

Works Progress Administration Records

0040

Finding aid prepared by M. Malta.

Last updated on March 03, 2017.

University of Pennsylvania, Penn Museum Archives

6/11/14

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Penn Museum Archives
Creator	Butler, Mary, 1903-1970
Creator	Fewkes, Vladimir
Title	Works Progress Administration Records
Call number	0040
Date [inclusive]	1935-1943
Extent	2.5 linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	<p>During the Great Depression President Franklin D. Roosevelt developed New Deal programs to return the country to work through relief projects. The most popular of these was the Works Progress Administration because it provided work for so many Americans. Large numbers were put to work building bridges, roads, public buildings, public parks and airports with nominal salaries subsidized by the federal government. In addition, tens of thousands of artists were funded to create murals and sculpture for public buildings, write plays and music and perform their work for an arts-hungry public. Between 1935 and 1942, the University Museum co-sponsored (with institutions such as the Fairmount Park Commission and the Pennsylvania Commission for the Fine Arts) at least eight Works Progress Administration projects as part of the State-wide Museum Assistance Program. Employee salaries for the WPA/University Museum projects were paid by the WPA; equipment, space, supplies, technical aid, and specimens were provided by the University Museum.</p>

Biography/History

During the Great Depression President Franklin D. Roosevelt developed New Deal programs to return the country to work through relief projects. The most popular of these was the Works Progress Administration because it provided work for so many Americans. Large numbers were put to work building bridges, roads, public buildings, public parks and airports with nominal salaries subsidized by the federal government. In addition, tens of thousands of artists were funded to create murals and sculpture for public buildings, write plays and music and perform their work for an arts-hungry public.

Between 1935 and 1942, the University Museum co-sponsored (with institutions such as the Fairmount Park Commission and the Pennsylvania Commission for the Fine Arts) at least eight Works Progress Administration projects as part of the State-wide Museum Assistance Program. Employee salaries for the WPA/University Museum projects were paid by the WPA; equipment, space, supplies, technical aid, and specimens were provided by the University Museum.

Projects 18369, 22831, and 23676 were each to some extent involved in amassing a bibliography of ceramics technology. In 1940, with the onset of project 23676, referred to as either the Archaeological Research Laboratory or the Archaeological Technology Laboratory, the scope of the larger bibliographic endeavor was changed to include articles of more general archaeological interest, particularly for the Eastern United States.

The total number of people employed by the WPA/University Museum projects fluctuated widely. Dr. Leonard Reisch directed the ceramics projects from their inception in 1935 through 1937, when he was succeeded by Donald Horton. Horton then served as director from January 1937 to September of 1939. Joseph Berman directed the projects from late 1939 through 1941. Dr. Vladimir J. Fewkes served as director of the bibliographic projects from their inception in 1937 to his death in November of 1941. He also briefly served as temporary head of the ceramics research projects in 1939.

Scope and Contents

Between 1935 and 1942, the University Museum co-sponsored (with institutions such as the Fairmount Park Commission and the Pennsylvania Commission for the Fine Arts) at least eight Works Progress Administration projects as part of the State-wide Museum Assistance Program. Employee salaries for the WPA/University Museum projects were paid by the WPA; equipment, space, supplies, technical aid, and specimens were provided by the University Museum.

WPA-funded work at the University Museum consisted of a number of different units of operation. Because so many of the records now available are incomplete, there may have been additional projects. Accurately representing the work that took place under the auspices of any one project is also difficult due to spotty records. As funding for one project was exhausted, another project occasionally took over as replacement, complete with ensuing changes of project name and number, regardless of similarity of purpose.

The Ceramic Technology Research Project was designed in 1935 by Mary Butler and rewritten as the proposal for the first WPA/University Museum project (number 2232). Projects 2232, 14753, and 19421 were referred to alternately as ceramics laboratories and ceramics research laboratories, and conducted similar research. The projects conducted ceramics technology research using chemical, petrographic, and optical methods to analyze artifacts, and also conducted experimental investigations of the composition of the various clays, pigments, tempers, shrinkage properties, and of the effects of temperature and other factors important in ceramics technology. The conservation and restoration of metal, stone, ivory, and bone objects was also carried out at various points by one or another of these projects. Objects from a number of sites were analyzed, including material from Kara Tepe, Tepe Gawra, and Tell Billa in Mesopotamia; Beth Shan in Palestine; Tepe Hissar in Persia; Homolka and Starcevo in Eastern Europe; Catawba in North America; and Piedras Negras, Chipal, and Kixpec in Mesoamerica. Facilities consisted of the Ceramics Technology Laboratory housed in the University Museum, the Chemical Laboratory housed in the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, and the Spectrography Department in the Physics building.

