

## MS-240

The Museum of Northern Arizona  
Harold S. Colton Memorial Library  
3101 N. Fort Valley Road  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001  
(928)774-5213 ext. 256

### **Title**

Emry and Anna Kopta collection

### **Dates**

1912-1998

### **Extent**

8.25 cm textual material, 1801 photographic images (1823 prints, 206 glass plate negatives, 1143 nitrate negatives, 30 safety negatives), 2 audio cassettes

### **Creator(s)**

Kopta, Emry, 1884-1953  
Kopta, Anna (née Phelps), 1882-1986

### **Biographical History**

Emry Kopta (May 22, 1884 - May 20, 1953) was born in Austria to Vaclav and Flora Kopta. Vaclav was a distinguished concert violinist and music teacher in Czechoslovakia and the U.S.; during a tour with the New York and Philadelphia Philharmonic Orchestras he met Flora Wilson, who was from a Philadelphia aristocratic family. Emry had also studied violin, but gave up when his father informed him that he'd never be a concert caliber violinist - he was nine years old.

Kopta's family moved to San Francisco when he was 16, and his father acquired a ranch in Sacramento. During a ranch accident, Emry's knee was crushed under the wheels of an overturning carriage, leading to a permanent limp, and Kopta's search for a job that would allow him to sit - he fell in love with sculpting. In 1904 he enrolled in the Mark Hopkins School of Art in San Francisco, and in 1906 he moved to France to study sculpting at the Sorbonne in Paris. In 1911 he completed his studies and moved back to Los Angeles, where he met Lon Megargee, a young artist from Arizona who later became a prominent Southwestern painter.

In 1912 Kopta and Megargee were invited to be guests of John "Don" Lorenzo Hubbell at his trading post on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. They were joined by William R. Leigh, another artist, and the three went out together to the Hopi village of Polacca to learn more about the American Indian and see the colorful Hopi ceremonies. It was in Polacca that Kopta met Tom Pavatea, a full-blooded Hopi and owner of the small trading post there. Pavatea would play an important role in Kopta's life.

Kopta fell in love with the Hopi people during this visit, and determined to continue his work among them. He soon closed out his affairs in Los Angeles and moved to Polacca. Tom Pavatea rented a bedroom and a studio space to him, and provided introductions to other members of the community. Kopta made many close relationships in the Hopi community, and was eventually

adopted as a son by the Pavatea family. During his life on the reservation he would take many photographs - of daily life, some ceremonies, and of particular individuals as studies for his sculptures.

Anna Kopta (née Phelps, November 8, 1882 - April 22, 1986) was born and raised in Ohio. In 1902 she visited relatives at Fort Sill Military Reservation in Oklahoma, where a number of Apaches from Arizona were confined (including Geronimo, whom Anna met). It was at this time that Anna decided on a career of teaching at Indian schools. In 1906 she moved to Arizona and began teaching at the Phoenix Indian School.

In 1922, Emry Kopta was commissioned to design a memorial at the Phoenix Indian School for soldiers killed in World War I. While there, he and Anna met, and they were married in 1923 in Flagstaff. They continued to live on the reservation until 1925, when Emry and Anna moved to Phoenix, where they built a house and studio with a large garden, vineyard, and orchard. They continued to visit their friends at the Hopi reservation regularly, and members from the reservation would often come to Phoenix to visit them.

In 1928, Emry was commissioned to design a decorative block for use in the Arizona Biltmore Hotel by Albert Chase McArthur, chief architect and student of Frank Lloyd Wright. In 1933, Emry was commissioned to design a fountain for the Arizona State Teachers College, now Arizona State University at Tempe. The original fountain design included a bronze statue of a Hopi flute player atop a pedestal featuring Hopi Kachina designs. However, before the statue could be cast the College Board informed Kopta that the fountain would no longer include it - possibly due to lack of funds. The pedestal itself became the fountain as it is today; the model of the flute player statue was later donated to the ASU museum by Anna Kopta in 1970.

