

Carleton Coon Papers

1141

Finding aid prepared by M. Malta.

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University of Pennsylvania, Penn Museum Archives

1/14/2015

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Penn Museum Archives
Creator	Coon, Carleton S., b. 1904-d. 1981
Title	Carleton Coon Papers
Call number	1141
Date [inclusive]	1949-1967
Extent	1.25 linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Carleton Stevens Coon was born on June 23, 1904, in Wakefield, Massachusetts. He graduated from the Phillips Academy in 1921, and then went on to graduate Magna Cum Laude from Harvard University in 1925. Coon then received both his Masters degree and Doctorate degree from Harvard University in 1928. Coon's field work was extensive, including the excavations of five cave sites in Iran (1949-1955), Afghanistan (1954), Syria and Central Africa (1955), and Chad and Libya (1966-1967). Contained in this collection are mostly records that pertain to Coon's survey and archaeological excavations during 1949-1955 of five cave sites in Iran: Bisitun in Luristan; Tamtama in Azerbaijan; the Khunik rock shelter in Southern Khorassan; and Belt and Hotu in Gorgan.</p>

Biography/History

Carleton Stevens Coon was born on June 23, 1904, in Wakefield, Massachusetts. He graduated from the Phillips Academy in 1921, and then went on to graduate Magna Cum Laude from Harvard University in 1925. Coon then received both his Masters degree and Doctorate degree from Harvard University in 1928. He stayed on at Harvard, working his way from instructor to full professor in Anthropology from 1934-1948. Coon took a leave of absence from 1942-1945, during which time he served in the State Special Assistant Department from 1942-43 and then as Major in the United States Army from 1943-45. In 1945, he was awarded the Legion of Merit. Coon was appointed curator of Ethnology at the University Museum and Professor of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania in 1948. In 1962, he retired as Curator of Ethnology and Professor of Anthropology and in 1963 became Research Curator in the General Anthropology section, where he remained active until 1977. From 1950 to 1966, he appeared as a regular panel member on the University of Pennsylvania Museum's television program, "What in the World?," in which he and the other panelists were challenged to correctly identify artifacts. Often he would perform such a feat blindfolded and characteristically accompanied by an irreverent remark. His field work was extensive, including the excavations of five cave sites in Iran (1949-1955), Afghanistan (1954), Syria and Central Africa (1955), and Chad and Libya (1966-1967). Coon was one of the last of the "general anthropologists;" his interests spanned each of the sub-disciplines of anthropology, including archaeology, physical anthropology, and cultural anthropology. His books include *Caravan* (1951), *The Story of Man* (1954), *The Seven Caves* (1957), *The Origin of Races* (1962), *The Hunting Peoples* (1971), and *A North Africa Story* (1980), as well as his autobiography, *Adventures and Discoveries* (1981). Coon also installed an exhibit entitled, "The Story of Man," which chronicled the stages of human evolution, both physical and cultural. Carleton S. Coon died on June 3, 1981 in Gloucester, Massachusetts at the age of 76.

Scope and Contents

Contained in this collection are mostly records that pertain to Coon's survey and archaeological excavations during 1949-1955 of five cave sites in Iran: Bisitun in Luristan; Tamtama in Azerbaijan; the Khunik rock shelter in Southern Khorassan; and Belt and Hotu in Gorgan. The last two sites are important because they document Late Paleolithic habitation for Iran, an identification which was supported by the then new technique of radio-carbon dating. The period of habitation for these sites ranges from the Late Paleolithic/Epipaleolithic through the Neolithic. Original field notebooks, field notes, drawings, and correspondence are available for these sites. Also included in this collection are original field notes and correspondence relating to his excavation of the rock shelter Kara Kamar and the cave Kok Jar in Afghanistan in 1954, as well as his excavation of two caves northwest of Palmyra in Syria, Taniat El Beidha and Jerf 'Ajla (the Cave of the Heifer) in 1955. Extremely scant records pertaining to expeditions (fully realized or only proposed) in Bahrain, Libya, South Africa, and Yemen are also present in the collection.

Papers regarding his "Story of Man" (also called "Hall of Man") exhibit are included as well. These include drafts of label copy, drawings, and plans of the exhibit. Other records relating to Coon's work done prior to and after these projects are most probably located at the Smithsonian Institution where most of the Coon papers were donated. Additional Coon papers may be found in Expedition Records—Nippur, Iraq (1949–1952) and Administrative Records—African Section.

Administrative Information

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Controlled Access Headings

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Negatives (photographic)
- Photographs

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Coon, Carleton S., b. 1904-d. 1981

SUBJECT(S)

