Franklin H. Williams Akan Goldweight Collection

Prepared by Dana Chandler, 2007

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**Tuskegee University Archives and Museums**

**Tuskegee, AL 36088**

Tuskegee University Archives and Museums

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**Collection Summary**

**Creator:** Franklin H. Williams

**Title:** Franklin H. Williams Akan Goldweight Collection

**Dates:** February 28, 1985

**Quantity:** One Box

**Identification:**

**Abstract:** Akan (Ghana) goldweights presented to Tuskegee University for its permanent African Collection by Dr. Franklin H. Williams, former United States Ambassador to Ghana. Weights range in age from 150 to 300 years and were used by the Akan peoples of Ghana as counter weights for gold dust in all commercial transactions.

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**Administrative Information**

**Preferred Citation**

Franklin H. Williams Akan Goldweight Collection

**Acquisition Information**

Presented to Mr. Daniel T. Williams, Archivist at Tuskegee University, on

February 28, 1985 by Mr. Franklin H. Williams.

**Processing Information**

Not Applicable

**Index Terms**

The artifact collection is indexed under the following headings in the Tuskegee University Libraries online catalog. Researchers seeking materials about related subjects, persons, organizations or places should search the catalog using these headings.

**Subjects:**

Ashanti (African people)

Goldweights, Ashanti

Goldweights, Akan

Akan (African people)

Goldweights, Ghana

**Persons:**

Franklin H. Williams

**History**

Collection includes Goldweights from the West African nation of Ghana. Specifically pieces are Akan bronzes (copper/tin alloy) that were made using the lost wax process. For over five centuries, approximately 1440 to 1900 C.E., Akan smiths cast weights in a immense variety of styles. T.F. Garrard created a chronology for the Goldweights that stipulated two major periods: an early period dating from 1400 to 1700, and a late period from 1700 to 1900. Garrard further defined the early period with two sub-periods of 1500 to 1720 and 1600 to 1720. The earliest weights were of plain geometric design with early introduction of simple decorations such as incised lines, dots, and cut edges. These primitive pieces were followed by a complexly sculpted, artistically advanced version of the geometric shapes that exhibit highly detailed decorations which continued into the late period and are easily identified by the elegance of their design. The first figurative or representational weights were created midway through the early period, around 1600. By the late period these marvelous representations of everyday Akan life had evolved into remarkable miniature sculptures that exhibited a delicate complex design in the more pronounced natural presentation, thus demonstrating a clear advancement of technical skill in the castings themselves.

**Scope and Contents**

Franklin H. Williams Akan Goldweight Collection consists of one archival box

containing one acid free folder with correspondence between Franklin H.

Williams and Tuskegee Archivist, Daniel T. Williams and a variety of

photographs; and Akan artifacts.

**Arrangement**

The collection is arranged into one series:

Series I: Franklin H. Williams Akan Goldweight Collection

**Restrictions**

**Restrictions on Access**

See Tuskegee University archives and museum for proper forms.

**Restrictions on Use**

Researchers are responsible for addressing copyright issues on materials not in the public domain.

**Inventory**

**Series I:** Franklin H. Williams Akan Goldweight Collection

**Box Folder**

1 1 Correspondence and photographs.

Artifacts listing:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Number** | **Object** | **Place of Origin** | **Case** | **Notes** |
| 75.1.1 | Container | Furuwa | 18 | w/ Lid |
| 75.1.2 | Goldweight | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.3 | Goldweight – Fish Head | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.4 | Goldweight – Horn | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.5 | Goldweight – Horn | Ghana | 18 | 2 Each |
| 75.1.6 | Goldweight – Horn | Ghana | 18 | 2 Each |
| 75.1.7 | Goldweight – Knot | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.8 | Goldweight – Knot | Ghana | 18 | 4 Each |
| 75.1.9 | Goldweight – Seed Pod (Also Same Mark Tri-Pod) | Ghana | 18 | 2 Marked Same |
| 75.1.10 | Goldweight – Drum | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.11 | Goldweight | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.12 | Goldweight  DSI. Headed Snake | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.13 | Goldweight – Lock | Ghana | 18 | 3 Each |
| 75.1.14 | Goldweight – Geometric | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.15 | Goldweight – Geometric | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.16 | Goldweight – Geometric | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.17 | Goldweight – Geometric | Ghana | 18 | 3 Each |
| 75.1.18 | Goldweight – Balance Bar | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.19 | Goldweight – Bells | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.20 | Goldweight – Geometric | Ghana | 18 | 2 Each |
| 75.1.21 | Goldweight | Ghana | 18 | 3 Each |
| 75.1.22 | Goldweight – Geometric | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.23 | Goldweight – Geometric | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.24 | Goldweight – Geometric | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.25 | Goldweight – Geometric | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.26 | Goldweight – Cock’s Head | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.27 | Goldweight – Bird | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.28 | Goldweight – Beetle | Ghana | 18 | 2 Each |
| 75.1.29 | Goldweight – Sheep | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.30 | Goldweight – Fan | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.31 | Goldweight – Axe | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.32 | Goldweight – Fan | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.33 | Goldweight – Stool | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.34 | Goldweight – Knife | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.35 | Goldweight – Knife | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.36 | Goldweight – Shield | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.37 | Goldweight – Cartridge Belt | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.38 | Tray from a Scale | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.39 | Tray from a Scale | Ghana | 18 |  |
| 75.1.40 | Goldweight – Shield | Ghana | 18 |  |
| No Number | Fan Design | Ghana |  | In with above labeled scale |
| No Number | 4 ea. Shield Design | Ghana |  | Labeled Ritual Objects |
| No Number | 1 ea. Lantern | Ghana |  | Labeled Ritual Objects |
| No Number | Cannon | Ghana |  |  |
| No Number | Small Knife | Ghana |  |  |
| No Number | Compass | Ghana |  |  |
| No Number | Axe | Ghana |  |  |
| No Number | Compass | Ghana |  |  |
| No Number | Medium Geometric Shapes | Ghana |  | 3 Each |
| No Number | Ceremonial Knots | Ghana |  | 3 Each |
| No Number | Wheel Lg. Insect Style | Ghana |  | 3 Each |
| No Number | Bird Cane Head | Ghana |  |  |
| No Number | Sword Scabbard | Ghana |  |  |
| No Number | X-Large Geometric | Ghana |  | 2 Each |
| No Number | Eye Shape (Lg.) | Ghana |  |  |
| No Number | Grave Marker | Ghana |  |  |
| No Number | Pistol | Ghana |  |  |
| No Number | Scepter | Ghana |  |  |
| No Number | Small Geometric Shape | Ghana |  |  |