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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: Albert G. Ingalls Papers
Identifier: NMAH.AC.0175
Date: circa 1920-1956
Extent: 8.7 Cubic feet (27 boxes)
Creator: Porter, Russell W.  
National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Electricity and Modern Physics  
Ingalls, Albert G., 1888-1958 (astronomer, editor)
Language: English .
Summary: Collection documents Albert G. Ingalls role as an editor for the "Scientific American" (specifically a column on amateur astronomy) primarily through correspondence and other publications.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
Collection donated by Jeremy G. Ingalls and Joan V. Ingalls, July 1985.

Processing Information
Collection processed by Don Darroch, 1985.

Preferred Citation

Restrictions
This collection is open for research.

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Biographical / Historical

Albert G. Ingalls (1888-1958) served in World War I; later as an editor of Scientific American, he conducted a regular column on amateur astronomy. Educated at Cornell University, Ingalls was a life-time astronomy and telescope-making enthusiast. In his editorial capacity he corresponded with hundreds of amateur and professional astronomers and other scientists in the U.S. and many other countries.

Scope and Contents

The Ingalls correspondence collection, while centered on problems of telescope construction, is by no means exclusively concerned with it. Over the years, in his editorial role and through many personal contacts, Ingalls developed continuing friendships which were maintained through voluminous correspondence. The letters often dealt with non-scientific subjects, sometimes quite personal in nature. They were often very informal in style and in the case of correspondents who were particularly close friends, were sometimes conducted on the basis of private nicknames, slang and "in-jokes."

In addition to letters, the Ingalls collection includes numerous copies of publications, reprints, and clippings often related to the subject matter of the correspondence. There are also drafts and final versions of Ingalls' columns from the Scientific American and from other publications. The collection also includes rough sketches of telescope components as well as blueprints and many photographs of equipment and individuals.

Prominent among Ingalls' correspondents was Russell W. Porter, a versatile scientist and artist who participated in Arctic exploration in the early 1900's and later became a professional maker of telescope mirrors and the author of numerous articles on the field. Porter's greatest contribution was as a member of the team which designed and constructed the 200-inch telescope at Mt. Palomar, California. Ingalls, 17 years Porter's junior, helped to publicize Porter's writings. Utilizing Porter's material as well as information from many other sources, Ingalls published in 1926 a book, Amateur Telescope Making, which went through 14 printings and 4 editions by 1959.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:
- Astronomy -- 20th century
- Telescope -- 20th century
- Telescope makers -- 20th century

Types of Materials:
- Clippings

Names:

Geographic Names:
- Mt. Palomar, California
## Container Listing

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