In 1979, some bibliographic material was discovered in the basement of Harrison Auditorium, but was destroyed due to its deteriorated condition. The remaining bibliographic entries have also not been kept, owing to their uselessness. Materials and records loaned to Dr. Fred Matson of Pennsylvania State University in 1949 were returned to the University Museum in 1993.

Other projects, including the Maps-Murals project (number 26506) and Museum Extension Project 26638 are documented so sparsely, that a discussion of the details of their operations is not possible. However, the Photographic Archives has a few extant images of murals being created for project 26506.

The records of the WPA/University Museum projects, as preserved in the Museum Archives, consist of personal and administrative correspondence; project proposals and outlines; project progress reports; financial status reports; personnel and payroll information; and data accumulated through the analyses undertaken by the projects. The bulk of records such as invoices, work schedules, requisitions, and packing slips have not been kept, though samples were retained. WPA forms like these, required for every activity undertaken by any project, did not contribute to the elucidation of these projects' inner workings, though their sheer volume was notable.

Research in the WPA files may be difficult for the simple reason that despite the innumerable forms required by the agency, project numbers and names were often confused. Indeed, research goals overlapped and projects sometimes replaced one another with a change in number while retaining name. Materials and funding were also apparently shared occasionally by projects operating simultaneously.

Administrative Information

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Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- Fairmount Park Commission (Philadelphia, Pa.).
- University of Pennsylvania. Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)

- Alaska
- Guatemala
- Marsa Matruh (Egypt)
- Piedras Negras site (Guatemala)

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Jayne, Horace Howard Furness, 1898-1975
- Johnson, Eldridge Reeves, b. 1867-d. 1945
- Vaillant, George C., b.1901-d.1945

SUBJECT(S)

- Physical anthropology
- WPA Statewide Museum Service

Collection Inventory

ALPHABETICAL CORRESPONDENCE, 1930-1943.

	Box
B general 1930.	1
Barnes, G.W. 1938-1939.	1
Berman, Joseph 1939-1940.	1
C general 1940.	1
Clark, F.W. 1939.	1
Cotton, Harold 1940.	1
Conference on Ceramic Technology in Archaeology.	1
G-H general 1937-1939.	1
J general 1936.	1
Jayne, Horace 1938-1940.	1
Johnson, E.R. Fenimore 1936-1938.	1
K general 1937-1938.	1
M general 1940.	1
Maps/Murals Project.	1

Petrullo, Vincenzo.	1
R general 1938.	1
S general 1938-1940.	1
Schaeffer, Claude 1941.	1
Vaillant, George 1942.	1
W general 1937-1943.	1

ADMINISTRATIVE CORRESPONDENCE, 1936-1943.

	Box
Sample forms and instructions 1936-1942.	1
Proposal and implementation for "project 2232" 1935.	1
Proposal to continue "project 2232" as "project 14753" 1937.	1
Proposal for "project 18369" 1937-1938.	2
Proposal for "project 19421" 1938-1939.	2
Proposal for "project 22831" (?) 1939.	2
Proposal for "project 23676" (?) 1939.	2
Proposal-Letters in support of "project 23676" 1939.	2
Proposal for "project 26638" (?) 1940.	2

Proposal for "project 28331"(?) 1941.	2
Functional organizational charts for "projects 23676,26638 and 28331".	2
Personnel of "project 2232" 1936-1937.	2
Personnel of "project 18369" 1938-1939.	2
Monthly administration personnel on "project 19421" 1939.	2
Personnel of "project 22831" 1939-1940.	2
Supervisory personnel reports for "project 22831" 1939-1940.	2
Form 2264: Project payroll report for "project 14753" 1938.	2
Form 2264: Project payroll report for "project 19421" 1938.	2
Form 401: Notification of field transfer; Form 411: Field transfer 1938-1941.	2
Form 404A: Request for reclassification and attached form 251: Personnel, "project 19421" 1939.	2
Form LR-1: Notice of Complaint; Form 418 Notice of Warning or Suspension 1939-1940.	2
Form 4326: Application for Allowable Time 1939-1941.	2
Form 419: Request for Termination of Employees for various projects 1939-1942.	2
Petty Cash Disbursements: Donald Horton 1938.	2
Weekly Reports for "project 14753" 1937-1938.	2
Weekly Reports for "project 19421" 1938-1939.	2
Weekly Reports for "project 22831" 1938-1939.	2

