



# Smithsonian

*National Museum of Natural History*

Guide to the Explorers Club films, circa 1940-1970

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Human Studies Film Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Explorers Club films
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1940-1970
<b>Identifier:</b>	HSFA.1991.21
<b>Creator:</b>	Explorers Club
<b>Extent:</b>	Film reels (black-and-white color silent sound)
<b>Language:</b>	Undetermined .

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Received from the Explorers Club in 1991.

### Preferred Citation

Explorers Club film collection, 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.

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## Scope and Contents

Collection consists of 23 films created or collected by the Explorers Club. Films include DJUKA - Morton Kahn, SWEENEY, AFGHANISTAN, RIDDLE OF MAYAN CAVE, WONDERS OF THE SAHARA, JAMBO PORINI: EAST AFRICA, MEXICO, TIBET-FORBIDDEN TIBET, PRIMITIVE PEOPLES OF MATTO GRASSO, A STORY OF THE TROPICS, LA JEUNE FORET, FROM NEW LANDS TO OLD, HIGH ARTIC, ARTIC EXPEDITION, ANTARCTICA HERE WE COME, Cotlow outs, AFRICA, ETHIOPIAN JUBILEE, SECOND BYRD EXPEDITION, ARTIC FILM-1956, Lindbergh flight.

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 As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today.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

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Eskimo/Inuit

Cultures:

Eskimo/Inuit

Types of Materials:

Sound films  
silent films

Places:

Afghanistan  
Africa, Central  
Asia, Central  
Brazil  
Canada  
Central America  
Chad  
Guatemala  
India  
Kenya  
North America  
Pakistan  
South America  
South Asia  
Tanzania

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## Container Listing

Afghanistan, circa 1959

Film reels (49 minutes; color sound; 1764 feet)

Notes: Edited film by Weir McDonald documents a hunting expedition sponsored by the Explorers Club to kill Marco Polo sheep. Footage includes: hilltop forts, Afghanis carrying firearms near the Khyber Pass; roadside teahouses, street vendors, and men smoking in the streets near Kabul and street scenes in Kabul; nomadic Tadzhiks camel caravans moving to lower elevations near Salang Pass tunnel; planting rice in Faizabad; Oxus River (Amu Darya River) near the Chinese border; cave homes in Bamian; blue/green pottery in Istalif; and hunting sheep.

HSFA 1991.21.3

Riddle of the Mayan Cave, 1968

Film reels (53 minutes; color sound; 1872 feet)

Notes: Television broadcast produced by Nicholas Webster and ABC News in collaboration with the Explorer's Club and narrated by Peter Jennings. Film documents an Explorer's Club expedition to Alta Verapaz, Guatemala in search of caves to prove that ancient Mayan Indians used caves for religious and ceremonial purposes. Russell Guerney leads an expedition of 10 men and one woman who also collect specimens of natural history of the area and caves for further study. Footage includes: contemporary Mayan ritual which takes place in a cave; Mayan masked dancers; Tikal; market; farming; tarantula with young being born; bats; birds; campsite activities; and exploration of several caves including one with long staircase and terraces leading to several rooms with human remains and pottery artifacts. Cave is thought to prove the expedition's hypothesis.

HSFA 1991.21.4

Wonders of the Sahara, circa 1970

Film reels (51 minutes; color sound; 1800 feet)

Notes: Edited film shot by Maurice H. Stans documents Explorers Club expedition to Tchad (Chad) lead by A. Burks Summers. Footage includes: male coming of age celebration in Sara village; visit to chief of Boli village and examination of musical instruments; camp life; gazelles, waterbucks, and baboons; former French Foreign Legion posts that have been converted into administrative centers and markets for desert people; rock pile tombs, cave paintings, and stone tools; oasis of Fada; and hunting of wild onyx and barbary sheep.

HSFA 1991.21.5

Jambo Porini, circa 1955

Film reels (60 minutes; color sound; 2100 feet)

Notes: Edited film by Frederick C. Crawford documents the Cleveland Zoo East Africa Expedition to the British Colony of Kenya (Kenya) and Tanganyika (Tanzania) to secure animals for the

zoo. Footage includes: Masai village and flamingos on Lake Munyora; secretary birds, wild dogs, antelopes, maribou storks, zebra, gnu, and baboons on the Serengetti Plain; Masai chief with herd of cattle and musical instruments at Ekoma; street scenes and shoe making near Lake Victoria; and black rhino, crocodile, cranes, ostriches, eland, hyenas, and other east African wildlife.

HSFA 1991.21.6

A Trek to Little Tibet, circa 1941

1 Film reel (24 minutes; color silent; 864 feet)

Notes: Edited film by M. Bhavnani records trip through Kashmir (Pakistan and India) and Ladakh (India). Footage includes: crossing the Wayil bridge in Srinagar (India); pony treks into the Himalayas; market, school, spinning, knitting, weaving wool, and women's headdresses in a small village; marriage ceremony; Ladakhis playing polo; monasteries with focus on Hemis monastery; *chortens*, a prostration ceremony performed in front of *stupas*; and "Mystery" plays with masked (chaam) dancers depicting the fight of Lord Buddha with evil and ignorance. Walter Asboe, a British missionary, is shown in a flower garden in Leh, Ladakh.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Rites and ceremonies ; Architecture Religious ; Clothing and dress ; Religious beliefs ; Dance as part of ceremony ; Instruments musical instruments ; Drums ; Music ; Weaving g ; Tea as beverage ; Domestic and family life ; Mountains India

HSFA 1991.21.8

Primitive Peoples of the Matto Grosso, circa 1955

1 Film reel (16 minutes; black-and-white sound; 576 feet)

Notes: Edited film by Ted Nemith records a University Museum expedition (University of Pennsylvania) to Paraguay and Xingu rivers in Brazil. Footage includes Carib, Trumai, Tupi, Arawok, Tapuya, and other settlements along rivers; house building; weaving; making manioc bread; puberty ceremony dance; and artifacts from the region in the Museum's collections. Film is narrated by Lowell Thomas.

HSFA 1991.21.9

A Story of the Tropics, 1969

Film reels (33 minutes; color sound; 1188 feet)

Notes: Edited film produced by John Carter and sponsored by the Explorers Club presents problems of life in the Tropics with particular emphasis on food production and cash crops. Tropical regions are divided into four principal areas: wet tropics (countries with rain forests), wet-dry tropics (east Africa, Thailand, India and Hong Kong), dry tropics (Peru and Africa), and upland tropics (Peru and Ceylon). Scenes include: growing rice, fruit, coconut, and rubber in wet tropics; growing mango and starfruit and Masai life in the wet-dry tropics; growing date palms and use of camels in dry tropics; growing coffee and

sisal and Tamil harvesters in upland tropics; and the Fairchild Tropical Gardens in Florida. Film is narrated by Lowell Thomas.  
HSFA 1991.21.10

Arctic Expedition, undated

1 Film reel (24 minutes; color silent; 864 feet)

Notes: Footage shot in the Canadian Arctic includes: huskies pulling sled back and forth across gap in ice, Inuit man displaying carving of man holding spear, dog's teeth being filed, feeding dogs, travelling by sled over ice, seal hunting, finishing igloo, walrus on ice floe, and polar bear.

HSFA 1991.21.15