



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the F.C. Brown Papers

NMAH.AC.0693

Jennifer Hecker

August 2000

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Arrangement.....	3
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Names and Subjects	4
Container Listing	5
Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1905-1940.....	5
Series 2: Correspondence, 1902 - 1964, undated.....	6
Series 3: Inventions, 1904 - 1942.....	7
Series 4 : U. S. Army Ordnance Department, 1918 - 1921.....	8
Series 5: U. S. Bureau of Standards, 1917 - 1926.....	9
Series 6: Museum Work, 1927 - 1941.....	10
Series 7: Photographs: Museums of the Peaceful Arts, Museum of Science and Industry, New York City, undated	11
Series 8: American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), 1932 - 1937.....	14
Series 9: Photographs: Other Subjects, 1907 - 1939.....	15
Series 10: Miscellaneous, 1910-circa 1945, undated.....	17

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	F. C. Brown Papers
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0693
Date:	1902 - 1964
Extent:	4.5 Cubic feet (17 boxes)
Creator:	Brown, F.C. (Fay Cluff)
Language:	English Some materials in German.
Summary:	F.C. Brown was a physicist and inventor who created and supervised the development of education exhibits, most notably as organizing director of the New York Museum of Science and Industry (part of the Museums of the Peaceful Arts), 1926-1931. He was also curator of physics exhibits at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry, 1932-1937. Much of Brown's scientific research focused on the element selenium. He invented the phonopticon, an improvement on the optophone (invented by Fournier d'Albe, 1912). Material focuses on Dr. Brown's professional life: correspondence, photographs, photo albums, scrapbooks, and ephemera from the positions he held and research he conducted. Very little personal information is included.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

This collection was donated to the Archives Center, National Museum of American History by Dr. Brown's son-in-law, Richard D. Olson, August 1999.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Jennifer Hecker (intern), August 2000 supervised by Alison Oswald, archivist.

Preferred Citation

F.C. Brown Papers, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Restrictions

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Biographical / Historical

Brown was a physicist and inventor who created and supervised the development of education exhibits, most notably as organizing director of the New York Museum of Science and Industry (part of the Museums of the Peaceful Arts), 1926-1931. He was also curator of physics exhibits at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry, 1932-1937. Much of Brown's scientific research focused on the element selenium. He invented the phonopticon, an improvement on the optophone (invented by Fournier d'Albe, 1912).

Scope and Contents

The material in the F. C. Brown Papers focuses primarily on Dr. Brown's professional life and includes correspondence, photographs, photo albums, scrapbooks and ephemera. Very little personal information is included. The collection is arranged into ten series.

Series 1, Biographical/General, 1905-1940, contains material which relates to Dr. Brown's personal life and research. Scientific publications, which do not relate directly to the professional positions he held, can be found here. Also included are some personal financial records and two photographic portraits of Dr. Brown.

Series 2, Correspondence, 1902-1964, undated, is arranged chronologically and pertains directly to Dr. Brown's career.

Series 3, Inventions, 1904-1942, documents Dr. Brown's inventions and include invention notebooks, loose notes, patent documents, correspondence, and an article announcing the invention of the phonopticon.

Series 4, U. S. Army Ordnance Department, 1918-1919, contains materials from Dr. Brown's tenure at the U. S. Army Ordnance Department. It includes a panoramic photograph and various official reports.

Series 5, U. S. Bureau of Standards, 1917-1926, contains assorted papers from the U. S. Bureau of Standards which date from 1917 to 1922, and also a few photographs, including a panoramic portrait of Bureau personnel in 1920.

Series 6, Museum Work, 1927-1940, consists of materials primarily dealing with Dr. Brown's work in the New York Museum of Science and Industry (part of the Museums of the Peaceful Arts) and the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry. Of note is material relating to the dedication ceremony at which the airplane Bremen was given to the Museums of the Peaceful Arts and two scrapbooks which contain clippings, brochures, and photos showcasing developments and events in science, industry and the Museums of the Peaceful Arts.

