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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Fred Lawrence Whipple Papers
Date:	<i>circa</i> 1927-1983
Identifier:	Record Unit 7431
Creator::	Whipple, Fred L. (Fred Lawrence), 1906-2004
Extent:	23.5 cu. ft. (23 record storage boxes) (1 document box)
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7431, Fred Lawrence Whipple Papers

Historical Note

Fred Lawrence Whipple (1906-), an astronomer, received his B.A. degree from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1927, and his Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley in 1931. In 1932, he joined the staff of Harvard University as an instructor of astronomy. By 1950, Whipple had received the title of professor and chairman of the Department of Astronomy at Harvard. Whipple was appointed director of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory (SAO) when it moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1955. Since his retirement in 1973, Whipple has continued his research as a senior scientist at SAO.

During his tenure as director, Whipple oversaw SAO research programs in stellar interiors, the upper atmosphere, meteorites, celestial mechanics, and geodesy studies. Major SAO projects under his direction included the Satellite Tracking Program, Project Telescope, the Radio Meteor Project, and the Meteorite Photography and Recovery Project, also known as the Prairie Network. In the late 1960s, Whipple selected Mount Hopkins, Arizona, as the site of a new SAO astronomical facility. Renamed the Fred Lawrence Whipple Observatory in 1981, the facility houses the Multiple-Mirror Telescope (MMT), an innovative, low-cost telescope planned by Whipple and two colleagues.

Whipple is internationally recognized for his research on the moon, meteors, and comets. He has conducted pioneering research in photographically measuring the speeds and decelerations of meteors, computing the orbits of comets and asteroids, and describing the structure of comets. He is the author of more than 150 scientific books and papers, has served as editor of several publications, and has been a member and officer in numerous professional organizations. In 1975, the minor planet no. 1940 was named "Whipple" in recognition of his contributions to astronomy.

Introduction

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Descriptive Entry

The papers of Fred Lawrence Whipple document his astronomical research; his professional work in the field of astronomy; his career as director of the SAO; and, to a lesser extent, his activities as a Harvard University faculty member. They include a large file of correspondence with professional colleagues, amateur astronomers, SAO staff scientists, Smithsonian Institution officials, scientific societies and professional groups, government agencies, and Harvard University staff and officials. The papers concern Whipple's research interests, scientific publications, and editorial work; SAO research projects, particularly the Satellite Tracking Program, Project Telescope, the Radio Meteor Project, and the Meteorite Photography and Recovery Project; Whipple's work for professional organizations and government agencies and committees including the International Astronomical Union, the Committee on Space Research, the Committee on Space and Astronautics of the United States House of Representatives, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Academy of Sciences, and the National Science Foundation; SAO relations with the Smithsonian Institution; and his activities at Harvard University and the Harvard College Observatory. Also included are college papers, notes, and a copy of his Ph.D. dissertation; manuscripts of articles, lectures, radio talks, reviews, and notes from his research; research notes on comets; correspondence, notes, reports, minutes and related materials from Whipple's work with professional groups and committees; files documenting the development of the MMT at Mount Hopkins, Arizona; and a set of Whipple's publications. Researchers should also consult Record Unit 9520, Fred Lawrence Whipple Interviews, 1976.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Asteroids
- Astronomers
- Astronomy
- Astrophysicists
- Astrophysics
- Comets
- Meteors

Types of Materials:

- Manuscripts

Names:

- COSPAR
- Fred Lawrence Whipple Observatory
- Harvard College Observatory
- Harvard University
- International Astronomical Union
- Mt. Hopkins Observatory
- Multiple Mirror Telescope Observatory
- National Academy of Sciences (U.S.)
- National Science Foundation (U.S.)
- Radio Meteor Project (Harvard College Observatory)
- Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory
- Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory. Meteorite Photography and Recovery Project
- Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory. Project Telescope

Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory. Satellite Tracking Program
United States. Congress. House. Select Committee on Astronautics and Space Exploration
United States. National Aeronautics and Space Administration
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Los Angeles
Whipple, Fred L. (Fred Lawrence), 1906-2004

Places:

Moon

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General Correspondence, 1962-1963

