



Smithsonian Institution Archives

## Records, 1849-1875, and related records from 1820

Finding aid prepared by Smithsonian Institution Archives

Smithsonian Institution Archives  
Washington, D.C.  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., <a href="mailto:osiaref@si.edu">osiaref@si.edu</a>
<b>Title:</b>	Records
<b>Identifier:</b>	Record Unit 60
<b>Date:</b>	1849-1875, and related records from 1820
<b>Extent:</b>	9.66 cu. ft. (18 document boxes) (2 half document boxes) (8 microfilm reels)
<b>Creator::</b>	Smithsonian Institution. Meteorological Project
<b>Language:</b>	English

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## Administrative Information

### Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 60, Smithsonian Institution, Meteorological Project, Records

### Access Restriction

Microfilm copies of incoming correspondence, 1852-1861, 1868, are available.

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## Descriptive Entry

Joseph Henry's first major project for the Smithsonian Institution was his plan to obtain weather reports from a countrywide network of voluntary observers; his plan is detailed in the 1848 annual report of the Institution. Voluminous reports, maps, tables, and charts were prepared and published on all phases of the work--rainfall, snowfall, temperatures, barometric pressure, storms, meteors, auroras, and other phenomena. In 1869, when Congress established the Weather Bureau of the United States Signal Service, the Smithsonian system of meteorological reports was turned over to the new bureau. The Smithsonian continued to work on the material collected up to the time of transfer, however, and over the next few years issued reports, tables and maps. A part of this record unit was published in the 1873 annual report, pages 84-131, "Classified Record of Monthly Meteorological Reports Preserved in the Smithsonian Institution," and other segments of this unit were published elsewhere. Completely unpublished, however, is meteorological incoming and outgoing correspondence. These records were created after 1850, but contain meteorological information dating back to 1820.

This record unit consists of papers and records regarding the Smithsonian's meteorological observation projects in the eighteen-fifties and analysis and publication of meteorological data in the eighteen-seventies; incoming correspondence to the Smithsonian, circa 1852-1873, from observers and others working on meteorology; another series of correspondence, reports and notes, 1853-1875, and undated; outgoing correspondence, 1853-1854, of Lorin Blodget, an assistant at the Smithsonian for meteorological affairs; a manuscript copy of part of the 1873 Smithsonian Annual Report on meteorological data

preserved at the Smithsonian; data on mean temperatures, annual rainfall, and barometric pressures in the United States and other countries of the Americas, mostly for the years 1850 through 1873, and prepared for publication; a small and uneven collection of clippings on meteorology, 1856-1873; records of meteorological observations and loan of instruments, 1856-1873; and miscellaneous and fragmentary original records of meteorological observations.

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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:

Meteorology  
Research

Types of Materials:

Clippings  
Letterpress copybooks  
Manuscripts  
Maps  
Microfilms

Names:

Blodget, Lorin  
Coffin, James Henry, 1806-1873  
Espy, James P. (James Pollard), 1785-1860  
Guyot, A. (Arnold), 1807-1884  
Henry, Joseph, 1797-1878  
Loomis, Elias, 1811-1889  
Schott, Charles A. (Charles Anthony), 1826-1901  
United States. Army. Signal Corps  
United States. Weather Bureau

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE, 1852-1861, 1868.

Correspondence received by the Smithsonian on meteorological matters, filed chronologically. The following persons important in meteorological work are included among the correspondents: James Henry Coffin, James Pollard Espy, Arnold Guyot, Joseph Henry, Elias Loomis, and Charles Anthony Schott. Each volume is indexed separately. The records are related to records in the National Archives.

#### Box 1

Box 1 of 20                      1852-1853  
[Digital Content: Letter from Lewis H. Steiner, a physician and librarian of Frederick, Maryland, to Edward Foreman, a clerk at the Smithsonian Institution, June 3, 1852. \(Image no. SIA2012-3217\)](#)

#### Box 2

Box 2 of 20                      1852-1853  
Box 2 of 20                      1855-1856

#### Box 3

Box 3 of 20                      1857-1858  
Box 3 of 20                      1858

#### Box 4

Box 4 of 20                      1858-1859  
Box 4 of 20                      1859

#### Box 5

Box 5 of 20                      1859-1860  
Box 5 of 20                      1860

#### Box 6

Box 6 of 20                      1860-1861

Box 6 of 20

1868

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## Series 2: MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE, NOTES, REPORTS, 1853-1875, CIRCA 400 PIECES, SOME WITH NOTATIONS BY JOSEPH HENRY.

### Box 7

Box 7 of 20	Notes for annual report and fragments and extracts of letters, no date
Box 7 of 20	1857, copies of letters
Box 7 of 20	1858, copies of letters
Box 7 of 20	1859, copies of letters
Box 7 of 20	1860, copies of letters
Box 7 of 20	1868, originals and copies of letters
Box 7 of 20	1869, originals and copies of letters
Box 7 of 20	1871, copy of letter
Box 7 of 20	1872, original letters
Box 7 of 20	1873, originals and copies of letters, notes for reports, other data
Box 7 of 20	1874, copy of letter
Box 7 of 20	1875, copy of letter
Box 7 of 20	Lightning, 1853-1875, originals and copies of letters, notes for reports
Box 7 of 20	Storms and Tornadoes, 1856-1873, same as above <a href="#">Digital Content: Report from Increase Allen Lapham of Milwaukee to the Smithsonian Meteorological Project regarding the map showing the track of a tornado that had passed over the eastern portion of Wisconsin on August 21, 1857. (Image no. SIA2010-0730)</a> <a href="#">Digital Content: Map showing the path of a tornado through the counties of Columbia, Dodge and Washington in Wisconsin sent to the Smithsonian Meteorological Project. The tornado had passed over the eastern portion of Wisconsin on August 21, 1857. (Image no. SIA2010-0732)</a>
Box 7 of 20	Aurora, 1856, 1872, same as above

