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William John McGee Papers, circa 1883, 1890

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Collection Overview

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| Repository: | Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu |
| Title: | William John McGee Papers |
| Date: | circa 1883, 1890 |
| Identifier: | Accession 20-089 |
| Creator:: | McGee, W J, 1853-1912 |
| Extent: | 0.25 cu. ft. (1 half document box) |
| Language: | English |

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession 20-089, William John McGee Papers

Descriptive Entry

W J McGee (William John McGee was known to his colleagues and signed his notebooks as "W J McGee", without periods) was a geologist with the United States Geological Survey primarily in charge of surveying the Atlantic Coastal Plain, 1881-1893 and was an ethnologist in charge of the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) at the Smithsonian Institution from 1893 to 1903. After resigned from the BAE McGee lead the Department of Anthropology of the St. Louis Exposition. Then, from 1905 to 1907, he was the first Director of the St. Louis Public Museum. In March of 1907 he was elected Vice-Chairman and Secretary of the federally created Inland Waterways Commission and also was appointed as an expert on soil waters in the Bureau of Soils, U.S. Department of Agriculture; he held both positions until his death in Washington, D.C. in 1912.

The McGee Papers consist of four field books from his geological trip during the summer of 1890 that saw him go from Washington, D.C. to Pennsylvania, then on down to Georgia, Mississippi, and Arkansas. There is also one field book that contains his geological observations in Iowa. The field books document his geological observations and include occasional drawings and lists of expenses incurring during his travel.

For additional materials related to McGee, the National Anthropological Archives and the University of Arizona have collections of photographs taken while McGee was at the BAE, while the Library of Congress holds the W J McGee Papers, 1880-1912.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Geography
- Geological surveys
- Geologists

Geology -- United States

Types of Materials:

Field notes

Names:

Geological Survey (U.S.)
Inland Waterways Commission (U.S.)
Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904 : Saint Louis, Mo.)
McGee, W J, 1853-1912
Saint Louis Public Museum
Smithsonian Institution. Bureau of American Ethnology
United States. Bureau of Soils

Places:

Arkansas
Georgia
Iowa
Mississippi
Pennsylvania
United States -- Surveys
Washington (D.C.)

Container Listing

| Box 1 | |
|------------|---|
| Box 1 of 1 | Folder 1 Field book: Farley, Iowa - Tenth Census trip, circa 1883 |
| Box 1 of 1 | Folder 2 Field book: June 2-11, 1890 - Washington, D.C. to Berwick, Pennsylvania; Field book: June 25-July 27, 1890 - Atlanta, Georgia to Stafford's Well, Mississippi |
| Box 1 of 1 | Folder 3 Field book: July 28-August 15, 1890 - Stafford's Well, Mississippi to Hot Springs, Arkansas; Field book: August 16-October 24, 1890 - Little Rock, Arkansas to Newport, Arkansas |