# Table of Contents

Collection Overview ........................................................................................................ 1  
Administrative Information .............................................................................................. 1  
Scope and Contents........................................................................................................... 3  
Biographical / Historical.................................................................................................. 2  
Arrangement..................................................................................................................... 3  
Bibliography...................................................................................................................... 3  
Names and Subjects ......................................................................................................... 3  
Container Listing ............................................................................................................. 4
Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: Charles Francis Hall Collection
Identifier: NMAH.AC.0702
Date: 1858-1871
Extent: 3.5 Cubic feet (12 boxes)
Creator: Field, Cyrus
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871
Franklin, John, 1786-1847
Royal Geographic Society.
Everett, Edward, 1794-1865
Language: Collection text is in English. Some materials in Inuktut.
Summary: The collection documents Hall's Arctic exploration.

Administrative Information

Provenance
Collection transferred to the Archives Center from the Division of Armed Forces History (now Division of Political and Military History) on October 8, 1999.

Processing Information
Collection processed by Archives Center staff, undated.

Preferred Citation
Charles Francis Hall Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions
Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use
Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.
Biographical / Historical

The Arctic explorer Charles Francis Hall was born about 1821, either Vermont or New Hampshire; there are very few details about his early life. He is most notable for spending over ten years in the Arctic among the Inuit, initially focused on locating evidence of the lost British Expedition under Sir John Franklin, and then, in two later expeditions, searching for the Northwest Passage and the North Pole.

Before becoming a polar explorer, Hall began as a blacksmith's apprentice at a young age in Rochester, NH. Sometime in the 1840's he married and moved westward eventually coming to Cincinnati, where Charles opened a business making engraving plates and seals, in 1849. Later he published a small newspaper in Cincinnati, The Cincinnati Occasional.

While publishing news stories of arctic expeditions related to the Franklin expedition, Hall became enamored with the idea of polar exploration. In 1857 he began collecting any material he could gather on the landscape and survival in the Arctic, previous expeditions, and John Franklin's expedition itself, while at the same time seeking financial support for his expedition.

After detailed preparation and a small amount of financial backing, Hall boarded a ship for Greenland, and then on to the "Terra Incognita" of the Arctic. Despite being an amateur explorer with very little support for his first expedition, Hall believed that by living amongst the indigenous Inuit people, a non-native could survive long periods living in the arctic. In May 1860, Hall arrived in Frobisher Bay, Canada and with not much more than a small boat and basic supplies, Hall met befriended local Inuit who took him in for the next two years.

Over those two years, Hall found little evidence of the Franklin expedition, but what he did find proved to be more valuable. While an avid and writer, Hall lived, learned and daily documented in his journals more about the Inuit people that any visitor before him. His journals describe Inuit society, traditions, oral histories, language and culture, as well as the skills necessary to survive in such an unforgiving climate. He also travelled and mapped much of the unknown Frobisher Bay area, correcting many previously incorrect maps that depicted area as an open strait, rather than a closed bay.

Once Hall returned to the United States, he began working on publishing his writings and preparing for a second expedition to Frobisher Bay. In 1864, he left for his second trip spending almost five years living amongst the Inuit, searching for the Franklin expedition and mapping unknown portions of the Arctic.

As soon as he arrived home in 1869, Hall began again planning his next and bigger expedition, but times had changed in the U.S. The Civil War was over and the United States government was now interested in polar exploration and the race to the North Pole. Gaining the attention of President Grant, Hall was appointed as joint commander of the Polaris Expedition.

Departing in 1871, the expedition began with critical problems. The "joint-command" of the expedition put Hall in direct conflict with the other two expedition commanders, each one believing they should have been appointed as sole commander. This eventually led to incredible disasters throughout the expedition, resulting in the total failure of the mission, loss of the ship, as well as the death of Charles Francis Hall. Hall died on the expedition in November 1871, possibly from poisoning by one of his co-commanders. His body was exhumed in 1969 and tested, revealing the presence of arsenic. While Hall claimed on his deathbed he had been poisoned by a crew member, many 19th century medicines contained arsenic.
Scope and Contents

Diaries, journals, notebooks, scrapbooks, business cards, correspondence, ships' logs, navigation charts and documents on Hall's Arctic exploration. The correspondence includes letters to and from Henry Grimmell, William Grimmell, J. Carson Brevoont, John Barrow, Cyrus Field, Edward Everett, Clement Markham, Joseph Henry, and the Royal Geographic Society.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into one series.

