

More

Create Blog Sign In



New Search

Items on Exhibit

Browse

Blog

Tutorial

About

Search

Smithsonian Collections Blog

Highlighting the hidden treasures from over 2 million collections

CollectionsSearchCenter

Friday, April 3, 2020

## Aleš Hrdlička: A New Finding Aid and an Exhibit Appearance for a Controversial Figure in the History of Anthropology

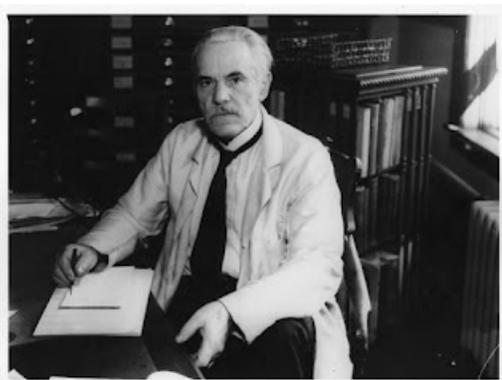


Photo: Aleš Hrdlička (1869-1943), curator of physical anthropology at the United States National Museum, now known as the National Museum of Natural History. National Anthropological Archives Image MNH-31513.

From Archivist Katherine Christensen:

Aleš Hrdlička was an anthropologist who left a complicated legacy. His work in physical anthropology was groundbreaking, but his history is fraught with accusations of misogyny and a belief that his work contributed to major racist ideologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His supporters argue that Hrdlička's work should be read in the context of his time, while his detractors argue that his views regarding immigrants, people of color, and women were problematic even within his cultural and temporal context. Both sides of the debate are so firm in their stances that this archivist dare not venture her humble opinion. Instead, I encourage you to form your own.

His papers are open for research at the National Anthropological Archives and the finding aid for those papers, the original creation of which was funded by the Repatriation Office, Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), is now available digitally on [SOVA](#) through recent funding from the FY2019 Collections Information (CIS) pool.

From Curator [Diana Marsh](#):

Some of Hrdlička's work is on display in the new exhibition, *Documenting Diversity: How Anthropologists Record Human Life*, which will be on view at the National Museum of Natural History when it reopens. In the exhibition, my co-curator, [Joshua A. Bell](#), and I featured aspects of Hrdlička's work through displaying his project and resulting book, *The Old Americans*, in which Hrdlička studied and compared anthropometric differences—height, skull diameter, etc.—of those descended from colonial American settlers and 20<sup>th</sup> century immigrants.

### Smithsonian Collections Blog

This Blog brings Archivists, Museum Specialists, and Librarians around the Smithsonian to write about their new collections, current works in progress or whatever catches their eye. It is our goal to bring our readers collection highlights, unveil hidden collections as they become online, and relate to current events with historical artifacts, art work and research materials from the past. We encourage conversation, questions, and comments.

[Home](#)
[About Us](#)

#### Search Our Collections!


 Only return results with online media

#### Search This Blog

#### Browse by Topic

- [2011 Archives Month](#) (24)
- [2012 Archives Month](#) (25)
- [2013 Archives Month](#) (11)
- [2014 Archives Month](#) (21)
- [2015 Archives Month](#) (21)
- [2016 Archives Month](#) (21)
- [2017 Archives Month](#) (22)
- [2018 Archives Month](#) (17)
- [2019 Archives Month](#) (14)
- [Advertising](#) (28)
- [Advocacy](#) (2)
- [Africa](#) (8)
- [African](#) (8)
- [African American](#) (74)
- [African American History](#) (4)
- [African Americans](#) (20)
- [Agriculture](#) (1)
- [Air and Space Museum](#) (12)
- [Air Races](#) (1)
- [Alaska](#) (1)
- [American Indian](#) (92)
- [Animals](#) (27)
- [Anthropologists](#) (77)
- [Anthropology](#) (4)
- [Apollo 11](#) (1)
- [Archaeologists](#) (32)
- [Archaeology](#) (3)
- [Archives](#) (392)

From the archives, documents for the project included in the exhibit are anthropometric sheets he made of prominent members of the National Academy of Sciences including anthropologists Franz Boas, Henry Fairfield Osborn, and Jesse Walter Fewkes, and famed eugenicist Charles Benedict Davenport. This allowed us to show what anthropometry methods look like without further objectifying Indigenous, marginalized, or displaced peoples.

