



# Smithsonian

*Institution Archives*

## Frederick William True Papers, *circa* 1886-1910

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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>	Frederick William True Papers
<b>Date:</b>	<i>circa</i> 1886-1910
<b>Identifier:</b>	Record Unit 7181
<b>Creator::</b>	True, Frederick William, 1858-1914
<b>Extent:</b>	2 cu. ft. (4 document boxes)
<b>Language:</b>	English

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## Administrative Information

### Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7181, Frederick William True Papers

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## Historical Note

Frederick William True was born in Middletown, Connecticut, on July 8, 1858. His brother was Alfred Charles True, a leader in American agricultural education. True attended the University of the City of New York and received his B.S. degree in 1878. Later that year, he received a position as a clerk with the United States Fish Commission. While with the Fish Commission, he served as custodian of the agency's exhibits at the Berlin Fisheries Exposition of 1880.

In 1881, he joined the Smithsonian Institution and began an association that lasted until his death in 1914. During that period, he held a number of positions in the Smithsonian and in the United States National Museum (USNM). From 1881 to 1883, he was librarian of the Smithsonian and acting curator of Mammals. He became curator of Mammals in 1883 and remained in charge of the division until 1909. In addition to those duties, he was curator of the Division of Comparative Anatomy from 1885 to 1890, executive curator from 1894 to 1897, and head of the Department of Biology from 1897 to 1911. From 1911 to 1914, True was assistant secretary of the Smithsonian in charge of the library and International Exchange Service. During this period, the Smithsonian Institution was actively engaged in displaying exhibits at the many expositions that were being held. True was responsible for the preparation of the Smithsonian exhibits for the Tennessee Centennial Exposition at Nashville, 1897; the Omaha Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition of 1898; the Pan American Exposition at Buffalo, New York, 1901; the South Carolina Interstate and West Indian Exposition at Charleston, 1902; the Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1904 at St. Louis; and the 1905 Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition at Portland, Oregon.

True originally began his zoological studies with the lower groups of animals, but bad eyesight forced him to revise his plans and he turned to the study of mammals. His particular speciality was cetaceans and allied groups. Later, he took up the study of fossil cetaceans, and in addition to publishing many important works in the field, helped build up the USNM's collection in this area. True died on June 25, 1914.

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## Descriptive Entry

This record unit contains correspondence of Frederick William True with zoologists, naturalists, museum officials, Smithsonian administrators, and friends concerning specimens, publication of manuscripts, exhibitions, his trip to the Pribilof Islands in 1895, and USNM affairs. Also included are files concerning the preparation of exhibits, material related to True's studies of fossil whales, and his trip to the Pribilof Islands in 1895, as well as a series on True's research on deer and moose antlers, a list of the genera of mammals, and a list True wrote of scientific periodicals held at the Smithsonian Institution.

Correspondents include Cyrus Adler, Glover Morrill Allen, Harrison Allen, Joel Asaph Allen, Outram Bangs, Tarleton Hoffman Bean, Arthur Erwin Brown, A. Howard Clark, William V. Cox, John J. Dagleish, William H. Dall, George M. Dawson, Charles Rochester Eastman, James W. Flint, Randolph Iltyd Geare, Herbert A. Gill, George Brown Goode, Samuel Henshaw, Charles F. Holder, William Henry Holmes, Leland Ossian Howard, David Starr Jordan, Frederic Augustus Lucas, John Macoun, Otis Tufton Mason, William D. Matthew, Clinton Hart Merriam, George P. Merrill, Gerrit Smith Miller, Jr., Henry Fairfield Osborn, William Palmer, George Henry Perkins, John Robert Procter, Richard Rathbun, Samuel Nicholson Rhoads, Charles Wallace Richmond, Philip Lutley Sclater, William B. Scott, Joseph Stanley-Brown, Leonhard Stejneger, Witmer Stone, James G. Swan, Charles Haskins Townsend, Charles D. Walcott, Arthur Smith Woodward.

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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:

- Mammalogists
- Mammalogy
- Museum techniques
- Paleontologists
- Paleontology

### Types of Materials:

- Black-and-white photographs
- Illustrations
- Manuscripts
- Scientific illustrations

### Names:

- Adler, Cyrus, 1863-1940
- Allen, Glover M.
- Allen, Harrison, 1841-1897
- Allen, J. A. (Joel Asaph), 1838-1921
- Bangs, Outram, 1862-1932
- Bean, Tarleton H. (Tarleton Hoffman), 1846-1916
- Berlin International Fisheries Exposition (1880: Berlin, Germany)
- Brown, Arthur Erwin
- Clark, A. Howard
- Cox, William Van Zandt, 1852-1923
- Dagleish, John J.
- Dall, William Healey, 1845-1927
- Dawson, George Mercer
- Eastman, Charles R.

