Amerind Foundation Collection Synopsis

This synopsis was written to make researchers aware of the Amerind Foundation’s holdings. Our cataloged collection consists of over 21,000 objects and tens of thousands of bulk sherd samples. This synopsis is not an exhaustive list. For more information, please contact Chief Curator Dr. Eric Kaldahl at Amerind Foundation, PO Box 400, Dragoon, AZ 85609, (520) 586-3666, or ekaldahl@amerind.org.

Archaeological Collections

Excavated Collections
The Amerind conducted several excavations at prehistoric sites in southeastern Arizona. These excavations were detailed in early Amerind publications. The sites include the Gleeson Site, the Tres Alamos site, Winchester Cave, and Babocomari Village. There were also excavations conducted on Amerind Foundation property in Texas Canyon. Ceramics recovered from these sites suggest a range of periods contemporaneous with the Hohokam Sedentary through Classic periods.


The Amerind Foundation excavated at southern Arizona ancestral pueblo migrant sites known as Davis Ranch Ruin and Reeve Ruin. Ceramics recovered from these sites suggest that they are contemporaneous with the later Hohokam Classic period.


The Amerind conducted excavations at the Spanish Colonial presidio of Terrenate in the San Pedro valley of Arizona. Arizona’s Santa Cruz de Terrenate was occupied between AD 1776 and 1780.


The Amerind conducted excavations in the Santa Cruz valley at the site of Paloparado near today’s Tumacácori National Monument. This site was multi-component dating from the Hohokam Classic period to the Spanish Colonial period. While working at Paloparado, the Amerind also explored Ramanote Cave.


The Amerind’s founder William Shirley Fulton excavated at the northern Arizona site of Painted Cave. Dr. Emil Haury also conducted work at the site at a later time. Haury wrote a report summarizing both investigations for the Amerind publication series. Haury identified a Basketmaker II component and a Pueblo III component at the site.

Painted Cave in Northeastern Arizona, by Emil W. Haury. Amerind Foundation Publication No. 3. 1945.

The Amerind’s Charles Di Peso conducted excavations at the site of Wind Mountain in the Mimbres Valley. His excavations uncovered a site with a long occupation sequence from the Mimbres Late Pithouse period through Mimbres Pueblo period. Di Peso’s work was reported posthumously.


The Amerind is well-known for the Joint Casas Grandes Project which excavated at the site of Casas Grandes (Paquimé) in Chihuahua. Current researchers date the main Medio Period occupation of the site from AD 1200 to the AD 1400s. Other sites in the vicinity were also subject to testing and recording. These other sites predate and postdate the Casas Grandes Medio Period. All of the artifactual materials were returned to Mexico in the 1980s. With the permission of the Mexican government, the Amerind retains certain representative sherd samples from the project. The Amerind also holds all of the original field records, photographs, and initial analyses.

Archaeological Survey Collections
The Amerind surveyed numerous sites in Arizona, New Mexico, Chihuahua, and Sonora. The Amerind holds representative sherd collections from the surface of these sites and site cards describing the sites.

The Amerind conducted a survey around the shorelines of pluvial Lake Willcox. Some representative artifacts, site cards, and an unpublished manuscript of the project are housed at the Amerind.

Unprovenienced Ancient Objects

The Amerind holds a small collection of pre-Columbian South American textiles.

The Amerind holds a collection of pre-Columbian Central and South American ceramics.

The Amerind holds a large sample of prehistoric Chihuahuan ceramics.

The Amerind holds several hundred whole pottery vessels from the American Southwest.

The Amerind holds collections of projectile points and other diagnostic stone tools from New England and the American Southwest.

Native American Ethnographic Collections

Amerind Foundation founder William Shirley Fulton collected Native American ethnographic objects from North, Central, and South America.

Fulton’s collection includes representative Navajo textiles from the last half of the nineteenth century through the twentieth century.

The Amerind holds several examples of Chimayo textiles.

Nineteenth and twentieth century Pueblo pottery is well represented, including a few examples of San Ildefonso’s Maria Martinez’s work and unsigned pottery pieces contemporary to Nampeyo of Hopi, as well as signed pieces by some Nampeyo descendants.

The Amerind has exceptional examples of baskets from Native American tribes in California, the Plateau, the Northwest coast, the Great Basin, the American Southwest, and northern Mexico.

Beadwork and quillwork on clothing and bags from the Great Lakes, Great Basin, Great Plains and American Southwest are represented.

The Arctic and Northwest coast are represented with wood and ivory figurines, masks, and tools. Both eastern and western Arctic regions are represented.
Non-Native American Historical Objects

The Amerind holds many examples of Spanish Colonial religious artwork, including *retablos* and *bultos*, and decorative arts including chairs, benches, tables, and *vargueños*.

The Amerind holds several examples of fine furnishings from nineteenth century and early twentieth century New England.

Archival Resources

The Amerind retains all of the original field records and photographs of all of its excavation and survey projects.

A microfilm copy of Spanish Colonial municipal records from the *Hidalgo del Parral* is held at the Amerind. The archive, encompassing roughly 200 years of records, is indexed.

The Amerind holds a copy of Roberts Zingg’s 1930s photographs from his ethnographic expeditions among the Huichol and Tarahumara of Mexico.

The Amerind maintains extensive correspondence files between William Shirley Fulton and Charles Di Peso with other members of the archaeological and museum communities.

Fine Art

The Amerind holds several hundred two dimensional artworks in watercolor, oil, ink, pastels, and photographs.

Native American artists represented in the collection include Allan Houser, Fred Kabotie, Otis Polelonema, and Andy Tsihnahjinnie among others.

Euro-American artists from New England are represented as well as artists whose subject matter is the American West. Some of the artists represented include Ted DeGrazia, George Inness, W. R. Leigh, and Frederick Remington.

The Amerind has collected fine examples of Mata Ortiz pottery from founder Juan Quezada to the newest generation of Mata Ortiz potters.