

John N. Cobb papers, 1876-1970

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Cobb, John N. (John Nathan), 1868-1930
Title	John N. Cobb papers
Dates	1876-1970 (inclusive) 1876 1970 1897-1930 (bulk) 1897 1930
Quantity	11.04 cubic feet (25 boxes and 3 folders)
Collection Number	1595
Summary	Papers of a fisheries biologist, author and editor, federal official, and University of Washington professor.
Repository	University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Special Collections University of Washington Libraries Box 352900 Seattle, WA 98195-2900 Telephone: 206-543-1929 Fax: 206-543-1931 speccoll@uw.edu
Access Restrictions	The papers are open to all users.
Additional Reference Guides	
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for encoding this finding aid was partially provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Biographical Note

Best known as a leading authority on fisheries and for initiating and directing the University of Washington fisheries program, John Cobb was a fisheries biologist, author and editor, federal official, and college professor. Cobb became a leader in his field and received commissions to investigate fisheries along the Atlantic coast, Great Lakes, and the Pacific coast. Most of Cobb's work was in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, but his investigations included everything from lobster fisheries in Maine to sponge fisheries in Florida. Aside from his development of the University of Washington fisheries program, some of Cobb's most noteworthy contributions were inventions to allow salmon to overcome modern barriers. These included fishways, such as escalators, to allow salmon to pass over dams, and electric gates to keep young salmon out of irrigation ditches.

Cobb was born in 1868 in Oxford, New Jersey, where he attended public schools. After finishing high school, Cobb received no further formal education. In the late 1880s, he began to work as a newspaper reporter and editor.

Cobb's fisheries career began when he took a job with the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries, which lasted from 1895 until 1904. At the bureau he authored various publications, but unlike his later works, Cobb's

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research and writing in the 1890s reflected a lack of scientific training. During this time, Cobb married Harriet C. Bidwell of Jersey City in 1898.

As he gained more experience in the field, his work improved and his reputation began to spread; Cobb furthered his career in 1904 when he accepted a position as the assistant agent of the Salmon Fisheries of Alaska. From 1913 to 1917, he served as editor of the *Pacific Fisherman*, a journal published in Seattle. In 1917 Cobb became the assistant general superintendent of the Alaska Packers Association, a job he held until 1919.

In the 1910s Cobb began to encourage the University of Washington to establish the first fisheries college in the United States. The university had begun consulting Cobb about a fisheries program as early as 1914, but once World War I began, the university put the program on hold until 1919. When the university opened the school in 1919, Cobb was asked to be its director. Given that Cobb had not even earned a bachelor's degree, his appointment was somewhat unusual and reflected his remarkable reputation and achievements. Without any familiarity with academic customs, Cobb was assigned to organize a new college, recruit faculty, establish a curriculum, and teach.

During Cobb's tenure as director (and later dean) of the College of Fisheries, he continued to publish and enhance his reputation in the field. In 1921 and 1923, he served as president of the Pacific Fisheries Society. During his career at the University of Washington, Cobb also gained a reputation as an irascible character who dealt ruthlessly with students and faculty alike.

By 1929 Cobb had developed a debilitating heart condition that forced him to put his teaching and research aside. In January 1930, Cobb died of a heart attack in La Jolla, California, at the age of 61.

Content Description

Correspondence, diaries, writings, lectures, notebooks and field notes, publications, reports, drawings, clippings, certificates, labor agreements, financial records, legal documents, legislation, and newsletters (1890-1930). Also includes records relating to Genevieve Cobb, John N. Cobb's daughter; the University of Washington Fisheries College; and the Washington State Fisheries Board. Major correspondents include Miller Freeman, the Alaska Packers Association, the Pacific Fisherman, the Pacific Power and Light Company of Portland, Oregon, the Union Fish Company of San Francisco, the United States Fish and Fisheries Commission, the United States Fisheries Bureau, and the Washington Fisheries and Game Department.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