Bibliography


Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:
- Eskimo/Inuit
- Explorers
- Indigenous peoples
- Inuktut

Cultures:
- Eskimo/Inuit

Types of Materials:
- Business cards
- Letters (correspondence) -- 1850-1900
- Navigation charts
- Notebooks
- Scrapbooks -- 19th century
- Ships' logs

Names:
- Henry, Joseph, 1797-1878

Geographic Names:
- Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
- Nunavut
## Container Listing

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 1</th>
<th>.001, [Charles Francis Hall's Diary], 1860 January 01</th>
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<td>Diary written prior to Hall's first Arctic expedition.</td>
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Image(s): .004, Journal for the months preceding the 1st expedition, with newspaper clippings

Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author

Journal for the months preceding Hall's first expedition, with newspaper clippings.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000021

Topic: Explorers
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 1, Folder 3

.005, [Pomroy v. Hall Documents], 1860 May

1 Item (Ink on paper; 17.0" x 11").

Image(s): .005, Documents relating to the case of Pomroy v. Hall

Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author

Documents for the legal case, Pomroy v. Hall, May 1860.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000022

Topic: Explorers
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 1, Folder 4

.006-.009, Four notebooks with notes on other arctic explorers, in preparation for Hall's 1st expedition, undated

Box 1, Folder 4

.006, [Volume 1 of Charles Francis Hall's Notes on Arctic Explorers], circa 1860

1 Item (Ink on paper; 17.0" x 11").

Image(s): [Volume 1 of Charles Francis Hall's Notes on Arctic Explorers]

Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author

English.

First volume of four notebooks on arctic explorers in preparation for Hall's 1st expedition.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000023

Topic: Explorers
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century
Box 1, Folder 4 .007, [Volume 2 of Charles Francis Hall's Notes on Arctic Explorers], circa 1860
1 Item (Ink on paper; 17.0" x 11".)
Image(s): [Volume 2 of Charles Francis Hall's Notes on Arctic Explorers]
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
English.
Second volume of four notebooks on arctic explorers in preparation for Hall's 1st expedition.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000024

Topic: Explorers
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 1, Folder 4 .008, [Volume 3 of Charles Francis Hall's Notes on Arctic Explorers], circa 1860
1 Item (Ink on paper; 17.0" x 11".)
Image(s): [Volume 3 of Charles Francis Hall's Notes on Arctic Explorers]
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
English.
Third volume of four notebooks on arctic explorers in preparation for Hall's 1st expedition.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000025

Topic: Explorers
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 1, Folder 4 .009, [Volume 4 of Charles Francis Hall's Notes on Arctic Explorers], circa 1860
1 Item (Ink on paper; 17.0" x 11".)
Image(s): [Volume 4 of Charles Francis Hall's Notes on Arctic Explorers]
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
English.
Fourth volume of four notebooks on arctic explorers in preparation for Hall's 1st expedition.

Local Numbers
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Topic: Explorers
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<td>Box 1, Folder 5</td>
<td>.011, [Loose Notes Kept by Charles Francis Hall on other Arctic Explorers], circa 1860, undated</td>
<td>.011, Loose notes kept by Hall on other Arctic explorers</td>
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<td>.012, Journal, Volume I</td>
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Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

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.013, [Charles Francis Hall's Expedition Diary 2], 1860 July-1860 November
1 item (Ink on paper; 11.0" x 8.5").

Image(s): .013, Journal, Volume II

Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author

Diary written during Hall's first Arctic expedition.

Local Numbers

AC0702-0000003

Topic: Explorers

Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration

Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 1, Folder 7

.014, [Charles Francis Hall Expedition Diary Volume III, First Expedition], 1860 August-1860 November
1 item (Ink on paper; 9.5" x 12.2").

Image(s): .014, Journal, Volume III

Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author

Ink on paper.

Local Numbers

AC0702-0000004

Topic: Explorers

Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration

Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 1, Folder 8

.015, [Charles Francis Hall Expedition Diary Volume IV, First Expedition], 1860 November-1861 April
1 item (9.5" x 12.2").