Weekly Reports for "project 22676" 1939-1941.	2
Weekly Reports for "project 18369" 1938-1939.	2
Weekly Reports for "project 26638" 1940-1941.	3
Weekly Narrative Reports for "project 28331" 1940-1941 (1 of 3).	3
Weekly Narrative Reports for "project 28331" 1940-1941 (2 of 3).	3
Weekly Narrative Reports for "project 28331" 1940-1941 (3 of 3).	3
Semi-monthly personnel reports, various projects 1939-1942.	3
Monthly progress reports for "project 14753" 1935-1938.	3
Monthly progress reports for "project 18369" 1938-1939.	3
Quarterly reports for "project 18369" 1938-1939.	3
Quarterly progress reports and achievement reports for "project 19421" 1939.	3
Quarterly progress reports and final report for "project 22831" 1938-1940.	3
Quarterly progress reports and final report for "project 23676" 1940.	3
Progress reports for "project 2232/19421" 1936-1938.	3
Percentage of physical completion for "project 22831" 1940.	3
Form 100: Physical Progress Reports for "project 23676" 1940-1941.	3
Form 100: Physical Progress Reports for "projects 22831 and 18369" 1939-1940.	3
Form 100: Physical Progress Reports for "project 19421" 1939.	3

ARTIFACT ANALYSIS, 1936-1940.

	Box
Analysis Methodology.	3
Explanations of various forms.	3
Form 01: Laboratory Guide Sheet.	3
Form 02: Shop Record: Thin Sections (1 of 2).	3
Form 02: Shop Record: Thin Sections (2 of 2).	3
Form 03: Shop Record: Refired Sherds.	3
Form 08: Inventory Sheet.	3
Inventory of Thin Sections.	4
Asia Minor-Tarsus 1939.	4
Brazil-Marajo Island-Amazonas-Lago Grande-Santarem 1939.	4
Canada-Ontario and Nova Scotia 1939.	4
Central Europe.	4
Chinese sherds 1939-1940.	4
Colombia-Santa Maria-Firing tests 1937.	4
Colombia-Santa Maria-Mineralogy of sections 1938.	4
Colombia-Santa Maria-Checklists 1939.	4
Colombia-Santa Maria-Classification.	4

Colombia-Santa Maria-Trial groupings on the basis of composition.	4
Colombia-Santa Maria-Reports.	4
Colombia-Santa Maria-color, hardness and surface character.	4
Colombia-Santa Maria-color, Rosiwal analysis.	4
Colombia-Santa Maria-Particle size analysis.	4
Colombia/Venezuela-Goajiro 1939.	4
Cyprus 1940.	4
France-Lake Bourget 1939.	4
France-Neolithic sherds 1939-1940, 1939-1940.	4
France-Tarrin-Neolithic and Eneolithic sherds from Tarrin near Orpierre-Hautes Alps, France 1939.	4
Guatemala-Piedras Negras No. 1, Various analyses 1936-1940.	4
Guatemala-Piedras Negras Primarily lists of their sections 1938-1939.	4
Guatemala-Piedras-Variou analyses 1936-1940.	4
Guatemala-Piedras Negra-Rosiwal and size analyses 1939-1940.	5
Guatemala-Piedras Negra-Technological analysis.	5
Guatemala-Maya Highlands 1939.	5
Ireland-Antrim-White Park Boy-Neolithic sherds 1938-1939.	5
Italy-Lake Varesse 1938-1939.	5