The exhibit was collaboratively produced by the National Anthropological Archives and Human Studies Film Archives, the Smithsonian Libraries, and Smithsonian Exhibits. It is located in the Evans Gallery on the Ground Floor of the NMNH and will be on view for 16 months.

Katherine Christensen and Diana Marsh



*Photo: Anthropometric Measurements of Franz Boas. National Anthropological Archives, Aleš Hrdlička papers.*

Posted by kbchrist at 11:50 AM 

 Tweet

 Like 41

 Save

 Save

Labels: [Anthropologists](#), [National Anthropological Archives](#), [National Museum of Natural History](#)

**No comments:**

**Post a Comment**



Enter Comment

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

- [Archives Center](#) (1)
- [Archives Month](#) (60)
- [Artists](#) (93)
- [Arts and Design](#) (99)
- [Asian](#) (63)
- [Automation](#) (3)
- [Aviation](#) (10)
- [Bahamas](#) (1)
- [Beards](#) (2)
- [Beatrice Medicine](#) (1)
- [Beer](#) (1)
- [Beverages](#) (1)
- [Black History Month](#) (4)
- [Cataloging](#) (6)
- [Central America](#) (5)
- [Christmas](#) (1)
- [Circus](#) (1)
- [Civil Rights](#) (16)
- [Civil War](#) (7)
- [Clippings](#) (8)
- [Cold Cases](#) (4)
- [Collection Spotlight](#) (197)
- [Collections](#) (13)
- [Collections Research](#) (2)
- [Collections Search Center](#) (21)
- [Collectors](#) (32)
- [Conservation](#) (15)
- [Constance Stuart Larrabee](#) (1)
- [Correspondence](#) (30)
- [Crowdsourcing](#) (1)
- [Curators](#) (1)
- [Current Events](#) (87)
- [DC History](#) (15)
- [Diaries](#) (2)
- [Digitization](#) (51)
- [Disability](#) (1)
- [Drawings](#) (18)
- [Education](#) (5)
- [Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives](#) (10)
- [Emily Dickinson](#) (1)
- [Entertainment](#) (4)
- [Ernst Herzfeld Series](#) (16)
- [Ethiopia](#) (1)
- [Europe](#) (5)
- [Exhibits](#) (4)
- [Expeditions](#) (35)
- [Family Photograph Album](#) (2)
- [Festivals](#) (10)
- [Field Books](#) (12)
- [Film and Video](#) (72)
- [Folkart](#) (2)
- [Folklife](#) (39)
- [Foodways](#) (6)
- [Forest Service](#) (1)
- [Frederick Douglass](#) (1)
- [Freedmen's Bureau Records](#) (1)
- [Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives](#) (44)
- [Games](#) (4)
- [Gardens](#) (75)
- [Girlhood](#) (1)
- [Graphic Arts](#) (20)
- [Guinea](#) (2)