Image(s): .015, Journal, Volume IV

Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author

Ink on paper.

Local Numbers

AC0702-0000005

Topic: Explorers

Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration

Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 1, Folder 8

.016, Loose pages of journal, 1861 January-1861 February
Box 2, Folder 1  
.017, [Notebook of Personal Account of John F. Sullivan Who Deserted from Whaling Ship], 1860 March  
1 Item (8.5" x 6.6").  
Image(s): .017, Notebook, with the personal account of John F. Sullivan who deserted ship  
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author  
Ink on paper.  
Local Numbers  
AC0702-0000012  
Topic: Explorers  
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration  
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 2, Folder 1  
.018, Small notebook, with navigational notes, 1861 April

Box 2, Folder 1  
.019, [Charles Francis Hall Expedition Diary Volume V Part 1, First Expedition], 1861 May 11-1861 May 28  
1 Item (8.5" x 7.0").  
Image(s): .019, Journal, Volume V  
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author  
Ink on paper.  
Local Numbers  
AC0702-0000006  
Topic: Explorers  
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration  
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 2, Folder 1  
.020, [Charles Francis Hall Expedition Diary Volume V Part 2, First Expedition], 1861 May 28-1861 June 5  
1 Item (Ink on paper.; 8.5" x 7.0").  
Image(s): .020, Journal, Volume V  
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author  
Local Numbers  
AC0702-0000007  
Topic: Explorers  
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration  
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century
Box 2, Folder 2
.021, [Charles Francis Hall Journal], 1861 August-1861 October
1 Item (5.4" x 8.3").
Image(s): .021, Journal by Hall
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.
Local Numbers
AC0702-0000008
Topic: Explorers
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 2, Folder 2
.022, [Charles Francis Hall Journal with Navigational Notes], 1861
1 Item (6.8" x 8.9").
Image(s): .022, Journal, with navigational notes
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.
Local Numbers
AC0702-0000011
Topic: Explorers
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 2, Folder 3
.023, [Charles Francis Hall Journal], 1862 April -1862 June
1 Item (6.0" x 15.5").
Image(s): .023, Journal by Hall
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.
Local Numbers
AC0702-0000010
Topic: Explorers
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 2, Folder 3
.024, Observation book, 1862 April-1862 May

Box 2, Folder 4
.025, [Charles Francis Hall's Ship Log and Journal Number 1], July 1860-1861 September
1 Item (8.3" x 12.5").
Image(s): .025, Ship's log and journal no. 1
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000009
Topic: Explorers
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 2, Folder 4
.026, Ship's Log and Journal no. 2, 1861 October-1862 August

Box 2, Folder 5
.027, [Charles Francis Hall's Notebook with bearings and tables during First Expedition], circa 1861, undated
1 Item (7.7" x 12.6").
Image(s): .027, Notebook, with bearings and tables as kept by Hall during his 1st expedition
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000014
Topic: Explorers
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 2, Folder 6
.028, [Notes Taken by Hall on the Esquimaux [Inuktut] Vocabulary], Circa 1860, undated
1 Item (8.2" x 13.2").
Image(s): .028, Notes taken by Hall on the Esquimaux vocabulary
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000015
Culture: Eskimo/Inuit
Topic: Explorers
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 3, Folder 1
.029, [Notebook with Reckonings as Kept by Charles Francis Hall during his First Expedition], circa 1860, undated
1 Item (8.4" x 13.2").

Image(s): .029, Notebook, with reckonings as kept by Hall during his 1st expedition

Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000016

Topic: Eskimo ?
Explorers

Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration

Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 3, Folder 1

.030, [Notebook with miscellaneous notes, and a list of names of all the people who contributed to the expedition]
circa 1860, undated

1 Item (7.6" x 12.4").

Image(s): .030, Notebook, with miscellaneous notes, and a list of names of all the people who contributed to the expedition

Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000017

Topic: Explorers
Inuktitut

Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration

Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Culture: Eskimo/Inuit

Box 3, Folder 2

.031, [Sketch Maps and Drawings from the First Expedition]
circa 1860, undated

1 Item (17" x 11").

Image(s): .031, Sketch maps and drawings from the 1st expedition

Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000029

Culture: Eskimo/Inuit

Topic: Explorers
Inuktitut

Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration

Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century
Box 3, Folder 3
.032, [Geographical Notes of Charles Francis Hall's First expedition], circa 1860, undated
1 Item (8.5" x 12.9").
Image(s): .032, Geographical notes of the 1st expedition
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000030

