
Finding Aid to the Father William Hughes Collection MS.536

Finding aid prepared by Holly Rose Larson
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Title: Father William Hughes Collection

Identifier/Call Number: MS.536

Contributing Institution: Autry National Center, Braun Research Library

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 0.4 Linear feet(1 box)

Date (inclusive): 1908-1934

Abstract: Father William McDermott Hughes (1880-1939) was a Catholic priest who traveled through California getting Native American storytellers to tell their tales to him. This collection includes Hughes's initial hand-written manuscripts produced mostly between 1910 and 1911 as well as typed versions from 1934. This collection also includes newspaper clippings, notes, and some correspondence. Materials are dated from 1908-1934.

creator: Hughes, William McDermott, Father, 1880-1939

Processing history

Processed by Glenna Schroeder, circa 1977-1981. Finding aid completed by Holly Rose Larson, NHPRC Processing Archivist, 2012 October 1, made possible through grant funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commissions (NHPRC).

Biographical note

William McDermott Hughes was born on January 9, 1880, in Sacramento, California. William's interest in Native Americans was developed at an early age. As a young boy, he spent a great deal of time playing, hunting and fishing among the Indian tribes of northern California. He attended Sacramento's public schools and then entered St. Mary's College in Oakland, graduating in 1900 with a Bachelor's degree. Hughes then studied philosophy and science at St. Thomas College, a Paulist school at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Later, with his schooling completed, Hughes moved to Los Angeles, where Bishop Thomas Conaty ordained him on August 5, 1905, the first Sacramento native to join the priesthood. The newly-ordained priest's first assignment was as an assistant at St. Agnes parish in Los Angeles. He remained there until he was transferred to Pasadena in early 1907. His service in Pasadena lasted little more than a year, until he asked Bishop Conaty to assign him to Indian mission work in 1908. He was assigned to St. Mary's parish in San Jacinto. Thus, Father Hughes began the work that consumed most of his adult life. Using San Jacinto as a base, Hughes ministered to a far-flung territory, including Catholic subjects in Murietta, Perris and Temecula and the Indians residing on the Soboba, Cahuilla and Los Coyotes reservations.

Native traditions fascinated Hughes. Throughout his missionary travels, he collected stories about Indian folklore and religious practices. He spent many nights sitting around a campfire, trying to pry recollections from Indian elders. He was appointed a lecturer for the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, traveling to parishes across the United States to raise awareness and funds. He later became the director of the Bureau, where he worked until June 1935.

He returned to California, working in Los Angeles with Dr. John P. Harrington of the Bureau of Ethnology on his collection of Indian myths and customs. He passed away on May 6, 1939.

Scope and Contents

Father William McDermott Hughes (1880-1939) was a Catholic priest who traveled through California getting Native American storytellers to tell their tales to him. This collection includes Hughes's initial hand-written manuscripts produced mostly between 1910 and 1911 as well as typed versions from 1934. This collection also includes newspaper clippings, notes, and some correspondence. Materials are dated from 1908-1934.

Acquisition

Purchase from Doris Harris, 1968 August 29.

Preferred citation

Father William Hughes Collection, 1908-1934, Braun Research Library Collection, Autry National Center, Los Angeles; MS.536; [folder number] [folder title][date].

Use

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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. An item-level list

is available from Library Staff.

Inventory

- (1) "Creation myth of the Kawea Indians of the Colorado Desert" - told by Ramon Garcia of Malki Reservation "The Cahuilla (Kawea) Creation Story - the Rival Gods"- told by Juanito Segundo Chief of Coyotes Reservation above Warner's Ranch
- (2) "Santa Rosa (Kawea) creation Story and Migration Myth" - told by Nicolas Wancha of Santa Rosa
- (3) "Creation" -told by Manuelito Leon, (Luiseño) Soboba
- (4) "Sawoish the Creator" - told by Bonifacio Cabse a Luiseño of Sobaba in San Jacinto
- (5) "Creation" -told by Lucaño Chevish (Luiseño) of Rincon "Creation"- told by Chico (Salvador) Cuevas (Luiseño) of La Jolla
- (6) "Serrano Creation Myth" - told by Cuate Gabriel (Serrano)
- (7) Serrano Myth compared to German Muspilli
- (8) "Creation" - told by Narcisso Lachappa (Diegeño) of Mesa Grande "Legend of the Hot Waters"- told by Matia Antonia Watters (Cupena)
- (9) "Legend of the Lost Sun and the Hot Springs" - told by Juana Maria Segundo (Cupeña)

Takwish Stories

- (10) "Takwish and Algot" -told by Bonifacio Cabse (Luiseño) or Jose Dolores Watters
- (11) "Takwish Story of Pichanga" -told by "Dacco" (Antonio) Trujillo (Luiseño)
- (12) "Takwish" - told by Josepa Chutnicut of San Isidro
- (13) "Takwish Teaches Wapiavit Evil-doing"- told by Jose Dolores Watta (Soboba)
- (14) "Takwish" - miscellaneous

Other Stories

- (15) "Arrowhead" - told by Cuate Gabriel (Serrano) "Arrowhead" - told by Jose Maria Zalvidea (Gabrieleño)
- (16) "The Chekhayim become Stars" - told by Jose Dolores Watta (Sobooa); also other notes on Chekhayim.
- (17) "The Coyote and Lion play Peon" - told by Cuate Gabriel (Cahuilla)
- (18) "Kiwish - the lonely" - told by Lucario Chevish Rincon (Luiseño)
- (19) "Marzal, the Medicine Man" - told by Juanito Segundo (Cahuilla)
- (20) "Met -a -weerr" furnished by Rev. E. Lapointe
- (21) "Mukat Outwitted by Frog" - told by Ramon Garcia (Cahuilla) "Mookat and Temayowit" - told by Juan Lugo (Cahuilla)
- (22) "Nahatchitch" told by Chico (Salvador) Cuevas (Luiseño) Lajolla
- (23) "Ooyot" - told by Lucario Chevish (Luiseño) "Ooyot"- told by Juan Awáyat
- (24) "Pahvowit and Nachnawhish" - told by Juan Awayo (Luiseño)
- (25) "Pahvowit, the Wicked Water Child" - told by Jose Dolores Watta
- (26) "Quayeel Sowayish, the Wonder Worker" - told by Juanito Segundo
- (27) "Temetawit" - told by Juan Awayat (Luiseño)
- (28) "Añil, the Indian desperado of Campo" furnished by Rev. E. Lapointe
- (29) "Why the Indians Cannot Write" - told by Bonifacio Cabse (Soboba)
- (30) Miscellaneous short stories etc.

Other

- (31) Notes on many stories
- (32) Miscellaneous notes
- (33) Introductory material
- (34) Place names, sources
- (35) Clippings of legends
- (36) Correspondence - postcard from B.F.G. - Hughes to Rev. E. Lapointe letter - Amos R. Frank - Antonio LaChapa - Mystica Amago

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Catholic Church -- California
Clippings
Correspondence

Indians of North America -- California
Indians of North America -- California -- Folklore
Indians of North America -- California -- Religion
Manuscripts
Typescripts
