

# A. D. Bache Papers

A Register of His Papers in the Library  
of Congress

Prepared by Marilyn Parr  
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, 2007

Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms007077>

Latest revision: 2009 October

# Collection Summary

Title: A. D. Bache Papers

Span Dates: 1828-1863

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1836-1863)

ID No.: MSS11494

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

Extent: 2,000 items; 18 containers; 7.2 linear feet; 5 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Scientist, educator, and superintendent of the United States Coast Survey.

Correspondence, a journal, and miscellaneous material reflecting Bache's service with the United States Coast Survey, his work at the Dudley Observatory, and his European trip to study educational methods.

## 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.

### Personal Names

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

Crittenden, John J. (John Jordan), 1787-1863--Correspondence.

Dahlgren, John Adolphus Bernard, 1809-1870--Correspondence.

Dana, James Dwight, 1813-1895--Correspondence.

Davis, Charles Henry, 1807-1877--Correspondence.

Dean, George W. (George Washington), 1825-1897--Correspondence.

Dudley, Blandina Bleecker, 1783-1863--Correspondence.

Gould, Benjamin Apthorp, 1824-1896--Correspondence.

Henry, Joseph, 1797-1878--Correspondence.

Peirce, Benjamin, 1809-1880--Correspondence.

Silliman, Benjamin, 1816-1885--Correspondence.

Waring, George E. (George Edwin), 1833-1898--Correspondence.

### Organizations

Dudley Observatory.

Girard College--Presidents.

United States Coast Survey.

United States. Light-House Board.

### Subjects

Astronomy--Research.

Discoveries in science.

Education--Europe--Methodology.

International relations.

Navigation--Atlantic Coast (U.S.)

Weights and measures--United States.

### Locations

Atlantic Coast (U.S.)--Maps.

Europe--Description and travel.

### Occupations

Educators.

Scientists.

# Administrative Information

## Provenance:

The papers of A. D. Bache, physicist and administrator, were deposited in the Library of Congress by Caroline Henry, daughter of Bache's colleague, Joseph Henry, in 1914. A small addition was given by Alice Scoville Barry in 1981 and transferred to the collection from the Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection in 2003. One item was purchased in 1973.

## Processing History:

The A. D. Bache Papers were processed in 1975. The finding aid was revised and expanded with the addition of a few items in 2003 and revised again in 2009.

## Additional Guides:

The deposit of 1914 has been briefly described in the *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress, 1914*, pp. 59-60.

## Transfers:

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Some maps have been transferred to the Geography and Map Division. A photograph has been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the Bache Papers.

## Copyright Status:

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

## Access and Restrictions:

The Bache Papers 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.

## Microfilm:

A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on five reels. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the microfilm edition.

## Preferred Citation:

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

# Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1806, July 19	Born, Philadelphia, Pa.
1821-1825	Attended United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.
1825-1826	Assistant, Department of Engineering, United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.

1826-1828	Assigned to the Army Corps of Engineers, Newport, R.I.
1828	Married Nancy Clarke Fowler
1828-1836	Professor of natural philosophy and chemistry, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.
1829	Elected member, American Philosophical Society and the Franklin Institute
1833-1836	Member, Board of Trustees, Girard College, Philadelphia, Pa.
1836	Elected president, Girard College, Philadelphia, Pa. Went to Europe to observe educational institutions, methods, and discipline
1839	Published <i>Report on Education in Europe</i> . Philadelphia: Lydia R. Bailey Appointed principal, Central High School, Philadelphia, Pa.
1840	Resigned as president of Girard College to be superintendent of schools, Philadelphia, Pa.
1842	Professor, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.
1843-1867	Superintendent, United States Coast Survey
1850-1851	President, American Association for the Advancement of Science
1855-1857	President, American Philosophical Society
1861-1865	Vice president, United States Sanitary Commission
1863	Planned the defense of Philadelphia, Pa., against Robert E. Lee's advance into the North
1863-1867	Charter member and first president, National Academy of Sciences
1864-1865	Visited Europe to recover his health
1867, Feb. 17	Died in Newport, R.I.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Alexander Dallas Bache (1806-1867) span the years 1828-1863 and include six series: [General Correspondence](#), [Special Correspondence](#), [Journal](#), [Scrapbook](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Addition](#). The bulk of the material is concentrated in the years 1836-1838 and 1857-1863.

The [General Correspondence](#) series relates mainly to the United States Coast Survey when Bache served as superintendent, 1843-1867. During his administration the Coast Survey published detailed maps of the East Coast of the United States. Its navigation charts of the Carolina and Georgia coasts were used during the Civil War to assist in enforcing the blockade of Southern ports.

Bache devised new instruments and methods to improve the work of the Coast Survey. While with the Survey, he also served on the Light-House Board and was superintendent of weights and

measures, coordinating these activities to produce detailed navigation charts. Correspondents include John Jordan Crittenden, John A. Dahlgren, Charles H. Davis, Benjamin A. Gould, Joseph Henry, Benjamin Peirce, Benjamin Silliman (1816-1885), and George E. Waring.

