



Smithsonian Institution Archives

Western Union Telegraph
Expedition Collection, 1865-1867

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Western Union Telegraph Expedition Collection
Identifier:	Record Unit 7213
Date:	1865-1867
Extent:	0.75 cu. ft. (1 document box) (1 half document box)
Creator::	Western Union Telegraph Expedition (1865-1867)
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7213, Western Union Telegraph Expedition Collection

Access Restriction

It appears that some of the material in this collection was removed from the official correspondence files of the Smithsonian.

Historical Note

The Western Union Telegraph Expedition, 1865-1867, also known as the Russian-American Telegraph Expedition, was undertaken to study the possibility of setting up a communications system with Europe by way of Alaska, the Bering Straits, and Asia. The expedition was organized in three divisions, working in Canada, Russian-America (Alaska), and Asia. Robert Kennicott, the veteran Alaskan explorer, was placed in charge of the Russian-American division. Under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution and the Chicago Academy of Sciences, a Scientific Corps was established, with Kennicott in command, to accompany the Russian-American division and make collections in natural history. Naturalists William H. Dall, Henry M. Bannister, and Henry W. Elliott served as members of the Scientific Corps. On the death of Kennicott on May 13, 1866, Dall became chief of the Scientific Corps until the expedition was terminated in July 1867 due to the successful laying of the Atlantic Cable.

Descriptive Entry

This collection includes correspondence, mostly to Spencer F. Baird, from members of the Scientific Corps of the Western Union Telegraph Expedition, including Kennicott, Dall, Bannister, and Elliott; copies of reports submitted to divisional chiefs from expedition staff members; newspaper clippings concerning

the expedition; copies of notes on natural history taken by Robert Kennicott; and a journal containing meteorological data recorded by Henry M. Bannister from March to August, 1866.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Natural history
- Scientific expeditions

Types of Materials:

- Field notes
- Manuscripts

Names:

- Baird, Spencer Fullerton, 1823-1887
- Bannister, Henry M.
- Chicago Academy of Sciences
- Dall, William Healey, 1845-1927
- Elliott, Henry Wood, 1846-1930
- Kennicott, Robert, 1835-1866
- Russian-American Telegraph Expedition
- Western Union Telegraph Expedition (1865-1867)

Geographic Names:

- Alaska

Container Listing

Box 1

- Box 1 of 2 Folder 1 Reports of Major S. Abasa, Chief of Asia Division, February 15, 1866, February 16, 1866, March 26, 1866 and April 19, 1866
[Image\(s\): Reports of Major S. Abasa, Chief of Asia Division, February 15, 1866, February 16, 1866, March 26, 1866 and April 19, 1866 \[SIA_007213_B01_F01\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 2 Henry M. Bannister
[Image\(s\): Henry M. Bannister \[SIA_007213_B01_F02\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 3 Charles S. Bulkley
[Image\(s\): Charles S. Bulkley \[SIA_007213_B01_F03\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 4 Report of Charles S. Bulkley, March 1, 1867
[Image\(s\): Report of Charles S. Bulkley, March 1, 1867 \[SIA_007213_B01_F04\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 5 Reports of Richard J. Bush, May 4, 1866, May 24, 1866, June 9, 1866, August 2, 1866, May 28, 1867, November 14, 1866, and July 15, 1867
[Image\(s\): Reports of Richard J. Bush, May 4, 1866, May 24, 1866, June 9, 1866, August 2, 1866, May 28, 1867, November 14, 1866, and July 15, 1867 \[SIA_007213_B01_F05\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 6 Report of R. D. Cotter, May 30, 1866
[Image\(s\): Report of R. D. Cotter, May 30, 1866 \[SIA_007213_B01_F06\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 7 William H. Dall
[Image\(s\): William H. Dall \[SIA_007213_B01_F07\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 8 Report of Joseph T. Dyer, July 7, 1867
[Image\(s\): Report of Joseph T. Dyer, July 7, 1867 \[SIA_007213_B01_F08\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 9 Henry W. Elliott
[Image\(s\): Henry W. Elliott \[SIA_007213_B01_F09\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 10 Reports of William H. Ennis, June 30, 1866, September 1, 1866 and August 15, 1867
[Image\(s\): Reports of William H. Ennis, June 30, 1866, September 1, 1866 and August 15, 1867 \[SIA_007213_B01_F10\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 11 Report of Henry T. Fisher, January 1, 1867
[Image\(s\): Report of Henry T. Fisher, January 1, 1867 \[SIA_007213_B01_F11\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 12 Reports of George Kennan, February 5, 1866 and March 28, 1866
[Image\(s\): Reports of George Kennan, February 5, 1866 and March 28, 1866 \[SIA_007213_B01_F12\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 13 Robert Kennicott

- [Image\(s\): Robert Kennicott \[SIA_007213_B01_F13\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 14 Duplicate Transcripts of Kennicott's Notes, undated
[Image\(s\): Duplicate Transcripts of Kennicott's Notes, undated \[SIA_007213_B01_F14\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 15 Reports of Frank E. Ketcham, July 12, 1866, March 6, 1867 and July 25, 1867
[Image\(s\): Reports of Frank E. Ketcham, July 12, 1866, March 6, 1867 and July 25, 1867 \[SIA_007213_B01_F15\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 16 Report of Captain James A. Mahood to Major S. Abasa, Asia Division, March 13, 1866 from Okhotsk, Eastern Siberia and October 3, 1865 from Nicolaefski
[Image\(s\): Report of Captain James A. Mahood to Major S. Abasa, Asia Division, March 13, 1866 from Okhotsk, Eastern Siberia and October 3, 1865 from Nicolaefski \[SIA_007213_B01_F16\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 17 Clippings
[Image\(s\): Clippings \[SIA_007213_B01_F17\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 18 Reports of Collins S. Macrae, March 28, 1866 and June 4, 1867
[Image\(s\): Reports of Collins S. Macrae, March 28, 1866 and June 4, 1867 \[SIA_007213_B01_F18\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 19 Report of D. C. Norton, April 20, 1867
[Image\(s\): Report of D. C. Norton, April 20, 1867 \[SIA_007213_B01_F19\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 20 Report of J. H. Robinson to Richard J. Bush, June 27, 1867, Northeast Siberia
[Image\(s\): Report of J. H. Robinson to Richard J. Bush, June 27, 1867, Northeast Siberia \[SIA_007213_B01_F20\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 21 Report of Joseph Trimble Rothrock, March 30, 1865
[Image\(s\): Report of Joseph Trimble Rothrock, March 30, 1865 \[SIA_007213_B01_F21\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 22 Report of E. Everett Smith to Bulkley, July 26, 1867
[Image\(s\): Report of E. Everett Smith to Bulkley, July 26, 1867 \[SIA_007213_B01_F22\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 23 Report of Ferdinand Westdahl, July 23, 1867
[Image\(s\): Report of Ferdinand Westdahl, July 23, 1867 \[SIA_007213_B01_F23\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 24 Report of Frederick Whymper to Ketcham, August 12, 1867, St. Michaels
[Image\(s\): Report of Frederick Whymper to Ketcham, August 12, 1867, St. Michaels \[SIA_007213_B01_F24\]](#)
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 25 Report of George M. Wright, December 31, 1867, San Francisco

[Image\(s\): Report of George M. Wright, December 31, 1867, San Francisco \[SIA_007213_B01_F25\]](#)

Box 2

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Meteorological Journal of Henry M. Bannister