Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
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Washington, D.C.
1997
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LC Online Catalog record:
http://lccn.loc.gov/mm79031682

Prepared by Preparation Section staff
Revised and expanded by Karen Linn Femia
Collection Summary
Title: Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
Span Dates: 1825-1960
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1830-1880)
ID No.: MSS31682
Creator: Maury, Matthew Fontaine, 1806-1873
Extent: 14,650 items; 64 containers plus 2 oversize; 17.5 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Summary: Naval officer and oceanographer. Correspondence, letterbooks, diaries, journals, speeches, articles, and other writings, notebooks, electrical experiment book, charts, and printed material relating chiefly to Maury's naval career, scientific activities and interests, service as a Confederate agent in England, and work as an immigration official for Southern expatriates in Mexico, and to the Maury (Morey) family.

Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People
Blackford, William M., 1801-1864--Correspondence.
Coblentz, Catherine Cate, 1897-1951. Matthew Fontaine Maury biography. 1953.
Corbin, Nannie, 1837-1900--Correspondence.
Corbin, Wellford, 1835-1897--Correspondence.
Hasbrouck, William C., 1800-1870--Correspondence.
Holmes, Nathaniel J., approximately 1821--Correspondence.
Jansen, Marin H. (Marin Henry), 1817-1893--Correspondence.
Maury family--Correspondence.
Maury family.
Maury, Ann, 1803-1876--Correspondence.
Maury, Ann, 1811-1901--Correspondence.
Maury, Matthew Fontaine, 1806-1873.
Maury, Matthew Fontaine, 1849-1886--Correspondence.
Maury, Richard L. (Richard Lancelot), 1840-1907--Correspondence.
Maury, Rutson, 1805-1882--Correspondence.
Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico, 1832-1867--Correspondence.
Minor, Franklin, 1812-1867--Correspondence.
Otey, James Hervey, 1800-1863--Correspondence.
Smith, C. Alphonso (Charles Alphonso), 1864-1924. C. Alphonso Smith papers. 1864-1927.
Smith, Francis H. (Francis Henney), 1812-1890--Correspondence.
Tremlett, F. W. (Francis William), 1821-1913--Correspondence.
Werth, Mary, 1844-1928--Correspondence.
Withers, Eliza, 1846-1881--Correspondence.

Organizations
United States Naval Observatory.
United States. Depot of Charts and Instruments.

Subjects
American Confederate voluntary exiles--Mexico.
Diplomatic and consular service, Confederate--Great Britain.
Meteorology.
Mines and mineral resources.
Oceanography.
Physical geography--Virginia.
Science--History--19th century.
Torpedoes.

Places
Confederate States of America--Foreign relations--Great Britain.
Confederate States of America--History, Naval.
Great Britain--Foreign relations--Confederate States of America.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Naval operations.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Refugees.

Occupations
Naval officers, Confederate.
Naval officers.
Oceanographers.

Administrative Information

Provenance
The papers and medals of Matthew Fontaine Maury, naval officer and oceanographer, were given to the United States by Maury's daughter, Mary Maury Werth, and other Maury descendants in 1912 in a presentation to President William Howard Taft. The medals were placed in the Smithsonian Institution and the papers in the Library of Congress later that year. The Library acquired additional Maury papers through gifts from the Maury family and others and by purchase, 1913-1996.

Processing History
The papers of Matthew Fontainer Maury were first arranged and described in 1962. Additional material was incorporated into the collection in 1978 and 1997.

Transfers
Maps have been transferred to the Library's Geography and Map Division where they are identified as part of these papers.

Copyright Status
The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Matthew Fontaine Maury is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions
The papers of Matthew Fontaine Maury are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation
Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date Event
1806, Jan. 14 Born near Fredericksburg, Va.; raised in Tennessee
1818 Entered Harpeth Academy, near Franklin, Tenn.

1825-1834 Obtained midshipman’s warrant, U.S. Navy and made three extended voyages

1834 Married Ann Hull Herndon; resided in Fredericksburg, Va.

1836 Promoted to lieutenant
Published A New Theoretical and Practical Treatise on Navigation (Philadelphia: Key and Biddle. 174 pp.)

