William Henry Pettee Papers: Finding Aid

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The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens
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Overview of the Collection
Title: William Henry Pettee Papers
Dates (inclusive): 1847-1898
Bulk dates: 1865-1878
Collection Number: mssPettee papers
Extent: 839 pieces in 4 boxes and 1 roll
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Manuscripts Department
1151 Oxford Road
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Abstract: This collection contains the papers of American geologist and professor of mining engineering William Henry Pettee (1838-1904) consisting primarily of letters dating from 1865 to 1878. The main subjects are the California State Geological Survey; geologist Josiah Dwight Whitney (1819-1896); Colorado; and Freiberg, Germany.
Language: English.
Access
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item]. William Henry Pettee Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
Provenance
Removed or Separated Material
Photographs of Europe and of the Cheyenne and Ute Indians have been transferred to the Photo Archives of the Huntington Library (see photPF 7261-7289 and photPF 21557-21567).
Biographical Note
Geologist and professor of mining engineering William Henry Pettee (1838-1904) was born in Massachusetts, the son of Otis Pettee who was a manufacturer of cotton goods, inventor of cotton milling machinery, and president of the Charles River Railroad. William graduated from Harvard with a degree in classical studies in 1861. He spent the next three years studying engineering at Lawrence Scientific School (later part of Harvard University), during which time he also assisted in teaching chemistry. He continued his graduate studies from 1865 to 1868 in Freiberg, Saxony, at the Royal Mining Academy and visited mining areas throughout northern Europe. On his return to Cambridge in 1869 he became an instructor in the new school of mines which Harvard had requested Josiah D. Whitney to found. During the summer of 1869 Pettee went with Whitney as part of the South Park Topographical Expedition to do field work in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. In 1870-71 Pettee was given leave to become an assistant to Whitney on the California State Geological Survey. Pettee is particularly known for his barometric determination of altitude and his studies of the beds of gold-bearing gravels. His work led to the publication of Whitney's book **Auriferous Gravels of the Sierra Nevada of California** and to **Contributions to Barometric Hypsometry**. Pettee did his field work in the northeastern part of the state (mainly the region of the Yuba and Feather Rivers) in 1870 then went to the Geological Survey office in San Francisco in 1871 for the reduction and arrangement of the summer's observations. He returned to Cambridge and served as Assistant Professor of Mining from 1871 to 1875. When the University of Michigan established its School of Mines, he was invited to become Professor of Economic Geology and Mining Engineering; he continued at the University of Michigan for the next 29 years. In 1879 he returned to California to complete his observations on the auriferous gravels so they could be included in Whitney's 1880 publication. Pettee did the behind-the-scenes research for many publications and was active in the American Institute of Mining Engineers, American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Philosophical Society and other learned
organizations.

Scope and Content
The collection consists primarily of letters, some of which were written by William Henry Pettee from California (Yuba and Feather River areas and San Francisco, 1870-71), from Colorado (South Park Topographical Expedition, 1869), and from Freiberg while studying at the Royal Academy of Mining (1865-68). The main subjects are the California State Geological Survey; Josiah Dwight Whitney; Colorado; and Freiberg.

A significant portion of the collection consists of correspondence addressed to Josiah Dwight Whitney from various persons (520 letters, including those from William Henry Pettee to Whitney).


The collection also contains some photographs of William Henry Pettee and other members of the Pettee family, members of the California State Geological Survey, and images of Europe during the years Pettee was studying in Freiberg.

The collection falls into four main groupings:


Some notable items include:

- Pettee, William Henry. To Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1870, 1871, 1879. Letters tell of field work in California.
- Pettee, William Henry. To Matilda (Sherman) Pettee. 1871, Feb. 26 and June 11. These letters tell of visits to the home of J. Ross Browne for the wedding of Pettee’s co-worker Alfred Craven to Browne’s daughter.
- Gabb, William More. To Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878 (5 letters). Final letters from the young paleontologist before his sudden death.

Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically by author, followed by photographs and oversize materials.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library’s Online Catalog.

Subjects
Pettee, William Henry, 1838-1904.
Whitney, J. D. (Josiah Dwight), 1819-1896.
Geological Survey of California.
Königliche Bergakademie (Freiberg, Germany)
Geological surveys -- California -- History -- Sources.
Geological surveys -- Colorado -- History -- Sources.
Geologists -- United States -- Correspondence.
Geology -- Rocky Mountains.
Geology -- Sierra Nevada (Calif. and Nev.)
Gold mines and mining -- Colorado -- South Park.
Mines and mineral resources -- California.
Mines and mineral resources -- Rocky Mountains.
Freiburg im Breisgau (Germany)
Sierra Nevada (Calif. and Nev.)
South Park (Colo.)