Culture: Eskimo/Inuit
Topic: Explorers
       Inuktut
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 3, Folder 4
.033, [Rough Notebook of Observations and Navigational Notes on Charles Francis Hall's First Expedition], circa 1860, undated
1 Item (6.1" x 4").
Image(s): .033, Rough notebook, containing observations, and navigational
notes of the 1st expedition
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000031

Culture: Eskimo/Inuit
Topic: Explorers
       Inuktut
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 3, Folder 5
.034, [Various Papers Containing Navigational Charts and Tables on Charles Francis Hall's First expedition], circa 1860, undated
1 Item
Image(s): .034, Navigational charts and tables from the 1st expedition
Image(s): [Various Papers Containing Navigational Charts and Tables on Charles Francis Hall's 1st Expedition Circa 1860.]
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000032 to AC0702-0000038

Culture: Eskimo/Inuit
Box 3, Folder 6 .035, [Observation Book Containing Navigational Notes for the First Expedition], circa 1860
1 Item (17.0" x 11.0").
Image(s): .035, Observation book, containing navigational notes for the 1st expedition
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.

Box 3, Folder 6 .036, [Meteorological Journal From Charles Francis Hall's First Expedition], circa 1860, undated
1 Item (17" x 11").
Image(s): .036, Meteorological journal from the 1st expedition
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.

Box 3, Folder 7 .037, [Various Bills, Receipts and Business Cards Collected by Charles Francis Hall], circa 1860, undated
1 Item (Various Sizes.)
Image(s): .037: Various bills, receipts and business cards collected by Hall
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.
Local Numbers
AC0702-0000041

Culture: Eskimo/Inuit
Topic: Explorers
       Inuktut
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 4, Folder 1 .038, [Charles Francis Hall's Notebook to Topics of His First Expedition], Circa 1860, undated
1 Item (14" x 11").

Image(s): .038, Notebook, Index to topics of the 1st expedition
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000042

Culture: Eskimo/Inuit
Topic: Explorers
       Inuktut
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 4, Folder 1 .039, [Charles Francis Hall's Notebook of Index to the Esquimaux [Inuit] of his First Expedition], Circa 1860, undated
1 Item (14" x 11").

Image(s): .039, Notebook, Index to the Esquimaux of the 1st expedition
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000043

Culture: Eskimo/Inuit
Topic: Explorers
       Inuktut
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 4, Folder 2 .040, [Charles Francis Hall's Letters to Captain Buddington], 1860 June
1860-1863 October
1 Item (Various Sizes.)
Image(s): .040, Hall's letters to Captain Buddington
Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author
Ink on paper.

Local Numbers
AC0702-0000044

Culture: Eskimo/Inuit
Topic: Explorers
Inuktut
Place: Arctic regions -- Discovery and exploration
Genre/Form: Diaries -- 19th century

Box 4, Folder 3 .041, Notebook, with passages and notes from Arctic explorers before Hall, undated
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 3 .042, Notebook, with selected passages and navigational notes copied from Hall's journal(s) of the 1st expedition, undated
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 4 .043, Writings on the explorations of Martin Frobisher, undated
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 4 .044, Writings on the loss of the "George Henry", 1863
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 5 .045, Correspondence regarding exhibits and lectures on the first expedition, undated
Image(s): .045, Correspondence(s) regarding exhibits and lectures on the 1st expedition

Box 4, Folder 6 .046, Notes for lectures on the first expedition, 1863 - 1864
Image(s): .046, Notes for lectures on the 1st expedition

Box 4, Folder 7 .047, Advertisement for P.T. Barnum's Museum, featuring an Esquimaux [Inuit] family, brought from Greenland by Hall, 1862 November 3
Image(s): .047, Advertisement for P.T. Barnum's Museum, featuring an Esquimaux family, brought from Greenland by Hall

Box 4, Folder 8 .048, Letters regarding an agreement between W. Parker Snow and Hall, for preparing a book on the first expedition, undated
Image(s): .048, Letters regarding an agreement between W. Parker Snow and Hall, for preparing a book on the 1st expedition

