
William E. Irwin Photographs of Great Plains Indians: Finding Aid

Finding aid prepared by Michelle Sanchez.

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens

Photo Archives

1151 Oxford Road

San Marino, California 91108

Phone: (626) 405-2191

Email: reference@huntington.org

URL: <http://www.huntington.org>

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Overview of the Collection

Title: William E. Irwin Photographs of Great Plains Indians

Dates (inclusive): approximately 1890-1910

Collection Number: photCL 161

Creator: Irwin, William E., 1871-1935

Extent: 50 photographs in 1 box; prints 14 x 10 cm. (5.5 x 4 in.)

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Abstract: A disbound album of primarily portrait photographs of Plains Indians, taken by photographer William E. Irwin from the 1890s to early 1900s, in Indian Territory. His images document the Chiricahua Apache, Comanche, and Kiowa Indians who lived near Anadarko and Fort Sill, Oklahoma; some photographs may have been taken at Irwin's studio at Chickasha, Indian Territory. Besides the studio and field portraits, there are also candid views illustrating late 19th-century Plains Indians in their daily lives; several views of cowboys and cow herding; Fort Sill; tepees; landscapes; and one view of a Wichita Indian grass house or wickiup. Notable portraits include those of Geronimo, seated, posing with headdress and revolver; Appeahstone (Kiowa Chief) and his wife; and Quanah Parker (Comanche Chief) with two of his wives.

Language: English.

Access

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Preferred Citation

William E. Irwin Photographs of Great Plains Indians. The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance

Purchased from Cherokee Bookstore, January 24, 1967.

Biographical and Historical Note

William E. Irwin was born in 1871 in Red Oak, Missouri. He learned photography around 1893 in either Indian Territory or Texas, and went on to operate galleries in Chickasha, Oklahoma and Silver City, New Mexico. In 1904, along with his brothers John and Marvin, Irwin opened and operated a photography studio in Bisbee, Arizona. In 1913, he renovated the McPhearson Building as a studio, and worked there until 1922. Irwin's last photography studio was located in Douglas, Arizona, which he managed until his death in 1935.

Scope and Content

A disbound album of primarily portrait photographs of Plains Indians, taken by photographer William E. Irwin from the 1890s to early 1900s, in Indian Territory. His images document the Chiricahua Apache, Comanche, and Kiowa Indians who lived near Anadarko and Fort Sill, Oklahoma; some photographs may have been taken at Irwin's studio at Chickasha, Indian Territory. Besides the studio and field portraits, there are also candid views illustrating late 19th-century Plains Indians in their daily lives. Notable portraits include those of Geronimo, seated, posing with headdress and revolver; Appeahstone (Kiowa Chief) and his wife; and Quanah Parker (Comanche Chief) with two of his wives.

Many of the photographs focus on Comanche and Kiowa Indians posing for studio portraits. These portraits depict infants and children, young women, mothers, scouts, and warriors, many identified by name. Named individuals include Poor Buffalo, White Buffalo, Lone Wolf, and Little White Shield, among others. Field photographs show Apache, Kiowa, and Comanche encampments; a Wichita grass house; both cowboys and Indians caring for their herds; and views in and around Anadarko and Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Item titles in the contents list are transcribed from handwritten captions below photographs; cataloger-supplied information is in brackets.

Indexing Terms

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

Apache Indians -- Photographs. -- Photographs.
Chickasaw Indians -- Photographs.
Comanche Indians -- Photographs.
Cowboys -- Photographs.
Indian encampments—Oklahoma -- Photographs.
Indians of North America—Dwellings—Great Plains -- Photographs.
Indians of North America—Great Plains -- Photographs.
Indians of North America Indian Territory -- Photographs.
Kiowa Indians -- Photographs.
Medicine-man -- Photographs.
Tipis -- Photographs.
Wichita Indians—Dwellings -- Photographs.
Wikiups -- Photographs.
Geronimo, 1829-1909 -- Photographs.
Parker, Quanah, 1845?-1911 -- Photographs.
Anadarko (Okla.) -- Photographs.
Fort Sill (Okla.) -- Photographs.
Photographs.
Photograph album.
Studio portraits.

