

Guide to the M. James Slack Papers

WA MSS S-4440



Sarah Lerner

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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-4440

CREATOR: Slack, M. James, 1894-1951

TITLE: M. James Slack papers

DATES: circa 1882-2007

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 3.09 linear feet (7 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English (Latin script)

SUMMARY: Artwork, photographs, and other papers created by M. James Slack and collected by John R. Beeder, circa 1882-2007. A portion of the material relates to Slack's work documenting Acoma Pueblo in New Mexico as part of the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1934. Included in the collection are Slack's diary for 1937, correspondence (primarily to Rosamond F. Slack as Curator at Fort Garland), and newspaper clippings (primarily relating to Fort Garland).

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

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.mjamesslack>.

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

From the estate of John R. Beeder. Purchased from Walkabout Books on the Frederick W. and Carrie S. Beinecke Fund for Western Americana, 2016. Slack family tree and portrait of M. James Slack gift of Amy Beeder, 2016 December.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Access

Boxes 6-7 (santos): Restricted fragile material. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

Conditions Governing Use

The M. James Slack 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

M. James Slack Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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.

M. James Slack

M. James Slack (1894-1951) of Denver, Colorado, attended Denver public schools and Manual Training Technical High School before studying art, architecture, and design at the Denver Atelier under architect Burnham Hoyt. He worked as a draftsman for Robert K. Fuller until 1934, when he was hired as a staff photographer on the Historic American Buildings Survey, a project established by the United States National Park Service during the Great Depression. Slack was involved in the work documenting the Acoma Pueblo in New Mexico, specifically.

In 1937, he married Rosamond F. Slack (1910-1989), with whom he had one child. The family lived in Las Cruces, New Mexico, in the 1940s, and ran the El Rio Lindo Curio Shop. In 1950, James Slack was appointed Curator of the grounds and new museum at Fort Garland, Colorado. Following his death from heart disease, Rosamond Slack was appointed Curator (a position she held until she remarried in 1954).

John R. Beeder

John R. Beeder (1932-2015), mining geologist and collector and dealer in Southwestern art and antiques, intended to publish a book on M. James Slack's efforts at Acoma Pueblo in New Mexico, making use of Slack's photographs and unpublished article on the pueblo submitted to National Geographic.

Content Description

Artwork, photographs, and other papers created by M. James Slack and collected by John R. Beeder, circa 1882-2007. A portion of the material relates to Slack's work documenting Acoma Pueblo in New Mexico as part of the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1934.

Included in the collection are Slack's diary for 1937, correspondence (primarily to Rosamond F. Slack as Curator at Fort Garland), and newspaper clippings (primarily relating to Fort Garland).

Arrangement

Organized into two series: I. Materials Relating to Acoma Pueblo and the Historic American Buildings Survey, 1934-2007. II. Other Materials, circa 1882-1975.

Collection Contents

Series I: Materials relating to Acoma Pueblo and the Historic American Buildings Survey, 1934-2007

Series I consists of 151 photographs taken by M. James Slack of Acoma Pueblo, its inhabitants, and surrounding landscape as part of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in 1934. Also included are enlargements of 36 of the photographs (some duplicates), amounting to 51 prints postdating Slack's lifetime. Multiple photographs have been annotated by John R. Beeder. Photographs document the Acoma community before it became accessible by road.

Series I also consists of a typescript (15 pages) of Slack's unpublished article titled "The Historic American Building Survey and the Pueblo of Acoma" (in which Slack intended to incorporate 54 of his photographs) and 12 pen-and-ink drawings of Acoma pottery designs. Included is a typescript report and 7 photographs of Mission San Xavier del Bac (included in the HABS).

Present are 57 color photographs (with negatives) likely taken by John R. Beeder of the pueblo, as well as 50 photographs (taken by Slack) sent to Beeder from Victor Hornbein, a draftsman on the HABS Acoma survey.

Also present are two publications relating to the pueblo: *Architecture of Acoma Pueblo: the 1934 Historic American Buildings Survey Project* by Peter Nabokov (Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1986) and *Recording a Vanishing Legacy: the Historic American Buildings Survey in New Mexico, 1933-Today* by the New Mexico Architectural Foundation (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2001).

