) for horses, Ile Balogun Alanamu's compound, Ilorin, 1985](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: Triangular decorations (*paro*) are meant to hang down on both sides of the horse's head. They feature a leather backing, with appliqué designs on the front in cloth, and are studded with what looks like brass. The appliqué designs involve a variety of geometrical shapes. They are very similar to those called, in Hausaland, *layun doki*, which supports the suggestion of a strong northern influence on the leatherworkers of Ile Onigaari.

Topic: Nigeria

EEPA 2016-004-0006: [Close-up of a triangular decoration \(paro\), Ile Balogun Alanamu's compound, Ilorin, 1985](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria

EEPA 2016-004-0007: [Alh. Imam Idiario cutting out a template for a design used on saddle blankets \(iteyin\), and on saddle cushions and pouffes \(tim-tim\), Ile Onigaari, 1988](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: Alh. Imam Idiario called the motif "*koronu*" (a word presumably derived from "crown").

Topic: Nigeria

EEPA 2016-004-0008: [Templates for a design \(koronu\) to be used on cushions and saddle blankets cut out by Alh. Imam Idiario in 1988, 1989](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria

EEPA 2016-004-0009: [Alh. Imam Idiario weaving, Ile Atoti compound, near Ile Onigaari, 1988](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: Ile Atoti, a compound near Ile Onigaari, specialized both in dyeing leather and in weaving *etu* ("guineafowl cloth"). Such cloth was used extensively in the horse trappings produced in Ile Onigaari.

Topic: Nigeria

EEPA 2016-004-0010: [Old saddle made in Ile Onigaari, detail of girth \(majayi\), Ile Balogun Alanamu, 1985](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: This photograph of the old saddle made in Ile Onigaari and photographed in Ile Balogun Alanamu shows the girth (*majayi*—a Hausa term), which is made of coconut fiber covered with cloth, apparently two strips of *etu* ("guineafowl cloth"), a type of cloth that was woven in the area around Ile Onigaari.

Topic: Nigeria

EEPA 2016-004-0011: [Old saddle made in Ile Onigaari, detail of crupper \(ikodi\), Ile Balogun Alanamu, 1985](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: This photograph of the old saddle (*ikodi*) made in Ile Onigaari and photographed in Ile Balogun Alanamu shows the crupper (*ikodi*), which is made up of many strips of *etu* ("guineafowl cloth"), a type of cloth that was woven in the area around Ile Onigaari.

Topic: Nigeria

EEPA 2016-004-0012: [Bridle \(ijanu\) made of brass, for use with the old saddle made in Ile Onigaari, Ile Balogun Alanamu, 1985](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria

EEPA 2016-004-0013: [Buckle \(angoro\) on the girth attached to the old saddle made in Ile Onigaari, 1985](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: This photograph shows the buckle on the girth attached to the old saddle made in Ile Onigaari and photographed in Ile Balogun Alanamu. This buckle is called *angoro* (maybe a Hausa term?), and is made, like the stirrups (*likafa*) of a silvery metal, possibly silvered brass.

Topic: Nigeria

EEPA 2016-004-0014: [Horse in ceremonial trappings waiting on the road into the city to welcome the Emir of Ilorin, Alh. Sulu Gambari, on his return from a trip abroad, 1988](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: The fact that only four horses could be mustered on this occasion demonstrates the great decline in horse keeping in Ilorin, which is reflected in the equally great decline in the numbers of leatherworkers in the twentieth century.

Topic: Nigeria

EEPA 2016-004-0015: [Horse in ceremonial trappings waiting on the road into the city to welcome the Emir of Ilorin, Alh. Sulu Gambari, on his return from a trip abroad, 1988](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: The fact that only four horses could be mustered on this occasion demonstrates the great decline in horse keeping in Ilorin, which is reflected in the equally great decline in the numbers of leatherworkers in the twentieth century.

Topic: Nigeria

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Series 2: Pottery Technology in Ilorin, 1980-2015

*19 Slides (photographs)**2 Digital images*

EEPA 2016-004-0016: [Clay pots at Ebu Dada pottery center, northern edge of Okelele district, Ilorin, 1980](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: As of the 1980s, Ebu Dada was the largest pottery making site in Ilorin, where numerous potters gathered to make and fire their pots. In this photograph, Ilorin "red" pots, for water or other storage, with red slip added, are set out to dry. Pots in the background have not yet been treated with the red slip. Ilorin potters divide their products into "red" (pupa) and "black" (dudu) wares, the red including these large storage pots, and the "black" including soup pots with burnished designs, and pots for storing medicines and oils.

