



Smithsonian  
*National Museum of American History*  
*Kenneth E. Behring Center*

## Guide to the Charles Came Collection

NMAH.AC.0661

Alison Oswald

2003

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
<b>Title:</b>	Charles Came Collection
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAH.AC.0661
<b>Date:</b>	1838-1979
<b>Extent:</b>	0.25 Cubic feet (2 boxes)
<b>Creator:</b>	Came, Charles, 1806-1881
<b>Language:</b>	English

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## Administrative Information

### Immediate Source of Acquisition

The collection was purchased by the Division of Electricity and Modern Physics, now known as the Division of Medicine and Science in 1989.

### Ownership and Custodial History

Collection was transferred from the Division of Information Technology & Society (now Division of Medicine and Science) to the Archives Center in January 1999.

### Related Archival Materials

Approximately 138 scientific instruments—some of which include electrical apparatuses, phrenology heads, tellurian, a celestial globe, colored lantern slides, and electromagnetic engines—from Dr. Came's personal collection are housed in the Division of Medicine and Science.

### Processing Information

Collection processed by Alison Oswald, 2003.

### Preferred Citation

Charles Came Collection, 1838-1979, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

### Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted research access on site by appointment. Unprotected photographs must be handled with gloves.

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## Biographical Note

Charles Came (1806-1881) was born in Henrietta, New York. Came did not attend school, but held work as both a cabinetmaker and a carver of gravestones. He had a strong interest in astronomy and electricity and during the late 1840s and 1850s, he traveled through upstate New York demonstrating the marvels of science, with an emphasis on electricity. Came discovered that he could make money on his own by traveling from town to town, presenting basic science to the people in a dramatic, entertaining style, or enlightening them about recent discoveries. Came began calling himself "Dr." Came and also prescribed medical remedies. The handbills in the collection note Dr. Came's Cough Balsam, Magnetic Stimulating Drops, Magnetic Vermifuge, Volatile Liniment, Vegetable Cathartic Powder, and Easy Emetic Tincture to name a few. The collection represents the popularization of science and its role in American culture.

### Sources

Sherman, Roger. "Charles Came, Itinerant Science Lecturer, and His Splendid Apparatus," *Journal of the American Scientific Instrument Enterprise*, Vol. 5, No. 4, August 1991, p. 120.

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## Scope and Contents

The collection consists of approximately .25 cubic feet of correspondence, pamphlets, photographs, and books documenting Charles Came. The bulk of the collection consists of correspondence from Charles Came to his second wife, Cynthia (Chadwick) Came which were written during his travels throughout upstate New York. The correspondence is not inclusive, and distinctions have been made between existing original correspondence, photostats, photocopies, and typed copies. The photostats appear to be the most complete set of letters between Dr. Came and his wife.

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## Arrangement

The collection is divided into six series.

Series 1: Biographical, undated

Series 2: Correspondence, 1845-1860

Series 3: Photographs, undated

Series 4: Writings, undated

Series 5: Pamphlets, 1838-1849

Series 6: Books, 1846-1854

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Electricity  
Lecturers  
Phrenology  
Sideshows  
Traveling sales personnel

Types of Materials:

Articles  
Books -- 19th century  
Letters (correspondence) -- 19th century  
Pamphlets -- 19th century  
Photographs -- 19th century

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## Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Materials, undated

*Box 1, Folder 1*

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## Series 2: Correspondence, 1845-1860

Box 1, Folder 2	Indices to letters (partial)
Box 1, Folder 3	Letters, March 20, 1846 to September 13, 1860 (original)
Box 1, Folder 4	Letters, January 19, 1845 to July 7, 1859 (typed)
Box 1, Folder 5	Letters, 1846-August 5, 1855; September 24, 1861 (photocopies)
Box 1, Folder 6	Letters, June 1846 to July 9, 1850 (photostats)
Box 1, Folder 7	Letters, October 5, 1851 to September 29, 1853 (photostats)

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