The creator's literary rights have not been transferred to the University of Washington Libraries.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

Arranged in 4 accessions:

Accession No. 1595-004, John N. Cobb family papers, 1876-1970

John N. Cobb papers, 1876-1970
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Accession No. 1595-005, John N. Cobb correspondence, 1893-1924
 Accession No. 1595-006, John N. Cobb papers, 1884-1969 (bulk 1897-1930)
 Accession No. 1595-007, John N. Cobb correspondence, blueprints, and photographs, 1921

Processing Note

Most of the visual materials from multiple accessions were relocated to the John N. Cobb Photographs, 1897-1926, PH Coll. 418, which is also located in Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries. From Accession No. 1595-004: one box of photographs and negatives were relocated in November 1977 and 3 photographs were relocated in April 1994. From Accession No. 1595-006, an unknown but substantial number of photographs was relocated in 1977.

Maps from Accession No. 1595-006 were relocated to the Map Collection & Cartographic Information Services division, University of Washington Libraries in 1977.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Accession No. 1595-004: John N. Cobb papers, 1876-1970

1 cubic foot (1 box)

Scope and Content: Correspondence (family), clippings, ephemera, photographs, speeches and writings.

Restrictions on Access: Presume open to all users.

Restrictions on Use: Creator's literary rights not transferred to the University of Washington Libraries.

Acquisition Info: Source: Genevieve C. Cobb, June 1974.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/ Folder	Accession	
1/1	1595-004 Historical Information	1913-1921
Correspondence		
Box/ Folder	Accession	
1/2	1595-004 National Cyclopedia of American Biography <u>Scope and Content:</u> Regarding biography of John N. Cobb.	1935-1936
1/3-17	1595-004 Family Correspondence <u>Arrangement:</u> Arranged chronologically.	1879-1941

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	<u>Scope and Content</u> : Major correspondents: John N. Cobb, Harriet (Bidwell) Cobb, Genevieve Cobb, Alfred Bidwell, Louise Bidwell, May Bidwell, Catherine Frentz, Maude (Bidwell) Palmer, Barbara Pollock. Notes on addresses of Cobb family members placed at the beginning of the family correspondence files.	
Box/ Folder	Accession	
1/18	1595-004 Clippings	1907-1972
	Ephemera <u>Arrangement</u> : Arranged chronologically.	
Box/ Folder	Accession	
1/19	1595-004 Harriet Bidwell (Mrs. John Cobb)	1876-1889
1/20	1595-004 Mr. and Mrs. John N. Cobb's Wedding and Honeymoon	1898
1/21	1595-004 Miscellaneous	1914-1930
1/22	1595-004 University of Washington Library	1934-1947
1/23	1595-004 John N. Cobb	1949-1967
Box/ Folder	Accession	
1/24	1595-004 Legal Documents Relating to the Estate of Harriet Bidwell Cobb	1930-1942
1/25	1595-004 Photographs	circa 1898-1931
	Speeches and Writings	
Box/ Folder	Accession	
1/26	1595-004 Cobb, Harriet B.	undated
1/27	1595-004 Cobb, John N.	1904

Accession No. 1595-005: John Cobb papers, 1893-1924

1 folder.

Scope and Content: Correspondence, 1893-1924.

Restrictions on Access: Open to all users.

Restrictions on Use: Copyright owned by Stanford University Archives.

Acquisition Info: Source: Joanne Webb, 3/31/1986.

Accession No. 1595-006: John N. Cobb Papers, 1884-1969 (bulk 1897-1930)

10 cubic feet (24 boxes and 1 vertical file)

Arrangement: Arranged in 4 series:

Professional and personal papers

Genevieve C. Cobb papers

University of Washington Fisheries College records

Washington (State) Fisheries Board records

Scope and Content: This accession is mostly about Cobb's professional work, with only a small number of records from the Fisheries College. The accession contains correspondence (bulk 1910-1928), diaries (1897-1928), writings, lectures, notebooks and field notes (bulk 1905-1915), publications, reports (1919-1929), drawings, photographs that were enclosed with letters, clippings, certificates, labor agreements (1914-1918), financial records (1907-1918), legal documents (1909, 1928), legislation (1899-1927), and newsletters. There are two groups of correspondence, general and fishways, which have some overlap.