Box 4, Folder 9 .049, Notes for Hall's book on the first expedition, undated
Image(s): .049, Notes for Hall's book on the 1st expedition

Box 5, Folder 1-2 .050, Rough draft of Hall's book, "Arctic Research and Life Among the Esquimaux [Inuit]", 1864 - 1864
Image(s): .050, Rough draft of Hall's book, "Arctic Research and Life Among the Esquimaux"

Box 5, Folder 3 .051, Letters to and from; Henry and William Grimmell, J. Carson Brevoont, John Barrow, Cyrus Field, Edward Everett, Clement Markham, Joseph Henry, The Royal Geographic Society, and others, 1863 - 1864
Image(s)

Box 5, Folder 4 .052, Various correspondences to and from Hall, 1862 - 1864
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 1 .053, Letters regarding the possibility of a second Arctic expedition, undated
Image(s): .053, Letters regarding the possibility of a 2nd arctic expedition

Box 6, Folder 2 .054, Letters from men volunteering for the second expedition, undated
Image(s): .054, Letters from men volunteering for the 2nd expedition

Box 6, Folder 3 .055, Journal, kept by Hall while preparing for his second expedition, 1863 January-1864 April
Image(s): .055, Journal, kept by Hall while preparing for his 2nd expedition

Box 6, Folder 4 .056, Notebook, with the expenses of H.W. Dodge in account with C. F. Hall, 1863
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 4 .057, Notebook, day to day planner of Hall, undated
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 4 .058, Expenditures of Hall while preparing for his second expedition, undated
Image(s): .058, Expenditures of Hall while preparing for his 2nd expedition

Box 6, Folder 5 .059, Notebook, "List of Stores Put on Board", a checklist preparing for the second expedition, undated
Image(s): .059, Notebook, "List of Stores Put on Board", a checklist preparing for the 2nd expedition

Box 6, Folder 5 .060, Receipts of items purchase, 1862-1864
Image(s)

Box 6, Folder 5 .061, Pamphlet, stating the rules and regulations governing foreign shipmasters visiting the coast of Greenland, undated
Box 6, Folder 6
.062, Journal kept by Hall, 1864 August-1864 October

Box 6, Folder 7
.063, Journal kept by Hall, 1864 December-1865 May

Box 7, Folder 1
.064, Journal kept by Hall, 1865 November-1866 April

Box 7, Folder 2
.065, Journal kept by Hall, 1866 August-1869 September

Box 7, Folder 3
.066, Private journal kept by Hall, 1866 May-1866 June

Box 7, Folder 4
.067, Journal "A", by Hall during the time he spent with the Esquimaux [Inuit] during his second expedition, 1868 April - December

Box 7, Folder 4
.068, Journal "B", kept by Hall, 1869 January-1869 July

Box 8, Folder 1
.069, Journal kept by Hall, 1868 April-1869 August

Box 8, Folder 2
.070, Journal kept by Hall, 1865 May

Box 8, Folder 3
.071, Nautical Almanac for 1868, with notes by Hall on selected dates, 1868

Box 8, Folder 4
.072, Meteorological journal, 1867 February-1867 April

Box 8, Folder 4
.073, Meteorological journal, 1864 November-1865 September

Box 8, Folder 4
.074, Meteorological journal, 1864 July-1864 November

Box 8, Folder 5
.075, Two chronometer rate reports, 1864 June

Box 8, Folder 6
.076, Rough astronomical calculations from the second expedition, undated
Box 8, Folder 6  .077, Eight small notebooks, recording solar observations for latitude and time, astronomical bearings, and triangulations, 1866-1869

Box 8, Folder 6  .078, Two small notebooks, recording Astronomical observations, 1869 July 31-1869 August 4

Box 8, Folder 7  .079, Two notebooks, listing subscribers to Hall 's second expedition, with business cards mounted within, 1864-1869

Box 9, Folder 1  .080, Seven notebooks, with journal entries and observations, 1866 June-1866 July

Box 9, Folder 2  .081, Fourteen small notebooks, with accounts of the ships stores and provisions, 1867-1869

Box 9, Folder 2  .082, Three small notebooks, with lists of articles aboard the ship that will be taken back to the U.S., 1869

Box 9, Folder 2  .083, Notebook, with list of stores, and accounts of their distribution , 1865

