

MS-369

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

Title

Alexander M. Stephen collection

Dates

circa 1880s-1930s

Extent

8.25 cm textual material

Name of Creator(s)

Bushnell, Olive (1865-19?)
Parsons, Elsie Clews (1874-1941)
Reichard, Gladys A. (1893-1955)
Stephen, Alexander M. (1850?-1894)

Biographical History

Alexander Macgregor Stephen (1850?-1894) was a Scottish mining prospector trained in metallurgy at the university of Edinburgh. When he emigrated from Scotland to the United States he enlisted in the New York Militia during the Civil War from 1861-1866. Afterwards, he prospected in search of the lost Merit silver mine in Nevada and Utah during the 1870s. From 1880-1894 it is not known whether Stephen lived with Thomas V. Keam, owner of a trading post, at his canyon ranch or at various places on the Hopi mesas. He did spend a decade building relationships with the Navajo and Hopi learning their language and their culture and recording it in what he considered an unbiased manner. Stephen and Keam worked together to collect and catalogue 4,500 ethnological specimens, which are today known as the Thomas V. Keam collection. Keam sold the collection to Mary Hemenway who then went on to fund the Hemenway Expeditions to the Southwest. Stephen was employed by Hemenway to assist the directors of the Expeditions: Jesse W. Fewkes and later anthropologist, Frank Hamilton Cushing. Stephen served as researcher, informant, and field director.

In 1894, Stephen came down with influenza while living with the Hopi. The disease had already spread through the mesas. Stephen believed that he was being punished for secretly observing burial customs and then joking about them. He died shortly thereafter. Keam erected monument at the canyon [Keam's Canyon] in honor of him.

Stephen's catalogue of the Keam collection is considered one of the first typologies of southwestern ceramics. Stephen's contribution to the catalogue is valued for the remarkable insight into the mythic associations of pottery designs with Hopi religious beliefs.

Scope and Content

This collection contains the original notes taken by Stephen during his stays on the Navajo and Hopi lands. Stephen describes and illustrates Native American dwellings, ceremonies, medicine, games, clothing, language, etc. He also transcribed interviews between the Navajo chief Ganado Muncho and Major John Wesley Powell, and others. Parts of Stephen's journals were later transcribed by Olive Bushnell and Elsie Clews Parsons. Their notes and manuscripts were then annotated by Gladys Reichard in the 1930s.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection contains culturally sensitive material. Therefore, the collection was restricted by staff at the Navajo Nation Historic Preservation Department on 30 October 2007. Contact the Museum of Northern Arizona archivist for more information.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

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Languages and Scripts of the Materials

English & Navajo

Custodial History

MS-369 belonged to Elsie Clews Parsons who edited Stephen's notes for publication. During her lifetime she gave the collection to Gladys Reichard, in whose collection they were found. Prior to Reichard's ownership they may have been given to Olive Bushnell for transcription. After Reichard's papers were deposited with the Museum of Northern Arizona in 1963, either Richard or Nathalie Woodbury arranged them.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

This material collection was found as part of the Gladys A. Reichard accession #MS-29 that was received in 1963 from Reichard's estate.

Related Archival Materials

MS-369 probably came from The American Philosophical Society's Elsie Clews Parsons papers (Mss.Ms.Coll.29), which still contains some of Stephen's records. The Peabody Museum Archives at Harvard University has records created by Stephen in their Hemenway Expedition records and in their Thomas V. Kean collection. Cornell University Library also has Stephen records in their Hemenway Southwestern Archaeological Expedition Papers (Collection Number: 9186). The University of Utah J. Willard Marriott Library also has Stephen's material.

Publication Note

Olive Bushnell's typed transcription of Stephen's journals were used for the article: Stephen, A. M. 1930. "Navajo Origin Legend". *Journal of American Folklore*. 43 (167): 88-104.

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Stephen's notes appear in:

Parsons, Elsie Worthington Clews. 1992. *North American Indian life: customs and traditions of 23 tribes*. New York: Dover Publications.

Stephen, Alexander MacGregor. 1889. "The Navajo shoemaker". *Proceedings of the United States National Museum*. 11: 131-136.

Stephen, Alexander MacGregor. 1970. *Notes about the Navajoes*. Human relations area files, 115. New Haven, Conn: Human Relations Area Files.

Stephen, Alexander MacGregor. 1970. *Notes on marriage among the Navajoes, Navajo dress, and Navajo dwellings*. Human relations area files, 111. New Haven, Conn: Human Relations Area Files.

Stephen, Alexander MacGregor. 1893. *The Navajo*. *American anthropologist*, old ser., v. 6, no. 4. Washington, D.C.: [s.n.].

Description Control

Finding aid written by Eileen Hogan using DACS, 26 August 2010

Alexander M. Stephen collection				
File #	File Description	Date(s)	Extent	Box/Folder
MS-369-1	"Hogan Songs": notes	circa 1880s	.5 cm textual	1.1
MS-369-2	Notes on Hopi life and language	circa 1880s	.5 cm textual	1.2
MS-369-3	Notes on Navajo architecture	circa 1880s	.5 cm textual	1.3
MS-369-4	Ash kon: dialogue between the Humbler and a woman	1882	.25 cm textual	1.4
MS-369-5	"Bookoody's Dance": notes	1882	.25 cm textual	1.5
MS-369-6	Transcribed dialogues	1882	.5 cm textual	1.6
MS-369-7	"A Navajo Medicine": notes	1883	.25 cm textual	1.7
MS-369-8	"Keam's Canyon": notes	1885	.5 cm textual	1.8
MS-369-9	Navajo notes	1885-1887	2 cm textual	1.9
MS-369-10	"When John the Jeweler Was Sick" and "Navajo Shoemaker": notes	1886-1887	.5 cm textual	1.10
MS-369-11	"Ho-hran [Hogan] Nomenclature": notes	1889	.25 cm textual	1.11
MS-369-12	"Vocabulary of the Sarcee Compared With the Navajo": notes	1889	.25 cm textual	1.12
MS-369-13	"Notes on the Navajo Indians" incomplete transcription of Stephen's journals by Olive Bushnell	circa 1930s	.75 cm textual	1.13
MS-369-14	"Notes on the Navajo Indians" transcription excerpts of Stephen's journals by Olive Bushnell	circa 1930s	1 cm textual	1.14
MS-369-15	Stephen notes transcribed by Olive Bushnell/Gladys Reichard	circa 1930s	.25 cm textual	1.15

LCSH Access Points

Hemenway Expedition (1886-1894)
Hopi Indians
Hopi Indians -- Social life and customs
Hopi language
Kearney, Thomas V.
Navajo County (Ariz.)
Navajo history
Navajo Indians
Navajo Indians -- Dwellings
Navajo Indians -- Rites and ceremonies
Navajo Indians -- Social life and customs
Navajo language
Parsons, Elsie Worthington Clews, 1874-1941
Powell, John Wesley, 1834-1902
Reichard, Gladys Amanda, 1893-1955
Stephens, Alexander MacGregor, d. 1894