Frederick Roeser Papers: Finding Aid

Processed by The Huntington Library staff in May 1987; supplementary encoding and revision supplied by Xiuzhi Zhou, Diann Benti, and Gina C Giang.
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Overview of the Collection
Title: Frederick Roeser Papers
Dates (inclusive): 1880-1919
Bulk dates: 1911-1919
Collection Number: mssRoeser
Creator: Roeser, Frederick, active 1880-1919.
Extent: 170 pieces in 1 box (0.42 linear feet)
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Abstract: This collection chiefly contains reports from various American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO) plants, dating from 1911 to 1919, presumably accumulated by Frederick Roeser while superintending company smelters in Colorado. Subjects include metallurgy, metallurgical plant construction and design, and mining engineering.
Language: English.
Access
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item]. Frederick Roeser Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
Provenance
Processing Information
The set of 76 photographs were transferred to the Photo Archive in 1985 but never cataloged. In 2019, they were transferred back to be reunited with the Roeser papers and were added to the collection by Gina C Giang.
Historical Note on ASARCO
On April 4, 1899, the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO) was chartered in the state of New Jersey. ASARCO, frequently referred to as the smelting trust, had consolidated a number of American smelting concerns with production plants east and west of the Mississippi. At its inception, ASARCO controlled 2/3 of America's smelting and refining capacity, although several major firms remained independent of its ownership. Two years later, a second merger took place which brought M. Guggenheim's Sons into the company, absorbing a principal competitor. In turn, Meyer Guggenheim's sons took control of ASARCO after the merger and directed the company's continued expansion. ASARCO's plants dominated much of the Rocky Mountain smelting industry in the early twentieth century, although the severe decline in silver, lead and copper prices which followed the Panic of 1907 and persisted until American entry into World War I forced it to curtail many operations.
Biographical Note on Frederick Roeser
Frederick Roeser was the superintendent of several Colorado smelting plants owned by the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO). He served at different times as superintendent of ASARCO's Arkansas Valley and Globe smelting plants in Colorado (the latter near the city of Denver). During the 1890s, he may have lived in Revelstoke, British Columbia; he certainly invested in British Columbian land and mining stock during that decade.
Bibliography
Fell, James E., Ores to Metals: The Rocky Mountain Smelting Industry (Lincoln, Neb.: 1979)
Removed or Separated Material
75 photographs of a trip to Africa and the Middle East have been transferred to the Photo Archive. See photCL 277.
Scope and Content
The collection consists of scientific, engineering, and administrative reports; photographs from trips to Africa; and personal papers related to Frederick Roeser. The reports, from various ASARCO plants, which span the period 1911-1919, discuss technical procedures for reducing different metals, ASARCO efforts to improve the efficiency of metallurgical processes, design and construction of metallurgical plants, and wages and productivity at ASARCO plants. There are also notebooks in the collection which contain information about developments in the fields of metallurgy, metals refining, industrial design, mining engineering, mining machinery, and mining geology. A set of 76 photographs chiefly of a trip to East and South Africa, including Egypt and Mozambique, date to approximately 1897. There are a few views of a mining camp and many of indigenous peoples, posed for portraits, performing dances, and in everyday scenes in villages. Other photographs show unidentified people (possibly Roeser) at a house in Europe or the United States, and scenery of the Rhine River and Monte Carlo. There is one carte-de-visite portrait of a man, made in Stuttgart, Germany, that is inscribed to Fred Roeser (in German), and signed by [Ferd.?] Keppler.

Notable items include: Reports on the metallurgy of arsenic and arsenic poisoning, 1917-1919, Box 1(1), review of inspection trip to ASARCO smelting plants in February 1916, Box 1(3), report on labor productivity at various ASARCO plants for the period 1908 to 1917, Box 1(6), reports on the design and construction of metallurgical plants between 1916 and 1919, Box 1(8), report on the wages at the Globe (Colorado) plant between 1915 and 1917, Box 1(16).

Arrangement
All items are housed in a single box. The various technical reports are gathered together by subject in separate folders, organized alphabetically. Reports are followed by folders which contain a few pieces of Roeser's personal correspondence, business papers and ephemera, in that order. Last are five notebooks, filled with technical data about mining machinery, engineering, metallurgy and geology. The notebooks are numbered in chronological order.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library's Online Catalog.

Subjects
Roeser, Frederick, active 1880-1919.
American Smelting and Refining Company.
American Smelting and Refining Company -- History -- Sources.
Metallurgical plants -- Colorado.
Metallurgical research.
Metallurgy -- United States -- History -- Sources.
Mining engineering -- Colorado.
Mining geology.
Mining machinery.
Smelting.
Wages -- Metal-workers.

Forms/Genres
Business records -- Colorado.
Letters (correspondence) -- Colorado.
Notebooks -- Colorado.
Photographs -- Africa.
Photographs -- Middle East.
Technical reports -- Colorado.

Box 1 1880-1919