The Archives is the administrative memory of the Penn Museum, as well as the repository for the scientific records of the institution’s many field expeditions worldwide. By virtue of its impressive photographic and art collections, the Archives also functions as the de facto Museum curatorial section for prints, drawings, and photographs.

Many of these items, such as 19th-century albumen photographs of sites from Egypt to the American Southwest, were collected for research and display in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In subsequent decades, the Museum’s photographic collections became more specialized and centered on its own field projects, which also included the use of specialized recording, such as aerial, underwater, and microscope photography.

In the contemporary digital era, photography continues to change, but the power and beauty of a vintage black-and-white photographic print endures. In recent years the Archives has received donations of several collections of prints by professional photographers covering the broad themes of anthropology, archaeology, and documentation.

William L. Potter, WG88, and Joanne S. Ruckel, WG88, recently gave us two such sets of prints, in 2012 and 2013, comprising the work of several well-known photographers, and including some by the photography luminary Henri Cartier-Bresson. We present a small sample of these works.

—Alessandro Pezzati, Senior Archivist

KEN HEYMAN, famous photojournalist for Life magazine and Margaret Mead’s photographer, is known for the universality of his images, and their strong sense of human dignity. The selection of his prints gifted to the Museum by Potter and Ruckel are from places such as Mexico, Portugal, and Japan. THIS PAGE: Man in patched hat, white hair on chin, hands around walking stick. Kenya, ca. 1964. UPM Image #238706. Band playing trumpets, tuba, and trombones. Mexico, 1960. UPM Image #238707. Hands and silver urn. India, 1965. UPM Image #238710. Photographs by Ken Heyman.