



Smithsonian

*National Museum of the American Indian*

Francis Gow-Smith photographs  
from Mato Grosso, Brazil

Rachel Menyuk

2019

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Museum of the American Indian
<b>Title:</b>	Francis Gow-Smith photographs from Mato Grosso, Brazil
<b>Date:</b>	1926
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAI.AC.001.045
<b>Creator:</b>	Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation Gow-Smith, Francis (Photographer)
<b>Extent:</b>	41 Negatives (photographic) 17 Copy negatives
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	Negatives shot by Francis Gow-Smith over the course of eight months of fieldwork in the Mato Grosso state of Brazil in 1926. Gow-Smith was collecting ethnographic material on behalf of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation. Indigenous communities photographed include the Parecís (Paressi), Nambikuára (Nambicuara) and Borôro (Bororo) peoples.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Field collection for the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation from Francis-Gow Smith in 1926.

### Related Materials

Ethnographic material collected by Francis Gow-Smith can be found in NMAI's ethnographic collections with catalog numbers 15/3657 - 15/3754.

### Processing Information

Collection record written by Rachel Menyuk, Processing Archivist, in 2019.

### Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Francis Gow-Smith photographs from Matto Grosso, Brazil, Item Number; National Museum of the American Indian Archive Center, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

Access to NMAI Archive Center collections is by appointment only, Monday - Thursday, 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. Please contact the archives to make an appointment (phone: 301-238-1400, email: [nmaiarchives@si.edu](mailto:nmaiarchives@si.edu)).

### Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

Francis William Gow-Smith (1894-1939) was an explorer and ethnologist who briefly worked on behalf of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation. Born in Coldwater, Michigan, Gow-Smith studied at Purdue University and self-financed his first expedition to Brazil in 1922-1923. He returned to Brazil exploring the Karaja and Kayapo territories in 1924, selling many of the items collected from this trip to the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation (MAI). The MAI offered to fund Gow-Smith's next collecting trip to Brazil in 1926. Gow Smith spent those eight months in the Xingu river region and the Mato Grosso province of Brazil making ethnological collections on behalf of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation. Gow-Smith collected among the Parecís (Paressi), Nambikuára (Nambicuara) and Borôro (Bororo) peoples. Gow-Smith wrote numerous newspaper articles about his travels and was also a member of the Explorers Club. He died in 1939 after several years of poor health. For reports on his 1926 work in Brazil see *Indian Notes*, Volume 4, no. 2 pp 163-166 and *Indian Notes*, Volume 4, no. 3, pp 305-308.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection includes 41 negatives and 17 copy negatives made by Francis Gow-Smith over the course of eight months of fieldwork in the Mato Grosso state of Brazil in 1926. Indigenous communities photographed during this course of this work include the Parecís (Paressi), Nambikuára (Nambicuara) and Borôro (Bororo) peoples in such places as the Juruena Municipality, Tapirapann, São João (Sao Juan), and the Campo Grande Microgeogion. The majority of the photographs are outdoor portraits of community members going about their daily lives though some are posed in groups. Man of these activities revolve around the river such as fishing and bathing. There are also a smaller amount of landscape views which showcase local plants such as the rubber tree and cow tree.

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## Scope and Contents

N12650-N12651, N12683, N12717, N12719, N12798, N12821, N12835, N12851, N12852, N12881, N12892-N12894, N12900, N12905, N12948, N12964-N12966, N12976, N12988, N12990, N13010, N13018, N13025, N13026, N13032-N13034, N13037, N13041, N13058-N13061, N13063-N13065, N13068, N13069, N13182-N13201.

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## Arrangement

Arranged by catalog number.

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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:

Borôro (Bororo)  
Ethnology -- Brazil  
Indians of South America -- Brazil  
Nambikuára (Nambicuara)  
Parecís (Paressi)  
Photographs

Cultures:

Borôro (Bororo)  
Nambikuára (Nambicuara)  
Parecís (Paressi)

Places:

Mato Grosso (Brazil : State)