

Charles S. Sperry Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



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LC Online Catalog record:

<http://lcn.loc.gov/mm82040923>

Prepared by Peter Bunce

Collection Summary

Title: Charles S. Sperry Papers

Span Dates: 1862-1912

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1900-1911)

ID No.: MSS40923

Creator: Sperry, Charles S. (Charles Stillman), 1847-1911

Extent: 2,300 items ; 14 containers plus 1 oversize ; 6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English, with some French

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

Summary: Naval officer and diplomat. General and family correspondence, orders to duty, journals, reports, memoranda, and other papers relating to Sperry's naval career.

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.

People

Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919.

Sperry, Charles S. (Charles Stillman), 1847-1911.

Organizations

Conference for the Revision of the Geneva Convention of 1864 (1906 : Geneva, Switzerland)

International Peace Conference (2nd : 1907 : Hague, Netherlands)

United States. Navy--Foreign service--Philippines.

Occupations

Diplomats.

Naval officers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Charles S. Sperry, naval officer and diplomat, were given to the Library of Congress by his son, Charles S. Sperry, in 1920, and his wife, Edith Sperry, in 1921. Another son, Marcy L. Sperry, gave additional papers in 1946.

Processing History

The papers of Charles S. Sperry were arranged and described in 1977. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Charles S. Sperry is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Charles S. Sperry are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

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

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1847, Sept. 3	Born, Brooklyn, N. Y.
1866	Graduated, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md. Duty in USS <i>Sacramento</i>
1868	Duty in USS <i>Kearsarge</i>
1871	Duty in storeship Supply
1872	Duty in USS <i>Worcester</i> , North Atlantic Squadron
1874	Duty at U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.
1877	Married Edith Marcy
1878	Duty in USS <i>Richmond</i>
1884	Executive officer, USS <i>Quinnebaug</i> , European Station
1887	Duty at U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.
1891	Executive officer, USS <i>Chicago</i> , South Atlantic Station
1894	Duty in Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, Washington, D.C.
1895	Ordnance officer, Navy Yard, New York, N.Y
1898	Commander, USS <i>Yorktown</i> , Philippines
1900	Duty in Bureau of Equipment, Navy Department, Washington, D.C.
1901	Commander, USS <i>New Orleans</i> , Asiatic Station
1903	Senior officer, Southern Squadron, Asiatic Station
1904	President, Naval War College, Newport, R.I.
1906	Promoted to rear admiral Delegate, International Conference on the Revision of the Geneva Convention of August 22, 1864, for treatment of the sick and wounded
1907	U.S. naval delegate, Second Hague Conference
1908-1909	Commander in chief of the Battle Fleet, cruise around the world
1909	Senior member, Board on Revision of Navy Regulations Retired
1911, Feb. 1	Died, Washington, D.C

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Charles Stillman Sperry (1847-1911) span the years 1862-1912, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1900-1911. The collection consists primarily of correspondence, orders, memoranda, and reports, supplemented by journals, letterbooks, letterpress books, printed matter, and miscellaneous material. The papers are organized by type of material with oversize filed at the end.

The journals and letterbooks chiefly relate to official naval business. The journal contains notes of Sperry's voyages and ports of call, as well as several crew lists. Letterbooks and letterpress volumes deal with personnel problems and current events of concern to the navy, among other topics.

Family correspondence, 1862 to 1912, covers the span dates of the collection. The earliest letters, written by Sperry as a midshipman, are addressed to a brother, a sister, and cousin. Letters to his wife Edith and son Charles make up most of the family correspondence. Personal and social activities as well as occasional current events and official matters are discussed in letters to his wife. Many of Sperry's letters to his son reflect his views on current events. For example, he foresaw trouble in the Far East prior to the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. The world cruise of the American Battle Fleet, 1907-1909, commanded by Sperry, highlights the correspondence of 1908 and early 1909.

Letters in the general correspondence are concerned chiefly with official naval business such as requests and grants for leaves of absence, letters of commendation, and reports of vessel's activities and maneuvers. The letters, chronologically arranged, span the years 1863-1911.

The subject file, alphabetically arranged, documents significant events in Sperry's life. His role as a delegate to the Geneva Convention in 1906 and the Hague Conference in 1907 is covered by correspondence, orders, memoranda, and reports, heavily supplemented by printed matter, much of it annotated. The printed matter, practically all of it in French, refers to proceedings, committee reports, and resolutions. The Ludlow case pertains to a controversy between Sperry and Commander Nicoll Ludlow over the former's fitness for duty and higher office.

Naval orders, 1865-1910, and naval promotions, 1868-1907, document Sperry's duty assignments and promotions. The Spanish-American War file, 1898-1900, deals exclusively with Sperry's activities in the Philippines. Of particular interest are the accounts of the capture of his landing party by Emilio Aguinaldo's forces. Concluding the subject file is a small amount of material on the world cruise of the American Battle Fleet. It consists of correspondence including four letters from Theodore Roosevelt, speeches, reports, and printed matter.

The speech, article, and lecture file covers some of the major events in Sperry's life. Topics include the Hague Conventions; the role of navy diplomacy; the railways in China, Manchuria, and Korea, complete with maps; and the world cruise. Most of the materials are drafts and at least one is incomplete.

The bulk of the miscellany is printed matter, including naval books and certificates and Hague Conference material.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged by type of material with oversize filed at the end.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	Journals and letterbooks
BOX 1	Journal, 1866-1909
BOX 1	Letterbook, 1887
BOX 1	Letterpress books
BOX 1	1897-1902
BOX 1	1902-1903
BOX 2	1907-1909
BOX 2	Index to letters sent, 1906-1907
BOX 2	Index to letters received, 1906-1907
BOX 3	Family correspondence
BOX 3	1862-1899
BOX 4	1900-1902
BOX 5	1903-1908
BOX 6	1909-1912, undated
BOX 7	General correspondence, 1863-1911, undated
BOX 8	Subject file
BOX 8	Geneva Convention (1907), 1898-1906
BOX 9-11	Hague Conference (1906), 1904-1908 <i>See also Oversize</i>
BOX 12	Ludlow, Nicoll, case, 1887-1895
BOX 12	Naval orders, 1865-1910
BOX 12	Naval promotions, 1868-1907
BOX 12	Spanish-American War, 1898-1900
BOX 13	World cruise, 1908-1909
BOX 13	Speeches, articles, and lectures
BOX 14	Miscellany
BOX 14	Printed matter
BOX 14	Naval books
BOX 14	Naval certificates
BOX 14	Calling cards
BOX 14	Greeting cards
BOX 14	Postcards
BOX 14	Letterheads
BOX 14	Newspaper clippings
BOX 14	College magazine
BOX 14	Programs
BOX 14	Receipts and notices
BOX 14	Transportation schedules
BOX 14	Other
BOX 14	Financial and legal material
BOX 14	Writings and sketches

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 14	Cloth samples
BOX OV 1	Oversize
BOX OV 1	Subject file
BOX OV 1	Hague Conference
