

Matthew Fontaine Maury

A Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress

**Prepared by Preparation Section staff
Revised and expanded by Karen Linn Femia**



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

1997

Contact information: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/mss/address.html>

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Manuscript Division, 2001**

Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/eadmss.ms001026>

Latest revision: 2004-10-15

Collection Summary

Title: Papers of Matthew Fontaine Maury

Span Dates: 1825-1960

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1830-1880)

ID No.: MSS31682

Creator: Maury, Matthew Fontaine, 1806-1873

Extent: 14,650 items; 65 containers plus 1 oversize; 17.5 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Naval officer and oceanographer. Correspondence, letterbooks, diaries, journals, speeches, articles, and other writings, notebooks, electrical experiment book, charts, and printed material relating chiefly to Maury's naval career, scientific activities and interests, service as a Confederate agent in England, and work as an immigration official for Southern expatriates in Mexico, and to the Maury (Morey) family.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Names:

Maury, Matthew Fontaine, 1806-1873

Blackford, William M., 1801-1864--Correspondence

Corbin, Nannie, 1837-1900--Correspondence

Corbin, Wellford--Correspondence

Hasbrouck, William C.--Correspondence

Holmes, Nathaniel J.--Correspondence

Jansen, Marin H. (Marin Henry), 1817-1893--Correspondence

Maury, Ann, 1803-1876--Correspondence

Maury, Ann, 1811-1901--Correspondence

Maury, Matthew Fontaine, 1849-1886--Correspondence

Maury, Richard L. (Richard Lancelot), 1840-1907--Correspondence

Maury, Rutson, 1805-1882--Correspondence

Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico, 1832-1867--Correspondence

Minor, Franklin, 1812-1867--Correspondence

Otey, James Hervey, 1800-1863--Correspondence

Smith, Francis Henney, 1812-1890--Correspondence

Tremlett, F. W. (Francis William)--Correspondence

Werth, Mary, 1844-1928--Correspondence

Withers, Eliza, b. 1846--Correspondence

Morey family

Morey family--Correspondence

Confederate States of America. Navy--Officers

United States. Navy--Officers

United States. Depot of Charts and Instruments.

United States Naval Observatory

Coblentz, Catherine Cate, 1897-1951. Typescript (1953)

Smith, C. Alphonso (Charles Alphonso), 1864-1924. Papers of C. Alphonso Smith (1864-1927)

Subjects:

American Confederate voluntary exiles--Mexico

Diplomatic and consular service, Confederate--Great Britain

Meteorology

Mines and mineral resources

Oceanography

Physical geography--Virginia
Science--History--19th century
Torpedoes
Confederate States of America--Foreign relations--Great Britain
Confederate States of America--History, Naval
Great Britain--Foreign relations--Confederate States of America
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Naval operations
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Refugees

Occupations:

Naval officers
Naval officers, Confederate
Oceanographers

Administrative Information

Provenance:

The papers and medals of Matthew Fontaine Maury (1806-1873), naval officer and oceanographer, were given to the United States by Maury's daughter, Mary Maury Werth, and other Maury descendants in 1912 in a presentation to President William Howard Taft. The medals were placed in the Smithsonian Institution and the papers in the Library of Congress later that year. The Library acquired additional Maury papers through gifts from the Maury family and others and by purchase, 1913-1996.

Processing History:

The papers of Matthew Fontaine Maury were first arranged and described in 1962. Additional material was incorporated into the collection in 1978 and 1997.

Transfers:

Maps have been transferred to the Library's Geography and Map Division where they are identified as part of these papers.

Copyright Status:

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

Preferred Citation:

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1806, Jan. 14	Born near Fredericksburg, Va.; raised in Tennessee
1818	Entered Harpeth Academy, near Franklin, Tenn.
1825-1834	Obtained midshipman's warrant, U.S. Navy and made three extended voyages
1834	Married Ann Hull Herndon; resided in Fredericksburg, Va.
1836	Promoted to lieutenant Published <i>A New Theoretical and Practical Treatise on Navigation</i> (Philadelphia: Key and Biddle. 174 pp.)

