

**N. C. Gerson Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2007**

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm97084060>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms009090>

Prepared by T. Michael Womack

Finding aid encoded by Glenn R. Gardner, 2009  
Revised 2010 April

## Collection Summary

**Title:** N. C. Gerson Papers

**Span Dates:** 1928-1998

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1950-1970)

**ID No.:** MSS84060

**Creator:** Gerson, N. C.

**Extent:** 6,300 items

**Extent:** 18 containers

**Extent:** 7.2 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm97084060>

**Summary:** Research physicist. Correspondence, biographical material, drafts and offprints of scientific articles, memoranda, minutes, notes and equations, reports, research material, rosters, schematics, and other papers documenting Gerson's career as a research physicist and his service as a member of the United States National Committee for the International Geophysical Year (1957-1958).

## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

### People

Gerson, N. C.

### Organizations

American Geophysical Union.

Cosmos Club (Washington, D.C.)

Mitre Corporation.

National Academy of Sciences (U.S.)

Syracuse University. Research Corporation.

United States. National Committee for the International Geophysical Year.

### Subjects

Airglow.

Artificial satellites in ionospheric research.

Atmosphere, Upper--Rocket observations.

Auroras.

Ballistics--Research.

Cosmic rays.

Geomagnetism.

Geophysics--International cooperation.

Glaciology.

Gravity.

International Geophysical Year (1957-1958)

Meteorology.

Oceanography.

Radio wave propagation.

Rockets (Aeronautics)

Science--International cooperation.

Science--Soviet Union.

Science--United States.

Scientific expeditions--Antarctica.

Scientific expeditions--Arctic regions.

Seismology.  
Solar activity.

**Occupations**  
Physicists.

## Provenance

The papers of Nathaniel C. Gerson, research physicist, were given to the Library of Congress by Gerson in two installments from 1997 to 1999.

## Processing History

The Gerson Papers were processed in 1999. The finding aid was revised in 2007.

## Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of N. C. Gerson is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of N. C. Gerson are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, N. C. Gerson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
1915, Oct. 15	Born, Boston, Mass.
1938-1946	Technical Investigations Section, United States Weather Bureau
1944	B.S., physics, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, P.R.
1945	Married Sareen R. Epstein
1946-1948	Assistant, LF Loran Evaluation, Watson Laboratories, United States Army Air Force, Ft. Monmouth, N.J.
1948	M.S., physics, New York University, New York, N.Y.
1948-1951	Chairman, Tropospheric Propagation Committee, United States Air Force Member, Ionospheric Propagation Committee, United States Air Force
1948-1955	Chief, Ionospheric Physics Laboratory, Air Force Cambridge Research Center, United States Air Force, Cambridge, Mass.
1949-1952	Member, United States Civil Service Commission
1952	Member, United States Air Force Committee to evaluate Alaskan Radar Defenses
1953-1955	Chairman, first two Antarctic committees, United States National Committee for the International Geophysical Year

1953-1957	Secretary, National Committee for the International Geophysical Year Secretary, Executive Committee, National Committee for the International Geophysical Year
1954-1955	Assigned by American Geophysical Union to negotiate with Merle Tuve for transfer of <i>Journal of Geophysical Research</i> from the Carnegie Institution, Washington, D.C., to American Geophysical Union
1954-1958	Member, Ionospheric Panel, National Committee for the International Geophysical Year Member, Rocket and Space Panel, National Committee for the International Geophysical Year
1955-1958	Vice-chairman, Arctic Committee, National Committee for the International Geophysical Year Chairman, Advertising Committee, American Geophysical Union
1956	Consultant, Department of Defense, Washington, D.C. Consultant, National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C.
1956-2001	Senior scientist, National Security Agency
1959-1960	Consultant, Lincoln Laboratory, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Lexington, Mass.
1960-1965	Advanced Research Projects Agency, Washington, D.C.
1965-1968	Staff scientist, Mitre Corp., Bedford, Mass.
1966-1969	Consultant, Syracuse University Research Corp., Syracuse, N.Y.
1968-1970	Staff scientist, Syracuse University Research Corp., Syracuse, N.Y. Consultant, Mitre Corp., Bedford, Mass.
2002, Jan. 11	Died, Millersville, Md.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Nathaniel Charles Gerson (1915-2002) span the years 1928-1998, with the bulk of the items concentrated in the period 1950-1970. The collection focuses on Gerson's career as a research physicist, particularly on his involvement with the International Geophysical Year (1957-1958). The collection consists of four series: [General Correspondence](#), [United States National Committee for the International Geophysical Year](#), [Writings](#), and [Subject File](#). Included in the papers are biographical material, correspondence, drafts and offprints of scientific papers, memoranda, minutes, notes and equations, reports, research material, rosters, schematics, and miscellaneous material.

The [General Correspondence](#) series consists of letters sent and received primarily from family members, friends, colleagues, employers, business suppliers, and professional organizations, such as Mitre Corporation, Syracuse University Research Corporation, American Geophysical Union, National Academy of Sciences, and companies supplying scientific equipment for expeditions. The series also contains correspondence relating to the education of Gerson's children, recommendations for membership in the Cosmos Club, with which Gerson was very involved, and lists of books and serials on physics donated to the library at Brandeis University.

The [United States National Committee for the International Geophysical Year](#) series is the largest in the collection. From 1953 to 1957 Gerson served as secretary of both the organization and its executive committee. The series provides information regarding the planning and execution of projects and expeditions undertaken during the International Geophysical Year. Subjects include budget estimates on projects, ballistics research and rocket exploration of the upper atmosphere, expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctica, and cooperative efforts with the Soviet Union.

