



# Smithsonian

*National Museum of Natural History*

## Guide to the Dache McClain Reeves papers, 1911-1968

National Anthropological Archives  
Museum Support Center  
4210 Silver Hill Road  
Suitland, Maryland 20746  
naa@si.edu  
<http://www.anthropology.si.edu/naa/>

# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Arrangement.....	3
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Names and Subjects .....	3
Container Listing .....	

---

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Anthropological Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Dache McClain Reeves papers
<b>Date:</b>	1911-1968
<b>Identifier:</b>	NAA.1973-35
<b>Creator:</b>	Reeves, Dache McClain, 1894-1972
<b>Extent:</b>	21 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .

---

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Most of the papers were originally donated to the Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History. They were transferred to the National Anthropological Archives in 1973. There were accretions in 1977 and 1980.

### Related Materials

The National Anthropological Archive holds MS 4318 Aerial photographs of mound sites in Ohio and Photographs of native peoples of the Philippine Islands, views of habitations and scenery, made and/or collected by Major Dache M. Reeves (MS 4299).

The National Museum of the American Indian holds Major Dache M. Reeves photographs of Ohio Mounds (NMAI.AC.154).

### Processing Information

The collection is partially processed. Contact the repository for more information.

### Preferred Citation

Dache McClain Reeves papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

### Restrictions

Access to the Dache McClain Reeves papers requires an appointment.

### Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

---

## Biographical / Historical

Dache McClain Reeves was a United States Air Force officer who specialized in balloon reconnaissance and aerial photography during World War I. His interest in aerial photography continued throughout his life. In 1925, he was a lecturer on photographic intelligence at the United States Military Academy at West Point. In 1927, he authored *Aerial Photographs: Characteristics and Military Applications*, New York, The Ronald Press Company. In 1932, he invented a stereoscope to aid in making maps from aerial photographs, which

was sold to the Fairchild Camera Company. ; In addition to this and many other interests, he also took part in establishing the Army Aeronautical Museum (later the United States Air Force Museum) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. He served the museum as a curator and director. ; Reeves's involvement in archeology had begun by 1914, when he was commissioned by Westminster Magazine to write a series of articles on early man in Georgia. The point of connection between this early interest and aerial photography is not clear, but by the 1920s it was growing. Reeves, for example, had discovered that aerial photography would reveal, among other things, outlines of earthworks even in plowed-over land.

---

## Scope and Contents

This collection reflects the interest of Dache M. Reeves, aerial photography expert, in prehistoric Americana. Included are correspondence, manuscript articles, data in tabular form, notes, drawings, indices, photographic prints and negatives, press clippings, and other documents that cover the period from 1911 to 1968. The bulk of the material relates to Reeves' detailed study of mound cultures. Reeves sought to develop and analyze data that would expand the body of knowledge concerning pre-Columbian Indian cultures for which no written history exists. Much of this work was pursued in the state of Ohio while he was stationed at Wright Field. Analysis consisted of locating mounds, describing their physical size and configuration as originally constructed, enumerating and describing any artifacts found at the site, and adding previously developed archaeological information on the Native culture associated with the site. Some of the mounds photographed and described were near population centers, and probably no longer exist due to the expansion of built-up areas.

Also included are prints and negatives relating to Reeves' war-time experiences in France. There are photographs of natural and man-made features of the land as photographed from the air. Most of these were taken in the United States; some are in the Philippine Islands. In addition to archaeology and anthropology, Reeves' papers reveal an active interest in aviation history, Biblical history, camera optics, and mechanical engineering. A few documents relate to Reeves' military service. The papers concentrate on his amateur intellectual pursuits and reveal little of his personal life and career. Among the correspondents whose letters are included are Neil M. Judd, Willis H. Magrath, and Georg Neuman.

Although Reeves was making aerial photographs of archaeological sites by 1924, it was not until the 1930s that he took or had taken most of the photographs in the collection. Most of them are of mounds and other earthworks in Ohio, but there are also views of sites in California, Louisiana, Georgia, Illinois, and Colorado. Reeves was in rather frequent touch with archeologists in the Bureau of American Ethnology and the United States National Museum. The photographs made at Marksville in Louisiana and at the Lindenmeier site in Colorado were made for these archeologists. For these and most of the photographs, there is provided the name of the site, photograph number, date, and reference to a map.

There are some maps that plot his flights. Such information as altitude, speed, and time, however, are generally lacking. About the Marksville photographs, he wrote "the time of year may be ascertained by studying the foliage on trees. As the camera used was probably of twelve inches focal length, the altitude may be computed from the length and the scale of the vertical photographs."

Reeves' interest in archeology extended beyond the technical problems of aerial photography. He thought of himself as resurveying Indian mounds and was interested in information about related artifacts as well as other data. Such information he normally acquired from publications and placed in information files of a rather general nature. The files include data outside areas where he photographed and concern sites of the Midwest, Southeast, and Pennsylvania.

There are small amounts of material in the collection that relate to nonarcheological subjects. Among these are photographs of Army Air Service activities in France during World War I, land forms of the Philippine Islands, and Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. There are also lantern slides used at a lecture at the United States Military Academy.

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 National Anthropological Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

---

## Arrangement

Arranged into 9 series: (1) Mound culture notes, n.d.; (2) mound formations, 1934-1940; (3) Ohio state index, 1934-1940; (4) general state site index, 1934-1940; (5) general notes on archeology and anthropology, ca. 1925-1968; (6) miscellany, n.d.; (7) photographic prints, 1911-1946; (8) photographic negatives 1911-1940; (9) oversize material (cartographic material, artwork, and large photographs), n.d.

---

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Aerial photography
- Archaeology
- Mounds

Names:

- United States. Army. Air Service

Places:

- Lindenmeier Site (Colo.)
- North America