



Smithsonian

*National Museum of the American Indian*

John Fortenberry expedition  
photographs from Venezuela

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2022

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Museum of the American Indian
<b>Title:</b>	John Fortenberry expedition photographs from Venezuela
<b>Date:</b>	1985
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAI.AC.342
<b>Creator:</b>	Fortenberry, John
<b>Extent:</b>	17 Photographic prints (color)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	This collection includes 17 photographic color prints made by John Fortenberry on a 1985 expedition with Canadian psychologists to the Amazonas region and Orinoco river in Venezuela. Photographs were made among the Yanomami (Yanoama) community, and possibly among the Piaroa and Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone) communities as well.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Gift of John Fortenberry, 1986.

### Processing Information

Processed by Rachel Menyuk, Processing Archivist, 2022.

### Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; 1985; John Fortenberry expedition photographs from Venezuela, image #, NMAI.AC.342; National Museum of the American Indian Archives Center, Smithsonian Institution.

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## Biographical / Historical

Born in Jackson, Mississippi, John Fortenberry graduated from the University of Mississippi in Film/Television. Right out of school, he went to work at Lorne Michaels' Broadway Video, serving as an editor for eight years before becoming a producer/director.

Fortenberry joined a 1985 expedition to the Amazonas region in Venezuela accompanying Robert Monnier, Leonard Langman, Pepe Hymas and a group of eight or nine Canadian psychologists.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection includes 17 photographic color prints made by John Fortenberry in October of 1985. The photographs include images made in several villages along the Orinoco river in the Amazonas region of Venezuela. The snapshots include portraits of Yanomami (Yanoama) community members and leaders, views of yucca processing and a banana plantation, as well as scenic views on the Orinoco river. There are also several photographs that include members of the expedition team including Leonard Langman and Pepe Hymas, the Assistant to the Medical Administrator to the Amazonas Region.

Additional descriptions of the photographs were provided by Fortenberry with the donation of the collection in 1986.

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## Scope and Contents

Catalog numbers include P25943-P25959.

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## Arrangement

Arranged by catalog number in three folders.

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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:

- Expeditions
- Piaroa
- Yanomami (Yanoama)
- Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)

Cultures:

- Piaroa
- Yanomami (Yanoama)
- Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)

Types of Materials:

- Photographic prints

Places:

Orinoco River Region (Venezuela and Colombia)  
Venezuela

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## Container Listing

Photo-folder 1	<p>P25943: <a href="#">Group with Village Chieftan, 1985</a> 1 Photographic print</p> <p>Notes: View of (L-R) an unidentified man, John Fortenberry, Chieftan of the village (unamed), and Leonard Langman standing posed in a Yanomami (Yanoama), or possibly Piaroa, Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone), village along the Río Orinoco in the Amazonas State, Venezuela. Commentary from Fortenberry: "An advanced village - got a lot of money from oil. They had solar panels (3-4 sets) used for electricity - energy for medical center + nursery. One guy in village had been to nursing school. Had a small refrigerator for drugs, sterilizer etc-- not overrun with supplies but had gauze, etc. They were a co-op-- everyone contributed- grew tobacco, pine, apples, still a financial stratification though. The Chieftan didn't say very much, he seemed quite wealthy."</p> <p>Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama) Piaroa Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)</p>
Photo-folder 1	<p>P25944: <a href="#">Yanomami (Yanoama) Chieftan posed in his house, 1985</a> 1 Photographic print</p> <p>Notes: Portrait of a Yanomami (Yanoama), or possibly Piaroa, Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone) Chieftan posed inside of his house. Likely photographed in his village near the Río Orinoco in the Amazonas Region, Venezuela. Fortenberry Commentary: Chieftan has a concrete house. Plumbing, shower, etc. This was their everyday clothing. Weren't very willing to have their pictures taken in this village. They have children in Caracas (the Chiefs). There were "tourist arts" - and [They asked him to put on the "crown" - he didn't ordinarily wear this.] The people are money conscious-- don't trade for goods anymore.</p> <p>Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama) Piaroa Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)</p>
Photo-folder 1	<p>P25945: <a href="#">Young Yanomami (Yanoama) girl, 1985</a> 1 Photographic print</p> <p>Notes: Portrait of a young Yanomami (Yanoama), or possibly Piaroa, Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone), girl leaning against a table outside in a village along the Río Orinoco in Amazonas State, Venezuela. Additional Fortenberry commentary: "Rest of houses were wood frame with mud bricks"</p> <p>Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama) Piaroa Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)</p>
Photo-folder 1	<p>P25946: <a href="#">Yucca processing, 1985</a> 1 Photographic print</p>

Notes: View of yucca processing in a Yanomami (Yanoama), or possibly Piaroa, Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone), village along the Río Orinoco in Amazonas State, Venezuela. Additional Fortenberry commentary: Additional commentary by John Fortenberry: "Power lines are from solar energy- There is a soccer field in village. Yucca process--(main sustenance) take root, soak it, grate it, put it in long strainers, drain out water, take grounds + make bread. Make an ant sauce out of the water plus ants, and eat it with the bread. [See bread on roof.] The strainers are like "Chinese finger traps."

Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama)  
Piaroa  
Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)

Photo-folder 1 P25947: [Portrait of Antonio and his family, 1985](#)  
1 Photographic print  
Notes: View of Antonio (third from the left), a nurse, with his family in a Yanomami (Yanoama), or possibly Piaroa, Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone), village along the Río Orinoco in Amazonas State, Venezuela. Additional Fortenberry commentary: "Third man from left is Antonio, a nurse. He is pictured with his family. Was only willing to be photo'd with family."  
Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama)  
Piaroa  
Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)

Photo-folder 1 P25948: [Women processing yucca, 1985](#)  
1 Photographic print  
Notes: View of two women processing yucca walking distance from a Yanomami (Yanoama), or possibly Piaroa, Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone), village along the Río Orinoco in Amazonas State, Venezuela. Additional Fortenberry commentary: "A walking distance from first village. Honey-making introduced, bottled. Woman processing yucca--woman in rear was grating. Inside the hut they are cooling the yucca bread."  
Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama)  
Piaroa  
Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)

Photo-folder 2 P25949: [Young Yanomami \(Yanoama\) boy, 1985](#)  
1 Photographic print  
Notes: Portrait of a young Yanomami (Yanoama), or possibly Piaroa, Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone), boy standing outside near a village along the Río Orinoco in Amazonas State, Venezuela.  
Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama)  
Piaroa  
Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)

Photo-folder 2 P25950: [Yanomami \(Yanoama\) men with blowguns and group, 1985](#)  
1 Photographic print

Notes: View of a large Yanomami (Yanoama), or possibly Piaroa, Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone) group in front of a central circular house in a village along the Río Orinoco in Amazonas State, Venezuela. The women and children watch two men with blowguns demonstrating their weapons. Additional Fortenberry commentary: "Each of the past two villages had a central circular house. They were used as schools. Two hunters with blowguns demonstrated their weapons--the arrows are held in the left hand. Curare poison is used to stun the animals. Most of the younger women had young babies with them."

Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama)  
Piaroa  
Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)

Photo-folder 2 P25951: [Yanomami \(Yanoama\) man in dugout canoe, 1985](#)  
1 Photographic print  
Notes: View of a Yanomami (Yanoama), or possibly Piaroa, Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone) man in a dugout canoe on a tributary of Río Orinoco in Amazonas State, Venezuela.  
Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama)  
Piaroa  
Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)

Photo-folder 2 P25952: [Three Yanomami \(Yanoama\) boys, 1985](#)  
1 Photographic print  
Notes: Portrait of three young Yanomami (Yanoama), or possibly Piaroa, Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone) boys standing posed holding bows and arrows in a village near the Río Orinoco in Amazonas State, Venezuela. Additional Fortenberry commentary: "Southern-most part-- A government post-- a building, a few huts, a mission, an air-strip. This post served other villages. Three boys-- at the outpost (poss. just visiting, They walked out of the woods, having just killed a bird--Long arrows and bows."  
Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama)  
Piaroa  
Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)

Photo-folder 2 P25953: [Yanomami \(Yanoama\) man with earrings, 1985](#)  
1 Photographic print  
Notes: Close up portrait of a Yanomami (Yanoama), or possibly Piaroa, Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone) man with feather earrings in a village near the Río Orinoco in Amazonas State, Venezuela. Additional Fortenberry commentary: "[Fortenberry acquired the earrings-- bird feathers-- Noticed the feather in his lip.] Yanomani."  
Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama)  
Piaroa  
Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)

Photo-folder 2 P25954: RESTRICTED Banana plantation, 1985



1 Photographic print

Notes: View of children and workers at a Yanomami (Yanoama), or possibly Piaroa, Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone) banana plantation near the Río Orinoco in Amazonas State, Venezuela. Additional Fortenberry commentary: "[Fortenberry acquired the earrings-- bird feathers-- Noticed the feather in his lip.] Yanomani." RESTRICTED due to sensitivity.

Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama)  
Piaroa  
Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)

Photo-folder 3

P25955: RESTRICTED Yanomami (Yanoama) family, 1985

1 Photographic print

Notes: View of a Yanomami (Yanoama), or possibly Piaroa, Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone) family at a banana plantation near the Río Orinoco in Amazonas State, Venezuela. Additional Fortenberry commentary: "Little girl had straw earrings. Happy yo have picture taken. [Less people visit there]. Plantation is a co-op. People float the bananas down to Puerto Ayacucho. Family group." RESTRICTED due to sensitivity.

Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama)  
Piaroa  
Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)

Photo-folder 3

P25956: [Blue-and-yellow macaw, 1985](#)

1 Photographic print

Notes: Close up view of a blue-and-yellow Macaw. Likely photographed in a Yanomami (Yanoama), or possibly Piaroa, Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone) village near the Río Orinoco in Amazonas State, Venezuela. Additional Fortenberry commentary: "A pet-- one of the only places that had them. Getting closer to Puerto Ayacucho there were more and more such signs-- barded wire, fences, motorized boats, etc."

Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama)  
Piaroa  
Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)

Photo-folder 3

P25957: [Río Orinoco, 1985](#)

1 Photographic print

Notes: A view of the Río Orinoco in Amazonas State, Venezuela.

Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama)  
Piaroa  
Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)

Photo-folder 3

P25958: [Río Orinoco, 1985](#)

1 Photographic print

Notes: A view of the Río Orinoco, near Puerto Ayacucho, in Amazonas State, Venezuela. A member of the expedition can be seen standing on the rocks.

Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama)  
Piaroa

Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)

Photo-folder 3

P25959: [Pepe Hymas and Leonard Langman, 1985](#)

1 Photographic print

Notes: Portrait of Leonard Langman, right, and Pepe Hymas, left, (Administrative Assistant to the Medical Administrator to the Amazonas region) standing in front of the Río Orinoco near Puerto Ayacucho, Amazonas Region, Venezuela.

Culture: Yanomami (Yanoama)  
Piaroa  
Ye'kuana (Makiritare/Mayagone)