Forms/Genres
Letters (correspondence) -- California -- 19th century.
Letters (correspondence) -- Colorado -- 19th century.
Letters (correspondence) -- Germany -- 19th century.

Alternate Authors
Box 1
A-Pettee, William H. (misc. manuscripts)
Folder 1
Agassiz, Alexander. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Apr. 22
Folder 2
Angell, James Burnill. 3 letters to William Henry Pettee. 1875
Folder 3
Baird, Spencer Fullerton. 3 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 4
Bates, H. W. 1 letter to William Henry Pettee. 1874, Feb. 26
Folder 5
Belcher, John A. 2 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 6
Bien, Julius. 4 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 7
Boon, E. P. 3 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 8
Brewer, William Henry. 4 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 9
Broadhead, Garland Carr. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Jan. 5
Folder 10
Brush, George Jarvis. 2 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 11
Carr, Lucien. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Feb. 13
Folder 12
Craven, Alfred. 3 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 13
Cutter, Charles Ammi. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Mar. 18
Folder 14
Dana, James Dwight. 2 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 15
Danforth, Allen. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Jan. 30
Folder 16
Denton, William. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Feb. 28
Folder 17
Desor, E. 2 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 18
Drown, Thomas Messinger. 3 letters to William Henry Pettee. 1877-1881
Folder 19
Drown, Thomas Messinger. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Feb. 28
Folder 20
Dunbar, Charles Franklin. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, June 6
Folder 21
Eliot, Charles Dwight. 3 letters to William Henry Pettee. 1891-1893
Folder 22
Emmons, Samuel Franklin. 2 letters to William Henry Pettee. 1876-1880
Folder 23
Engelhardt, F. E. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Feb. 25
Folder 24
Frazier, B. W. 1 letter to Thomas Messinger Drown. 1881, Jan. 7
Folder 24a
Fries, August. 2 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 25
Gabb, William More. 5 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 26
Garrison, Wendell Phillips. 4 letters to William Henry Pettee. 1884-1890
Folder 27
Garrison, Wendell Phillips. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, May 28
Folder 28
Goodale, George Lincoln. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Jan. 4
Folder 29
Goodyear, Watson Andrews. 6 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 30
Hall, James. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Mar. 15
Folder 31
Harris, C. M. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Feb. 7
Folder 32
Hastings, Serranus Clinton. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Mar. 12
Folder 33
Hayden, Ferdinand Vandiveer. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, May 20
Folder 34
Heard, John T. 2 letters to Henry Billings. 1868
Folder 35
Herrmann, Ch. W. A. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Jan.
Folder 36
Hoffmann, Charles Francis. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Jan. 15
Folder 37
Hooper, E. W. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Mar. 2
Folder 38
Houghton (H.O.) & Co. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Jan. 23
Folder 39
Isawa, S. 3 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 40
Jack, Robert L. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Apr. 3
Folder 41
Kerr, Washington Caruthers. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1876, Apr. 8
Folder 42
Lamberton, Robert Alexander. 1 letter to William Henry Pettee. 1880, Nov. 18
Folder 43
Lane, H. B. 2 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 44
Langley, Samuel Pierpont. 1 letter to William Henry Pettee. 1888, Jan. 13
Folder 45
Leckie, Robert G. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Apr. 16
Folder 46
Lesquereux, Leo. 8 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 47  Littlehale, James. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, May 15
Folder 48  Macfarlane, James. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, May 10
Folder 49  Pach, G. W. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, June 4
Folder 50  Packard, Alpheus Spring. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Jan. 18
Folder 51  Peirce, James Mills. 1 letter to Asa Gray. 1878, June 3
Folder 52  Perkins, Frederic Beecher. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. c.1878
Folder 53  Pettee, Matilda (Sherman). 27 letters to William Henry Pettee. 1870-1871
Folder 54  Pettee, Otis, Estate of. Papers re estate settlement. 4 items. 1847-1860
Folder 55  Pettee, William Henry. Accounts, etc. from Germany. 3 items. 1865-1868
Folder 56  Pettee, William Henry. Article (draft) on Harvard University. 1 item. 1874, Nov. 18
Folder 57  Pettee, William Henry. Bank books. 3 items. 1875-1879
Folder 58  Pettee, William Henry. Lecture for course on Economic Development of Mineral Resources. 1883

Related Material
For other manuscripts, see Box 4.

