



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the Robert M. Zingg films of the Huichol and Tarahumara, 1933-1934

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Human Studies Film Archives
Museum Support Center
4210 Silver Hill Road
Suitland 20746
Business Number: Phone: 301-238-1330
Fax Number: Fax: 301-238-2883
hsfa@si.edu
<http://www.anthropology.si.edu/naa>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Human Studies Film Archives
Title:	Robert M. Zingg films of the Huichol and Tarahumara
Date:	1933-1934
Identifier:	HSFA.1982.10
Creator:	Zingg, Robert M. (Robert Mowry), 1900-1957
Extent:	2 Film reels (79 minutes; black-and-white silent; 1835 feet) Linear feet
Language:	No linguistic content; Not applicable .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Transferred from the Center for the Study of Man, National Museum of Natural History in 1982.

Processing Information

Titles are supplied by the archivist for untitled films.

Preferred Citation

Robert M. Zingg films of the Huichol and Tarahumara, Human Studies Film Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

The collection is open for research. Please contact the archives for information on availability of access copies of audiovisual recordings. Original audiovisual material in the Human Studies Film Archives may not be played.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Scope and Contents

Collection consists of footage shot by anthropologist Robert Zingg in Northern Mexico. Collection also contains related publications.

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect the views of the Smithsonian Institution or Anthropology Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Rarámuri (Tarahumara)
Wixarika (Huichol)

Cultures:

Rarámuri (Tarahumara)
Wixarika (Huichol)

Types of Materials:

silent films

Places:

Mexico
North America

Container Listing

Huichol footage, 1933-1934

1 Film reel (59 minutes; black-and-white silent; 1332 feet; 35mm)

[Video: Zingg's Huichol Footage, 1933-1934, 1982.10.001, clip 1](#)

[Video: Zingg's Huichol Footage, 1933-1934, 1982.10.001, clip 2](#)

Notes: Footage shot among the Huichol of Tuxpan de Bolanos, northern Mexico, is the earliest known motion picture documentation of the Huichol. Footage depicts the distinctively indigenous aspects of Huichol culture and various acculturated aspects derived from Christian influence including *tatei neixa* or *wimakwari* (a first fruits ritual) at the ceremonial center of Ratontita, temple officers returning from a successful deer hunt, a peyote dance, parched corn ceremony, rain-making rituals, Easter Week activities (including the stations of the cross and a procession of the "saints"), and the cambio de las varas, an annual ceremony performed to sanctify the changing of Huichol government officials. Footage also documents Huichol subsistence and craft activities.

Legacy Keywords: Ceremony carnival Las Pachitas Mexico ; Agriculture corn Huichol Mexico ; Hallucinogens peyote ritual use of Huichol Mexico ; Ritual dance drumming Huichol Mexico ; Processions "saints" stations of cross Huichol ; Flowers use of in ritual headdress Huichol ; Hunting deer with ritual Huichol ; Looms weaving Huichol ; Language and culture

HSFA 1982.10.1

Tarahumara footage, 1933

1 Film reel (20 minutes; black-and-white silent; 503 feet)

[Video: Zingg's Tarahumara Footage, 1933, 1982.10.002, clip 1](#)

[Video: Zingg's Tarahumara Footage, 1933, 1982.10.002, clip 2](#)

Notes: Footage shot by anthropologist Robert Zingg in the Sierra Madre of northern Mexico of the Tarahumara (or Raramuri), most probably during Easter Week ceremonies. The syncretic rituals, dances, and costumes depicted in this "fiesta" reflect the legacy of the Tarahumara mission system as it developed under the authority of Spanish Jesuits and Franciscans during the 17th and 18th century. During Holy Week, the central theme of the Tarahumara fiesta is the conflict between God and the Devil and the necessity of restoring balance in the world. The Tarahumara are divided into soldalities as "Pharisees", allies of the Devil, and Captains or Soldiers, the allies of God. Much of what appears in Zingg's film document requires analysis in terms of this cosmological opposition. This ethnographic document opens with two lines of male dancers assembled on a patio outside of a native church. Dressed in long capes and crowns, they are seen performing a "matachin" dance accompanied by violin players. Shots of a man with a rattle intoning a praise chant (probably a "tutuburi") are followed by a procession of Pharisees and Soldiers circumambulating and entering the church. The former are identified either by hats adorned with plumed turkey feathers or white earth

used to decorate their bodies or faces. Young boys (apparently being initiated as Pharisees), are shown having their bodies ; with white earth and being led in a dance by an adult sponsor. A second group of dancers is seen performing a "Pharisee dance" characterized by high skipping steps. Communicants are then seen filing into the church and following a processional route through archways constructed of leaves and saplings. Concludes with shots of a Tarahumara running game and various subsistence and craft activities. ; Footage shot among the Tarahumara (or Raramuri) of Samachique and other sites of the Sierra Madre Mountains in Chihuahua, northern Mexico, in association with Wendell Bennett. Documentation includes a mix of daily year-round activities and rituals held during Easter week. The former includes: man with children dancing a *pascole*, *tutuburi* (a man with rattle intoning a chant), various craft activities, making *maguay* beer, and the pre-Columbian running game known as *rarajipa*. Easter week footage includes the syncretic rituals, dances, and costumes which reflect the legacy of the Tarahumara mission system as it developed under the authority of Spanish Jesuits and Franciscans during the 17th and 18th century. These ritual activities reflect a cosmological opposition between God and his allies, the "soldiers," and the Devil and his allies, the "Pharisees." Tarahumara are seen performing a *matachin* dance accompanied by violin players and drummers, young boys are shown having their bodies painted as part of the process of being taught how to dance--then performing a Pharisee dance, and communicants are shown filing into a native church and then following an Easter week processional route. Included are shots of yoking an ox and plowing, planting and harvesting corn, making maguey beer, spinning wool and weaving, and pottery making.

HSFA 1982.10.2