

Cleveland Abbe Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2010

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm73010025>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms010272>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2010
Revised 2013 August

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 Pierpont), 1834-1906--Correspondence.

Newcomb, Simon, 1835-1909--Correspondence.

Packard, A. S. (Alpheus Spring), 1839-1905--Correspondence.

Peirce, Benjamin, 1809-1880--Correspondence.

Rutherford, 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

Glavnai astronomicheskai observatorii (Pulkovo, Russia)

United States Coast Survey.

United States. Army. Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, 44th (1862-1863)

United States. Army. Signal Corps.

United States. Weather Bureau.

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

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

The Abbe Papers are described in the *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, vol. 22, no. 29 (22 July 1963), pages 357-358, and in Nathan Reingold, "A Good Place to Study Astronomy," *Library of Congress Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions*, vol. 20, no. 4 (September 1963), pages 211-217.

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

Date	Event
1838, Dec. 2	Born, New York, N.Y.
1857	B.A., College of the City of New York, New York, N.Y.

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
1916, Oct. 24	Died, Washington, D.C.

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

Container	Series
BOX 1	<p><u>Diaries, 1862-1889</u></p> <p>Diaries. Arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX 2-9	<p><u>General Correspondence, 1850-1916</u></p> <p>Letters received and copies of letters sent, including letters sent by Cleveland Abbe to various members of the Abbe family. Arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX 10-12	<p><u>Family Correspondence and Related Papers, circa 1858-1954</u></p> <p>Correspondence and related items such as diaries, medical case notebooks, radium photographs, genealogical material, and the manuscript of <i>Cleveland Abbe</i> by Truman Abbe. Arranged alphabetically by name of family member.</p>
BOX 13-28	<p><u>Subject File, 1855-1884</u></p> <p>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.</p>
BOX 29	<p><u>Speech and Article File</u></p> <p>Drafts and printed copies of speeches, articles, reports and autobiographical writings. Arranged by type of material.</p>
BOX 30-31	<p><u>Printed Matter</u></p> <p>Newspaper clippings and miscellaneous printed matter. Arranged by type of material.</p>
BOX OV 1	<p><u>Oversize, 1870</u></p> <p>Photographs, weather maps, certificates, and awards. Arranged by subject or type of material.</p>

Container List

Container	Contents
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 <i>Cleveland Abbe</i> 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.

Subject File, 1855-1884

Container	Contents
BOX 13-14	Abbe family genealogy
BOX 15	Biographical material
BOX 16	Brown, Reginald C., papers
BOX 16	Financial papers
BOX 17	Financial papers
BOX 17	Lecture notebooks, circa 1860s
BOX 18	Meteorological data (statistics, barometric readings, and miscellaneous items), 1880-1884
BOX 19-21	Photographs <i>See also Oversize</i>
BOX 22	Scientific papers
BOX 22	Astronomical material
BOX 22	1855-1861
BOX 23	1862-1868
BOX 24	Miscellaneous notes
BOX 25	Weather synopses and probabilities
BOX 25	1871
BOX 26	1872
BOX 26	Weather maps, 1870 <i>See Oversize</i>
BOX 26	Certificates and awards <i>See Oversize</i>
BOX 27-28	Miscellaneous
BOX 29	Speech and Article File Drafts and printed copies of speeches, articles, reports and autobiographical writings. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 29	Speeches
BOX 29	Articles
BOX 29	Annual reports
BOX 29	Autobiographical writings
BOX 30-31	Printed Matter Newspaper clippings and miscellaneous printed matter. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 30	General
BOX 31	General
BOX 31	Newspaper clippings
BOX OV 1	Oversize, 1870 Photographs, weather maps, certificates, and awards. Arranged by subject or type of material.
BOX OV 1	Subject File Photographs (Container 21)
BOX OV 2	Weather maps, 1870 (Container 26)
BOX OV 3	Certificates and awards (Container 26)