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Guide to the Adolf Carl Noé Papers 1892-1939



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Descriptive Summary

Title	Noé, Adolf Carl. Papers
Date	1892-1939
Size	7.5 linear feet (15 boxes)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract Adolf Carl Noé (1873-1939) taught paleobotany and German at the University of Chicago. Curator of Fossil Plants, Walker Museum. Contains professional and personal correspondence, lecture notes, published writings, photographs, home movies, and glass lantern slides. Subjects include the collection of fossil specimens; field work; trips to Mexico, Russia and the Canal Zone; state geological surveys; museums; professional organizations and conferences; and personal affairs and interests.

Information on Use

Access

No restrictions.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Noé, Adolf Carl. Papers

Biographical Note

Adolf Carl von Noé, paleobotanist, was born October 28, 1873 in Graz, Austria. He attended the University of Graz and the University of Göttingen before coming to the United States in 1899, and received an A.B. from the University of Chicago in 1900. Although his earlier training had been in paleobotany, it was easier in the U.S. to find work as a German teacher. He taught at Burlington (Iowa) Institute and Stanford University, then returned to the University of Chicago as a Fellow in German in 1903. He was an Assistant in German in 1904, received his Ph.D. in Germanic and Romance languages in 1905, and served as an Instructor in German from 1905 until 1910, when he was made Assistant Professor of German Literature. Noé was married to Mary Evelyn Cullaton in 1901, and they had two children, Mary Helen and Valerie.

As well as teaching a full load of courses in German, Noé also worked half time as an assistant librarian in classification and cataloguing from 1910 to 1920. During this time he published several articles on bibliographical topics, and edited the Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America for the years 1913 and 1914.

Noé had served in an Austro-Hungarian hussar regiment in 1894-1895, and as a naturalized U.S. citizen volunteered for service in the Illinois National Guard in 1916. Although rejected because of eye defects, he was a sharpshooter and expert rifleman, and later helped organize and instruct the University of Chicago Rifle Club. He also coached the fencing team, and in 1915 conducted military drills for upper classmen on the Midway.

Demand for German classes dropped during the war. Registrations began to pick up after the armistice was signed in 1918, but the Germanic Languages and Literatures Department was still badly overstaffed. Noé found it advantageous to return to his earlier interests in paleobotany (and to drop the "von" before his name). In 1920 he began teaching German courses designed for students in the natural sciences, and also taught two courses in paleobotany in the Geology and Botany departments. He was appointed Assistant Professor of Paleobotany in 1921, although he continued to teach German until 1923. In 1924 he was made Associate Professor of Paleobotany and Curator of Fossil Plants at Walker Museum, serving in both those capacities until his death in 1939.

Noé began work for the Illinois Geological Survey in 1921, continuing through the rest of his career, and also worked for the geological surveys of Kentucky in 1922 and Iowa in 1923-1925. Coalmines were a major source for fossil plant specimens, and Noé's knowledge of coal formations and geology were of value to the mining industry. Noé developed close relationships with mine owners and operators in many parts of the country, sometimes working as a consultant, other times conducting field work for his own research. He developed a collection of over 25,000 specimens of fossil plants at Walker Museum, and in the 1930s helped prepare a reconstruction of a Carboniferous forest at the Field Museum of Natural History.

Noé was one of the first to offer complete training in paleobotany in the U.S., and thus was able to attract many of the best students in the field. He was well known for his book *Pennsylvanian Flora of Northern Illinois* (1925), and for initiating the study of coal balls in North America. Coal balls, limestone concretions containing plant fragments found in coal seams, were crucial to the study of the internal structure of paleozoic plants. Noé did field work throughout the Midwest and in Texas, Arizona, Mexico, the Canal Zone, and the Donetz Basin of Russia. The friendships and contacts he made with officials and mine workers who helped him collect specimens were much appreciated by the researchers who followed him. Noé was scheduled to retire in October 1939, but died on April 10 of that year.

Scope Note

The papers of Adolf Carl Noé cover the period from his student years in Graz to the year of his death, although most of the materials date from after 1920. The papers concern Noé's professional career, his travels and fieldwork, personal affairs and interests, and correspondence with family members and friends in the U.S. and Europe. There are five series in the collection.

Series I. CORRESPONDENCE

Noé's correspondence is in two groups, professional and personal, each arranged alphabetically by correspondent. Subjects of professional correspondence include collection of fossil specimens;

trips abroad to Russia and the Canal Zone; outside jobs with mining firms, state geological surveys, and museums; professional organizations and conferences; colleagues and former students; research grant proposals; public lectures; acquisition of books and laboratory equipment; and publication of books and articles. Included is a folder of correspondence with Botany Department alumni, whom Noé solicited for contributions for a portrait he commissioned of Charles J. Chamberlain, and letters of two German faculty members with whom Noé worked, Starr W. Cutting and Camillo von Klenze.

