



New York State Archives

**New York State Museum and Science Service Assistant
Commissioner's Correspondence and Subject Files 11843**

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	This series consists of correspondence, memoranda, reports, and press releases between the Director of the State Museum, later the Assistant Commissioner for State Museum and State Science Service, and Museum scientists and other staff, administrators and scientists at other institutions, private citizens, and officials in other State agencies. The records document research projects; exhibit planning; acquisition and management of collections; field work; publications; advice to other institutions; education; research grants; professional development; and museum legislation.
Creator:	New York State Museum and Science Service
Title:	Assistant Commissioner's correspondence and subject files
Quantity:	31.4 cubic feet
Inclusive Date:	1947, 1952, 1954-1970
Bulk Date:	bulk 1962-1968
Series:	11843

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Arrangement

11843-77: Chronological by year, then alphabetical by subject, institution, or author, then reverse chronological order by date written.

11843-82: Arranged by subject.

11843-19: Inventory cards are arranged by institution.

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Scope and Content Note

This series consists of correspondence, memoranda, reports, and press releases between the Director of the State Museum, later the Assistant Commissioner for State Museum and State Science Service, and Museum scientists and other staff, administrators and scientists at other institutions, private citizens, and officials in other State agencies. The positions of Director and Assistant Commissioner were occupied by Carl E. Guthe (1944-1953), William N. Fenton (1954-1968) and John G. Broughton (1968-1970).

These files contain correspondence concerning: research projects conducted by the Museum; Museum exhibit planning; acquisition and management of collections; Museum sponsored field work; production of Museum publications; advice to other institutions; Museum education; research grants received; staff participation in professional conferences and meetings; and inquiries about scientific positions.

11843-82: This accretion contains correspondence, memoranda, reports, and meeting minutes from Assistant Commissioner William N. Fenton (1954-1968) concerning the following subjects: meetings of and reports by the Commissioner's Committee on Museum Resources; promotion of museum legislation by the New York State Association of Museums; and meetings of and reports by the Cultural Center Planning Committee concerning plans for the Cultural Center (later Cultural Education Center) building in Albany's South Mall (later Empire State Plaza) and for State Museum exhibits in the building.

11843-19: This accretion contains inventory cards for and black-and-white photographs of Iroquoian and other North American Indian artifacts in about thirty European museums, with related notes, correspondence, and color slides. Most of the information was compiled by State Museum Director William N. Fenton during trips to Europe in 1962, 1964, and 1967.

Inventoried artifacts date from the seventeenth through early twentieth centuries. Most were produced by Iroquoian, Great Lakes, and Great Plains peoples. Inventory data is typewritten and handwritten on cards, which identify and describe each object. Some of the cards are accompanied by black-and-white photographs of inventoried objects. Other information on artifacts is found in typewritten lists and reports. Museums holding especially relevant collections include the the Bernisches Historisches Museum, Bern; Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen; Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden; Horniman Museum, London; Musée de l'Homme, Paris; Museum für Lander- und Völkerkunde, Stuttgart; Skoklosters Slot, near Uppsala, Sweden; and Warwick Castle, England.

Correspondence concerns Fenton's inventory work in European museums; and his participation in the Wenner-Gren Foundation Symposium no. 39, held in Austria in 1967. Correspondents include anthropologists Ted J. Brasser, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and William C. Sturtevant.

Collection includes numerous color slides (35 mm.) of travel destinations, institutions, and museum objects and exhibits. Other slides were taken at conferences of the International

Council of Museums, Amsterdam, 1962; and the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Moscow, 1964.

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Related Information

Related Material

B0561 Series B0561, State Museum Director's, State Geologist's, and State Paleontologist's Correspondence Files, and

B0579 Series B0579, State Museum Director's, State Geologist's, and State Paleontologist's Correspondence, Drafts of Publications, and Photographs, contain additional Museum correspondence.

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Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

11843-19: An item list covering approximately one-half of the color slides is available at the repository.

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of this material.

Alternate Formats AvailableAlternate Formats Available

11843-19: Inventory cards have been photocopied.

[Assistant Commissioner's correspondence and subject files, 1947, 1952, 1954-1970](#)

Administrative Information

Custodial History

11843-19: Donated by George R. Hammell in 2019.

Processing Information

11843-82 was originally part of accession 82-13. 11843-77 was originally accessioned as old collection #502, accession number -309, plus one cubic foot (1969 correspondence) from old collection #503, accession number -309.

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Access Terms

- Regulating
- Museums
- Supervising
- New York (State)
- Natural history museums
- Cultural Education Center (Albany, N.Y.)
- New York (State). Division of Science and State Museum
- University of the State of New York
- Fenton, William Nelson, 1908-
- New York (State). Education Department
- New York State Museum