



Smithsonian

National Museum of the American Indian

John Fortenberry expedition photographs from Venezuela

Rachel Menyuk

2022

National Museum of the American Indian
4220 Silver Hill Rd
Suitland, Maryland 20746-2863
Business Number: Phone: 301.238.1400
Fax Number: Fax: 301.238.3038
nmaiarchives@si.edu
<http://nmai.si.edu/explore/collections/archive/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical	2
Scope and Contents	2
Arrangement	2
Names and Subjects	
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	National Museum of the American Indian
Title:	John Fortenberry expedition photographs from Venezuela
Date:	1985
Identifier:	NMAI.AC.342
Creator:	Fortenberry, John
Extent:	17 Photographic prints (color)
Language:	English .
Summary:	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.

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.

Restrictions

Access to NMAI Archives Center collections is by appointment only, Monday - Friday, 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. Please contact the archives to make an appointment (phone: 301-238-1400, email: nmaiarchives@si.edu).

Conditions Governing Use

Permission to publish materials from the collection must be requested from National Museum of the American Indian Archives Center. Please submit a written request to nmaiphotos@si.edu. For personal or classroom use, users are invited to download, print, photocopy, and distribute the images that are available online without prior written permission, provided that the files are not modified in any way, the Smithsonian Institution copyright notice (where applicable) is included, and the source of the image is identified as the National Museum of the American Indian. For more information please see the Smithsonian's [Terms of Use](#) and NMAI Archive Center's [Digital Image request](#) website.

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.

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.

Scope and Contents

Catalog numbers include P25943-P25959.

Arrangement

Arranged by catalog number in three folders.

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

Container Listing

Photo-folder 1	<p>P25943: Group with Village Chieftan, 1985 1 Photographic print</p> <p>Notes: View of (L-R) an unidentified man, John Fortenberry, Chieftan of the village (unnamed), 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: Yanomami (Yanoama) Chieftan posed in his house, 1985 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: Young Yanomami (Yanoama) girl, 1985 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: Yucca processing, 1985 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 airstrip. 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)