Series 7, Photographs: Museums of the Peaceful Arts, Museum of Science and Industry, New York City, undated, is comprised of photographs from the Museums of the Peaceful Arts including such subjects as events, exhibits, displays, models, objects, machines, devices, and people. The majority of the photographs are undated.

Series 8, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), 1932-1937, includes two photo albums and a scrapbook which deal with the planning of the AAAS annual science exhibitions.

Series 9, Photographs: Other Subjects, 1907-1939, is comprised of photographs covering subjects such as exhibits, displays, objects, and people.

Series 10, Miscellaneous, 1910-circa 1945, includes invitations, programs, brochures, miscellaneous publications and other writings, notes and calculations, and papers from a series of radio broadcasts on science. There is also a 1939 textbook, *Experimental Heat, Sound and Light*, with accompanying notes and annotations.

Arrangement

The collection is organized into ten series.

Series 1, Biographical/General, 1905-1940

Series 2, Correspondence, 1902-1964 and undated

Series 3, Inventions, 1904-1942

Subseries 1, Notebook, 1904

Subseries 2, Invention Notebooks, 1910-1942

Series 4, U.S. Army Ordnance Department, 1918-1921

Series 5, U.S. Bureau of Standards, 1917-1926

Subseries 1, Papers, 1917-1922

Subseries 2, Photographs, 1920, 1924, 1926, undated

Series 6, Museum work, 1927-1941

Series 7, Photographs: Museums of the Peaceful Arts, Museum of Science and Industry, New York City, undated

Subseries 1, Events, Exhibits and Displays, undated

Subseries 2, Models, Objects, Machines and Devices, undated

Subseries 3, People with Objects, undated

Subseries 4, People, undated

Subseries 5, Photos of Other Materials, undated

Series 8, American Association for the Advancement of Science (A.A.S.), 1932-1937

Series 9, Photographs: other subjects, 1907-1939

Subseries 1, Exhibits, Displays and Objects, 1931-1939, undated

Subseries 2, People, 1907-1928, undated

Subseries 3, Miscellaneous, circa 1918-1920, undated

Series 10, Miscellaneous, 1910-circa 1945

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Engines
- Inventions
- Inventors
- Museums
- Physicists
- Physics
- Plows
- Printing presses
- Selenium
- Sewing machines
- Turbines

Types of Materials:

- Clippings -- 20th century
- Correspondence -- 20th century
- Photographs -- 20th century
- Scrapbooks -- 20th century

Names:

- American Association for the Advancement of Science
- Museum of Science and Industry (Chicago, Ill.).
- Museum of Science and Industry (New York, N.Y.).
- United States. Army. Ordnance Department
- United States. Bureau of Standards.

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1905-1940

Box 1, Folder 1	Biographical Information, undated
Box 1, Folder 2	Miscellaneous—Personal, 1924-1934
Box 1, Folder 3	Personal Financial Records, 1936-1939
Box 15, Folder 4	Investment Portfolio Statements and Receipts, 1931-1937
Box 1, Folder 4	Miscellaneous: Professional, circa 1934-1941
Box 1, Folder 5	Papers and Publications by F. C. Brown, 1905-1940
Box 1, Folder 5	Scrapbooks, 1907-1911
Box 1, Folder 6	Scrapbooks—Selenium Articles, 1907-1908
Box 1, Folder 6	Scrapbooks—Heat Articles, 1908-1909
Box 1, Folder 7	Scrapbooks—Selenium Articles, 1911
Box 1, Folder 7	Scrapbooks—Selenium Articles(some in German), 1911
Box 17, Folder 1	Photographic Portraits of F. C. Brown, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Correspondence, 1902 - 1964, undated

