



Smithsonian

National Museum of the American Indian

Joseph W. Keppler, Jr. collection
of negatives and photographs

2011

National Museum of the American Indian
4220 Silver Hill Rd
Suitland, Maryland 20746-2863
Business Number: Phone: 301.238.1400
Fax Number: Fax: 301.238.3038
nmaiarchives@si.edu
<http://nmai.si.edu/explore/collections/archive/>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Museum of the American Indian
Title:	Joseph W. Keppler, Jr. collection of negatives and photographs
Date:	1870-1947
Identifier:	NMAI.AC.001.016
Creator:	Keppler, Udo J., 1872-1956 Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation Fly, C. S. (Camillus Sidney), 1849-1901
Extent:	79 Photographic prints (black and white) 129 Negatives (photographic) (black and white)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Images depict the Seneca Iroquois Indians on the Cattaraugus Reservation in New York.

Administrative Information

Provenance

Historically, the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation managed all photographic and related manuscript collections separately. This collection description represents current management practices of organizing and contextualizing related archival materials.

Processing Information

NMAIA Review

Preferred Citation

Joseph W. Keppler, Jr. collection of negatives and photographs, National Museum of the American Indian Archives, Smithsonian Institution (negative, slide or catalog number).

Restrictions

Access is by appointment only, Monday - Friday, 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. Please contact the archives to make an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

Restricted: Cultural Sensitivity

Biographical Note

Udo J. Keppler, who changed his name to Joseph W. Keppler, Jr. in honor of his father, was a political cartoonist for Puck Magazine and an avid collector of Indian artifacts, as well as being an Indian activist. This interest led him

to an association with George G. Heye, director of the Museum of the American Indian. Keppler often acted as an intermediary between other collectors and Native artisans, facilitating the expansion of the Iroquois collection of the Museum of the American Indian and others. He was elected honorary chief of the Seneca in 1899 and given the name Gy-ant-wa-ka.

Biographical / Historical

Born Udo J. Keppler, Joseph W. Keppler (1872-1956), or "Kep," was the son of Joseph Keppler, the great political cartoonist and founder and publisher of the popular and highly influential magazine, Puck. The younger Keppler was born in St. Louis, Missouri and educated in Munich, Germany and New York City. Like his father, he too was a political cartoonist. He became the art director at Puck and, when his father died in 1894, took over as publisher. Joseph W. Keppler ran the magazine until he sold it in 1914. The younger Keppler's two great interests in life were said to be Puck and American Indians. Evidently, Keppler's deep interest in Indians and Indian affairs developed out of his desire to collect Indian objects and his friendship with Mrs. Harriet Maxwell Converse, an early advocate for Native rights. Through Converse, Keppler built friendships with Iroquois living on reservations in New York State and Canada, but especially with Senecas living on the Cattaraugus and Tonawanda reservations in New York. At Converse's funeral in 1903, the 31-year-old Keppler was adopted by the Seneca Nation and made a member of the Wolf Clan. Like Converse, Keppler served as an advocate for Senecas. Most importantly, he worked to help defeat or modify plans to allot Iroquois reservations in New York State. Keppler became a major collector of American Indian objects and his passion to collect led to an association with George G. Heye. In 1901, Heye apparently accompanied Keppler to the Seneca and Cattaraugus Reservations; this trip might have been Heye's first to a Native community. From 1927 to 1942, Keppler served on the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation board of trustees and for a time was also the Museum's vice president. In 1944, Keppler and his (second) wife Vera left New York and moved to California. Keppler died in La Jolla, California, at the age of 84.

Scope and Contents

The Keppler collection consists primarily of informal portraits of Seneca men and women made in 1900, 1904, 1905, 1908 and 1910. Keppler made most of these photographs on the Cattaraugus Reservation (including a photograph of Edward Cornplanter's Indian and Minstrel show) but also on the Tonawanda, Onondaga, and Allegany Reservations. Aside from the portraits, the photographs depict Seneca dwellings and ceremonials. Also by Keppler is a group of photographs depicting Seneca and Cayuga athletes playing lacrosse and standing for a group portrait. These he made in 1902 at the Crescent Athletic Club in New York City. In New York State, he also photographed Oneida, Onondaga, and Tuscarora individuals. The collection includes several portraits of Keppler and approximately 15 photographs dated ca. 1937 of the interior of Keppler's home. The latter showcase Keppler's American Indian object collection. He also made portraits of Native sitters in his home. There are several photographs in the collection that Keppler did not make. Among them is an 1886 print by Camillus S. Fly entitled "Council between General Crook and Geronimo," and studio portrait made before 1870 of a group of Kiowa sitters, including Lone Wolf and his wife, and full-length studio portrait of a Shoshone or Bannock man dating ca. 1870. Some of the negatives are later copy negatives.

Arrangement

Negatives Arranged by negative number (N18567-N18589, N21231-N21314, N21803-N21806, N23071, N23087, N23089, N23091, N23093, N23095-N23096, N23106-N23114, N34852, N36800-N36801, N37887)

Prints Arranged by print number (P00277, P01535-P01536, P01622, P01625, P01652, P01737-P01738, P02640, P10029, P12499-P12518, P13246-P13247, P13252-P13253, P13256, P13258, P13756, P16081, P16084, P16111, P16112, P16114, P25274-P25295, P37581)

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Cayuga
- Chiricahua Apache
- Kiowa
- Oneida
- Onondaga
- Seneca
- Tuscarora

Cultures:

- Cayuga
- Chiricahua Apache
- Kiowa
- Oneida
- Onondaga
- Seneca
- Tuscarora

Types of Materials:

- Black-and-white negatives
- Photographic prints
- Photographs

Places:

- Cattaraugus Indian Reservation (N.Y.)