
William Jones Rhees Papers: Finding Aid

Finding aid prepared by Harriet McLoone, September 1982.

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens

Manuscripts Department

1151 Oxford Road

San Marino, California 91108

Phone: (626) 405-2129

Email: reference@huntington.org

URL: <http://www.huntington.org>

© 2017

The Huntington Library. All rights reserved.

Overview of the Collection

Title: William Jones Rhees Papers

Dates (inclusive): 1744-1907

Collection Number: mssRH 1-4598

Creator: Rhees, William Jones, 1830-1907.

Extent: Approx. 4,700 pieces in 64 boxes.

Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Manuscripts Department
1151 Oxford Road

San Marino, California 91108

Phone: (626) 405-2129

Email: reference@huntington.org

URL: <http://www.huntington.org>

Abstract: This collection contains the papers of Smithsonian chief clerk, bibliographer, and collector William Jones Rhees (1830-1907), of materials assembled chiefly for their autograph value, though the collection contains various groups of related materials. Includes papers of American physicist and surveyor Alexander Dallas Bache (1806-1867), American geographer Henry Rowe Schoolcraft (1793-1864), National Institute for the Promotion of Sciences, and the Smithsonian Institution, as well as correspondence of William Jones Rhees, letters and papers addressed to the United States Pension Bureau, letters and papers related to Indian affairs, and miscellaneous autograph letters and documents.

Language: English.

Access

Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact Reader Services.

Publication Rights

The Huntington Library does not require that researchers request permission to quote from or publish images of this material, nor does it charge fees for such activities. The responsibility for identifying the copyright holder, if there is one, and obtaining necessary permissions rests with the researcher.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item]. William Jones Rhees Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Provenance

Chiefly purchased from Romania F. Rhees, February 24, 1922. A few items were purchased from Flora G. Rhees, February 6, 1935.

- Additional photographs related to the collection in the Photo Archives include: photPF 3490-3529; 3555-3577. These are from various sources, but related to the Smithsonian Institution and some of the photographs may have come with the Rhees papers.

Biographical Note

William Jones Rhees (1830-1907) was a bibliographer, collector, and chief clerk of the Smithsonian Institution. Rhees became chief clerk of the Smithsonian Institution in July 1852, and served in this capacity until 1891, when he was placed in charge of the archives, publications, etc. His association with the Smithsonian Institution continued until his death. An enthusiastic autograph collector, Rhees accumulated numerous unrelated letters and papers of prominent men as well as more coherent groups of manuscripts relating to his official position.

Scope and Content

This collection contains the papers of Smithsonian chief clerk, bibliographer, and collector William Jones Rhees (1830-1907), of materials assembled chiefly for their autograph value, though the collection contains various groups of related materials. Includes papers of American physicist and surveyor Alexander Dallas Bache (1806-1867), American geographer Henry Rowe Schoolcraft (1793-1864), National Institute for the Promotion of Sciences, and the Smithsonian Institution, as well as correspondence of William Jones Rhees, letters and papers addressed to the United States Pension Bureau, letters and papers related to Indian affairs, and miscellaneous autograph letters and documents. There is also personal correspondence of William Jones Rhees and correspondence with Sons of the American Revolution, particularly the chapter at Washington, D.C. This portion of the collection holds letters from Dorothea Lynde Dix. Letters and addresses to the United States Pension Bureau contain routine letters regarding pensions or applications. Letters and papers relating to Indian affairs pertain to various Indian agents and factors, including Benjamin Hawkins, William Hull, William Irvine, Return

Jonathan Meigs, and others. There are also 134 letters collected chiefly for their autograph value, and receipts for Smithsonian publications.