1839	Permanently lamed in stagecoach accident and thenceforth not assigned to sea duty
1842-1844	Superintendent of the Navy Department's Depot of Charts and Instruments
1844-1861	Superintendent of the Naval Observatory and Hydrographical Office
1847	Issued first <i>Wind and Current Charts</i> (U.S. Hydrographic Office) howing best "tracks" for sailing ships in the North Atlantic
1853	U.S. representative at international maritime congress, Brussels, Belgium
1855	Published <i>The Physical Geography of the Sea</i> (New York: Harper & Bros. 274 pp.), the first modern oceanographic textbook Placed on inactive duty by the U.S. Navy
1858	Restored to active duty by presidential order; promoted to commander retroactive to 1855
1861, Apr. 20	Resigned from U.S. Navy and accepted commission as commander in Confederate Navy
1862	Special agent of the Confederate government to England
1865-1866	Imperial commissioner of immigration to the Emperor of Mexico
1866-1868	Resided in England
1868	Published <i>First Lessons in Geography</i> (New York: Richardson & Co. 62 pp.) Published <i>The World We Live in</i> (New York: Richardson & Co. 104 pp.)
1868-1872	Professor of meteorology, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Va.
1870	Published <i>Manual of Geography</i> (New York: University Publishing Co. 162 pp.)
1873, Feb. 1	Died, Lexington, Va.

Scope and Content Note

The Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers span the years 1825-1960, with the bulk of the material dating from the 1830s to the 1870s. The papers consist of letterbooks, correspondence, diaries, notebooks, electrical experiment book, journals, drafts and printed copies of speeches and articles, charts, related printed matter, and proofs of his unpublished work "Astronomy." The papers are organized into the following series: [General Correspondence](#), [Writings, Addresses, and Lectures](#), [Letterbooks](#), [Miscellany](#), [Additions](#) and [Oversize](#).

The papers pertain chiefly to Maury's naval career, his scientific activities and interests, and his service to the Confederacy in the Civil War. There is also considerable material concerning the many medals and honors conferred upon him for his scientific contributions. Some subjects touched upon are mines, meteorology, the colonization of Mexico by former Confederates, physical geography of Virginia, and oceanography. Much of the [correspondence](#) is family correspondence, including many of Maury's own letters.

Prominent among his correspondents are William M. Blackford, William C. Hasbrouck, Nathaniel J. Holmes, Admiral Marin H. Jansen, Privy Councilor to the King of Holland, Ann Hull Herndon Maury, Richard L. Maury, Rutson Maury, Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico, Franklin Minor, James Hervey Otey, Francis Henney Smith, Francis W. Tremlett, and Mary Herndon Maury Werth.

Placed with the collection are papers of Charles Alphonso Smith regarding Maury including clippings and notes on Maury as well as correspondence with Mary Maury (Mrs. James R.) Werth concerning her father. Also included is a typescript of a life of Maury by Catherine Cate Coblentz.

The 1978 [addition](#) to the Maury Papers consists of [correspondence](#) between various Maury family members, 1858-1878. These papers were received by the Library between 1966 and 1975. Correspondents include Nannie Corbin, Wellford Corbin, Matthew Fontaine Maury (1849-1886), Mary Herndon Maury Werth, and Eliza Hull Maury Withers. Of particular interest are the letters Maury received during the periods when he was special Confederate agent to Great Britain in London and an immigration official for Southern expatriates in Mexico.