Flint, James W.  
Geare, Randolph Iltyd, 1854-  
Gill, Herbert A.  
Goode, G. Brown (George Brown), 1851-1896  
Henshaw, Samuel, 1852-1941  
Holder, Charles Frederick, 1851-1915  
Holmes, William Henry, 1846-1933  
Howard, L. O. (Leland Ossian), 1857-1950  
Jordan, David Starr, 1851-1931  
Lucas, Frederic A. (Frederic Augustus), 1852-1929  
Macoun, John, 1831-1920  
Mason, Otis Tufton, 1838-1908  
Matthew, William D.  
Merriam, C. Hart (Clinton Hart), 1855-1942  
Merrill, George P. (George Perkins), 1854-1929  
Miller, Gerrit S. (Gerrit Smith), 1869-1956  
Osborn, Henry Fairfield, 1857-1935  
Palmer, William, 1856-1921  
Perkins, George H. (George Henry), 1844-1933  
Procter, John Robert, 1844-1903  
Rathbun, Richard, 1852-1918  
Rhoads, Samuel N. (Samuel Nicholson), 1862-1952  
Richmond, Charles Wallace, 1868-1932  
Sclater, Philip Lutley, 1829-1913  
Scott, William B.  
Smithsonian Institution. Committee on Publications  
Smithsonian Institution. International Exchange Service  
Stanley-Brown, Joseph  
Stejneger, Leonhard, 1851-1943  
Stone, Witmer, 1866-1939  
Swan, James Gilchrist  
Townsend, Charles Haskins  
True, Frederick William, 1858-1914  
United States Fish Commission  
United States National Museum. Department of Botany  
United States National Museum. Division of Comparative Anatomy  
United States National Museum. Division of Mammals  
United States National Museum. Executive Curator  
Walcott, Charles D. (Charles Doolittle), 1850-1927  
Woodward, Arthur Smith, 1864-1944

Places:

Pribilof Islands (Alaska)

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: CORRESPONDENCE OF FREDERICK WILLIAM TRUE, MOSTLY INCOMING, 1887-1900. ARRANGED ALPHABETICALLY.

#### Box 1

Box 1 of 4	Folder 1 Allen - Cox
Box 1 of 4	Folder 2 Dalgleish - Humphries
Box 1 of 4	Folder 3 Ingersoll - Merrill
Box 1 of 4	Folder 4 Miller - Rathbun
Box 1 of 4	Folder 5 Rhoads - Want, two unidentified pieces

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Series 2: LETTERPRESS BOOK CONTAINING COPIES OF OUTGOING  
CORRESPONDENCE OF FREDERICK WILLIAM TRUE AS CHAIRMAN OF  
THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLICATIONS, 1894-1896.

Box 1

Box 1 of 4

Folder 6 Letterpress book of outgoing correspondence, 1894-1896

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**Series 3: CORRESPONDENCE, ARTICLES, CLIPPINGS, MEMORANDA,  
DRAWINGS, AND RELATED MATERIAL CONCERNING EXHIBITS IN THE  
UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM, C. 1893-1910. ARRANGED BY  
SUBJECT.**

Box 1

Box 1 of 4	Folder 7 Exhibits central file, includes copy for labels and layout of exhibits, 1893, 1896-1897, 1900-1901, 1903-1904.
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Box 1 of 4	Folder 8 Mammals file, 1895, 1898, 1907-1908
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Box 2

Box 2 of 4	Folder 1 Birds file, 1910
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Box 2 of 4	Folder 2 Reptiles file, 1905
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Box 2 of 4	Folder 3 Fish file
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Box 2 of 4	Folder 4 Insects file
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Box 2 of 4	Folder 5 Marine Invertebrates file
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Box 2 of 4	Folder 6 Comparative Anatomy file
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Box 2 of 4	Folder 7 Plants file
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Box 2 of 4	Folder 8 Children's Room file, 1901
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## Series 4: CORRESPONDENCE, NOTES, AND RELATED MATERIALS CONCERNING FOSSIL WHALES, 1886, 1893, 1905-1910.

