Two large hand-colored photographic transparencies of landscapes by Smithsonian photographer John K. Hiller, likely made for the World’s Fairs of the 1890s, are among the highlights of 2014 National Anthropological Archives (NAA) acquisitions. These rare transparencies, each over two feet wide and three feet tall, depict rock formations known as the Captains of the Canyon in Canyon de Chelly, made during one of John Wesley Powell’s expeditions in the 1870s and Tallulah Falls in Georgia. They are a bequest of Clifford and Norma Fleeharty.

Other acquisitions (see sidebar) include the papers of anthropologists Walter Hough, Phillip Walker, Robert I. Levy, Carole Sane Jolles, Robert Rankin, and Alan Sandstrom plus Joseph Carrier’s Vietnam highlands slides and papers and the art of Robert T. “Smitty” Smith.

Ringtone Movie Debuts at NHB

Miyarra Media (http://miyarrkamedia.com/) held the Washington, D.C. premiere of its new film Ringtone in the Q?rius Theater in November, 2014. Ringtone explores the connections, intrusions and demands that mobile phones have brought to Yolngu Aboriginal families living in a remote region of Northern Australia. In exploring how mobile phones have become an important and ubiquitous aspect of Yolngu everyday lives, the surprisingly moving film provoked viewers to consider their own relationship with technology. Following the screening Director Jennifer Deger and cast/crew members Enid Wunungmurra and Warren Gurruwiwi discussed the film with the audience. This event was part of ongoing research project Unseen Connections: A Natural History of the Cellphone led by Joshua A. Bell, Joel Kuipers (GWU) and Alex Dent (GWU).
Ten-Year-Old Boy Donates Clovis Point to Museum

Noah Cordle, a 10-year-old Fairfax County, Virginia boy, has donated a Clovis spear point, estimated to be 13,000 years old, to the Smithsonian. Noah found the Clovis point while on vacation on Long Beach Island, New Jersey. Clovis points occur during the PaleoIndian period in North America and are found in archaeological contexts that date from about 12,000 to 13,000 years ago.

NMNH has one of the world’s leading PaleoIndian artifact collections and Dennis Stanford, director of the museum’s PaleoIndian program, says this one is particularly important since it is the first Clovis point from New Jersey to join our collections.

Noah says he thinks it’s “pretty cool” to donate the ancient spear point to the museum. NMNH gave Noah an exact plastic replica of the artifact to keep.

Handbook Project Marching On...Again

Work has resumed on an unfinished volume of the Smithsonian Handbook of North American Indians series. There were 15 volumes published between 1978 and 2008, but with the passing of series General Editor, William C. Sturtevant and the closing of the Handbook office in 2008, production was discontinued. This left the Handbook series literally ‘headless,’ as it lacks the opening Volume 1, Introduction.

In 2013–2014, a small team chaired by Igor Krupnik, explored options to re-start Volume 1. On December 8–9, 2014, the team held a two-day workshop at NMNH and NMAI, with about 60 participants that charted the course of action for covering major developments in the field of Native American research over the past half a century.

Kennewick Man, The Scientific Investigation of an Ancient American Skeleton

Almost two decades after the skeleton’s discovery, 9000-year-old Kennewick Man has been definitively detailed in a comprehensive book representing the work of 50 scientists. From the discovery of his bones in the Columbia River by college students, through the years of court debate involving the Federal government and native tribes, the volume describes the exhaustive investigations that even revealed his burial position and preferred diet, and led to the reconstruction of his possible appearance.

First available in September, Kennewick Man, The Scientific Investigation of an Ancient American Skeleton is already scheduled for a third printing. Co-edited by curator Doug Owsley and Richard Jantz, the volume includes chapters by department members Karin Bruwelheide, David Hunt, Margaret Jodry, and Dennis Stanford, along with NMNH staff Steven Jabo, James Norris, and Rebecca Snyder.
Preserving Language and Environmental Knowledge in Mexico

A Smithsonian team directed by Gabriela Pérez Báez, linguistics curator and director of the Recovering Voices program, worked in collaboration with Zapotec community members to collect plant samples from 225 different locations in La Ventosa, Oaxaca. These samples will serve as the basis for a pilot project for the NMNH’s online National Ethnobotanical Herbarium, a virtual collection of dried, pressed plants and their botanical and cultural data. By collecting both the native plants and their names, the project preserves local environmental knowledge and helps document Didxazá, an indigenous Zapotec language spoken in Oaxaca, Mexico.

Both the NMNH Anthropology and Botany departments participated in this project, along with staff from the National Museum of the American Indian, the Smithsonian’s Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and scientific colleagues from Mexico. In all, the team conducted a systematic survey of the region’s plants during 92 days of field work between September 2013 and September 2014. They collected a total of 1,311 botanical samples and also made audio recordings of Didxazá speakers. Over 350 distinct plant species were documented with their Didxazá names and their cultural relevance. The National Ethnobotanical Herbarium will go online in early 2016.