The 1997 [addition](#) consists of Maury papers received by the Library from 1989 to 1996. It primarily contains letters written by Matthew F. Maury to his cousin, Ann Maury, relating his daily activities. Also included are correspondence with other family members, one letter of 1858 to Benjamin Silliman concerning expeditions and packet ships, news clippings (some dating from the mid-twentieth century), and copies of navigational charts.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in six series:

- [General Correspondence, 1825-1910, n.d.](#)
- [Writings, Addresses, and Lectures, 1856-1872](#)
- [Letterbooks, 1859-1891](#)
- [Miscellany, 1839-1953, n.d.](#)
- [Additions, 1834-1960, n.d.](#)
- [Oversize, 1856-1873, n.d.](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-46	<u>General Correspondence, 1825-1910, n.d.</u> Correspondence. Arranged chronologically in forty-six bound volumes.
BOX 47-51	<u>Writings, Addresses, and Lectures, 1856-1872</u> Arranged chronologically in five bound volumes.
BOX 52-56	<u>Letterbooks, 1859-1891</u> Copies of outgoing correspondence. Arranged chronologically in five bound volumes.
BOX 57-63	<u>Miscellany, 1839-1953, n.d.</u> Account books, diaries, photographs, printed matter, scrapbook, writings, and C. Alphonso Smith papers re Maury. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 64-65	<u>Additions, 1834-1960, n.d.</u> Correspondence and family correspondence, each arranged chronologically. Miscellaneous material including genealogical records and news clippings. Arranged in two additions.
BOX OV 1	<u>Oversize, 1856-1873, n.d.</u> Diplomas, awards, and probate papers. Organized and described according to the series, folders, and boxes from which the items were removed.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-46	General Correspondence, 1825-1910, n.d. Correspondence. Arranged chronologically in forty-six bound volumes.
BOX 1	6 Feb. 1825-3 Nov. 1839
BOX 2	6 Nov. 1839-15 July 1843
BOX 3	29 July 1843-13 Feb. 1850
BOX 4	15 Feb. 1850-17 Sept. 1855
BOX 5	18 Sept. 1855-4 Feb. 1856
BOX 6	5 Feb. 1856-25 Feb. 1857
BOX 7	26 Feb. 1857-6 June 1859
BOX 8	7 June 1859-23 Jan. 1860
BOX 9	29 Jan.-21 Oct. 1860
BOX 10	22 Oct. 1860-21 Jan. 1861
BOX 11	22 Jan.-4 Feb. 1861
BOX 12	5-22 Feb. 1861
BOX 13	23 Feb.-6 Apr. 1861
BOX 14	7 Apr.-7 Oct. 1861
BOX 15	8 Oct. 1861-3 May 1862
BOX 16	4 May-17 Sept. 1862
BOX 17	18 Sept. 1862-20 Apr. 1863
BOX 18	21 Apr.-2 Nov. 1863
BOX 19	3 Nov. 1863-5 Feb. 1864
BOX 20	6 Feb.-19 Oct. 1864
BOX 21	20 Oct. 1864-8 June 1865
BOX 22	9 June-20 Aug. 1865
BOX 23	21 Aug.-1 Dec. 1865
BOX 24	3 Dec. 1865-18 Apr. 1866
BOX 25	19 Apr. 1866-10 May 1867
BOX 26	11 May 1867-9 June 1868
BOX 27	10 June-27 Nov. 1868
BOX 28	28 Nov. 1868-2 Feb. 1869
BOX 29	3 Feb.-10 Mar. 1869
BOX 30	11 Mar.-22 Apr. 1869
BOX 31	23 Apr.-25 June 1869
BOX 32	26 June-1 Nov. 1869
BOX 33	2 Nov. 1869-17 Jan. 1870
BOX 34	18 Jan.-29 Apr. 1870
BOX 35	30 Apr.-4 Aug. 1870
BOX 36	5 Aug. 1870-10 Apr. 1871
BOX 37	11 Apr.-3 Sept. 1871
BOX 38	9 Sept. 1871-1 Jan. 1872

General Correspondence, 1825-1910, n.d.

