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2021

**MSS0256. United States Weather Bureau, Memphis Station, records finding aid**

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United States Weather Bureau, Memphis Station, records

Title: United States Weather Bureau, Memphis Station, records
Collection No: MSS.256
Extent: 6 cubic feet
Inclusive Dates: 1871-1952

Abstract: The collection comprises 48 volumes of records of the U.S. Weather Bureau, Memphis Station, Tennessee, from 1871 to 1952.

Access: Open to all researchers.
Language: English
Preferred Citation: United States Weather Bureau, Memphis Station, records, Special Collections Department, University Libraries, University of Memphis.

Publication date: 2022 April
Scope and contents

The collection comprises 48 volumes of records of the U.S. Weather Bureau, Memphis Station, from 1871 to 1952 but mainly from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They include recorded comments and meteorological records of weather conditions, as well as river stages, barometer readings, frosts, waterfowl migrations, cloud formations, and precipitation. There are also station memoranda from the early twentieth century.

Subject terms


Inventory

Box 1
Daily Journal
These volumes contain daily comments and meteorological records on weather conditions. The recorders note the condition of instruments, changes in personnel, river stages, barometer readings, killing frosts, duck and geese migration, cloud formations, rain and storms.

Volume 1. March 1, 1871 - May 31, 1874.
On p.4 is a hand-drawn map of "Memphis tempest of March 15, 1871, 11:15-30 A.M." It indicates the path of wind and rain during a storm which isolated Memphis for two days; May 3, 1873, entry records "A rumor prevailed today that a slight shock of earthquake had been felt this morning."

Volume 2. June 1, 1874 - March 31, 1877.
June 20, 1874, entry notes that a portion of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in the rear of the weather bureau's building lost a portion of its roof; January 30, 1875, Memphis "Daily Appeal" begins publishing meteorological records; November 8, 1876, "Country people are beginning to complain of too much rain as it is injuring the cotton crop."

Volume 3. April 1, 1877 - September 4, 1878.
Yellow fever information is found on pp. 218-224. The entries refer to "yellow fever panic" and the death from the disease of Sgt. McElroy of the Bureau; June 17, 1877, entry describes a tornado.


Volume 5. January 1, 1881 - September 29, 1881. Also wind record.

January 20, 1882, entry mentions a smallpox epidemic in Memphis; p. 201 records a buffalo gnat plague; p. 110 lists visitors to the station with their occupation and purpose.
Volume 7. June 1, 1882 - August 31, 1883. Also miscellaneous wind data.
Volume 8. September 1, 1883 - October 31, 1884. Also miscellaneous wind data.
February 6, 1884, entry notes "Flood telegrams received. Heavy rains in Ohio Valley...will reach
the Mississippi early part of next week... Property and stock should be moved to points of safety.
Give general warning."; wind record for 1883-1884 is on pp.239-252.
Volume 9. November 1, 1884 - November 31, 1885. Also wind record.
March 1885, p. 80 contains a newspaper clipping reporting "that changes indicated in the
elements will be sent out on the several railway lines leaving this city."

**Box 2**
Volume 10. December 1, 1885 - September 1886. Also wind data.
December 24, 1885, entry notes that a telephone was installed in the office; August 31, 1886,
records earthquake shocks; many newspaper clippings from the newspapers of Memphis and
other cities on the Charleston, South Carolina, earthquake.

**Daily Journals**
Volume 11. September 1, 1886 - July 31, 1887. Also wind record.
Volume 13. September 1, 1888 - June 30, 1891.
Volume 16. July 1, 1895 - December 1900. Also some corrections to weather station records.

**Station Forms and Copies of Forms**
These volumes record daily time of observations, barometer, thermometer, hygrometer, relative
humidity readings, wind, lower clouds, upper clouds, rain or snow, cold wave records, river
observations, and wind velocity.

**Box 6**
Volume 19. April 20, 1872 - June 1873.
Volume 22. January 1, 1876 - March 31, 1877.

**Box 3**
Volume 23. April 1877 - June 1878.
Volume 25. October 18, 1879 - September 30, 1881.

**Box 6**
Volume 27. 1890 - 1892, Miscellaneous 1872.
Contains sunshine records, 1887-1889; river gauges, 1871-1889.
May 23, 1891, copy of letter concerning the transfer of the weather service from the Army Signal
Corps to the Department of Agriculture.

**Box 5**
Pages 395-404 contain the 1897 annual report, noting station activity during the flood of March
and April; annual reports for 1893-1900 are on pp.409-438.
Contains a list of persons injured and killed by lightning, a list of maps and bulletins issued, addresses of Memphis companies and individuals to be added to the forecast card list.

Station Forms and Copies of Forms
Volume 31. September 1898 - 1904.
Contains a brief history of the station on pp.255, 463.
Volume 32. 1901 - 1903.
Volume 34. 1904.

Box 4
River Stages
Contains reading of gauge, above high water and above low water, changes in last 24 hours, direction of wind, state of weather, rainfall, and remarks.
Volume 35. Daily river stages at Helena, Arkansas, November 1, 1874 - April 30, 1882.

Box 7

Meteorological Summary
Contains monthly and annual temperature, dew point, relative humidity, wind, precipitation in inches and hundredths, rain gauge above ground, clouds and weather.
Volume 41. Meteorological Summary, February 28, 1871 - December 31, 1890.
Continuation of Meteorological Summary.

Monthly Meteorological Report

Climatological Record
Pressure (highest and lowest in inches and hundredths, each month), temperature (absolute minimum, monthly mean maximum), degree days, weather (number of clear, cloudy and partly cloudy days), wind (prevailing direction and average hourly velocity), daily precipitation and snowfall.
Volume 44. Climatological Record, 1891 - 1910.
Volume 45. Climatological Record, 1911 - 1930, Records killing frosts since 1871.
Records killing frosts, visibility, instrumental equipment from 1871 to 1952.

Station Memorandum
Daily notes pertaining to the arrival of new equipment, problems with equipment, the use of Bureau records in court cases and other administrative matters.
Volume 47. Station Memorandum, January 7, 1905 - December 31, 1925.
February 20, 1905, reference, "Informed that efforts are being made by U.S. marshall to occupy
rooms in Custom House assigned to this Bureau."

Volume 48. Station Memorandum, January 1926 - July 1934.
January 26, 1933, reference to a visit to the station by the 8th grade class of Ernest Adam School.