

## **Bruce M. Knaft Papers**

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La Jolla 92093-0175

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## **Descriptive Summary**

**Languages:** English

**Contributing Institution:** Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego

9500 Gilman Drive

La Jolla 92093-0175

**Title:** Bruce M. Knauff Papers

**Identifier/Call Number:** MSS 0031

**Physical Description:** 0.6 Linear feet(2 archives boxes)

**Date (inclusive):** 1980-1985

**Abstract:** Papers of an American anthropologist, consisting largely of carbon copies of anthropological field notes taken by Bruce Knauff and his wife Eileen when they lived among the Gebusi people of Papua New Guinea from 1980-1982. The notes include information on social structure, kinship, and culture, with especial emphasis on spiritual activities of the Gebusi, including transcriptions of audio recordings made at seances.

### **OFF-SITE STORAGE**

COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE. ALLOW ONE WEEK FOR RETRIEVAL OF MATERIALS.

### **Scope and Content of Collection**

The collection consists largely of carbon copies of anthropological field notes, some in manuscript and some in typescript. The notes were written by Bruce Knauff and his wife Eileen and are based on their experiences among the Gebusi. Although some of the materials are dated as late as 1985, the actual field research took place during the years 1980-1982.

The notes reflect the Knauffs' investigations into concepts of social structure among the Gebusi, including ethos, myths, and beliefs. Also included is information about kinship relationships and interrelationships among several Gebusi villages and outlying bush hamlets, and Eileen Knauff's notes on temperature, rainfall, food availability, and subsistence. Also included is a small folder of correspondence containing letters written by Knauff explaining aspects of his work.

The main thrust of Bruce Knauff's investigation was directed towards the spirit world of the Gebusi. In this regard he made extensive studies of 62 seances, seance songs, rituals, and witchcraft. This interest is reflected in the collection by a group of transcriptions from tape recordings of individual seances.

The materials are arranged in categories as suggested by Knauff himself in a letter to UCSD's Barbara Jones. This letter can be found in the CORRESPONDENCE (Box 1, Folder 1). With the exception of the Field Report and a folder of miscellaneous notes, the materials are arranged alphabetically by category. The folder of miscellaneous notes includes several untitled documents as well as a narrative written in the Gebusi language.

### **Biography**

Bruce M. Knauff is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Emory University in Atlanta. Born on January 25, 1954, Knauff graduated Magna Cum Laude in anthropology from Yale University in 1976. He received his M.A. in anthropology from the University of Michigan in 1979, and he earned his PhD. in anthropology from Michigan in 1983.

From 1980 to 1982 Knauff and his wife Eileen lived in remote villages of Papua New Guinea's Western Province among the Gebusi tribe. During this time the Knauffs participated in all activities of tribal life and acquired a working knowledge of the Gebusi language. Much of the material gathered among the Gebusi was used in writing Knauff's dissertation titled *Good Company and Anger: The Culture and Sociology of Sorcery Among the Gebusi of the Strickland Plain, Papua New Guinea* (1983), and his book *Good Company and Violence: Sorcery and Social Action in a Lowland New Guinea Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

The focus of Knauff's research was directed toward the unusually large rate of homicides within the Gebusi tribe. Also of interest to him was tribal genealogy and the kinship relationship between the Gebusi and neighboring tribes. Knauff sought to explain the sharp contrast between the tribe's notions of good fellowship versus their attitudes toward punishment and homicide. He found that beliefs in witchcraft or sorcery represented a bond between members of the tribe, their friends, and within family units. Such beliefs, he found, were as important a bond as other aspects of socialization and fraternization.

Bruce Knauff has received many awards and honors, including the C.S. Ford Cross-Cultural Research Prize in 1976 and a Guggenheim Foundation research grant in 1985. His articles have appeared in numerous scholarly journals.

### **Publication Rights**

Publication rights are held by the creator of the collection.

### **Preferred Citation**

**Acquisition Information**

Acquired 1986.

**Restrictions**

The Bruce Knauff Papers cannot be used without the permission of Bruce Knauff, Department of Anthropology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia 30322.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Homicide -- Papua New Guinea -- Western Province

Ethnology -- Papua New Guinea -- Western Province

Oceania

Witchcraft -- Papua New Guinea -- Western Province

Gebusi (Papua New Guinea people)

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**CORRESPONDENCE**

Box 1, Folder 1

**1980 - 1985**

**FIELD NOTES**

Box 1, Folder 2

**Field report**

Box 1, Folder 3

**Census - Residence**

Box 1, Folder 4

**Comings and goings**

Box 1, Folder 5

**Death and illness**

Box 1, Folder 6

**Disputes**

Box 1, Folder 7

**Ethos**

Box 1, Folder 8

**Events calendar**

Box 1, Folder 9

**Food and weather**

Box 1, Folder 10

**Funeral rituals**

Box 1, Folder 11

**Gebusi tribal report**

Box 1, Folder 12

**Homosexuality**

Box 1, Folder 13

**Initiation**

Box 1, Folder 14

**Kinship - Charts and tabulation (genealogy)**

Box 1, Folder 15

**Kinship - History**

Box 1, Folder 16

**Kinship - Marriage**

Box 1, Folder 17

**Kinship - Terminology**

Box 1, Folder 18

**Leadership**

Box 1, Folder 19

**Lexical statistics**

Box 1, Folder 20

**Morality**

Box 1, Folder 21

**Myths and narratives**

Box 1, Folder 22

**Naming and taboos**

Box 1, Folder 23

**Population statistics by villages (lineages)**

Box 1, Folder 24

**Physical disorders**

Box 1, Folder 25

**Residence - Personal histories**

Box 1, Folder 26

**Rituals and feasts**

Box 2, Folder 1-2

**Seances - Texts and master lists**

Box 2, Folder 3

**Seances - Mediumship**

Box 2, Folder 4

**Seances - Songs**

Box 2, Folder 5

**Social structures**

Box 2, Folder 6

**Sorcery and witchcraft**

Box 2, Folder 7

**Spirit beliefs**

Box 2, Folder 8

**Trade goods**

Box 2, Folder 9

**Traditional times**

Box 2, Folder 10

**Tribal relations**

Box 2, Folder 11

**Villages**

Box 2, Folder 12

**Miscellany**

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