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## **Department of Ethnology - Section of Aboriginal Pottery: Annual Report 1885**

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Department of American Pre-Historic Pottery.  
~~Museum of Aboriginal Pottery.~~

K2 upper.

Report of <sup>the</sup> Curator. Jan-June 85

George Holmes, Curator.

The greater part of the collection of aboriginal american pottery has been placed in the N.W. Court of the Museum. A preliminary classification has been made and as soon as the <sup>necessary</sup> cases are completed a representative series will be placed on exhibition.

The wall cases have been finished and are now occupied, chiefly, by the very extensive collection of modern pueblo ware. The arrangement is only temporary, however, as the final placing will not be attempted until the more recent additions ~~to this section~~ are catalogued. During the year a large case has been constructed for the Center of the hall and plans have been made for a number of smaller cases for the floor.

The year is remarkable for the great number of additions to the collection, upwards of ten thousand earthen vessels having been acquired and entered upon the books. These have



been obtained through purchase, exchange and donation, as well as through the various agents of the museum.

The Bureau of Ethnology has contributed upwards of six thousand pieces. These comprise the collections of James Stevenson from the modern pueblos, of Victor Mindeleff, E. H. Nelson and H. C. Yarrow from the ancient ruins of New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah, and of Do<sup>ny</sup> Thomas from the Valley of the Mississippi.

A small collection of interesting fragments from the shell mounds of Maryland ~~has been~~ <sup>was</sup> donated by Mr. J. P. McGuire and a number of fugitive pieces have come from various southern states. A valuable addition to the Mexican collection, consisting of about one hundred pieces, mostly in a fragmentary state, has been acquired, by donation, from W. H. Holmes.

Perhaps the most unique and important acquisition of the year is that of some three thousand vases from the ancient tombs of Chiriqui, state of Columbia. This collection



~~was made by Mr J. C. McNeil and was~~  
from J. C. McNeil, the collector.  
was secured by purchase. An extremely valuable  
collection from Ancón, Peru, has been re-  
cured through the agency, of <sup>D. Wm. H. Jones.</sup> ~~Mr. Jones.~~

In cataloguing and arranging the col-  
lection the curator has been assisted by  
Mr. Henry Walther and Mr. Wm. Barber.

The ordinary entry in the records is general-  
ly supplemented by a drawing of the  
specimen. As many of the vases reach  
the museum in a fragmentary state, it  
is found desirable to have them carefully  
restored. In this work Mr. Walther is extreme-  
ly skillful. Care is taken that such restor-  
ations do not, in any way, ~~lose~~ <sup>falsify</sup> the original  
characters of the vessel.

The curator has been engaged during the  
year in the study of portions of the collection,  
first, for the purpose of securing the best  
possible classification of the <sup>material</sup> ~~collection~~ for  
Museum purposes, and second, with the view  
of publishing a monograph upon the aborig-  
inal pottery of America. One paper has been



prepared on the "Pottery of the Ancient people,"  
and another upon the "Ancient ware of the  
Middle Mississippi Valley". They are sup-  
plemented by a third paper upon the "Origin  
of form and ornament in the Ceramic art".  
These papers will appear in the Fourth An-  
nual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology.

In addition, a short study of the ceramic  
products of a section exposed in the City  
of Mexico has been made. This will appear  
in the proceedings of the Anthropological  
Society of Washington.

It will be seen that the collection, al-  
ready an extremely valuable one, promises  
in the near future to be worthy of a Nat-  
ional Museum, but there are many gaps  
that must be filled up before it can be  
considered satisfactory to students of American  
Archæology. The collections from all parts  
of Mexico and the Northern Central American  
States need especial attention. In South  
American material we are still far behind  
the Museums of Europe.



Megaw  
Holmes

K2 upper

Account of Aboriginal Pottery  
Jan 1st 1885 to July 1st 1885

Work in the Ceramic Court has been confined chiefly to labeling, cataloguing and classifying the collections of the accessions of the preceding summer and fall.

The very extensive collections of pueblo material made for the Worlds Cotton Centennial arrived from the west too late to be made fully available for exhibition but a small representative series of vessels and other objects of clay was forwarded to New Orleans.

The collection of ancient pottery recently obtained from Chiriqui, Panama, and partially paid for from the Exposition funds was also represented. In July these exhibits were, along with other museum material, transferred to the Louisville Exposition where they will remain until November.

It is hoped that a portion at least of the pottery Court will be opened to the public by the end of the present year.

W. H. Holmes



Pittsburg

H James  
Jan - June  
1885 -