

**Erwin F. Smith Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2008**

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm78040337>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms008062>

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Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2008  
Revised 2010 April

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Erwin F. Smith Papers

**Span Dates:** 1876-1927

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1920-1927)

**ID No.:** MSS40377

**Creator:** Smith, Erwin F. (Erwin Frink), 1854-1927

**Extent:** 400 items

**Extent:** 7 containers

**Extent:** 3 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in English

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78040337>

**Summary:** Plant pathologist. Diaries, correspondence, notes, literary manuscripts, and photographs relating primarily to his laboratory work and his employment at the Department of Agriculture.

## 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

Heredia, José-Maria de, 1842-1905.

Meyer, Frank Nicholas--Correspondence.

Smith family.

Smith, Charlotte May Buffet, 1871-1906.

Smith, Erwin F. (Erwin Frink), 1854-1927.

### Organizations

United States. Department of Agriculture--Employees and officials.

### Subjects

Botany--China.

Botany--Japan.

Literature.

Plant diseases.

Plants--Washington (D.C.)

Poetry.

### Places

Europe--Description and travel.

Florida--Description and travel.

### Titles

*Erwin Frink Smith papers*

### Occupations

Plant pathologists.

## Provenance

The papers of Erwin F. Smith, plant pathologist, were given to the Library of Congress from 1956 to 1958 by the estate of his widow, Ruth Annette Warren Smith, via Fred Neter. Papers donated by the American Philosophical Society via the Library's Poetry Office in 1955 were added to the collection in 1996.

## Processing History

The papers of Erwin F. Smith were arranged and described in 1957. The collection was expanded and revised in 1996, and additional revisions to the finding aid were made in 2008.

## Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Erwin F. Smith is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of Erwin F. Smith 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, Erwin F. Smith Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

Date	Event
1854, Jan. 21	Born, Gilbert's Mills, N.Y.
1880	Published <i>The Flora of Michigan</i> , with Charles F. Wheeler. Lansing, Mich.: Michigan Horticultural Society Report
1886	B. S., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich. Employed by Agriculture Department to study peach blight
1889	Sc.D., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.
1893	Married Charlotte M. Buffett (died 1906)
1901	Appointed plant pathologist, Bureau of Plant Industry, U.S. Department of Agriculture
1902-1927	Head, plant pathology laboratory, Bureau of Plant Industry, U.S. Department of Agriculture
1905-1914	Published <i>Bacteria in Relation to Plant Diseases</i> . Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington
1914	Married Ruth Annette Warren
1915	Published <i>For Her Friends and Mine: a Book of Aspirations, Dreams, and Memories</i> . Washington, D.C.: privately printed
1920	Published translation from the French with Florence Hedges of <i>Pasteur: The History of a Mind</i> , by Emile Duclaux. Philadelphia, London: W. B. Saunders Co. Published <i>An Introduction to Bacterial Diseases of Plants</i> . Philadelphia, London: W. B. Saunders Co.
1927, Apr. 6	Died, Washington, D.C.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Erwin Frink Smith (1854-1927) span the years 1876-1927 and include diaries, correspondence, notes, photographs, and literary manuscripts. The papers are arranged in four series: [Diaries](#), [Scientific File](#), [Literary File](#), and [Miscellany](#). They have been available for research since 1957, with additional material incorporated principally into the [Literary File](#) in 1996. Smith's [diaries](#) for the years 1920-1927 constitute the bulk of the collection. In the [diaries](#) Smith

made note of his laboratory work and employment at the Agriculture Department. Smith also commented on his home life; extensive reading in French, German, Italian literature and texts in Latin; and his reaction to the news of events throughout the world. Smith's travels on behalf of the Agriculture Department are sometimes featured, such as a trip to Florida to study diseases in oranges groves described in his journal of 1891. A three-volume journal of his trip to Europe in the winter of 1924-1925 makes note of official meetings and also includes ink sketches of plants, architectural details, museum exhibitions, and landscapes.

The remaining fragmentary material relating to Smith's scientific career is in the [Scientific File](#). The file includes a notebook describing plants seen in the District of Columbia in 1894, a synopsis of Smith's research, and a catalog of his scientific library. There are no records concerning the publication of his books or Agriculture Department studies on bacterial diseases in plants. The letters of Frank Meyer, mostly typewritten copies, concern an expedition in 1905 to Japan and China in search of plants and information for the Agriculture Department.

