

# **Dorothy M. Spencer papers**

**Ms. Coll. 1002**

**Finding aid prepared by Kevin Stuart Lee.**

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Last updated on January 31, 2018.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2014 June

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## Table of Contents

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Summary Information.....	3
Biography/History.....	4
Scope and Contents.....	4
Administrative Information.....	5
Controlled Access Headings.....	5
Collection Inventory.....	7
I. Anthropological manuscripts.....	7
II. Meeting notes.....	11
III. Academic pamphlets.....	11
IV. Class materials.....	11
V. Multimedia materials and index cards.....	12

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
<b>Creator</b>	Spencer, Dorothy M. (Dorothy Mary), 1907-
<b>Title</b>	Dorothy M. Spencer papers
<b>Call number</b>	Ms. Coll. 1002
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	1939-1952
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1939-1973
<b>Extent</b>	3.5 linear feet (7 boxes)
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	Dorothy M. Spencer (born 1907) was an American anthropologist who was a participant observer among the Mundari-speaking Adivasi tribespeople of India during four periods between 1939 and 1952. This collection features her notes from these expeditions on individual villagers, their customs, daily lives, and town meetings. It also contains several academic papers, materials from two courses taught by Spencer in the Department of South Asia Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, and several vinyl records and two 8mm films.

**Cite as:**

Dorothy M. Spencer collection, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts,

University of Pennsylvania

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## Biography/History

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Dorothy Mary Spencer, born 1907 in Chester, Pennsylvania, was an American anthropologist who performed research on native societies of India and the South Pacific. She received her A.B. in 1930 from the University of Wisconsin. She earned her master's degree at the University of Pennsylvania in 1933, with a thesis entitled, "The Dual Organization and Regulation of Marriage in Melanesia." She remained in the department and earned her doctorate in 1937. After a short lectureship in anthropology at Penn, she began ethnographic field research on the Chota Nagpur plateau in the Jharkand state of northeastern India. She lived there as a participant observer among the Munda, a tribe of India's Adivasi aborigines, from 1939 to 1942. She returned in 1946 to continue her research and remained for two years, followed by brief returns in 1951 and 1952. In 1958 she began a lectureship in the Department of South Asia Studies, a position which she held through the 1970s. During her career, she published a number of journal articles and monographs on Indian fiction and traditional medicine and religion in Fiji.

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## Scope and Contents

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This collection consists of documentation related to Spencer's work in India between 1939 and 1952 among the Munda of Jharkand. The materials are divided into five series: Anthropological manuscripts, Meeting notes, Academic pamphlets, Class materials, and Multimedia materials and index cards. The series Anthropological manuscripts is composed almost entirely of Spencer's handwritten field notes. They are organized into several subseries. Autobiographies contains Spencer's transcriptions of the life stories of several Mundari villagers. Economic and social arrangements comprises handwritten notes on topics such as caste organization, rites of passage, traders, measures, emotions and dreams, and customs of ownership, borrowing, and exchange, among others. Family features Spencer's notes on marriages and children. Field notes consists of Spencer's jottings on various aspects of tribal life and observations of several individual villagers. Folklore and spiritualism covers tales, songs, animals, witchcraft and a paper on the functions of a shaman. Rorshach test results and interviews includes pencil reproductions of ink blots and transcripts from ink blot tests and other interviews. Meeting notes consist of Spencer's handwritten records of village assemblies convened to mete out punishments for various transgressions, among other disturbances. Academic pamphlets is composed of scholarly papers, including four written and autographed to Spencer by Indian anthropologist Surajit Chandra Sinha. Class materials features student exams, papers, bibliographies, and grade and blank exam sheets. One file containing student grades is restricted from use. Multimedia materials and index cards comprises six recordings on vinyl, two 8mm films entitled "Fiji," and two boxes of index cards featuring

information on and terms related to villagers Spencer had studied intensively.

The collection features a very thorough set of notes on Munda villagers and their practices. It should accordingly be of great interest to anthropologists, ethnographers, and ethnologists, particularly those specializing in Indic peoples and Adivasi tribes. With the exception of the index cards and a few of the Rorshach test results and other papers, all of Spencer's notes are handwritten and looseleaf.

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## **Administrative Information**

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University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

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### **Access Restrictions**

The bulk of the this collection is open for research use. However, folder 6 in box 6 is restricted from use until 2048 and access to original audio/visual materials and computer files is restricted. The Kislak Center will provide access to the information on these materials from duplicate master files. If the original does not already have a copy, it will be sent to an outside vendor for copying. Patrons are financially responsible for the cost. The turnaround time from request to delivery of digital items is about two weeks for up to five items and three to seven weeks for more than five items. Please contact Reprographic Services (reprogr@upenn.edu) for cost estimates and ordering. Once digital items are received, researchers will have access to the files on a dedicated computer in the Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center. Researchers should be aware of specifics of copyright law and act accordingly.

### **Use Restrictions**

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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**FORM/GENRE(S)**

- Articles
- Audiovisual materials
- Autobiographies
- Case files
- Interviews

**GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)**

- Chota Nagpur (India)

**SUBJECT(S)**

- Anthropology
- Munda (Indic people)
- Women anthropologists

## Collection Inventory

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### I. ANTHROPOLOGICAL MANUSCRIPTS, 1939-1952.

