

Americas (Plains and Southwest USA)

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1 - Buffalo war bonnet

Collected between 1859 and 1916

Blackfoot, Northern Plains

Only men of high rank wore buffalo horns on their headdresses. The horns conferred the power of the buffalo bulls upon the wearer. The eagle feathers were symbols of power and liberty.

2 - Tomahawks

19th century or earlier

Plains culture

These weapons were made in Europe for trade to Native Americans. Originally the word 'tomahawk' referred to a group of weapons used by the Algonquian of the eastern United States, known by them as *tomahack* or *tomahick*. The Mahican word was *tumnahecan*.

3 - Knife and sheath

Before 1879

Blackfoot, Northern Plains

A warrior's hunting knife with an iron blade set into a wooden handle which is fixed with four rivets. The sheath is decorated with European glass beads, threaded and sewn with imported cotton thread.

4 - Sheath

Acquired after 1879

Hunkpapa Lakota (Sioux), Central Plains

This sheath once belonged to one of the warriors of Tatan'ka-iyotake or Chief Sitting Bull, the famous Hunkpapa shaman and leader.

5 - Sheath

Acquired after 1879

Blackfoot, Northern Plains

Made using commercially tanned leather, which was possibly cut from a suitcase (holes from the lines of machine stitching are evident). This item was acquired from the warriors of a Blackfoot chief.

6 - Pad saddle

Acquired after 1879

Blackfoot, Northern Plains

Padded with buffalo wool and deerskin pad saddles were used by various Plains people. They were also popular trade items. Men often rode bareback but a pad saddle provided more comfort on longer journeys.

7 - Bow and arrow

Acquired 1882-3

Siksika (Blackfoot), Bow River, Alberta.

These items form part of the collection of regalia that once belonged to Sapo-omach-socah, or Crowfoot, a famous Blackfoot leader at the signing of Treaty 7.

8 - Drawing

22 January 1847

Plains, North America

A watercolour sketch of Captain T.E. Drake R.N. wearing the costume of an American hunter in which he crossed the Rocky Mountains around the time the drawing was made.

9 - Shirt

Made before 1847

Plains culture

Made from a semi-tanned hide, these items of clothing were accessioned as the 'Costume of a North American Hunter'. They were worn by T.E. Drake, European-American hunter/trapper in the mid-19th century.

10 - Leggings

Made before 1847

Northern Plains-style

These traditional Plains deer hide leggings have been adapted for the wearer by the addition of imported buttons and buttonholes sewn around with European-made thread. This was once worn by hunter T.E. Drake.

11 - Octopus bag

Collected before 1847

Plains culture

This was popular among the Cree and Cree-Metis peoples of the subarctic region of North America and introduced by them across the Northern Plains. Toward the end of the 19th century, octopus bags were also being made and used by other nations.

12 - Moccasins

19th century

Tsuu T'ina, near Calgary, Alberta

The Tsuu T'ina previously known as the Sarcee, were allies of the Blackfoot in the 19th century. Edgar Dewdney's brother-in-law was an Indian Agent on the Sarcee Reserve for several years, and these moccasins may have been collected by him.

13 - Quirt or horsewhip

Late 19th century

Siksika (Blackfoot), Bow River, Alberta

This was acquired from Crowfoot, by Cecil Denny, Indian Agent to the Blackfoot, Stony and Tsuu T'ina peoples between 1882-3.

14 - Grizzly bear claw necklace

19th century

Siksika (Blackfoot), Bow River, Alberta

Once owned by Crowfoot, chief of the Blackfoot. This necklace is made using hide strip with glass beads, teeth, claws, an elk tooth, metal beads, buffalo horn and brass studs. Such necklaces were worn by distinguished Plains warriors.

15 - Pouch

Acquired after 1879

Probably Kiowa-Apache, Southern Plains

A hide pouch decorated with beadwork on the front and dangling fringes of metal cones. In a 1920 letter the donor referred to this item as a 'money bag'.

16 - Stone-head war club

19th century

Plains culture

The head and haft are sheathed in hide and decorated with glass beads, red trade cloth, feathers and hide tassels. The neck is flexible to allow the head to move, increasing the force of the blow delivered.

17 - Stone-head war club

Acquired by Edgar Dewdney after 1879

Hunkpapa Lakota (Sioux), Central Plains

This club once belonged to one of the warriors of Tatan'ka-iyo'take, who is more commonly known as Chief Sitting Bull.

18 - Stone-head war clubs

Acquired by Edgar Dewdney after 1879

Blackfoot, Northern Plains

Hand to hand warfare, common among all Plains peoples, was waged according to codes of honour.

19 - Moccasins

19th century

Possibly Kiowa, Southern Plains

Clothing decoration was generally more ornate among the Dakota and northern Arapaho than the southern Plains tribes, such as the Kiowa.

20 - Moccasins

Acquired by Edgar Dewdney after 1879

Cheyenne, Central Plains

Made at a time when the buffalo were being destroyed and native peoples were being moved onto reserves. Beadwork reached a peak during the Reservation Period from 1880 onwards.

21 - Moccasins

Acquired by Edgar Dewdney after 1879

Nakota (Stoney), Northern Plains

Beaded with machine-tooled leather soles, the leather was re-used from an item of European make. Before the Europeans introduced glass beads, dyed quill was used to decorate clothing.

22 - Beadwork panel

Late 19th century

Plains culture

A beadwork strip couched to a hide backing. This was intended to decorate a shirt or one of a pair of leggings.

23 - Bow and arrow

19th century

Plains culture

This bow has a twisted fibre bow-string. There are traces of red and chalky blue-green pigment upon it. The arrow is shaped to a point, without an arrowhead attached.