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Box 17 of 24	Lecture on the moon delivered before the APS, April 1970
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Box 17 of 24	Atmosphere - notes, etc., undated
Box 17 of 24	Cosmic Radiation - Conference on "The Astrophysical Implications of the Cosmic Radiation." New York, April 12, 1947
Box 17 of 24	Astroballistics - Paper given by Whipple, c. 1950s
Box 17 of 24	Erosion Meteorites - Notes and calculations
Box 17 of 24	Satellite Geodesy - Royal Society, British National Committee on Space Research meeting, October 17-18, 1966
Box 17 of 24	"Meteoroids and Dust." Paper presented November 16, 1964 at Third International Symposium on Physics and Medicine of the Atmosphere and Space, San Antonio. Paper, calculations, and notes.
Box 17 of 24	Celescope Project, 1968-1969
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Box 18 of 24	Historical on S.S. Meteor Cameras and V-2 Biological (?), 1947
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Box 18 of 24	Interplanetary Matter. Draft paper, "On the Nature and Density of Interplanetary Matter," 1947.
Box 18 of 24	Jupiter a Planet. Appears to be drafts of articles for Encyclopedia Britannica, 1946.
Box 18 of 24	Hamid, Salah. "On the Origin of the Geminid (?) Meteor Stream." Typescript.
Box 18 of 24	Kantrowitz, Arthur. Mss. & notes for paper to be authored with Whipple, "Theoretical and Observed Radii of Meteor Trails," 1952-1953.
Box 18 of 24	"Kinematics of Cosmic Clouds." Publication, mss. & notes by Whipple, 1946.
Box 18 of 24	Plans for research projects by Whipple, 1939
Box 18 of 24	Meteor widths, 1953
Box 18 of 24	Meteor Orbit Results (published). Observations and calculations, 1950-1953.
Box 18 of 24	Monograph on meteors. Meteors and the Upper Atmosphere. Notes and outlines, 1948.
Box 18 of 24	Meteorites and Space Travel. Includes mss. on meteorites phenomena and meteorites (?) and meteorites and space travel, 1946-1951.
Box 18 of 24	Measuring engines, 1946
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	Research," paper presented at Symposium on the Upper Atmosphere before the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics, Brussels, 1951. Includes notes, graphs, and charts.
Box 18 of 24	Standard Atmosphere. Various publications by others. (2 folders)
Box 18 of 24	Space Travel. "Why Conquer Space?" Typescript by Whipple, 1953.
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Box 18 of 24	Record of experiments at the Eastman Kodak Labs, Rochester, N.Y., 1931
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Box 18 of 24	"A Proposed Nebular Spectrograph of Relatively High Resolving Power" by Whipple, mss. and notes, undated
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Box 18 of 24	"The Significance of the 200-inch Telescope." Address given before the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Meridian, Conn., November 1, 1938. Includes photo of Whipple.
Box 18 of 24	Notes for a lecture on nebulae and star clusters, Herschel's Birthday Bicentenary, November 15, 1938
Box 18 of 24	Lecture, Sigma Xi, Brown University, April 14, 1941.
Box 18 of 24	Lecture for open house, November 8, 1937, "Meteors as Messengers from Space."

Box 18 of 24	Leo Goldberg's farewell party, 1941
Box 18 of 24	"From Stardust to Galaxies." Notes for talk at State Teachers College, Westfield, Massachusetts, 1942.
Box 18 of 24	"Meteors and the Earth's Upper Atmosphere." Debate & discussion on WGY-GE, Schenectady, New York, February 6, 1946.
Box 18 of 24	Radio broadcast for WGY-GE, October 2, 1946, "The Forthcoming Meteor Shower."
Box 18 of 24	"A Star has Burst," undated.
Box 18 of 24	"Photography in Astronomy." Newspaper review for open night, November 1, 1935.
Box 18 of 24	Lecture to Skyscrapers, November 7, 1934, notes.
Box 18 of 24	"Comets," radio talk, February 7, 1933.
Box 18 of 24	"The Sun," WIXAL Radio Lecture No. IV, April 30, 1937.
Box 18 of 24	"Red Giant and White Dwarf Stars," Radio Lecture No. VI, May 14, 1937.
Box 18 of 24	"A Universe of Universes," Radio Lecture, WIXAL, May 28, 1937.
Box 18 of 24	"The Stars," Radio Lecture IV, WIXAL, May 8, 1937 (?)
Box 18 of 24	Radio interview with Whipple and D. H. Menzel, WEEI, July 27, 1939. Topic is Mars.
Box 18 of 24	Round table discussion on Aurora Borealis, WEEI, January 1938.
Box 18 of 24	"Comets," WIXAL Radio Lecture III, April 23, 1937
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Box 18 of 24	"What Keeps the Stars Shining," WRUL, February 1, 1941.
Box 18 of 24	"Variable Stars," Radio Lecture No. VII, WIXAL, May 21, 1937.
Box 18 of 24	"Novae and Supernovae," WRUL Radio, March 1, 1941
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Box 19 of 24	IAU Subcommittee 22 on meteorites, 1957-1958, Moscow
Box 19 of 24	IAU, 10th General Assembly, Moscow, 1958
Box 19 of 24	IAU, 10th General Assembly, Moscow, 1958. Includes some records of the fifth CSAGI (?) meeting.
Box 19 of 24	International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics, Helsinki, 1960. Includes "On the Structure of the Cometary Nucleus," by Whipple.
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Box 21 of 24	Research and Development Board, Dept of Army, 1952-1953. Primarily on security classification.
Box 21 of 24	National Geographic, undated
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