

Papers and drawings for Cherokee Indian materials
1893-1948
Mss.970.3.W78

American Philosophical Society
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Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Title	Papers and drawings for Cherokee Indian materials
Date [inclusive]	1893-1948
Call number	Mss.970.3.W78
Extent	1.0 Item(s) 1 item, 19 p.
Location	LH-MV-E-13
Language	English

Background note

Born October 4, 1921 in Oneonta, New York, John Witthoft had an unusual childhood. Suffering from scarlet fever at age 6, the disease left him with permanent eye damage and life-long tremors. His family saw these physical afflictions as retribution for his disagreeing with their religious beliefs and as a consequence disowned him at a very early age. At age 13 he started working and held many various jobs until finally settling on anthropology as a career. He obtained his masters degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1946. While at the university, he assisted anthropologist Frank Speck with his studies of Cherokee language and culture at Big Cove, North Carolina. From 1948-1966, Witthoft was the Pennsylvania state anthropologist. He reported to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and curated the state museum in Harrisburg. Some of his work there included field drawings of Indian mounds in Bradford County in 1948 as part of the Works Progress Administration program. Witthoft joined the faculty of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania in 1966 and remained as professor there until his retirement in 1986. During his teaching career he continued his field research among the Eastern Cherokee, Seneca, Cayuga, Delaware, and Cataba in the Atlantic region and the Hopi and Paiute in the West.

Scope & content

28 sketches, 8 black and white silver gelatin photographs, and 2 negatives of North Carolina Cherokee artifacts from ca. 1893-1948. Presumably collected by Frank Speck with John Witthoft during the latter's graduate field work, the images reflect the social life and customs of the Cherokee including war clubs, garments, Deer & Bear masks, rattles and dance formations. Of the dances presented are the Pigeon, Partridge, Corn, Beaver, Green Corn, and Ball game. Of note, an 1893 photograph by Mooney depicting Cherokee men and women in native attire at a ceremony before a ball game. The sketches are noted in Murphy Smith's Historical American Sketches.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Presented by Dr. Leonard Broom, through Dr. Witthoft; April 3, 1969.

Processing Information

Inventory not complete, only scanned images are noted.

Related Materials

Related Material

Works by John Witthoft include a 1953 Phillips fund report entitled A Cherokee economic botany from western North Carolina: man and nature in the southern Appalachians (497.3 Am4, no.4); a 1948 Works Progress Administration report with field drawings from the Sick site, Towanda, Bradford County, Pennsylvania (913.748 Un3, no.29).

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- Gelatin silver prints
- Negatives
- Sketches.

Personal Name(s)

- Speck, Frank Gouldsmith, 1881-1950

Subject(s)

- Cherokee dance
- Cherokee Indians--Social life and customs
- Cherokee masks
- Indians of North America--North Carolina
- Southeast Indians

Collection Inventory

Cherokee bear mask	1930-1950
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Cherokee bear mask , 1930-1950

[\[http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/graphics:2993\]](http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/graphics:2993)

Cherokee clubs

1930-1950

Cherokee clubs , 1930-1950

[\[http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/graphics:2991\]](http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/graphics:2991)

Cherokee deer mask

1930-1950

Cherokee deer mask , 1930-1950

[\[http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/graphics:2992\]](http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/graphics:2992)
