Collection Summary
Title: Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers
Inclusive Dates: 1825-1960
Bulk Dates: 1830-1880
ID No.: MSS31682
Creator: Maury, Matthew Fontaine, 1806-1873
Extent: 14,650 items
Extent: 64 containers plus 2 oversize
Extent: 17.5 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm79031682
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.
Online Content: The papers of Matthew Fontaine Maury are available on the Library of Congress website at https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/collmss.ms000110. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the online edition.

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

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, Jr., 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.

**Titles**
*Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers at the Library of Congress*

**Occupations**
Naval officers, Confederate.
Naval officers.
Oceanographers.

**Acquisition Information**
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 Fontaine Maury were first arranged and described by Manuscript Division staff in 1962. Additional material was incorporated into the collection by Manuscript Division staff in 1978 and by Karen Linn Femia in 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.

Online Content

The papers of Matthew Fontaine Maury are available on the Library of Congress website at https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/collmss.ms000110. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the online edition.

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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1806, Jan. 14</td>
<td>Born near Fredericksburg, Va.; raised in Tennessee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Entered Harpeth Academy, near Franklin, Tenn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825-1834</td>
<td>Obtained midshipman's warrant, U.S. Navy and made three extended voyages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Married Ann Hull Herndon; resided in Fredericksburg, Va.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>Promoted to lieutenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Published <em>A New Theoretical and Practical Treatise on Navigation</em> (Philadelphia: Key and Biddle. 174 pp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Permanently lamed in stagecoach accident and thenceforth not assigned to sea duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842-1844</td>
<td>Superintendent of the Navy Department's Depot of Charts and Instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844-1861</td>
<td>Superintendent of the Naval Observatory and Hydrographical Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Issued first <em>Wind and Current Charts</em> (U.S. Hydrographical Office) showing best &quot;tracks&quot; for sailing ships in the North Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>U.S. representative at international maritime congress, Brussels, Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>Published <em>The Physical Geography of the Sea</em> (New York: Harper &amp; Bros. 274 pp.), the first modern oceanographic textbook</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Placed on inactive duty by the U.S. Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>Restored to active duty by presidential order; promoted to commander retroactive to 1855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861, Apr. 20</td>
<td>Resigned from U.S. Navy and accepted commission as commander in Confederate Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Special agent of the Confederate government to England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865-1866</td>
<td>Imperial commissioner of immigration to the Emperor of Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866-1868</td>
<td>Resided in England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>Published <em>First Lessons in Geography</em> (New York: Richardson &amp; Co. 62 pp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Published <em>The World We Live in</em> (New York: Richardson &amp; Co. 104 pp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868-1872</td>
<td>Professor of meteorology, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Va.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>Published <em>Manual of Geography</em> (New York: University Publishing Co. 162 pp.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873, Feb. 1</td>
<td>Died, Lexington, Va.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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>Details</th>
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| BOX 1-46  | **General Correspondence, 1825-1910**                                   | Correspondence.  
Arranged chronologically in forty-six bound volumes. |
| BOX 47-51 | **Writings, Addresses, and Lectures, 1856-1872**                       | Arranged chronologically in five bound volumes. |
| BOX 52-56 | **Letterbooks, 1859-1891**                                             | Copies of outgoing correspondence.  
Arranged chronologically in five bound volumes. |
| 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 64    | **Additions, 1831-1960**                                               | Correspondence and family correspondence, each arranged chronologically. Miscellaneous material including genealogical records and news clippings.  
Arranged in two additions. |
| 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. |
## Container List

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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<td>Correspondence.</td>
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<td>Arranged chronologically in forty-six bound volumes.</td>
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<td>BOX 2</td>
<td>1839, Nov. 6-1843, July 15</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>1850, Feb. 15-1855, Sept. 17</td>
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<td>BOX 5</td>
<td>1855, Sept. 18-1856, Feb. 4</td>
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<td>BOX 6</td>
<td>1856, Feb. 5-1857, Feb. 25</td>
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<td>BOX 7</td>
<td>1857, Feb. 26-1859, June 6</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 10</td>
<td>22 Oct. 1860-21 Jan. 1861</td>
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<td>22 Jan.-4 Feb. 1861</td>
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<td>BOX 12</td>
<td>5-22 Feb. 1861</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>
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<td>9 June-20 Aug. 1865</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>23 Apr.-25 June 1869</td>
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<td>26 June-1 Nov. 1869</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>2 Nov. 1869-17 Jan. 1870</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>37</td>
<td>11 Apr.-3 Sept. 1871</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>9 Sept. 1871-1 Jan. 1872</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>2 Jan.-27 Mar. 1872</td>
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General Correspondence, 1825-1910

