



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Anthony W. Pendergast Collection

NMAH.AC.0882

Jason Nargis

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Archives Center, National Museum of American History
P.O. Box 37012
Suite 1100, MRC 601
Washington, D.C. 20013-7012
Business Number: Phone: 202-633-3270
Fax Number: Fax: 202-786-2453
archivescenter@si.edu
<https://americanhistory.si.edu/archives>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Anthony W. Pendergast Collection
Date:	1920s-1970.
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0882
Creator:	Pendergast, Anthony W., 1879- (Creator)
Source:	National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Music, Sports and Entertainment (Collector)
Extent:	0.5 Cubic feet (2 boxes)
Language:	English .
Summary:	A Fairbury, Illinois, optometrist, Dr. Anthony W. Pendergast, (1879 -?) was a collector, author, antiquarian, dealer, and authority on the subject of cigar store figures. The collection includes correspondence; newspaper clippings on Pendergast and his various folk art collections; a scrapbook of photographs and miscellaneous materials relating to cigar store figures; and a large number of black and white photographs of figures from his personal collection, mostly for use in selling the figures.

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Immediate source of acquisition unknown.

Provenance

Collection transferred to the Archives Center in 2005 by the Division of Music, Sports, and Entertainment (now Division of Cultural and Community and Life).

Processing Information

Collection processed by Jason Nargis (intern), supervised by Vanessa Broussard Simmons, archivist, March 2006.

Preferred Citation

Anthony W. Pendergast Collection, 1920s-1970, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions on Access

Collection is open for research and access on site by appointment. Unprotected photographs must be handled with gloves.

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Biographical / Historical

A Fairbury, Illinois, optometrist, Dr. Anthony W. Pendergast, (1879-?) was a collector, author, antiquarian, dealer, and authority on the subject of cigar store figures. As a newsboy in his youth, Pendergast was fascinated by the cigar store "Indians" he saw all around the streets of his home town. In their book on the cigar store figure, Dr. Pendergast and co-author W. Porter Ware state that the earliest evidence of cigar store figures dates them to as early as 1600 in the city of Amsterdam, where a tobacconist's shop had a figure of an American black slave as his sign, because of the association between slaves and tobacco. The tradition was continued in England and the figures began to look more like American Indians, usually with feathered headdresses, often holding a pipe or a roll of tobacco leaves. Not all the figures were of Indians or of slaves. As their popularity spread, "Turks," "Moors," Scotsmen, jockeys, Roman figures, mythological figures, and others were used. Antiquarian John L. Morrison, cited by Mr. Pendergast in his 1953 book *Cigar Store Figures*, states that the first appearance of a cigar store "Indian" in America was in 1770 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. By the latter half of the nineteenth century the cigar store figure (usually an Indian) was as much a symbol of the tobacco trade as the barber pole was of barber shops. Mr. Pendergast owned at least two hundred figures during his lifetime and was a noted expert on the genre. He sold many figures to other collectors and had a workshop where he repaired and reconditioned the figures.

Scope and Contents

The collection documents Dr. Pendergast's interest in and work with cigar store figures as well as some of his other folk art collections. Included among the materials are correspondence, photographs of cigar store figures, and books on the subject. There are also articles and clippings about Dr. Pendergast and his collections and about cigar store figures in general, a scrapbook of photographs of figures, miscellaneous clippings, advertisements, business cards, postcards, and an inventory list.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged into one series.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Cigar store Indians
- Figure sculpture -- United States
- Folk art
- Wood sculpture

Types of Materials:

Clippings -- 20th century
Correspondence -- 20th century
Notes
Photographs -- 20th century
Scrapbooks -- 20th century

Names:

National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Music, Sports and Entertainment

Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1	Correspondence, 1939-1967
Box 1, Folder 2	Books
Box 1, Folder 3	Newspaper clippings, 1926-1972
Box 1, Folder 4	Miscellaneous newspaper clippings, 1959
Box 1, Folder 6	Photograph proofs for newspaper article and other material, 1967
Box 1, Folder 5	Magazine articles, 1928-1947
Box 2, Folder 1	Magazine articles, 1930-1956
Box 1, Folder 7	Miscellaneous materials
Box 1, Folder 8-10	Photographs of cigar store figures, "Indians"
Box 1, Folder 11	Photographs of cigar store figures, with people
Box 1, Folder 12	Photographs of cigar store figures, non -"Indians"
Box 1, Folder 13	Photograph of Native American
Box 2, Folder 2	Scrapbook binding
Box 2, Folder 3	Scrapbook, pages 1-24
Box 2, Folder 4	Scrapbook, pages 25-46
Box 2, Folder 5	Poster