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Correspondence, 1936, 1938, 1948-1977 and undated

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Correspondence
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Language:	English

Administrative Information

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Department of Mineral Sciences, Correspondence

Historical Note

The Department of Mineral Sciences was created in 1963 as part of a reorganization in the National Museum of Natural History. At that time the Department of Geology was divided into two new departments, with the Division of Mineralogy and Petrology becoming the Department of Mineral Sciences and the Divisions of Invertebrate Paleontology and Paleobotany and Vertebrate Paleontology joined to form the Department of Paleobiology. George S. Switzer became the first chairman of the Department of Mineral Sciences in 1963 and served until 1968. Other incumbents included Brian H. Mason, 1968-1973; and William G. Melson, 1973-1978. Staff of the Division of Mineralogy and Petrology included William F. Foshag, assistant curator, 1919-1929, curator, 1929-1948, and acting curator, 1948-1956; Edward P. Henderson, associate curator, 1942-1963 (Henderson also served as assistant curator in the Division of Physical and Chemical Geology from 1929 to 1942); George S. Switzer, associate curator, 1948-1956, acting curator, 1957, and curator, 1958-1963; Paul E. Desautels, associate curator, 1957-1963; and Roy S. Clarke, Jr., chemist, 1957-1963. In 1963 Henderson and Clarke were assigned to the Division of Meteorites, and Desautels to the Division of Mineralogy. Therefore, after 1963, they are not represented in this correspondence.

Descriptive Entry

This record unit consists of correspondence documenting the operation of the Department of Mineral Sciences, 1963-1977, and its predecessor the Division of Mineralogy and Petrology of the Department of Geology, 1948-1963. With the exception of a few letters, correspondence of the Division of Mineralogy and Petrology prior to 1948 is not included in the record unit. The correspondence is both incoming and outgoing and concerns the identification and acquisition of specimens; participation in professional

societies and mineral exhibitions; the publication of scientific manuscripts; and departmental and divisional administration. Correspondents include geologists and mineralogists, gemologists, jewelers, mineral collectors and dealers, colleges and universities, mining companies, publishers, government agencies, and the general public. Correspondence prior to 1963 is mostly directed to Curator George S. Switzer and Associate Curator Paul E. Desautels. Correspondence after 1963 is primarily carried out by Departmental Chairmen Switzer, Brian H. Mason, and William G. Melson. The correspondence is arranged alphabetically by correspondent.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Geology
Meteoroids
Mineralogy
Museums -- Public relations

Types of Materials:

Manuscripts

Names:

Clarke, Roy S.
Desautels, Paul E.
Foshag, William F. (William Frederick), 1894-1956
Henderson, Edward P. (Edward Porter), 1898-
Mason, Brian (Brian Harold), 1917-2009
Melson, William G., 1938-
National Museum of Natural History (U.S.). Division of Meteorites
National Museum of Natural History (U.S.). Division of Mineralogy
Switzer, George S. (George Shirley), 1915-2008
United States National Museum. Department of Geology
United States National Museum. Division of Mineralogy and Petrology
United States National Museum. Division of Physical and Chemical Geology (Systematic and Applied)

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