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Lester Frank Ward Papers, 1882-1913,
with related materials to *circa* 1965

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Lester Frank Ward Papers
Identifier:	Record Unit 7321
Date:	1882-1913, with related materials to <i>circa</i> 1965
Extent:	0.75 cu. ft. (1 document box) (1 half document box)
Creator::	Ward, Lester Frank, 1841-1913
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7321, Lester Frank Ward Papers

Historical Note

Lester Frank Ward (1841-1913), paleontologist and sociologist, was born in Joliet, Illinois. After serving in the Union Army during the Civil War, he moved to Washington, D.C. From 1865 to 1881, Ward was employed by the United States Treasury Department. During this period he studied at Columbian College (now The George Washington University) from which he received the A.B. degree in 1869, the LL.B. degree in 1871, and the A.M. degree in 1872. In 1882, Ward was appointed Assistant Geologist in the United States Geological Survey (USGS). He served the USGS for the remainder of his career in the federal government, receiving promotions to Geologist in 1883, and Paleontologist in 1892. In addition to his USGS work, Ward was appointed Honorary Curator of the Department of Fossil Plants in the United States National Museum in 1882. He remained in charge of the national collections of fossil plants until his resignation from the USGS in 1905. In that year he accepted a faculty appointment at Brown University, where he remained until his death.

Ward was considered one of the foremost paleobotanists of his time. His work with the USGS concentrated upon the relation of fossil plants to geology, and their value and importance in stratigraphic investigations. He also made valuable contributions to paleobotany by compiling extensive indices of the genera and species of fossil plants and their places in the published record. His scientific bibliography included over one hundred and fifty titles.

He is probably best remembered for his pioneering work in sociology. Between 1883 and his death, he completed several important works including *Dynamic Sociology* (1883), *Outlines of Sociology* (1898), *Pure Sociology* (1903), and *Applied Sociology* (1906).

Descriptive Entry

This collection consists primarily of incoming and outgoing correspondence documenting Lester Frank Ward's paleobotanical research and his work as Honorary Curator in charge of the United States National Museum (USNM) collection of fossil plants. Also included are letters concerning his official duties with the United States Geological Survey (USGS). The correspondence concerns the acquisition and identification of specimens; the preparation and publication of scientific manuscripts; field work and expeditions; and administrative matters. Ward corresponded with most of the prominent paleobotanists of the late nineteenth century including Leo Lesquereux, John Strong Newberry, and Arthur Hollick. Other correspondents include USNM and USGS scientific and administrative staff and personnel of domestic and foreign museums, universities, and research institutions. The correspondence does not touch upon Ward's sociological theories and writings. Researchers interested in that aspect of his career should consult collections of Ward's papers at Brown University and the Library of Congress.

The collection also includes a small amount of correspondence of Ward's assistant and colleague Frank Hall Knowlton; a photograph of Ward taken in his USNM office in 1886; and a pencil sketch of Ward.

Researchers should also consult Record Unit 220, records of the Department of Botany, United States National Museum, for other material documenting Ward's career at the USNM.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Geologists
Paleontology

Types of Materials:

Black-and-white photographs
Manuscripts
Sketches

Names:

Brown University
Geological Survey (U.S.)
Hollick, Charles Arthur, 1857-1933
Knowlton, Frank Hall, 1860-1926
Lesquereux, Leo, 1806-1889
Newberry, J. S. (John Strong), 1822-1892
United States National Museum. Department of Fossil Plants
Ward, Lester Frank, 1841-1913

Container Listing

Series 1: LESTER FRANK WARD CORRESPONDENCE, 1882-1905. ARRANGED ALPHABETICALLY.

Box 1

- Box 1 of 2 Folder 1 B-C, general. Correspondents include John Henry Comstock, 1886
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 2 Berry, Edward Wilber, 1901-1904
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 3 Clark, William Bullock, 1889-1890, 1900-1904
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 4 D-F, general. Correspondents include Constantin Freiherr von Etingshausen, 1886-1888; and William Morris Fontaine, 1885, 1888, 1901
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 5 Fairchild, Herman Leroy, 1893-1895. Of special interest is a letter of February 8, 1893 which contains Ward's thoughts on the scientific career of John Strong Newberry
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 6 G-I, general. Correspondents include Grove Karl Gilbert, 1886, 1890; and Charles Willard Hayes, 1902-1904
- Box 1 of 2 Folders 7-13 Hollick, Arthur, 1892-1904, 1912, 1919-1920, 1925. Primarily concerns Hollick's completion of John I. Northrup's study of the Brighton fossil plant collection. See also under John I. Northrup, folder 21. Correspondence after 1904 is between Hollick and Charlotte H. Schmidt
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 14 Knowlton, Frank Hall, 1885-1896. Includes correspondence concerning Knowlton's field work in Yellowstone National Park, 1888; New Mexico and Arizona, 1889; and Montana, 1890. Also included is a letter from Ward to C. Hart Merriam (August 20, 1889) concerning Knowlton
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 15 L-M, general. Correspondents include Arthur Lakes, 1890; William Libbey, Jr., 1893; Robert Hills Loughridge, 1886-1887; Othniel Charles Marsh, 1898; and George P. Merrill, 1898
- Box 1 of 2 Folders 16-20 Lesquereux, Charles Leo, 1882-1889. Primarily concerns his work identifying fossil plant specimens for the United States National Museum and the United States Geological Survey
- Box 1 of 2 Folder 21 Marsh, Othniel Charles, 1898-1899

Box 2

- Box 2 of 2 Folder 1 N-S, general. Correspondents include Henry Fairfield Osborn, 1901; Charles Smith Prosser, 1886, 1888; Richard Rathbun, 1898, 1905-1906; and Charles H. Sternberg, 1887-1888, 1899
- Box 2 of 2 Folder 2 Newberry, John Strong, 1882-1891. Letter of June 7, 1889 contains Newberry's remarks on Ferdinand V. Hayden
- Box 2 of 2 Folder 3 Northrup, John I., 1888-1892. Concerns Northrup's study of the Bridgton fossil plant collection. See also under Arthur Hollick, folders 6-12
- Box 2 of 2 Folder 4 T-Z, general. Correspondents include C. D. White, 1886-1888
- Box 2 of 2 Folder 5 Wieland, George R., 1898-1904

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Series 2: FRANK HALL KNOWLTON CORRESPONDENCE, 1903-1926.
ARRANGED CHRONOLOGICALLY

Box 2

Box 2 of 2

Folder 6 Frank Hall Knowlton correspondence, 1903-1926. Consists mostly
of correspondence with United States Geological Survey officials

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Series 3: PHOTOGRAPHS AND PENCIL SKETCH, 1886 AND C. 1965

Box 2

Box 2 of 2

Folder 7 Photograph of Ward and Miss Moorehead (later Mrs. Frank H. Knowlton) in his office in the United States National Museum, 1886. Photograph possibly taken by David White

Box 2 of 2

Folder 8 Pencil sketch of Ward by Marjorie Arnold, circa 1965. Apparently sketched from the photograph found in folder 25. Also included is a photograph of the sketch

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