

Lewis Reeves Gibbes

A Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress

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Revised by Brian McGuire**



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

2003

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

**Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress
Manuscript Division, 2004**

2004-07-02 converted from EAD 1.0 to EAD 2002

Collection Summary

Title: Papers of Lewis Reeves Gibbes

Span Dates: 1793-1894

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1838-1894)

ID No.: MSS22707

Creator: Gibbes, Lewis Reeves, 1810-1894

Extent: 5,700 items; 16 containers; 3 linear feet; 8 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Scientist and professor. Chiefly correspondence along with specimen lists, resolutions, clippings, printed material, and other papers relating primarily to Gibbes's career as professor of astronomy, mathematics, and physics at the College of Charleston in South Carolina. Includes his correspondence with other scientists on the subjects of astronomy, botany, chemistry, geology, meteorology, physics, and zoology. Other subjects relate to the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Smithsonian Institution.

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:

Gibbes, Lewis Reeves, 1810-1894

Alexander, Stephen, 1806-1883--Correspondence

Bache, A. D. (Alexander Dallas), 1806-1867--Correspondence

Bailey, Jacob Whitman, 1811-1857--Correspondence

Beadle, E. R. (Elias Root), 1812-1879--Correspondence

Binney, Amos, 1803-1847--Correspondence

Calhoun, John C. (John Caldwell), 1782-1850--Correspondence

Cheves, Langdon, 1776-1857--Correspondence

Cooper, Thomas, 1759-1839--Correspondence

Dana, James Dwight, 1813-1895--Correspondence

De Bow, J. D. B. (James Dunwoody Brownson), 1820-1867--Correspondence

De Saussure, Henry William, 1763-1839--Correspondence

Ellet, Charles, 1810-1862--Correspondence

Ellet, E. F. (Elizabeth Fries), 1818-1877--Correspondence

Espy, James P. (James Pollard), 1785-1860--Correspondence

Forster, Alex M.--Correspondence

Gould, Benjamin Apthorp, 1824-1896--Correspondence

Gray, Asa, 1810-1888--Correspondence

Grimké, Thomas Smith, 1786-1834--Correspondence

Haldeman, Samuel Steman, 1812-1880--Correspondence

Henry, Joseph, 1797-1878--Correspondence

Herrick, Edward Claudius, 1811-1862--Correspondence

LeConte, John L. (John Lawrence), 1825-1883--Correspondence

LeConte, Joseph, 1823-1901--Correspondence

Loomis, Elias, 1811-1889--Correspondence

Lovering, Joseph, 1813-1892--Correspondence

Manigault, Gabriel E. (Gabriel Edward), 1833-1899--Correspondence

Markoe, Francis, 1801-1871--Correspondence

Maury, Matthew Fontaine, 1806-1873--Correspondence

Memminger, C. G. (Christopher Gustavus), 1803-1888--Correspondence

Paine, Robert Treat, 1835-1910--Correspondence

Petigru, James Louis, 1789-1863--Correspondence

Pinckney, Charles Cotesworth, 1746-1825--Correspondence

Redfield, W. C. (William C.), 1789-1857--Correspondence
Ritchie, E. S.--Correspondence
Runkle, John Daniel, 1822-1902--Correspondence
Sparks, Jared, 1789-1866--Correspondence
Stimpson, William, 1832-1872--Correspondence
Storer, David Humphreys, 1804-1891--Correspondence
Trescot, William Henry, 1822-1898--Correspondence
Tuomey, M. (Michael), 1805-1857--Correspondence
Winlock, Joseph, 1826-1875--Correspondence
Wurdemann, William--Correspondence
Gibbs family
American Association for the Advancement of Science
College of Charleston
Smithsonian Institution
McBride, James, 1784-1817. Papers of James McBride (1808-1817)

Subjects:

Astronomy
Botany
Chemistry
Geology
Mathematics
Meteorology
Physics
Science--History--19th century
Universities and colleges--South Carolina
Zoology
United States--History--War of 1812

Occupations:

Mathematicians
Naturalists

Administrative Information

Provenance:

The papers of Lewis Reeves Gibbes, mathematician and naturalist, were purchased by the Library of Congress in 1916. Additional items were given by S. P. Gibbes in 1932.

Processing History:

The Lewis Reeves Gibbes Papers were processed for filming in 1977. The finding aid was revised in 2003.

Copyright Status:

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

Microfilm:

A microfilm edition of these papers is available on eight reels. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan.

