



Smithsonian
National Museum of Natural History

Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore photographs
relating to Japan and China, circa 1914-1916

NAA Staff

2015

National Anthropological Archives
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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Local Call Number(s).....	2
Scope and Contents note.....	2
Biographical/Historical note.....	2
Names and Subjects	2

Collection Overview

Repository:	National Anthropological Archives
Title:	Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore photographs relating to Japan and China
Identifier:	NAA.PhotoLot.139
Date:	circa 1914-1916
Extent:	50 Negatives (glass) 23 Negatives (nitrate) 120 lantern slides
Creator:	Scidmore, Eliza Ruhamah, 1856-1928
Language:	Undetermined
Digital Content:	Image(s): Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore photographs relating to Japan and China

Administrative Information

Provenance

The collection was donated to the Smithsonian as the result of the Institution's having loaned Scidmore photographic equipment. It was donated in USNM accessions 70640 (1923), 85816 (1925), 31224 (1896), and possibly 30262 (1896).

Location of Other Archival Materials

Additional photographs made and collected by Scidmore are held in National Anthropological Archives Photo Lot 97 and in the National Geographic Society archives.

Location of Other Archival Materials

The Department of Anthropology collections holds several artifacts donated by Scidmore.

Other Finding Aids

Preliminary finding aid is available in repository.

Available Formats

Most of the glass negatives and lantern slides have been digitized and are available online. Contact prints were made from the nitrate negatives and are available with the collection.

Preferred Citation

Photo lot 139, Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore photographs relating to Japan and China, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

Original nitrate negatives are in cold storage and require advanced notice for viewing.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Biographical Note

Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore (1856-1928) was an author, journalist, lecturer, and collector who traveled extensively and helped to bring the Japanese cherry blossoms to Washington, DC. She spent her early life in Madison, Wisconsin, and then moved during the Civil War to Washington, DC, with her mother and brother. She was educated for two years at Oberlin College before obtaining a position as a newspaper correspondent covering the capital's social scene. Her career as a travel writer began in 1883 during a trip to Alaska which she documented in her first book, *Alaska, Its Southern Coast and the Sitkan Archipelago* (published 1885). Shortly thereafter, she lived for long periods of time in southern and eastern Asia, particularly in China, India, Japan, Java, and the Philippines. Scidmore promoted intercultural understanding and cooperation and particularly encouraged the relationship between America and Japan, where her brother served as a Consul General in Yokohama. She was decorated by the Japanese emperor for her sympathetic reporting of Japan's treatment of prisoners of war during the Russo-Japanese War. Though Scidmore contributed articles to many popular magazines, she was most active for *National Geographic* (between 1893 and 1914) and her photographs accompanied many articles. She also served on the *National Geographic* staff and on its board of managers.

Scope and Contents

Photographs made and collected by Scidmore documenting life in Japan and China. They depict people, agriculture, crafting and jewelry, and natural and urban settings. Some additional photographs were made in South America and possibly the Philippines. The collection includes lantern slides published by the William H. Jackson Photo and Publishing Company of Denver and E. B. Thompson of Washington, DC.

Local Call Number(s)

NAA Photo Lot 139

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Agriculture -- Japan
Chinese
Handicraft
Japanese

Transportation -- Japan

Cultures:

Chinese
Japanese

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Names:

Jackson, William Henry, 1843-1942
Thompson, E. B. (Ezra Bowen), 1865-1951 (possible photographer or publisher)

Geographic Names:

China
Japan
Philippines
South America