The [Writings](#) series is organized in two parts. Writings by Gerson include drafts and offprints of scientific papers dealing with various aspects in physics. Writings by others represent drafts and offprints by colleagues and associates. Used frequently by Gerson as reference material, these relate to meteorology, geomagnetism, aurora and airglow, ionospheric physics, solar activity, cosmic rays, glaciology, radio propagation, oceanography, rockets and satellites, seismology, and gravity.

The [Subject File](#) consists of both personal and professional material. The former includes biographical material and information relating to the Cosmos Club. Files more professional in nature include lists of classified records destroyed, notes and equations on physics, and issues of *RASO*, published by Radio Amateur Scientific Observations, an amateur radio organization cofounded by Gerson to provide general research information.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in four series:

- [General Correspondence, 1950-1998](#)
- [United States National Committee for the International Geophysical Year, 1928-1961](#)
- [Writings, 1940-1998](#)
- [Subject File, 1947-1996](#)

## Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-6	<p><b><u>General Correspondence, 1950-1998</u></b></p> <p>Letters sent and received with attached and related material. Arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX 6-12	<p><b><u>United States National Committee for the International Geophysical Year, 1928-1961</u></b></p> <p>Budget material, correspondence, memoranda, minutes, reports, research material, rosters, schematics, and miscellaneous material. Arranged by type of material and chronologically therein.</p>
BOX 13-17	<p><b><u>Writings, 1940-1998</u></b></p> <p>Drafts and offprints of scientific papers and articles. Arranged under authorship by Gerson or by others and chronologically therein.</p>
BOX 17-18	<p><b><u>Subject File, 1947-1996</u></b></p> <p>Biographical material, lists, notes, schematics, and miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically by subject, type of material, or name of individual or organization and chronologically therein.</p>

# Container List

<b>Container</b>	<b>Contents</b>
<b>BOX 1-6</b>	<b>General Correspondence, 1950-1998</b> Letters sent and received with attached and related material. Arranged chronologically.
<b>BOX 1</b>	1950-1964 (9 folders)
<b>BOX 1</b>	1965
<b>BOX 1</b>	Jan.-June (4 folders)
<b>BOX 2</b>	July-Dec. (3 folders)
<b>BOX 2</b>	1966 (9 folders)
<b>BOX 2</b>	1967
<b>BOX 2</b>	Jan.
<b>BOX 3</b>	Feb.-Dec. (5 folders)
<b>BOX 3</b>	1968 (7 folders)
<b>BOX 4</b>	1969-1970 (11 folders)
<b>BOX 4</b>	1971
<b>BOX 4</b>	Jan.-July (2 folders)
<b>BOX 5</b>	Aug.-Dec.
<b>BOX 5</b>	1972-1976 (11 folders)
<b>BOX 5</b>	1977
<b>BOX 5</b>	Jan.-Apr.
<b>BOX 6</b>	May-Dec. (2 folders)
<b>BOX 6</b>	1978-1979, 1985-1998, undated (5 folders)
<b>BOX 6-12</b>	<b>United States National Committee for the International Geophysical Year, 1928-1961</b> Budget material, correspondence, memoranda, minutes, reports, research material, rosters, schematics, and miscellaneous material. Arranged by type of material and chronologically therein.
<b>BOX 6</b>	Budget, 1954-1958, undated
<b>BOX 6</b>	Correspondence, 1948-1958, undated (4 folders)
<b>BOX 6</b>	Memoranda

# United States National Committee for the International Geophysical Year, 1928-1961

Container	Contents
BOX 6	1953-1954
BOX 6	1955
BOX 6	Jan.-May (2 folders)
BOX 7	June-Dec. (6 folders)
BOX 7	1956-1960, undated (8 folders)
BOX 8	Minutes
BOX 8	1953-1954 (11 folders)
BOX 8	1955
BOX 8	Jan.-Feb. (4 folders)
BOX 9	Mar.-Nov. (14 folders)
BOX 10	Dec.
BOX 10	1956-1958 (3 folders)
BOX 10	Miscellany, 1953-1961, undated
BOX 10	Reports
BOX 10	1953-1954 (9 folders)
BOX 11	1955-1957 (12 folders)
BOX 12	1958, undated (10 folders)
BOX 12	Research material, 1928-1946, 1954, undated (5 folders)
BOX 12	Rosters, 1955, undated
BOX 12	Schematics, 1949, undated
BOX 13-17	<b>Writings, 1940-1998</b> Drafts and offprints of scientific papers and articles. Arranged under authorship by Gerson or by others and chronologically therein.
BOX 13	By Gerson
BOX 13	Notes and fragments, 1964-1989, undated (3 folders)
BOX 13	Texts
BOX 13	1945-1968 (14 folders)
BOX 14	1969, 1977, 1984-1987, 1997, undated (11 folders)
BOX 14	By others
BOX 14	1940, 1950-1951 (3 folders)



## Writings, 1940-1998

Container	Contents
BOX 15	1953-1962 (14 folders)
BOX 16	1963-1991 (13 folders)
BOX 17	1998, undated (4 folders)
BOX 17-18	<b>Subject File, 1947-1996</b> Biographical material, lists, notes, schematics, and miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically by subject, type of material, or name of individual or organization and chronologically therein.
BOX 17	Biographical material, 1970, 1989-1996, undated
BOX 17	Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C., 1990
BOX 17	Destruction of classified records, lists, 1959-1965 (5 folders)
BOX 17	Miscellany, 1965-1968, 1978, 1995-1996, undated
BOX 17	Physics, notes and equations
BOX 17	1965-1966 (3 folders)
BOX 18	1967-1973, undated (6 folders)
BOX 18	Radio Amateur Scientific Observations (RASO), 1950-1951 (2 folders)
BOX 18	Schematics, 1947-1963, undated (3 folders)