



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the Gordon Gibson films, 1953-1973

Cataloging supported by Smithsonian Institution Women's Committee

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Human Studies Film Archives
Title:	Gordon Gibson films
Date:	1953-1973
Identifier:	HSFA.1983.05
Creator:	Gibson, Gordon D.
Extent:	Film reels (5 hours 14 minutes; black-and-white color silent sound; 12,042 feet; 16mm) Linear feet
Language:	Undetermined .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Received from Gordon Gibson in 1983.

Related Materials

The National Anthropological Archives holds the Gordon Davis Gibson papers, 1937-2007.

Processing Information

Titles are supplied by the archivist for untitled films.

Preferred Citation

Gordon Gibson films, 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

Footage shot by Gordon D. Gibson from 1953-1973. Collection also includes associated texts, sound recordings, production logs, and field notes.

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 As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today.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:

- Damara (African people)
- Herero (African people)
- Himba (African people)
- Nzima (African people)
- Rites and ceremonies

Cultures:

- Damara (African people)
- Herero (African people)
- Himba (African people)
- Nzima (African people)

Types of Materials:

- Sound films
- silent films

Places:

- Africa, Southern
- Angola
- Botswana
- Namibia

Container Listing

Himba Research Film, 1972-1973

Film reels (1 hour 40 minutes; black-and-white color sound; 4000 feet; 16mm)

Video: [Himba Research Film, 1972-1973, 1983.05.001.003, clip 1](#)

Video: [Himba Research Film, 1972-1973, 1983.05.001.003, clip 2](#)

Notes: Full film record of a research film project documenting the Himba, a pastoral Bantu people of southwestern Angola and northwestern Namibia. Footage features documentation of a rainmaking ceremony with animal sacrifices to the ancestors and the anointing of *ombale* stones (rain shrines), the tending of cattle herds and the problems of drought, various musical performances, a baby-naming ceremony, and techniques of female hairdressing and braiding. Edited films THE HIMBA and HIMBA WEDDING were produced from this project. Includes associated texts, sound recordings, and production logs.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Ritual propitiation rainmaking ; Rainmaking magic sympathetic rocks water ; Animal sacrifice divination entrails ; Ritual anointing stones sacred ; Rainmaking ceremony descent group ancestors animal sacrifice ; Animal sacrifice suffocation blood ; Singing males praise songs cattle ; Shrines sacred rocks "ombale stones" ; Adornment women hair styles ; Clothing traditional leather sheepskin ; Hair styles sex status life cycle social identity ; Pastoral activities seasonal migration ecology ; Musical instruments horn pluriarch ; Music songs cattle praises oral history ; Naming infant rites of passage ; Ceremony naming anointing clan ; Inheritance cattle ceremony baby naming ; Milk purification sacred cattle ritual tasting ; Curing singing women trance ; Adornment necklaces wristbands women ; Adornment hair styles women braiding ; Hair styles hair dressing braiding grease wood ash red ochre ; Tillage division of labor by sex hoe ; Hair styles boys clan membership ; Animal husbandry division of labor by sex herding milking ; Seasonal migrations ; Rites and ceremonies

HSFA 1983.5.1

[The Himba, 1972](#)

Film reels (50 minutes; color sound; 1977 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film of harvest time activities and marriage rites among the Himba, a pastoral Bantu people of southwestern Angola and northwestern Namibia. Film illustrates womens' role in the domestic economy of the Himba and the various stages in a marriage ceremony. Film discusses stages in the seclusion of the bride, the ceremonial strangulation and butchering of an ox by Himba bachelors followed by a war dance and divination of the ox's entrails, seclusion of the groom's party adjacent to the village of bride's male relatives, the performance of *onjongu* dances at the wedding ceremony, and the incorporation of the bride into the village of her husband. Included are details on

male and female adornment specific to jural status. Includes sound recordings, field and production logs.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Marriage customs and rites g ; Dancing ceremonial ; Adornment ceremonial attire
HSFA 1983.5.2

Himba Wedding, 1969

1 Film reel (33 minutes; color sound; 1200 feet; 16mm)

[Video: Himba Wedding, 1969, 1983.05.003, clip 1](#)

[Video: Himba Wedding, 1969, 1983.05.003, clip 2](#)

Notes: Edited film of wedding rites among the Himba, a pastoral Bantu people of Kackoveld in Namibia. Film documents the taking of a second wife by a Himba man and discusses the marriage in connection with intervillage kinship relations, bridewealth, and polygyny. Film includes: the adornment and ritualization surrounding *zacirwa* (seclusion of the bride), customary strangulation and butchering of a bridewealth ox and the reading of its viscera, *onjongu* dancing by guests, ritual capture of the bride by groom's age-mates, and ceremonial incorporation of the bride into the homestead of her husband. Includes sound recordings.

