Collection Summary
Title: W J McGee Papers
Span Dates: 1880-1916
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1885-1905)
ID No.: MSS32128
Creator: McGee, W J, 1853-1912
Extent: 7,000 items
Extent: 31 containers plus 1 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/mm78032128
Summary: Geologist, anthropologist, and hydrologist. Correspondence, letterbooks, speeches, articles, scientific papers, lectures, notes, geological notebooks, scrapbooks, bibliographical notes, and memorabilia relating chiefly to McGee's career as a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey and as an ethnologist in charge of the Bureau of American Ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution. Includes correspondence when he was director of the anthropological and historical exhibit of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis.

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
Boas, Franz, 1858-1942--Correspondence.
Call, Richard Ellsworth, 1856-1917--Correspondence.
Colby, Frank Moore, 1865-1925--Correspondence.
Hay, Robert, 1835-1895--Correspondence.
Hayward, Florence, 1865--Correspondence.
Hill, Robert Thomas, 1858-1941--Correspondence.
Johnson, Jerome F.--Correspondence.
Johnson, Lawrence C.--Correspondence.
Johnson, Willard D.--Correspondence.
Langley, S. P. (Samuel Pierpont), 1834-1906--Correspondence.
McCowan, Samuel M.--Correspondence.
McGee, W J, 1853-1912.
Skiff, F. J. V. (Frederick James Volney), 1851-1921--Correspondence.
Starr, Frederick, 1858-1933--Correspondence.
Williams, George Huntington, 1856-1894--Correspondence.
Williams, Henry Shaler, 1847-1918--Correspondence.

Organizations
Geological Survey (U.S.)
International Geographical Congress.
Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904 : Saint Louis, Mo.)
Saint Louis Public Museum.

Subjects
Anthropology--Exhibitions.
Anthropology.
Coastal plains.
Ethnology--United States.
Exhibitions--Missouri--Saint Louis.
Provenance

The papers of W J McGee, geologist, anthropologist, and hydrologist, were given to the Library of Congress by his wife, Anita Newcomb McGee, between the years 1915-1950.

Processing History

The papers of W J McGee were arranged and described in 1962. The collection was expanded and revised in 2012.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of W J McGee is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of W J McGee 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, W J McGee Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1853, Apr. 17</td>
<td>Born near Farley, Iowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878-1882</td>
<td>Made surveys of the geology of Iowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Joined the United States Geological Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-1894</td>
<td>Surveyed the geology of the Atlantic Coastal Plain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1888 Married Anita Newcomb (died 1940)
1893 Became anthropologist in charge, Bureau of American Ethnology
1903-1904 In charge of the anthropological and historical exhibit, Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis, Mo.
Appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt to the Inland Waterways Commission
Appointed by the secretary of agriculture to take charge of the study of the water resources of the United States.
1912, Sept. 4 Died, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note
The papers of W J McGee (1853-1912) include correspondence, letterbooks, speeches, articles, and lectures, notes, notebooks, scrapbooks, bibliographical notes, and memorabilia spanning the years 1880-1916, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1885-1905. Included are numerous copies of McGee's letters. The focus is on his career as geologist with the United States Geological Survey and ethnologist in charge in the Bureau of American Ethnology. At the geological survey he was given charge of the branch dealing with the geology of the Atlantic Coastal Plain, and during 1883-1894 he conducted important studies in this area. The collection is organized into seven series: General Correspondence, Special Correspondence, Letterbooks, Articles and Notes, Miscellany, Scrapbooks, and Oversize.

The Special Correspondence consists of copies of letters sent when McGee was director of the anthropological and historical exhibit of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in Saint Louis in 1904. Also documented in the collection is his work as director of the Saint Louis Public Museum and his role in 1904 as chairman of the committee of the International Geographical Congress in Washington, D.C.


Arrangement of the Papers
This collection is arranged in seven series:
- General Correspondence, 1880-1916
- Special Correspondence, 1903-1904
- Letterbooks, 1885-1907
- Articles and Notes, 1885-1910
- Miscellany, 1890-1910
- Scrapbooks, 1889-1912
- Oversize, 1903-1905
Description of Series

Container    Series

BOX 1-13     General Correspondence, 1880-1916
             Letters sent and received.
             Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.