Emry Kopta died May 20, 1953 in Phoenix, Arizona at age 68. Anna continued to teach at Indian Schools in Phoenix, Gila Crossing, and Zuni (in New Mexico), and authored several articles on her experiences and friendships among American Indians. She was instrumental in having the Hubbell Trading Post declared a National Historic Site, was chosen Phoenix Woman of the Year in 1968, and Sun City Woman of the Year in 1973. In 1981 she gave a tape recorded interview with Ned Danson. Anna Kopta died April 22, 1986 in Phoenix Arizona at age 103.

### **Scope and Content**

Collection consists of materials relating to Emry and Anna Kopta's personal and professional life. Textual material includes articles and clippings, Anna Kopta's scrapbook, personal gifts received, Anna Kopta's teaching materials from Zuni Day School, student workbooks from Zuni Day School, personal correspondence, and a handwritten transcription of Anna Kopta's interview with Ned Danson. Photographic materials feature scenes of Emry and Anna Kopta's daily life, Emry Kopta's sculpture, and images of Navajo and Hopi life and ceremonies.

### **System of Arrangement**

Collection is arranged in the following series:

- Series 1: Biographical Material
- Series 2: Emry Kopta Photographs
- Series 3: Anna Kopta

There is no apparent order to the photographs in this collection. Photographs appear to be numbered based on order in which they were received.

### **Conditions Governing Access**

This collection contains culturally sensitive images; these are identified at the item level throughout the photograph files. Advance permission is required to view restricted materials. Please contact the MNA Archivist for more information and to obtain permission for viewing these materials.

### **Physical Access**

Glass plate negatives are fragile and require delicate handling. One glass plate negative is broken and housed on a sink mat. Nitrate negatives are stored in cold-storage; 24-hour notice is required for access to these negatives.

### **Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use**

Unpublished and published manuscripts are protected by copyright. Permission to publish, quote, or reproduce must be secured from the repository and the copyright holder.

### **Finding Aids**

Detailed inventories of photographs are available upon request.

### **Custodial History**

Following the death of Emry Kopta, the photographs in this collection were in the possession of Anna Kopta until their donation to the Museum of Northern Arizona in 1976.

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition**

All materials were donated to the MNA archives by Anna Kopta in 1976 (Accession #MS-240).

### **Existence and Location of Copies**

Some prints are housed in the archives of the Heard Museum, collection RC 16.

### **Related Archival Materials**

- Additional glass plates by Kopta are housed in the archives of the Heard Museum, collection RC 26.
- Additional photographs are located in the archives of the Heard Museum, collections RC 2 and RC 18.
- Other photographs and negatives are housed in the archives of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution.

**Publication Note**

Photographs taken by Emry Kopta have appeared in:

Bol, Marsha. 1998. *North, South, East, West: American Indians and the natural world*. Carnegie Museum of Natural History.

Breunig, Robert G., and Michael Lomatuway'ma. Hopi: scenes of everyday life. *In Plateau*, vol. 55, no. 1. 1983.

*El Palacio*, Vol 5-8: Journal of the Museum of New Mexico, The School of American Research, the Archaeological Society of New Mexico, and the Sante Fe Society of the Archaeological Institute. July 1, 1918.

The Emry and Anna Kopta Foundation. 1982. *Emry Kopta: the Sculptor -- the Man*. Taos, New Mexico: Columbine Printing Co.

Hurst, Tricia. 1982. Emry Kopta (1884-1953) - Each Respected the Other. *In Southwest Art*, vol.11, no.11. 1982.

Johnson, Tim. 1998. *Spirit capture: photographs from the National Museum of the American Indian*. Smithsonian Institution Press in association with the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution.

Koyiyumptewa, Stewart B., Carolyn O'Bagy Davis, Hopi Cultural Preservation Office. 2009. *The Hopi People (Images of America)*. Arcadia Publishing.

Kramer, Barbara. 1996. *Nampeyo and her pottery*. University of New Mexico Press.

O'Kane, Walter Collins. Emry Kopta – Sculptor of Indians. *In Arizona Highways*, vol. 33, no. 8. 1957.

O'Kane, Walter Collins. The Story of a Fountain. *In Arizona Highways*, vol. 33, no. 8. 1957.

