



Smithsonian

National Museum of the American Indian

George Bird and Elizabeth Curtis
Grinnell photograph collection

2011

National Museum of the American Indian
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Museum of the American Indian
Title:	George Bird and Elizabeth Curtis Grinnell photograph collection
Date:	1902-1910
Identifier:	NMAI.AC.140
Creator:	Tuell, Julia E. Grinnell, George Bird, 1849-1938
Extent:	119 Negatives (photographic) (119 glass plate negatives; black and white; 7 x 9 in.)
Language:	English .
Summary:	The core of this photographic collection (1902-1904) was taken during Grinnell's visits among the Northern (Montana, Rosebud County and Rosebud River, Lame Deer) and Southern (Washita County, Oklahoma) Tsitsistas/Suhtai (Cheyenne). The photographs document domestic and daily life on the reservation (especially activities involving women), religious ceremonies, camps and dwellings, and important officials. The attributions of the photographs in this collection are far from certain. While many of these images appear to have been taken by Grinnell himself, a substantial portion were also taken by his wife Elizabeth Curtis Grinnell (b. 1876) and their friend Julia E. Tuell. A very small subset of these images (3) also depicts mountains and vistas in Glacier National Park (Flathead County, Glacier County) Montana.

Administrative Information

Provenance

Donated by George C. Grinnell to the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation in 1928.

Processing Information

Processed by Mimi Games

Restrictions

Researchers must contact the NMAI Archives for an appointment to access the collection.

Conditions Governing Use

Some items restricted: Cultural Sensitivity

Biographical Note

George Bird Grinnell, naturalist, conservationist and Indian rights activist, was born into a prominent family in Brooklyn, New York. He attended Yale University, receiving his B.A. in 1870 and a Ph.D. in paleontology in 1880. While at Yale, Grinnell participated in a paleontological expedition to the central Plains, Wyoming

and Utah. In 1874 he served as naturalist and paleontologist in Lt. Colonel George Armstrong Custer's Black Hills expedition and, in 1875, was a member of William Ludlow's expedition surveying the Yellowstone. In 1899 Grinnell was a naturalist on Edward H. Harriman Expedition to Alaska. Grinnell's lifelong interest in the west was well established long before he left Yale. In 1876, four years before he earned his Ph.D., Grinnell became the editor-in-chief and soon-to-be owner of Forest and Stream magazine. Under his leadership, it became the country's foremost natural history magazine. Grinnell was the magazine's editor from 1876 until 1911, and he used its pages to help promote the creation of national parks. Grinnell played a pivotal role in the creation of Glacier National Park in 1910.

Grinnell's interest in the west extended to its native inhabitants. He was deeply interested in Plains Indians and, year after year, spent his summers visiting different reservations. He had befriended Frank North and his Pawnee scouts, and accompanied them on buffalo and elk hunts. Grinnell witnessed the destruction of game animals, brought about by commercial hunters, and was cognizant of its impact on Plains Indians' way of life. Grinnell, a prolific writer, authored several books and many articles on Cheyenne, Blackfoot, and Pawnee Indians, the most well-know of which was the two volume work entitled "The Cheyenne Indians: Their History and Way of Life," first published in 1923. Until his death, he remained a staunch supporter of Cheyenne rights.

Grinnell was a founding member of both the Audubon Society and Boone and Crockett Club (with Theodore Roosevelt). He chaired the Council on National Parks, Forests and Wildlife, and was president of the National Parks Association. He was a trustee of the New York Zoological Society. Grinnell was also a prominent member of many other associations, such as the American Association of the Advancement of Science and New York Academy of Science. Grinnell was 89 years old when he died in New York City.

Arrangement

negatives: organized in 6 boxes; arranged numerically by image number

Location of Other Archival Materials Note

See manuscript items in the Museum of the American Indian/Heye Foundation records at the NMAI Archive Center. See also the George Bird Grinnell photograph collection at the Braun Research Library, Southwest Museum, Autry National Center in Los Angeles.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Indians of North America

Cultures:

Indians of North America

Types of Materials:

Glass plate negatives

Places:

Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma
Glacier National Park (Mont.)

Lame Deer (Mont.)
Northern Cheyenne Tribe of the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, Montana
Rosebud County (Mont.)
Washita County (Okla.)