



# Smithsonian

*National Museum of Natural History*

Edward William Nelson photograph  
collection relating to Indigenous  
peoples of Mexico, circa 1892-1906

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2014 April 02

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## Collection Overview

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|--------------------|--|
| <b>Repository:</b> | National Anthropological Archives  |
| <b>Title:</b>      | Edward William Nelson photograph collection relating to Indigenous peoples of Mexico |
| <b>Date:</b>       | circa 1892-1906  |
| <b>Identifier:</b> | NAA.PhotoLot.171   |
| <b>Creator:</b>    | Nelson, Edward William, 1855-1934  |
| <b>Extent:</b>     | 21 Prints (silver gelatin and possibly platinum)                                     |
| <b>Language:</b>   | English .  |

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## Administrative Information

### Location of Other Archival Materials

This collection has been relocated from Photo Lot 123.

### Location of Other Archival Materials

Additional photographs by Nelson are held in National Anthropological Archives Photo Lot 89-8, Photo Lot 133, Photo Lot 24, and the BAE historical negatives.

### Location of Other Archival Materials

The Smithsonian Institution Archives holds the Edward William Nelson and Edward Alphonso Goldman Collection, circa 1873-1946 (SIA RU007364) and a registry to their additional field notes.

### Other Finding Aids

Folder list available in repository.

### Preferred Citation

Photo Lot 171, Edward William Nelson photograph collection relating to Indigenous peoples of Mexico, 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.

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## Biographical Note

Edward William Nelson (1855-1934) was an explorer and naturalist for the United States government known for his studies in Alaska, California and Mexico. Born near Manchester, New Hampshire, Nelson grew up

with an ardent interest in birds and the outdoors. With the help of Henry W. Henshaw and Smithsonian Assistant Secretary Spencer F. Baird, he gained a post as a weather observer with the Signal Corps in 1877. Nelson was stationed in St. Michael, Alaska, for the next four years, during which time he collected ethnological data and natural history collections for the Smithsonian Institution. In 1890, Nelson joined the Bureau of Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture as a Special Field Agent on the Death Valley Expedition of Clinton Hart Merriam. After this Expedition disbanded in 1891, Nelson continued to work in California under orders from the Bureau and met his future expedition partner Edward Alphonso Goldman. A three month field survey in Mexico in 1892 evolved into fourteen years of research by the pair, during which they made extensive investigations of Mexican mammalogy, ornithology, and ethnology. Following these studies, Nelson moved into an administrative role in the Bureau, holding appointments as Chief Field Naturalist, 1907-1912; Assistant in Charge of Biological Investigations, 1913-1914; Assistant Chief, 1914-1916; Chief, 1916-1927; and Senior Biologist, 1927-1929.

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## Scope and Contents

Studio portraits of Indigenous people of Mexico and one image of a coffee plantation. The photographs were probably collected by Edward William Nelson during his field studies in Mexico with Edward Alphonso Goldman, 1892-1906.

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## Local Call Number(s)

NAA Photo Lot 171

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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:

Coffee plantations  
Indians of Mexico

### Cultures:

Indians of Mexico

### Types of Materials:

Photographs