



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the Frank Maryl Setzler papers, 1927-1960

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Anthropological Archives
Title:	Frank Maryl Setzler papers
Date:	1927-1960
Identifier:	NAA.XXXX.0329
Creator:	Setzler, Frank M. (Frank Maryl), 1902-1975
Extent:	17.5 Linear feet
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Related Materials

The National Anthropological Archives holds the Frank Maryl Setzler photographs (NAA.PhotoLot.36), Harris and Ewing Photographic News Service photograph of Smithsonian officials unpacking boxes from American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land (NAA.PhotoLot.80-36), MS 2180 Report of a visit to the Grave Creek Mound, at Moundsville, West Virginia, MS 7298 Memorandum to Frank Maryl Setzler, and MS 7437 Letter to A. E. Henning.

Preferred Citation

Frank Maryl Setzler papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

The Frank Maryl Setzler papers are open for research.

Access to the Frank Maryl Setzler papers requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Biographical Note

While Frank Maryl Setzler was an undergraduate student at Ohio State University during the mid-1920s, he served as an assistant field director at the Ohio State Museum and worked under Henry C. Shetrone in excavations of the Hopewell and Seip mounds in central Ohio. He was later a graduate student of anthropology at the University of Chicago and took courses from Fay-Cooper Cole, Robert Redfield, and Edward Sapir. At the same time, he worked as an Indiana state archaeologist and carried out excavations of mounds in southeastern Indiana and a survey of the Whitewater River Valley. He also worked on the University of Chicago's pictorial survey of Mississippi Valley archeology.

In 1930, Setzler was appointed assistant curator in the Division of Archeology of the United States National Museum. In 1935, he was made acting head curator for the Department of Anthropology and two years later became head curator. A number of significant developments took place during his career at the Smithsonian. During the 1930s

and early 1940s, the government was involved in many archaeological projects through its work relief programs, including the Federal Emergency Relief, Civil Works, Public Works, and Work Projects administrations.

Setzler not only took advantage of the assistance provided by these programs for his own archeological work, but he also participated in the CWA as Smithsonian Institution liaison officer responsible for the direction of eleven projects in the southeastern states and California. For the WPA, he served as a consultant, reviewing project proposals. While he was head curator, he participated in a study of visitor reactions to the United States National Museum exhibits and supervised the modernization of exhibits of the Department of Anthropology.

He also worked toward the removal of nonanthropological sections which had long been part of the department, expansion of the curatorial staff to include specialists outside North America, and establishment of a docent service. In addition, he was responsible for the department's efforts made necessary by World War II, including the protection of the collections, special tours for soldiers, special exhibits, and work for the Ethnogeographic Board.

Setzler was involved in surveys and excavations in southwestern Texas in an attempt to find links between Mexican Indian cultures and those of the Mississippi Valley. Related work was later carried out under Setzler's direction by museum collaborator Walter W. Taylor, who undertook archaeological work in the state of Coahuila in Mexico. Setzler also worked at sites in Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, and carried out reconnaissance along the Yampa and Green Rivers in Colorado and Utah. In 1948, he was deputy leader for the Australian-American Arnhem Land Expedition sponsored by the Smithsonian, National Geographic Society, and the government of Australia.

Setzler's chief interest, however, continued in the archaeology of the midwestern states and he developed a strong interest in the southeastern states. Included in his activities was work at Marksville, Louisiana; Proctorville, Ohio; Cumberland Island, Florida; the Kinaid site, Illinois; Cambridge, Maryland; New Martinsville, West Virginia; and Saltsville, Virginia. With John Reed Swanton, he also investigated sites of villages reported by the chroniclers of Hernando de Soto. Late in his career, he also joined C. Malcolm Watkins and Oscar H. Darter in excavating historical sites at Marlborough Town and near Bell Plains in Virginia.

Setzler was also active with a number of scientific and government organizations. He was a member of the Advisory Board for National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments of the National Park Service and its secretary in 1940-1942. He represented anthropology on the National Research Council in 1940-1942 and was vice chairman of the Division of Anthropology and Psychology of the National Academy of Science in 1942-1943. In 1937-1940, he was secretary of the American Anthropological Association; and, between 1939 and 1953, he held offices with the Washington Academy of Sciences, including the presidency in 1953. He was secretary of the Anthropological Society of Washington in 1932-1937 and president in 1940-1942. In 1930-1941, he was on the council of the Society for American Archaeology.

Scope and Contents

The papers reflect many of the activities of Setzler, ranging from his curatorial duties, activities with several organizations, and his field work. Much of this, however, is contained in correspondence only. Among the materials relating to field work are diaries and other materials relating to the Yampa-Green reconnaissance, field material relating to the Arnhem Land Expedition, and aerial photographs and related flight logs made over Marksville, Louisiana, through arrangements with Dache McClain Reeves. Other materials relating to the Marksville site are found in the papers of James Alfred Ford. Also included among the papers are some field materials concerning W. W. Taylor's work in Mexico, a parchment deed to land in Maryland, correspondence between Neil Merton Judd and James Townsend Russell, and manuscript articles on culture sequences in Illinois by Thorne Deuel and on Wisconsin pottery by Will C. McKern.

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.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 14 series: (1) Correspondence, 1929-1960, (2) Work Projects Administration correspondence, 1930s-1940s; (3) diaries, 1948; (4) drafts for journal articles, 1932-1954; (5) reprints of published articles, 1930-1956; (6) addresses and lectures, 1928-1951; (7) school notebooks, 1927-1928; (8) Smithsonian exhibits, reports, affairs, 1925-1960; (9) papers relating to the National Park Service Advisory Boards, 1940-1952; (10) papers relating to the National Research Council, 1934-1935; 1937-1943; (11) papers relating to professional societies, 1930-1950s; (12) miscellany, 1930-1959; (13) photographs; (14) maps.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

American Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land, 1948
Archaeology
United States. -- Work Projects Administration

Names:

National Museum of Natural History (U.S.). Department of Anthropology