- Anthropology
 - Antiquities
 - Iran--Antiquities
 - Radiocarbon dating
-

Selected Bibliography

1950 Anthropological Possibilities in Iran (in *Iran and the U.S.A.*, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 48-51, Tehran) 1951 Cave Explorations in Iran 1949 (Museum Monographs, The University Museum, Philadelphia) Caravan (Henry Holt and Co., New York, NY) 1952 Excavations in Hotu Cave, Iran, 1951, A Preliminary Report (Proc. of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 96, No. 3, pp. 231-249. Philadelphia, PA) The Excavations at Hotu Cave (Transactions of the NY Academy of Sciences, Ser. II, Vol. 14, No. 4, Feb. 1952, pp. 179-180. New York, NY) The Impact of the West on Middle Eastern Social Institutions (Proc. of the Academy of Political Science, Vol. 24, No. 4, pp. 443-466. New York, NY) 1953 Our Mediterranean Heritage—Islamic Tradition (Saturday Review, Vol. 36, October, pp. 18-19) “Social Evolution in the Middle East,” for Evolution in the Middle East, a symposium. Middle East Institute. Washington, D.C. 1954 The Story of Man (Alfred A. Knopf and Co., New York) 1955 The Nomads (in “Social Forces in the Middle East,” edited by Sidney Fisher, Cornell University Press, Chap. 2, pp. 23-42) “Radio-Carbon Dates for Kara Kamar, Afghanistan” (University of Pennsylvania II with Elizabeth K. Ralph, Science, Nov. 11, 1955, Vol. 122, pp. 921-922) 1956 “The Desert and the Land” (in *Mid-East: World Center*, edited by Nanda Anshen, Science and Culture Series, Vol. VII, Harper and Bros., pp. 76-89) *Antrubulujjiyya li’l-Arab* (Anthropology for Arabs) (in *al-thakafat al-islamiyyat wa al-Hayat al-Mu asirat*, Franklin Publication, NY and Cairo, pp. 289-301) 1957 *The Seven Caves: Archaeological Explorations in the Middle East* (Knopf, NY) 1981 *Adventures and Discoveries: The Autobiography of Carleton S. Coon* (Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey)

Collection Inventory

IRAN 1948-1955.

	Box
Correspondence 1949-1951.	1
Correspondence 1951-1958.	1
Financial Records.	1
Bisitun-Field notes.	1
Bisitun-Miscellaneous notes.	1
Bisitun(?) project logistics.	1
Bisitun-Stone (1 of 2).	1
Bisitun-Stone (2 of 2).	1
Bisitun-Butt thickness.	1
Bisitun-Bone-Flint comparisons.	1
Bisitun-Pottery.	1
Bisitun-Plans and sections.	1
Bisitun-Stone catalogue.	1
Bisitun-Pottery catalogue.	1

Bisitun-Stone typed catalogue.	1
Bisitun-Pottery typed catalogue.	1
Belt-Field notes.	1
Belt-Miscellaneous notes.	1
Belt-Stone.	1
Belt-Bone-Pottery comparisons.	1
Belt-Stone catalogue.	1
Belt-Pottery catalogue.	1
Belt-Pottery typed catalogue.	1
Khunik and Tamtama-Miscellaneous notes.	1
Khunik-Stone catalogue.	1
Khunik-Stone typed catalogue.	1
Tamtama-Stone catalogue.	1
Hotu-Field notes.	2
Hotu-Miscellaneous notes.	2
Hotu-Discussion of Neolithic cultural material.	2
Hotu-Stone.	2
Hotu-Pottery.	2
Hotu-Bones.	2

Hotu-Loose pig teeth.	2
Hotu-Bones, graphs and tables.	2
Hotu-Worked Bone.	2
Hotu and Belt comparisons.	2
Hotu-Special studies.	2
Hotu and Belt Soil samples.	2
Various sites-Bones.	2
Various sites-Tabulated percentages of bones exhibiting tool markings or other evidence of utilization by man.	2
Various sites-Comparative pottery notes.	2
Various sites-Maps and drawings.	2
Various sites-Obsolete quantitative.	2
Various sites-Specialists.	2
Various sites-Carbon 14 studies.	2
Various sites-Miscellaneous and unidentified.	2
Other sites-Notes.	2
Catalogues-code explanations.	2
Catalogues-surface material 1949.	2
Catalogues-Negatives.	2

Catalogues-Miscellaneous.	2
Cave Explorations in Iran 1949.	2
The Horse Hunters' Cave at Bisitun.	2
Excavations at Hotu cave 1951-A Preliminary Report.	2
The 1951 Season's work at Turujan:A Preliminary Report.	2
Reports by J. Lawrence Angel.	2
Reports by Louis Dupree.	2
Reports on Bisitun by H.L. Movius.	2
Provisional dating of human skulls from Hotu Cave, Iran by Kenneth P. Oakley.	2
Miscellaneous Articles.	2
Bibliographic notes.	2

OTHER EXPEDITIONS 1952-1967.

	Box
Bahrain 1952.	3
Yemen Correspondence 1954.	3
Afghanistan-Kok Jar and Kara Kamar Field notebook.	3
Afghanistan-Excavation of the Kara Kamar Rock Shelter: A Preliminary Report.	3

Afghanistan-Radio Carbon dates for Kara Kumar.	3
Syria-Correspondence 1953-1959.	3
Syria-Project logistics.	3
Syria-Field notes.	3
Syria-Field notebook.	3
Syria-Artifact list.	3
Taniat El Beidha and Jerf'Ajla-Field notebook.	3
Taniat El Beidha and Jerf'Ajla-Field notes.	3
Syria-Bones.	3
Syria and Jordan-Report 1954.	3
South Africa 1955.	3
Libya 1966-1967.	3

"THE STORY OF MAN" EXHIBITION 1950-1953.

	Box
Correspondence 1950.	3
Plans and Drawings.	3
Outline.	3

Typed Outline (1 of 2).	3
Typed Outline (2 of 2).	3
Typed Outline and Notes.	3
Typed Draft of Booklet.	3
The Five Gifts of Man.	3
Hunting, Agriculture.	3
Environmental Adaptations.	3
Energy Data.	3
List of Photos for Exhibit.	3
Photographs-Explanations.	3
Lettering and Labels.	3
Miscellaneous.	3