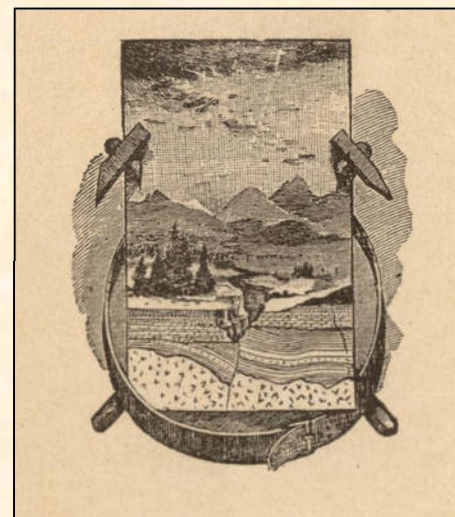




# Russian Royal Jewels

## Hidden Treasures in the USGS Libraries

July 2012



U.S. Department of the Interior  
U.S. Geological Survey



# The Kunz Collection

In the rare book room of the U.S. Geological Survey Library in Reston, VA resides the personal library of George Frederick Kunz (1856-1932). Kunz was a preeminent mineralogist and gemologist, an employee of the USGS, and a prolific writer. His library contains numerous rare and valuable books dating back to as early as the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.



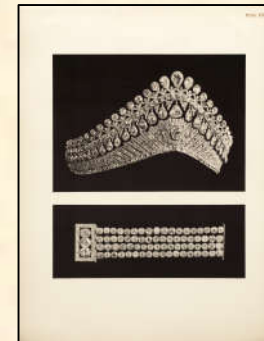
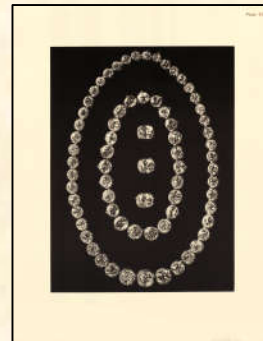
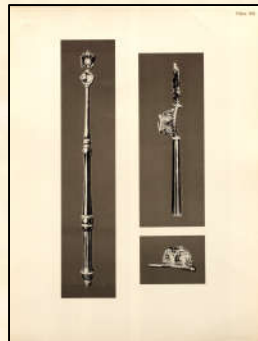
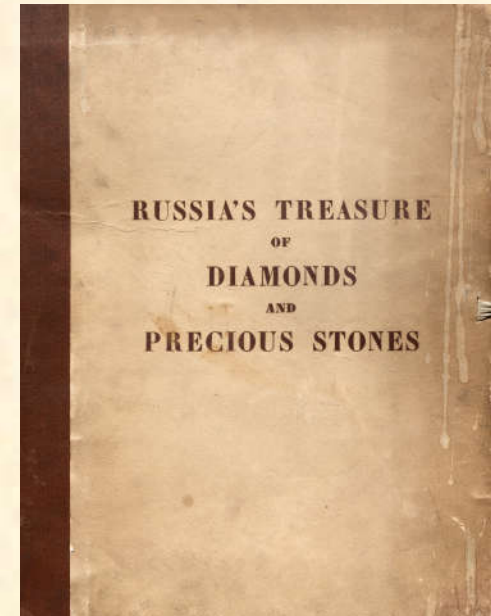
Photos of George Frederick Kunz working with kunzite which was discovered by and named after him. Taken from one of his original scrapbooks titled "Photographs of Kunzite".





# Russia's Treasure of Diamonds and Precious Stones (1925)

- “Rediscovered” in the Kunz collection. Complete except for plates LI and LII.
- Consists of 100 plates with accompanying text which inventory the Romanov jewels.
- In 2007 a copy of this catalog sold on auction for \$141,984  
[http://www.christies.com/LotFinder/lot\\_details.aspx?intObjectID=4928114](http://www.christies.com/LotFinder/lot_details.aspx?intObjectID=4928114)
- Some of these jewels were sold by the Soviet government shortly after this inventory was created. To this day the locations of many of the jewels are still unknown.