24 - Pipe stems

Mid to late 19th century

Sioux, Alberta

The stems are made of ash wood. The left one is wrapped with thin strips of dyed quill stitched end to end with braided fibre thread. The right stem has braided dyed quill binding and a tassel of quill-wrapped hide strips tied with a green silk ribbon.

25 - Pipe bowl

Collected before 1881

Plains culture

Made of catlinite, a mineral first quarried about 400 years ago at what is now Pipestone National Monument, Minnesota, U.S.A. The mineral is named after artist of the West, George Catlin (1796- 1872), who was the first person to take samples for analysis.

26 - Pipe bowl

Acquired by Edgar Dewdney after 1879

Blackfoot, Northern Plains

A catlinite pipe bowl. Pipe smoking among Native American peoples was usually a ceremonial practice. Pipes had a supernatural potency only when the stem and the bowl were joined together.

27 - Effigy bottle

Early 20th century

Zuni Pueblo, New Mexico/ Arizona

This vessel depicts a badger with a small lizard on its back. In Zuni mythology, the badger is associated with the south, he is seen as one of the six directional guardians.

28 - Jar

Early 20th century

Likely Zia Pueblo, New Mexico

A damaged polychrome clay vessel decorated with a combination of moulded clay and painting. The animal depicted is a possible representation of the 'roadrunner' or ground cuckoo which is the state bird of New Mexico.

29 - Jar

Acquired before 1950

Likely Acoma Pueblo, New Mexico

Polychrome vessel decorated with flowers and birds. The dark smudge is a 'fire cloud' where the oxygen had missed an area of the pot during firing.

30 - Turkey figurine

Anita Lowden (born 1935)

Acoma Pueblo, New Mexico

Lowden's black on white designs are based on the work of the Mimbres culture that flourished 1000 years ago. This piece is signed by the artist. Native Americans considered the turkey as an important source of nutrition but also as a source of decorative feathers, which were used for adornment.

31 - Bird figurine

First half 20th century

Possibly Acoma Pueblo, New Mexico

This water vessel is in the form of a duck-like bird and is based upon an older style that existed over 800 years ago. This piece is unsigned as many potters of this period thought it was inappropriate.

32 - Animal effigy

Early 20th century

Acoma or Zuni Pueblo, New Mexico

A water pouring vessel depicting what appears to be a mole. These small burrowing animals spend most of their lives underground. According to Zuni mythology, the mole is the guardian of the underworld and is seen as an important healing animal.

33 - Bowl

Made before 1960s

Hopi Pueblo, Arizona

A handmade bowl with black and red design on a golden-buff coloured base. Potters achieved perfect symmetry without using a wheel. All the vessels displayed here were made by coiling and then scraping to smooth the surface and thin the walls.

34 - Vase

Made between 1920 and 1930

Hopi Pueblo, Arizona

A polychrome vessel of black and red paint applied to a cream ground echoes similar styled ceramics made over a thousand years ago. A partial signature of the potter 'Ethel Pl - - - ' still survives on the base. The vessel's shape, called a tulip vase, reflects a European influence.

35 - Bowl

20th century

Hopi Pueblo, Arizona

On the base of this redware bowl is a drawing of a frog; a signature relating originally to potter Paqua Naha known to many as 'Frog Woman'. In 1939 this signature was passed on to another potter her daughter Joy Navasie who started making her own ceramics in 1935.

36 - Bowl

Mid-20th century

Ethel Youvella (1919 – 2006)

Hopi-Tewa, Hano Pueblo, First Mesa, Polacca, Arizona

A bowl decorated with black and red slip on a cream ground, which is signed by the artist. Youvella's creations are based on traditional forms and she is credited with starting the modern revival in Pueblo pottery.

37 - Bowl

20th century

Hopi Pueblo, Arizona

Bowl decorated with a black and red design on a cream ground. More than a few contemporary potters still maintain the tradition of digging their own clay, grinding and mixing it by hand.

38 - Effigy vessel

Mid-20th century

Jemez or Conchiti Pueblo, New Mexico

This is a singing mother vessel, which was made in the 1960s and became increasingly popular along with storyteller figures. This piece is reminiscent of the work of Cochiti pueblo figurine maker Helen Cordero.

39 - Dish

20th century

Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico

Santa Clara potters, of which there are approximately 200 today, produce perhaps some of the finest ceramics. Due in part to early tourism in the late 19th century, the development of stylish blackware and redware vessels have included some of the highest-priced pottery ever made.

40 - Jar

Collected about 1923

San Ildefonso Pueblo, New Mexico

These vessels, referred to as black-on-black vessels are made with local iron-red clay, burnished with a pebble and the decorations are painted with a slip. In the firing process, at a cool temperature, the pots are smothered with fuel so that there is little oxygen. The resulting trapped smoke colours the clay.

41 - Polychrome bowl

20th century

Santo Domingo Pueblo, New Mexico

This pot may have been painted by a young child or apprentice. The design is believed to be a spirit-trail, a line that frees evil spirits that are trapped in the vessel. However, this belief is traditionally held by weavers.

42 - Dance headdress

Before 1885

Possibly Karuk or Shasta, Northwest California

This rare deerskin cap is crowned with a spray of the tail feathers of the Northern Flicker bird (*Colaptes auratus*). The vanes are cut away leaving a saw-tooth pattern. Deer dew claws are also included as ornamentation.

43 - Apron

Before 1885

Likely Hupa, Northern California

This woman's apron is rare. The wide waistband is made of animal hide. From this hang hide thongs which are covered with pine nuts and bear grass.