Box 2
Pettee, William H. to Matilda (Sherman Pettee); Pettee, William H., to Josiah Dwight Whitney, 1869-1873
Folder 1  Pettee, William Henry. 16 letters to Matilda (Sherman) Pettee. 1865
Folder 2  Pettee, William Henry. 40 letters to Matilda (Sherman) Pettee. 1866
Folder 3  Pettee, William Henry. 44 letters to Matilda (Sherman) Pettee. 1867
Folder 4  Pettee, William Henry. 23 letters to Matilda (Sherman) Pettee. 1868
Folder 5  Pettee, William Henry. 16 letters to Matilda (Sherman) Pettee. 1869
Folder 6  Pettee, William Henry. 32 letters to Matilda (Sherman) Pettee. 1870
Folder 7  Pettee, William Henry. 35 letters to Matilda (Sherman) Pettee. 1871
Folder 8  Pettee, William Henry. 5 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1869
Folder 9  Pettee, William Henry. 32 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1870
Folder 10  Pettee, William Henry. 66 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1871
Folder 11  Pettee, William Henry. 65 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1872
Folder 12  Pettee, William Henry. 57 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1873

Box 3
Pettee, William H., to Josiah Dwight Whitney, 1874-1884; Correspondence P-Z; Biographical Information; Photographs
Folder 1  Pettee, William Henry. 46 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1874
Folder 2  Pettee, William Henry. 9 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1875
Folder 3  Pettee, William Henry. 14 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1876
Folder 4  Pettee, William Henry. 6 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1877
Folder 5  Pettee, William Henry. 14 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 6  Pettee, William Henry. 39 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1879
Folder 7  Pettee, William Henry. 13 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1880
Folder 8  Pettee, William Henry. 8 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1881
Folder 9  Pettee, William Henry. 3 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1882
Folder 10  Pettee, William Henry. 9 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1883
Folder 11  Pettee, William Henry. 2 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1884
Folder 12  Phillips, Wendell. 1 letter [Autograph]. 1860, May 27
Folder 13  Putnam, Earl B. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, June 8
Folder 14  Putnam, S. O. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, June 20
Folder 15  Rabe, Carl. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney? 1878, Jan. 17
Folder 16  Ratzel, Friedrich. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, May 12
Folder 17  Raymond, Rossiter Worthington. 2 letters to William Henry Pettee. 1891-1894
Folder 18  Richards, Robert Hallowell. 1 letter to William Henry Pettee. 1894, Oct. 30
Folder 19  Stearns, Robert Edwards Carter. 2 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 20  Sturgis, Appleton. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Feb. 2
Folder 21  Thompson, Robert Means. 1 letter to Oliver Wolcott Gibbs. 1878, Apr. 1
Folder 22  Thompson, Robert Means. 2 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
Folder 23  Torrey, H. W. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Mar.
Folder 24  Voy, C. D. 2 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878
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<th>Folder</th>
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<td>Walkup, W. D. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Jan. 25</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Walling, H. F. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Apr. 2</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Watson, Sereno. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, June 7</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Welch, Bigelow &amp; Co. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, Feb. 12</td>
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<td>Westermann (B.) &amp; Co. 3 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878</td>
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<td>White, C. J. 1 letter to William Henry Pettee. 1880, Mar. 20</td>
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<td>White, Charles Abiathar. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, May 6</td>
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<td>Whitney, Josiah Dwight. 1 letter to William Henry Pettee. 1878, Mar. 24</td>
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<td>Whitney, Josiah Dwight. 1 letter to William Henry Pettee. 1879</td>
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<td>Whitney, Josiah Dwight. 1 letter to William Henry Pettee. 1881, Feb. 22</td>
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<td>Whitney, William Dwight. 7 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1872-1878</td>
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<td>Wilson, A. D. 3 letters to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Woods, W. L. 1 letter to Josiah Dwight Whitney. 1878, June 19</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>Biographical information. 11 items.</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>Photographs - Pettee, Sybil [anna] (Clarke). 1 item. c.1880</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>Photographs - Pettee, William Henry. 6 items. 1865-1875</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>Photographs - Pettee, William Henry &amp; others in California State Geological Survey?. 1 item. 1870-1871</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>Photographs acquired while studying in Europe. 38 items. 1865-1868</td>
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<td>Box 4</td>
<td>Oversize Manuscripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pettee, William Henry. To Josiah Dwight Whitney: Daily journal of field work for the California State Geological Survey in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, July 12-Dec. 14, 1870. 1871, June 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pettee, William Henry. To Josiah Dwight Whitney: Manuscript and sketches for Auriferous Gravels of the Sierra Nevada of California. 1880</td>
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<td>Roll</td>
<td>Certificate of election to American Philosophical Society. 1898, May 20</td>
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