

Simon Newcomb Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2014

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm79034629>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms014072>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2014

Collection Summary

Title: Simon Newcomb Papers

Span Dates: 1813-1949

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1865-1909)

ID No.: MSS34629

Creator: Newcomb, Simon, 1835-1909

Extent: 46,000 items

Extent: 145 containers plus 8 oversize

Extent: 61.2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm79034629>

Summary: Astronomer, mathematician, and economist. Correspondence, diaries, commonplace books, drafts of speeches, articles, reviews, and books, financial papers, genealogical papers, charts, tables, computations, photos, and printed matter reflecting Newcomb's personal and family life, his work in mathematics and astronomy, his writing of articles for encyclopedias and other publications, and his work as president of the International Congress of Arts and Sciences.

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

Barnard, Edward Emerson, 1857-1923--Correspondence.
Bell, Alexander Graham, 1847-1922--Correspondence.
Boss, Lewis, 1846-1912--Correspondence.
Burnham, S. W. (Sherburne Wesley), 1838-1921--Correspondence.
Campbell, William Wallace, 1862-1938--Correspondence.
Cattell, James McKeen, 1860-1944--Correspondence.
Davidson, George, 1825-1911--Correspondence.
Gill, David, 1843-1914--Correspondence.
Gilman, Daniel C. (Daniel Coit), 1831-1908--Correspondence.
Gould, Benjamin Apthorp, 1824-1896--Correspondence.
Hale, George Ellery, 1868-1938--Correspondence.
Hall, Asaph, III, 1829-1907--Correspondence.
Hill, George William, 1838-1914--Correspondence.
Holden, Edward S. (Edward Singleton), 1846-1914--Correspondence.
Langley, S. P. (Samuel Pierpont), 1834-1906--Correspondence.
Marsh, Othniel Charles, 1831-1899--Correspondence.
Newcomb family.
Newcomb, Mary Hassler 1840-1921--Correspondence.
Newcomb, Simon, 1835-1909.
Peirce, Benjamin, 1809-1880--Correspondence.
Pickering, Edward C. (Edward Charles), 1846-1919--Correspondence.
See, T. J. J., 1866-1962--Correspondence.
Struve, Otto, 1819-1905--Correspondence.
Walcott, Charles D. (Charles Doolittle), 1850-1927--Correspondence.
Wright, Carroll D. (Carroll Davidson), 1840-1909--Correspondence.

Organizations

Alvan Clark & Sons--Correspondence.
Carnegie Institution of Washington--Correspondence.
Congress of Arts and Science (1904 : Saint Louis, Mo.)
National Academy of Sciences (U.S.)--Correspondence.

Smithsonian Institution--Correspondence.

Subjects

Arts--Congresses.
Astronomy.
Mathematics.
Science--Congresses.

Titles

Science--Correspondence.

Occupations

Astronomers.
Economists.
Mathematicians.

Provenance

The papers of Simon Newcomb, astronomer, mathematician and economist, were deposited in the Library of Congress in 1909 by his daughter and literary executor, Anita Newcomb McGee. In 1921, she converted the deposit to a gift.

Processing History

The papers of Simon Newcomb were described and arranged in 1963. The finding aid was revised in 2014.

Additional Guides

A working index of correspondents compiled when the Newcomb Papers were processed is available online as a [PDF](#) document.

Transfers

Some photographs have been transferred to the Library's Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as part of the Simon Newcomb Papers.

Related Material

Related collections in the Manuscript Division include the papers Newcomb's daughter, [Anita Newcomb McGee](#) .

