



Smithsonian Institution Archives

Records, 1865-1951

Finding aid prepared by Smithsonian Institution Archives

Smithsonian Institution Archives
Washington, D.C.
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Records
Identifier:	Record Unit 217
Date:	1865-1951
Extent:	9.43 cu. ft. (18 document boxes) (1 12x17 box)
Creator::	Smithsonian Institution. Libraries
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 217, Smithsonian Institution, Libraries, Records

Historical Note

The Act organizing the Smithsonian Institution in 1846 provided for the ". . . gradual formation of a library, composed of valuable works pertaining to all departments of human knowledge." Charles C. Jewett became the first administrator of the Smithsonian Library in 1847. After Jewett's resignation in 1854, the position of Librarian remained vacant until the appointment of Frederick William True in 1881. During the interim, library affairs were administered by Secretary Joseph Henry and Assistant Secretary Spencer F. Baird. Administrative officers of the Smithsonian Library included True, 1881-1887; John Murdoch, 1887-1892; J. Elfreth Watkins, July-October, 1892; Cyrus Adler, 1892-1909, including the years 1905-1909 when he held the title of Assistant Secretary in charge of Library and Exchanges; Frederick William True, 1911-1914, with the title Assistant Secretary in charge of Library and Exchanges; Paul Brockett, 1914-1924, with the title Assistant Librarian; William L. Corbin, 1925-1942; and Leila F. Clark, 1943- .

Descriptive Entry

These records contain material concerning both the Smithsonian and United States National Museum (USNM) libraries and consist mostly of incoming and outgoing correspondence. Most of the correspondence is routine and deals with requests for publications, acknowledgments of publications received, the exchange of publications, employment inquiries, staff matters, and administrative policy.

Correspondents include Smithsonian and Museum administrative officers and staff, libraries, scientific institutions and societies, and the general public. Of special interest is correspondence regarding the evacuation of rare books, manuscripts, and archival material from the library during World War II. Other material includes ledgers, logbooks, and other records relating to books borrowed and lent, publications deposited in the Library of Congress, and the exchange of publications with other institutions; and

records relating to the construction of book stacks in the main hall of the Smithsonian Institution Building, 1914-1915.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Collection management (Libraries)
- Interlibrary loans
- Libraries -- Public relations
- Library administration
- Library directors
- Museum libraries
- World War, 1939-1945
- World War, 1939-1945

Types of Materials:

- Books
- Manuscripts

Names:

- Adler, Cyrus, 1863-1940
- Baird, Spencer Fullerton, 1823-1887
- Brockett, Paul, 1872-1946
- Clark, Leila F.
- Corbin, William L.
- Henry, Joseph, 1797-1878
- Jewett, Charles C. (Charles Coffin), 1816-1868
- Library of Congress
- Murdoch, John, 1852-1925
- Smithsonian Institution Building (Washington, D.C.)
- True, Frederick William, 1858-1914
- United States National Museum
- Watkins, J. Elfreth (John Elfreth), 1852-1903

Container Listing

Box 1

Box 1 of 19 General Correspondence, 1878-1889 (8 folders)

Box 2

Box 2 of 19 General Correspondence, 1882-1909 (5 folders)

Box 3

Box 3 of 19 General Correspondence, 1902-1909 (2 folders)

Box 3 of 19 G. E. Stechert & Company Correspondence, 1905-1913 (3 folders)

Box 3 of 19 William Wesley & Son Correspondence, 1911-1917 (2 folders)

Box 4

Box 4 of 19 General Correspondence, 1913, 1920-1926 (6 folders)

Box 5

Box 5 of 19 General Correspondence, 1926-1927 (6 folders)

Box 6

Box 6 of 19 General Correspondence, 1927-February 1929 (11 folders)

Box 7

Box 7 of 19 General Correspondence, March 1929-December 1929 (9 folders)

Box 8

Box 8 of 19 General Correspondence, 1930 (11 folders)

Box 9

Box 9 of 19 General Correspondence, January-June 1931 (7 folders)

Box 10

Box 10 of 19 General Correspondence, July 1931-September 1932 (15 folders)

Box 11

Box 11 of 19 General Correspondence, October 1932-May 1936 (10 folders)

Box 12

Box 12 of 19 General Correspondence, June-October 1936 (3 folders)

Box 12 of 19 What is the Man on the Street to Believe These Days Regarding the "Riddle of the Universe" in Light of Things as They are and Related Manuscripts

Box 12 of 19 Rules and Regulations for the General Library of the Smithsonian Institution

Box 12 of 19 General Correspondence, November-December 1936

Box 12 of 19 Correspondence, 1925-1942

Box 13

Box 13 of 19 General Correspondence, 1925-1944 (6 folders)

Box 13 of 19 Logbook, c. 1886-1891

Box 14

Box 14 of 19 Logbooks, 1882-1885, 1914-1940

Box 15

Box 15 of 19 Receipts for Books Returned to Congress Library, 1879-1885

Box 15 of 19 List of Books Returned to Library of Congress

Box 16

Box 16 of 19 List of Books Ordered for the Secretary

Box 16 of 19 USNM Library Memo Copy Book I

Box 16 of 19 Records of Periodicals Entered (2 volumes)

Box 16 of 19 Invoices

Box 16 of 19 Communications from Library of Congress

Box 16 of 19 Library - Exchanges with Other Institutions

Box 17

Box 17 of 19 Construction of Book Shelves in Smithsonian Institution Building, 1914-1915

Box 18

Box 18 of 19 Cataloging Reports, 1922-1955 (5 folders)

Box 19

Box 19 of 19 Publications Lent to Curators, etc., 1862-1889