Finding Aid to the Joseph Keppler, Jr. Papers MS.208

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2013
Title: Joseph Keppler, Jr. Papers
Identifier/Call Number: MS.208
Contributing Institution: Autry National Center, Braun Research Library
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 3.0 Linear feet (84 folders in 3 document boxes)
Date (inclusive): 1899-1960

Abstract: Joseph Keppler Jr. was born Udo Keppler on 1872 April 4 in St Louis, Missouri. He was a writer, collector of Native American literature and artifacts, political cartoonist, and publisher. In 1898, Keppler was adopted into the Wolf Clan of the Seneca tribe and in appreciation of his social and legislative efforts on behalf of American Indians in New York, he was made an honorary Chief of the Seneca tribe and given the name "Gy-ant-wa-ka." Keppler died 1956 July 4 in La Jolla, California. The Joseph Keppler, Jr. Papers contains newspaper and magazine clippings; ephemera; correspondence; photographic material; drawings; notes on Native American ceremonies and stories; and speeches created or collected by Keppler from 1899-1960. The bulk of the collection contains correspondence and letters from Keppler's family members and associates.

creator: Converse, Harriet Maxwell
creator: Cornplanter, Ed, Chief
creator: Johnson, Freeman, Chief
creator: Keppler, Joseph, Jr., 1872-1956
creator: Ninham, Fred
creator: Ninham, Gertrude

Access
Collection is open for research. Appointments to view materials are required. To make an appointment please visit http://theautry.org/research/research-rules-and-application or contact library staff at rroom@theautry.org. A folder level inventory is available from library staff.

Preferred citation
Joseph Keppler, Jr. Papers, 1899-1960, Braun Research Library Collection, Autry National Center, Los Angeles; MS.208; [folder number] [folder title][date].

Processing history

Biographical note
Joseph Keppler Jr. was born Udo Keppler on 1872 April 4 in St Louis, Missouri. He was a writer, collector of Native American literature and artifacts, political cartoonist, and publisher. He later changed his name to Joseph Keppler, Jr. in honor of his father.

His mother was Pauline Pfau and his father Udo Joseph Keppler, founded Puck magazine. Keppler, Jr. took over the publication after his father's death.

Keppler, Jr. had two sons, Udo Keppler III and George Keppler, with his first wife Louise. Louise died in December of 1944. He later married Vera, who survived him.

Keppler was also good friends with George Heye and assisted with the founding of the Heye Foundation's Museum of the American Indian in 1916.

He became active in Indian affairs and spent a great deal of time with the Seneca Nation both as an activist and as a collector. Keppler worked with others to defeat or substantially modify proposed legislation concerning the New York State reservations. He also actively promoted Iroquois lacrosse teams and his connections with the railroad enabled him to procure discount railroad passes for New York Indians.

In 1898, Keppler was adopted into the Wolf Clan of the Seneca tribe in New York, through the sponsorship of Harriet Maxwell Converse, herself a third generation adoptee. In 1899, in appreciation of his social and legislative efforts on behalf of Native Americans in New York, he was made an honorary Chief of the Seneca tribe and given the name "Gy-ant-wa-ka." Keppler died 1956 July 4 in La Jolla, California, where he had been living. His residences in Woodland, New York and La Jolla were both called "Tov-nis-gah."
http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/ead/htmldocs/RMM09184.html
http://dlib.nyu.edu/eadapp/transform?source=nyhs/keppler.xml&style=nyhs/nyhs.xsl&part=body
See also: Comments on Certain Iroquois Masks (1941) Heye Foundation V 12 No 4 (970.6711).

Scope and contents
The collection contains newspaper and magazine clippings; ephemera; correspondence; photographic material; drawings; notes on Native American ceremonies and stories; and speeches created or collected by Joseph Keppler.
The bulk of the collection contains correspondence and letters from Keppler's family members and associates, including Chief Ed Cornplanter, Chief Freeman Johnson, Fred and Gertrude Ninham, and Harriett Maxwell Converse. Clippings consist of obituaries and articles that relate to Native American athlete Jim Thorpe; Native American culture, art, health, and food; and the Navajo, Iroquois, and Seneca tribes. There are also articles related to the discovery of bones claiming to belong to "The Missing Link."

Use
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Acquisition
Donated by Mrs. Vera Keppler, 1958 March 27.

Related collections
MS.876, English-Seneca Dictionary Notes, Autry National Center.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Gray Wolf, Sam
Thorpe, Jim, 1887-1953
Anthropology
Clippings
Correspondence
Drawings
Indian art
Indians of North America -- Food
Indians of North America -- Health
Indians of North America -- Social life and customs
Iroquois Indians
Navajo Indians
Obituaries
Photographs
Seneca Indians
Speeches