Box 2, Folder 1	1902-1911, 1902-1911
Box 2, Folder 2	1914-1917, 1914-1917
Box 2, Folder 3	1918, 1918
Box 2, Folder 4	1919, 1919
Box 2, Folder 5	1920-1924, 1920-1924
Box 2, Folder 6	1925-1929, 1925-1929
Box 3, Folder 1	1930, 1930
Box 3, Folder 2	1931, 1931
Box 3, Folder 3	1932-1933, 1932-1933
Box 3, Folder 4	1934-1935, 1934-1935
Box 3, Folder 5	1937 January-1937 November , January 1937-November 1937
Box 3, Folder 6	1937 December, 1937 December
Box 3, Folder 7	1938, 1938
Box 4, Folder 1	1939, 1939
Box 4, Folder 2	1940, 1940
Box 4, Folder 3	1941, 1941
Box 4, Folder 4	1946-1964, undated , 1946-1964, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Inventions, 1904 - 1942

Subseries 3.1: Notebook, 1904

Box 12, Folder 2

Subseries 3.2: Invention Notebooks, 1910-1942

Box 5, Folder 1	Invention Notebook, Selenium Book II, Fall 1910
Box 5, Folder 2	Selenium Book III, 1911
Box 5, Folder 1	Invention Notebook, Selenium Book IV, May 1911
Box 5, Folder 3	Invention Notebook, Selenium Sensitivity, 1912-1914
Box 5, Folder 3	Invention Notebook, Selenium, January 1914-May 1915
Box 5, Folder 4	Phonopticon Articles, undated
Box 5, Folder 5	Phonopticon Correspondence, 1914-1917, undated
Box 5, Folder 6	Ground Speed Meter, circa 1941
Box 5, Folder 7	Bomb Sight, 1941-1942
Box 5, Folder 8	Patent Documents, 1917, 1920, 1923

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4 : U. S. Army Ordnance Department, 1918 - 1921

Box 5, Folder 1	Photograph: Aircraft Armament Section, Engineering Division, Ordnance Department, Washington, D. C. , January 20, 1919
Box 6, Folder 1	Research Information Committee, Italian Bomb Tests, 1918
Box 6, Folder 2	Assorted Ballistics Reports, 1918-1919
Box 6, Folder 3-4	Report on Ballistics of American Bombs, May 7, 1919
Box 6, Folder 5	Report on the Determination of the Damping Coefficients of Aircraft Bombs, September 3, 1919
Box 6, Folder 6	The Application of Motion Picture Photography to Ballistics and Airplane Performances, undated
Box 6, Folder 7	The Application of Motion Picture Photography to Ballistics and Airplane Performance: Report No. II, November 20, 1919
Box 6, Folder 8	Bomb Sights, undated
Box 6, Folder 9	Reports, undated
Box 6, Folder 10	Figures and Tables, undated
Box 6, Folder 2	Fort Monroe and Vicinity Map, 1914
Box 6, Folder 2	Blueprints, 1917-1921
Box 6, Folder 11	Miscellaneous, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 5: U. S. Bureau of Standards, 1917 - 1926

Subseries 5.1: Papers, 1917-1922

Box 6, Folder 12

Subseries 5.2: Photographs, 1920, 1924, 1926, undated

Box 6, Folder 12

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Box 6, Folder 1 | Personnel, Bureau of Standards, Washington, D.C. , November 1920 |
| Box 6, Folder 13 | U. S. Department of Commerce, Sesqui Centennial Exposition, Bureau of Standards Booth, Philadelphia, 1926 |
| Box 6, Folder 14 | Unidentified Buildings, Safer-Cabinet Laboratory, Marietta, Ohio, undated |
| Box 6, Folder 15 | Man in Airplane, undated |
| Box 6, Folder 16 | Bomb Models, undated |

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 6: Museum Work , 1927 - 1941

Subseries 6.1: Museums of the Peaceful Arts, Museum of Science and Industry-NYC, 1927-1932

Box 7, Folder 1	Aviation Exhibits, circa 1929-1932
Box 7, Folder 2	Dedication of the Bremen Airplane, 1929
Box 17, Folder 2	Machine Age Exhibit Articles, 1930 Image(s)
Box 13-14, Folder 1	Water Basin Exhibit Blueprint, circa 1930
Box 16, Folder 1	Scrapbook, 1929-1931
Box 17, Folder 5	Scrapbook(Researcher Copy), 1929-1931
Box 7, Folder 3	Miscellaneous, circa 1927-1931