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 39	2 Jan.-27 Mar. 1872
BOX 40	28 Mar.-10 Aug. 1872
BOX 41	11 Aug. 1872-3 Jan. 1873
BOX 42	4-30 Jan. 1873
BOX 43	1 Feb.-20 Mar. 1873
BOX 44	21 Mar.-27 Oct. 1873
BOX 45	28 Oct. 1873-8 Feb. 1895
BOX 46	13 Apr. 1895-25 Apr. 1910, n.d.
BOX 47-51	Writings, Addresses, and Lectures, 1856-1872 Arranged chronologically in five bound volumes.
BOX 47	June 1856-June 1868
BOX 48	Dec. 1869-Jan. 1871
BOX 49	May 1871
BOX 50	May-Dec. 1871
BOX 51	Jan.-May 1872
BOX 52-56	Letterbooks, 1859-1891 Copies of outgoing correspondence. Arranged chronologically in five bound volumes.
BOX 52	3 Dec. 1859-18 Jan. 1861
BOX 53	9 Oct. 1868-28 Sept. 1869
BOX 54	29 Sept.-9 Oct. 1869
BOX 55	4 Apr. 1871-19 Mar. 1872
BOX 56	12 Apr.-14 Nov. 1872 Fragments, 1891
BOX 57-63	Miscellany, 1839-1953, n.d. Account books, diaries, photographs, printed matter, scrapbook, writings, and C. Alphonso Smith papers re Maury. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 57	Account books, 1841-1872 "Children's recollections," 1872-1873, 1928 Coblentz, Catherine Cate, "Naval Lieutenant Matthew Fontaine Maury, First Citizen of the World, 1853-1953," 1953
BOX 58	Diaries, 1862-1872 Diplomas and awards, 1854-1856, n.d. <i>See also Oversize</i> Notebooks Electricity, 1864 Virginia, n.d. Photographs, 1872, n.d. Printed matter Booklets and journals 1854-1872 (2 folders)

Miscellany, 1839-1953, n.d.

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 59	1873-1904, 1923, n.d. (3 folders) News clippings, ca. 1840-ca. 1900 (1 folder)
BOX 60	(3 folders)
BOX 61	Probate, 1873 <i>See Oversize</i> Scrapbook, 1839-1873 Smith, Alphonso C., collection Correspondence General, 1864-1868, 1889, n.d. Re Maury, 1864-1867, 1923-1927 News clippings, 1922-1924 Photographs, n.d.
BOX 62	Writings re Maury, 1903-1924, n.d. (2 folders) Writings by Maury Articles, n.d. Astronomical observations made at the National Observatory, Washington, D.C., 1846-1851 "Astronomy," n.d.
BOX 63	<i>First Lessons in Geography</i> , 1884 <i>Physical Survey of Virginia</i> , 1869 Published letters and commentary, 1866-1868 Report on the loss of the mail steamer <i>Central America</i> under the command of William Lewis Herndon, 1857, 1884 Speeches, 1859, 1869-1873, n.d. <i>Winds and Currents of the Sea</i> , 1851 Testimonial volume to Maury, 1859
BOX 64-65	Additions, 1834-1960, n.d. Correspondence and family correspondence, each arranged chronologically. Miscellaneous material including genealogical records and news clippings. Arranged in two additions.
BOX 64	1978 Addition, 1858-1878, n.d. Family correspondence Index, n.d. 1858-1878, n.d. (2 folders) Genealogy, n.d.
BOX 65	1997 Addition, 1834-1960, n.d. Correspondence, 1834-1872, n.d. (10 folders) Miscellany, 1857-1873, 1956-1960, n.d.
BOX OV 1	Oversize, 1856-1873, n.d. Diplomas, awards, and probate papers. Organized and described according to the series, folders, and boxes from which the items were removed.

Oversize, 1856-1873, n.d.

Container

Contents

BOX OV 1

Miscellany

Diplomas and awards, 1856, n.d. ([Container 58](#))

Probate, 1873 (Container 61)