
George A. Ashley Collection, circa 1900-1988 LA.2018.0905

Finding aid prepared by Ana Ochoa.

San Diego Natural History Museum Research Library

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Language of Material: English

Contributing Institution: San Diego Natural History Museum Research Library

Title: George A. Ashley Collection

creator: Ashley, George A. (George Alfred), 1904-1992

Identifier/Call Number: LA.2018.0905

Physical Description: 1 Linear Feet

Date (inclusive): circa 1900-1988

Abstract: The George A. Ashley Collection consists of photographic material documenting minerals and mines in San Diego County. The collection includes photographic prints, negatives and memorabilia compiled by George Ashley, a noted San Diego County miner and lapidary artist.

Storage Unit: 92

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open to researchers by appointment. Contact the Research Library Director, San Diego Natural History Museum.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright may be reserved. Consult the San Diego Natural History Research Library Director for more information.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], George A. Ashley Collection (LA.2018-0905). Research Library, San Diego Natural History Museum.

Biographical / Historical

George Alfred Ashley was born on November 24, 1904 near the city of Orange in Orange County, California. He moved to Ramona when he was 11 years old and lived there for 20 years. He first became interested in minerals when he was in 4th grade when some of his fellow students brought quartz and garnet crystals to school. George quit school by the end of his freshman year of high school and instead focused on doing ranch work, cutting stones and making jewelry. He and a Ramona machinist designed and built a faceting head for cutting gemstones. Ashley eventually learned to cut Mesa Grande and Ramona tourmaline. He met Louis Spaulding, owner of the Little Three mine in Ramona, and re-discovered the McFall garnet mine situated several miles southwest of Ramona. In 1947, he bought the entire Hiriart Hill including the San Pedro, Anita, White Queen, Naylor, Katerina, El Molino, and Vandenberg mines located in Pala, California. This made him the dominant force in San Diego County morganite and kunzite mining.

Known as one of San Diego County's pioneer miners and gemstone cutters, Ashley opened a room in his house for mineral displays and hosted school groups for lectures and tours of one of his mines. During the last 40 years he invented machines which turned blocks of gemstones into polished bowls earning him numerous local and national awards. Most of his bowls are carved gem materials found in western states with the exception of some bowls made of gems from other countries. Ashley donated his carved bowl collection and other items to the San Diego Natural History Museum on December 8th, 1990. He is believed to have died on May 31, 1992 of apparent heart failure in Pala, California.

Scope and Contents

The collection, spanning 1900-1988, consists of photographic prints, negatives and memorabilia compiled by George A. Ashley. The files in the collection contain 30 photographs in total; the majority are black and white prints with descriptive captions. The collection primarily documents minerals and mines in San Diego County. People featured in the collection include Josie Scripps and Frederick Sickler.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Minerals

Mines and mineral resources

San Diego County (Calif.)

Sickler, Frederick M. (Frederick Marcellus), 1879-1963

Scripps, Josephine L. (Josephine Louise), 1910-1992

Memorabilia 1948

Scope and Contents

(1) Cardboard box 5 in. x 6 in. Includes: one Kodachrome transparency (1 in. x 1.5 in.); four negatives of minerals and mines (2 in. x 3 in.); four labels in different media; an Ashley Gem Mines business card and a first place ribbon for the San Diego County Fair in Del Mar California.

Wood prints 1905

Scope and Contents

(3) Wood prints of the Himalaya and School mines (6 in. x 10 in. and 9 in x 12 in.)

Photographs 1985-1988

Scope and Contents

(5) Color photographs of staff working in the Department of Mineralogy (3.5 in. x 6 in.).

Mounted photographs circa 1900

Scope and Contents

(13) Black-and-white photographs (7.5 in. x 9.5 in.) of mines in San Diego County. Mounted on brown cardboard and labeled with information in the front and back. Includes the Pala Chief, Himalaya, Esmeralda, Tannenbaum, Naylor-Vanderberg and Katerina mines.

Black-and-white photographs circa 1954-1971

Scope and Contents

(1) Folder (9 in. x 12 in.) containing (9) black-and-white photographs (8 in. x 10 in.) with labels about the diamond mining process. Includes aerial view and diagram of mineral shafts mounted on cardboard; and letter relating to the provenance of the photographs.

Mineral Museums Advisory Council photograph 1988

Scope and Contents

(1) Color photograph of the members of the Mineral Museums Advisory Council in Tucson, Arizona (8.5 in. x 11 in.).

Photographs and clippings

Scope and Contents

(2) mounted black-and-white photographs (3 in. x 5 in. and 4 in. x 5 in.); (1) newspaper clipping about Frederick Sickler (3.7 in. x 6.7 in.).

Josie Scripps photograph

Scope and Contents

(1) Framed black-and-white photograph of Josie Scripps (4.5 in. x 8.5 in.).

Information panels

Scope and Contents

(2) Information panels (4 in. x 13 in.).

Lapidary work photograph

Scope and Contents

(1) color photograph (8 in. x 10 in.) of lapidary work by George A. Ashley including bowls and mineral cuts.