Guide to the Robert J. Squier Olmec Collection 1964

Author: SPK, 04/29/2015

Encoder:

Creator of Collection: Robert J. Squier

Collection Dates: June-July, 1964

Accession Number: 2015.01

Repository:
Archaeological Research Center (ARC)
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Abstract:
In June and July of 1964, Robert J. Squier conducted archaeological excavations at La Venta and El Tiestal in southern Veracruz and western Tabasco, Mexico. In addition, other sites that were stratigraphically sampled include, Cerro del Yucateco, El Remolino, La Ilusion and Ceiba Bonita. Robert J. Squier also visited the sites of Tres Zapotes, San Miguel, and San Lorenzo. There is no documentation that would indicate any testing took place at the visited sites.
The goal of the archaeological investigations was to procure stratigraphic and ceramic data to formulate a better understanding of the ceramic sequence in the region. Charcoal samples were hoped to be obtained from La Venta to check with those obtained from the 1955 excavations.
The project was funded by the University of Kansas General Research Fund. Robert J. Squier indicated in correspondence that he planned for a two year project that would be supported by a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant. There is no documentation present to indicate that this occurred. Robert J. Squier received permission from Mexico authorities to bring the 1964 collected materials to the University of Kansas. All documents and associated materials of this collection was produced by Robert J. Squier.

Access Restrictions: Prior notification to ARC staff is required.

Use Restrictions:
ARC staff may determine use restrictions dependent upon the physical condition of the document. Researchers may be required to either purchase or use photocopies of fragile documents.

**Extent:** 0.5 Linear Feet

**Dimensions:** One 5”x12”x11” Box

**Associated Records:**
Field Notes / Photograph logs / Catalogs / Financial Data / Correspondence / Publications / Miscellaneous Related Papers Postdating 1964

**Biographical Name:** Robert J. Squier

**Biographical Note:** Robert J. Squier was born in 1918 in Decatur, Michigan. He received his PhD from the University of California, Berkeley where he trained under Robert F. Heizer and John. H. Rowe, and was initially exposed to California and Mesoamerican archaeology. He joined the University of Kansas faculty in 1958 as an instructor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and research associate with the Natural History Museum. He became an assistant professor of anthropology when the discipline was formed into a separate department in 1962, and advanced to professor of anthropology by 1968. He held the position of department chair numerous times between 1964 and 1982. Robert J. Squier’s research interests focused on the formative period of Mesoamerica, dynamics of cultural growth in the archaic civilizations of the new world, cultural ecology, and history of anthropology. His fieldwork spanned 1949 to 1971 and included investigations in northern California, Nevada, and eastern Kansas in the United States, and the Valley of Mexico, Tabasco, and Veracruz in Mexico. Robert Squier’s fieldwork and research significantly added to the body of knowledge on Olmec archaeology in Mesoamerica and he frequently corresponded with other renowned Mesoamerican archaeologists such as, Matthew W. Sterling, Phillip Drucker, Michael D. Coe, and Tatiana Proskouriakoff. Additionally, his research added to the collections and created a legacy in Mesoamerican archaeological research at KU that continues today.

**Scope and Contents:**

The 1964 project resulted in test excavations at the sites of La Venta and El Tiestal. Other sites stratigraphically sampled include Cerro del Yucateco, El Remolino, La Ilusion and Ceiba Bonita. Robert J. Squier also visited numerous archaeological sites to take photographs. This included Tlatilco and Monte Alban among others.

The collection includes field notebooks with logs of picture rolls and notes on excavations of Pit B, B-1, and Pit C at La Venta. Field notes from excavations at La
Venta and El Tiestal from July 3-18, 1964. La Venta drawer counts, catalogs, categories of ceramic sherds, possible figurine fragments and other stone artifacts. Correspondence between Robert J. Squier and Robert F. Heizer about obtaining radiocarbon samples from La Venta. Correspondence between Robert J. Squier, Robert F. Heizer and radiocarbon dating facilities. Correspondence between Robert J. Squier and Mexico authorities regarding permission to excavate and take materials out of the country to the University of Kansas. Publications regarding radiocarbon dates from La Venta and miscellaneous notes of Robert J. Squier conclude the documents in this collection.

