



Smithsonian

*National Museum of the American Indian*

Ephraim George Squier collection of  
negatives and photographs, circa 1862-1868

Heather Shannon

2011

National Museum of the American Indian  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Museum of the American Indian
<b>Title:</b>	Ephraim George Squier collection of negatives and photographs
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1862-1868
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAI.AC.041
<b>Creator:</b>	Squier, E. G. (Ephraim George), 1821-1888
<b>Extent:</b>	312 Negatives (photographic) (black and white) 3 Photographic prints (black and white)
<b>Language:</b>	No linguistic content; Not applicable .
<b>Summary:</b>	The Squier collection consists primarily of glass plate negatives made by Squier in the Central Andes region of Peru from 1862 to 1868 while he served as the United States Commissioner to Peru.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Historically, the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation managed all photographic materials separately. This collection description represents current management practices of organizing and contextualizing related archival materials.

### Related Materials

Papers of Ephraim George Squier, 1835–1872; Tulane University Library.

### Processing Information

Processed by Heather Shannon, Photo Archivist in 2013.

### Preferred Citation

Ephraim George Squier collection of negatives and prints, circa 1862-1868, National Museum of the American Indian Archives, Smithsonian Institution (negative, slide or catalog number).

### Restrictions

Access is by appointment only, Monday - Friday, 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. Please contact the archives to make an appointment.

### Conditions Governing Use

Restricted: Cultural Sensitivity

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## Biographical Note

Ephraim George Squier (1821-1888) was born Bethlehem, New York, and as a young man pursued several career paths until he settled on archaeology in about 1847. This interest led to the publication of the 1848 *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley*, which he co-authored with Edwin H. Davis and represents

the Smithsonian Institution's first official publication. His fascination with the antiquities of the Western Hemisphere encouraged him to secure political posts in Central and South America that would allow him to pursue these interests. From 1846 to 1869, Squier worked in various diplomatic positions throughout Latin America, and it was then that he undertook archaeological and ethnological field work. Originally appointed by President Lincoln, from 1862 to 1868, Squier was the United States Commissioner to Peru. His studies and travels produced another extremely popular book, *Peru: Incidents of Travel and Exploration in the Land of the Incas* (1877). Several of the photographs in the NMAI's collection appear as (slightly altered) illustrations in this book. Squier's papers and the original photographs from his negatives are housed at the Tulane University Library. Squier died in Brooklyn, New York, in 1888.

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## Scope and Contents

The Squier collection consists primarily of glass plate negatives made by Squier in the Central Andes region of Peru from 1862 to 1868 while he served as the United States Commissioner to Peru. A few of the negatives measure 6.5 x 8.5 inches but the overwhelming majority of them are stereoscopic. Each stereoscopic negative has a notation in Squier's hand etched into the emulsion. The bulk of these Squier made in Cusco and the Cusco region and include depictions of colonial and archaeological Inka (Inca) architecture and antiquities, and Spanish architecture. The negatives he made in Lima and Lima Province, and the Trujillo, Ancash, Puno, Ayacucho, and Arequipa regions also depict Inka or Central Andes (which includes Chimú) antiquities and Inka colonial architecture. In addition, there are representations of objects, contemporary streets scenes and village scenes, and a few negatives made in Bolivia. The few prints in the collection are copy photographs made of Squier's drawings.

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## Arrangement

Negatives Arranged by negative number (N18828-N19139)

Prints Arranged by print number (P04466, P04467, P18525)

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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:

- Central Andes
- Chimú (archaeological culture)
- Colonial Inka (Inca)
- Incas
- Incas -- Peru -- Antiquities -- Photographs
- Inka (Inca) (archaeological)

### Cultures:

- Central Andes
- Chimú (archaeological culture)
- Colonial Inka (Inca)
- Inka (Inca) (archaeological)

### Types of Materials:

- Black-and-white negatives

Photographic prints  
Photographs  
Stereoscopic photographs

Places:

Peru -- Antiquities  
Peru -- Photographs