[Halloween](#) (1)  
[Hirshhorn](#) (2)  
[History and Culture](#) (263)  
[Holidays](#) (2)  
[Human Origins](#) (2)  
[Human Studies Film Archives](#) (2)  
[Humor](#) (1)  
[I Found It](#) (8)  
[Image of the Day](#) (26)  
[In Memoriam](#) (5)  
[Indigenous Peoples](#) (2)  
[Indigenous Peoples Day](#) (1)  
[Information Technology](#) (15)  
[Internships](#) (16)  
[jazz](#) (5)  
[Joseph Cornell](#) (3)  
[Joseph Cornell Study Center](#) (4)  
[Joseph Henry](#) (3)  
[Kenya](#) (1)  
[Languages](#) (8)  
[Latin American](#) (13)  
[LGBT](#) (2)  
[LGBTQ](#) (2)  
[Libraries](#) (70)  
[Maps](#) (1)  
[Marianne Moore](#) (1)  
[Mexico](#) (2)  
[Middle East](#) (6)  
[Military History](#) (1)  
[Museums](#) (76)  
[Music](#) (35)  
[Musicians](#) (40)  
[Mustaches](#) (3)  
[NASA](#) (1)  
[Natalie Knight](#) (1)  
[National Air and Space Museum](#) (9)  
[National Anthropological Archives](#) (32)  
[National Aviation Day](#) (1)  
[National Museum of African American History and Culture](#) (1)  
[National Museum of African Art](#) (9)  
[National Museum of American History](#) (6)  
[National Museum of Natural History](#) (3)  
[National Museum of the American Indian](#) (24)  
[National Poetry Day](#) (1)  
[National Portrait Gallery](#) (4)  
[National Portrait Gallery Photographs](#) (1)  
[National Zoological Park](#) (3)  
[Native Americans](#) (4)  
[Natural history](#) (19)  
[Navigation](#) (1)  
[New Hebrides](#) (1)  
[New in the Catalog](#) (27)  
[No Shave November](#) (2)  
[Octavio Paz](#) (1)  
[Outdoor Sculpture](#) (12)  
[Paintings](#) (1)  
[Parker Tyler](#) (1)  
[Peter A. Juley & Son Collection](#) (1)  
[Photographers](#) (2)  
[Photographs](#) (327)  
[Pioneering Women Photographers in Africa project](#) (6)

[Poetry](#) (1)  
[Postal Museum](#) (1)  
[Postcards](#) (1)  
[Preservation](#) (22)  
[Presidents](#) (2)  
[Prints](#) (1)  
[Recovering Voices](#) (6)  
[Restoration](#) (4)  
[Sally Ride](#) (1)  
[Science and Technology](#) (48)  
[Scrapbooks](#) (1)  
[Series](#) (39)  
[Sister Blog](#) (21)  
[Smithsonian American Art Museum](#) (6)  
[Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative](#) (5)  
[Smithsonian History](#) (48)  
[Smithsonian History SOVA](#) (1)  
[Smithsonian Institution](#) (6)  
[Smithsonian Libraries](#) (3)  
[Smithsonian Staff](#) (53)  
[Smithsonian Volunteers](#) (11)  
[Sneak Peek From The Stacks](#) (25)  
[Sound Recordings](#) (18)  
[South America](#) (5)  
[SOVA](#) (10)  
[Sports](#) (2)  
[Standing Rock Agency](#) (1)  
[Stereographs](#) (1)  
[Survival guides](#) (1)  
[Suzanne Priebatsch](#) (1)  
[Tanzania](#) (1)  
[Textiles;Industry;Archives;South Carolina;Collection Spotlight;Business Archives](#) (1)  
[The People of India Series](#) (7)  
[The Profession](#) (25)  
[Theater](#) (1)  
[Transcription Center](#) (32)  
[True Story](#) (9)  
[United States Army Air Force](#) (1)  
[Women](#) (73)  
[Women Musicians](#) (2)  
[Women photographers](#) (5)  
[Women's History](#) (8)  
[Women's History Month](#) (9)  
[Works of Art](#) (32)  
[World War I](#) (6)  
[World War II](#) (4)  
[Yayoi Kusama](#) (2)

#### Blog Archive

April 2020 (3)

#### Blogs to Your Inbox

 Posts 

 Comments 

### Sister Smithsonian Blogs



#### Smithsonian Libraries

Wesley Chenault Named Associate  
Director for Strategic Initiatives and  
Programs

#### Eye Level

Luce Unplugged: Five Questions with  
Snakes

#### Archives of American Art Blog

Acquisitions: Galerie Darthea Speyer  
Records

#### The Affiliate

#### Transcription Center Blog

[Show All](#)