Included in Series I are Beeder's papers relating to his intended publication of a book on Slack and the pueblo.

b. 1, f. 1	The Historic American Building Survey and the Pueblo of Acoma	1934
b. 1, f. 2-19	Photographs of Acoma Pueblo (18 folders)	1934
b. 1, f. 20-23	Photographs of Acoma Pueblo (Enlargements of 1934 photographs) (4 folders)	after 1934
b. 1, f. 24-25	Photographs taken by M. James Slack and sent to John R. Beeder by Victor Hornbein (2 folders)	undated
b. 2, f. 26-29	Photographs taken by John R. Beeder (4 folders)	circa 1980s
b. 2, f. 30	Photographs of and report on Mission San Xavier Del Bac	1934
b. 2, f. 31	Drawings	1934
b. 2, f. 32	<i>Architecture of Acoma Pueblo: the 1934 Historic American Buildings Survey Project</i> by Peter Nabokov (Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1986)	
b. 2, f. 33	<i>Recording a Vanishing Legacy: the Historic American Buildings Survey in New Mexico, 1933-Today</i> by the New Mexico Architectural Foundation (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2001)	
b. 2, f. 34-38	Materials created by John R. Beeder (5 folders)	1987-2007

Series II: Other materials, circa 1882-1975

Series II consists of artwork (drawings, watercolors, and block prints), photographs, two wooden religious sculptures (also known as santos), and other papers.

Themes represented in Slack's artwork include Indigenous or Southwestern peoples and patterns, Ancient Egypt, the Middle Ages, architecture, interiors, and religion.

Photographs are primarily portraits of Slack and relatives.

Other papers include M. James Slack's diary for 1937, correspondence (primarily to Rosamond F. Slack as Curator at Fort Garland), and newspaper clippings (primarily relating to Fort Garland).

Series II is arranged alphabetically by format.

Quoted phrases in parentheses were taken from folders received at time of acquisition.

b. 2, f. 39	Artwork (Sketchbook)	circa 1935
b. 2, f. 40	Artwork (Architecture)	circa 1928-1938
b. 2, f. 41	Artwork ("Cartoons South-Western")	circa 1939
b. 2, f. 42	Artwork (Colorado Engineering Council Medal of Award)	1927
b. 2, f. 43	Artwork ("Furniture design sketches")	circa 1938
b. 3, f. 44-45	Artwork ("Monterey furn. design") (2 folders)	circa 1938
b. 3, f. 46	Artwork ("Pot holder color studies")	undated
b. 3, f. 47	Artwork ("Spanish plates")	circa 1935-1946
b. 3, f. 48-54	Artwork ("Watercolors") (7 folders)	circa 1911-1924
b. 3, f. 55	Artwork (Woodblock prints)	undated
b. 3, f. 56	Artwork (Woodblock)	undated
b. 3, f. 57-58	Artwork ("Miscellaneous") (2 folders)	circa 1933-1948
b. 4, f. 59-62	Artwork (Miscellaneous) (4 folders)	circa 1935
b. 4, f. 63	Correspondence	1929-1932
b. 4, f. 64-67	Correspondence (addressed to Rosamond F. Slack) (4 folders)	1950-1954
b. 4, f. 68	Diary	1937
b. 4, f. 69	Papers concerning Fort Garland	1955, undated
b. 4, f. 70	Newspaper clippings	1952-1975
b. 4, f. 71b. 5, f. 72-73	Photograph albums (3 folders)	circa 1882-1936
b. 5, f. 73-77	Photographs (5 folders)	circa 1905-1951
b. 5, f. 78	Portrait of M. James Slack	circa 1910?

b. 5, f. 79	Slack family tree	undated
b. 5, f. 80	Miscellaneous other papers	1946-1948, undated
b. 6-7	Wooden religious sculptures Restricted fragile material. For further information consult the appropriate curator.	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.

Geographic Names

Acoma (N.M.) -- Pictorial works
Acoma Pueblo (N.M.) -- Pictorial works
Fort Garland (Colo.)
New Mexico -- Pictorial works

Subjects

Acoma architecture -- New Mexico -- Pictorial works
Acoma Indians -- New Mexico -- Pictorial works
Indians of North America -- New Mexico -- Pictorial works
Indians of North America -- Portraits
Surveys -- New Mexico

Genres / Formats

Photographs
Santos (statues)

Corporate Body

Historic American Buildings Survey

Contributors

Slack, M. James, 1894-1951
Beeder, John R., 1932-2015
Slack, Rosamond F., 1910-1989