Earle Forrest Photographs of Hopi Indians: Finding Aid

Finding aid prepared by Michelle Sanchez and updated by Diann Benti.
The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
Photo Archives
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Overview of the Collection
Title: Earle Forrest Photographs of Hopi Indians
Dates (inclusive): 1906-1908
Collection Number: photCL 126
Creator: Forrest, Earle R. (Earle Robert), 1883-1969
Extent: 77 prints and 1 copy negative in 1 box; prints 9 x 14.5 cm. (3.5 x 6 in.)
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Abstract: A collection of 77 photographs by Earle Robert Forrest (1883-1969) documenting the dances and rituals of Hopi Native Americans in the villages of Oraibi and Mishongnovi, Arizona, in 1906-1908. The images primarily depict the Snake Race, Snake Dance, and Blue Flute Dance ceremonies, but there are also candid views of people in their everyday lives, as well as sacred places and objects. The prints, made in the early 1960s, are accompanied by extensive typed captions by Forrest.

Language: English.

Access
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Earle Forrest Photographs of Hopi Indians, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance

Biographical Note
Earle Robert Forrest (1883-1969) was born on June 20, 1883, in Washington, Pennsylvania. After graduating from high school, he took three years off from studying and spent some of that time at his uncle’s farm in Missouri; his encounter with cowboys there instilled in Forrest a desire to travel to the western United States. From 1902 to 1907, Forrest spent his summers and autumns working on various cow camps and ranches throughout the western United States, including Montana, California, and Arizona. In 1906, he had the opportunity to witness the Hopi Snake Dance at Oraibi, Arizona, which he photographed. In the summer of 1907, while working in Flagstaff, Forrest was told by his manager to take the artist Louis Akin to the Hopi Snake Dance at Mishongnovi. The two men did go to the Snake Dance and also attended a Flute Ceremony at Oraibi; during these travels, Forrest took hundreds of pictures of the Hopi people, their villages, and their rain dance ceremonies.

Forrest broke away from ranch work in 1914, when he took a temporary job with the newspaper the Washington Record. When the paper folded six years later, Forrest moved on to work for the Washington Reporter, where he specialized in writing daily columns of historical topics until he retired in 1960. Forrest became a well-known contributor to travel and outdoor-life magazines, as well as a writer of local Pennsylvania history. Forrest passed away at the age of 86 on August 25, 1969, in Washington, Pennsylvania.

Scope and Content of Collection
This collection of 77 photographs by Earle Robert Forrest documents Hopi Native Americans in the villages of Oraibi and Mishongnovi, Arizona, in 1906-1908. The prints, made in the early 1960s, are accompanied by extensive descriptive typed captions by Forrest on the backs. Images depict Hopi natives and their families; the Hopi villages of Oraibi and Mishongnovi; the Snake Dance; the Antelope Dance; the Blue Flute Ceremony; the race before the Snake Dance; initiation ceremonies into the Snake Society; kivas; the altar of the Blue Flute Society; preparations for the Blue Flute Ceremony; and crypts (in which smallpox victims were burned) being used as a storage area. There are also photographs of Forrest.
traveling through Arizona and American painter Louis Akin observing the Snake Dance ceremony.

Two photographs from 1960, a photograph of an amphitheater in Wupatki National Monument and a photograph of a stone serpent head at a temple of Quetzalcoatl in San Juan Teotihuacán, Mexico, are included. It appears from the photo captions that Forrest placed these photos in the collection to help explain the origins of the Hopi Snake Dance.

Item titles transcribed in an abridged form from the photograph captions.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library's Online Catalog.

Hopi Indians -- Photographs.
Kivas -- Photographs.
Rites and ceremonies -- Arizona -- Hopi Indian Reservation -- Photographs.
Snake dance -- Photographs.
Indians of North America -- Arizona -- Photographs.
Akin, Louis, 1868-1913 -- Photographs.
Oraibi (Ariz.) -- Photographs.
Second Mesa (Ariz. : Mesa) -- Photographs.
Photographs.
Negatives.

Box 1

Photographs

Box 1, Item 1
Snake racers coming up the trail from the desert to the rim of the Third Mesa, during the Snake Race in the early morning of the Snake Dance.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, September 5, 1906.

Box 1, Item 2
Fight between the boys and girls for the green cornstalks.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, September 5, 1906.

Box 1, Item 3
Snake priests descending into the Snake kiva on the edge of the dance plaza after the Snake race in the early morning of the Snake Dance.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, September 5, 1906.

Box 1, Item 4
Hopigirls with their hair braided in whorls on each side of their heads, indicating that they are of marriageable age, and looking for a husband.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, September 5, 1906.

Box 1, Item 5
Antelope priests making their first ceremonial circuit at the last old time Snake Dance held at Oraibi.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, September 5, 1906.

Box 1, Item 6
The Snake Society making the first circuit in front of the kisi.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, September 5, 1906.

