

Guide to the Frank Schilling Cummings Papers

WA MSS S-4487



Beinecke staff

February 2024

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: WA MSS S-4487

CREATOR: Cummings, Frank Schilling

TITLE: Frank Schilling Cummings papers

DATES: circa 1940-2017

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 7.3 linear feet (19 boxes) + 1 broadside

LANGUAGE: Chiefly in English. Some sound recordings in Navajo and Inuit (likely Inupiaq).

SUMMARY: Photographs, audiovisual material, and papers of Frank Schilling Cummings relating to the Navajo peoples near Monument Valley, Arizona, circa 1940s-1970s. 1,010 photographs and slides depict Navajo men, women, and children, as well as Monument Valley. 49 reel-to-reel audio tapes contain oral histories, language lessons, and chants, songs, and ceremonies by Navajo peoples. Two additional tapes pertain to the Aleut peoples of Alaska, while a third contains an informal language lesson in "Eskimo" (likely Inupiaq). Included are two VHS tapes, one 16mm film reel, one DVD, and one external hard drive.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.fscummings>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.fscummings>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Langdon Manor Books, LLC on the Walter McClintock Memorial Fund, 2019.

Conditions Governing Access

The collection contains potentially culturally sensitive material related to the Navaho Nation. As of February 2024, it is closed to research pending consultation with tribal representatives.

Boxes 5-17 (audiovisual materials) and Box 18 (born digital material): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Public Services for further information.

Conditions Governing Use

The Frank Schilling Cummings Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Frank Schilling Cummings Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

These materials have been arranged and described according to national and local standards. For more information, please refer to the Beinecke Manuscript Unit Processing Manual.

Associated Material

Frank Schilling Cummings Papers (WH497), Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado.

Associated Material

Frank Schilling Cummings Film Collection (MS-305), Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff, Arizona.

Biographical / Historical

Frank Schilling Cummings (1894-1978) was an engineer and amateur anthropologist who grew up in Los Angeles, California, graduated Los Angeles Polytechnic High School in 1912, and settled in Oakland after attending college in New Jersey. In 1949, Cummings became acquainted with Frank Todacheene, a Navajo man. From this relationship, Frank Cummings and wife Betty Cummings photographed and recorded the traditions of the Navajo peoples near Monument Valley, Arizona, for more than two decades.

Scope and Contents

Photographs, audiovisual material, and papers of Frank Schilling Cummings relating to the Navajo peoples near Monument Valley, Arizona, circa 1940s-1970s. 1,010 photographs and slides depict Navajo men, women, and children, as well as Monument Valley. 49 reel-to-reel audio tapes contain oral histories,

language lessons, and chants, songs, and ceremonies by Navajo peoples. Two additional tapes pertain to the Aleut peoples of Alaska, while a third contains an informal language lesson in "Eskimo" (likely Inupiaq). Included are two VHS tapes, one 16mm film reel, one DVD, and one external hard drive.

Arrangement

Organized into four series: I. Photographs, circa 1940s-1970s. II. Audiovisual Material, 1952-1973. III. Computer Media, circa 2017. IV. Papers, 1945-1973.

Collection Contents

Series I: Photographs, circa 1940s-1970s

Series I contains 1,010 photographs and slides of Navajo men, women, and children, and Monument Valley, Arizona.

Some slides appear to document family vacations taken by Frank and Betty Cummings.

Series I is arranged alphabetically by format.

Print Photographs		circa 1940s-1970s
b. 1, f. 1-9	Portraits	
b. 1, f. 10	Portraits (negatives)	
b. 1, f. 11	People: Art	
b. 1, f. 12	People: Dance	
b. 1, f. 13-21	People	
b. 2, f. 1-5	People	
b. 2, f. 6	People (negatives)	
b. 2, f. 7-22	Landscapes	
b. 3, f. 1-9	People	
b. 3, f. 10-12	Landscapes	
b. 3, f. 13-14	Landscapes, structures	
b. 3, f. 15	Landscapes	
b. 3, f. 16	Nevills expedition	
b. 3, f. 17-18	Disbound album	
b. 3, f. 19	Disbound notebook	
Slides		circa 1944-1963
b. 4, f. 1	Slides	circa 1944-1945
b. 4, f. 2	Slide	1959 September
b. 4, f. 3	"Reservation & Aleutians"	1959 December
b. 4, f. 4	Slides	1960 June
b. 4, f. 5-6	Slides	1960 August
b. 4, f. 7	Slides	1961 March
b. 4, f. 8	Slides	1961 August