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Simon Newcomb 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, Simon Newcomb Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1835, Mar. 12	Born, Wallace, Nova Scotia
1853	Came to the United States
1854	Began teaching career, Massey's Cross Roads, Kent Co., Md.
1855	First publication, a letter in <i>The National Intelligencer</i> , Washington, D. C.
1857	Appointed computer in Nautical Almanac office, Cambridge, Mass
1858	B.S., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1861	Commissioned professor of mathematics, United States Navy
1877	Appointed superintendent, American Ephemeris and Nautical Almanac Office
1884	Appointed professor of mathematics and astronomy, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.
1897	Retired from navy and as superintendent of the American Ephemeris and Nautical Almanac
1903-1904	President, International Congress of Arts and Sciences, Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis, Mo.
1909, July 11	Died, Washington, D. C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Simon Newcomb (1835-1909) span the years 1813-1949, but the greater part of the material is dated between 1865 and 1909. The collection consists of nine series: [Diaries and Commonplace Books](#); [Letterbooks](#); [Letter Registers](#); [Family Correspondence](#); [General Correspondence](#); [Subject File](#); [Speech, Article, and Book File](#); [Miscellany](#), and [Oversize](#).

The [General Correspondence](#) is organized into alphabetical and chronological files, with the alphabetical file consisting primarily of letters received and the chronological file of letters sent and received. Treated are professional and scientific interests, including Newcomb's work as president of the International Congress of Arts and Sciences which met at St. Louis in 1904. The [Subject File](#) contains additional materials relating to the International Congress of Arts and Science as well as files pertaining to the Newcomb family genealogy, Simon's work in mathematics and astronomy, and to his writing and editing of articles for encyclopedias.

Contained in the [Speech, Article, and Book File](#) are drafts and printed copies of speeches, lectures, articles, books, essays, editorials, and reviews by Newcomb on personal and professional topics of interest.

Also in the collection are [Diaries and Commonplace Books](#) compiled by Newcomb, his wife, Mary Hassler Newcomb, and numerous family letters dated between 1858 and 1936. The largest portion of the [Family Correspondence](#) consists of letters exchanged between Newcomb and his wife reflecting on his personal, family, and professional life.

Rounding out the papers are financial records, biographical matter, computations, material on occultations, photographs, and printed material.

Prominent correspondents include Edward Emerson Barnard, Alexander Graham Bell, Lewis Boss, S.W. Burnham, William Wallace Campbell, James McKeen Cattell, George Davidson, David Gill, Daniel C. Gilman, Benjamin Apthorp Gould, George Ellery Hale, Asaph Hall, George William Hill, Edward S. Holden, S.P. Langley, Othniel Charles Marsh, Benjamin Peirce, Edward C. Pickering, T.J.J. See, Otto Struve, Charles D. Walcott, and Carroll D. Wright. There is also correspondence with the Carnegie Institute of Washington, Alvan H. Clark & Sons, National Academy of Sciences, Science magazine, and the Smithsonian Institution.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in nine series:

- [Diaries and Commonplace Books, 1852-1918](#)
- [Letterbooks, 1862-1898](#)
- [Letter Registers, 1903-1909](#)
- [Family Correspondence, 1855-1949](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1854-1936](#)
- [Subject File](#)
- [Speech, Article, and Book File, 1859-1910](#)
- [Miscellany, 1813-1914](#)
- [Oversize](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-3	<u>Diaries and Commonplace Books, 1852-1918</u> Organized by type of material and arranged chronologically therein.
BOX 4-6	<u>Letterbooks, 1862-1898</u> Bound volumes containing copies of letters sent. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 7	<u>Letter Registers, 1903-1909</u> Five volumes. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 8-13	<u>Family Correspondence, 1855-1949</u> Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically by year.
BOX 14-55	<u>General Correspondence, 1854-1936</u> Letters sent and received by Newcomb. Arranged in an alphabetical file of letters sent and a chronological file of letters sent and received.
BOX 56-86	<u>Subject File</u> Correspondence, mathematical, meteorological, and astronomical charts, tables, and computations, as well as drafts and printed copies of encyclopedia articles. Organized alphabetically by topic.
BOX 87-114	<u>Speech, Article, and Book File, 1859-1910</u> Handwritten, typewritten, and printed copies of addresses, speeches, lectures articles, books, essays, editorials, reviews, and miscellaneous writings. Organized by type of writing.
BOX 115-145	<u>Miscellany, 1813-1914</u> Biographical, financial, bibliographical, and printed matter as well as photographs, scrapbooks, and other miscellaneous material. Arranged by type of material with general miscellany filed at the end.
BOX OV 1-OV 8	<u>Oversize</u> Computations, tables, charts, and blueprints. Organized by type of material.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-3	Diaries and Commonplace Books, 1852-1918 Organized by type of material and arranged chronologically therein.
BOX 1	Diaries
BOX 1	1855-1871 (4 folders)
BOX 2	1894-1914, undated (4 folders)
BOX 2	Commonplace books
BOX 2	1857-1914, undated (4 folders)
BOX 3	1852-1918 (2 folders and 14 vols.)
BOX 4-6	Letterbooks, 1862-1898 Bound volumes containing copies of letters sent. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 4	1862-1880 (3 vols.)
BOX 5	1880-1884 (3 vols.)
BOX 6	1884-1898 (4 vols.)
BOX 7	Letter Registers, 1903-1909 Five volumes. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 7	1903-1909 (5 vols.)
BOX 8-13	Family Correspondence, 1855-1949 Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically by year.
BOX 8	Simon Newcomb to Mary Hassler and her brother, 1862-1863 (2 folders)
BOX 8	General
BOX 8	1855-1872 (13 folders)
BOX 9	1873-1889 (21 folders)

Family Correspondence, 1855-1949

Container	Contents
BOX 10	1890-1900 (14 folders)
BOX 11	1901-1923 (18 folders)
BOX 12	1924-1949 (5 folders)
BOX 12	Undated (7 folders)
BOX 13	(4 folders)
BOX 14-55	General Correspondence, 1854-1936 Letters sent and received by Newcomb. Arranged in an alphabetical file of letters sent and a chronological file of letters sent and received.
BOX 14	Alphabetical file of letters received
BOX 14	Abbot-Ammen (11 folders)
BOX 15	Anderegg-Barnard (12 folders)
BOX 16	Barth-Boss (9 folders)
BOX 17	Boston Public Library-Brown, E. W. (8 folders)
BOX 18	Brown, Melville C.-Carus (8 folders)
BOX 19	Case-Clough, Anne (7 folders)
BOX 20	Clough, H. W.-Deisle (10 folders)
BOX 21	Delmar-Etrel (11 folders)
BOX 22	Evans- Garfield, James A. (10 folders)
BOX 23	Garfield, James R.-Gillet (7 folders)
BOX 24	Gillets-Hage (8 folders)
BOX 25	Hagner-Harvard College (7 folders)
BOX 26	Hassard-Hogg (7 folders)
BOX 27	Holcombe-Iddings (9 folders)
BOX 28	Illes-Klein (11 folders)
BOX 29	Knap-Library of Congress (7 folders)

General Correspondence, 1854-1936

Container	Contents
BOX 30	Lichneckerl-McNeill (8 folders)
BOX 31	Macomber-Meyer (7 folders)
BOX 32	Meyer-Muensterberg, Hugo (12 folders)
BOX 33	Muensterberg, Hugo-Noble, George H. (99 folders)
BOX 34	Noble, William-Perrier (10 folders)
BOX 35	Perrine-Prescott (7 folders)
BOX 36	President of the U.S.-Remsen (8 folders)
BOX 37	Renouf-Rogers, Howard J. (11 folders)
BOX 38	Rogers, William B.- <i>Scientific American</i> (9 folders)
BOX 39	Scott-Smith, Justin H. (9 folders)
BOX 40	Smith, Obertin-Struve (9 folders)
BOX 41	Study-Tozzer (10 folders)
BOX 42	Tracey-Weaver (10 folders)
BOX 43	Webb-Woodward, R. S. (8 folders)
BOX 44	Woodward, William C.-Z, unidentified (4 folders)
BOX 45	Chronological file of letters sent and received
BOX 45	1856-1879
BOX 45	1854-1880 (20 folders)
BOX 46	1880-1885 (11 folders)
BOX 47	1886-1898 (18 folders)
BOX 48	1898-1903 (12 folders)
BOX 49	1903-1904, Feb. (12 folders)
BOX 50	1904, Feb.-June (11 folders)
BOX 51	1904, June-Dec. (9 folders)
BOX 52	1905-1906 (12 folders)