Individuals represented by 5 or more pieces consist of:

- Agassiz, Louis (41 items)
- Alden, James (11 items)
- Alexander, John Henry (9 items)
- Alexander, Stephen (10 items)
- Bache, Alexander Dallas (61 items)
- Barnard, Frederick Augustus Peter (12 items)
- Cass, Lewis (12 items)
- Caswell, Alexis (7 items)
- Chase, Salmon Portland (10 items)
- Chauvenet, William (7 items)
- Cobb, Howell (9 items)
- Colfax, Schuyler (16 items)
- Craven, Tunis Augustus (7 items)
- Dana, Charles Anderson (6 items)
- Dana, James Dwight (39 items)
- Davis, Charles Henry (20 items)
- Dix, Dorothea Lynde (25 items)
- DuPont, Samuel Francis (11 items)
- Emory, William Hemsley (5 items)
- Fessenden, William Pitt (5 items)
- Field, Cyrus West (6 items)
- Force, Peter (13 items)
- Gibbs, Oliver Wolcott (28 items)
- Gilbert, Samuel Augustus (12 items)
- Gilliss, James Melville (36 items)
- Gould, Benjamin Apthorp (30 items)
- Gray, Asa (17 items)
- Guyot, Arnold (6 items)
- Hamlin, Hannibal (10 items)
- Hare, Robert (6 items)
- Hayes, Isaac Israel (6 items)
- Henry, Joseph (78 items)
- Hilgard, Julius Erasmus (13 items)
- Hill, Abrose Powell (6 items)
- Humphreys, Andrew Atkinson (15 items)
- Jenkins, Thornton Alexander (13 items)
- Kennedy, Joseph Camp Griffith (7 items)
- LeConte, John (5 items)
- LeConte, John Lawrence (7 items)
- LeFroy, Sir John Henry (11 items)
- Lesley, J. Peter (5 items)
- Lieber, Francis (32 items)
- Llody, Humphrey (7 items)
- McCosh, James (6 items)
- Maclean, John (40 items)

-
- Markoe, Francis (9 items)
 - Meigs, Montgomery Cunningham (9 items)
 - Mitchell, Henry (7 items)
 - Newcomb, Simon (7 items)
 - Patterson, Carlile Pollock (10 items)
 - Pearce, James Alfred (24 items)
 - Peirce, Benjamin (38 items)
 - Phelps, Thomas Stowell (10 items)
 - Poe, Orlando Metcalfe (5 items)
 - Porter, David Dixon (10 items)
 - Porter, Noah (10 items)
 - Potter, Alonzo (8 items)
 - Preble, George Henry (5 items)
 - Quetelet, Lambert Adolphe Jacques (8 items)
 - Rodgers, Christopher Raymond Perry (8 items)
 - Rodgers, John (5 items)
 - Rogers, Fairman (28 items)
 - Sabine, Sir Edward (30 items)
 - Seward, William Henry (7 items)
 - Silliman, Benjamin, Jr. (31 items)
 - Simpson, James Harvey (9 items)
 - Stevens, Isaac Ingalls (18 items)
 - Smith, Gerrit (7 items)
 - Totten, Joseph Gilbert (26 items)
 - Trenchard, Stephen Decatur (16 items)
 - Trowbridge, William Petit (23 items)
 - Tyndale, Hector (11 items)
 - Tyndall, John (16 items)
 - Waite, Morrison Remick (35 items)
 - Wilkes, Charles (26 items)

Arrangement

Arranged in the following manner:

- Miscellaneous correspondence (Boxes 1-2)
- Indian Affairs materials (Box 3)
- Pension Bureau materials, 1817-1885 (Box 4)
- Henry Rowe Schoolcraft correspondence, 1815-1874 (Box 5-6)
- National Institute materials, 1844-1859 (Boxes 7-11)
- Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence, 1822-1904 (Boxes 12-35)
- Smithsonian Institution materials 1831-1906 (Boxes 36-55)
- William Jones Rhees Correspondence, 1822-1904 (Boxes 56-59)
- Miscellaneous (boxes 60-64)
 - Receipts for Smithsonian Publications, A-Z (Boxes 60-62)
 - Miscellaneous fragments and ephemera (Box 63)
 - Miscellaneous photographs (Box 64)
- Index to the autographs (RH 4596)

Cards are filed in alphabetical and chronological sections of the Manuscripts card catalog.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the [Huntington Library's Online Catalog](#).