Note: The material in this collection division is arranged alphabetically by either correspondent or scientific name of specimen. There appears to be no specific rule which determines where a particular item is filed, and correspondence with individuals is often filed by scientific name. This collection division includes material on the collection and description of specimens, professional correspondence on fossil whales, and information on collecting localities.

### Box 2

Box 2 of 4

Folder 9 A - M

[Digital Content: Correspondence, A-M \[Field Book Registry modsi699\]](#)

Box 2 of 4

Folder 10 N - Z

[Digital Content: Correspondence, N-Z \[Field Book Registry modsi703\]](#)

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## Series 5: NOTEBOOKS AND RELATED MATERIALS CONCERNING 1895 TRIP TO PRIBILOF ISLANDS, ALASKA.

Note: In May 1895, Frederick William True and Leonhard Stejneger were temporarily detailed to the United States Fish Commission to make a special study of seal rookeries in Alaska. This series contains notebooks and related materials maintained by True on that trip.

### Box 2

Box 2 of 4

Folder 11 Notebook of Frederick William True containing articles and related material concerning the Pribilof Islands and sealing, including: "Notes on Mammals of the Pribilof Islands and vicinity" by William Palmer, 1890; notes on the geology of the Pribilof Islands by William H. Dall, George M. Dawson, and Joseph Stanley Brown; a list of books concerning the islands; recommendations for the collecting of a fur seal group; "Fur Seal skins on hand," presumably at the United States National Museum, by William Palmer, 1895; "State Department Lot Fur Seals" collected by Charles Haskin Townsend, 1892; a letter to Otis Tufton Mason from James G. Swan concerning the preparation of a report on sealing in the Bering Sea and including a report on fur sealing at Cape Horn, 1889; and newspaper clippings concerning the sealing industry and other topics.

Box 2 of 4

Folder 12 Notebook of Frederick William True containing notes on the Pribilof Islands including: "Notes on Bones of Whales, St. Paul Island, Alaska," 1895; notes on seals, 1895; "Notes on the American Case, Part Second"; notes on the Report of the American Commissioners; "Notes on Elliot's Monograph"; measurements of specimens; notes on the Report of the British Commissioners.

### Box 3

Box 3 of 4

Folder 1 Notebook of Frederick William True concerning botany of the Pribilof Islands including: "Plants of the Pribilof Islands, Bering Sea" by C. Hart Merriam; Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington, 1892; and unidentified notes concerning specific plants.

Box 3 of 4

Folder 2 Two notebooks of Frederick William True containing field notes and daily entries on seals and other wildlife on St. Paul Island, Kelaire, Lukannan, Polovina, Tolstoi, and St. George's Island, Alaska. Both books have True's name on the inside cover, but place the author at different places on the same day. It is possible that one of the books belonged to Leonhard Stejneger or another participant of the expedition. June-August, 1895.

[Digital Content: Notebooks \[Items Nos. SIA\\_007181\\_B03\\_F02\\_E01 and SIA\\_007181\\_B03\\_F02\\_E02; Field Book Registry modsi709\]](#)

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## Series 6: NOTES, DRAWINGS, PHOTOGRAPHS, MANUSCRIPT, AND RELATED MATERIAL CONCERNING DEER AND MOOSE ANTLERS, UNDATED.

### Box 3

Box 3 of 4	Folder 3 Notes, clippings, and drawings concerning antlers, and other information on deer, moose, and elk
Box 3 of 4	Folder 4 Photographs of antlers
Box 3 of 4	Folder 5 Drawings of antlers

### Box 4

Box 4 of 4	Folder 1 Manuscript on analysis of antlers of the American deer and deer of the world, undated and apparently unpublished
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## Series 7: OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE AS EXECUTIVE CURATOR, 1894-1900.

### Box 4

Box 4 of 4

Folder 2 Outgoing correspondence of True as executive curator, January  
25, 1894 to June 7, 1900

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## Series 8: LIST OF THE GENERA OF MAMMALS, UNDATED.

Box 4

Box 4 of 4

Folder 3 List of the genera of mammals, undated

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## Series 9: LIST OF SCIENTIFIC PERIODICALS HELD BY THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, UNDATED.

Note: This series consists of a list compiled by Frederick William True of American, British, French, German, Norwegian, Dutch, Belgian, Swiss, and Italian scientific periodicals held in the National Museum and the Smithsonian Institution Building. The list includes: place of publication, inclusive dates ranging from 1769 to 1880, number of volumes, and final repository for each publication.

Box 4

Box 4 of 4

Folder 4 List of scientific periodicals, undated.

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