



# Smithsonian Institution Archives

## Records, 1890-1922

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# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Historical Note.....	1
Descriptive Entry.....	2
Names and Subjects .....	2
Container Listing .....	3
Series 1: GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE AND ACCOUNTING RECORDS, 1890, 1898-1920.....	3
Series 2: PUBLICATIONS.....	4
Series 3: NEWS CLIPPINGS.....	5

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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>	Records
<b>Identifier:</b>	Record Unit 7471
<b>Date:</b>	1890-1922
<b>Extent:</b>	1.5 cu. ft. (3 document boxes)
<b>Creator::</b>	George Washington Memorial Association
<b>Language:</b>	Language of Materials: English

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## Administrative Information

### Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7471, Records

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## Historical Note

The George Washington Memorial Association (GWMA) was organized in 1898 for the purpose of establishing in Washington D.C. an educational institution for the "promotion of science and literature" as described by George Washington in his messages to Congress and in his will. Early attempts to establish a National University were unsuccessful and by early 1904 the GWMA entered into an agreement with Columbian College in the District of Columbia to build a marble monument to George Washington in the form of an administration building and cultural center for its new site at Constitution Avenue and 17th St., NW (now the site of the Pan American Union). Plans for building on the site fell through (though Columbian College in the District of Columbia did rename itself George Washington University), and the association then joined with the Smithsonian Institution to build a multipurpose structure on the mall that would serve as a memorial to George Washington.

In 1914 a competition was held and New York architects Evarts Tracy and Robert Edgerton Swartwout were chosen. By the time the cornerstone was laid in 1921, the building was called the George Washington Victory Memorial Building to additionally honor World War I veterans. The structure included a military museum and archives. The concrete foundation and stairway were completed by 1924, and a fence was constructed around the site. For more than 10 years the GWMA, with the help of Secretary Charles Doolittle Walcott and then Charles Greeley Abbot, attempted to raise funds to complete the building but failed. The foundation and monumental stairway were razed in 1937 for the construction of the National Gallery of Art.

## Descriptive Entry

These records document the history and organization of the GWMA and the planning for the George Washington Memorial Building - first in conjunction with the establishment of a National University in Washington, the construction of an administrative building and cultural center for Columbian College in the District of Columbia, and finally, allied with the Smithsonian, as a victory memorial for World War I veterans. Included is documentation of the fundraising efforts by Secretaries Samuel Pierpont Langley and Charles Doolittle Walcott needed to complete the project, including financial records, brochures and descriptive material, correspondence, newspaper articles, drawings by the prize-winning architects, and photographs.

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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:

Science -- Study and teaching  
Universities and colleges

Types of Materials:

Architectural drawings  
Black-and-white photographs  
Manuscripts

Names:

Abbot, C. G. (Charles Greeley), 1872-1973  
Columbian College in the District of Columbia  
George Washington Memorial Association  
George Washington University  
Langley, S. P. (Samuel Pierpont), 1834-1906  
National Gallery of Art (U.S.)  
Swartwout, R. E. (Robert Egerton)  
Tracy, Evarts, 1869-1922  
Walcott, Charles D. (Charles Doolittle), 1850-1927  
Washington, George, 1732-1799

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE AND ACCOUNTING RECORDS, 1890, 1898-1920

#### Box 1

- Box 1 of 3 Folder 1 Correspondence, 1901. Incoming and outgoing correspondence files of Charles Walcott relating to the establishment of a National University in Washington, D.C. Correspondents include Alexander Agassiz, Alexander Graham Bell, Nicholas M. Butler, Charles Dabney, Charles Eliot, and A. C. True.
- Box 1 of 3 Folder 2 Correspondence, 1899, 1911, 1914. Includes correspondence from contractors and architects offering services for the National University project. Correspondents include Langley, Charles Walcott, and Alexander Graham Bell. Of particular interest is a ca. 1911 Mall site plan attached to a letter to Susan Whitney Dimock from Walcott.
- Box 1 of 3 Folder 3 Correspondence and miscellaneous documents, 1900-1903, 1910, 1914. Includes material relating to the founding of the George Washington Memorial Institution and the Washington Academy of Sciences, 1901-1903. Includes text of speech delivered by Walcott to the GWMA in 1900, "Washington's Will in Relation to the Work of the George Washington Memorial Association."
- Box 1 of 3 Folder 4 Correspondence, 1900-1904. Includes memoranda dealing with the agreement between Columbian College and the George Washington Memorial Association.
- Box 1 of 3 Folder 5 Correspondence and accounting records relating to the solicitation and collection of donations to the George Washington Memorial Building/ George Washington Memorial Association Fund, 1919-1920. Includes an accounts ledger listing contributions from the Society of the Sons of the Revolution, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1916, and 1918.

#### Box 2

- Box 2 of 3 Folder 1 Miscellaneous correspondence and documents; finance committee meeting minutes, 1920-1924. Includes letter to Walcott from architects Tracy and Swartwout (November 25, 1921) describing building plans, materials, cost estimates, and architects' fees.
- Box 2 of 3 Folder 2 Receipts and accounting documents regarding sale of savings and thrift stamps, 1919-1922.
- Box 2 of 3 Folder 3 Ledgers, 1910, 1920-1921.

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*

## Series 2: PUBLICATIONS

## Box 2

Box 2 of 3 Folder 4 Brochures, programs, speech texts, invitations, and publications (many duplicates). Includes GWMA constitution and by-laws; condensed history of the GWMA, 1897; 1905 publication containing elevation and site plan by George Post & Sons, original architects for the project; Washington Academy of Sciences officers and members list (1900); and 1910 GWMA report.

## Box 3

Box 3 of 3 Folders 1A-1B Booklets, pamphlets, brochures, article reprints, and speech texts relating to the founding of Columbian College and its graduate school, government funding for higher education, and the formation of a National University, 1890-1904. Includes 1902 Report of the Senate Committee to Establish the University of the United States; Report of the Special Committee of the Board of Regents on the Proposal Submitted by the American Association of Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations for the Establishment of a Bureau of Graduate Study under the Smithsonian Institution (1900); Relations of the National Government to Higher Education and Research by Charles Walcott (reprint from *Science*, 1901); and Guide to Washington and its Scientific and Educational Institutions of the United States by George Brown Goode (1890).

Box 3 of 3 Folder 2 Publications, descriptive material, brochures, artifacts, 1914-1919. Includes two commemorative lapel pins emblazoned with the head and signature of George Washington (apparently sent to contributors); Program of Competition for the George Washington Memorial Hall, 1914, containing site plans; floor plans and elevation for George Washington Memorial Hall (see originals in Record Unit 92).

Box 3 of 3 Folder 3 National Victory Memorial Building brochures, ca. 1917; program of cornerstone-laying ceremonies, November 14, 1921; telegram from Pershing to Dimock, 1919; site plan and elevation, ca. 1914 (see originals in Record Unit 92).

*Return to Table of Contents*

## Series 3: NEWS CLIPPINGS

Box 3

Box 3 of 3

Folder 4 News clippings, 1901, 1903, 1904, 1922.

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*