



Smithsonian

*National Museum of the American Indian*

Hidatsa Delegation photographs in  
Washington, DC and New York City

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2019

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Museum of the American Indian
<b>Title:</b>	Hidatsa Delegation photographs in Washington, DC and New York City
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAI.AC.001.057
<b>Date:</b>	1938 January
<b>Creator:</b>	Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation Miller, Kenneth C., 1901-1974 (Photographer) Sinclair, David (Photographer)
<b>Source:</b>	United States. Bureau of Indian Affairs
<b>Extent:</b>	56 Photographic prints 18 Negatives (photographic)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	Photographs of the Hidatsa Delegation at the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation in New York, City and visiting the White House in Washington, D.C. for the repatriation of a Water Buster Bundle in 1938. Hidatsa Delegation members included elders Drags Wolf and Foolish Bear.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Photographs shot at the Museum in New York City were wither donated by David Sinclair in 1938 or created by Kenneth C. Miller, a museum staff member at the time. The photographs shot in Washington, DC, were donated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1938.

### Processing Information

This collection is still in need of processing. Collection record written by Rachel Menyuk, Processing Archivist, in 2019.

### Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Hidatsa Delegation photographs in Washington, DC and New York City, 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). Some photographs are restricted due to cultural sensitivity.

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## Biographical / Historical

During the 1930s, a terrible drought parched the Plains. In North Dakota, members of the Hidatsa Water Buster Clan asked George Gustav Heye, director of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation to return a medicine bundle important in ceremonies to bring rain. Heye was initially reluctant to part with the bundle, which he acquired in 1927, twenty years after the son of the clan's bundle-custodian sold it to a Presbyterian missionary. When the press and government officials showed interest in the clan's request, Heye changed his mind.

In 1938, two Hidatsa elders, Drags Wolf and Foolish Bear, traveled east to collect the medicine bundle. Their first stop was Washington, D.C., where they met President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The next day, the Hidatsa attended a ceremony in New York, where they gave Heye a powder horn and war club in exchange for the medicine bundle.

In 1977, twenty years after Heye's death, museum curators came upon a wooden box, stored in a stairwell. Inside were items that belonged with the medicine bundle. It is unclear if the contents had become separated from the bundle or were deliberately set aside. The items were later returned to the Hidatsa.

<https://americanindian.si.edu/exhibitions/infinityofnations/george-hey.html#plains-plateau>

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## Scope and Contents

The Hidatsa Delegation photographs in Washington, DC and New York City include photographic prints and negatives made in January 1938. The photographs in Washington, DC, shot on January 13, were made by photographers from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. These include images of Minitari (Hidatsa) elders Foolish bear and Drags Wolf with their interpreter Arthur Mandan and Bureau staff members John Herrick, F.W. LaRoche in the BIA offices; Studio portraits of Foolish Bear and Drags Wolf in traditional dress; as well as images of the delegation visiting with President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the White House. Photographs in New York City were shot by either David Sinclair or Kenneth C. Miller before and during the repatriation ceremony at the Museum of the American Indian on January 14, 1938. In addition to the delegation members several MAI staff and board members were photographed including George Heye, Edwin K. Burnett, Thomas Roberts, Louis Bishop, and George Heye's wife at the time, Jessica Standing Heye, among others. Photographs which display the contents of the bundle have been restricted due to cultural sensitivity. For the photographs made by Miller, who was on staff at the time, we have both the negatives (possibly original) and the photographic prints.

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## Scope and Contents

Photographic prints: P12888-P12927, P37470-P37485. Negatives: N21505-N21522.

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## Arrangement

Arranged by catalog number.

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Minitari (Hidatsa)  
Repatriation of American Indian material

Cultures:

Minitari (Hidatsa)

Names:

Drags Wolf  
Foolish Bear  
Heye, George G. (George Gustav), 1874-1957  
Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano), 1882-1945  
United States. Bureau of Indian Affairs

Places:

New York (State) -- New York City -- Photographs