



# Smithsonian

*National Museum of Natural History*

## Guide to the Wells Moses Sawyer paintings of masks and tablets excavated at Key Marco, Florida, 1896

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Anthropological Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Wells Moses Sawyer paintings of masks and tablets excavated at Key Marco, Florida
<b>Date:</b>	1896
<b>Identifier:</b>	NAA.MS241241
<b>Creator:</b>	Sawyer, Wells, 1863-1960 (Artist)
<b>Extent:</b>	20 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; approximately 9 x 13 inches)
<b>Language:</b>	No linguistic content; Not applicable .

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Transferred to the United States National Museum collection from the Bureau of American Ethnology through W. H. Holmes, Washington, D.C., April 1, 1908.

Transferred to Smithsonian Office of Anthropology (SOA) Archives (now the National Anthropological Archives) from the North American Division, SOA, April 19, 1967.

### Related Materials

The National Anthropological Archives holds additional material created by Sawyer for the Pepper-Hearst/Key Marco expedition in MS 1844-b List of manuscript material left by Frank Hamilton Cushing; MS 1849-b Maps of F. H. Cushing's excavation at Florida sites; MS 3381 Drawings of crania from Cushing's Florida Collection; Frank Hamilton Cushing photograph collection relating to excavations on the west coast of Florida, 1895-1896 (Photo Lot 2).

The Archives of American Art holds the Wells Sawyer papers.

The University of Florida holds the Wells M. Sawyer Collection.

### Preferred Citation

Wells Moses Sawyer paintings of masks and tablets excavated at Key Marco, Florida, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

### Restrictions

The collection is open for research.

Access to the collection requires an appointment.

### Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

## Biographical Note

Wells Moses Sawyer (1863-1960) was an American painter, illustrator, and photographer. Sawyer received a law degree in 1882, but pursued a career in art after studying at the Art Institute of Chicago. He was an illustrator for the *Chicago Daily News* and the *Chicago Tribune* before becoming a draftsman for the U.S. Geological Survey in Washington D.C. He served as the artist for the Pepper-Hearst Expedition to Key Marco, Florida, 1895-1897. The expedition, led by Frank Hamilton Cushing (1857-1900), uncovered over 1000 wooden artifacts created by Southwest Florida's early Calusa people or their Muspa ancestors. As artist, Sawyer documented these findings in drawings, paintings, photographs, and maps. He resigned from his position with the USGS in 1898 to oversee the design and inspection of furnishings for government buildings. Sawyer's artistic works were well exhibited during his lifetime, first showing in the early 1890s.

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## Scope and Contents

The collection consists of twenty-one (21) watercolor paintings of wooden masks and other objects excavated at Key Marco and Tarpon Springs, Florida. The paintings are signed with the monogram W. M. S. Two of the paintings have pencil drawings of abstract and geometric designs on the reverse.

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.

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## Arrangement

The paintings are arranged by the original USNM Catalog number.

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## Local Numbers

NAA MS 241,241-241,260

USNM Accession 48,531

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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:

- Archaeology
- Calusa (archaeological)
- Paleoindian Tradition (archaeological culture)

### Cultures:

- Calusa (archaeological)
- Paleoindian Tradition (archaeological culture)

Types of Materials:

Watercolors  
Works of art

Places:

Florida  
North America

## Container Listing

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 1

Wooden mask of a human face

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 9 in x 13 in)

Image(s): Mask, Wood:Human:Elongated Face:Painted Chin:Oval Mouth with Protruding Lips: Long Nose:Dominant Color Gray Painting

Notes: NAA INV 08516000

NAA MS 241241

OPPS NEG MNH.1219H

Painting of predominantly gray wooden mask of an elongated human face with painted chin, oval mouth with protruding lips, and long nose.

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 2

Wooden mask of a human face

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 9 x 13 inches)

Image(s): Mask, Wood, Human:Oval Face:Crooked Nose:Right Eye Larger Than Left:Dominant Color Grayish-Brown (Wood Broken Over Left Eye) Painting

Notes: NAA MS 241242

NAA INV 08516100

OPPS NEG MNH.2020H

Painting of predominately grayish-brown wooden mask of oval-shaped human face with crooked nose and right eye larger than the left eye. The wood is broken over the left eye.

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 3

Wooden mask of a human face

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 9 x 13 inches)

Image(s): Mask, Wood:Human: Straight-Sided Face:Rounded Chin: Open Elliptical Mouth: Straight Nose: Elliptical Eyes with Round Pupils: Grayish-Black Color, Dark Lines Painting

Notes: NAA MS.241243

NAA INV.08516200

OPPS NEG MNH.1219C

Painting of predominantly grayish-black wooden mask of a straight-sided human face with rounded chin, open elliptical mouth, straight nose, and elliptical eyes with round pupils.