1839 Permanently lame in stagecoach accident and thenceforth not assigned to sea duty

1842-1844 Superintendent of the Navy Department’s Depot of Charts and Instruments

1844-1861 Superintendent of the Naval Observatory and Hydrographical Office

1847 Issued first Wind and Current Charts (U.S. Hydrographic Office) showing best “tracks” for sailing ships in the North Atlantic

1853 U.S. representative at international maritime congress, Brussels, Belgium

1855 Published The Physical Geography of the Sea (New York: Harper & Bros. 274 pp.), the first modern oceanographic textbook
Placed on inactive duty by the U.S. Navy

1858 Restored to active duty by presidential order; promoted to commander retroactive to 1855

1861, Apr. 20 Resigned from U.S. Navy and accepted commission as commander in Confederate Navy

1862 Special agent of the Confederate government to England

1865-1866 Imperial commissioner of immigration to the Emperor of Mexico

1866-1868 Resided in England

1868 Published First Lessons in Geography (New York: Richardson & Co. 62 pp.)
Published The World We Live in (New York: Richardson & Co. 104 pp.)

1868-1872 Professor of meteorology, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Va.

1870 Published Manual of Geography (New York: University Publishing Co. 162 pp.)

1873, Feb. 1 Died, Lexington, Va.

**Scope and Content Note**

The papers of Matthew Fontaine Maury (1806-1873) span the years 1825-1960, with the bulk of the material dating from the 1830s to the 1870s. The papers consist of letterbooks, correspondence, diaries, notebooks, electrical experiment book, journals, drafts and printed copies of speeches and articles, charts, related printed matter, and proofs of his unpublished work "Astronomy." The papers are organized into the following series: General Correspondence, Writings, Addresses, and Lectures, Letterbooks, Miscellany, Additions and Oversize.
The papers pertain chiefly to Maury's naval career, his scientific activities and interests, and his service to the Confederacy in the Civil War. There is also considerable material concerning the many medals and honors conferred upon him for his scientific contributions. Some subjects touched upon are mines, meteorology, the colonization of Mexico by former Confederates, physical geography of Virginia, and oceanography. Much of the correspondence is family correspondence, including many of Maury's own letters.

Prominent among his correspondents are William M. Blackford, William C. Hasbrouck, Nathaniel J. Holmes, Admiral Marin H. Jansen, Privy Councilor to the King of Holland, Ann Hull Herndon Maury, Richard L. Maury, Rutson Maury, Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico, Franklin Minor, James Hervey Otey, Francis Henney Smith, Francis W. Tremlett, and Mary Herndon Maury Werth.

Placed with the collection are papers of Charles Alphonso Smith regarding Maury including clippings and notes on Maury as well as correspondence with Mary Maury (Mrs. James R.) Werth concerning her father. Also included is a typescript of a life of Maury by Catherine Cate Coblentz.

The 1978 addition to the Maury Papers consists of correspondence between various Maury family members, 1858-1878. These papers were received by the Library between 1966 and 1975. Correspondents include Nannie Corbin, Wellford Corbin, Matthew Fontaine Maury (1849-1886), Mary Herndon Maury Werth, and Eliza Hull Maury Withers. Of particular interest are the letters Maury received during the periods when he was special Confederate agent to Great Britain in London and an immigration official for Southern expatriates in Mexico.

The 1997 addition consists of Maury papers received by the Library from 1989 to 1996. It primarily contains letters written by Matthew F. Maury to his cousin, Ann Maury, relating his daily activities. Also included are correspondence with other family members, one letter of 1858 to Benjamin Silliman concerning expeditions and packet ships, news clippings (some dating from the mid-twentieth century), and copies of navigational charts.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in six series:

- General Correspondence, 1825-1910
- Writings, Addresses, and Lectures, 1856-1872
- Letterbooks, 1859-1891
- Miscellany, 1836-1953
- Additions, 1831-1960
- Oversize, 1855-1873
## Description of Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th><strong>Details</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1-46</td>
<td><strong>General Correspondence, 1825-1910</strong></td>
<td>Correspondence. Arranged chronologically in forty-six bound volumes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 47-51</td>
<td><strong>Writings, Addresses, and Lectures, 1856-1872</strong></td>
<td>Arranged chronologically in five bound volumes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 52-56</td>
<td><strong>Letterbooks, 1859-1891</strong></td>
<td>Copies of outgoing correspondence. Arranged chronologically in five bound volumes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 57-63</td>
<td><strong>Miscellany, 1836-1953</strong></td>
<td>Account books, diaries, photographs, printed matter, scrapbook, writings, and C. Alphonso Smith papers re Maury. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 64</td>
<td><strong>Additions, 1831-1960</strong></td>
<td>Correspondence and family correspondence, each arranged chronologically. Miscellaneous material including genealogical records and news clippings. Arranged in two additions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX OV 1-OV 2</td>
<td><strong>Oversize, 1855-1873</strong></td>
<td>Diplomas, awards, and probate papers. Organized and described according to the series, folders, and boxes from which the items were removed.</td>
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## Container List