**Note**

- The Fine Arts collection of the Museum of Northern Arizona houses several original and plaster cast busts by Kopta.
- Arizona State University houses a fountain and flute player statue created by Emry Kopta.
- The Museum of New Mexico has other busts or plaster casts of Emry Kopta's sculptures in their collection.

**Description Control**

Finding aid written by Christine Solymossy using *DACS*, 10 November, 2010

## MS-240

### Title

Series 1: Biographical Material

### Dates

1914-1998

### Extent

2 cm textual material

### Scope and Content

Series consists of materials related to Emry Kopta and his family. This includes newspaper clippings, magazine articles, pamphlets, Anna Kopta's scrapbook (containing clippings and photographs related to their lives), and other materials received as gifts related to Emry Kopta's personal and professional life.

<b>Series 1: Biographical Material</b>				
<b>File #</b>	<b>File Description</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Extent</b>	<b>Box/Folder</b>
MS-240-1-1	Kopta Family Biographical Information	1914-1998	0.7 cm textual	1.1
MS-240-1-2	Emry Kopta: The Sculptor – The Man	1982	0.3 cm textual	1.2
MS-240-1-3	Anna Kopta Scrapbook	undated	0.9 cm textual	1.3
MS-240-1-3	Gifts Received	1917-1921	0.1 cm textual	1.4

## MS-240

### Title

Series 2: Emry Kopta Photographs

### Dates

circa 1912-1950s

### Extent

1801 photographic images (1823 prints, 206 glass plate negatives, 1143 nitrate negatives, 30 safety negatives)

### Scope and Content

Series consists of photographs related to Emry Kopta's personal and professional life. Personal photographs include images of Emry and Anna Kopta, their friends, and their activities. The majority of the photographs represent the Kopta's time among the Hopi and Navajo people of Arizona, showing scenes of daily life, buildings, and some ceremonies. People of note include Coyawyema of the Snake Clan, the potter Nampeyo, and the archaeologist Walter Hough. Photographs from Emry Kopta's professional work include studies for his sculptures, photographs of finished pieces, the fountain now at the Arizona Teacher's School, and the Arizona Biltmore. Several photographs correspond to items in the Museums' Fine Arts Collection. Some prints have annotations written by Kopta or others.

### System of Arrangement

There is no apparent order to the collection; photographs appear to have been numbered based on order in which they were received. Some photographs and negatives have numbers which appear to correspond to lists made by Emry Kopta. Other numbers and lists post-date Kopta's death and were made by an unknown individual. A 1995 note in the inventory file notes that several loose prints were located at that time and appended to the existing inventory, beginning with MS 240-2-1360. These photographs were grouped by subject.

<b>Series 2: Emry Kopta Photographs</b>				
<b>Series #</b>	<b>Series Description</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Extent</b>	<b>Box/Folder</b>
MS-240-2	Photographs	1912-1950s	1823 prints, 206 glass plate negatives, 1143 nitrate negatives, 30 safety negatives	Box 2-4, GP-A Box 81-87, nitrate freezer
<b>Nitrates</b>				<b>Location</b>
240-2-709 to 240-2-713				Nitrate Freezer, Box 1A
240-2-716 to 240-2-719				Nitrate Freezer, Box 1A
240-2-721 to 240-2-727				Nitrate Freezer, Box 1A
240-2-729 to 240-2-737				Nitrate Freezer, Box 1A
240-2-739 to 240-2-748				Nitrate Freezer, Box 1A
240-2-752 to 240-2-763				Nitrate Freezer, Box 1A
240-2-767 to 240-2-776				Nitrate Freezer, Box 1A
240-2-784				Nitrate Freezer, Box 1A
240-2-794 to 240-2-799				Nitrate Freezer, Box 1A
240-2-812 to 240-2-832				Nitrate Freezer, Box 1B

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240-2-834 to 240-2-843	Nitrate Freezer, Box 1B
240-2-845 to 240-2-846	Nitrate Freezer, Box 1B
240-2-848 to 240-2-860	Nitrate Freezer, Box 1B
240-2-863 to 240-2-864	Nitrate Freezer, Box 1B
240-2-867 to 240-2-869	Nitrate Freezer, Box 1B

## MS-240

### Title

Series 3: Anna Kopta

### Dates

1931-1981

### Extent

6.25 cm textual material, 2 audio cassettes

### Scope and Content

Series consists of Anna Kopta's teaching materials and activity outlines from Zuni Day School, student workbooks from Zuni Day School, personal correspondence between Anna Kopta and staff of the Museum of Northern Arizona, and a taped interview with Anna Kopta on Hopi life conducted by E.B. Danson & Mrs. Mildred Hooper, January 24, 1981. Interview was transcribed. Additional articles written by or about Anna Kopta are in the Biographical Materials series.