Testing for Fakes

Jane Walsh and Tim Rose of Mineral Sciences examined a collection of smuggled pre-Columbian artifacts to determine whether or not they were fakes. Seized by government agents, the artifacts included some that may be from the ancient Mexican city of Teotihuacan, and a large number of jadeite artifacts that are stylistically Olmec, a pre-Aztec culture. The object’s owner claimed they were reproductions. Using the museum’s analytical scanning electron microscope, Walsh and Rose determined that most, but not all, of the artifacts were genuine and found some of the pieces to be quite extraordinary.

Do You Have the Guts?

The Material Traditions project managed by Dawn Biddison of the Arctic Studies Center in Anchorage hosted a 5-day exhibition called Sewing Gut, using the knowledge and skill of three artists-in-residence, Mary Tunuchuk (Yup’ik), Elaine Kingeekuk (St. Lawrence Island Yupik) and Sonya Kelliher-Combs (Inupiaq/Athabaskan). The experts shared their knowledge of processing and sewing sea mammal gut (intestines and other inner membranes) with University of Alaska Anchorage Native art students, Anchorage school district students and museum visitors. NMNH conservators, including Michele Austin-Dennehy, attended hands-on learning sessions about making and caring for gut objects. The exhibition was augmented by community workshops, a webcast lecture by Igor Krupnik, a webcast workshop with NMNH’s education center, Q?rius called “Do You Have the Guts?” which garnered half a million tweets.
New Department Chair

Torben Rick joined the Department of Anthropology as curator of Human Environmental Interactions in 2008. He received his BA from the University of California, Santa Barbara and MA and PhD in Anthropology from the University of Oregon. Prior to joining the NMNH staff, he was Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX (2004-2008). Rick’s research focuses on the archaeology and historical ecology of coastal and island peoples, especially on the North American Pacific and Atlantic coasts. He has active field projects on California’s Channel Islands and the Chesapeake Bay, which are collaborative with researchers from a variety of disciplines (anthropology, biology, ecology, etc.) and focus on ancient and modern human environmental interactions.

Recent Events

AWARDS:  Ives Goddard, emeritus curator of linguistics, was honored with a lifetime achievement award at the 46th Algonquian conference. Goddard has worked with Algonquian linguistics since his dissertation in 1969.  
Adrienne Kaeppler, curator, Oceania, was made an Honorary Life member of the Society for Ethnomusicology at their 2014 meeting in Pittsburgh.  
Pam Wintle was the recipient of Association of Moving Image Archivists’ new Spotlight award. At the AAA conference this year archivist Alan Bain received an Executive Director Award for the published guide to the AAA records.  
Douglas Ubelaker, physical anthropology curator, received the Hong Kong Forensic Foundation award for his contributions to international forensic science. He also was elected “Professor Ad Honorem” by the Faculty of Medicine of the Universidad de La Republica, Montevideo, Uruguay and was the first non-medical doctor to receive this honorary title from the medical school.

LECTURES: Arctic Studies Center director Bill Fitzhugh’s Maine to Greenland: Exploring the Maritime Far Northeast, co-authored with Wilfred Richard, was launched at the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum at Bowdoin College and featured at the opening of the Anthropocene Symposium.  
Adrienne Kaeppler gave a lecture at the St. Louis Art Museum in conjunction with their exhibit “Atua, Sacred Gods of Polynesia.” Her lecture presented the historical and anthropological perspectives to the art exhibit.  
Igor Krupnik, curator of circumpolar ethnology, gave the keynote address at the UNESCO Climate Frontlines program Climate Change Assessments and the ‘Best Available Knowledge’: The Challenge of Bridging Disciplines and Knowledge Systems at UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

Cesare Marino, research associate, contributed to the documentary “Carlos Montezuma: Changing is Not Vanishing” being produced at the University of Illinois Urbana, and was interviewed in Italy on this subject.

Douglas Ubelaker served as the primary lecturer in forensic anthropology in a course on Human Identification presented at the Department of Legal Medicine, University of the Republic, Montevideo, Uruguay. Doug also served on the scientific committee of the Seoul, Korea meeting of the International Academy of Forensic Science. Doug presented five lectures in four workshops plus the opening lecture for the forensic anthropology section and the plenary lecture.

WORKSHOPS: Recovering Voices hosted four community scholar visits this year, from American Samoa, Papua New Guinea, the Chumash and the Kiowa tribes.  
Adrienne Kaeppler, and conservators Greta Hansen, and Michele Austin-Denney held a workshop on tapa cloth, which is made from the bark of the mulberry tree, from the making of to the storing of, at the MSC.