<table>
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<th>Container</th>
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<td>BOX 1-46</td>
<td><strong>General Correspondence, 1825-1910</strong>&lt;br&gt;Correspondence.&lt;br&gt;Arranged chronologically in forty-six bound volumes.</td>
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<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>6 Feb. 1825-3 Nov. 1839</td>
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<td>BOX 2</td>
<td>6 Nov. 1839-15 July 1843</td>
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<td>BOX 3</td>
<td>29 July 1843-13 Feb. 1850</td>
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<td>BOX 4</td>
<td>15 Feb. 1850-17 Sept. 1855</td>
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<td>BOX 5</td>
<td>18 Sept. 1855-4 Feb. 1856</td>
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<td>BOX 6</td>
<td>5 Feb. 1856-25 Feb. 1857</td>
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<td>BOX 7</td>
<td>26 Feb. 1857-6 June 1859</td>
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<td>BOX 8</td>
<td>7 June 1859-23 Jan. 1860</td>
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<td>BOX 9</td>
<td>29 Jan.-21 Oct. 1860</td>
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<td>BOX 13</td>
<td>23 Feb.-6 Apr. 1861</td>
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<td>BOX 14</td>
<td>7 Apr.-7 Oct. 1861</td>
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<td>BOX 15</td>
<td>8 Oct. 1861-3 May 1862</td>
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<td>BOX 16</td>
<td>4 May-17 Sept. 1862</td>
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<td>BOX 17</td>
<td>18 Sept. 1862-20 Apr. 1863</td>
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<td>BOX 18</td>
<td>21 Apr.-2 Nov. 1863</td>
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<td>BOX 19</td>
<td>3 Nov. 1863-5 Feb. 1864</td>
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<td>BOX 20</td>
<td>6 Feb.-19 Oct. 1864</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 21</td>
<td>20 Oct. 1864-8 June 1865</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 22</td>
<td>9 June-20 Aug. 1865</td>
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<td>BOX 23</td>
<td>21 Aug.-1 Dec. 1865</td>
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<td>BOX 24</td>
<td>3 Dec. 1865-18 Apr. 1866</td>
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<td>BOX 25</td>
<td>19 Apr. 1866-10 May 1867</td>
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<td>BOX 26</td>
<td>11 May 1867-9 June 1868</td>
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<td>BOX 27</td>
<td>10 June-27 Nov. 1868</td>
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<td>BOX 28</td>
<td>28 Nov. 1868-2 Feb. 1869</td>
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<td>BOX 29</td>
<td>3 Feb.-10 Mar. 1869</td>
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<td>BOX 30</td>
<td>11 Mar.-22 Apr. 1869</td>
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<td>BOX 31</td>
<td>23 Apr.-25 June 1869</td>
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<td>BOX 32</td>
<td>26 June-1 Nov. 1869</td>
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<td>BOX 33</td>
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<td>18 Jan.-29 Apr. 1870</td>
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<td>5 Aug. 1870-10 Apr. 1871</td>
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<td>BOX 37</td>
<td>11 Apr.-3 Sept. 1871</td>
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<td>BOX 38</td>
<td>9 Sept. 1871-1 Jan. 1872</td>
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### General Correspondence, 1825-1910

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<td>BOX 40</td>
<td>28 Mar.-10 Aug. 1872</td>
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<td>BOX 41</td>
<td>11 Aug. 1872-3 Jan. 1873</td>
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<td>BOX 42</td>
<td>4-30 Jan. 1873</td>
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<td>BOX 43</td>
<td>1 Feb.-20 Mar. 1873</td>
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<td>BOX 44</td>
<td>21 Mar.-27 Oct. 1873</td>
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<td>BOX 45</td>
<td>28 Oct. 1873-8 Feb. 1895</td>
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<td>BOX 46</td>
<td>13 Apr. 1895-25 Apr. 1910, undated</td>
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**BOX 47-51**

**Writings, Addresses, and Lectures, 1856-1872**

Arranged chronologically in five bound volumes.

| BOX 47    | June 1856-June 1868 |
| BOX 48    | Dec. 1869-Jan. 1871 |
| BOX 49    | May 1871 |
| BOX 50    | May-Dec. 1871 |
| BOX 51    | Jan.-May 1872 |

**BOX 52-56**

**Letterbooks, 1859-1891**

Copies of outgoing correspondence.