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 4

Wooden mask of a human face

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 9 x 13 inches)

Image(s): Mask, Wood,:Human: Square-Sided Face and Chin:Pointed Nose:Central Groove on Upper Lip: Arched Eyebrows:Closed Mouth Thin Lips; Brownish-Gray Color, Painted Lines Painting

Notes: NAA MS 241244

NAA INV 08516300

OPPS NEG MNH.1219D

Painting of a brownish-gray wooden mask of a square-sided human face with pointed nose, a central groove on the upper lip, arched eyebrows, and a closed mouth with thin lips.

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 5

Wooden mask of a human face  
1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 14 x 9 inches mounted on 14 by 9 inches)

Image(s): [Mask, Wood:Human:Front and Profile View: Oval Face With Square Chin:Oval Mouth:Gray, Painted Over with Black:Oval Eyes: Black Triangles Across Forehead Painting](#)

Notes: NAA MS 241245

NAA INV 08516400

OPPS NEG MNH.1220G

Painting of the front and profile view of a wooden mask of a human face. The mask depicts an oval face with square chin, oval mouth and eyes, and black triangle across the forehead. The painting is gray, painted over with black.

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 6

Wooden mask of a human face  
1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 9 x 13 inches)

Image(s): [Mask, Wood, Human: U-Shaped Face with Broad Square Chin: Scowling Mouth, Small Pointed Nose: Mongoloid Eye:Square Forehead: Brownish-Gray Color: Painted Lines Painting](#)

Notes: NAA MS 241246

NAA INV 08516500

OPPS NEG MNH.1219B

Painting of brownish-gray wooden mask of U-shaped human face with broad square chin, scowling mouth, small pointed nose, and square forehead

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 7

Wooden mask of a human face  
1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 9 x 13 inches)

Image(s): [Mask, Wood: Human:Oval Face with Pointed Chin, Closed Mouth, Elliptical:Pouting Lip:Nose Missing:Almond Eyes:Small Black Pupils:Grayish-White Color:Painted Line Designs Painting](#)

Notes: NAA MS 241247

NAA INV 08516600

OPPS NEG MNH.1219A

Painting of grayish-white wooden mask of oval human face with pointed chin, closed elliptical mouth, pouting lip, and eyes with small black pupils. The nose is missing.

Mask, Wood: Human:Oval Face with Pointed Chin, Closed Mouth, Elliptical:Pouting Lip:Nose Missing:Almond Eyes:Small Black Pupils:Grayish-White Color:Painted Line Designs Painting

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 8

Wooden mask of a human face, 1896

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 9 x 13 inches)

[Image\(s\): Mask, Wood, Human: U-Shaped Face with Broad-Rounded Chin:Pointed Up Turned Nose, Elliptical Eyes:Expanded Forehead; Thin Lips:Gray Color:Painted Line Designs Painting](#)

Notes: NAA MS 241248

NAA INV 08516700

OPPS NEG MNH.1219

Painting of a gray wooden mask of u-shaped human face with broad-rounded chin, pointed upturned nose, elliptical eyes, expanded forehead, and thin lips.

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 9

Wooden mask of a wild cat

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 9 x 13 inches)

[Image\(s\): Mask, Wood:Wild Cat:Round Face:Sides Continue to Form Tips of Open and Erect Ears: Round Mouth:Brownish-Gray Color:Painted Line Designs Painting](#)

Notes: NAA MS 241249

NAA INV 08516800

OPPS NEG MNH.1220E

Painting of brownish-gray wooden mask of a wild cat with a round mouth. The sides of the face continue to form tips of open and erect ears.

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 10

Wooden mask of a wolf jaw in original wrappings

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 9 x 13 inches mounted on 9 x 13 inches)

[Image\(s\): Mask, Wood:Wolf Jaw in Original Wrappings: Jaws Distended, Upper Part Head Missing: Light Blue and White Color: Wrappings Brownish in Color Painting](#)

Notes: NAA MS 241250

NAA INV 08516900

OPPS NEG MNH.1219E

Painting of a wooden mask of light blue and white wolf jaw in original brown wrappings. The jaws are distended and the upper part of the head is missing.

