



Smithsonian Institution Archives

C. G. Abbot Oral History Interviews, 1973

Finding aid prepared by Smithsonian Institution Archives

Smithsonian Institution Archives
Washington, D.C.
Contact us at osiaref@si.edu

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Historical Note.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Descriptive Entry.....	2
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	3

Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	C. G. Abbot Oral History Interviews
Identifier:	Record Unit 9500
Date:	1973
Extent:	3 audiotapes (Reference copies). 3 digital .mp3 files (Reference copies).
Creator::	Abbot, C. G. (Charles Greeley), 1872-1973, interviewee
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 9500, C. G. Abbot Oral History Interviews

Historical Note

Charles Greeley Abbot graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1894 and came to work as an assistant to Samuel P. Langley at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory on June 19, 1895. The following year he was placed in charge of the Observatory and in 1907 was made director of the Observatory, a position he held until 1944. He served as Assistant Secretary from 1918 to 1928 and as Secretary of the Smithsonian from 1928 to 1944. He continued as a Research Associate of the Institution until his death in 1973. Abbot pioneered solar observation and meteorological prediction and refined the bolometer.

Introduction

The Smithsonian Institution Archives began its Oral History Program in 1973. The purpose of the program is to supplement the written documentation of the Archives' record and manuscript collections with an Oral History Collection, focusing on the history of the Institution, research by its scholars, and contributions of its staff. Program staff conduct interviews with current and retired Smithsonian staff and others who have made significant contributions to the Institution. There are also interviews conducted by researchers or students on topics related to the history of the Smithsonian or the holdings of the Smithsonian Institution Archives.

Dr. Abbot was interviewed for the Oral History Program because he made significant scholarly and administrative contributions to the Smithsonian during 78 years of service.

Descriptive Entry

Abbot was interviewed on October 5 and 12 and November 16, 1973, by Miriam S. Freilicher, shortly before his death at 101 years of age. The interviews consist of reminiscences of Samuel P. Langley and the Astrophysical Observatory, Robert H. Goddard's early work in rocketry, and Joseph G. Cannon of the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee. Abbot discussed his philosophy of life and his work in solar observations, meteorological predictions and inventions.

For additional Charles Greeley Abbot interview, see Record Unit 7005, Charles G. Abbot Papers, Box 209.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Astrophysics
- Interviews
- Oral history

Types of Materials:

- Audiotapes
- Compact discs
- Electronic records
- Transcripts

Names:

- Abbot, C. G. (Charles Greeley), 1872-1973
- Cannon, Joseph Gurney, 1836-1926
- Freilicher, Miriam S., interviewer
- Goddard, Robert Hutchings, 1882-1945
- Langley, S. P. (Samuel Pierpont), 1834-1906
- Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory
- Smithsonian Institution. Office of the Secretary

Container Listing

Interviews

Interviews **Interview 1: October 5, 1973**

Interviews Includes Dr. Abbot's reminiscences of his education, early years at the Smithsonian, inventions, Astrophysical Observatory, c. 1894-1915.

Interviews Transcript, pp. 1-15, of audio recording, 0.5 hour.

Interviews Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 0.5 hour

- Note:
- Original Masters: 1 3" reel-to-reel analog audiotape
 - Preservation Masters: 1 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotape; 1 digital .wav file
 - Reference Copies: 1 cassette audiotape; 1 digital .mp3 file.

Interviews **Interview 2: October 12, 1973**

Interviews Includes Dr. Abbot's parable of "The Gate," reminiscences about the Astrophysical Observatory and his scientific work, c. 1902-1952.

Interviews Transcript, pp. 16-37, of audio recording, 1 hour.

Interviews Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 1 hour

- Note:
- Original Masters: 2 3" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes
 - Preservation Masters: 2 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotapes; 2 digital .wav files
 - Reference Copies: 1 cassette audiotape; 2 digital .mp3 files.

Interviews **Interview 3: November 16, 1973**

Interviews Includes Dr. Abbot's reminiscences about Robert H. Goddard, attitude toward astronautics, his book, *Adventures in the World of Science*, and awards, c. 1915-1973.

Interviews Transcript, pp. 38-46, of audio recording, 0.5 hour.

Interviews Recording of Interview: Total Recording Time: 0.5 hour

- Note:
- Original Masters: 1 3" reel-to-reel analog audiotape

- Preservation Masters: 1 7" reel-to-reel analog audiotape; 1 digital .wav file
- Reference Copies: 1 cassette audiotape; 1 digital .mp3 file.