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| BOX 44    | 21 Mar.-27 Oct. 1873  
|           | [Digital content available] |
| BOX 45    | 28 Oct. 1873-8 Feb. 1895  
|           | [Digital content available] |
| BOX 46    | 13 Apr. 1895-25 Apr. 1910, undated  
|           | [Digital content available] |
| BOX 47-51 | **Writings, Addresses, and Lectures, 1856-1872**  
|           | Arranged chronologically in five bound volumes.  
| BOX 47    | June 1856-June 1868  
|           | [Digital content available] |
| BOX 48    | Dec. 1869-Jan. 1871  
|           | [Digital content available] |
| BOX 49    | May 1871  
|           | [Digital content available] |
| BOX 50    | May-Dec. 1871  
|           | [Digital content available] |
| BOX 51    | Jan.-May 1872  
|           | [Digital content available] |
| BOX 52-56 | **Letterbooks, 1859-1891**  
|           | Copies of outgoing correspondence.  
|           | Arranged chronologically in five bound volumes.  
| BOX 52    | 3 Dec. 1859-18 Jan. 1861  
|           | [Digital content available] |
| BOX 53    | 9 Oct. 1868-28 Sept. 1869  
|           | [Digital content available] |
| BOX 54    | 29 Sept.-9 Oct. 1869  
|           | [Digital content available] |
| BOX 55    | 4 Apr. 1871-19 Mar. 1872  
|           | [Digital content available] |
| BOX 56    | 12 Apr.-14 Nov. 1872, Fragments, 1891  
|           | [Digital content available] |
| 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  
|           | [Digital content available] |
|           | Architectural drawing of Lee Memorial Episcopal Church, Washington & Lee University, Lexington, Va., undated  
|           | [Digital content available] |
|           | "Children's recollections," 1872-1873, 1928  
|           | [Digital content available] |
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**
- Electricity, 1864
- Virginia, undated

**Photographs, 1872, undated**

**Printed matter**
- Booklets and journals
  - 1854-1869
  - 1870-1872
  - 1873-1874
  - 1877-1889
  - 1890-1904, 1923
  - Undated

**BOX 59**

**General, 1860-1904, undated**

**Maury monument, 1890-1905**

**Newspaper clippings**
- About Maury's death, 1872-1873

**BOX 60**

**Miscellany, 1836-1953**
Newspapers
circa 1860s-1870s
  Digital content available
circa 1880s-1890s
  Digital content available

BOX 61
Periodicals, 1836-1897
  Digital content available
Probate, 1873 See also Oversize
  Digital content available
Scrapbook, 1839-1873
  Digital content available
Smith, Alphonso C., collection
  Correspondence
    General, 1864-1868, 1889, undated
      Digital content available
    Regarding Maury, 1864-1867, 1923-1927, undated
      Digital content available
Newspaper clippings, 1922-1924
  Digital content available
Photographs, undated
  Digital content available

BOX 62
Writings about Maury
  1903-1923
    Digital content available
  1924, undated
    Digital content available
Testimonial volume to Maury, 1859
  Digital content available
Writings by Maury
  Articles, undated
    Digital content available
Astronomical observations made at the National Observatory, Washington, D.C., 1846-1851
  Digital content available

BOX 63
"Astronomy," undated
  Digital content available
First Lessons in Geography, 1884
  Digital content available
Lieut. Maury's Investigations of the Winds and Currents of the Sea, 1851
  Digital content available
Physical Survey of Virginia, 1869
  Published letters and commentary, 1857-1871
    Digital content available
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, 1885
  Digital content available
Speeches, 1856-1873
Digital content available

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
Digital content available
1858-1872
Digital content available
1873-1878, undated
Digital content available
Genealogy, undated See also Oversize
Digital content available

BOX 64  1997 Addition, circa 1831-1960, undated
Correspondence
circa 1831-1837
Digital content available
1838
Digital content available
1839
Digital content available
1840
Digital content available
1841
Digital content available
1842-1843
Digital content available
1844-1846
Digital content available
1847-1849 See also Oversize
Digital content available
1850-1859
Digital content available
1860-1872, undated
Digital content available
Miscellany, 1857-1873, 1956-1960, undated
Digital content available

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
<table>
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<td>Genealogy, undated (Container 64)</td>
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<td><strong>Digital content available</strong></td>
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<td>1997 Addition, circa 1831-1960, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>1847-1849</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
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<tr>
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<td>&quot;Genealogical Chart of the Fontaine and Maury Families,&quot; undated (Container 64)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Digital content available</strong></td>
</tr>
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