

Guide to the William Sully Beebe Papers

MS 915



compiled by Janet Elaine Gertz

November 1982

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	3
Requesting Instructions	3
Administrative Information	4
Immediate Source of Acquisition	4
Conditions Governing Access	4
Conditions Governing Use	4
Preferred Citation	4
Biographical / Historical	4
Scope and Contents	4
Collection Contents	5
Selected Search Terms	7

Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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CALL NUMBER: MS 915

CREATOR: Beebe, William Sully, 1841-1898

TITLE: William Sully Beebe papers

DATES: 1844-1898

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.75 linear feet

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Largely writings on Biblical subjects and on the Indians of South and Central America to support William Sully Beebe's theory that "a great philosophical cult once occupied all the Americas, originating in Peru" and that there is a relationship between the phonetic values of their pictographs and those of the semitic languages. He also held that their legends resemble those of the Genesis cycle, which, Beebe believed, had their origin in America. Included in the papers are several letters on these subjects by Beebe to Josiah Willard Gibbs, William Dwight Whitney and Henry Clark Corgin. Also miscellaneous newspaper clippings, 1893-1894, on archaeology and biblical research.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0915>

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.0915>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to 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

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of William Sully Beebe in 1895 and Frances Dorothy Beebe in 1915.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

William Sully Beebe Papers (MS 915). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

William Sully Beebe was born on February 14, 1841, in Ithica, N. Y. He attended West Point Academy, graduating in 1863. He immediately entered the army, with an appointment of Second Lieutenant of Ordnance. During the Civil War, he received honors on multiple occasions. He remained in the army until 1874, when he resigned his commission. After his resignation, he spent his time creating a theory that argued, in part, for a connection between the Biblical book of Genesis and the ancient peoples of the Americas. With the start of the Spanish-American War, Beebe reentered the army and died of yellow fever in Havana, Cuba, on October 12, 1898.

Scope and Contents

The William Sully Beebe Papers consist largely of undated writings by Beebe on Biblical exegesis and philology, South and Central American Indian mythology and languages, and related topics. There are, in addition, four letters written by Beebe, one of which encloses a manuscript; a selection of newspaper clippings about ancient history, anthropology, and American Indians completes the collection.

The manuscripts "Biblical and Hebrew Roots" and "General Vocabulary, Maya and English" were given to Yale University in 1915 by Frances Dorothy Beebe. The remaining papers appear to have been the gift of William Sully Beebe in 1895.

Collection Contents

Correspondence

b. 1, f. 1 - 2	ALS to Josiah Willard Gibbs, enclosing ms. "Cosmic Theory of Primes"; with geometric figures and numerical equivalents of letters	1844 February 19
b. 1, f. 3	ALS to William Dwight Whitney	1885 January 27
b. 1, f. 3	2 ALS to Henry Clark Corgin	1898 June 11

Writings

Biblical topics

b. 1, f. 4	Part I: Introduction to an examination of the Bible as a treatise on creation	undated
b. 1, f. 5	Part II: Origin of Biblical proper names	undated
b. 1, f. 6	Part III: Discussion of contradictions in the Old Testament	undated
b. 1, f. 7	Part III: Discussion of Biblical allegories	undated
b. 1, f. 8	Part IV: Attempt to prove the truth of Biblical philology	undated
b. 1, f. 9	Part IV: Discussion of Assyrian characters	undated
b. 1, f. 10	Part V: The Bible as a description of benevolent design	undated
b. 1, f. 11	Biblical proper names, A-E	undated
b. 1, f. 12	Quotations from Bible and authorities on ancient history	undated
b. 1, f. 13	"Biblical and Hebrew Roots" English	undated

American Indian topics

b. 1, f. 14	"A Native Myth," [lecture before the Rembrandt Club, Brooklyn, NY] English	1883 January 7
b. 1, f. 15	Notes on the Chimalpopoca Manuscript [Mexican religion and legend of creation]	undated
b. 1, f. 16	Religious legends and gods of the Miztec [i.e., Mixtec] Indians	undated
b. 1, f. 17	Indian myth in English translation [fragment]	undated
b. 1, f. 18	Notes on religion of the Quiche [Quecha] Indians	undated
b. 1, f. 19 - 20	"General Vocabulary, Maya and English" English	undated
b. 2, f. 21	Unidentified Indian vocabulary, A-B	undated

Miscellaneous

b. 2, f. 22	Use of significant symbols to describe phenomena	undated
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Miscellaneous (continued)

b. 2, f. 23	Table of contents from <i>Analysis of Basque Legends</i> , by Rev. Wentworth Webster	undated
b. 2, f. 24	Unidentified	undated
b. 2, f. 25 - 27	Newspaper clippings	1893-1894

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.

Preferred Titles

Bible -- Language, style

Subjects

Indians -- Languages
Indians of Central America
Indians of Mexico -- Folklore
Maya language
Mixtec Indians
Quechua Indians

Geographic Names

Central America
South America

Names

Beebe, William Sully, 1841-1898