<b>Series 3: Anna Kopta</b>				
<b>File #</b>	<b>File Description</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Extent</b>	<b>Box/Folder</b>
MS-240-3-1	Anna Kopta Teaching Materials	1931-1932	1 cm textual	1.5
MS-240-3-2	Zuni Day School Student Workbooks	1931-1932	4 cm textual	1.6-1.7
MS-240-3-3	Anna Kopta Personal Correspondence	1972-1976	0.25 cm textual	1.8
MS-240-3-4	Anna Kopta Interview Tapes	1981	2 cassettes	1.9
MS-240-3-5	Anna Kopta Interview Transcript	1981	1 cm textual	1.10

### LCSH Access Points

Agathla Peak (Ariz.)  
Architecture  
Arizona Biltmore  
Arizona State Teachers College  
Arizona State University  
Black-and-white photography  
Bronze sculpture  
Buffalo dance  
Busts  
Butterfly dance  
Canyon de Chelly National Monument (Ariz.)  
Devil dance  
Dockstader, Frederick J.  
Figure sculpture  
First Mesa (Ariz. : Mesa)  
Fort Sill (Okla.)  
Grand Canyon (Ariz.)  
Heard Museum  
Heye, George G. (George Gustav), 1874-1957  
Hopi architecture



Hopi art  
Hopi artists  
Hopi baskets  
Hopi children  
Hopi cooking  
Hopi dance  
Hopi dolls  
Hopi Indian Reservation (Ariz.)  
Hopi Indians  
Hopi Indians -- Dwellings -- Arizona -- Oraibi  
Hopi Indians -- Religion  
Hopi Indians -- Rites and ceremonies  
Hopi Indians -- Social life and customs  
Hopi Indians -- Women  
Hopi mythology  
Hopi pottery  
Hopi Tribe of Arizona  
Hopi women  
Hopi women potters  
Hopi youth  
Hotevilla (Ariz.)  
Hough, Walter, 1859-1935  
Hubbell, John Lorenzo  
Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site (Ganado, Ariz.)  
Images, Photographic  
Kachinas  
Kayenta (Ariz.)  
Kopta, Emry, 1884-1953  
Kopta, Anna (née Phelps), 1882-1986  
McArthur, Albert Chase  
Mission San Xavier del Bac (Tucson, Ariz.)  
Models (Clay, plaster, etc.)  
Monument Valley (Ariz. and Utah)  
Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation  
Museum of New Mexico  
Museum of Northern Arizona  
Nampeyo, ca. 1856-1942  
National Museum of the American Indian (U.S.)  
Navajo architecture  
Navajo art  
Navajo children  
Navajo cooking  
Navajo dance  
Navajo girls  
Navajo Indian Reservation  
Navajo Indians

Navajo Indians -- Dwellings  
Navajo Indians -- Education  
Navajo Indians -- Religion  
Navajo Indians -- Rites and ceremonies  
Navajo Indians -- Social life and customs  
Navajo Nation, Arizona, New Mexico & Utah  
Navajo National Monument (Ariz.)  
Navajo pottery  
Navajo women  
Oraibi (Ariz.)  
Phoenix Indian School  
Photography  
Photography of sculpture  
Plaster sculpture  
Portrait photography  
Portrait sculpture  
Red Lake (Ariz.)  
Ruins  
Sculpture  
Second Mesa (Ariz. : Mesa)  
Shungopavi (Ariz.)  
Terra-cotta figurines  
Terra-cotta sculpture  
Tewa dance  
Tewa Indians  
Trading posts  
Trading posts -- Arizona  
Tuba City (Ariz.)  
Zuni Day School (Zuni, N.M.)