

Louis Shotridge Collection

0047

**Finding aid prepared by Eleanor M. King, December, 1982 and Alessandro Pezzati,
October, 2007.**

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University of Pennsylvania, Penn Museum Archives

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Penn Museum Archives
Creator	Shotridge, Louis
Title	Louis Shotridge Collection
Call number	0047
Date [inclusive]	1905-1937
Extent	1 linear foot
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The papers of Louis Shotridge are one of the most extensive groups in the Arctic research collections of the University of Pennsylvania Museum Archives. Shotridge, a Tlingit Indian, was intermittently employed by the museum to make ethnographic collections of Northwest Coast materials between 1903 and 1912. The archives has papers concerning his original research, arranged topically, manuscripts for articles published in <i>The Museum Journal</i>, oral histories, Tlingit language notes, and general ethnographic notes on the Tlingit and other Northwest Coast groups.</p>

Cite as:

[Item name]. Box [Box number]. Louis Shotridge collection. Penn Museum Archives. Accessed [Date accessed].

Biography/History

Louis Situwuka Shotridge, a Tlingit indian of noble birth, was born in Klukwan, near Haines, Alaska in 1882. He is known for being an American art collector and ethnological assistant, an expert on the traditions of his people, the Tlingit nation of southeastern Alaska. His Tlingit name was Stoowukháa, which means "Astute One."

Louis attended the Mission School in Haines where he met his future wife, Florence Dennis. Florence was an accomplished weaver of baskets and displayed her technique at the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition in Portland, Oregon in 1905. Louis accompanied his wife to sell artifacts from Klukwan. He sold forty-nine items to George Byron Gordon of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology and was hired by Gordon to collect more objects for the museum.

In 1912, Shotridge visited Philadelphia and met Frank Speck who introduced Shotridge to Canadian anthropologist Edward Sapir. Soon, Shotridge was providing essays, information and objects to Sapir also. A meeting with Franz Boas in 1914 in New York resulted in Shotridge's providing him with recordings of the Tlingit language and musicology. This led to Shotridge holding weekly round-table discussions with Boas and other anthropologists at Columbia University.

Shotridge was employed by the Penn Museum for seventeen years as an assistant curator. He was dismissed in 1932 at the height of the Museum's financial crisis.

Louis Shotridge participated in four expeditions, being co-director of the first with his wife, Florence:
John Wanamaker Expedition I 1915-1919 John Wanamaker Expedition II 1922-1927 Expedition August 1928-May 1929 Expedition 1930-1932

While each expedition included the collection of artifacts the first Wanamaker expedition included trips to Northern Chilkoot and Chilkot regions to record Tlingit songs. During the second Wanamaker trip, Shotridge travelled to photograph abandoned and living Tlingit communities. During the third season Louis was an active member of the Alaska Native Brotherhood and helped organize the Grand Camp in Sitka in 1929. The trip was shortened due to the death of his wife and financial concerns at the museum. He purchased only two objects on this trip, a Kaagwaantaan shark helmet and a wooden tray. Louis returned to install the Museum's new American Wing in May of 1929. The fourth expedition was shortened due to the Depression and the termination of most museum employees including Shotridge. Following his return to Sitka Shotridge made his living from fishing, doing odd jobs and selling the occasional artifact. In 1935, he took a job as a government stream guard. His responsibility was to prevent fishing in closed areas, and it was an unpopular duty among Native fishermen.

In 1937, Shotridge was found on the ground near his cabinet in Redoubt Bay, about 16 miles south of Sitka. He had a broken neck and had apparently lain there for several days before a local schoolteacher found him. He was taken to a hospital in Sitka where he died 10 days later. The coroner's jury concluded that Shotridge had fallen from the roof and ruled it an accident. While this is a generally accepted fact, there were rumors that his death was not accidental in the community.

Scope and Contents

The papers of Louis Shotridge are one of the most extensive groups in the Arctic research collections of the University of Pennsylvania Museum Archives. The Archives has papers concerning his original research, arranged topically, manuscripts for articles published in *The Museum Journal*, oral histories, Tlingit language notes, and general ethnographic notes on the Tlingit and other Northwest Coast groups. Several items in this section are of special interest. A 1919 published map is annotated with Shotridge's itinerary during one of his travels seeking collections and information. Also a folder of original drawings, attributed to Shotridge, that illustrate house plans and artistic motifs. Finally, an indexed ethnographic card file fills one box. This file contains information on many aspects of native life in southeast Alaska, much of it unpublished. Certain titled sections of the file have no cards; otherwise, the file appears to be relatively complete, with only a few cards obviously missing. The only other noticeable gaps in the research material are a few incomplete article manuscripts.

