



Smithsonian

National Museum of the American Indian

Alanson Buck Skinner
photograph collection, 1865-1925

2011

National Museum of the American Indian
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Museum of the American Indian
Title:	Alanson Buck Skinner photograph collection
Date:	circa 1870 to before 1926
Identifier:	NMAI.AC.001.036
Creator:	Van Schaick, C.J. (Photographer) Skinner, Alanson, 1886-1925 Smith, Huron H. (Huron Herbert), 1883-1933 (Photographer)
Extent:	454 Negatives (photographic) 99 Photographic prints (black and white) 5 Lantern slides
Language:	No linguistic content; Not applicable .
Summary:	Tribes covered in the photographs are: Arapaho, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Chippewa, Iowa, Iroquois, Mahican, Menomoni, Ojibwa, Oto, Plains Cree, Potawatomi, Seminole, Seri, Shinnecock, Sioux, Winnebago, Zuni Pueblo. The majority of photographs (552) have Skinner listed as the photographer and presumably are photographs he took on his expeditions. However, 104 photos are of the Seminole in Florida. According to Dennis P. Carey's biography of Skinner (Unpublished? 1980) Julian Q. Dimock, a well-known photographer, accompanied him on his expedition to the Seminole in Florida; how many of the photos were taken by Dimock is unknown, but he is listed as the photographer for 23 of them. Skinner's other photographs are of the Seneca Iroquois in New York; the Zuni Pueblo and Hawikku site; several tribes in Wisconsin; the Chippewa in Minnesota; and miscellaneous shots taken in Canada, Costa Rica, Florida and New York. Two photographs of the Mahican were taken by Huron H. Smith (1923) and two of the Winnebago were taken by C.J. Van Schaick (c. 1870). The remaining photographs have no photographer listed but were in Skinner's collection of photographs and are of varying tribes with dates ranging from 1909 to 1923.

Administrative Information

Available Formats

99 black and white prints, 454 negatives, and 5 lantern slides, of which 109 have been digitized (11 prints, 93 negatives, 5 lantern slides) as of December 2003.

Processing Information

Processed by Gayle Yiotis

Restrictions

Access restricted. Researchers should contact the staff of the NMAI Archives for an appointment to access the collection.

Biographical Note

Alanson Buck Skinner was born in Buffalo, New York, on September 7, 1886. His parents moved to Staten Island, New York, when Alanson was still very young. There Alanson met W.T. Davis who taught him to find arrowheads and other traces of ancient Indian life. When he was older he consulted with Prof. F.W. Putnam and George H. Pepper at the American Museum of Natural History about his interest. In the summer of 1902 Skinner went on his first fieldwork expedition near Shinnecock Hills, Long Island, for the American Museum of Natural History with Arthur C. Parker and Mark R. Harrington. Two years later Skinner and Harrington went on another archeological expedition in western New York State for the Peabody Museum and while there he attended his first Native ceremony on the Cattaraugus reservation. After high school Skinner joined the staff of the AMNH as an assistant in anthropology. In 1908 he led an expedition to Hudson Bay to study the Cree Indians. In 1910 he went to Wisconsin where he met John V. Satterlee, part Menomini, and Judge Sabatis Perote, a full-blooded Menomini, who adopted him into the tribe under the Thunder clan name of Sekosa or "Little Weasel." He later went on expeditions to collect from the Seminoles in the Florida Everglades, and other tribes in Wisconsin, Oklahoma, and other states. During these years he was also studying anthropology at Columbia under Boas, Farrand, Saville, and Bandelier, and at Harvard under Dixon, Tozzer, and Farrabee. In 1916 Skinner joined the Museum of the American Indian and remained there until 1920, when he took a position as curator of anthropology at the Public Museum of Milwaukee. He returned to the MAI in 1924 where he remained until his untimely death on August 17, 1925 in a car accident in North Dakota. He was a member of the American Anthropological Association, the Wisconsin Archeological Society, the Explorer's Club, a York Rite Mason and a Shriner. A more detailed biography by Dennis P. Carey (1980) can be found in the vertical file. A complete bibliography of Skinner's writings can be found in Indian Notes, Vol. II, No. 4 (October 1925).

Arrangement

Collection arranged by item number.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Bribri
- Cayuga
- Ho-Chunk (Winnebago)
- Indians of Mexico
- Indians of North America -- Great Lakes Region
- Indians of North America -- Great Plains
- Indians of North America -- New Mexico
- Indians of North America -- New York (State)
- Indians of North America -- Southern states
- Indians of North America -- Wisconsin
- Iowa
- James Bay Cree

Kesagami (Kesagmi) Cree
Menominee (Menomini)
Minnesota Chippewa
Odawa (Ottawa)
Plains Cree (Prairie Cree)
Plains Ojibwa (Bungi)
Potawatomi [Forest County, Wisconsin]
Saulteaux
Seminole
Seneca [Cattaraugus]
Shinnecock
Wahpetonwan Dakota (Wahpeton Sioux)

Cultures:

Bribri
Cayuga
Ho-Chunk (Winnebago)
Iowa
James Bay Cree
Kesagami (Kesagmi) Cree
Menominee (Menomini)
Minnesota Chippewa
Odawa (Ottawa)
Plains Cree (Prairie Cree)
Plains Ojibwa (Bungi)
Potawatomi [Forest County, Wisconsin]
Saulteaux
Seminole
Seneca [Cattaraugus]
Shinnecock
Wahpetonwan Dakota (Wahpeton Sioux)

Types of Materials:

Lantern slides
Negatives
Photographic prints

Places:

Canada
Costa Rica
Florida
Mexico
Minnesota
New Mexico
New York
Oklahoma
Wisconsin
Wyoming