Personal correspondence includes letters of family, social acquaintances, and personal business affairs. Following World War I, Noé became involved in helping family members and others in Austria who were left without support when the currency collapsed. Noé sent money to his sisters, Valerie Kirschberg and Lilly Watzke, other relatives, and some of his schoolteachers and brought two of his nephews to the U.S. He also served as treasurer of the American Committee for Vienna Relief. Much of the correspondence concerns these efforts, along with Noé's attempts to collect on a trust fund he held in an Austrian bank. Other letters document Noé's own financial difficulties during the Depression, especially after the Hyde Park-Kenwood National Bank folded in 1932. Also included are letters from fellow members of the Skeeters Club and Club Vindobona.

Series II. LECTURE NOTES

The lecture notes, mostly written on 5" x 8" cards, contain detailed descriptions and summaries of various botanical and geological subjects. They are not well identified as to when or for what they were used. Some are illustrated with drawings of plant parts.

Series III. PUBLICATIONS

This series includes published versions and reprints of papers, notices of research, and book reviews, arranged alphabetically by title. It does not constitute a complete set; a full bibliography of Noé's published writings can be found in Proceedings of the Geological Society of America for 1939, pp. 225-227. Also contained in this series are several botanical papers Noé wrote while a student in Austria, and both typescript and published copies of his book Golden Days of Soviet Russia, which was printed in 1931.

Series IV. PERSONAL PAPERS

This series contains notices of lectures given by Noé at the University and elsewhere, news articles and clippings, a diary for 1930-1931, and other miscellaneous items that provide details of various facets of Noé's interests and activities.

Series V. PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs include prints, negatives, and glass lantern slides, most relating to Noé's field work and travels in the U.S., Mexico, Canal Zone, and Russia, along with some pictures of laboratory-prepared fossil specimens. Most of the photographs are pasted in notebooks that carry written notations. 60 rolls of negative film are numbered, and most of these are indexed in three

notebooks that contain positive contact strips and notes on subject matter and technical data. The lanternslides are in three boxes at the end of the collection, and most of them have notations written on the margin of the plates. Also included in this series are two reels of 16mm movie film, apparently home movies.

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Additional information on Adolf Carl Noé can be found in the Presidents' Papers, the University Library Records, Series II, the Julius Rosenwald Papers, and the Archival Biographical and Photographic Files. See also the records of the Botany and Geology departments, and the papers of J Harlen Bretz, Thomas Chrowder Chamberlin, John M. Coulter, Rollin D. Salisbury, Paul Voth, and Stuart Weller for more information on the Botany and Geology departments during Noé's tenure.

Subject Headings

- Noé, A. C. (Adolf Carl), 1873-1939
- Paleobotanists

INVENTORY

Series I: Correspondence

Subseries 1: Professional Correspondence

Box 1

Folder 1

A, general

Box 1

Folder 2

American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers

Box 1

Folder 3

B, general

Box 1

Folder 4

Bausch & Lomb Optical Co.

Box 1

Folder 5

Binkley Coal Co.

Box 1

Folder 6

Blake, Thomas B.

Box 1

Folder 7
Bodine, H. E.

Box 1

Folder 8
C, general

Box 1

Folder 9
Carnegie Institution

Box 1

Folder 10
Chamberlain, Charles J., portrait

Box 1

Folder 11
D, general

Box 1

Folder 12
Darrah, William C.

Box 2

Folder 1
Dörfler, Ignaz

Box 2

Folder 2
E, general

Box 2

Folder 3
F, general

Box 2

Folder 4
G, general

Box 2

Folder 5
H, general

Box 2

Folder 6
I, general

Box 2

Folder 7
Iowa Geological Survey

Box 2

Folder 8
J-K, general

Box 2

Folder 9
L, general

Box 2

Folder 10

Leitz, E., Inc.

Box 2

Folder 11

Lomax, Joseph R.