[Digital Content: Letter to Meteorological Observers of the Smithsonian Institution, June 6, 1872 \(Image no. SIA2010-0728\)](#)

[Digital Content: Observations taken from 9 p.m. August 3th to 2 a.m. August 9, 1872 in Holt County, Missouri, of an aurora. \(Image no. SIA2010-0731\)](#)

Box 7 of 20

Dark Day Report, copies of letters, 1873

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## Series 3: LORIN BLODGET'S OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE, 1853-1854.

Correspondence sent from the Smithsonian by Lorin Blodget, an employee assigned to meteorological work.

Box 8

Box 8 of 20

1 volume, 1853-1854

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Series 4: MANUSCRIPT FOR "CLASSIFIED RECORD OF MONTHLY  
METEOROLOGICAL REPORTS PRESERVED IN THE SMITHSONIAN  
INSTITUTION," ANNUAL REPORT, 1873.

Boxes 9-11

Boxes 9-11 of 20

"Classified Record of Monthly Meteorological Reports Preserved in the  
Smithsonian Institution"

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## Series 5: RECORDS RELATING TO STUDIES OF MONTHLY AND ANNUAL MEAN TEMPERATURES IN THE UNITED STATES AND ELSEWHERE IN THE AMERICAS, DATA FROM EIGHTEEN TWENTIES THROUGH EIGHTEEN SEVENTIES.

### Box 12

Box 12 of 20

Alabama-New Mexico

### Box 13

Box 13 of 20

New York-Wyoming, Central and South America

[Digital Content: Data of meteorological observations for the Smithsonian's Meteorological Project from 1849-1859 showing the mean temperature by month, mean temperature for the year, extreme high, extreme low, and hours observation in the Washington Territory at Columbia River - Fort Vancouver \(Columbia Barracks\); Puget's Sound - Fort Steilacoom; and Fort Walla-Walla. \(Image no. SIA2010-0725\)](#)

[Image\(s\): Monthly Mean Temperatures in the United States, Volume III \(Image nos. SIA2018-076390 to SIA2018-076702\)](#)

### Box 14

Box 14 of 20

Different configuration of data for locations in the United States, apparently texts used for tabulations or printing

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**Series 6: RECORDS RELATING TO STUDIES OF MONTHLY AND ANNUAL RAINFALL IN THE UNITED STATES AND ELSEWHERE IN THE AMERICAS, DATA FROM THE EIGHTEEN TWENTIES THROUGH THE EIGHTEEN SEVENTIES.**

Box 15

Box 15 of 20

Alabama-New Jersey

Box 16

Box 16 of 20

North Carolina-Wyoming, other areas in the Americas

Box 17

Box 17 of 20

Consolidated Tables of Precipitation and other records used in tabulations

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## Series 7: RECORDS RELATING TO ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE, DATA FROM EIGHTEEN FIFTIES THROUGH ABOUT 1875.

Box 18

Box 18 of 20

Collected data on atmospheric pressure, arranged alphabetically by state.

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## Series 8: RECORDS OF OBSERVERS AND USE OF SMITHSONIAN INSTRUMENTS, 1850-1873.

### Box 19

- Box 19 of 20      Meteorological Instruments Loaned, 1850-1870, 1 volume, arranged by states with an alphabetical index to persons.  
[Digital Content: Data on Instruments Loaned and Number of Observers for the Smithsonian Meteorological Project, 1872 \(Image no. SIA2010-0726\)](#)
- Box 19 of 20      Meteorological Records, 1859-1860, 1 volume, combined list of observers and instruments loaned, arranged alphabetically by state or other area.
- Box 19 of 20      Records of Meteorological Observers, 1868-1873, 1 volume, arranged alphabetically by name of state and indexed by name of observer.
- Box 19 of 20      Rain Gages Sent Out, 1868-1870, listed by date sent, 1 volume.
- Box 19 of 20      List of Barometer Stations, 1861, loose.
- Box 19 of 20      List of Books and Pamphlets in the Smithsonian Institution Library on Meteorology.

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Series 9: CLIPPINGS ON METEOROLOGY, 1853, 1855, 1857, 1858, 1867,  
1872, 1873.

Box 20

Box 20 of 20

Clippings (7 folders)

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## Series 10: MISCELLANEOUS METEOROLOGICAL RECORDS, 1849-1875.

### Box 20

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Box 20 of 20 | Meteorological Observations in Nicaragua, 1849  |
| Box 20 of 20 | Meteors, a list and description of meteors observed during years 1849-1867            |
| Box 20 of 20 | Temperature Reading in Jackson, Ohio, 1851-1852                                       |
| Box 20 of 20 | Barometer Reading in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, 1870                                    |
| Box 20 of 20 | Meteorological Observations in New York and New London, Connecticut, 1873, 1875       |
| Box 20 of 20 | Publications  |
| Box 20 of 20 | Letter - John F. Posey to E. S. Glover (March 21, 1857) re: meteorological materials. |

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