There are also records relating to Genevieve Cobb, his daughter (1936-1952); the University of Washington Fisheries College (1920, 1923); and the Washington State Fisheries Board (1924-1926).

Major correspondents include Miller Freeman, the Alaska Packers Association, the Pacific Fisherman, the Pacific Power and Light Company of Portland, the Union Fish Company of San Francisco, the United States Fish and Fisheries Commission, the United States Fisheries Bureau, and the Washington Fisheries and Game Department.

Restrictions on Access: Open to all users.

Acquisition Info: Merger of Accession No. 1595-001 (gift of Genevieve C. Cobb, April 1971), Accession No. 1785-002 (gift of the University of Washington Oceanography Library, December 1971; Accession No. 1595-003 (gift of Genevieve C. Cobb, May 1972).

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Professional and Personal Papers		
Box/ Folder	Accession	
1/1-2	1595-006 Biographical Information	

Container(s)	Description	Dates
1/3	1595-006 Letters of Recommendation	circa 1884-1922
General Correspondence		
Box/ Folder	Accession	
1/4	1595-006 Alaska Codfish Company, San Francisco	1906-1915
1/5-7	1595-006 Alaska Packer's Association	1911-1929
1/8	1595-006 American Fisheries Society	1916
1/9	1595-006 Applegate, S.	1908
1/10	1595-006 Associated Sunday Magazines	1906-1909
1/11	1595-006 Atwood & Payne Company, Gloucester, Massachusetts	1912-1913
1/12	1595-006 British Columbia Fisheries Department	1919
1/13	1595-006 California Fish and Game Commission	1913-1916
1/14	1595-006 California Academy of Sciences	1916-1917
1/15	1595-006 Chamber of Commerce, Seattle	1911-1929
1/16	1595-006 Cohoon Packing Company, Orlando, Florida	1914
1/17	1595-006 Fishing Gazette	1913-1922
1/18	1595-006 Garfield, Charles D.	1921
1/19	1595-006 Hall, (G. Batcheller) Company	1918
1/20	1595-006 Hawaii Attorney General	1904
1/21	1595-006 Holder, Charles F.	1911-1915
1/22	1595-006 Ives, W.C.	1911
1/23	1595-006 Lippincott (J.B.) Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	1916

Container(s)	Description	Dates
1/24	1595-006 Little, Brown, and Company	1921, 1929
1/25	1595-006 McGowan, Henry S.	1908-1915
1/26	1595-006 MacMillan Company, Publishers	1921
1/27	1595-006 Matheson Fisheries Company, Anacortes, Washington	1915-1916
1/28	1595-006 National Canners Association	1919
1/29	1595-006 Pacific Fisheries Society	1915-1916, 1924
1/30	1595-006 Pacific Fisherman (Miller Freeman)	1909-1928
1/31	1595-006 Pinchot, Gifford	1911
1/32	1595-006 Poindexter, Miles C.	1911
1/33	1595-006 Robinson Fisheries Company, Anacortes, Washington	1914-1915
2/1	1595-006 Seattle Aquarium Society	1929
2/2	1595-006 Seattle Rod and Gun Club	1925, 1930
2/3	1595-006 Shannon, George D.	1899-1902
2/4	1595-006 Stanford University	1904-1917
2/5	1595-006 Thomas, William S.	1908-1909
2/6	1595-006 Union Fish Company, San Francisco, California	1910-1917
2/7	1595-006 Union Fishermen's Co-operative Packing Company, Astoria, Oregon	1915
2/8	1595-006 United States Agriculture Department	1914-1915
2/9	1595-006 United States Commerce and Labor Department	1906-1920
2/10	1595-006 United States Fish and Fisheries Commission	1895-1903
2/11-16	1595-006 United States Fisheries Bureau	1903-1929