**Separated Material:** Photographs, Slides, Material Collections from Excavations

**Subject Terms:** Mesoamerica, Olmec, Archaeology, Radiocarbon Dating, Pottery, Ceramics, La Venta, El Tiestal, Tlatilco, Monte Alban, Cerro del Yucateco, El Remolino, La Ilusion, Ceiba Bonita

**Geographic Locations:** United States, Mexico, Tabasco, Veracruz

**Personal Names:** Robert J. Squier, Robert F. Heizer, Edna Flood, Frederick Peterson, Frank Morrison, Jose Benavente, C. W. Clelowlow JR., Rainer Berger, Frank Owen, John H. Vogel

**Corporate Names:** The University of Kansas, University of California Los Angeles, Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia (National Institute of Anthropology and History), National Science Foundation

**Language:** English and Spanish

**Acquisition Information:** Deposited with the University of Kansas on completion of the project. Materials were donated by the estate of Robert J. Squier.

**Custodial History:** Contents of the home of the late Robert J. Squier.

**Inventory:**

**FIELD NOTES / CATALOGS**

Box 1

Folder 1  Robert J. Squier’s field notebook number one. Contains field catalog numbers, site and excavation level data. (Original)

Folder 2  Photocopies of Folder 1 documents.

Folder 3  Robert J. Squier’s field notebook number two. Contains general notes and photographic roll numbers and descriptions. Roll numbers 1-4 are for three sites including Tlatilco, Monte Alban and La Venta. (Original)
Folder 4  Photocopies of Folder 3 documents.

Folder 5  Robert J. Squier’s field notebook number three. Contains notes about excavations at LaVenta and El Tiestal from July 3-18, 1964. (Original)

Folder 6  Photocopies of Folder 5 documents.

Folder 7  Field notes with sketches. Test excavations and associated slide numbers. Notes for Pit A, Pit B, Pit B-1, and Pit C. LaVenta drawer counts with catalog numbers, depths, pit association, categories of sherds, possible figurine fragments, stone/other material, unnumbered flakes, and total counts. (Originals)

Folder 8  Photocopies of Folder 7 documents.

FINANCIAL / LOGISTICS

Box 1

Folder 9  Cost of Program allowance (NSF). Preparatory hand written documents tallying estimated expenses and project objectives. Printed instructions for medical kits. (Originals)

Folder 10  Photocopies of Folder 9 documents.

CORRESPONDENCE

Box 1

Folder 11  Robert J. Squier with the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia (National Institute of Anthropology and History in Mexico) regarding permission to excavate and take materials out of Mexico. Robert J. Squier to Allan H. Smith of the NSF asking for grant application materials. Robert J. Squier to Frank Owen at the University of Kansas regarding vehicle rental. Robert J. Squier with John H. Vogel regarding reimbursement for travel expense to be made from the University of Kansas general research fund. (Originals)

Folder 12  Photocopies of Folder 11 documents.

Folder 13  Radiocarbon dating correspondence between Robert J. Squier, Robert F. Heizer and Rainer Berger at UCLA. Correspondence regards samples from 1964 and includes descriptions with some stratigraphic details. (Originals)

Folder 14  Photocopies of Folder 13 documents.
Folder 15  Personal correspondence of Robert J. Squier with Robert F. Heizer, Edna Flood and Frederick Peterson. (Originals)

Folder 16  Photocopies of Folder 15 documents.

**PUBLICATIONS / MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS**

Box 1


Folder 18  Photocopies of Folder 17 documents.

**POST 1964 MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENTS**

Box 1

Robert J. Squier’s Miscellaneous Hand Written Notes about the La Venta Pyramid. Hand Written Notes with Heading “Antover: tehuacan ceramics, Fred Johnson C-14 dates accepted for Mesoamerican sites, manioc pollen preservation.” Dates for these documents are from 1968-1970. (Originals)

Folder 20  Photocopies of Folder 19 documents.