General Correspondence, 1854-1936

Container	Contents
BOX 53	1907-1911 (11 folders)
BOX 54	1912-1936 (10 folders)
BOX 54	Undated (5 folders)
BOX 55	(2 folders)
BOX 55	Telegrams, 1878-1909, undated
BOX 55	Shorthand notebook, undated
BOX 56-86	Subject File Correspondence, mathematical, meteorological, and astronomical charts, tables, and computations, as well as drafts and printed copies of encyclopedia articles. Organized alphabetically by topic.
BOX 56	Computations (2 folders and 5 vols.)
BOX 57	Eclipses (3 folders)
BOX 57	Electricity and light (4 folders)
BOX 58	<i>Encyclopedia Americana</i>
BOX 58	<i>Encyclopedia Britannica</i> (5 folders)
BOX 59	(7 folders and packets)
BOX 59	Several loose items
BOX 59	<i>Johnson's Cyclopaedia</i>
BOX 60	Genealogy (7 folders)
BOX 60	Hansen's tables (2 folders)
BOX 61	Biographical materials (2 folders)
BOX 61	Genealogy (4 folders)
BOX 62	(4 folders)
BOX 63	(7 folders)
BOX 64	(8 folders)
BOX 64	Hansen's tables (10 folders)
BOX 65	Mars and sun (6 vols.)
BOX 66	Mathematics (6 folders)
BOX 67	(20 folders)
BOX 68	(27 folders)
BOX 69	(14 folders)
BOX 70	(4 folders)
BOX 71	(11 folders)

Subject File

Container

Contents

BOX 72	Meteorological data (4 folders)
BOX 73	Moon (6 folders)
BOX 74	(2 folders)
BOX 75	(3 folders)
BOX 76	(2 folders)
BOX 77	(2 folders)
BOX 78	(3 folders)
BOX 79	Naval Observatory (5 folders)
BOX 80	St. Louis exposition, Louisiana Purchase Exposition, 1904 (3 folders)
BOX 81	(5 folders)
BOX 82	(3 folders)
BOX 83	Stars
BOX 83	Jupiter, Neptune, Uranus (1 folder)
BOX 84	(5 folders)
BOX 85	(4 folders)
BOX 86	Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus (4 folders)
BOX 87-114	Speech, Article, and Book File, 1859-1910 Handwritten, typewritten, and printed copies of addresses, speeches, lectures articles, books, essays, editorials, reviews, and miscellaneous writings. Organized by type of writing.
BOX 87	Speeches, 1874-1910, undated (27 folders)
BOX 88	Lectures (17 folders)
BOX 89	Articles
BOX 89	Chronological file
BOX 89	1859-1879 (27 folders)
BOX 90	1880-1888 (24 folders)
BOX 91	1890-1899 (33 folders)
BOX 92	1900-1905 (39 folders)
BOX 93	1906-1909 (20 folders)
BOX 94	Alphabetical file
BOX 94	A-L (36 folders)
BOX 95	M-P (26 folders)