Container(s)	Description	Dates
2/17	1595-006 United States Justice Department	1908, 1912
2/18	1595-006 Warren, Frank M.	1918-1919
2/19	1595-006 Washington (State) Conservation and Development Department	1924
2/20	1595-006 Washington (State) Fisheries and Game Department	1908-1921
2/21	1595-006 University of Washington	1918
Box/ Folder	Accession	
2/22-3/4	1595-006 Others, Alphabetical A-Z	1890-1930
Box/ Folder	Accession	
3/5	1595-006 Unidentified Fragments	
General Correspondence - Regarding Fishways		
Box/ Folder	Accession	
3/6	1595-006 Beaver, Hugh	1925, 1928
3/7	1595-006 California Fish and Game Commission	1924
3/8	1595-006 Chelan County Game Commission	1924-1925
3/9	1595-006 Cruickshank, J.H.	1925-1926
3/10	1595-006 Journal of Electricity	1924-1926
3/11	1595-006 Link-Belt Meese & Gottfried Company	1924
3/12	1595-006 O'Malley, Henry	1924
3/13	1595-006 Oregon Fish Commission	1924-1929

Container(s)	Description	Dates
3/14	1595-006 Pacific Power & Light Company, Portland	1924-1926
3/15	1595-006 Portland Electric Power Company	1924-1925
3/16	1595-006 United States Army Engineer Corp., Seattle District	1920-1929
3/17	1595-006 United States Fisheries Bureau	1924-1925
3/18	1595-006 United States Reclamation Bureau	1921-1925
3/19	1595-006 Veazie and Veazie, Portland, Oregon	1928
3/20	1595-006 Warren Packing Company Portland, Oregon	1924
3/21	1595-006 Washington Fisheries and Game Department	1923-1924
4/1	1595-006 Washington Irrigation & Development Company	1924
4/2	1595-006 Washington Water Power Company	1924, 1926
4/3-11	1595-006 Other Correspondence	1921-1929
Box/ Folder	Accession	
4/12-13	1595-006 Incoming Letters - Regarding Publications, Bibliographies, Reports, and Autographs	1893-1912
5/1	1595-006 Incoming Letters - Condolences on Death of Cobb	1930
5/2	1595-006 Outgoing Letters	1905-1929
Diaries		
Box/ Folder	Accession	
5/3	1595-006 March 1897 - January 1898	1897-1898
5/4	1595-006 February 1898 - October 1898	1898
5/5	1595-006 October 1898 - May 1899	1898-1899

Container(s)	Description	Dates
5/6	1595-006 May 1899 - April 1900	1899-1900
5/7	1595-006 April 1900 - November 1900	1900
6/1	1595-006 November 1900 - July 1901	1900-1901
6/2	1595-006 July 1901 - March 1902	1901-1902
6/3	1595-006 March 1902 - December 1902	1902
6/4	1595-006 December 1902 - December 1903	1902-1903
6/5	1595-006 December 1903 - December 1904	1903-1904
6/6	1595-006 July 1904 - September 1904	1904
6/7	1595-006 June 1905 - August 1905	1905
7/1	1595-006 January 1905 - October 1906	1905-1906
7/2	1595-006 May 1906 - September 1906	1906
7/3	1595-006 October 1906 - October 1907	1906-1907
7/4	1595-006 May 1907 - September 1907	1907
7/5	1595-006 October 1907 - December 1907	1907
7/6	1595-006 April 1908 - August 1908	1908
7/7	1595-006 April 1909 - July 1909	1909
8/1	1595-006 January 1909 - April 1910	1909-1910
8/2	1595-006 May 1910 - November 1910	1910
8/3	1595-006 May 1910 - October 1911	1910-1911
8/4	1595-006 April 1911 - July 1911	1911
8/5	1595-006 April 1912 - October 1913	1912-1913

