



Smithsonian

National Museum of the American Indian

Photographs of Chief Wolf Wanna

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Museum of the American Indian
Title:	Photographs of Chief Wolf Wanna
Date:	circa 1910-1914
Identifier:	NMAI.AC.332
Creator:	Marotta, Louis
Extent:	0.05 Linear feet 7 Photographic prints
Language:	English .
Summary:	This collection consists of 5 publicity photographic portraits and 2 photographic performance posters of Native American entertainer and performer Chief Wolf Wanna.
Container:	Photo-folder 1
Container:	Photo-folder 2

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

This collection was donated by Louis Marotta in 1970.

Separated Materials

One oil portrait of Chief Wolf Wanna is in the NMAI Object Collections, and was assigned the object number 24/3981.

Related Materials

The Carl A. Kroch Library of Rare and Manuscript Collections at Cornell University also contains two cloth-backed posters promoting lectures by Chief Wolf Wanna.

Processing Information

Processed by Nathan Sowry, Reference Archivist, in 2019.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Photographs of Chief Wolf Wanna, NMAI.AC.332; National Museum of the American Indian Archive Center, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

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Biographical / Historical

Specific details on the life of Chief Wolf Wanna (1880-1919) are somewhat difficult to locate. Wolf Wanna was born to Petro Wanna and Luiza Obanda in Pueblo, Colorado in 1880. He may have possibly attended the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, although no records appear to exist. Around 1905 Wanna lived in San Antonio, Texas, where he worked as a ranch foreman. He later relocated to New York City sometime prior to 1911, and in June of that year married Loretta Colombo in Boston, Massachusetts.

During his early years in New York City he traveled throughout the country, working in motion pictures, vaudeville, and stage performances, and was billed as "Chief Wolf Wanna – Full blood American Indian Performer and Entertainer." Various newspaper articles and playbills identify Wanna as either Diné (Navajo) or Apache, and as the "favorite grandson" of Goyathlay (Geronimo, ca. 1825-1909; Chiricahua Apache). During these early years of his stage career, he reportedly lectured on "Justice to the Indian," spoke about Custer's Last Stand and Sitting Bull, sang a number of songs, and performed Native American dances. In the years 1911-1914, he may have also been involved with Wild West shows.

By 1915 Wanna was re-married to Mary Schlereth, still living in New York City, and self-employed as a Medicine Manufacturer. Sometime around 1915-1916 Wanna was employed to promote "Walsh's Eucalyptus and Menthol Inhaler" by John J. Walsh, whom the 1915 Journal of the American Medical Association considered a street faker. By 1919 Wanna and Schlereth had separated, and he was employed as a "Medical Demonstrator." Chief Wolf Wanna died in November, 1919, in New York.

Content Description

The Photographs of Chief Wolf Wanna collection consists of 5 publicity portraits and 2 photographic performance posters of Native American entertainer and performer Chief Wolf Wanna. These materials provide a window into the performing career of Wanna, originally from the U.S. Southwest, who moved to New York City at the turn of the twentieth century. Wanna briefly found celebrity in lecturing, singing, and performing dances which romanticized and to some extent stereotyped Native cultures throughout the U.S.

Arrangement

The materials in this collection are organized into folders.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Apache
Diné (Navajo)

Cultures:

Apache
Diné (Navajo)

Container Listing

Photo-folder 1	<p>332_pht_001_P27116: Publicity photographic portrait of Chief Wolf Wanna, circa 1910 1 Photographic print Notes: Publicity photographic portrait of Chief Wolf Wanna wearing full regalia. Original label provides following description: "Chief Wolf Wanna. Full blood American Indian Performer and Entertainer." Photographed by White, in Boston, MA, circa 1910. Culture: Apache Diné (Navajo)</p>
Photo-folder 1	<p>332_pht_001_P27117: Photographic portrait of Chief Wolf Wanna, circa 1910 1 Photographic print Notes: Photographic portrait of Chief Wolf Wanna. Photographed by White, in Boston, MA, circa 1910. Culture: Apache Diné (Navajo)</p>
Photo-folder 1	<p>332_pht_001_P21178: Publicity photographic portrait of Chief Wolf Wanna, circa 1910 1 Photographic print Notes: Publicity photographic portrait of Chief Wolf Wanna wearing full regalia. Original label provides following description: "Chief Wolf Wanna. Full blood American Indian Performer and Entertainer." Photographed by White, in Boston, MA, circa 1910. Culture: Apache Diné (Navajo)</p>
Photo-folder 1	<p>332_pht_001_P21179: Photographic print of Chief Wolf Wanna at convention, circa 1910 1 Photographic print Notes: Photographic print of Chief Wolf Wanna posed in a convention sales booth for "Walsh's Eucalyptus and Menthol Inhaler." On the tabletop in front of Wanna are jars of tuberculous lung tissue and healthy lung tissue, posed to illustrate the benefits to one's lungs of utilizing Walsh's inhaler. Photographed by Salathial Mastin, in New York, NY, circa 1910. Culture: Apache Diné (Navajo)</p>
Photo-folder 2	<p>332_pht_002_P21180: Photographic performance poster of Chief Wolf Wanna, 1912 1 Photographic print Notes: Photographic performance poster of Chief Wolf Wanna performing at the Star Family Theatre, New York City, on Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, March 19th, 22nd, and 23rd, 1912.</p>

	Culture:	Apache Diné (Navajo)
Photo-folder 2	332_pht_002_21181:	Photographic performance poster of Chief Wolf Wanna, 1914 1 Photographic print Notes: Photographic performance poster of Chief Wolf Wanna performing at the Cleveland Theatre, New York City, on Wednesday, May 20th, 1914. Culture: Apache Diné (Navajo)
Photo-folder 2	332_pht_002_P21182:	Publicity photographic portrait of Chief Wolf Wanna, circa 1910 1 Photographic print Notes: Publicity photographic portrait of Chief Wolf Wanna wearing full regalia. Original label provides following description: "Chief Wolf Wanna. Full Blood American Indian From Apache Tribe." Photographed by White, in Boston, MA, circa 1910. Culture: Apache Diné (Navajo)