Slides (continued)

b. 4, f. 9	Slide	1963 June
b. 4, f. 10	Slides	undated

Series II: Audiovisual Material, 1952-1973

49 reel-to-reel audio tapes contain oral histories, language lessons, and chants, songs, and ceremonies by Navajo peoples. Two additional tapes pertain to the Aleut peoples of Alaska, while a third contains an informal language lesson in "Eskimo" (likely Inupiaq). Included are two VHS tapes and a 16mm film titled "Sun City Lake."

Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Public Services for further information.

Series II is arranged alphabetically by format.

Sound Recordings		1952-1973
b. 5, f. 1	Zitlau & Ajo reel I <i>1 Audiotape Reel 0:33:45 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i>	1973-1974
b. 5, f. 2	Zitlau & Ajo reel II	1973
b. 5, f. 3	Navajo - Songs - Records	undated
b. 5, f. 4	Navajo - Chants M.V. RWC	1952 August 8
b. 5, f. 5	Eugene Blackbear	1956 August 31
b. 5, f. 6	Original Ned Todacheene History	1956 October 5
b. 6, f. 1	Maurice McCabe Talk	1956 October 5
b. 6, f. 2	Ned Songs Original	1956 October 5
b. 6, f. 3	Ted Cly - Songs	1957 August 6
b. 6, f. 4	Chants - "Little Boy" & Chas Holiday	1957 August 3
b. 6, f. 5	Sweat Bath - Dallas Chants	1957 July 30 and 1957 August 7
b. 6, f. 6	Maurice Knee, John Watchman & Flora - History	undated
b. 7, f. 1	John Watchman - Life	1957 November 4
b. 7, f. 2	John Watchman, Flora Watchman - History	1957 November 5
b. 7, f. 3	John Watchman, Phillip Jackson - Bear Song Oklahoma Ceremonies	1957 November 11
b. 7, f. 4	Eskimo Language	undated
b. 7, f. 5	Harry Black - Home	1957 August
b. 7, f. 6	Guy White - Navajo - Travel	1954 June 25
b. 8, f. 1	Guy White	1954 June 25
b. 8, f. 2	Guy White	1954 June 25

Sound Recordings (continued)

b. 8, f. 3	Guy White	1954 June 25
b. 8, f. 4	Navajo Inez	undated
b. 8, f. 5	Navajo Inez	undated
b. 8, f. 6	Mrs. Shapsnakoff #1	1959 October 6
b. 9, f. 1	Mrs. Shapsnakoff #2	1959 October 6
b. 9, f. 2	Katso	1960 August 8
b. 9, f. 3	John Burnsides	1960 July 15
b. 9, f. 4	John Burnsides	1960 July 16
b. 9, f. 5	Rain Ceremony + Edward Clitso	1960 August 4-5
b. 9, f. 6	John Seaton	1960 August 6
b. 10, f. 1	John Seaton	1960 August 13
b. 10, f. 2	John Burnsides Chants Sand Painting	1962 July 26
b. 10, f. 3	Ralph Gray	1960 August 13
b. 10, f. 4	Toh ha Zini Begay, Horned Toad Sand Painting	1960 August 12
b. 10, f. 5	Pat & Lucy Sisco sing at MV	1960 July 31
b. 10, f. 6	Pat's sister Lucy Ann & Pat's Grandmother	1960 August 12
b. 11, f. 1	Pat, Prayer of Beauty Way	1960 August 12
b. 11, f. 2	Pat's Family	1960 August 12
b. 11, f. 3	Frank & Betty Todacheene, Sierra Club	1963 June 21
b. 11, f. 4	1st half Cecil & Ned	undated
b. 11, f. 5	Last half Cecil & Alice	undated
b. 11, f. 6	1st half Ned & John	undated
b. 12, f. 1	2nd half Ned & John Watchman	undated
b. 12, f. 2	Walter Zitlau tells about Ajo Desert Reel #1	undated
b. 12, f. 3	Walter Zitlau tells about Ajo Desert Reel #2	undated
b. 12, f. 4	Harry Goulding's Story	1972 May 13
b. 12, f. 5	Harry Goulding's Story 2	1972 May 13
b. 12, f. 6	Moorea Welcoming Song, Dances	1967
b. 12, f. 7	#1 Nedra	1968 March 14
b. 13, f. 1	#2 Nedra	1968 March 14

