



Smithsonian
National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the Alfred F. Whiting papers, 1952-1954

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2001

National Anthropological Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Anthropological Archives
Title:	Alfred F. Whiting papers
Date:	1952-1954
Identifier:	NAA.1976-37
Creator:	Whiting, Alfred F. Whiting, Marjorie Grant
Extent:	7 Linear feet 9 Sound tape reels
Language:	Material is in English, Pohnpeian, German, and Japanese.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Received from Alfred F. Whiting in 1975.

Related Materials

The National Anthropological Archives holds additional sound recordings by Marjorie Grant Whiting in MS 7024 Magic for Curing.

The Cline Library at Northern Arizona University holds the Alfred F. Whiting collection, 1930-1979.

Preferred Citation

Alfred F. Whiting papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

The Alfred F. Whiting papers are open for research.

Access to the Alfred F. Whiting papers requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Scope and Contents

This collection reflects the work of an anthropologist in Micronesia during 1952-1954. The U.S. Government employed Alfred F. Whiting as a staff anthropologist in the U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific, Ponape District. His field notes, papers, photographs, and correspondence make up this collection. Marjorie Grant Whiting contributed to part of the collection including the linguistics texts and photograph file.

Diaries contain a daily record of events and mostly concern professional matters. Correspondence includes official reports, answers to questions of persons in the government of the Trust Territory, and summaries of economic conditions of the islands. Some of the letters are personal letters and contain information about Whiting's work. Most frequent correspondents are Homer Barnett and Saul Riesenberg.

Note cards in the subject file are indexed by subject. Historical data is mostly information, which is quoted. Original research and data gathering includes lists of persons and their roles, social arrangements, material culture and census data. Miscellaneous notes represent field notes and first drafts of reports.

Special files were created by Whiting about Nan Matol, and ancient burial place, and the diary of a young man in school in Ponape.

Hand drawn and traced maps show the physical features and social aspects of the island. Location of houses, land ownership, historic structures and other man-made features are shown on the maps. Maps are drawn on tracing paper and kraft paper and measure as large as 42 inches by 100 inches. Diagrams show family relationships and other social aspects.

Processed material contains Ponapean and English language items. Newsletters, government reports, and linguistic material are included. Whiting began a Ponapean language newsletter while he was in Ponape, and several copies are in the collection.

Mrs. Whiting compiled the photograph collection, in two sections. The subject index of photographs is filed by subject. Reference is made to the print and negative file by number of film and exposure. The second part of the collection is the photograph file. It contains contact prints and negatives, which are filed in chronological order of exposure. Negatives are filed behind the prints which are numbered to provide access from the subject file of photographs. Photographs were taken of geographic features, social situations, and material culture.

The final part is a collection of books in Japanese about Micronesia.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Archaeology

Places:

Micronesia

Oceania

Container Listing

Series 1: Diaries, 1952-1954

Box 1

Scope and Contents: A record of daily events while Whiting was working on Ponape. The diaries contain his observations on the people and social aspects of life on Ponape. One notebook is a record of a conference about self-government on Truk in July, 1953.

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Series 2: Outgoing Letters, 1952-1954

Box 1

Arrangement: Arranged chronologically, undated letters at the end of the series.

Scope and Contents: Contains carbon copies of letters to damly, communication to persons in the Trust Territory government, and requests for information. There are also personal letter that describe Whiting's work.

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Series 3: Incoming Letters, 1952-1954

Box 1

Arrangement: Arranged alphabetically

Scope and Contents: This series includes questions directed to Whiting as a government anthropologist, letters about specific projects, replies to queries by Whiting, and letters from family. Most correspondence deal with Ponape, but some concern conferences and projects on other Micronesian islands. Memos are sometimes addressed to several people including Whiting. Unsigned letters appear at the end.

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Series 4: Subject Files, 1952-1954

Scope and Contents: This series consists of notes used for reference and compiling reports. The files were arranged by Whiting in broad subject categories and includes both original research and information from other sources. Related material may be found in Series 9 (maps) and Series 10 (photographs).

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Series 5: Linguistic Texts, 1952-1954

Scope and Contents: Three notebooks representing the study of the Ponapean language. Since these notebooks appear to be primarily for language practice, they may not contain much original linguistic research. Linguistic notes are also found in the subject file (Series 4) and published material (Series 9). Mrs. Whiting compiled the texts.

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Series 6: Miscellaneous Notes, 1952

Scope and Contents: Arranged by subject, this series contains field notes, conference notes, legal matters drafts of reports.

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Series 7: Nan Matol Archaeology Project, 1952-1954

Scope and Contents: The Nan Matol Archaeology Project refers to a burial site on the west side of Ponape. The series contains is a collection of information culled together by Whiting when he was providing information to Saul Rienseberg, XXX of teh Smithsonian INstitution. Material includes correspondence, cards from the subject files, phtoographs and diagrams.

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Series 8: Diary of Sared J. Aiseam, 1952-1954

Scope and Contents: Sared K. Aideam, a student at the INtermediat School, Kolonia, wrote the diary at Whiting's request. Included isanalysis of subjects written about in the diary.

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Series 9: Maps and diagrams

Scope and Contents: This series consists printed and hand-drawn maps of Ponape as well as diagrams of Ponapean kinship and social heirarchy.

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Series 10: Published material, 1952-1954

Scope and Contents: Series 10 contains material collected and written by Whiting. Included are samples of a newsletter he helped to start, local church news, conference proceedings and Trust Territorial governmental publications.

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Series 11: Photographs, 1952-1954

Scope and Contents: Photographs of people and activities on Ponape.

Arrangement: Prints and negative are filed together in the order that exposures were made. Notes of photographic content are provided in subject index created by Mrs. Whiting, but some notes may also be included with the photographs themselves.

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Series 12: Japanese books about Micronesia, 1952-1954

Scope and Contents: Books collected by Whiting, which were written whiel Japan controlled Ponape.

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Series 13: Sound recordings, ca.1951-1954, undated

9 Sound recordings

Creator: Whiting, Alfred F., 1912-1978
Language: Pohnpeian; Ponapeic-Trukic (language sub-family)
Scope and Contents: Miscellaneous recordings of interviews etc. Some tapes are in German
Contents: Alfred F. Whiting served as district anthropologist for the Ponape District of United Trust Territory of the Pacific, 1951-1954. During that time he made sound recordings of Ponapean language in interviews, readings, and the Story of Namkero. Included are readings in German from the work of Paul Hambruch with translation. Hambruch made a detailed survey of Nan Matol on Ponape Island in 1910 and conducted archaeological excavations there in 1936.

Names: Hambruch, Paul, 1882-1933
Place: Pohnpei Island (Micronesia)
Topic: Language and languages -- Documentation
Archaeology -- Ponape, Nan Matol

Genre/Form: Interviews
Sound recordings

Culture: Ponapean

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