The Dudley Observatory in Albany, New York, was established in 1856 for the advancement of astronomy. Bache was a member of the Scientific Council which directed the Observatory's research and controlled daily operations; other council members were Benjamin Gould, Joseph Henry, and Benjamin Peirce. A conflict of interest between the Scientific Council and the Board of Trustees, which almost destroyed the Observatory, is detailed in the [Special Correspondence](#) series. Principal correspondents were Blandina Dudley, main financial supporter of the Observatory, and Benjamin Gould, Joseph Henry, Thomas Olcott, Benjamin Peirce, and C. H. F. Peters.

A [scrapbook](#) of newspaper clippings reflects Bache's interest in scientific developments of the period. The [Miscellany](#) series consists of a partial index of correspondents between 1857 and 1860, and the [Addition](#) contains photocopies of letters from George W. Dean to Bache, 1860-1861.

## Related Materials

In addition to the correspondence in the Bache Papers, there are Bache letters in other collections in the Manuscript Division, including the papers of [Lewis Reeves Gibbes](#), [Matthew F. Maury](#), [Samuel F. B. Morse](#), and Simon Newcomb. Other repositories holding collections relating to Bache are the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California; the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in six series:

- [General Correspondence, 1828-1863, n.d.](#)
- [Special Correspondence, 1855-1859, n.d.](#)
- [Journal, 1836-1838, n.d.](#)
- [Scrapbook, 1829-1843](#)
- [Miscellany, 1857-1860, n.d.](#)
- [Addition, 1860-1861](#)

## Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-9 REEL 1-4	<u>General Correspondence, 1828-1863, n.d.</u>  Bound volumes of letters received and sent by Bache. Arranged chronologically and therein alphabetically by name of correspondent.
BOX 10 REEL 4	<u>Special Correspondence, 1855-1859, n.d.</u>  Bound volume of letters sent and received concerning the Dudley Observatory. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 11-16 REEL 5	<u>Journal, 1836-1838, n.d.</u>  Bound volumes of a journal kept by Bache on a trip to Europe to study educational methods. Arranged chronologically with undated notes at the ends of volumes 15 and 16.
BOX 17 REEL 5	<u>Scrapbook, 1829-1843</u>  Newspaper clippings on scientific developments and other subjects of interest to Bache. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 18 REEL 5	<u>Miscellany, 1857-1860, n.d.</u>  Partial index to Bache correspondence and a note. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 18 not filmed	<u>Addition, 1860-1861</u>  Photocopies of letters from George W. Dean to Bache. Arranged chronologically.

# Container List

Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 16,511

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-9 REEL 1-4	General Correspondence, 1828-1863, n.d.  Bound volumes of letters received and sent by Bache. Arranged chronologically and therein alphabetically by name of correspondent.
BOX 1 REEL 1	1828, May 29-1857, Sept. 10
BOX 2 REEL 1	1857, Sept. 18-1858, June 4
BOX 3 REEL 1-2	1858, June 5-Dec. 23
BOX 4 REEL 2	1858, Dec. 24-1859, Aug. 2
BOX 5 REEL 2	1859, Aug. 5-1860, May 30
BOX 6 REEL 3	1860, May 31-1861, June 10
BOX 7 REEL 3	1861, June 11-Nov. 28
BOX 8 REEL 3-4	1861, Nov. 29-1862, Apr. 19
BOX 9 REEL 4	1862, Apr. 21-1863, Apr. 10, n.d.
BOX 10 REEL 4	Special Correspondence, 1855-1859, n.d.  Bound volume of letters sent and received concerning the Dudley Observatory. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 10 REEL 4	Dudley Observatory, Albany, N.Y., 1855-1859, n.d.
BOX 11-16 REEL 5	Journal, 1836-1838, n.d.  Bound volumes of a journal kept by Bache on a trip to Europe to study educational methods. Arranged chronologically with undated notes at the ends of volumes 15 and 16.
BOX 11 REEL 5	1836, Nov. 2-16
BOX 12	1836, Nov.17-Dec. 10

REEL 5	
BOX 13	1836, Dec. 17-30
REEL 5	
BOX 14	1837
REEL 5	
BOX 14	Jan. 1- Feb. 5
REEL 5	
BOX 15	Nov. 19-Dec. 9, n.d.
REEL 5	
BOX 16	1838, Jan. 1-Mar. 29, n.d.
REEL 5	
BOX 17	Scrapbook, 1829-1843
REEL 5	
	Newspaper clippings on scientific developments and other subjects of interest to Bache. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 17	Newspaper clippings, 1829-1843
REEL 5	
BOX 18	Miscellany, 1857-1860, n.d.
REEL 5	
	Partial index to Bache correspondence and a note. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 18	Partial index
REEL 5	
BOX 18	1857-1858, D-H
REEL 5	
BOX 18	1858-1859, A-H
REEL 5	
BOX 18	1859-1860, H-K
REEL 5	
BOX 18	1860, A-Z
REEL 5	
BOX 18	Note, n.d.
REEL 5	
BOX 18	Addition, 1860-1861
not filmed	
	Photocopies of letters from George W. Dean to Bache. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 18	Photocopies of letters from George W. Dean to Bache, 1860-1861
not filmed	