Legacy Keywords: Marriage rites of passage ritual phases ; Food preparation butchering ritual cooking ; Divination butchering augury ; Adornment headdress marriage nubility ; Bridewealth marriage animal sacrifice kinship relationships ; Avoidance groom mother-in-law ; Dancing celebration mimicry feasting ; Rites of passage seclusion bride veil bridal hut ; Symbols ritual bride prosperity ox stomach fat ; Marriage bride capture kinship relationships ; Residence post-marital virilocal ; Food consumption ceremony commensality marriage ; Feasting marriage groom seclusion age mates ; Animal husbandry pastoral activities cattle wealth ; Language and culture ; Rites and ceremonies ; Zacriwa bride ; Naango bride's mother ; Vesenga groom ; Cakoya bride's father's brother ; Kackoveld (Namibia)

HSFA 1983.5.3

Zimba Research Film, 1971

Film reels (58 minutes; color sound; 2100 feet; 16mm)

[Video: Zimba Research Film, 1971, 1983.05.004.001, clip 1](#)

[Video: Zimba Research Film, 1971, 1983.05.004.001, clip 2](#)

Notes: Full film record of a research film project documenting the Zimba, a pastoral Bantu people of southwestern Angola. Footage documents the organization of Zimba homesteads, role of women in the domestic economy, and men engaged in pastoral activities. Sequences include: women threshing, winnowing, and stamping millet (for cereal and beer); milking cows; watering cattle; weaving baskets; and making fences to protect their fields. Men are shown churning milk and herding and watering cattle.

Legacy Keywords: Visima ; Kapupu ; Omusupi ; Kaumbila ; Luhuna ; Balundu ; Kawiya ; Language and culture ; Domestic

life ; Women Africa ; Division of labor by sex threshing grain millet ; Food preparation winnowing grain ; Basketry winnowing ; Speech greetings ; Domestic activities food preparation milk ; Food preparation graineries ; Alcohol beermaking grain ; Adornment rites of passage headdress ; Adornment women hair styles ; Pastoral activities watering ; Hair styles males females life cycle social identity ; Children food preparation ; Tillage fences division of labor by sex women ; Tillage women ; Tools agricultural ; Trade tools textiles ; Acculturation dress clothing ; Music tillage rhythms ; Food preparation mortar-and-pestle ; Division of labor by sex tillage ; Angola Zimba Damba Region

HSFA 1983.5.4

Kuvale Research Film, 1971

Film reels (30 minutes; color silent; 1200 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Full film record documenting the pastoralist Kuvale people of the Mocamedes Desert, Mbambi region, southwestern Angola. Footage documents the organization of Kuvale homesteads and styles of dress and adornment. Various leisure, child-rearing, and domestic activities include: hairdressing, women grinding grain and milking cows, men butchering animals, and preparation of meals. Includes sound recordings, annotation, filming logs.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Domestic relations ; Homesteads domestic groups marriage ; Adornment women hair styles ; Clothing and dress ; Child rearing ; Food preparation cooking ; Food crops g ; Milking ; Butchering

HSFA 1983.5.5

Herero of Ngamiland, 1953

2 Film reels (43 minutes; color sound; 1565 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film, narrated by Gordon D. Gibson, about the Herero, a pastoral Bantu people in Bechwanaland, southwestern Africa. Scenes represent the division of labor between men and women as it relates to house construction, the care of cattle (herding, watering, milking), making butter and buttermilk, wood carving, and the preparation and consumption of food (butchering, stamping cornmeal); the role of clan priests in daily and ceremonial life including the daily ritual of milk tasting, propitiation of the ancestors, funerals, mourning, and inheritance; and the activities of children, the nature of traditional adornment, and song and dance.

Legacy Keywords: Cattle domestication ; Funeral rites and ceremonies ; Rites and ceremonies ; Body alterations ; Architecture, Domestic ; Domestic life ; Food preparation cooking ; Dance ; Song ; Children Africa ; Language and culture ; Educational ; Ngamiland (Botswana) ; Bechuanaland Protectorate

HSFA 1983.9.1

The National Film Preservation Foundation supported
preservation of this film.