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 11

Wooden mask of a wolf or rabbit

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 13 x 9 inches mounted on 13 x 9 inches)

[Image\(s\): Mask, Wood:Wolf Painting](#)

Notes: NAA MS 241251

NAA INV 08747000

Painting of a wooden mask of a wolf or rabbit

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 12

Wooden mask of an alligator



1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 14 x 9 inches mounted on 14 x 9 inches)

Image(s): Mask, Wood:Alligator: Profile of Head and Mouth With Straight Line Separating Upper from Lower Jaw: Dominant Color Dark Gray:Elliptical Eyed:Painted Designs Painting

Notes: NAA MS 241252

NAA INV 08517000

OPPS NEG MNH.1219G

Painting of the profile view of a dark gray wooden mask of an alligator's head and mouth. There is a straight line separating the upper and lower jaw.

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 13

Wooden mask of a human face

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 9 x 13 inches)

Image(s): Mask, Wood:Human: U-Shaped Face with Round Chin:Oval Mouth:Straight Nose:Light Gray and Brown; Painted Geometric Patterns and Lines Painting

Notes: NAA MS.241253

NAA INV.08517100

OPPS NEG MNH.1220F

Painting of a light gray and brown wooden mask of a u-shaped human face with round chin, oval mouth, straight nose and painted geometric patterns and lines.

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 14

Wooden mask of a human face, 1896

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 9 x 14 inches)

Image(s): Mask, Wood:Human: Normal Shape: Rounded Chin, Pointed: Mouth: Round Eyes:Painted Line Designs, Straight Painting

Notes: NAA MS 241254

NAA INV 08517200

OPPS NEG MNH.1220H

Painting of wooden mask of human face with rounded chin, pointed mouth, and round eyes.

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 15

Wooden mask of a beaked sea turtle, 1896

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 13 x 9 inches mounted on 13 x 9 inches)

Image(s): Mask, Wood:Beaked Sea Turtle: Round Elongated Head; Pupil of Eye Protruding Few Inches from Head Painting

Notes: NAA MS 241255

NAA INV 08517300

OPPS NEG MNH.1219F

Painting of a wooden mask of a beaked sea turtle with a round, elongated head. The pupil of the visible eye is protruding a few inches from the head.

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 16

[Wooden mask of a human face](#)

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 9 x 13 inches)

Notes: NAA MS 241256

NAA INV 08747100

Painting of a brownish-black mask of a human face with close-set eyes and open mouth.

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 17

[Axe handle](#)

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 5 x 13 inches)

[Image\(s\): Axe Handle, Wood: Tan Color: Carved Curvilinear Designs Around Socket Painting](#)

[Image\(s\): Drawing of Abstract Designs Drawing](#)

Notes: NAA MS 241257

NAA INV 08517401

NAA INV 08517402

OPPS NEG MNH.1220D

OPPS NEG MNH.1220D

Painting of tan-colored axe handle with curvilinear designs around the socket. The reverse of the painting is a pencil drawing of abstract designs.

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 18

[Carved tablet](#)

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 6 x 13 inches)

[Image\(s\): Tablet, Wood: Carved: Tan Color: Upper Half with Thick Rounded Center Panel Separated from Sides with Carved Parallel Lines: Leaping Porpoise Bottom Half Painting](#)

[Image\(s\): Abstract and Geometric Shapes Painting](#)

Notes: NAA MS 241258a

NAA INV 08517601

NAA INV 08517602

OPPS NEG MNH.1220C

Painting of a carved wooden tablet. The upper half consists of a thick rounded center panel separated from the sides with carved parallel lines. The lower half has a stylized carving of leaping porpoise. The reverse of the painting is a pencil drawing of abstract shapes and measurements.

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 19

[Carved tablet](#)

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 6 x 13 inches)

Notes: NAA MS 241258

NAA INV 08517500

Painting of a carved tablet with geometric designs

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 20

[Wood panel with bird painting](#)

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 13 x 9 inches mounted on  
13 x 9 inches)

[Image\(s\): Wood Panel, Bird Painting](#)

Notes: NAA MS 241259

NAA INV 08747200

Painting of a wood panel decorated with a painting of a bird

Box MS 241241,  
Folder 21

Wooden box lid and sides

1 Paintings (visual works) (watercolor and colored pencil; 9 x 13 inches)

[Image\(s\): Box, 3, Wood:Side Panel:Reptile and Shells Outlined In Black Painting](#)

Notes: NAA MS 241260

NAA INV 08517700

OPPS NEG MNH.1220

Painting of a lid and two sides of a wooden box. The lid depicts a reptile and the sides depict seashells.