Smith's literary endeavors were not confined to science. In 1915 he published a book of poetry, *For Her Friends and Mine*, and dedicated it to his deceased first wife, Charlotte M. Buffett. Corrected proofs and drafts of the poems are in the [Literary File](#), as are drafts for a second set of poems, "Nature and the Dream." Smith translated sonnets of the Cuban-born French poet, José Maria de Heredia (1842-1905), and planned to publish them with biographical notes, explication, and illustrations. Records for the projected Heredia volume are included in the [Literary File](#).

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in four series:

- [Diaries, 1891-1927](#)
- [Scientific File, 1880-1927](#)
- [Literary File, 1876-1926](#)
- [Miscellany, 1915-1927](#)

## Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-3	<p><b><u>Diaries, 1891-1927</u></b></p> <p>Daily diaries and travel journals. Arranged by type and chronologically therein.</p>
BOX 3	<p><b><u>Scientific File, 1880-1927</u></b></p> <p>Notebooks, correspondence, library catalog, and notes. Arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material.</p>
BOX 4-7	<p><b><u>Literary File, 1876-1926</u></b></p> <p>Galleys, holograph and typescript drafts of miscellaneous writings and three collections of poetry, including text, notes, and illustrations for a translation of sonnets by José Maria de Heredia. Arranged by genre and thereunder alphabetically by title.</p>
BOX 7	<p><b><u>Miscellany, 1915-1927</u></b></p> <p>Memorial tribute, notebook, personal correspondence, and a photograph. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.</p>

# Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-3	<b>Diaries, 1891-1927</b> Daily diaries and travel journals. Arranged by type and chronologically therein.
BOX 1	Daily diaries
BOX 1	1920-1925 (6 vols.)
BOX 2	1926-1927 (2 vols.)
BOX 2	Travel journals
BOX 2	1891, Florida
BOX 2	1924-1925, Europe (2 vols.)
BOX 3	(1 vol.)
BOX 3	<b>Scientific File, 1880-1927</b> Notebooks, correspondence, library catalog, and notes. Arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material.
BOX 3	Catalog of scientific library, 1928, undated
BOX 3	Meyer, Frank, letters on plant expedition to Japan and China, 1905
BOX 3	Miscellaneous
BOX 3	Correspondence, 1880-1887, 1898, 1916, 1924-1926
BOX 3	Notes and printed matter, 1896-1899, 1914, 1927, undated
BOX 3	Notes on plants seen in the District of Columbia, 1894
BOX 3	Synopsis of research, 1922-1925
BOX 4-7	<b>Literary File, 1876-1926</b> Galleys, holograph and typescript drafts of miscellaneous writings and three collections of poetry, including text, notes, and illustrations for a translation of sonnets by José Maria de Heredia. Arranged by genre and thereunder alphabetically by title.
BOX 4	Miscellaneous essays, translations, notes, and poems, 1876, 1910-1923, undated (2 folders)
BOX 4	Poetry collections
BOX 4	<i>For Her Friends and Mine</i>
BOX 4	Corrected proof, circa 1915
BOX 4	Drafts, 1906-1913, undated (3 folders)
BOX 4	Record of book distribution, 1915
BOX 4	"Nature and the Dream," drafts, 1926, undated (3 folders)

## Literary File, 1876-1926

<b>Container</b>	<b>Contents</b>
BOX 5	(2 folders)
BOX 5	"Sonnets of José Maria de Heredia"
BOX 5	Bibliography, undated
BOX 5	Illustrations, undated
BOX 5	Notes, undated (5 folders)
BOX 6	(1 folder)
BOX 6	Text drafts, undated (6 folders)
BOX 7	(4 folders)
BOX 7	<b>Miscellany, 1915-1927</b> Memorial tribute, notebook, personal correspondence, and a photograph. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 7	Memorial tribute to Smith, 1927
BOX 7	Notebook of addresses, accounts, and lists, circa 1915
BOX 7	Personal correspondence, 1915-1924
BOX 7	Photograph, portrait, circa 1920