#### AUTOBIOGRAPHIES.

	Box	Folder
Laro autobiography, 1939-1952.	1	1-2
Mora, Sanika, Ganju, 1939-1952.	1	3
Women's autobiographies, 1939-1952.	1	4

#### ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ARRANGEMENTS.

	Box	Folder
Caste (Marangdi and Madukamdi), 1939-1952.	1	5
Cultivation: Wild food nutrition, 1939-1952.	1	6
Disease, 1939-1952.	1	7
Dreams, 1939-1952.	1	8
"Economic Magic" (Marangdi and Madukamdi), 1939-1952.	1	9
Economics (Madukamdi), 1939-1952.	1	10
Economics: Borrowing, exchange, sale (Madukamdi), 1939-1952.	2	1

Economics: Ownership, utilization of land, 1939-1952.	2	2
Economics: Stealing, Madait, Saja (Madukamdi), 1939-1952.	2	3
Emotions, 1939-1952.	2	4
Land tenure: Inheritance (Madukamdi), 1939-1952.	2	5
Laro's property (Marangdi), 1939-1952.	2	6
Markets: Traders, 1939-1952.	2	7
Measures, time, counting (Marangdi and Madukamdi), 1939-1952.	2	8
Rites of passage, 1939-1952.	2	9
Sandigao: Police reports, crimes, 1939-1952.	2	10
Servants, 1939-1952.	2	11
Social organization, 1939-1952.	2	12
Work (Narayob), 1939-1952.	2	13

**FAMILY.**

	Box	Folder
Children's games, 1939-1952.	2	14
Children's knowledge: Dreams, 1939-1952.	2	15
Kunjila genealogies, 1939-1952.	2	16
Marriage ceremonies, 1939-1952.	2	17



Marriages, funerals, 1939-1952.	2	18
Relationships within tribe, genealogies, 1939-1952.	2	19
Women and children: Baby talk, 1939-1952.	2	20

**FIELD NOTES.**

	Box	Folder
Agom, Nam, Bonga, 1939-1952.	3	1
Animals, Marangdi genealogy, food, etc., 1939-1952.	3	2
Bau, 1939-1952.	3	3
Economics, plant disease, magic, fishing, 1939-1952.	3	4
Haga Khut Bonga, Duar Hari, Maray Bonga, Saygi Hanj Kan, 1939-1952.	3	5
Oal, Soso, Pati, Bunafo, 1939-1952.	3	6
Sugumdas notes, 1939-1952.	3	7
Sukta notes, 1939-1952.	3	8-9
Sumarsing and Munda notes, 1939-1952.	3	10
Tokatn: Meetings, genealogy, autobiography, 1939-1952.	3	11
Tribal customs, 1939-1952.	3	12
Tribal notes, 1939-1952.	4	1-2
Tribes, 1939-1952.	4	3

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Miscellaneous, 1939-1952.	4	4
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**FOLKLORE AND SPIRITUALISM.**

	Box	Folder
Animals (Marangdi), diseases, treatment, 1939-1952.	4	5
Poems and stories, transcripts, 1939-1952.	4	6
Sacrifices (Madukamdi), 1939-1952.	4	7
Sandigao 1952: Were-tigers, burial rites, 1939-1952.	4	8
"The Shaman," paper, 1939-1952.	4	9
Songs, riddles, stories, 1939-1952.	4	10
Tales: Duray Kahrani, 1939-1952.	5	1
Witchcraft (Madukamdi), 1939-1952.	5	2
Witchcraft (Marangdi), 1939-1952.	5	3

**RORSHACH TEST RESULTS AND INTERVIEWS.**

	Box	Folder
Interviews with villagers "Soma", 1939-1952.	5	4
Marangdi Rorshach tests, 1939-1952.	5	5
Psychological tests on Calcutta Indians, 1939-1952.	5	6
Rorshach journal articles, 1939-1952.	5	7

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Rorshach test results: Inspection bungalow, 1939-1952.	5	8
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Rorshach tests: Tribal, 1939-1952.	5	9
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Rorshach tests: Tribal women, 1939-1952.	5	10
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## **II. MEETING NOTES.**

	Box	Folder
Meeting notes I, 1939-1952.	6	1
Meeting notes II, 1939-1952.	6	2

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## **III. ACADEMIC PAMPHLETS.**

	Box	Folder
Linguistic pamphlets, 1939-1952.	6	3
Surajit Sinha academic pamphlets (4), 1939-1952.	6	4

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## **IV. CLASS MATERIALS.**

	Box	Folder
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Richard la Riviere: Exams from "Village Hinduism", 1973.	6	5
South Asia Studies 531: Course data [RESTRICTED], 1970-1973.	6	6

#### V. MULTIMEDIA MATERIALS AND INDEX CARDS.

	Box	Item
Index cards: Laro, Photograph of a man (Laro?) by a river, miscellaneous cards, 1939-1952.	7	1
Index cards: Sugumdas, Sumarsing, Sukta, Mora, 1939-1952.	7	2
Fiji films [RESTRICTED], 1939-1952.	7	3-4
Department of Anthropology, Government of India "Abor Music (1)" [RESTRICTED], 1939-1952.	7	5
Department of Anthropology, Government of India "Abor Song (4)" [RESTRICTED], 1939-1952.	7	6
Department of Anthropology, Government of India record "Abor Song (6)" [RESTRICTED], 1939-1952.	7	7
Department of Anthropology, Government of India record "Abor Speech" [RESTRICTED], 1939-1952.	7	8
Department of Anthropology, Government of India record "Andamanese Song" [RESTRICTED], 1939-1952.	7	9
Department of Anthropology, Government of India record "Angaminaga Song (2)" [RESTRICTED], 1939-1952.	7	10