



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the Shirley Gorenstein papers

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Anthropological Archives
Title:	Shirley Gorenstein papers
Date:	circa 1960-1980
Identifier:	NAA.2023-12
Extent:	15 Linear feet
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated to the National Anthropological Archives in 2022 by Gabriel Gorenstein.

Processing Information

The collection is currently unprocessed. Contact the repository for more information.

Preferred Citation

Shirley Gorenstein papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Access to the collection requires an appointment. Contact the repository for more information.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Biographical Note

Shirley Gorenstein (1928-2020) was a pioneering Mesoamerican archaeologist who carried out major projects in the Mexican states of Puebla, Guanajuato, and Michoacán.

Gorenstein received her PhD from Columbia University in 1963 based on library studies on the development of Andean and Mesoamerican states from the perspective of their political and military organization. She stayed on as faculty in the Department of Anthropology at Columbia, and led her first archaeological field project in 1965 in Mexico with a study of the Aztec fortress at Tepexi el Viejo in Puebla. In 1971, she focused studies on the Tarascan side of the Aztec-Tarascan military frontier, seeking historically documented fortified sites along the northern frontier of the Aztec empire. In 1972, her focus was the site of Acámbaro in Guanajuato. She then teamed up with Helen Pollard on a major project in the Lake Pátzcuaro Basin in Michoacán.

After a decade teaching at Columbia, Gorenstein left to found the public archaeology program at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) and was later founding chair of RPI's Department of Science and Technology Studies. She wrote and edited numerous books and articles, many of which have become classics in Mesoamerican archaeology.

Content Description

The papers include field notes, photographs, and other material relating to Gorenstein's work in Tepexi el Viejo (1965), Acámbaro (1972), and in the Pátzcuaro Basin (late 1970s), all in Mexico.

Also includes notebook of W. Duncan Strong.