

Frederica de Laguna Alaska Expedition records

1077

Finding aid prepared by Jody Rodgers.

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University of Pennsylvania, Penn Museum Archives

2/4/2016

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Penn Museum Archives
Creator	de Laguna, Frederica, 1906-2004
Title	Frederica de Laguna Alaska Expedition records
Call number	1077
Date [inclusive]	1930-1963
Extent	0.6 linear foot
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Frederica de Laguna was born in 1906 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the daughter of Theodore and Grace de Laguna, both Professors of Philosophy at Bryn Mawr College. Dr. de Laguna graduated summa cum laude from Bryn Mawr in 1927, winning the prestigious European Fellowship. She spent the following year in Europe topping it off with a trip to Denmark where she met Dr. Therkel Mathiassen. She accompanied him as a volunteer assistant on his expedition to Greenland. de Laguna enrolled at Columbia University where she was a University Fellow in anthropology. She attained her Ph.D. in 1933. She is known for her ground-breaking work with the Athobaskan, Eyak, Chugach and Tlingit people of Alaska. The Frederica de Laguna Alaska expedition records consist of three archival boxes and two card catalogue boxes of material. The records were organized by de Laguna by site and date requiring just minor processing of the sequence within the folders. Most of the collection is correspondence and catalogues.</p>

Biography/History

Frederica de Laguna was born in 1906 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the daughter of Theodore and Grace de Laguna, both Professors of Philosophy at Bryn Mawr College. Her early years were highlighted by accompanying her parent's trips to Europe on two separate sabbatical leaves. A love for learning was fostered by both parents, but it was her father who nurtured her curiosity and first suggested archaeology as a possible profession. Dr. de Laguna graduated summa cum laude from Bryn Mawr in 1927, winning the prestigious European Fellowship. She spent the following year in Europe topping it off with a trip to Denmark where she met Dr. Therkel Mathiassen. She accompanied him as a volunteer assistant on his expedition to Greenland.

Back in the United States, Dr. de Laguna enrolled at Columbia University where she was a University Fellow in Anthropology. She attained her Ph.D. in 1933. That same year she was appointed co-leader with Kaj Birket-Smith on an expedition to Prince William Sound, Alaska co-sponsored by the Penn Museum and the Danish National Museum. This was her first of many trips to Alaska's Eskimo settlements. de Laguna participated or led expeditions in 1935, 1947, and 1949 to conduct the Yukon survey, explore the St. Lawrence River Valley and survey Tlingit archaeology and ethnology. In 1950 and 1952, de Laguna worked in Angoon and Yakutat, returning to Yakutat in 1952 and in 1953 to lead an expedition under the Directorship of Francis A. Riddell. She studied the ethnology of the Atna Indians of the Copper River Valley in the 1950s. She is known for her ground-breaking work with the Athabaskan, Eyak, Chugach and Tlingit people.

de Laguna also worked in the Southwest United States with the Pima Indians of Arizona for the U. S. Soil Conservatory Service and served as Director for a summer school program in archaeology in conjunction with the University of Arizona at Flagstaff. She returned to the St. Lawrence River Valley in 1947 to collaborate with Douglas Leechman on a survey of the region.

Frederica de Laguna was a member of many scholarly organizations, serving as President of the Philadelphia Anthropology Society in 1939-1940 and the American Anthropology Association in 1966-1967. Other organizational activities included membership as a Fellow in the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Arctic Institute of North America.

de Laguna published extensively in both books and journals. With Kaj Birket-Smith of the Danish National Museum she wrote *The Eyak Indians of the Copper River Delta, Alaska*. Her work with other tribes yielded *Under Mount Elias: the History and Culture of the Yakutat Tlingit*, and *Chugach Prehistory: the Archaeology of Prince William Sound, Alaska*.

De Laguna had success as a writer of popular books. Two mysteries were published; *The Arrow Points to Murder* and *Fog On the Mountain* along with a children's book and a memoir of her trip to Greenland. After her long and varied career, Frederica de Laguna passed away in her sleep a few days after her 98th birthday in October 2004.

Scope and Contents

Frederica de Laguna was born in 1906 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the daughter of Theodore and Grace de Laguna, both Professors of Philosophy at Bryn Mawr College.

Dr. de Laguna graduated summa cum laude from Bryn Mawr in 1927, winning the prestigious European Fellowship. She spent the following year in Europe topping it off with a trip to Denmark where she met Dr. Therkel Mathiassen. She accompanied him as a volunteer assistant on his expedition to Greenland. Back in the United States, Dr. de Laguna enrolled at Columbia University where she was a University Fellow in anthropology. She attained her Ph.D. in 1933. That same year she was appointed co-leader with Kaj Birket-Smith on an expedition to Prince William Sound, Alaska co-sponsored by the Penn Museum and the Danish National Museum. This was de Laguna's first of many trips to Alaska's Eskimo settlements. She is known for her ground-breaking work with the Athobaskan, Eyak, Chugach and Tlingit people.