Subjects

Bache, A. D. (Alexander Dallas), 1806-1867 -- Archives.
Schoolcraft, Henry Rowe, 1793-1864 -- Archives.
Dix, Dorothea Lynde, 1802-1887 -- Correspondence.
Hawkins, Benjamin, 1754-1816 -- Correspondence.
Hull, William, 1753-1825 -- Correspondence.
Irvine, William, 1741-1804 -- Correspondence.
Meigs, Return Jonathan, 1740-1823 -- Correspondence.
Smithsonian Institution -- Archives.
National Institute for the Promotion of Science -- Archives.
Smithsonian Institution -- Archives.
Sons of the American Revolution -- Archives.
Smithsonian Institution -- Archives.
United States. Pension Bureau -- Archives.
Autographs -- Collectors and collecting -- United States.
Indian agents -- Correspondence.

Forms/Genres

Autographs -- United States.
Collections -- United States.
Letters (correspondence) -- United States.
Personal papers -- United States.
Professional papers -- United States.
Documents.

Additional Contributors

Bach, A. D. (Alexander Dallas), 1806-1867.
Schoolcraft, Henry Rowe, 1793-1864.
Dix, Dorothea Lynde, 1802-1887.
Hawkins, Benjamin, 1754-1816.
Hull, William, 1753-1825.
Irvine, William, 1741-1804.
Meigs, Return Jonathan, 1740-1823.
Smithsonian Institution.
Sons of the American Revolution.
United States. Pension Bureau.
National Institute for the Promotion of Science.

Miscellaneous correspondence.

Box 1
Box 2

Miscellaneous Correspondence, A-L.
Miscellaneous Correspondence, M-Z.
Indian Affairs materials. 1796-1858

Physical Description: 42 pieces

Chiefly letters from Indian Agents or Factors, with their greatest value in the autographs. Included are letters from Benjamin Hawkins, William Hull, William Irvine, Return Jonathan Meigs, and others.

Box 3

Indian Affairs (RH 15-56). 1796-1858

Pension Bureau materials. 1817-approximately 1885

Physical Description: 95 items

These are routine letters addressed to the United States Pension Bureau regarding pensions or applications, of value chiefly for their autographs.

Box 4

**Pension Bureau Correspondence (RH 57-151). 1817-approximately 1895
Henry Rowe Schoolcraft correspondence. 1815-1874**

Physical Description: 129 items

This series contains personal correspondence and papers of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft (1793-1864) and his of his wife, Mary (Howard) Schoolcraft, as well as information related to the publication of their writings and letters of condolence at Schoolcraft's death. Notable items include an endorsement of Schoolcraft's proposal to start a periodical devoted to topics related to American Indians, made by prominent individuals in Detroit, Philadelphia, New York, and Washington, between June 30th and July 13, 1841, and a September 22, 1862, letter from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow acknowledging his debt to Schoolcraft's "Algic Researches" for "Hiawatha."

Box 5

Schoolcraft Correspondence. 1815-1853

Box 6

Schoolcraft Correspondence. 1854-1874

National Institute materials. 1816-1848

Physical Description: 316 items

This series contains correspondence and papers documenting the National Institute, including materials related to

- The Institute's forerunners: The Metropolitan Association; The Columbian Institute; and the Washington Museum
- The organization of the National Institution for the Promotion of Science (later incorporated as the National Institute), including membership and the constitution, by-laws and rules for the Institute
- The Museum (housed in the United States Patent Office), including the acquisition of curiosities and the collections of the United States Exploring Expedition, commanded by Charles Wilkes, 1838-1842
- The Smithson bequest, including his interest and influence in the final disposition of the gift and the original custody of Smithson's collections of minerals, pamphlets and personal effects.

Some notable items include:

- The plan of organization for the Metropolitan Society or Association (June 15, 1816) in the handwriting of Edward Cutbush, with signatures of the original members
- A notebook kept by John Varden of subscribers to the Washington Museum, 1840-1841
- A note by Joel Roberts Poinsett, c. 1840, of the members to confer on the Smithson bequest
- An August 23, 1848, letter from Joseph Libbey Folsom sending a specimen of the gold found at Sutter's Mill and some other minerals from California.