BOX 14-20    Special Correspondence, 1903-1904
             Correspondence relating to the anthropological and historical exhibit at the Louisiana Purchase
             Exposition, Saint Louis, Mo.
             Arranged chronologically.

BOX 21-26    Letterbooks, 1885-1907
             Copies of letters sent.
             Arranged chronologically by first date of volume.

BOX 27-29    Articles and Notes, 1885-1910
             Printed, typewritten and handwritten copies of speeches, articles, remarks and press releases;
             also ethnological notebooks.
             Arranged by type of material.

BOX 30       Miscellany, 1890-1910
             News clippings, calling cards, invitations, and unidentified items.

BOX 31       Scrapbooks, 1889-1912
             Clippings and memorabilia mounted in scrapbooks.
             Arranged by volume.

BOX OV 1    Oversize, 1903-1905
             Scrapbook relating to Louisiana Purchase Exhibition and the establishment of a western
             expansion museum in Saint Louis. Described according to the series and container from
             which it was removed.
## Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BOX 1-13  | **General Correspondence, 1880-1916**  
|           | Letters sent and received.  
|           | Arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent. |
| BOX 1     | A-B      |
| BOX 2     | C-D      |
| BOX 3     | E-Gi     |
| BOX 4     | Go-Haw   |
| BOX 5     | Hay-He   |
| BOX 6     | Hi-I     |
| BOX 7     | J-Le     |
| BOX 8     | Li-Ma    |
| BOX 9     | Me-Pl    |
| BOX 10    | Po-R     |
| BOX 11    | Sa-Sl    |
| BOX 12    | Sm-V     |
| BOX 13    | W-Z      |
| BOX 14-20 | **Special Correspondence, 1903-1904**  
|           | Correspondence relating to the anthropological and historical exhibit at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, Saint Louis, Mo.  
|           | Arranged chronologically. |
| BOX 14    | 1903     |
| BOX 15    | 1903-1904|
| BOX 16    | 1903-1904|
| BOX 17    | 1903-1904|
| BOX 18    | 1904     |
| BOX 19    | 1904     |
| BOX 20    | 1904     |
| BOX 21-26 | **Letterbooks, 1885-1907**  
|           | Copies of letters sent.  
<p>|           | Arranged chronologically by first date of volume. |
| BOX 21    | 1885, Jan.-1887, Jan. |
| BOX 22    | 1887, Jan.-1888, Nov. |
| BOX 23    | 1888, May-1891, Mar. |
| BOX 24    | 1891, Oct.-1893, June |
| BOX 25    | 1905, Sept.-1906, Mar |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 26</td>
<td>1906, Apr.-1907, Apr.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| BOX 27-29 | **Articles and Notes, 1885-1910**  
Printed, typewritten and handwritten copies of speeches, articles, remarks and press releases;  
also ethnological notebooks.  
Arranged by type of material. |
| BOX 27    | Articles concerning anthropology, the Seriland Expedition of 1895, and bibliographical notes |
| BOX 28    | Papers concerning the Bureau of Ethnology and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, Saint Louis, Mo. |
| BOX 29    | Notebooks used during geological and ethnological surveys |
| BOX 30    | **Miscellany, 1890-1910**  
News clippings, calling cards, invitations, and unidentified items. |
| BOX 30    | Bills and receipts, news clippings, calling cards, and invitations, 1890-1910 |
| BOX 31    | **Scrapbooks, 1889-1912**  
Clippings and memorabilia mounted in scrapbooks.  
Arranged by volume. |
| BOX 31    | News clippings and memorabilia |
| BOX 31    | General, 1889-1912 |
| BOX 31    | Louisiana Purchase Exposition, Saint Louis, Mo., 1903-1905 [See Oversize] |
| BOX OV 1  | **Oversize, 1903-1905**  
Scrapbook relating to Louisiana Purchase Exhibition and the establishment of a western expansion museum in Saint Louis. Described according to the series and container from which it was removed. |
| BOX OV 1  | Scrapbooks |
| BOX OV 1  | News clippings and memorabilia |
| BOX OV 1  | Louisiana Purchase Exposition, Saint Louis, Mo., 1903-1905 (Container 31) |