Mediterranean-Greece (Minyan/Aegean area)-Terra Sigillata 1937-1940.	5
Mesopotamia-Tell Billa 1937-1939.	5
Mesopotamia-Tepe Gawra 1938-1939.	5
Mesopotamia-Tepe Halaf 1939.	5
Mexico-Durango-Chemical analysis 1940.	5
Mexico-Durango-Data 1937-1939.	5
Mexico-Sinaloa 1938-1940.	5
Mexico-Yucatan 1939.	5
Palestine-Tell Beit Mirsin 1939.	5
Persia-Lake sherds 1940.	5
Persia-Tepe Hissar-(Various analyses) 1936-1939.	5
Persia-Tepe Hissar-Misc.	5
Persia-Tepe Hissar.	6
Persia-Tepe Hissar-Analysis of beads and metal objects 1936-1940.	6
United States-Alaska-Yukon and Point Barrow-Geographical material and technological studies 1939.	6
United States-Alaska-Yukon and Point Barrow-Color, hardness and thickness.	6
United States-Alaska-Yukon and Point Barrow-Rosiwal analysis.	6
United States-Alaska-Yukon and Point Barrow-Particle size analysis.	6

United States-Alaska-Yukon and Point Barrow-Lists and guide sheets.	6
United States-Alaska-Yukon and Point Barrow-Microscopic data.	6
United States-Alaska-Yukon and Point Barrow-Sampling record and maps.	6
United States-Alaska-Yukon and Point Barrow-Tabulations.	6
United States-Arizona-Little Colorado-San Juan Area-Kayenta District 1939-1940.	6
United States-Colorado-Prehistoric Colorado or Northeast Arizona-San Juan Cultural Area-Little Colorado Cultural Area-for shop lists see Utah.	6
United States-Connecticut-South Windsor-for shop records and lists see Florida 1939.	6
United States-Delaware-Slaughter Creek and Rehoboth 1936-1939.	6
United States-Florida-Reports, correspondences, reference 1936.	6
United States-Florida-Tarpon Springs-Technical analysis 1936-1941.	6
United States-Florida-Matanza Inlet-Alapa River-Rose Bay-Gordon River-Key Marco-Florida Sherds-for various other data see Tarpon Springs 1938.	6
United States-Florida-Tarpon Springs 1938-1940.	6
United States-Florida-Old Enterprise-Buffalo Bluff-Lake Jessup-for various other data see Tarpon Springs 1939.	6
United States-Georgia-Ocmulgee 1938-1940.	6
United States-Georgia-Saint Simon's Island-for lists and laboratory sheets see Evelyn Plantation 1939-1940.	6
United States-Georgia-Evelyn Plantation 1939.	7
United States-Georgia-Irene Mound 1938.	7

United States-Georgia-Form 01: Laboratory Guide sheet.	7
United States-Georgia-Form 06: Particle Size Analysis.	7
United States-Long Island 1939.	7
United States-Louisiana-Houma 1939.	7
United States-Maryland-Sharpeston-Magothy River-Conestoga-Pope's Creek-For list see PA 1939.	7
United States-Michigan-Youngs Site 1939-1940 -Checkup inventory performed 1971.	7
United States-Mississippi-Mound Area 1938-1940.	7
United States-New Mexico-For shop records see Utah 1939.	7
United States-New York 1939.	7
United States-North Carolina-Cherokee 1939.	7
United States-Pennsylvania-Towanda-Peck Site-Pittsburgh-Lock Haven 1939-1940.	7
United States-Pennsylvania-Philadelphia Academy Sections from Gap Nickel Mine area 1940.	7
United States-Modern Zuni (?) Pueblo 1939-1940.	7
United States-South Carolina-Charleston-Port Royal Island-Catawba 1938-1939.	7
United States-Utah-Navajo Mountains-Mesa Surface 1939.	7
United States-Virginia-Chickohominy River 1939.	7
Venezuela-State of Apure-Delta of Apure River-Arauquin 1939.	7
West Indies-First and second groups 1939-1940.	7

Miscellaneous Samples (1 of 3).	7
Miscellaneous Samples (2 of 3).	7
Miscellaneous Samples (3 of 3).	7
Spectrographic Analysis (1 of 2).	7
Spectrographic Analysis (2 of 2).	7
Chemical Analysis #1.	8
Chemical Analysis #2.	8
Chemical Analysis #3.	8
Chemical Analysis #4.	8
Chemical Analysis #5.	8
Chemical Analysis #6.	8
Research Reports (1 of 2).	8
Research Reports (2 of 2).	8
Record of Scientific Supplies.	8
Miscellaneous Notes.	8
Miscellaneous Inventories 1940.	8
Miscellaneous sections/sherds missing 1940.	8
Photos of miscellaneous specimens/thin sections 1936.	8