

Stewart Culin game collection records

1136.1986.46

Finding aid prepared by Sam Bulter.

Last updated on March 02, 2017.

University of Pennsylvania, Penn Museum Archives

1/30/2009

Table of Contents

Summary Information.....	3
Biography/History.....	4
Scope and Contents.....	5
Administrative Information.....	5
Controlled Access Headings.....	5
Collection Inventory.....	7
Correspondence.....	7
Collection Data.....	8
Miscellaneous.....	8

Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Penn Museum Archives
Creator	Culin, Stewart, 1858-1929
Title	Stewart Culin game collection records
Call number	1136.1986.46
Date [inclusive]	1893-1903
Extent	0.25 linear feet (one manuscript box)
General Physical Description note	Many of the letters had to be placed in plastic sheaths to prevent them from tearing, and all the papers containing the list of "Goose Games" were split down the middle, so they also were placed in plastic sheaths.
Language	English
Abstract	Stewart Culin had a passion for the study of games from around the world and became a pioneer in the field of comparative game studies, amassing an extensive collection of games. The material in this collection is divided into three series: correspondence, collection data, and miscellaneous.

Cite as:

[Item name]. Box [Box number]. Stewart Culin game collection records. Penn Museum Archives.
Accessed [Date accessed].

Biography/History

Stewart Culin was born in Philadelphia on July 13, 1858. He did not have professional training and was a self-taught scholar with a powerful curiosity about other cultures. Culin became acquainted with the Chinese community in Philadelphia, learning their customs and language, and, in 1887, wrote his first publication on their religious and medical practices. In 1890, Culin was appointed Secretary of the Oriental Section at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Paleontology (now called "The Penn Museum") and was made the Museum's first director in 1892, a position he held until 1899 when the office was abolished. Culin remained the Curator of the American and General Ethnology Sections until 1903 when he resigned from the museum. During his time in Philadelphia, Culin organized exhibits of games and folk culture at international exhibitions in Madrid (1892), Chicago (1893), Atlanta (1895), Paris (1900), and Buffalo (1901). He became a renowned expert on games of the world and published essays on Korean games (1895), Chinese games with dice and dominoes (1895) and chess and playing cards (1898). In 1900, Culin made the first of many trips to the American West to collect information on Native American games. When Culin left the University of Pennsylvania Museum in 1903 he found an appointment as the first Curator of the Department of Ethnology at the Museum of Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. He continued his trips to the American West until 1911, collecting Native American material for the Museum of Brooklyn. He accumulated an extensive collection of material from native cultures from all over the American West. Culin then made three collecting trips into Asia, visiting Japan and China from 1909-1910; Japan in 1912; and India, Korea, China and Japan from 1913-1914. He also obtained items from Africa and Eastern Europe. His focus was on material culture: instruments, games, religious items, textiles, and decorative arts.

Culin was a founding member of the American Folklore Society and the Oriental Club in Philadelphia and also belonged to the American Anthropological Association. He wrote several books on games from different cultures, but is most famous for his . Culin was also a pioneer in the art of designing exhibitions. His novel ideas earned him much commendation, as well as disparagement. He earned gold medals for his exhibitions at the World's Exposition in Madrid (1892), the World's Colombian Exposition in Chicago (1893) and the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta (1895). Yet it was mainly the novelty of his ideas that led to the strife between Culin and other department leaders at the Penn Museum, which led to Culin's forced resignation in 1903.

When Stewart Culin died in 1929, he left a lasting impression on the art of designing museum exhibitions as well as a large catalogue and collection of games from all over the world.

Scope and Contents

Stewart Culin had a passion for the study of games from around the world and became a pioneer in the field of comparative game studies, amassing an extensive collection of games. However, the Penn Museum's collection of the records of Culin's games is incomplete because Culin took much of his collection to the Brooklyn Museum when he left Philadelphia.

The material in this collection was found in complete disorder but was finally divided into three series: correspondence, collection data, and miscellaneous. The correspondence was easily arranged by sender, and contains only a few letters sent by Culin. Collection data includes an eclectic mix of game instructions, some in French, German or Italian, collected by Culin in his passion for all things to do with games, as well as a list of "Goose Games" containing esoteric information about their origin. The miscellaneous series contains a few items that are difficult to identify or classify.

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Penn Museum Archives

1/30/2009

Finding aid prepared by Sam Bulter.

Use Restrictions

Although many items from the archives are in the public domain, copyright may be retained by the authors of items in these papers, or their descendants, as stipulated by United States copyright law. The user is fully responsible for compliance with relevant copyright law.

Controlled Access Headings

Form/Genre(s)

- Correspondence

Personal Name(s)

- Culin, Stewart, 1858-1929

Subject(s)

- Games

Correspondence

Collection Inventory

Correspondence, 1893-1903.

Series Description

Contains correspondence between Stewart Culin and donors and collectors concerning the collection of games from around the world, correspondence between Culin and the Smithsonian Institution about the loan of several objects between the Smithsonian and the Penn Museum, correspondence between Culin and a man in Burma was well as the Wakem & McLaughlin importing company concerning Burmese items Culin used in the Chicago World's Fair, and correspondence between Culin and the U.S. Playing Card Co. The personal correspondence is arranged alphabetically by sender, and the other correspondence by subject.

A-M, 1893-1898.

Box

Meeker, Louis L, Jan.-Oct.

1

N-Z, 1895-1903.

Chicago World's Fair [Burmese Games], 1893-1894.

U.S. National Museum [Smithsonian Institution], 1895-1900.

U.S. Playing Card Co., 1896-1897.

Collection Data

Collection Data.

Series Description

Contains accession cards with information about the donation of items to the Penn Museum, a list of information about ?Goose Games? from Europe, and advertisements and instructions for games and puzzles. Arranged by subject.

Accession Cards.

Game of the Goose.

Instructions, Advertisements, etc.

Miscellaneous.

Series Description

Contains a list, image and notes not related to any other material in the collection as well as a list of people to whom Culin?s book was sent.

Misc. Information.

Korean Games, List of Recipients.