



Smithsonian

National Museum of the American Indian

Harold J. Hibben collection photographs

Mattie Lewis

2025

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Museum of the American Indian
Title:	Harold J. Hibben collection photographs
Date:	undated
Identifier:	NMAI.AC.348
Creator:	Hibben, Harold J. (1881-1956)
Extent:	1 Scrapbook 26 Photographic prints
Language:	English .
Summary:	This collection includes one scrapbook and 26 photographs of tomahawks from the Northeast, Wampanoag, Potawatomi, and Woodlands communities and military posts in the Northeastern United States and Canada.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Gift of Mr. Richard M. Fairbanks in memory of Harold J. Hibben, 1958.

Separated Materials

Also donated were 211 items, mostly tomahawks, catalog numbers 22/7198-22/7408. Documents relating to the items and photographs can be found in Series 6, Collectors of the Museum of the American Indian Heye Foundation records, NMAI.AC.001:

[Tomahawk Collection](#)

[Correspondence](#)

Processing Information

Collection processed by Mattie Lewis, Archives Technician in 2025.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Harold J. Hibben collection photographs, image #, NMAI.AC.348; 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

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Biographical / Historical

Harold James Hibben was born in May 1881 in Indianapolis, Indiana. He was the third generation of his family to work with Hibben, Hollweg, and Co, a dry goods store with a long history in the community. He started in sales and eventually became Vice President. Hibben was very active in the Chamber of Commerce, Wholesale Trade Division. In 1910, he was asked by the Republican party to run for the state legislature, but didn't receive the nomination. He developed an interest in Indigenous belongings, particularly tomahawks, and was an extensive collector. Hibben passed in 1956.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains one black 12x7x2 in. scrapbook containing 173 photographs, postcards, and newspaper clippings from Canada and the Northeastern USA assembled by Harold James Hibben. It also contains 26 8x10 in. black and white photographs of Hibben's tomahawk collection and display cases. The collection was donated to the Museum of the American Indian by Hibben's nephew.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged in two series.

Series 1: Scrapbook- Left in the order Harold Hibben originally chose when assembling the scrapbook. Catalog numbers were assigned starting at the beginning of the book.

Series 2: Object photographs- arranged numerically by the label numbers used by Harold Hibben. These photographs do not have NMAI catalog numbers.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Northeast
- Potawatomi
- Wampanoag
- Woodlands

Cultures:

- Northeast
- Potawatomi
- Wampanoag
- Woodlands

Container Listing

Scrapbook, undated

1 Scrapbook

Box 1

Scope and
Contents:

One black 12x7x2 in. scrapbook containing 173 photographs, postcards, and newspaper clippings from Canada and the Northeastern USA. The majority of the photographs show the tomahawks Hibben collected, which were also donated to the museum. Other photographs include locations where the tomahawks were found, military posts, and sites from the American Indian Wars. Hibben typed out the known information on the history of each tomahawk and included it next to the photograph. The notes detail who the weapons were purchased from, where they were originally found, and unique details of the individual tomahawk. The tomahawks were collected circa 1898-1953.

Image numbers P26538-P26710.

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Object photographs, undated

Scope and Contents: 26 8x10 in. black and white photographs of tomahawks in Hibben's collection. The photographs depict the display cases in Hibben's home and object photographs on a white background with a number next to them, assigned by Hibben. Some of these photographs are duplicates of photographs in the scrapbook.

Photo-folder 1	Tomahawks 1-80, undated 9 Photographic prints Notes: Nine 8x10 in. black and white photographs, each depicting multiple groups of numbered tomahawks on a white background. This folder contains images of tomahawks 1-80, with some missing.
Photo-folder 2	Tomahawks 82-127, undated 9 Photographic prints Notes: Nine 8x10 in. black and white photographs, each depicting multiple groups of numbered tomahawks on a white background. This folder contains images of tomahawks 82-127, with some missing.
Photo-folder 3	Display Cases 8 Photographic prints Notes: Eight 8x10 in. black and white photographs of display cases in Hibben's home.

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