Box 2

Folder 12

M, general

Box 3

Folder 1

Museum of Science and Industry

Box 3

Folder 2

N, general

Box 3

Folder 3

National Research Council

Box 3

Folder 4

National Youth Administration

Box 3

Folder 5

O-P, general

Box 3

Folder 6

R, general

Box 3

Folder 7

Russian correspondence

Box 3

Folder 8-9

S, general

Box 3

Folder 10

Schwarz, Max

Box 3

Folder 11

Straley, H. W. III

Box 4

Folder 1

T, general

Box 4

Folder 2

U, general

Box 4

Folder 3

University of Chicago

Box 4

Folder 4

V, general

Box 4

Folder 5

von Klenze, Camillo

Box 4

Folder 6

W, general

Box 4

Folder 7

Weinberg, Fay

Box 4

Folder 8

Y-Z, general

Subseries 2: Personal Correspondence

Box 4

Folder 9

A, general

Box 4

Folder 10

Alien Property Custodian

Box 4

Folder 11

American Committee for Vienna Relief

Box 4

Folder 12

B-C, general

Box 4

Folder 13

D-E, general

Box 5

Folder 1

F-G, general

Box 5

Folder 2

H, general

Box 5

Folder 3

Hauser, Maria

Box 5

Folder 4

Herrmann, Oberstleutnant

Box 5

Folder 5

I-L, general

Box 5

Folder 6

M, general

Box 5

Folder 7

Metzenberg, Lee

Box 5

Folder 8

Mulliken, Gyles

Box 5

Folder 9

N, general

Box 5

Folder 10

O-P, general

Box 5

Folder 11

Paltauf, F. M.

Box 5

Folder 12

R-T, general

Box 5

Folder 13

Tripartite Claims Commission

Box 5

Folder 14

U-V, general

Box 5

Folder 15

W-Z, general

Box 5

Folder 16

Watzke, Herbert

Box 6

Folder 1

Watzke, Lilly

Box 6

Folder 2

Wiener Bank-Verein

Box 6

Folder 3

Miscellaneous and unidentified correspondence

Series II: Lecture Notes

Box 6

- Folder 4**
Botany 360
- Box 6**
 - Folder 5-6**
Botany 460
- Box 6**
 - Folder 7**
Geographic Botany
- Box 6**
 - Folder 8**
Geologic History of Plants
- Box 6**
 - Folder 9**
"Z. Hist."
- Box 6**
 - Folder 10**
Lecture notes, 1926
- Box 7**
 - Folder 1-7**
Miscellaneous lecture notes

Series III. Publications

- Box 7**
 - Folder 8**
Publications, 1899-1932
- Box 7**
 - Folder 9**
"Evidences of Climate in the Morphology of Pennsylvanian Plants," 1931
- Box 8**
 - Folder 1**
Publications, 1922, 1936
- Box 8**
 - Folder 2**
Golden Days of Soviet Russia, manuscript
- Box 8**
 - Folder 3**
Golden Days of Soviet Russia, published book, 1931
- Box 8**
 - Folder 4**
Publications, 1935-1937
- Box 8**
 - Folder 5**
Publications, 1909-1938
- Box 8**
 - Folder 6**
Publications, 1894-1935

Series IV: Personal Papers

Box 8

Folder 7

"Dreiundzwanzigster Jahresbericht des Zweiten Staats-Gymnasiums in Graz," 1892

Box 8

Folder 8

Lecture notices, 1909-1913

Box 8

Folder 9

Lecture notices, 1921-1936

Box 8

Folder 10

News clippings and notices about Noé, 1914-1919

Box 9

Folder 1

News clippings and notices about Noé, 1920-1925

Box 9

Folder 2

News clippings and notices about Noé, 1926-1936

Box 9

Folder 3

Appraisal and engineer's report on mine and property of Majestic Collieries Ltd., Taber, Alberta, 1926

Box 9

Folder 4

Diary, 1930-1931

Box 9

Folder 5

Trip to Barro Colorado Island, Canal Zone - map, receipts and accounts, 1937

Box 9

Folder 6

Clipping file - references, notes, maps, statistics, ca. 1930s

Box 9

Folder 7

Miscellaneous notebooks

Box 9

Folder 8

"Caligula: Eine Studie über römischen Cäsarenwahnsinn" by L. Quidde, pamphlet and typewritten commentary, n.d.

Box 9

Folder 9

Calling cards and book plates

Box 9

Folder 10

Miscellaneous papers

Series V: Photographs

Box 10

Folder 1

Russia, 1927

Box 10

Folder 2

Texas, 1931-1934

Box 10

Folder 3

Arizona, California, New Mexico, New Hampshire, Halifax, and Iowa

Box 10

Folder 4-7

Mexico, 1935

Box 11

Folder 1

Permian plants from Baylor County, Texas, prints

Box 11

Folder 2

Permian plants from Baylor County, glass negatives (fragile)

Box 11

Folder 3

Miscellaneous

Box 11

Folder 4

Index to negative rolls 6-22 (Mexico, 1935)

Box 11

Folder 5

Index to negative rolls 25-38 (western U.S., 1936)

Box 11

Folder 6

Index to negative rolls 43-54 (Canal Zone, 1937)

Box 11

Folder 7

Home movies (16mm, 2 reels)

Box 12

Negatives (35mm), rolls 1-69 plus 3 unidentified rolls

Box 12

Glass lantern slides, Canal Zone (fragile)

Box 13-15

Glass lantern slides - Mexico, Barro Colorado Island, western U.S., fossil plant specimens (fragile)