Box 7

National Institution. 1844-1847

Box 8

National Institution. 1842-1843

Box 9

National Institution. 1844-1847

Box 10

National Institution. 1848-1850

Box 11

National Institution. 1850-1858

Alexander Dallas Bache correspondence. 1827-1867

Physical Description: 1896 items

This series contains the correspondence of American physicist and educator Alexander Dallas Bache (1806-1867), and chiefly consists of correspondence addressed to Bache from 1827-1867 (with very few letters after 1864). Subject matter includes:

- A. Girard College (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)
 - 1. Bache's presidency, 1836-1842
Bache's tour of Britain and the European continent preparatory to formulating a plan of organization for the college.
- B. The United States Coast Survey: Bache was appointed in 1843 as Superintendent of the Coast Survey to succeed the late Ferdinand R. Hassler, and continued to direct the Survey until his death. These letters, however, relate more to the personnel of the organization rather than to the work itself.
- C. Bache's interest in the development of science
 - 1. Terrestrial magnetism research
 - 2. Correspondence with contemporaries, chiefly in the fields of physics, mathematics, and astronomy
 - 3. Interest in and support of scientific expeditions
 - 4. The establishment of scientific institutions and departments of science
- D. The Civil War
 - 1. The work of the Coast Survey
Reports of events from former associates
The Sanitary Commission, of which Bache was one of the vice presidents.

Some notable items include:

- A letter from Horace Binney offering Bache the chair of "Natural Philosophy" at the University of Pennsylvania (August 29, 1828)
- Notes by Whitley Stokes, Regius Professor of Medicine, Trinity College, Dublin, on a "Plan of organization for a College near Philadelphia" (November 22, 1836)
- 8 letters from Belgian astronomer Lamber Adolphe Jacques Quetelet (1836-1849)
- 29 letters from Sir Edward Sabine chiefly concerning their mutual interest in magnetic research (1839-1864)
- 7 letters from Humphrey Lloyd, provost of Trinity College, Dublin, dealing with magnetism (1840-1851)
- 36 letters from American physicist Benjamin Peirce, chiefly personal but with considerable mention of science and fellow scientists (1845-1863)
- 32 letters from Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz, both personal and relating to science (1847-1864)
- 2 letters from members of the Perry expedition, which opened relations with Japan: one from George Henry Preble (April 2, 1854) and one from John Rodgers Goldsborough (May 15, 1854)
- 2 letters from subsequent Admiral John Rodgers regarding a theory of tides (March 31 and April 2, 1855)
- 5 items from Elisha Kent Kane concerning Arctic expeditions (1852-1856)
- 6 letters from Isaac Israel Hayes concerning his polar expedition (1858-1862)
- 15 letters from Isaac Ingalls Stevens, highly critical of Union generalship, particularly in South Carolina (February 22-August 5, 1862)

Box 12
Box 13
Box 14
Box 15

Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1827-1839
Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1840-1844
Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1845-1849
Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1850-1852

Box 16	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1853-1854
Box 17	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1855-1856
Box 18	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1857
Box 19	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1858
Box 20	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1859
Box 21	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1860 January-June
Box 22	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1860 July-August
Box 23	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1860 September-October
Box 24	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1860 November
Box 25	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1861 January-February
Box 26	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1861 March
Box 27	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1861 April
Box 28	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1861 May
Box 29	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1861 June-1862
Box 30	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1862 January-April
Box 31	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1862 May
Box 32	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1862 June
Box 33	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1862 July-1863
Box 34	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. 1863
Box 35	Alexander Dallas Bache Correspondence. after 1864-1867

Smithsonian Institution materials. 1831-1906

Physical Description: 1625 items

This series contains correspondence and papers relating to the Smithsonian Institution and its executive officers. Subject matter includes:

A. James Smithson (chiefly references to him and his bequest creating the Smithsonian Institution)

Routine activities of the Smithsonian Institution

1. Preparation and circulation of reports and other publications, including replies to the plan of organization sent to scientists, educators, etc. in 1847 for their opinions
2. Meetings of the Regents and Executive Committee
3. Visits to the Institution.