Preferred Citation:

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or reel number, Lewis Reeves Gibbes Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Event</i> |
|---------------|--|
| 1810, Aug. 4 | Born, Charleston, S.C. |
| 1829 | Graduated, South Carolina College, Columbia, S.C. |
| 1831-1834 | Tutor in math, South Carolina College, Columbia, S.C. |
| 1834-1835 | Acting professor of mathematics, South Carolina College, Charleston, S.C. |
| ca. 1835 | Studied at the Sorbonne and the Jardin des Plantes, Paris, France |
| 1836 | M.D., Medical College of South Carolina, Charleston, S.C. |
| 1838-1892 | Professor of mathematics, astronomy, and physics, College of Charleston, Charleston, S.C. |
| 1848 | Married Anna Barnwell Constructed Charleston Observatory, Charleston, S.C. |
| 1854 | Published "Path of the Storm of Eighth of Sept. 1854," <i>Charleston Evening News</i> |
| 1856 | Published "Monograph of Genus of Cryptopodia," <i>Proceedings of Elliott Society of Natural History</i> |
| 1858 | Published "Discovery of New Species of Fir in Mountains of North Carolina, Allied to Abies Canadensis. Proposed to call it Ab. Carolinensis," <i>Proceedings of Elliott Society of Natural History</i> |
| 1860 | Published "Remarkable Flight of Thousands of Butterflies of Genus Callidryas Across Charleston Harbor," <i>Canadian Entomologist</i> , vol. 12, p. 60 |
| 1887 | Published "Observations Made upon the Earthquake of Thirty-first of Aug.," <i>Proceedings of Elliott Society of Natural History</i> |
| 1892-1894 | Professor emeritus, College of Charleston, Charleston, S.C. |
| 1894, Nov. 21 | Died, Charleston, S.C. |

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Lewis Reeves Gibbes (1810-1894) span the years 1793-1894, with the bulk of the material from Gibbes's tenure as a professor at the College of Charleston, 1838-1894. The collection consists almost entirely of correspondence received, but also includes clippings, calling cards, resolutions, scientific circulars, announcements, specimen lists, reports of experiments, various memorabilia, and some copies of letters sent which were nearly all typed or written by others after Gibbes's death.

Also in the collection are letters received by two of Gibbes's forebears, Robert Gibbes and Lewis S. Gibbes. Dating from 1793 to the late 1820s, they vary in content from an item of 1800 commenting on the recent national elections, to correspondence relating to St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church, John's Island, South Carolina, to a series of letters from the guardian of a family member studying at Harvard College. An addendum to the collection contains correspondence of James MacBride, 1784-1817, a South Carolina botanist whose papers were included among the original purchase of the Gibbes Papers. Included are letters from Thomas Smith Grimké and John C. Calhoun when he was a young congressman active in the cause of war with Britain, 1811-1813.

Scion of a prominent South Carolinian family, Lewis Gibbes returned to South Carolina after medical study abroad in the mid-1830s to become professor of mathematics, physics, and astronomy at the College of Charleston. His papers document extensive connections with educators and university administrators, particularly in the South and focus on scientific and research undertakings. An early contributor to the Smithsonian Institution, he was a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. The Civil War interrupted but did not terminate his correspondence with scientists outside the Confederacy.

The Gibbes Papers are as much a source of information about the work of Gibbes's peers as of his own studies. Important correspondents include Alexander Dallas Bache, James D. Dana, Asa Gray, and Joseph Henry, all of whom shared technical data and exchanged botanical, zoological, or geological specimens. The correspondence with Gray is especially notable for the longevity of their communication and because it includes copies of Gibbes's replies. Other significant material includes descriptions of experiments, specifications for laboratory devices, meteorological readings, circulars containing news of recent publications and announcements of scientific meetings, astronomical reports from observatories around the nation, communications with publishers and manufacturers of scientific instruments, and field reports from colleagues and former students throughout the United States and Europe.

There is little concerning Gibbes's private life in these papers. Two exceptions are the letters he received from Robert W. Gibbes prior to the Civil War and letters from S. P. Ravenel after the war. Other than a letter Gibbes wrote to his brother John while a student at South Carolina College in 1828, the collection contains no correspondence with immediate family members.

