



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the Sister Marie Inez Hilger papers, 1931-1971

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Table of Contents

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

Collection Overview

Repository:	National Anthropological Archives
Title:	Sister Marie Inez Hilger papers
Date:	1931-1971
Identifier:	NAA.2003-33
Creator:	Hilger, Marie Inez, Sister, 1891-1977
Extent:	18 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	Most of the collection concerns Sister Inez's study of child life of the Chippewa, Arapaho, Araucanian, Ainu, miscellaneous papers about other tribes of the Plains, Southwest, Southeast, and Latin America. Part of the material is based on readings, the remainder on her own field work. Most of this material is in the form of note slips, the original notes from which they were made having presumably been destroyed. There are also materials that reflect her interest in social problems, particularly among the Chippewa. Some recordings reflect an interest in early days in Montana. There are also some of the so-called grandmother stories. The material concerning the Ainu includes material of Chiye Sano and Midori Yamaha, Sister Inez's assistants in Japan. The papers also include a very small amount of correspondence of Margaret Mead and Rhoda Metraux. Most of Sister Inez's correspondence has been retained by the College of St. Benedict.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Most of the papers were donated to the National Anthropological Archives by Sister Inez in 1974. An increment was sent by Sister Inez's niece Mary K. Zirbes in 1977. Another increment was received from St. Benedict's Convent in St. Joseph, Minnesota, 1979.

Preferred Citation

Sister Marie Inez Hilger papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

The Sister Marie Inez Hilger papers are open for research. The following series is restricted: Series 14. Material Relating to Psychological Test Administered to Ainu And Japanese School Children.

Access to the Sister Marie Inez Hilger papers requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Biographical Note

Marie Inez Hilger was born to a family of German immigrants October 16, 1891 in Roscoe, Minnesota. She joined the order of the Sisters of St. Benedict in 1914. Throughout her life, Sister Inez's primary institutional affiliation was the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota. She joined its staff when it still operated as a high school. A plan to convert the school into a college was the impetus for Sister Inez to pursue further studies in history, literature, sociology, and anthropology at the University of Minnesota and The Catholic University of America. She was the first woman fully admitted to The Catholic University of America and matriculated with an anthropology Ph.D. in 1939. In 1955, she became a research associate of the Bureau of American Ethnology.

Sister Inez's field work began during the 1930s with concern for the social problems of Chippewa Indians of Minnesota. However, with the influence of Rhoda Metraux and Margaret Mead, she eventually developed a special interest in the life of children. She pursued studies in this field among the Chippewa (1932-1966); Arapaho (1935-1942), Araucanian (1946-1947; 1951-1952), and Ainu and Japanese (1962-1963). In addition, she carried out miscellaneous ethnological studies among several Plains, southwestern, southeastern, and Latin American tribes. At the end of her life, Sister Inez was working among the Blackfeet collecting what she called "grandmother tales." Her work was basically descriptive.

In addition to her classroom teaching and field work, Sister Inez prepared a field guide on the study of child life for the Human Relations Area File. Sister Inez died May 18, 1977 in St. Joseph, Minnesota.

Scope and Contents

These papers reflect the professional life of anthropologist Sister Inez Hilger. The collection includes correspondence; Latin American diaries and notebooks (arranged chronologically); noteslips (arranged by tribe and/or subject); reading notes; notes on museum specimens; outlines and draft publications; survey materials; black and white photographs (both prints and negatives, arranged by subject and geographical area); color slides; sound recordings; some outline tracings of artifacts; plant specimens; newspaper clippings (primarily concerning Indians and Sister Inez); published maps; and several original illustrations. There is also a large amount of printed material, primarily reprints of Hilger's articles.

Of special interest are psychological tests (temporarily restricted) which Hilger and associates administered to Ainu and Japanese school children in 1965. Also of note are Margaret Mead's and Father John M. Cooper's materials relating to the study of child life. In addition, Mary Zirbes, Hilger's niece, conducted a tape-recorded interview with Hilger, concerning her early life and entrance into the Catholic University of America.

Correspondents include Margaret Mead and Rhoda Metraux. The collection occupies 18.5 linear feet of shelf space.

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

Series 1. Diaries and Notebooks. 1946-47; 1966-68.

Series 2. Material Relating to the Field Guide to the Ethnological Study Of Child Life. 1932-1966. 5 In.

Series 3. Noteslips Regarding the Chippewa, 1932-1942. ca 14 in.

- Series 4. Chippewa Photographs. 1932-1940. 8 1/4 In.
- Series 5. Noteslips, Photographs and Other Material Concerning the Arapahos. 1935-1942. 16 In.
- Series 6. Miscellaneous Field and Reading Notes. 1936-1943. 22 In.
- Series 7. Noteslips From Secondary Sources. N.D. 36 In.
- Series 8." Notes On Crow Culture." Ca. 1970. 1/2 In.
- Series 9. Noteslips Concerning the Araucanians. 1946-1947; 1951-1952. 12 In.
- Series 10. Araucanian Photographs. 1946-52 28 In.
- Series 11. Miscellaneous Araucanian Material. 1916-65 (Much Undated). 7 In.
- Series 12. Material Regarding Huenun Namku: An Araucanian Indian Of the Andes Remembers the Past. 1952-62. 10 In.
- Series 13. Material Regarding the Ainu and together With the Ainu. Ca. 1965-71. 16 In.
- Series 14. Material Relating to Psychological Test Administered to Ainu and Japanese School Children. 1964-69. 10 In.
- Series 15. Ainu Photographs. 1957-65. 7 In.
- Series 16. Material Regarding the Television Course "Anthropology Of the Americas." 1957-58 13 In.
- Series 17. Writings. 1931-64. 10 In.
- Series 18. Printed Material. Most 1930s-70s. 3 Ft.
- Series 19. Miscellany. 1938-70 2 In.
- Series 20. Sound Recordings
- Series 21. Maps. 1929-58 (Several Undated). 47 Items
- Series 22. Miscellaneous Photographs. 1932-46. 8 In.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Ainu
- American Indian -- Plains
- American Indian -- Southwest
- Anishinaabe (Chippewa/Ojibwa)
- Apsáalooke (Crow/Absaroke)
- Araucanian
- Children
- Indians of North America -- Great Plains
- Indians of North America -- Northeast
- Inunaina (Arapaho)
- Japanese
- Language and languages -- Documentation
- Television -- educational shows

Cultures:

- Ainu
- American Indian -- Plains

American Indian -- Southwest
Anishinaabe (Chippewa/Ojibwa)
Apsáalooke (Crow/Absaroke)
Araucanian
Indians of North America -- Great Plains
Indians of North America -- Northeast
Inunaina (Arapaho)
Japanese

Types of Materials:

Psychological tests

Names:

Huenua Namku Araucanian
Mead, Margaret, 1901-1978
Metraux, Rhoda
Sano, Chiye
Yamaha, Midori

Places:

Montana -- History