C. Joseph Henry (1797-1878), the first Secretary, including biography material, papers related to the administration of the Smithsonian Institution, and his other interests including research in physics, Princeton University, the United States Lighthouse Board, the National Academy of Sciences, and correspondence with noted contemporaries; and commemoration including a memorial service held on January 16, 1879 and a statute by William Wetmore Story erected in Washington in 1883

D. Spencer Fullerton Baird (1823-1887), the second Secretary, related to his administrative duties and the United States Bureau of Fish and Fisheries

E. Miscellaneous items related to the National Museum, the Library, and encouragement of research

Some notable items include:

- A copy of the receipt given by Charles Coffin Jewett for the books and pamphlets in the Smithson bequest (January 10, 1849)
- 6 letters from prominent historians, including George Bancroft, Washington Irving, and Jared Sparks, urging publication by the Smithsonian of some Spanish documents relating to the history of the Southwest.
- A letter from Joseph Henry to Professor Agassiz, giving details of the fire that destroyed part of the Smithsonian Institution on January 24th (January 31, 1865)
- A letter from George Catlin asking Professor Henry's aid for securing his Indian portraits for the benefit of science (March 21, 1870). There is also a memorial from the New York Historical Society, signed by several members, urging action to preserve this collection (January 1875)
- 3 letters from Sir John Henry Lefroy to Joseph Henry from Bermuda (1872-1873)
- A letter from Phineas Taylor Barnum to Joseph Henry regarding a proposed aerial navigation of the Atlantic in a balloon (September 19, 1873)
- A letter from Rear Admiral John Rodgers to Mrs. Henry notifying her of the action of Congress for the payment of \$11,000 to the heirs of Professor Henry in recognition of his services to the Lighthouse Establishment (July 5, 1878)
- Draft of the address given by Samuel Sullivan Cox at the commemoration services for Joseph Henry (January 16, 1879)
- 10 letters from Frank Hamilton Cushing to William Jones Rhees from Zuni, New Mexico Territory (1880-1881)

There are many letters from prominent figures in science, education, and politics, though it is often routine correspondence.

Box 36
Box 37
Box 38
Box 39
Box 40
Box 41
Box 42

Smithsonian Institution. 1831-1849 January

Smithsonian Institution. 1849 February-1850

Smithsonian Institution. 1851-1859

Smithsonian Institution. 1860-1867

Smithsonian Institution. 1868-1869

Smithsonian Institution. 1870-1871 June

Smithsonian Institution. 1871 July-1872 August

Box 43	Smithsonian Institution. 1872 May-December
Box 44	Smithsonian Institution. before 1872-1874 February
Box 45	Smithsonian Institution. 1874 March-1875 June
Box 46	Smithsonian Institution. 1875 July-after 1876
Box 47	Smithsonian Institution. 1877-1878 May
Box 48	Smithsonian Institution. 1878 June-1879
Box 49	Smithsonian Institution. 1880
Box 50	Smithsonian Institution. 1881-1882
Box 51	Smithsonian Institution. 1883 January-August
Box 52	Smithsonian Institution. 1883 September-after 1884
Box 53	Smithsonian Institution. 1885-1886
Box 54	Smithsonian Institution. 1887-1889
Box 55	Smithsonian Institution. 1890-1906

William Jones Rhees correspondence. 1822-1904

Physical Description: 354 items

This series contains correspondence of William Jones Rhees, chiefly personal letters or correspondence related to the Sons of the American Revolution, particularly the Washington, D.C., chapter. Within this series there are 22 letters from Dorothea Lynde Dix, dating from approximately 1870 to 1886.

Box 56	Rhees correspondence. 1822-1873
Box 57	Rhees correspondence. 1874-1884
Box 58	Rhees correspondence. 1885-1896
Box 59	Rhees correspondence. 1897-1904

Miscellaneous

This series includes miscellaneous signatures, 134 unrelated miscellaneous autograph letters of including two from Thomas Jefferson, one from John Penn, and three from Michael Faraday.

Box 60	Receipts for Smithsonian Publications, B-K.
Box 61	Receipts for Smithsonian Publications, L-S.
Box 62	Receipts for Smithsonian Publications, T-Z; miscellaneous requisitions, etc.; receipts from other institutions, etc.
Box 63	Miscellaneous fragments, printed items, clippings, pictures, and facsimiles
Box 64	Miscellaneous autographs (including some listed in the Rhees index (RH 4596), but removed from correspondence.

Index

Box RH 4596	Rhees, Wm. Jones: Index to Autographs.
-------------	---