Arranged chronologically in five bound volumes.

| BOX 52    | 3 Dec. 1859-18 Jan. 1861 |
| BOX 53    | 9 Oct. 1868-28 Sept. 1869 |
| BOX 54    | 29 Sept.-9 Oct. 1869 |
| BOX 55    | 4 Apr. 1871-19 Mar. 1872 |
| BOX 56    | 12 Apr.-14 Nov. 1872 |
|           | Fragments, 1891 |

**BOX 57-63**

**Miscellany, 1836-1953**

Account books, diaries, photographs, printed matter, scrapbook, writings, and C. Alphonso Smith papers re Maury.

Arranged alphabetically by type of material.

| BOX 57    | Account books, 1841-1872 |
|          | Architectural drawing of Lee Memorial Episcopal Church, Washington & Lee University, Lexington, Va., undated |
|          | "Children's recollections," 1872-1873, 1928 |
|          | Coblentz, Catherine Cate, "Naval Lieutenant Matthew Fontaine Maury, First Citizen of the World, 1853-1953," 1953 |

| BOX 58    | Diaries |
|          | 1863 |
|          | 1864 |
|          | 1864-1865, 1866 |
|          | 1865-1866 |
|          | 1866-1869, 1872 |

Diplomas and awards, 1854-1858, undated *See also Oversize*

Notebooks
### Miscellany, 1836-1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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|           | Electricity, 1864  
             | Virginia, undated  
             | Photographs, 1872, undated  
             | Printed matter  
             | Booklets and journals  
             | 1854-1869  
             | BOX 59  
             | 1870-1872  
             | 1873-1874  
             | 1877-1889  
             | 1890-1904, 1923  
             | Undated  
             | General, 1860-1904, undated  
             | Maury monument, 1890-1905  
             | Newspaper clippings  
             | About Maury's death, 1872-1873  
             | BOX 60  
             | circa 1860s-1870s  
             | circa 1880s-1900s  
             | Newspapers  
             | circa 1860s-1870s  
             | circa 1880s-1890s  
             | BOX 61  
             | Periodicals, 1836-1897  
             | Probate, 1873 See also Oversize  
             | Scrapbook, 1839-1873  
             | Smith, Alphonso C., collection  
             | Correspondence  
             | General, 1864-1868, 1889, undated  
             | Regarding Maury, 1864-1867, 1923-1927, undated  
             | Newspaper clippings, 1922-1924  
             | Photographs, undated  
             | BOX 62  
             | Writings about Maury  
             | 1903-1923  
             | 1924, undated  
             | Testimonial volume to Maury, 1859  
             | Writings by Maury  
             | Articles, undated  
             | Astronomical observations made at the National Observatory, Washington, D.C., 1846-1851  
             | BOX 63  
             | "Astronomy," undated  
             | First Lessons in Geography, 1884  
             | Lieut. Maury's Investigations of the Winds and Currents of the Sea, 1851  
             | Physical Survey of Virginia, 1869  
             | Published letters and commentary, 1857-1871  
             | Report of Lieut. Matthew F. Maury, United States Navy, on the Loss of the United States Mail Steamer "Central America," under the Command of Commander William Lewis Herndon, United States Navy (1857), inscribed by President Chester A. Arthur, 1884  

Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
Speeches, 1856-1873

BOX 64   Additions, 1831-1960
Correspondence and family correspondence, each arranged chronologically. Miscellaneous material including genealogical records and news clippings. Arranged in two additions.

BOX 64
1978 Addition, 1858-1878, undated
Family correspondence
   Index, undated
   1858-1872
   1873-1878, undated
Genealogy, undated See also Oversize
1997 Addition, circa 1831-1960, undated
Correspondence
   circa 1831-1837
   1838
   1839
   1840
   1841
   1842-1843
   1844-1846
   1847-1849 See also Oversize
   1850-1859
   1860-1872, undated
Miscellany, 1857-1873, 1956-1960, undated

BOX OV 1-OV 2   Oversize, 1855-1873
Diplomas, awards, and probate papers. Organized and described according to the series, folders, and boxes from which the items were removed.

BOX OV 1
Miscellany
   Diplomas and awards, 1856, undated (Container 58)
      Document accompanying gold medal of honor at the Universal Exposition of 1855
      Commission as commander, Jan. 27, 1858
      Award of 3,000 guineas in appreciation of interest of maritime science, undated
   Probate, 1873 (Container 61)

BOX OV 2
1978 Addition, 1858-1878, undated
   Genealogy, undated (Container 64)

BOX OV 2
1997 Addition, circa 1831-1960, undated
   Correspondence
      1847-1849
         "Genealogical Chart of the Fontaine and Maury Families," undated Lieut. Maury’s Investigations of the Winds and Currents of the Sea, 1851 (Container 64)