Sound Recordings (continued)

b. 13, f. 2	#4 Nedra	1968 March 14
b. 13, f. 3	#6 Sing Sing Mt. Hagen	1967
b. 13, f. 4	Durango	1972
b. 13, f. 5	D + RGW - Rookwood and Durango, Colorado	1958 July 31
b. 13, f. 6	D + RGW - Durango - Silverton	1958 August 1
b. 14, f. 1	D + RGW Durango - Silverton	1958 August 1
b. 14, f. 2	D + RGW in Durango	1959 August
b. 14, f. 3	D + RGW from Loco - originals #1	1960 July 24
b. 14, f. 4	D + RGW originals #2	1960 July 24
b. 14, f. 5	D + RGW Durango + Silverton from Loco #3	1960 July 24
b. 14, f. 6	D + RGW Originals #4	1960 July 24
b. 15, f. 1	D + RGW Originals #5	1960 July 24
b. 15, f. 2	D + RGW Originals #6	1960 July 24
b. 15, f. 3	D + RGW Durango + Silverton from Loco #1	1960 July 24
b. 15, f. 4	D + RGW Durango + Silverton from Loco #2	1960 July 24
b. 15, f. 5	Sun City - Transfers Panasonic to Film	1969-1970
b. 15, f. 6	Sun City - Transfers Panasonic to Film	1969-1970

Video Recordings and Films

b. 16, f. 1	U.C. garden, Navajo balls	1958
b. 16, f. 2	Navajo Mt. Sunset	undated
b. 16, f. 3	Sun City Lake <i>1 Film Reel (16mm)</i>	1977 May
b. 16, f. 4	Hair do, squaw bread, tribal fair, sweat bath, squaw dances	undated
b. 17, f. 1	Mon. Valley early days, 1955 C.U. Canyon, Canyon del Muerto, Mon. Valley 1958	undated
b. 17, f. 2	Monument Valley 1954, Ruins Rangers etc. 1957, Navajo water 1959, M.V. sand painting 1949	undated

Series III: Computer Media, circa 2017

Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Public Services for further information.

b. 18, f. 1	Cummings <i>1 Optical Disc (DVD)</i>	2017
b. 18, f. 2	External hard drive <i>1 External Hard Drive (1 terrabyte)</i>	undated

Series IV: Papers, 1945-1973

Series III contains a film index of Frank S. Cummings's films (not present in collection), five notebooks recording brief notes made during multiple trips, Cummings's personal and family history, and other papers.

Series III is arranged alphabetically by format.

b. 19, f. 1	Film index	1959
b. 19, f. 2	Notebooks	1945-1973
b. 19, f. 3	Personal/Family history	after 1960
b. 19, f. 4	Printed material	1963 and undated
b. 20 (Broadside)	Retirement card	undated

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Genres / Formats

Audiovisual materials
Oral histories (literary works)
Photographs

Subjects

Hymns, Navajo
Indians of North America -- Arizona -- Pictorial works
Indians of North America -- Portraits
Navajo chants
Navajo Indians -- Arizona -- Pictorial works
Navajo Indians -- Portraits

Geographic Names

Arizona -- Pictorial works
Monument Valley (Ariz. and Utah) -- Pictorial works

Acquired From

Langdon Manor Books, LLC