Container(s)	Description	Dates
8/6	1595-006 April 1917 - July 1917	1917
8/7	1595-006 April 1918 - August 1918	1918
8/8	1595-006 July 1920 - August 1920	1920
8/9	1595-006 September 1920 - May 1922 <u>Scope and Content:</u> Includes a record of fish, fry, and eggs.	1920-1922
8/10	1595-006 June 1922 - June 1923	1922-1923
8/11	1595-006 June 1924 - October 1924	1924
9/1	1595-006 November 1926 - June 1927	1926-1927
9/2	1595-006 June 1927 - July 1927	1927
9/3	1595-006 June 1928	1928

Notebooks and Fieldbooks

Box/ Folder	Accession	
9/4	1595-006 Alaska Salmon Measurements	1906-1907
9/5	1595-006 Address Books - Assistant Alaska Salmon Agent	1912, undated
9/6-7	1595-006 Bibliographies	1902-1912
9/8	1595-006 Biological Survey Financial Records	1921
9/9-10	1595-006 Canning Procedures	1910-1915, undated
9/11	1595-006 Check Register	1907-1909
10/1	1595-006 Expenses	1909-1911
10/2	1595-006 Factbook on Fisheries	1917

Container(s)	Description	Dates
10/3-4	1595-006 Fisheries Related Topics	1907-1914
10/5	1595-006 Graves Notebook	undated
10/6	1595-006 Record of Negatives of Graves of Prominent People	undated
10/7	1595-006 Stores Record	1912

Writings by Cobb

Box/ Folder	Accession	
10/8-12/4	1595-006 Manuscripts and Typescripts <u>General Notes:</u> Numbered 1-108, missing 71, 102-106.	undated

Publications

Box	Accession	
12	1595-006 <i>Fisheries of Hawaiian Islands</i>	1902
12	1595-006 <i>Fisheries of Alaska</i>	1904-1911
13	1595-006 <i>Fisheries of Alaska</i>	1905-1910
13	1595-006 Miscellaneous Fishery Papers	1906
13	1595-006 <i>Pacific Salmon and Cod Fisheries</i>	1911
13	1595-006 <i>Pacific Salmon Fisheries</i>	1916
13	1595-006 <i>Pacific Cod Fisheries</i>	1927
14	1595-006 <i>Fish Cookery</i>	1922
14	1595-006 <i>Canning of Fishery Products</i>	1919

Box/ Folder	Accession	
14-15/3	1595-006 Others	

Container(s)	Description	Dates
15/4-16/1	1595-006 Lectures	1921-1929
Writings of Others		
Box/ Folder	Accession	
16/2-3	1595-006 Typescripts	1922, undated
Publications		
Box/ Folder	Accession	
16/4-5	1595-006 University of Washington	1924-1929
17/1	1595-006 Government Publications	1911, 1919, 1924
17/2-3	1595-006 Pacific Fisherman	1913, 1914, 1919
17/4-5	1595-006 Other	1921, 1926, 1930, 1950, undated
Box	Accession	
17	1595-006 Scrapbook, "Miscellaneous Papers by John N. Cobb"	1903-1918
Box/ Folder		
17/6	1595-006 Conferences and Conventions	1920, 1922
17/7	1595-006 Financial Records	1907-1918
18/1	1595-006 Labor Agreements	1914-1918
18/2	1595-006 Legal Documents	1909, 1928, undated
18/3	1595-006 Court Papers	undated

