



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the John R. Spears photographs from trip to Greenland

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National Anthropological Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Anthropological Archives
Title:	John R. Spears photographs from trip to Greenland
Date:	1890
Identifier:	NAA.PhotoLot.178
Creator:	Spears, John Randolph, 1850-1936
Extent:	21 Photographic prints (albumen)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

This collection was donated by John R. Spears in 1892.

Processing Information

These photographs have been relocated from Photo Lot 24.

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 / Historical

John R. Spears (1850-1936) was an Ohio-born writer and journalist. He worked in the printing office of a local newspaper during the Civil War, which served as his introduction to the world of journalism. In 1866, he entered the naval academy, but after three years, he returned to newspaper journalism and worked as writer and editor at several different papers. In the early 1880s, he took a job as travelling correspondent for *The Sun* in New York, which sent him on assignments all over the world. In addition to his newspaper writing, he published short stories and non-fictional books on a wide array of topics.

Scope and Contents

These photographs were taken by John R. Spears during a trip to Greenland in the fall of 1890. His subjects include the people and activities of the Greenlandic Inuit, as well as landscapes of the Arsuk Fjord. Photos are arranged in the approximate order they were taken, based on Spears' description of his travels as serialized in the New York *Sun* between December 28, 1890, and January 25, 1891. Copies of relevant pages from *The Sun* are included with this collection for researcher convenience.

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 As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today.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.

General

USNM Accession #: 26,109

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Inuit -- Greenland

Cultures:

Inuit -- Greenland

Places:

Greenland

Container Listing

Envelope 1, Item 1	01327600: Seascape of Cape Desolation at sunrise, 1890 1 Photographic print
Envelope 1, Item 2	01499800: View of Arsuk Fjord with two individuals paddling kayaks in the foreground, 1890 1 Photographic print
Envelope 1, Item 3	01326100: Village of Arsuk, 1890 1 Photographic print
Envelope 1, Item 4	01326400: Wooden side table displaying greenstone sculptures carved by Inuit, possibly in the home of Danish Governor Kurseh of Arsuk, 1890 1 Photographic print Notes: Written on verso: "Eskimo Art work figures carved from Greenstone (weight stone, the Danes call it)"
Envelope 1, Item 5	01327700: Exterior of an Inuit home built from stone, with man standing nearby, 1890 1 Photographic print
Envelope 1, Item 6	01327500: Man and woman (Inuit) sitting in their home, 1890 1 Photographic print
Envelope 1, Item 7	01327400: Group of children (Inuit) gathered outside, 1890 1 Photographic print
Envelope 1, Item 8	01326200: Group of children (Inuit) outside with dogs, 1890 1 Photographic print Notes: Written on verso: "Eskimo children 'diving' for pennies"
Envelope 1, Item 9	01327100: Older woman (Inuit), possibly named Julia, scraping a reindeer skin that is staked to the ground with seal ribs, 1890 1 Photographic print
Envelope 1, Item 10	01327200: Kayak builder (Inuit) standing beside a kayak frame laid out on the ground, 1890 1 Photographic print
Envelope 1, Item 11	01327900: Two individuals (Inuit) sitting with kayaks pulled up on dry rocks, 1890 1 Photographic print Notes: Written on verso: "Eskimo messengers from Gotthaab, in the Arsuk fiord"
Envelope 1, Item 12	01326300: Frame of an umiak laid upside down on the ground, 1890 1 Photographic print
Envelope 1, Item 13	01499900: Umiak, kayak, paddles, and oars laid out on the ground, 1890

	1 Photographic print
Envelope 1, Item 14	01326800: Inuit painting on a rock face, depicting a man with arms upraised beside the words "Hurâ Kurner Bud", 1890 1 Photographic print Notes: Written on verso: "Eskimo art work - painting on face of rock, Arsuk fiord. It represents the joy of the men when the women approach during an annual festival."
Envelope 1, Item 15	01326900: Inuit painting on a rock face, depicting a person with an object in hand, probably a flag, 1890 1 Photographic print Notes: Written on verso: "Eskimo Art work, Arsuk fiord"
Envelope 1, Item 16	01326600: A paddle and inflated seal skin, used in seal hunting, aboard ship, 1890 1 Photographic print
Envelope 1, Item 17	01326700: Harpoon, lance, and inflated seal skin, used in seal hunting, aboard ship, 1890 1 Photographic print
Envelope 1, Item 18	01327300: Inuit-built schooner, the Whale, anchored in the fjord at Arsuk, 1890 1 Photograph Notes: Written on verso: "The Whale, a schooner made by Eskimo workmen of imported lumber"
Envelope 1, Item 19	01327800: Inuit cemetery at Arsuk, with Danish buildings and mountains in the background, 1890 1 Photographic print Notes: Written on verso: "Eskimo grave yard, Arsuk fiord. The bodies are placed on the rocks and covered with broken stone at this settlement but I saw a grave on an island in the fiord which had been dug out in the ground. It was 2'x2'x5' large and held the bones of at least six people of whom 2 were children say nine or 10 y old. It had been covered with broken stone. J.R.S."
Envelope 1, Item 20	01327000: Glacier at the head of Arsuk Fjord, 1890 1 Photographic print
Envelope 1, Item 21	01326500: Man standing on the ice at the top of Arsuk glacier, 1890 1 Photographic print