William Jones Rhees Correspondence
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2021

Contact information: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact

Catalog Record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2018086268

Additional search options available at: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms020021

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff
Finding aid encoded by Manuscript Division staff, 2020
Collection Summary

Title: William Jones Rhees Correspondence
Inclusive Dates: 1856-1876
Bulk Dates: 1861
ID no.: MSS86268
Creator: Rhees, William Jones, 1830-1907
Extent: 140 items
Extent: 1 container
Extent: .2 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm2018086268

Summary: Chief clerk of the Smithsonian Institution. Correspondence to wife Laura O. Clarke Rhees on his Christian beliefs, their marriage and family, life in Washington, D.C., his work at the Smithsonian Institution, T. S. C. Lowe and balloon ascensions on The Mall in Washington, D.C., and the American Civil War.

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
Henry, Joseph, 1797-1878.
Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865.
Lowe, T. S. C. (Thaddeus Sobieski Coulincourt), 1832-1913.
Rhees family.
Rhees, Laura O. Clarke, (Laura Oliver Clarke), 1835-1864--Correspondence.
Rhees, William Jones, 1830-1907.

Organizations
Smithsonian Institution.
United States. Army--Military life.
United States. Army.

Subjects
Ballooning--Washington (D.C.)
Balloons.
Cabinet officers z United States.
Christianity.
Museums--United States.
Museums--Washington (D.C.)
Slavery.

Places
Mall, The (Washington, D.C.)
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
United States--Politics and government--19th century.
Washington (D.C.)--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
Washington (D.C.)--Social life and customs.

Titles
William Jones Rhees papers

Occupations
Clerks, Smithsonian Institution.
Acquisition Information

The papers of William Jones Rhees were given to the Library of Congress by Melinda Berry in 2018.

Processing History

The papers of William Jones Rhees were arranged and described by Elizabeth Livesey in 2020.

Other Repositories

Other papers of William Jones Rhees can be found in the Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., and the Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Related Material

Related collections in the Manuscript Division include the records of the Young Men’s Christian Association (Washington, D.C.), 1852-1903 (see https://lccn.loc.gov/mm81047684).

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of William Jones Rhees are open to research. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, William Jones Rhees Correspondence, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>Clerk, Census Office of the Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>Cofounder, Young Men’s Christian Association of Washington, D.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853-1855</td>
<td>General assistant and personal secretary to Joseph Henry, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855-1891</td>
<td>Chief clerk, Smithsonian Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Married Laura Oliver Clarke (died 1864)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Married Romenia F. Ellis (died 1923)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891-1907</td>
<td>Keeper of the Archives, Smithsonian Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907, March 17</td>
<td>Died, Washington, D.C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scope and Content Note

The papers of William Jones Rhees (1830-1907) span the years 1856-1876, with the bulk of the material from 1861. The collection primarily comprises correspondence sent from Rhees to his first wife Laura O. Clarke Rhees. Rhees’s letters detail his personal affairs, family, Christian values, political views, and work as chief clerk of the Smithsonian Institution. Specific topics include his meetings with, and opinions of, first Smithsonian secretary, Joseph Henry, as well as members of President Abraham Lincoln’s cabinet and other politicians. Other letters describe his observations of the outbreak of the American Civil War and address troop activities, camps and soldiers’ behavior in and around Washington, D.C., T. S. C. Lowe's balloon ascensions on the National Mall, as well as his support for the Union and for the abolition of slavery.

Arrangement of the Papers

Materials are arranged alphabetically by type of material, with correspondence arranged chronologically thereunder.
## Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Correspondence, 1856-1861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6 folders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Envelope addressed to daughter Fannie, 1876</td>
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