Finding aid prepared by Holly Rose Larson
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2012 August 31
Title: William E. Winter Maya Research Papers
Identifier/Call Number: MS.226
Contributing Institution: Autry National Center, Braun Research Library
Language of Material: English
Storage Unit: 1-3
Physical Description: 2.25 Linear feet(3 boxes)
Date (inclusive): 1935-circa 1961
Abstract: William Ernst Winter (1899-1966) was a San Jose businessman with a voracious interest in Maya culture and the Mayan calendar. Winter studied Maya archaeology from at least 1932 until 1961, and created an entire library of hand-drawn glyphs. This collection from 1935 until about 1961 contains all of Winter's research on Maya culture and archaeology, and includes notecards and paper slips with hand-drawn symbols in black and colored pencils, dictionary notes, calendrical and planetary calculations, and newspaper clippings.
creator: Thompson, J. Eric S. (John Eric Sidney), 1898-1975
creator: Winter, William, 1899-1966
Processing history
Physical processing completed by Anna Liza Posas, 2011. Finding aid completed by Holly Rose Larson, NHPRC Processing Archivist, 2012 August 31, made possible through grant funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commissions (NHPRC).
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Access
Collection is open for research. Appointments to view materials are required. To make an appointment please visit http://theautry.org/research/research-rules-and-application or contact library staff at room@theautry.org.
Preferred citation
William E. Winter Maya Research Papers, 1935-circa 1961, Autry National Center, Los Angeles; MS.226; [folder number] [folder title] [date].
Acquisition
Donation from Mrs. Katherine Winter, 1967 November 18.
Scope and Contents
This collection contains the research material and notes made by William E. Winter relating to Mayan hieroglyphs and the Mayan calendar. Materials include notecards and paper slips with hand-drawn symbols in black and colored pencils, dictionary notes, calendrical and planetary calculations, newspaper clippings, and one piece of correspondence from Eric Thompson from 1959. Some files and binders are named Archaeology, Maya Dictionary, and Mayan Archaeology. The glyphs drawn on index cards are in the categories Affixes, Heads, Main Signs, and Whole Glyphs. The earliest dated object is a newspaper clipping from 1935, but majority of the collection is undated.
Biographical Note
William Ernst Winter was born 1899 December 17 in Blue Rapids, Kansas. After high school, Winter attended United States Military Academy at West Point, followed by a year as a U. S. Army Second Lieutenant of Infantry at Camp Meade, Maryland. Winter resigned from the military in January 1924, moved to Wyoming, and then settled in Northern California by the end of the year. Winter attended Stanford University from 1925-1926 as a journalism student, then pursued work as a statistician in the Bay Area. Winter married Katherine Mary Steiner in 1932, and the two lived in San Jose until about 1961. Winter passed away in Palm Springs in October of 1966.
Although Winter was not an archaeology student, he always had a keen interest in history. Winter co-authored two historical review books in 1927 for the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Co., where he was a statistician and rate engineer. Winter’s interest in Maya glyphs and culture started at least in 1932, but possibly earlier. He amassed a collection of twenty books on Maya archaeology, which were also donated to the Braun Research Library in 1967. Winter corresponded with English archeologist of Mesoamerica, Eric Thompson, who was working at the Carnegie Institution in Washington, D. C. at the time. Winter’s book collection and meticulously-executed notes were frequently used and given special consideration by scholars visiting the Southwest Museum’s Braun Research Library.
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Archaeology
Calendar -- Mathematics
Clippings
Drawings
Encyclopedias and dictionaries, Mayan
Maya calendar
Mayan languages -- Writing
Mayas -- Social life and customs
Mesoamerica