Subseries 6.2: Museum of Science and Industry-Chicago, 1937-1941, undated

Box 7, Folder 4	Papers, 1938-1940
Box 7, Folder 5	Publications, 1937-1940
Box 17, Folder 3	Newspaper Clippings, 1940-1941
Box 17, Folder 3	Floor plans, 1938, undated
Box 7, Folder 6	Other Museum Exhibits, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 7: Photographs: Museums of the Peaceful Arts, Museum of Science and Industry, New York City , undated

Subseries 7.1: Events, Exhibits and Displays, undated

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Box 10, Folder 1 | <i>Bremen</i> Airplane Acceptance and Display, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 2 | Industrial Museum, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 3 | Science Forum, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 4 | Color Exhibit, U. S. Department of Agriculture, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 5 | Aviation Displays, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 6 | <i>Toward Civilization</i> Window Display (Brentano's), undated |
| Box 10, Folder 7 | Various Exhibits, undated
Image(s) |

Subseries 7.2: Models, Objects, Machines and Devices, undated

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Box 10, Folder 8 | Daniel Webster Plow, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 9 | Hudson River Bridge Model, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 10 | Eli Whitney's Milling Machine and Others, undated
Image(s) |
| Box 10, Folder 11 | Parsons Steam Turbine and Others, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 12 | Locomotive Model, Salamanca, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 13 | Milling Machine, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 14 | Tesla Coil, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 15 | Corliss Engine, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 16 | Early Singer Sewing Machine, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 17 | Blaew (Printing) Press, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 18 | Gases Display, undated |

Box 10, Folder 19 Earth Inductor Compass, undated

Box 10, Folder 20 Unidentified Devices, undated

Subseries 7.3 : People with Objects, undated

Box 10, Folder 21 Lilienthal - Hang Gliding, August 1, 1897

Box 10, Folder 22 F. C. Brown and Woman Electrified!, undated
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 10, Folder 23 Children and Exhibits, undated
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 10, Folder 24 Woman and Switchboard, undated

Box 10, Folder 25 Woman and "Father of Typewriters", 1930

Box 10, Folder 26 Woman, Microscope and Chesterfields, undated
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 10, Folder 27 Woman and Camco Robot, undated

Box 10, Folder 28 Woman and Unidentified Device, undated

Box 10, Folder 29 Nathalia Crane and Potter's Wheel, undated

Box 10, Folder 30 Man Demonstrates Model for Women, undated

Box 10, Folder 31 Man and Model of Kill Van Kull Bridge, undated

Box 10, Folder 32 Man and Lathe, undated

Box 10, Folder 33 Man and Duryea Motor Wagon, undated

Box 10, Folder 34 Men and Devices, undated
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 10, Folder 35 Man and Spencer Automatic Lathe, undated

Subseries 7.4: People, undated

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Box 10, Folder 36 | Men and Corliss Engine (Stuart Chase, Ralph Borsodi, Ralph B. Flanders, and F. C. Brown), undated |
| Box 10, Folder 37 | Ralph Borsodi, Ralph B. Flanders, Stuart Chase, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 38 | Portrait, Unidentified Man, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 39 | Portrait, Dr. Karl Compton, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 40 | Portrait, Dr. Fred E. Wright, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 41 | Portrait, Unidentified Man, undated |

Subseries 7.5: Photos of Other Materials

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Box 10, Folder 42 | Photos of Correspondence, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 43 | Photos of Press Clippings, undated |
| Box 10, Folder 44 | Photos of Negative Strips, undated |

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 8: American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), 1932 - 1937

Box 7, Folder 7	Annual Exhibition, 1932
Box 9, Folder 1	Photo Album: Annual Exhibition, 1932
Box 7, Folder 8	Annual Exhibition, 1933
Box 15, Folder 1	Scrapbook: Annual Exhibition, 1934
Box 9, Folder 2	Photo Album: Annual Exhibition, 1934
Box 7, Folder 9	Annual Exhibitions, 1935-1937