Box 1	Photographs
Box 1 , Item 1	Comanche Indian camp near Fort Sill [Comanche man with two children on horse]
Box 1 , Item 2	Kiowa Indians drawing rations at the Commission, Anadarko [Oklahoma]
Box 1 , Item 3	Comanche Indians butchering a beef
Box 1 , Item 4	Kiowa Indian camp near Anadarko
Box 1 , Item 5	Little Comanche girls
Box 1 , Item 6	Little Kiowa boy
Box 1 , Item 7	Gertrude Threefinger. A Chickasaw belle.
Box 1 , Item 8	Kiowa papoose
Box 1 , Item 9	Little Kiowa boy [Boy with ribbon-wrapped pigtails]
Box 1 , Item 10	A young warrior [Toddler boy dressed in breastplate]
Box 1 , Item 11	Big Tom, Comanche monte [?] dealer
Box 1 , Item 12	Comanche squaw and papoose [Woman sitting outside with infant in lap]
Box 1 , Item 13	Cruis and family. Comanches
Box 1 , Item 14	Kiowa papoose
Box 1 , Item 15	Little Kiowa girls [One girl standing and one girl sitting in animal fur]
Box 1 , Item 16	Comanche Medicine Man
Box 1 , Item 17	Poor Buffalo in War Costume
Box 1 , Item 18	Waterman,Âs squaw and papoose
Box 1 , Item 19	White Buffalo (Kiowa)
Box 1 , Item 20	Millie Oytant. Dress val. \$1000.00
Box 1 , Item 21	Kiowa Annie. Dress val. \$500.00
Box 1 , Item 22	White Wolf in war costume. Comanche
Box 1 , Item 23	Apache girls
Box 1 , Item 24	Kokome,Âs daughters. Kiowa.
Box 1 , Item 25	Appehtone and squaw. Kiowa chief
Box 1 , Item 26	Atole in his war costume
Box 1 , Item 27	Little Bow,Âs teepee

Box 1 , Item 28	Kiowa kids [Six Kiowa girls sitting by wagons]
Box 1 , Item 29	Geronimo. Apache chief
Box 1 , Item 30	Geronimo,Âs interpreter
Box 1 , Item 31	Little White Shield (Kiowa)
Box 1 , Item 32	Lone Wolf,Âs mother
Box 1 , Item 33	Kiowa squaw and papoose [Kiowa woman facing away from camera with infant on her back]
Box 1 , Item 34	Lone Wolf dancing the war dance
Box 1 , Item 35	Kiowa squaw and papoose [Kiowa woman with child on her back, both facing the camera]
Box 1 , Item 36	Comanche papoose
Box 1 , Item 37	Daisy Waterman. Kiowa
Box 1 , Item 38	Kiowa bride and groom
Box 1 , Item 39	Apache squaw carrying wood
Box 1 , Item 40	Chief Quanah Parker with two of his wives
Box 1 , Item 41	Kiowa squaw and papoose [Woman wrapped in dark blanket holding papoose upright]
Box 1 , Item 42	Ponto and Lone Bear. Kiowa warriors
Box 1 , Item 43	Wichita Indian grass house near Anadarko
Box 1 , Item 44	Indians watering ponies in the Washita Riv. near Anadarko
Box 1 , Item 45	Kiowa Indian scouts of Anadarko
Box 1 , Item 46	Fort Sill as seen from the top of the hospital
Box 1 , Item 47	Cattle grazing near Fort Sill
Box 1 , Item 48	Views around Fort Sill [Cowboys on horseback with cows at watering hole]
Box 1 , Item 49	Apache Indian camp near Anadarko
Box 1 , Item 50	Kiowa Indian camp near Anadarko [Camp with cow hides drying on line]