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0017: [Large clay red water pots drying, Ebu Dada pottery center, Ilorin, 1980](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0018: [Young potter, using an old, inverted pot as a mold, beats out batt to make the base for a pot, Ebu Dada pottery center, Ilorin, 1980](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: Process of making a large red storage pot. A ball of prepared clay mix has been beaten or trodden out into a "batt," or patty. Here, a young potter, using an old, inverted pot as a mold, beats out the batt to make the base for a pot.

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0019: [Woman constructing clay storage pot, removing the base after the batt \(patty\) has been beaten out over the mold, Ebu Dada pottery center, Ilorin, 1980](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: Process of making a large red storage pot. When the batt (patty) has been beaten out over the mold, the young potter removes the base carefully. It is then left to dry until sufficiently hardened.

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0020: [Potter constructing clay storage pot, beginning to build up sides using coiling method, Ebu Dada pottery center, Ilorin, 1980](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0021: [Potter constructing clay storage pot, building up sides using coiling method, Ebu Dada pottery center, Ilorin, 1980](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0022: [Potter constructing clay storage pot, adding the rim, Ebu Dada pottery center, Ilorin, 1980](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0023: [Potter constructing clay storage pot, smoothing out the rim, Ebu Dada pottery center, Ilorin, 1980](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0024: [Madam Fatimoh, celebrated maker of small, decorative water coolers, joins two hemispherical molded pieces together with clay, to form the basic shape of a water cooler, Ile Babaoye, Okelele, Ilorin, 1982](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0025: [Madam Fatimoh, having joined two hemispherical molded pieces together, smooths out the join, Ile Babaoye, Okelele, Ilorin, 1982](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0026: [Small firing site, used to fire medicine pots, Ilorin, 1982](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: Firing is carried out by potters working in larger (as in Ebu Dada) or smaller groups, with pots piled into open "clamps." The firing is low-temperature, and firing times in the second

half of the twentieth century were particularly short. The firing is economical and efficient, and the resulting pots can be transported over long distances without excessive breakages and used for cooking over an open fire.

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0027: [Medicine pot being fired and treated with a liquor made from locust-bean pods, 1982](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: A medicine pot being fired is treated with a liquor made from locust-bean pods, which gives it a bronze/brown color. This helps to seal the pot (which is to be used to store liquid medicines) and increase its strength. The locust-bean pods from which the liquor is made can be seen in the lower right of the picture.

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0028: [Small black soup pot, showing burnished designs on the inside, Ilorin, 2015](#)

1 Digital image (color)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: Pot was purchased in Ilorin, circa 1989. Burnished designs have been rubbed into the pot before firing, and it has gone through a thorough carbonization and locust-bean pod liquor treatment, producing the black color. In the 1980s, it appeared that a complete carbonization/locust-bean-pod liquor treatment was routinely used only for black cooking pots, large and small, which need to be particularly strong and seepage proof.

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0029: [Small black soup pot, showing burnished designs on the inside, Ilorin, 2015](#)

1 Digital image (color)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: Pot was purchased in Ilorin, circa 1989. Burnished designs have been rubbed into the pot before firing, and it has gone through a thorough carbonization and locust-bean pod liquor treatment, producing the black color. In the 1980s, it appeared that a complete carbonization/locust-bean-pod liquor treatment was routinely used only for black cooking pots, large and small, which need to be particularly strong and seepage proof.

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0030: [Elderly potter rolling prepared clay mix into a ball, which will then be beaten out into a batt, or patty, Ile Malubi, Ilorin, 1988](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0031: [Two young potters working, one of whom is forming a batt, or patty, into a small pot, using an old pot as a mold, Ile Mulubi, Ilorin, 1988](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0032: [Potter coiling clay, a process by which the rim is added to the pot, Ile Malubi, Ilorin, 1988](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0033: [Potter coiling clay, a process by which the rim is added to the pot, Ile Malubi, Ilorin, 1988](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0034: [Potter smoothing rim of clay pot, Ile Malubi, Ilorin, 1988](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0035: [Potters gathering clay at clay pits, near Ilorin, 1988](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: Clay pits just outside the city of Ilorin, and close to Ebu Dada, the biggest pottery production center. Potters are seen gathering clay, to which they will add a decomposed quartz-schist (called *wuyan* by the potters), which is dug nearby, or, alternatively, sand. This coarse-textured mixture has the best consistency for the molding and coiling methods that are used by Ilorin potters.

Topic: Nigeria
Pottery

EEPA 2016-004-0036: [Man digging clay pit, near Ilorin, 1988](#)

1 Slides (photographs) (color; 35mm)

Photographer: O'Hear, Ann

Notes: Clay pits just outside the city of Ilorin, and close to Ebu Dada, the biggest pottery production center.

Topic: Nigeria

Pottery

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