

George Frederick Kunz Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2023

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm77029041>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms022014>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Manuscript Division staff, 2022

Collection Summary

Title: George Frederick Kunz Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1783-1930

Bulk Dates: 1890-1922

ID No.: MSS29041

Creator: Kunz, George Frederick, 1856-1932

Extent: 1,700 items

Extent: 5 containers plus 3 oversize

Extent: 2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English, with Russian, German, and French

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm77029041>

Summary: Gemologist and geologist. Correspondence, notes, speeches, typescripts, broadsides, certificates, clippings, illuminated Russian manuscripts, maps, minutes, pamphlets, photographs, printed matter, reports, and other papers relating to Kunz's career as a gemologist and geologist, with a chief focus on the mineralogy of Russia and Kunz's trip to Russia in 1891, his involvement with the American Museum of Safety (renamed Safety Institute of America in 1918), New York, N.Y., and his work on an appendix about the construction of bridges and tunnels on the Hudson River.

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

Cooke, Robert Grier, 1864-1924--Correspondence.

Fielder, James F. (James Fairman), 1867-1954--Correspondence.

Hawkes, McDougall, 1862-1929--Correspondence.

Kunz, George Frederick, 1856-1932.

Kümmel, Henry Barnard, 1867-1945--Correspondence.

McAdoo, W. G. (William Gibbs), 1863-1941--Correspondence.

O'Keefe, Arthur J., 1866--Correspondence.

Saxe, Martin, 1874-1967--Correspondence.

Sulzer, William, 1863-1941--Correspondence.

Tolman, William Howe, 1861-1958--Correspondence.

Williams, Arthur, 1868-1937--Correspondence.

Organizations

American Museum of Safety.

New York (N.Y.). Department of Bridges--Correspondence.

New York (N.Y.). Department of Docks and Ferries--Correspondence.

Safety Institute of America.

Tiffany and Company.

Subjects

Bridges--New York (State)

Gemology.

Geology--New York (State)

Geology.

Industrial hygiene--United States.

Industrial safety--United States.

Land tenure--Russia--Volga-Ural Region.

Mineralogy--Russia.

Museums--New York (State)--New York.

Precious stones--Russia--Ural Mountains Region.

Safety education, Industrial--United States.
Tunnels--New York (State)
Working class--Health aspects--United States.

Places

Hudson River (N.Y. and N.J.)
Russia--Description and travel.
Ural Mountains Region (Russia)--Description and travel.
Volga-Ural Region (Russia)--History.

Occupations

Gemologists.
Geologists.

Acquisition Information

The papers of George Frederick Kunz were given to the Library of Congress by Opal Logan Kunz between 1933 and 1934. Foundling material was added to the collection in 2017.

Processing History

The papers of George Frederick Kunz were minimally arranged and described by Allyson Davies in 1970. Additional arrangement and description as well as conservation was completed by Shandra Morehouse and Pang H. Xiong in 2022. Due to the condition of the collection, all items have been cleaned.

Other Repositories

Other collections of George Frederick Kunz can be found at the United States Geological Survey Library, Reston, Virginia, and the New-York Historical Society Museum and Library, New York, New York.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

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

Preferred Citation

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

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1856, Sept. 29	Born, New York, N.Y.

- 1879 Married Sophia Leore Handforth (died 1912)
- 1879-1932 Gem expert and vice president, Tiffany and Co., New York, N.Y.
- 1883-1909 Special agent, Geological Survey (U.S.)
- 1886 Cofounder, New York Mineralogical Club, New York, N.Y.
- 1889 In charge of mining exhibits, Exposition universelle de 1889, Paris, France
- 1890 Published *Gems and Precious Stones of North America: A Popular Description of Their Occurrence, Value, History, Archeology, and of the Collections in Which They Exist, also a Chapter on Pearls and on Remarkable Foreign Gems Owned in the United States*. New York: Scientific Publishing Co.
- 1891 Trip to Russia
- 1892 In charge of mining exhibits, South African and International Exhibition, Kimberley, South Africa
Published *Natal Stones: Sentiments and Superstition Connected with Precious Stones*. New York: Tiffany and Co.
- 1893 In charge of mining exhibits, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill.
- 1895 In charge of mining exhibits, Cotton States Exposition, Atlanta, Ga.
- 1898 Received honorary A.M., Columbia University, New York, N.Y.
- 1902 Gemstone discovered and eventually named Kunzite in honor of Kunz
- 1903 Received honorary Ph.D., Philipps-Universität Marburg, Marburg, Germany
- 1904 Commissioner on radium, Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis, Mo.
- 1907 Received honorary Sc.D., Knox College, Galesburg, Ill.
- 1908 Published with Charles Hugh Stevenson *Book of the Pearl: The History, Art, Science, and Industry of the Queen of Gems*. New York: The Century Co.
- 1911-1922 Member, Board of Trustees, and chair, Plan and Scope Committee, American Museum of Safety (renamed Safety Institute of America in 1918), New York, N.Y.
- 1913 Founder and president, Museum of Peaceful Arts (later New York Museum of Science and Industry), New York, N.Y.
Published *Curious Lore of Precious Stones: Being a Description of Their Sentiments and Folk Lore, Superstitions, Symbolism, Mysticism, Use in Medicine, Protection, Prevention, Religion, and Divination. Crystal Gazing, Birthstones, Lucky Stones and Talismans, Astral, Zodiacal, and Planetary*. Philadelphia & London: J. B. Lippincott Co.
- 1915 Published *Magic of Jewels and Charms*. Philadelphia & London: J. B. Lippincott Co.
- 1916 Published *Ivory and the Elephant in Art, in Archaeology, and in Science*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Co.
- 1917 Published *Rings for the Finger: From the Earliest Known Times to the Present, with Full Descriptions of the Origin, Early Making, Materials, the Archaeology, History, for Affection, for Love, for Engagement, for Wedding, Commemorative, Mourning, etc.* Philadelphia & London: J. B. Lippincott Co.
- 1923 Married Opal Logan Giberson (annulled 1929)
- 1932, June 29 Died, New York, N.Y.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of George Frederick Kunz (1856-1932) span the years 1783-1930, with the bulk of the material dating from 1890 to 1922. The collection covers some aspects of Kunz's career as a gemologist and geologist. There is a primary focus on the mineralogy of Russia and Kunz's trip to Russia in 1891, his involvement with the American Museum of Safety (renamed the Safety Institute of America), and his work on the geology of the Hudson River in relation to bridge and tunnel construction in New York. The papers are primarily in English with some material in Russian, German, and French.