Container(s)	Description	Dates
18/4-8	1595-006 Legislation	1899-1927
18/9	1595-006 Executive Orders and Proclamations	1915-1923
18/10	1595-006 Treaties	undated
Reports		
Box/ Folder	Accession	
18/11	1595-006 Congressional	1919-1924
18/12	1595-006 Regarding Fishway Work	1924-1927
18/13	1595-006 Others	1929
Pack Reports		
Box/ Folder	Accession	
19/1-2	1595-006 Alaska	1914-1928
19/3-4	1595-006 British Columbia	1917-1930
19/5	1595-006 Puget Sound	1918-1929
19/6	1595-006 Others	1891-1924
Box/ Folder	Accession	
19/8	1595-006 Newsletter - Puget Sound Academy of Science	1930
19/9	1595-006 News Releases	1924
19/10	1595-006 Membership Cards	undated
19/11	1595-006 Announcements	undated
19/12	1595-006 Certificates	undated

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box:Oversize		
Misc. 3	1595-006 Certificates Oversize	undated
Box/ Folder		
19/13	1595-006 Programs	undated
19/14	1595-006 Lists	1911, undated
19/15	1595-006 Maps	undated
19/16-17	1595-006 Drawings of Fishways	undated
19/18	1595-006 Miscellany - Fishways	1897-1924
19/19	1595-006 Miscellany	1915-1929
20/1	1595-006 Ephemera - Canadian Pacific Railway Company	1918-1926
20/2	1595-006 Ephemera	1909-1926
20/3	1595-006 Photographs	undated
Clippings		
Box/ Folder	Accession	
20/4	1595-006 Fishways	1924-1928
20/5	1595-006 Legislation	1916-1917
20/6- 23/3	1595-006 Chronological and Unsorted Clippings	1896-1930, 1950, 1958, 1961, 1967-1969
Box	Accession	
24	1595-006 Flag - United States Fisheries Department	

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/ Folder	Accession	
23/4	1595-006 Genevieve C. Cobb Papers	1936-1952
23/5	1595-006 University of Washington Fisheries College Records	1920, 1923
Washington (State) Fisheries Board Records		
Box/ Folder	Accession	
23/6	1595-006 General Correspondence	1925-1926
23/7-9	1595-006 Meeting Transcripts	1924
23/10	1595-006 Hearings	undated
23/11	1595-006 Clippings	1913, 1924

Accession No. 1595-007: John N. Cobb papers, 1921-1921

1 folder

Scope and Content: Correspondence, blueprints and photographs; ca. 1921. The materials document the site and new installation of an enlarged salmon hatchery on the island of Etorofu, Japan.

Restrictions on Access: Presume open to all users

Restrictions on Use: Creator's literary rights not transferred to the University of Washington Libraries.

Acquisition Info: Source: Pamela Mofjeld, January 1987.

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

College teachers--Washington (State)--Seattle--Archives
 Fisheries--Alaska
 Fisheries--Pacific Coast (North America)
 Fisheries--Research
 Fisheries--Study and teaching (Higher)--Washington (State)--Seattle
 Fisheries--United States
 Fisheries--Washington (State)
 Fishery innovations--United States
 Fishery schools--Washington (State)--Seattle
 Fishery schools--Washington (State)--Seattle--Faculty--Archives

Fishery scientists--Washington (State)--Seattle--Archives
Fishways--United States

Personal Names :

Cobb, Genevieve Catherine, 1900-1977
Cobb, John N. (John Nathan), 1868-1930--Archives
Freeman, Miller, 1875-1955
Jordan, David Starr, 1851-1931

Corporate Names :

Alaska Packers Association
Pacific Power and Light Company
United States. Bureau of Fisheries
University of Washington. College of Fisheries
University of Washington--Faculty--Archives
Washington (State). Fisheries Board

Form or Genre Terms :

agreements
Clippings (Books, newspapers, etc.)
correspondence
Diaries
drawings
ephemera
field notes
financial records
lectures
legal files
Newsletters
Notebooks
Photographs
Publications
reports
Scrapbooks
writings

Titles within the Collection :

Pacific fisherman

Other Creators :

Corporate Names :

University of Washington. University Archives

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

University Archives/Faculty Papers (University of Washington)

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