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 9: Photographs: Other Subjects, 1907 - 1939**Subseries 9.1: Exhibits, Displays and Objects, 1931-1939, undated**

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Box 11, Folder 1 | World's Fair Exhibit on Time, 1939 |
| Box 11, Folder 2 | Artist's Representation of Museum Exhibit on Time, 1931 |
| Box 11, Folder 3 | Cosmic Ray Exhibit and Unidentified Man, undated |
| Box 11, Folder 4 | American Association for the Advancement of Science Exhibition, Indianapolis (loose photos from album), 1937 |
| Box 11, Folder 5 | People Listening on Headphones and Onlookers, undated |
| Box 11, Folder 6 | Crowd of People and Statue, undated |
| Box 11, Folder 7 | Electrified Man and Onlooker, undated |
| Box 11, Folder 8 | Men and Machines (Unidentified), undated |
| Box 11, Folder 9 | Children in Museum, undated |
| Box 11, Folder 10 | Langley Aerodrome Airplane, 1903 |
| Box 11, Folder 11 | Professor Moler and First Dynamo Built in U. S., undated |
| Box 11, Folder 12 | Edison Storage Battery Display, undated |
| Box 11, Folder 13 | Man and Quartz Spirals, undated |
| Box 11, Folder 14 | Old Hand Loom, Crompton and Knowles Loom Works, undated |
| Box 11, Folder 15 | Unidentified Instruments, undated |

Subseries 9.2: People, 1907-1928, undated

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Box 11, Folder 1 | American Physical Society, Washington, D. C., April 1920 |
| Box 11, Folder 16 | Dr. Fox, Director of Brooklyn Museum and F.C. Brown, in Paris, August 1928
Image(s) |
| Box 11, Folder 17 | Children, Washington, D.C., March 18, 1919 |

- Box 11, Folder 18 General Electric, Edison and Steinmetz, undated
- Box 11, Folder 19 Portrait S. W. Stratton, undated
- Box 11, Folder 20 Portrait Unidentified Man, undated
- Box 11, Folder 21 Portrait and Obituary Lord Rutherford, (1871-1937)

Subseries 9.3: Miscellaneous, circa 1918-1920, undated

- Box 11, Folder 22 Bomb Testing, circa 1918
- Box 11, Folder 23 Aerial Photos of Town and Clouds, undated
- Box 11, Folder 24 Photos of Science Paintings by Walter Russell, undated
- Box 11, Folder 25 Projectile Camera Film, circa 1920
- Box 11, Folder 26 Smokestack Demolition in South Philadelphia, PA, 1932
- Box 11, Folder 27 Unidentified, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 10: Miscellaneous, 1910-circa 1945, undated

Box 11, Folder 2	General Motors Graph, 1939
Box 11, Folder 3	<i>Electronics</i> Supplements, 1930, 1934
Box 7, Folder 10	Executive Orders (National Recovery Administration), 1934
Box 7, Folder 11	Invitations, Programs and Brochures, 1926-1931, undated
Box 7, Folder 12	Miscellaneous: Publications, 1919-circa 1945, undated
Box 8, Folder 1	Miscellaneous: Writings, undated
Box 8, Folder 2	National Research Council Reports and Minutes, 1930-1932
Box 8, Folder 3	Notes and Calculations, undated
Box 8, Folder 4	Prints: Bureau of Engraving and Printing, undated
Box 8, Folder 5	Radio Broadcasts on Science, 1929-1930
Box 8, Folder 6	Radio Broadcasts on Science, 1931, undated
Box 8, Folder 3	<i>Science Service</i> Articles, 1937
Box 8, Folder 7	Scientific Papers and Publications, 1910-1940
Box 12, Folder 1	<i>Textbook: Experimental Heat, Sound and Light: An Analytical College Text</i> , 1939
Box 17, Folder 4	"When Wind and Water Strike At Man" Article, 1937

[Return to Table of Contents](#)