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Penn Museum Archives
Finding aid prepared by Eleanor M. King, December, 1982 and Alessandro Pezzati, October, 2007.

Use Restrictions

Although many items from the archives are in the public domain, copyright may be retained by the authors of items in these papers, or their descendants, as stipulated by United States copyright law. The user is fully responsible for compliance with relevant copyright law.

Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- University of Pennsylvania. Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Correspondence
- Manuscripts for publication
- Maps

- Negatives (photographic)
- Photographic prints
- Photographs

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Gordon, G. B. (George Byron), 1870-1927
- Sapir, Edward, 1889-1939
- Shotridge, Louis
- Speck, Frank G., 1881-1950

SUBJECT(S)

- Anthropological museums and collections
- Ethnology
- Ethnology--Indigenous peoples
- Tlingit art
- Tlingit Indians

Bibliography

- Mason, J. A., "Louis Shotridge" *Expedition*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 11-16
- Shotridge, Florence, "The Life of a Chilkat Indian Girl." *The Museum Journal* 4:3. 1913
- Shotridge, Louis, "War Helmets and Clan Hats of the Tlingit Indians." *The Museum Journal* 10:1-2. 1919.
- Shotridge, Louis, "A Visit to the Tsimshian Indians." *The Museum Journal* 10:1-2,3. 1919.
- Shotridge, Louis, "The Bride of Tongass (A Study of the Tlingit Bridal Ceremony)." *The Museum Journal* 20:2. 1929.
- Shotridge, Louis, "The Kaguanton Shark Helmet." *The Museum Journal* 20:3-4. 1929.
- Shotridge, Louis, "How Ats-ha Followed the Hide of His Comrade to the Land of the Yek (A Tlingit Legend)." *The Museum Journal* 21:3-4. 1930.
- Shotridge, Louis, "Keyt-Gooshe 'Killer Whale's Dorsal Fin' (A Tlingit Dance Baton)." *The Museum Journal* 10:4. 1919.
- Shotridge, Louis, "Ghost of Courageous Adventurer (A Tlingit Legend)." *The Museum Journal* 11:1. 1920.
- Shotridge, Louis, "My Northland Revisited." *The Museum Journal* 8:2. 1917.
- Shotridge, Louis, "Anthropological exploration of Alaska." *Science*, n.s., XLIX: 1273:491. 1919.
- Shotridge, Louis, "Land Otter - Man (A Tlingit Myth)." *The Museum Journal* 13:1. 1922.
- Shotridge, Louis, "The Emblems of the Tlingit Culture." *The Museum Journal* 19:4. 1928.
- Shotridge, Louis, "Tlingit Woman's Root Basket." *The Museum Journal* 12:3. 1921.
- Shotridge, Louis and Florence Shotridge, "Indians of the Northwest." *The Museum Journal* 4:3. 1913.

Wanneh, Gewasa, "Situwaka Chief of the Chilkats" Society of American Indians, *Quarterly Journal*, vol. II, pp. 280-283

Collection Inventory

CORRESPONDENCE, 1905-1937.

Series Description

Correspondence mostly with Museum Director George B. Gordon, but also to Director Horace H. F. Jayne and Jane McHugh, describing progress of fieldwork and collecting. Also included are expense reports and lists of artifacts purchased. Letters from Gordon to Shotridge until October, 1922 are in the Director's Office letterpress copybooks; after that date, carbon copies of Museum letters are included in the Shotridge correspondence. Arranged chronologically.

Related Archival Materials note

See Gordon Letterpress books for correspondence from Gordon to Shotridge.

	Box
Correspondence (1 of 10), 1905-1909.	1
Correspondence (2 of 10), 1911-1917.	1
Correspondence (3 of 10), 1918.	1
Correspondence (4 of 10), 1919-1923.	1
Correspondence (5 of 10), 1924.	1
Correspondence (6 of 10), 1925.	1
Correspondence (7 of 10), 1926-1927.	1
Correspondence (8 of 10), 1928-1929.	1
Correspondence (9 of 10), 1930-1931.	1

Correspondence (10 of 10), 1932-1937.	1
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FINANCIAL RECORDS, 1912-1932.

Scope and Contents note

Cancelled checks and vouchers for fieldwork and collecting expenses. Expense reports are found in the Correspondence Series. Arranged chronologically.

	Box
Canceled Checks and Vouchers.	1

CURATORIAL, 1911-1930.

Scope and Contents note

Letters, memoranda, reports, and collection notes relating to miscellaneous curatorial duties performed by Shotridge in the American Section. Also included is work by Shotridge on Museum exhibitions. Arranged topically.

