

# Guide to the Ralph P. Cobbold Papers

MS 1663



compiled by Carol King

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Yale University Library  
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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
(203) 432-1735  
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 1663

**CREATOR:** Cobbold, Ralph Patteson

**TITLE:** Ralph Patteson Cobbold papers

**DATES:** 1903

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 0.25 linear feet

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The papers consist of two manuscript journals recounting the campaign against Maxamad Cabdulle Xasan, the "Mad Mullah of Somaliland," from March 19 to August 5, 1903. Cobbold describes the sufferings on the march, the heat, the lack of palatable food, native customs, intelligence reports from escaped prisoners of the Mullah, details of the Italian campaign against the Mullah, reports of casualties, and skirmishes and rumors of a disastrous defeat of the British force. Preceding the journal is Cobbold's retained copy of a letter written by him at the end of January 1903 describing the plans for disembarking troops and proceeding against the Mullah.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1663>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1663>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.        box  
f.        folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Transferred by the African Collection Curator, 1994.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The entire collection is available on microfilm. Patrons must use HM 265 instead of the originals.

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### Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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### Preferred Citation

Ralph Patteson Cobbold Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

Major Ralph Patteson Cobbold was a member of a well-known Suffolk, England family of bankers, and travelled extensively in Central Asia. With Major Algernon Hanbury-Tracy, Cobbold went on a special mission to the Emperor Menelik of Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), the result of their visit being the consolidation of British interests and influence in that part of the world. In 1901, Cobbold marched with the Abyssinian army during the Somaliland campaign, and in 1903 he was again attached to the army, which formed part of the combined Abyssinian, British, and Italian expedition against Maxamad Cabdulle Xasan.

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## Scope and Contents

The Ralph P. Cobbold Papers consist of Cobbold's diaries which provide a detailed description of the joint military campaign launched by the British, Italians, and Abyssinians (now Ethiopians) against the religious reformer, Maxamad Cabdulle Xasan (the Mad Mullah), in Ogaden Country, 1901.

Cobbold's journals describe the hardships encountered on the expedition such as the heat and unpalatable food, details of the Italian campaign against the Mullah, rumors of a defeat of the British force, and intelligence reports from the Mullah's escaped prisoners. A letter written by Cobbold in January, 1903 at Berbera, the chief port of British Somaliland, describes plans for disembarking troops and supplies and proceeding against the Mullah.

A volume of military reports and despatches written by A. Hanbury-Tracy (Royal Horse Guards) and by R. P. Cobbold (Late 60th Rifles) includes original prints of the Abyssinian fighters in the field.

The collection was acquired by the African Collection Curator in 1994.

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## Collection Contents

b. 1, f. 1reel 1U	"Captain Cobbold's Diary": typescript English	1901 March 8- September 30
b. 1, f. 2 - 3reel 1U	[Captain Cobbold's Diary]: handwritten English	1903 March 19- August 5
b. 1, f. 4reel 1U	Reports, despatches by A. Hanbury-Tracy and Ralph P. Cobbold: typescript with original prints of Abyssinian troops in the field	1901 April 10- September 6

## **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.

### **Subjects**

Maxamad Cabdulle Xasan's Rebellion, Somalia,  
1900-1920

### **Geographic Names**

British Somaliland -- History  
Somalia -- History

### **Names**

Cobbold, Ralph Patteson  
Maxamad Cabdulle Xasan, 1864-1920