The Frederica de Laguna Alaska expedition records consist of three archival boxes and two card catalogue boxes of material. The records were organized by site and date requiring just minor processing of sequence within the folders. Most of the material involves correspondence related to each site and letters about joint publication with Kaj Birkett-Smith of the Danish National Museum. The original order of the catalogue cards was maintained by the use of plain white paper between the original packets of cards. This was done as a part of the 1982 initial processing.

Financial records are minimal and represent deLaguna's early expedition from 1931 to 1935.

Specimens and objects from her expeditions are listed in card and catalogue formats. They are organized by location; Kanai Peninsula, Knight Island, Yakutat Bay. A large group of Old Town cards were recently discovered and merged with similar material. The object list from the above expedition (1931-1933) designates the objects sent to the Danish Museum with the letters "B.S."

The photographs are housed in an archival box amid the photo collection, North America section(box NA4).

Administrative Information

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Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Additional collections of Frederica de Laguna materials are held by the National Anthropological Archives at the Smithsonian Institution, Bryn Mawr College, and the American Philosophical Society in

Philadelphia.

Controlled Access Headings

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Card catalogs

GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)

- Alaska

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- de Laguna, Frederica, 1906-2004
- Mathiassen, Therkel, 1892-1967
- Oetteking, Bruno, 1871-1960
- Rainey, Froelich, Director of the University Museum
- Riddell, F.A.
- Smith-Birket, Kaj, 1893-1977

SUBJECT(S)

- Ethnology--Indigenous peoples
- Tlingit Indians

Collection Inventory

CORRESPONDENCE.

	Box
Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound Survey Apr.-Oct. 1930.	1
Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound Survey Nov.-Dec. 1930.	1
Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound Expedition Jan. 1931-Dec. 1932.	1
Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound Expedition Jan.-Sept. 1933.	1
Expedition to the Lower Yukon Valley Feb. 1934-Mar.1937.	1
Joint Publication with Birket-Smith, Eyak Indians Oct.1937-Nov. 1938.	1
Re: Permit Application, Permit to Dig, Yakutat Bay 1940.	1
June 1942-March 1947.	1
Expedition to Northern Tlingit Area, Angoon, Klucwan, Yukatat 1948-1963.	1

FINANCIAL.

	Box
Expenses, Payments 1931-1935.	1

CATALOGUES.

	Box
Kanai Peninsula Division lists 1933.	1
Kanai Peninsula Specimens 1933.	2
Knight Island Faunal Remains 1952 (1 of 5).	2
Knight Island Faunal Remains 1952 (2 of 5).	2
Knight Island Faunal Remains 1952 (3 of 5).	2
Knight Island Faunal Remains 1952 (4 of 5).	2
Knight Island Faunal Remains 1952 (5 of 5).	2
Old-Town and Old River sites-Loan objects.	2
Prince William Sound-Danish Museum Catalogue.	2
Yakutat Bay 1949-1953 (1 of 2).	2
Yakutat Bay 1949-1953 (2 of 2).	2
Field Catalogue cards.	3,4
	Box
Old Town, Yakutat Bay 1952, 1953.	3, 4
Prince William Sound, Kanai (ethnology) 1952, 1953.	4
Prince William Sound, Kanai (Daxatkanada) 1949 -Preliminary.	4

REPORTS.

	Box
Report on Archaeological Investigations in the Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet Districts, 1930 (1 of 2).	2
Report on Archaeological Investigations in the Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet Districts, 1930 (2 of 2).	2
An Anthropological Survey of the Northern Tlingit, 1949.	2
Archaeological Explorations in the Angoon Area, Southeast Alaska, 1950.	2

PHOTOGRAPHS.

	Box
Cook Inlet Plates 1-10.	NA 4
Cook Inlet Plates 11-20.	NA 4
Cook Inlet Plates 21-30.	NA 4
Cook Inlet Plates 31-40.	NA 4
Cook Inlet Plates 41-50.	NA 4
Cook Inlet Plates 51-60.	NA 4
Cook Inlet Plates 61-66.	NA 4
Cook Inlet Plates 67-72.	NA 4

Yukatat Bay Plates 4-17.

NA 4

Cape Nome.

NA 4

The Prehistory of Northern North America.

NA 4

Unidentified.

NA 4