# The Photographic Album (1922)



- Consists of a hand-colored title page (left) and 59 pages on which are pasted 81 original photographs depicting Romanov jewels.
- 22 photos (some cut from larger images) appear to have been used for prints in *Russia's Treasure of Diamonds and Precious Stones*.
- 60 of the photos show jewels depicted in *Russia's Treasures* from different angles.
- 4 photos show jewelry **not** included in *Russia's Treasures*.



# Origins of Album & Catalog

It is unknown how Kunz came to possess these volumes. No connection has been found between him and the jewels at the time of assessment or sale. However, we do know that he saw them personally at an earlier point:

The Winter Palace treasures, the Orlov diamond, the red diamond of Emperor Paul, the great pearls and other magnificent jewels were shown to me by the courtesy of the Imperial Chamberlain, Prince Putjatzin on January 15, 1891, the guard being commanded by Colonel Gernet. Scarcely six months later the Prince was bombed to death. (Kunz, 1919)

Kunz's collection also contains a number of newspaper clippings from the early 1920s regarding the jewels and an auction catalogue from Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods (1927) detailing the sale of 124 lots of Russian royal jewelry.



# Examples of identical images



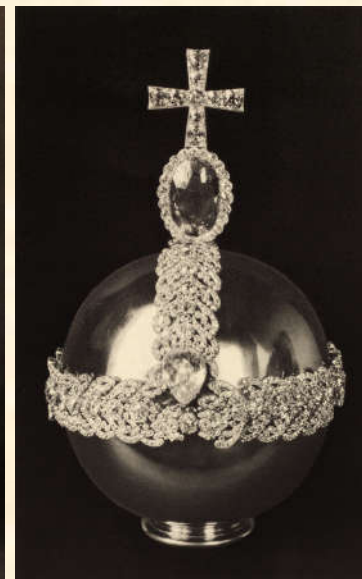
1922 photo



1925 print



1922 photo



1925 print



1922 photo



1925 print

# Examples of differing images



1922 photo



1925 print



1922 photo



1925 print



# Unique Photo 1



1922 photograph



*A Ribbon Brooch With a Large Sapphire in a Medallion*  
A formal dress item with rich stones, typical of the mid-19th century. The medallion was made from an existing clasp. Dates from the 1850s-1860s.  
No. 240

Entry from *Selling Russia's Treasures*, Nicolas Iljine, Natalya Semyonova, 2000 Appendix II.

