

PHILIP FOX (1878 - 1944) PAPERS, 1904 - 1941
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Biography

Philip Fox was born on March 7, 1878 in Manhattan, Kansas, the son of Adjutant General of Kansas, Simeon I. Fox and Esther Butler Fox. He received his B.S. degree from Kansas State College in 1897. In the fall of 1899 he accepted the position of commandant and teacher of mathematics at St. John's Military School, Salina, Kansas, remaining there for two years. In 1901 he was awarded an M.S. by Kansas State College.

In the fall of 1901 he entered Dartmouth College as a senior to study under Edwin Brant Frost and his cousin, Ernest Fox Nicholes, then a professor of physics and later president of Dartmouth. Fox studied at Dartmouth for a year, receiving a second B.S. and remained another year as an assistant in physics.

In 1903 Fox was appointed Carnegie Research Assistant at the Yerkes Observatory of the University of Chicago where he was to remain for the next six years. In 1905 he married Ethel L. Snow of Chicago and spent a year, on leave from Yerkes, studying at the University of Berlin and the Potsdam Observatory. On his return he resumed his work at Yerkes as instructor in astrophysics.

In 1909, upon the nomination of Henry Crew, Fox was appointed to the position of professor of astronomy and Director of Dearborn Observatory at Northwestern University. He resigned in 1929.

With the organization of the first planetarium in America, the Adler Planetarium and Astronomical Museum, Fox entered a new field of activity as its first director. He lectured and gave demonstrations there and served as master of ceremonies on the occasion of the opening of the Chicago World's Fair in 1933. Fox was director of the Planetarium for eight years and continued for some time later as consultant to the Planetarium. In 1937 Fox was appointed director of the Museum of Science and Industry of Chicago. For three years he was active in furthering the work of the Museum; however, in 1940, owing to a change of policy of the governing board, Fox was suddenly ousted together with several department heads.

Fox began a military career as a young man just out of college. In 1898 he enlisted in the U.S. Army and served as a private in the Spanish American War, participating in the campaigns against the Moros of the Philippine Islands until October, 1899. He was promoted in the field for heroism in action to the rank of second lieutenant. In 1917, as a reserve officer, Fox was immediately available for service. He served in France for more than two years. He rose to the rank of Major of Infantry and Assistant Chief of Staff of the Seventh Division.

In 1941 Fox was recalled to active duty as a colonel and was assigned to the position of Commanding Officer of Gulf Coast Recreation Areas with headquarters at Mobile, Alabama. In May, 1942, he was transferred to the Signal Corps and designated as Commanding Officer of the Signal Corps Schools at Harvard University. In September of that year, upon the activation of the Army Electronics Training Center at Harvard, he became Commanding Officer of the Center. In September, 1943, he was retired from the army under the age regulations.

Fox published relatively few articles. His major scientific investigations are recorded in the *Annals of the Dearborn Observatory* (Vol. 1-3, 1915-1935). His association with Hale at Yerkes led Fox to undertake another massive study, *The Rotation of the Sun* (1921).

Fox was a member of many societies. He served as secretary and then vice-president of section D of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1925-1937. He served

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as secretary, councillor, and vice-president of the American Astronomical Society, 1912-1923 and 1938 - 1940. He received honorary doctor's degrees from Drake University and from his alma mater, Kansas State College. In 1936 he was decorated with the cross of the Legion d'Honneur of France. His fraternal affiliations included Alpha Delta Phi, Phi Kappa Phi, Phi Beta Kappa, and Sigma Xi.

Fox died on July 21, 1944 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. A military funeral service was held in the Harvard Chapel. Interment, with a military escort from Fort Riley, was in Manhattan, Kansas next to his parents.

Description of the Series

The Philip Fox papers, comprising one box, include correspondence, astronomical notes and calculations, notes and drafts of publications, and lists compiled by Fox of outstanding scientists.

The general correspondence covers the years from 1904 to 1941. