



Guide to the Bailey Willis Papers, 1882-1896

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Summary

Collection Title:

Bailey Willis papers, 1882-1896

Creator:

Willis, Bailey, 1857-1949

Abstract:

U.S. Geological Survey geologist. Collection consists mainly of letters Willis wrote to his wife but also includes letters to him and between other family members. They frequently wrote to one another in code; a key to the code is with the collection. His letters pertain to the Geological Survey as well as family, travels, the Appalachians and other prominent geologists such as Raphael Pumpelly. A few sketches are also included.

Extent:

1.5 Linear Feet
256 Items

Physical Location:

For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.

Language:

English

Language:

Material in English

Collection ID:

RL.01392

Permalink:

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/willisbailey/>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Bailey Willis Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

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Background

Scope and Content

Collection consists mainly of letters Willis wrote to his wife, Altona Grinnel, but also includes letters to him and between other family members. They frequently wrote to one another in code; a key to the code is with the collection. His letters pertain to the Geological Survey as well as family, travels, the Appalachians and other prominent geologists such as Raphael Pumpelly. A few sketches are also included.

Biographical/Historical

Bailey Willis (1857-1949) was a geological engineer who worked for the U.S. Geological Survey. He was born in New York and studied at Columbia University, earning degrees in mechanical and civil engineering. In 1879, he began working with the Northern Pacific Railroad, under the direction of Raphael Pumpelly, and surveyed regions of Appalachia and the Northwestern U.S. He visited Mt. Rainier in 1882, and later contributed to its designation as a National Park.

Willis began working for the U.S. Geological Survey in 1884, spending the next decade working and researching in the Appalachian Mountains and throughout the eastern U.S. His publications on the region's geology garnered international attention from scientists. In 1903, he led an expedition funded by the Carnegie Institution to northern China, an area previously unexplored by geologists. He also traveled and mapped geology throughout South America, Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe. Later in his career he lectured at Johns Hopkins and Stanford, retiring from teaching in 1922. He remained an active explorer and geologist, however, until his death in 1949.

Willis married Altona Grinnell in 1882; the couple had one child before she died in 1896. Willis remarried in 1898 to Margaret Baker. They had three children.

This historical note is drawn from Eliot Blackwelder's biographical memoir "Bailey Willis: 1857-1949," published by the National Academy of Sciences in 1961.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Acquisition Information

The Bailey Willis Papers were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a purchase in 1981.

Processing Information

Processed by RL Staff, date unknown.

Encoded by Meghan Lyon, March 2013

Materials may not have been ordered and described beyond their original condition.

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Names and Subjects

- Geologists
- Pumpelly, Raphael, 1837-1923
- Geological Survey (U.S.)
- Willis, Bailey, 1857-1949
- Willis, Bailey, 1857-1949

Collection Inventory

Papers from Palo Alto, California, 1882-1896

Physical Description: 3 boxes

Information folder	Box 1
Papers, 1882-1884	Box 1
Papers, 1885-1889, July	Box 2
Papers, 1889, August-1896 and undated	Box 3

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