Collection Summary

Title: Cleveland Abbe Papers
Span Dates: 1850-1954
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1850-1916)
ID No.: MSS10025
Creator: Abbe, Cleveland, 1838-1916
Extent: 9,500 items
Extent: 31 containers plus 3 oversize
Extent: 12.4 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm73010025
Summary: Astronomer and meteorologist. Correspondence, diaries, and other papers relating mainly to Abbe's career with the Weather Service of the Army Signal Corps, his participation in the West African Eclipse Expedition (1880s), and his career in the United States Weather Bureau.

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
Abbe family.
Abbe, Cleveland, 1838-1916.
Abbe, Robert, 1851-1928--Correspondence.
Bickmore, Albert S. (Albert Smith), 1839-1914--Correspondence.
Coffin, James H. (James Henry), 1806-1873--Correspondence.
Ferrel, William, 1817-1891--Correspondence.
Gibbs, Wolcott, 1822-1908--Correspondence.
Gould, Benjamin Apthorp, 1824-1896--Correspondence.
Hall, Asaph, III, 1829-1907--Correspondence.
Henry, Joseph, 1797-1878--Correspondence.
Langley, S. P. (Samuel Pierpoint), 1834-1906--Correspondence.
Newcomb, Simon, 1835-1909--Correspondence.
Packard, A. S. (Alpheus Spring), 1839-1905--Correspondence.
Peirce, Benjamin, 1809-1880--Correspondence.
Rutherfurd, Lewis Morris, 1816-1892--Correspondence.
Safford, Truman Henry, 1836-1901--Correspondence.
Searle, G. M. (George Mary), 1839-1918--Correspondence.
Struve, Otto, 1819-1905--Correspondence.
Watson, James C. (James Craig), 1838-1880--Correspondence.

Organizations
Glavnaía astronomicheskaí observatorií (Pulkovo, Russia)
United States Coast Survey.
United States. Army. Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, 44th (1862-1863)

Subjects
Astronomical observatories--Russia (Federation)--Pulkovo.
Astronomy.
Eclipses.
Longitude.
Meteorology.
Scientific expeditions--Africa, West.
Weather--Maps.
Weather.

**Places**
Beaufort (N.C)--History.
North Carolina--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Medical care.

**Occupations**
Astronomers.
Meteorologists.

**Provenance**
The papers of Cleveland Abbe, astronomer and meteorologist, were given to the Library of Congress by Abbe's granddaughter Petrena Abbe Shea in 1963. Additional material was transferred that year from the National Archives and Records Administration.

**Processing History**
The papers of Cleveland Abbe were arranged and described in 1964. The finding aid was revised in 2010.

**Additional Guides**

**Copyright Status**
Copyright in the unpublished writings of Cleveland Abbe in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

**Access and Restrictions**
The papers of Cleveland Abbe 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, Cleveland Abbe Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**Biographical Note**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1838, Dec. 2</td>
<td>Born, New York, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>B.A., College of the City of New York, New York, N.Y.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1859-1860  Taught engineering at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.  
          Studied astronomy under Franz Brünnow
1860      M.A., College of the City of New York, New York, N.Y.  
1861-1864 Assisted Benjamin Apthorp Gould on longitude determinations for the United States Coast Survey  
1864-1866 Guest astronomer, Observatory of Pulkovo, Russia  
1867-1868 Aid, United States Naval Observatory
1868-1873 Director, Cincinnati Observatory, Cincinnati, Ohio
1869      Began publishing daily weather reports for the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce
1870      Married Frances Martha Neal (died 1908)
1871-1916 Meteorologist, United States Signal Corps and the United States Weather Bureau
1884-1916 Professor of meteorology, Columbian (George Washington) University, Washington, D.C.
1895-1916 Lecturer on meteorology, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.
1906      Awarded the Franklin Medal by the American Philosophical Society
1909      Married Margaret Augusta Percival
1912      Awarded the Symons Memorial Gold Medal by the Royal Meteorological Society of London
1916      Awarded the Marcellus Hartley Medal by the National Academy of Sciences

Scope and Content Note

The papers of the American meteorologist Cleveland Abbe (1838-1916) span the years 1850-1954, with the bulk of the material dated up to 1916. The papers consist mainly of correspondence received by Abbe and a few copies of his replies and are organized into the following series: Diaries, General Correspondence, Family Correspondence and Related Papers, Subject File, Speech and Article File, Printed Matter, and Oversize.

The General Correspondence contains many letters from the American astronomer Benjamin Apthorp Gould, whom Cleveland Abbe assisted at Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1861-1864, in the telegraphic longitude work of the United States Coast Survey. There are also numerous letters from Otto Struve, former director of the Nicholas Central Observatory of Pulkovo, near St. Petersburg, Russia, where Abbe spent two years, 1864-1866, as a guest astronomer. Other prominent correspondents include Albert S. Bickmore, James H. Coffin, William Ferrel, Wolcott Gibbs, Asaph Hall, Joseph Henry, S. P. Langley, Simon Newcomb, A. S. Packard, Benjamin Pierce, Lewis M. Rutherford, Truman Henry Safford, and James C. Watson. Abbe's career as meteorologist with the United States Signal Corps and with the United States Weather Bureau, which was organized under the Department of Agriculture, is also reflected in his correspondence.

The Family and Related Papers contain a sizeable number of letters received from members of his family, notably those from his brother Robert Abbe, an American surgeon who was one of the first in the United States to use radium in the treatment of cancer.