Additional correspondents include Stephen Alexander, Jacob Whitman Bailey, E. R. Beadle, Amos Binney, Langdon Cheves, Thomas Cooper, James D. B. DeBow, Henry William DeSaussure, Charles Ellet, Elizabeth Fries Lummis Ellet, James Espy, Alex M. Forster, Benjamin Apthorp Gould, Samuel Steman Haldeman, Edward Claudius Herrick, John Lawrence LeConte, Joseph LeConte, Elias Loomis, Joseph Lovering, G. E. Manigault, Francis Markoe, Matthew Fontaine Maury, C. G. Memminger, Robert Treat Paine, James L. Petigru, C. C. Pinckney, William C. Redfield, E. S. Ritchie, John Daniel Runkle, Jared Sparks, William Stimpson, David Humphreys Storer, William Henry Trescot, M. Tuomey, Joseph Winlock, and William Wurdemann.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in three series:

- [Correspondence, 1793-1894, n.d.](#)
- [Printed Matter, n.d.](#)
- [James MacBride Papers, 1808-1817](#)

Description of Series

Container

Series

BOX 1-16
REEL 1-8

Correspondence, 1793-1894, n.d.

BOX 1-15
REEL 1-8

Bound, 1793-1894, n.d.

Bound volumes of correspondence received and a few copies of letters sent with related lists, reports of experiments, circulars and announcements, resolutions, calling cards, and miscellaneous items.

Arranged chronologically.

BOX 16
REEL 8

Unbound, 1828-1883

Letters received and copies of letters sent.

Arranged alphabetically by name or correspondent and therein chronologically.

BOX 16
REEL 8

Printed Matter, n.d.

Calling cards.

BOX 16
REEL 8

James MacBride Papers, 1808-1817

Mostly correspondence received, with an index.

Arranged chronologically.

Container List

Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 17,327

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Contents</i> |
|------------------------------------|---|
| BOX 1-16 REEL 1-8 | Correspondence, 1793-1894, n.d. |
| BOX 1-15 REEL 1-8 | Bound, 1793-1894, n.d. Bound volumes of correspondence received and a few copies of letters sent with related lists, reports of experiments, circulars and announcements, resolutions, calling cards, and miscellaneous items. Arranged chronologically. |
| BOX 1 REEL 1 | 1793, Jan. 12-1844, Feb. 12 |
| BOX 2 REEL 1-2 | 1844, Feb. 13-1847, July 15 |
| BOX 3 REEL 2 | 1847, July 16-1849, Nov. 27 |
| BOX 4 REEL 2-3 | 1849, Nov. 28-1851, Oct. 13 |
| BOX 5 REEL 3 | 1851, Oct. 15-1854, Mar. 13 |
| BOX 6 REEL 3-4 | 1854, Mar. 14-1855, Dec. 27 |
| BOX 7 REEL 4 | 1855, Dec. 28-1858, May 27 |
| BOX 8 REEL 4 | 1858, May 28-1860, Oct. 16 |
| BOX 9 REEL 5 | 1860, Oct. 18-1867, Sept. 16 |
| BOX 10 REEL 5 | 1867, Sept. 18-1872, Oct. 1 |
| BOX 11 REEL 6 | 1872, Oct. 3-1880, Dec. 18 |

Correspondence, 1793-1894, n.d.

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Contents</i> |
|------------------|--|
| BOX 12 REEL 6 | 1880, Dec. 20-1883, Sept. 19 |
| BOX 13 REEL 7 | 1883, Sept. 20-1888, June 27 |
| BOX 14 REEL 7 | 1888, June 28-1892, July 11 |
| BOX 15 REEL 8 | 1892, July 13-1894, Sept. 12, n.d. |
| BOX 16 REEL 8 | Unbound, 1828-1883 Letters received and copies of letters sent. Arranged alphabetically by name or correspondent and therein chronologically. |
| BOX 16 REEL 8 | Gibbes, John (brother), 1828 Gray, Asa, 1842-1883 Loomis, Elias, 1848, 1854 Lovering, Joseph, 1855-1860 Redfield, William C., 1832, 1838, 1854-1855 Torrey, John, 1839, 1844, 1851-1854 Westerman Co., 1858-1860 |
| BOX 16 REEL 8 | Printed Matter, n.d. Calling cards. |
| BOX 16 REEL 8 | Calling cards, n.d. |
| BOX 16 REEL 8 | James MacBride Papers, 1808-1817 Mostly correspondence received, with an index. Arranged chronologically. |
| REEL 8 | Correspondence, 1808-1817 |