	Box
Miscellaneous Correspondence.	1
Exhibit Labels.	1
Note on Root Basket.	1
Miscellaneous, including lists of collections.	1
North American Exhibition-1925 Room AA.	2

MANUSCRIPTS, 1913-1933.**Scope and Contents note**

Drafts of articles published by Shotridge in The Museum Journal, recounting Tlingit myths, expedition narratives, and descriptions and interpretations of artifacts. Also includes some unpublished material and public school lectures. Arranged chronologically.

	Box
"Chilkat Dwelling House" and "Smoking or Food Preparing House" 1913.	1
"War Helmets and Clan Hats of the Tlingit Indians" 1919.	1
"The Ghost of Courageous Adventurer" 1920.	1
"Tlingit Woman's Root Basket" 1921.	1
"Land Otter-Man" 1922.	1
"The Emblems of the Tlingit Culture" (Medoff) 1928.	1
"The Bride of Tongass" 1929.	1
"The Kaguanton Shark Helmet" 1929.	1
"How Ats-ha Followed the Hide of His Comrade to the Land of the Yek" [Fragment] 1930.	1
"Vengeance" 1933.	1
"The Vanishing Nobility of Alaska".	1

Public School Lectures— “First White Man”.	2
Public School Lectures -“Lantern Slides — The American Territory of Alaska — Its Peoples and Its History”.	2
Public School Lectures-“Alaska-The Country and Its People”.	2
Public School Lectures-“Moldy Head-Adventure of ‘Alive in Pond’ in the Salmon World”.	2

RESEARCH, 1914-1930.

Scope and Contents note

Includes one notebook of linguistic work prepared by Shotridge for and with Franz Boas, and a box of notes on the ethnography, language, history, genealogy, etc., of the Tlingit. Arranged topically.

	Box
Notebook on Tlingit language and grammar, Shotridge work with Franz Boas; includes Tlingit songs and article for The Museum Journal.	1
Ethnographic notes (oversize from card file).	1
Ethnographic notes-Photocopies from the Alaska State Museum Ethnographic notes-Photocopies from the Alaska State Museum.	1
Ethnographic Notes with subject tabs.	2
Shotridge negative sleeves with identifications, 4x5 (nos. 14704–14950, mostly 14704-14792).	2
Shotridge negative sleeves with identifications, 5x7 (nos. 14744–14754).	2

VISUAL MATERIALS.

Scope and Contents note

Approximately 500 photographs of people and places in Alaska and British Columbia taken by Shotridge in the field, as well as an annotated published map of Southeastern Alaska used by Shotridge, and drawings of houses and decorative motifs made by Shotridge for a Museum Journal article. Maps and drawings stored in oversize flat files, photographic collections stored by type with the negative, lantern slide, or print collections. Two additional drawings and a hand-drawn map are found in the Ethnographic Notes.

	Drawer
Drawings of Tlingit houses and decorative motifs, mostly published in "Indians of the Northwest," The Museum Journal Vol IV No. 3 (Philadelphia: September, 1913). Attributed to Louis Shotridge.	P-36
	Drawer
Chilkat blanket. .	P-36
Artistic motifs and portrait of Tlingit man. .	P-36
Artistic motifs. .	P-36
Fig. 68, Chilkat dwelling house, floor plan. .	P-36
Fig. 69, Chilkat dwelling house, framework. .	P-36
Fig. 70, Dwelling house, rear wall and framework. Fig. 71, Dwelling house, front wall and framework. .	P-36
Fig. 72, Manufacturing of boards and planks. Fig. 73, Cornice. Fig. 74, Making of corner-post. Unpublished figure, Cornice. .	P-36
Fig. 75, Dwelling house, exterior side wall. Fig. 76, Longitudinal section of dwelling house. .	P-36
Fig. 77, Food preparing house, floor plan. .	P-36

Fig. 78, Food preparing house, transverse section showing construction. Fig. 80, Food preparing house, front wall and framework. .	P-36
Fig. 79, Food preparing house, framework. .	P-36
Fig. 81, Food preparing house, longitudinal section. Fig. 82, Food preparing house, exterior side wall. .	P-36
Published map of Southeastern Alaska annotated with Shotridge's itinerary. 8002. Alaska, Dixon Entrance to Cape St. Elias (Washington, DC: U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey).	M-58

PHOTOGRAPHS (INCLUDING PRINTS, NEGATIVES, AND LANTERN SLIDES).

Scope and Contents note

A list of negatives in this collection is available by request.