Speech, Article, and Book File, 1859-1910

Container	Contents
BOX 96	R-W (21 folders)
BOX 97	Essays (3 folders)
BOX 97	Editorials
BOX 97	Notes (4 folders)
BOX 97	Obituary
BOX 97	Papers (2 folders)
BOX 97	Reports (15 folders)
BOX 98	Book File
BOX 98	<i>Action of the Planets on the Moon</i> (3 folders)
BOX 98	“A Study of Correlations among Terrestrial Temperatures as Indicating Fluctuations in the Sun’s Thermal Radiation,” 1907
BOX 98	<i>Astronomy for Everybody</i> (2 folders)
BOX 99	(7 folders)
BOX 99	<i>Astronomy for Schools</i> (8 folders)
BOX 100	<i>Autobiography of My Youth</i>
BOX 100	<i>Calculus</i>
BOX 100	<i>Cosmical Physics and Astronomical Optics</i>
BOX 100	<i>Education</i>
BOX 101	<i>George Eggle: A Story of a Life</i>
BOX 101	<i>His Wisdom the Defender or the Advent of the Golden Age</i>
BOX 101	<i>Least Squares</i>
BOX 101	<i>Populäre astronomie by H. C. Vogel, 1892</i>
BOX 102	<i>Popular Astronomy</i> (13 folders)
BOX 103	(7 folders)
BOX 104	<i>Religious Autobiography</i>
BOX 104	<i>Reminiscences of an Astronomer</i> (4 folders)
BOX 105	<i>Side-Lights of Astronomy</i>
BOX 105	<i>Spherical Astronomy</i> (5 folders)
BOX 106	(5 folders)
BOX 107	(6 folders)
BOX 108	<i>Theory of Probable Interference</i>
BOX 108	<i>Up the Saskatchewan</i>
BOX 109	Miscellaneous pages (4 folders)
BOX 109	“Introduction to A Textbook of Physics”
BOX 109	Reviews (13 folders)

Speech, Article, and Book File, 1859-1910

Container

Contents

BOX 110	Miscellaneous writings (9 folders)
BOX 111	(21 folders)
BOX 112	(12 folders)
BOX 113	(1 folder)
BOX 114	(7 folders)
BOX 115-145	Miscellany, 1813-1914 Biographical, financial, bibliographical, and printed matter as well as photographs, scrapbooks, and other miscellaneous material. Arranged by type of material with general miscellany filed at the end.
BOX 115	Account books
BOX 115	Bibliographical material (5 folders)
BOX 116	Bills, receipts, check stubs, and financial miscellany (3 folders)
BOX 117	(4 folders)
BOX 118	(4 folders)
BOX 119	Bills and receipts, 1870-1914 (36 folders)
BOX 120	(8 folders)
BOX 121	(5 folders)
BOX 122	(3 folders)
BOX 123	(2 folders)
BOX 123	Journal, 1860-1903
BOX 124	Biographical material (8 folders)
BOX 125	(7 folders)
BOX 125	Clippings and printed matter
BOX 126	Family Bible
BOX 127	Invitations and cards (4 folders)
BOX 128	(3 folders)
BOX 129	(3 folders)
BOX 130	(4 folders)
BOX 131	(3 folders)
BOX 132	(5 folders)
BOX 133	(3 folders)
BOX 134	(3 folders)
BOX 135	Newspaper clippings (2 folders)
BOX 135	Photographs (2 folders)
BOX 135	Printed matter (3 folders)
BOX 136	(4 folders)
BOX 137	<i>Memoirs of the Life of David Rittenhouse</i> , 1813
BOX 137	<i>Smith's Illustrated Astronomy</i> , 1862

Miscellany, 1813-1914

Container	Contents
BOX 138	Scrapbook
BOX 138	Notebooks (10 vols.)
BOX 139	General correspondence
BOX 139	A-Ch (6 folders)
BOX 140	Co-Me (12 folders)
BOX 141	Mf-R (9 folders)
BOX 142	S-W (8 folders)
BOX 143	Unidentified (3 folders)
BOX 144	(4 folders)
BOX 145	(8 folders)
BOX OV 1-OV 8	Oversize Computations, tables, charts, and blueprints. Organized by type of material.
BOX OV 1-OV 6	Computations and occultations
BOX OV 7	Celestial charts
BOX OV 7	Faye's Comet computations
BOX OV 7	Vocabulary charts of Mohegan language
BOX OV 7	Blueprints of Newcomb house
BOX OV 8	Temperature readings
BOX OV 8	Miscellaneous computations