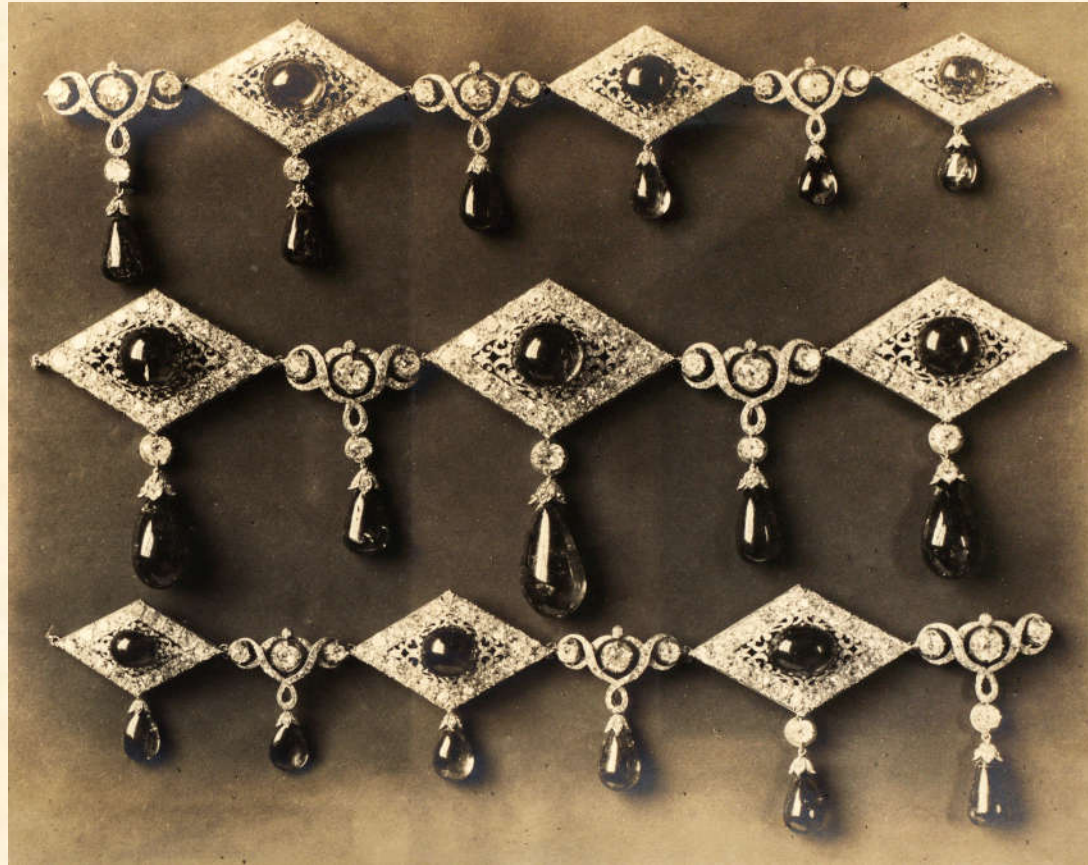


## Unique Photo 2



1922 photograph. Appears to be a bracelet. So far no references to it have been identified.

## Unique Photo 3



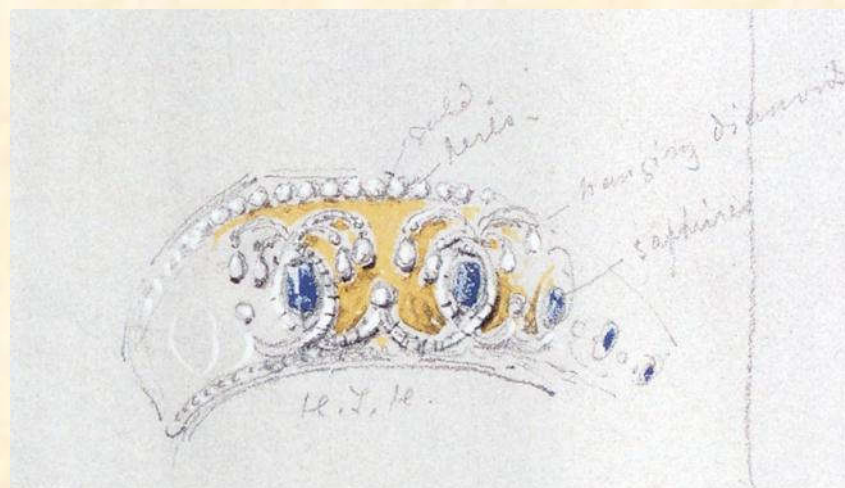
1922 photograph. Possibly a necklace. So far no references to it have been identified.



## Unique Photo 4



1922 photograph. This is a sapphire and briolette diamond kokoshnik-style tiara. No record of it being sold has been located, nor does it appear to be in the Russian Diamond Fund.



This study done by Nicholas Chevalier possibly represents the same tiara as one of the jewels worn by the Tsarevna at the marriage of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, and the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna of Russia in 1874 (Mund, 2001, 287). The design of the central portion appears identical to the photograph, although the sketch shows a pearl frame and solid backing to the tiara.

# Russian Royal Jewels



Photograph from *Russia's Treasure of Diamonds and Precious Stones*. Indicated from left to right: Photos 1, 2, and 4.



# References

Fersman, A. E. (1925). *Russia's Treasure of Diamonds and Precious Stones*. Moscow: People's Commissariat of Finances.

Iljine, Nicolas & Semyonova, Natalya. (2000). *Selling Russia's Treasures.: The Story of the Sale of Russian National Art Treasures Confiscated from the Tsarist Royal Family, the Church, Private Individuals and Museums in the USSR in 1918 – 1937*. Moscow: Trefoil Press.

Kunz, George Frederick. (1919). *The Crown Jewels of Russia*. Lotus Magazine; v. 10, p. 288-292.

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# Special Thanks

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