Box 9, Folder 3  .084, Correspondences relating to Hall, 1866-1868

Box 9, Folder 4  .085, Letters written by Hall after leaving New London for his second Arctic expedition , undated

Box 9, Folder 4  .086, Letters received by Hall while on the 2nd expedition, 1867-1868

Box 9, Folder 5  .087, Letters written by Hall to his friend Edward A. Chapel, undated

Box 9, Folder 6  .088, Three notebooks with journal entries and observations made by Hall, 1864 May-1864 August
Box 9, Folder 7 .089, Two notebooks, with observations and accounts of a sledge trip back to the ship, 1865

Box 9, Folder 7 .090, Notes on boat voyage top Repulse Bay, undated

Box 9, Folder 8 .091, Miscellaneous loose notes from Hall's 2nd expedition, 1864-1869

Box 10, Folder 1 .092, Rough notes and journal entries, 1864 September-1864 December

Box 10, Folder 2 .093, Rough notes and journal entries, 1865 June-1865 August

Box 10, Folder 2 .094, Rough notes and journal entries, 1866

Box 10, Folder 3 .095, Ten small notebooks, with accounts of a sledge trip to Repulse Bay, 1866 June-1866 August

Box 10, Folder 4 .096, Five small notebooks, with journal entries and observations, 1866 February-1866 October

Box 10, Folder 5 .097, Twenty-one small notebooks with journal entries and observations of a sledge trip, 1866 April-1866 June

Box 10, Folder 6 .098, Eighteen small notebooks, with accounts of a sledge trip to Igloolik [Foxe Basin, Qikiqtaaluk Region in Nunavut, northern Canada.], 1867 February-1867 April

Box 10, Folder 7 .099, Notebooks, loose notes, and clippings on the sledge journey to Cape Weynton, 1867 May

Box 11, Folder 1 .100, Thirty-eight small notebooks, with notes of sledge journey to Igloolik and back, 1868 February-1868 June

Box 11, Folder 2 .101, Twenty small notebooks, with accounts of the sledge journey to Lyons Inlet, 1868 November-1868 December

Box 11, Folder 3 .102, Five small notebooks, with notes on the Sledge journey from Talloon Bay to five miles east of Ft. Hope, 1869 March

Box 11, Folder 4 .103, Sixty-two small notebooks, with accounts of the final sledge journey to King Williams Land, including notes on provisions, 1869 March-1869 June
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 11, Folder 5</th>
<th>.104, Speech given by Hall in Cincinnati upon his return from the 2nd expedition, 1869</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 11, Folder 6</td>
<td>.105, Notebook, partial list of Sir John Franklin's relics, 1870 August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 11, Folder 6</td>
<td>.106, List of the relics delivered to Lady Franklin, 1870 August 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 11, Folder 6</td>
<td>.107, Records of Hall's second Arctic expedition, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 11, Folder 7</td>
<td>.108, Receipts for advertisements, and preparations for a lecture given by Hall on his 2nd expedition, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 11, Folder 7</td>
<td>.109, Advertisement and ticket to a lecture given by Hall, at The Steinway Hall, 1869 October 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 11, Folder 8</td>
<td>.110, Correspondence after Hall's return from the second expedition, 1869-1870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 11, Folder 9</td>
<td>.111, Wax Seal of Henry Clay, engraved at &quot;Hall's Engraving Room&quot;, Cincinnati Ohio, by Benjamin True, with a newspaper relating to Hall attached, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 11, Folder 9</td>
<td>.112, Issue of Stock in the Hudson Bay Co., given to Hall, 1869 August 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 11, Folder 10</td>
<td>.113, Correspondence regarding Congressional Acts which approved a third expedition, 1870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 12</td>
<td>.114, [Charles Francis Hall's report to Secretary of the Navy on third Arctic expedition], 1871 October, October 20, 1871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Item (10.6&quot; x 16.3&quot;).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Image(s): .114, Letter from Hall, to the Secretary of Navy, during the 3rd expedition. (Letter contained in a Copper Tube)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s): [Charles Francis Hall's report to Secretary of the Navy, 1871.]</td>
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<td>Hall, Charles Francis, 1821-1871, Author</td>
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<td>Genre/Form: Reports</td>
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