

Chester G. Fuson papers

Ms. Coll. 932

Finding aid prepared by Christine Bellizzi.

Last updated on July 24, 2014.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Fuson, Chester Garfield, 1881-1965
Title	Chester G. Fuson papers
Call number	Ms. Coll. 932
Date [inclusive]	1909-1963
Extent	0.8 linear feet (2 boxes)
Language	English
Abstract	Chester Garfield Fuson (1881-1965) taught English, geography, and Bible studies at the Canton Christian College in Canton, China. He participated in a magnetic survey across Asia, and served as a teaching missionary under the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions from 1917 to 1949. The collection documents Fuson's life in China from 1909 to 1917, as well as his continued interest in the country from 1943 to 1963.

Cite as:

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Biography/History

Chester Garfield Fuson, the son of Willis Hardin and Anna Louise (Nelson) Fuson, was born on May 18, 1881 in Wakeeney, Kansas. After the death of his father in 1884, Fuson, his mother, and older sister moved several times around the state of Kansas, from Wakeeney to Emporia to Kansas City to Weir City, and finally back to Emporia in 1899. During this time, Fuson worked for a printer, as a coal mining apprentice, and eventually as a master-miner. In 1899, however, Fuson entered Kansas State Normal School, graduating in the Latin Course in 1903. By 1905, Fuson earned his B.A. from the College of Emporia in education and accepted a position as a short-term position as a teacher in Canton Christian College in Canton, China. From 1905 to 1909, Fuson taught English, Bible, and geography. He also introduced western sports to his students, including soccer, football, and track.

In 1909, under the auspices of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Fuson and his colleague, Don C. Sower, participated in a magnetic survey expedition across Asia from Peking, China, traveling westward across west China, the Gobi Desert area, Chinese Turkestan, over the Karakorum Pass in the Himalaya Mountains, to Kashmir, and finally to Bombay. This ten-month trip resulted in readings of the earth's magnetism with the goal of helping to establish the Magnetic North Pole. At the end of this trip, Fuson married Phebe Meeker of Emporia and they returned to Canton so that he could resume his teaching at Canton Christian College. While in China, the Fusons became the parents of Ben Willis Fuson (born in 1911), Chester Nelson Fuson (born in 1913), and William Meeker Fuson (born in 1915).

Fuson began working for the American Presbyterian Mission in Canton in 1917, leaving his position at Canton Christian College. In 1938, Fuson and his wife began evangelical and general missionary work in Lin-hsien, 250 miles north of Canton and spent eleven years at the inland station and hospital. After forty-three years of service in China, Fuson retired. He and his family returned to the United States, only three months before Communists took over South China. Fuson died in 1965.

Scope and Contents

The collection documents Chester G. Fuson's life in China from 1909 to 1917, as well as his continued interest in the country from 1943 to 1963 and is arranged in three series: Writings by Fuson, Writings by others, and Visual materials. Writings by Fuson include Fuson's diary (partial and complete) from 1909 to 1910, articles relating to his participation in the magnetic survey, and published materials, including several articles and *The New Geography of China*, a textbook perhaps intended for Fuson's own students. The series Writings by Others largely relates to the magnetic survey which took place under the auspices of the Carnegie Institute of Washington. As such, the collection includes *Land Magnetic Observations* and an annual report from the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, both published by the Carnegie Institute. *Land Magnetic Observations* contains contributions by Fuson, and the relevant pages are flagged and annotated, probably by one of Fuson's sons. In addition, researchers will find clippings about China from 1949 to 1963, after the country's fall to communism. Finally, this series contains a brief chronology of the events of Fuson's life, entitled "Skeleton Biography of Chester Garfield Fuson." Visual materials consists of material dating from 1909 to 1917 and in fact, seems to document two separate trips: the magnetic survey trip of 1909 and a trip through Asia in 1917. Material from the 1909 trip includes a large, cloth map of China depicting the route used by Sowers and Fuson on their 1909 trip and photographs that Fuson sent to the National Geographic Society along with articles that do not appear to have been published. Fuson requested that these photographs be returned in 1960. A photocopy of a photograph of Fuson on a Yak is probably from 1909, but it is impossible to be completely certain. The bulk of this series is made up of photographs from a disbound 1917 scrapbook documenting a trip through

Asia. These photographs are all labeled and the images show people, scenery, towns, markets, and tombs. This collection may be of interest to researchers studying terrestrial magnetism and China during the first half of the 20th century. Fuson's diary and articles about his experiences during the magnetic survey trip may be of particular interest.

Administrative Information

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Finding aid prepared by Christine Bellizzi.

Sponsor

The processing of this collection was made possible through the generous funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, administered through the Council on Library and Information Resources' "Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives" Project.

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Source of Acquisition

Gift of Dr. Nelson Fuson and Dr. William Fuson, 2000.

Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- Carnegie Institution of Washington. Department of Terrestrial Magnetism.

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Articles
- Diaries
- Photographs
- Publications

GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)

- China--Description and travel
- China--photographs

SUBJECT(S)

- Geomagnetism

Collection Inventory

I. WRITINGS BY FUSON.

	Box	Folder
Diary, partial (includes photocopies), circa 1909-1910.	1	1
Diary, complete (includes binder that originally housed the diary and photocopies), 1910.	1	2-6
"The Old Asian Trail," article, probably unpublished, 1909.	1	7
"Through Chinese Turkestan, a journey along the Great Road," article, probably unpublished, circa 1911-1912.	1	8
"The Great Passes of the Karakorum Route," article, probably unpublished, circa 1911-1912.	1	9
"The Fan Palm," <i>Lingnan Science Journal</i> , Volume 6, Number 4, 1928 December.	1	10
"The People of Kwangtun: Their Origins, Migrations, and Present Distribution," <i>Lingnan Science Journal</i> , Volume 7, 1929 June.	2	1
<i>New Geography of China</i> , The Commercial Press, Limited, Shanghai (textbook), 1933.	2	2

II. WRITINGS BY OTHERS.

	Box	Folder
<i>Annual Report of the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1909.</i>	2	3
<i>Land Magnetic Observations, 1905-1910</i> , by L. A. Bauer (with contributions by Fuson), 1912.	2	4
Clippings about China, 1943-1963.	2	5
"Skeleton Biography of Chester Garfield Fuson", after 1949.	2	6

III. VISUAL MATERIALS.

	Box	Folder
Cloth map of 1909 China trip and photocopy of map, 1945.	2	7
Magnetic Survey trip photographs (returned by the National Geographic Society), 1909.	2	8
Asia Scrapbook (disbound), 1917.	2	9-11
Fuson on a yak (photocopy), undated.	2	12