Box 1, Item 7
The dance plaza at Old Oraibi during the last old time Snake Dance held there on Sept. 5, 1906. This shows the Snake and Antelope societies chanting before the tie kisi.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, September 5, 1906.

Note
There is also a copy negative of 126 (7).

Box 1, Item 8
The last old-time Snake Dance ever held at Oraibi. This shows the Snake priests after the chanting has ceased, gathering in groups of three, ready to receive the snakes from the snake keeper in the kisi.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, September 5, 1906.

Box 1, Item 9
Snake priests dancing with live rattlesnakes held in their mouths.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, September 5, 1906.
A young boy being initiated into the Snake Society dancing with a large rattlesnake held in his mouth.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, September 5, 1906.

A snake priest dancing with a larger rattler held in his mouth.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, September 5, 1906.

The Snake priest in the foreground has danced around the circle four times with the snake in his mouth ...
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, September 5, 1906.

This shows three carriers and three huggers in a close line. ...
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, September 5, 1906.

Earle R. Forrest enroute with Louis Akin to the Hopi Snake Dance at Mishongnovi. This was snapped by Akin on the Little Colorado River west of Tolchaco Mission.
Little Colorado River, Navajo Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 13, 1907.

The Navajo council hogan at Tolchaco in which Louis Akin and I camped after wandering through the breaks of the Little Colorado. This was taken just when we were ready to start for Mishongnovi.
Tolchaco Mission, Little Colorado River, Arizona, August 15, 1907.

Antelope priests chanting in front of the kisi at the Antelope or Corn Dance, which takes place on the evening before the Snake Dance.
Mishongnovi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 17, 1907.

The Antelope or Corn Dance. This shows the Antelope priests with their backs to the kisi, and the line of Snake priests facing them.
Mishongnovi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 17, 1907.

A snake racer coming up the trail to the top of the mesa during the Snake Race at Mishongnovi, during the early morning of the day of the Public Snake Dance.
Mishongnovi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 18, 1907.

Five Snake priests and one Antelope priest (at the right) on the edge of the mesa during the Snake Race on the day of the public Snake Dance at Mishongnovi.
Mishongnovi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 18, 1907.

Winner of the Snake Race at Mishongnovi in the early morning of the day of the Snake Dance ... receiving his reward from the chief of the Snake Society ...
Mishongnovi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 18, 1907.

Snake Dance at Mishongnovi.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 18, 1907.

The Cakwalenya (Blue) Flute Ceremony at Oraibi.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 19, 1907.

Scene on the Snake Kiva in the dance plaza at old Oraibi. One squaw is picking lice from the head of the other and cracking them between her teeth.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 20, 1907.

A Hopi family Louis Akin and I met in the Oraibi wash, several miles south of Oraibi.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 22, 1907.

Hopi squaw carrying a child in a blanket thrown over her shoulder.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 19, 1908.

A hopi boy spinning a home-made top.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 19, 1908.

A Hopi man with his burro loaded with corn on the cob.
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 18, 1908.

The Flute Ceremony at Mishongnovi in 1908. The standard of emblem of the Cakwalenya or Blue Flue Society.
Mishongnovi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 20, 1908.

The Flute Ceremony at Mishongnovi. Tiponi or Sacred Badge of office of the Macilenya (Drab) Flute Society.
Mishongnovi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 19, 1908.

The Flute Ceremony at Mishongnovi in 1908. Flute priests descending from the roof o the room where the altar was erected (Blue Flute) just after the Flute race at dawn.
Mishongnovi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 20, 1908.
Photographs

| Box 1, Item 51 | Hopi squaw carrying water in an olla on her back and in a bucket in her hand, up the trail from the spring to Mishongnovi. 
Mishongnovi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 20, 1907. |
| Box 1, Item 52 | The Twin Pueblos of the Second Mesa. 
Mishongnovi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 20, 1908. |
| Box 1, Item 53 | The Dance Plaza at Mishongnovi. This shows the buildings around the plaza, which are typically Hopi of the ancient construction. 
Mishongnovi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 20, 1907. |
| Box 1, Item 54-65 | The Flute Ceremony at Mishongnovi in 1908. 
Mishongnovi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 20, 1908. |
| Box 1, Item 66-67 | Crypt in a shelf under the rock of the Second Mesa, where the snake jars are stored between Snake Dances. 
Mishongnovi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 20, 1908. |
| Box 1, Item 68-75 | The Snake Dance at Oraibi in 1908. 
Old Oraibi, Hopi Indian Reservation, Arizona, August 21, 1908. |
| Box 1, Item 76 | View of both the upper and lower ruins and the Amphitheatre or circular ceremonial plaza. 
| Box 1, Item 77 | San Juan Teotihuacan, Mexico ... large serpent head set in a rosette at the bottom of a ramp on the front of an earlier temple of Quetzalcoatl. 
November 28, 1960. |