The Subject File contains papers relating to Abbe's activities following his return to the United States from Russia. In 1868, he became director of the Cincinnati Observatory, and his interest shifted from the field of astronomy to that of meteorology and the practical application of that science in preparing weather forecasts and issuing warnings of approaching storms. There are a number of the earliest maps that Abbe constructed in 1870 showing the current state of weather conditions over the country based on telegraphic reports of weather conditions in various locations throughout the nation. There are also copies of weather synopses and probabilities from 1872 that were issued in the forms of bulletins with the cooperation of the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce, the first regular undertaking of this kind in America and prototype of the present weather service. The series also contains papers collected by Abbe relating to the Abbe family genealogy, a work that for nearly sixty years was his recreation and hobby.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in seven series:
- Diaries, 1862-1889
- General Correspondence, 1850-1916
• Family Correspondence and Related Papers, circa 1858-1954
• Subject File, 1855-1884
• Speech and Article File
• Printed Matter
• Oversize, 1870
## Description of Series

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td><strong>Diaries, 1862-1889</strong>&lt;br&gt;Diaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arranged chronologically.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 2-9</td>
<td><strong>General Correspondence, 1850-1916</strong>&lt;br&gt;Letters received and copies of letters sent, including letters sent by Cleveland Abbe to various members of the Abbe family.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Arranged chronologically.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 10-12</td>
<td><strong>Family Correspondence and Related Papers, circa 1858-1954</strong>&lt;br&gt;Correspondence and related items such as diaries, medical case notebooks, radium photographs, genealogical material, and the manuscript of <em>Cleveland Abbe</em> by Truman Abbe.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arranged alphabetically by name of family member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 13-28</td>
<td><strong>Subject File, 1855-1884</strong>&lt;br&gt;Genealogical material assembled by Abbe, biographical material, financial records, lecture notebooks, meteorological maps, charts, synopses and forecasts, photographs, holograph astronomical papers and notes, and memorabilia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 29</td>
<td><strong>Speech and Article File</strong>&lt;br&gt;Drafts and printed copies of speeches, articles, reports and autobiographical writings.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Arranged by type of material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 30-31</td>
<td><strong>Printed Matter</strong>&lt;br&gt;Newspaper clippings and miscellaneous printed matter.</td>
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<td>Arranged by type of material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX OV 1</td>
<td><strong>Oversize, 1870</strong>&lt;br&gt;Photographs, weather maps, certificates, and awards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arranged by subject or type of material.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| BOX 1     | **Diaries, 1862-1889**  
Diaries.  
Arranged chronologically. |
| BOX 1     | 1862-1870, 1889 |
| BOX 2-9   | **General Correspondence, 1850-1916**  
Letters received and copies of letters sent, including letters sent by Cleveland Abbe to various members of the Abbe family.  
Arranged chronologically. |
| BOX 2     | 1850-1866, May 8 |
| BOX 3     | 1866, May 11-1868, Aug. 31 |
| BOX 4     | 1868, Sept. 2-1869, July 20 |
| BOX 5     | 1869, July 21-1870, May 31 |
| BOX 6     | 1870, June 6-1871, Dec. 27 |
| BOX 7     | 1872, 17 Jan.-1877, 29 Oct. |
| BOX 8     | 1878, Feb. 8-1893, June 26 |
| BOX 9     | 1893, June 27-1916 |
| BOX 9     | Undated |
| BOX 10-12 | **Family Correspondence and Related Papers, circa 1858-1954**  
Correspondence and related items such as diaries, medical case notebooks, radium photographs, genealogical material, and the manuscript of *Cleveland Abbe* by Truman Abbe.  
Arranged alphabetically by name of family member. |
| BOX 10    | Abbe, Charles |
| BOX 10    | Abbe, Cleveland (1872-1934) |
| BOX 10    | Abbe, Fanny |
| BOX 10    | Abbe, George |
| BOX 10    | Abbe, Robert |
| BOX 10    | Abbe, Truman |
| BOX 11    | Abbe, Truman |
| BOX 12    | Abbe, Truman |
| BOX 12    | Abbe, William C. |
| BOX 12    | Hooper, Mary L. |
| BOX 13-28 | **Subject File, 1855-1884**  
Genealogical material assembled by Abbe, biographical material, financial records, lecture notebooks, meteorological maps, charts, synopses and forecasts, photographs, holograph astronomical papers and notes, and memorabilia.  
Arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material. |
### Abbe family genealogy
- Box 13-14

### Biographical material
- Box 15

### Brown, Reginald C., papers
- Box 16

### Financial papers
- Box 16
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### Lecture notebooks, circa 1860s
- Box 17

### Meteorological data (statistics, barometric readings, and miscellaneous items), 1880-1884
- Box 18

### Photographs
- Box 19-21
- See also Oversize

### Scientific papers
- Box 22

### Astronomical material
- Box 22
- 1855-1861
- 1862-1868

### Miscellaneous notes
- Box 24

### Weather synopses and probabilities
- Box 25
- 1871
- 1872

### Weather maps, 1870
- Box 26
- See Oversize

### Certificates and awards
- Box 26
- See Oversize

### Miscellaneous
- Box 27-28

### Speech and Article File
- Drafts and printed copies of speeches, articles, reports and autobiographical writings.
- Arranged by type of material.

#### Speeches
- Box 29

#### Articles
- Box 29

#### Annual reports
- Box 29

#### Autobiographical writings
- Box 29

### Printed Matter
- Newspaper clippings and miscellaneous printed matter.
- Arranged by type of material.

#### General
- Box 30
- Box 31

#### Newspaper clippings
- Box 31

### Oversize, 1870
- Photographs, weather maps, certificates, and awards.
- Arranged by subject or type of material.

#### Subject File
- Photographs (Container 21)

#### Weather maps, 1870
- Box OV 2
- Weather maps, 1870 (Container 26)

#### Certificates and awards
- Box OV 3
- Certificates and awards (Container 26)