The majority of the collection includes clippings, correspondence, maps, notes, photographs, printed matter, and typescripts relating to Russia and the mineralogy of Russia, including Kunz's trip to the Ural Mountains region in 1891. He was sent by Tiffany and Company to Russia to study the country's lapidary work and report on the precious stones found in the region. Also noteworthy are land papers of the Volga-Ural Region from 1783 to 1785.

Another substantive portion of the papers relate to Kunz's activities as a member of the Board of Trustees and chair of the Plan and Scope Committee of the American Museum of Safety. Also documented is the museum's mission to educate and ensure the health, safety, and welfare of industrial workers and to help advance the science of industry. Correspondents include William Howe Tolman and Arthur Williams.

The collection also contains correspondence, research material, and a typescript of an appendix Kunz wrote about the bridges, geology, and tunnels of the Hudson River in New York, New York. Correspondents include Robert Grier Cooke, James F. Fielder, McDougall Hawkes, Henry Barnard Kümmel, W. G. McAdoo, the New York Department of Bridges, the New York Department of Docks and Ferries, Arthur J. O'Keeffe, Martin Saxe, and William Sulzer.

Arrangement of the Collection

This collection is arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	American Museum of Safety, New York, N.Y.
BOX 1	Articles about safety, 1911-1912
BOX 1	Board of trustees meetings, 1913-1922 (4 folders)
BOX 1	<i>Communication to the Trustees</i> , bulletin, 1922
BOX 1	Correspondence, 1910-1922 (5 folders)
BOX 1	Dinner menus and invitations, 1913-1917
BOX 1	General, 1913, undated
BOX 1	International Exposition of Safety and Sanitation, New York, N.Y., 1913
BOX 2	Medals, 1913, undated
BOX OV 1	Poster, undated
BOX 2	Printed matter, 1912-1919, undated
BOX 2	Safety pamphlets and publications by the American Museum of Safety, 1913-1922
BOX OV 2	Awards and certificates, 1889-1898, 1904, 1915, 1921-1927, undated
BOX OV 2	Broadsides and proclamations, 1903-1907, 1924-1928
BOX 2	"Daylight Saving for Economic, Preparedness, Health, and Social Reasons," speech, 1917
BOX OV 2	Diagrams, Congrès International des Mines et de la Métallurgie, 1900
BOX 2	General correspondence, 1879-1930, undated (7 folders)
BOX 3	"Geology of the Hudson River and Its Relation to Bridges and Tunnels," appendix
BOX 3	Correspondence and research material, 1910-1919 (2 folders)
BOX 3	Typescripts, 1910-1913 (2 folders)
BOX 3	Kunz, Elizabeth H. ("Bessie"), notebook, 1911
BOX 3	Miscellany, 1883, 1891-1895, 1902, 1910-1913, undated
BOX 3	Russia
BOX 3	Correspondence, 1878, 1891-1892, 1901, 1908
BOX OV 2	Illuminated Russian manuscripts, land papers of the Volga-Ural Region, 1783-1785
BOX OV 3	Maps, 1885, undated
BOX 3	Maps, 1890-1891, undated
BOX 3	Notes, speeches, and writings
BOX 3	Fragments, 1891, undated
BOX 3	Metallurgy, mineralogy, and mining, circa 1890s
BOX 4	Metallurgy, mineralogy, and mining, circa 1890s
BOX 4	Russian crown jewels, 1882, undated
BOX 4	"Russia Social," undated
BOX 4	Photographs, circa 1891
BOX 4	Printed matter
BOX 4	L'Exposition de Moscou, Moscow, Russia, 1891-1896
BOX OV 2	L'Exposition de Moscou, Moscow, Russia, circa 1891

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 4	General, 1874, 1903-1905, undated
BOX 4	Metallurgy, mineralogy, and mining, 1877, 1887-1898, undated (2 folders)
BOX 4	Russian life and politics, 1864, 1879, 1890-1893, 1899-1907, 1920, undated
BOX 5	Russian life and politics, 1864, 1879, 1890-1893, 1899-1907, 1920, undated (2 folders)
BOX 5	Religious ephemera and pamphlets, 1881-1889
BOX 5	Tiffany, Charles Lewis, biographical information, 1898-1902, 1916, 1928