



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

MS 3898 Materials relating to Powell's
alphabet for recording Indian languages

National Anthropological Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Anthropological Archives
Title:	MS 3898 Materials relating to Powell's alphabet for recording Indian languages
Date:	Ca. 1877; and 1903-1911
Identifier:	NAA.MS3898
Creator:	Smithsonian Institution. Bureau of American Ethnology McGee, W J, 1853-1912 Boas, Franz, 1858-1942 Harrington, John Peabody, 1884-1961 Hodge, Frederick Webb, 1864-1956 Hewitt, J. N. B. (John Napoleon Brinton), 1859-1937 Powell, John Wesley, 1834-1902 Whitney, William Dwight, 1827-1894 Mason, Otis Tufton, 1838-1908 Gibbs, George, 1815-1873 Pilling, James Constantine, 1846-1895 Gatschet, Albert S. (Albert Samuel), 1832-1907
Extent:	1 Portfolio
Language:	Undetermined .

Administrative Information

Citation

Manuscript 3898, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Scope and Contents

Folder 1: Powell to Whitney, July 17, 1877 (Copy) Whitney to Powell, July 25, 1877 (Draft) Powell to Whitney, July 31, 1877 (Draft) List of vowel and consonant symbols, with definitions, from Whitney (so identified in George Gibb's hand--MCB); undated copy of draft of Whitney's manuscript which is also in the Yale manuscripts. It was subsequently published, slightly revised and attributed to Whitney as "On the alphabet," page 306 of Powell's Introduction . . ., 1877. 11 pages.

Scope and Contents

Folder 2: Photographic copies of all Powell-Whitney correspondence in Yale University Library, secured by W. C. Sturtevant after visit of November 4, 1960 (Stirling Memorial Library, Yale University, Historical Manuscripts Collections, W. D. Whitney (1827-1894) collection): Powell to Whitney, July 17, 1877, 15 pages. Enclosure in above : untitled manuscript by W. D. W., describing alphabet for Indian languages. 22 pages.

Powell to Whitney, July 31, 1877, 6 pages letter and 6 pages tables of symbols. Powell to Whitney, August 27, 1877, 2 pages (transmitting 2 copies of printed alphabet, not present).

Scope and Contents

Folder 3: 3 drafts of Powell's alphabet with introduction, undated. "Suggestions from I. (?) Porter", May 12, (no year) re Whitney's orthographic proposals. 2 pages. O. T. Mason's note on Powell's and Whitney's orthography, 2 pages. 2 unsigned copies of letter to William Dwight Whitney, May 7th, 1877, labelled "O. T. Mason," on US Geographic & Geologic Survey Rocky Mountains letterhead paper--written in phonetic orthography, one (marked "q") in Whitney's orthography, and the other (marked "r" in Mason's modification, 2 pages each.

Scope and Contents

Folder 4: Several sheets on orthography, unsigned, undated, marked "Gibbs," "Pilling," "Gatschet," etc. and apparently received from them. The manuscript copy in Gibbs' hand marked "Pickering's alphabet" is summarized from pages 35-36 of "An essay on a uniform orthography for the Indian languages of North America," by John Pickering, Cambridge, University Press, 1820 (reprint from Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences volume 4, art.22)(BAE Library PM 211.P5). The Dakota alphabet in Gibb's hand is a copy from Riggs, Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge, 4, 1852.

Scope and Contents

Folder 5: Printed materials: Clipping, definition of symbols "from the manual or circular sent out by Gibbs, George 1863" two copies printed sheet "The Origin of our alphabet," copyright 1877 by J. Enthoffer Newspaper clipping re Melville Bell's "Universal Alphabet," March 17, 1876.

Scope and Contents

Folder 6: McGee to Boas, May 27, 1903 (Copy); Boas to McGee, May 28, 1903; McGee to Boas, June 16, 1903; J. P. Harrington to F. W. Hodge, January 11, 1910; J. P. Harrington to F. W. Hodge, January 16, 1910 (two letters, this date); Hodge to Harrington, January 20, 1910; Harrington to Hodge, September 30, 1911; Hewitt to Hodge, October 16, 1911 re Harrington's proposals; Hodge to Harrington, October 18, 1911.

Local Numbers

NAA MS 3898

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Alphabet -- phonetic
Language and languages -- Documentation

Names:

Pickering, John, 1777-1846
Porter, I.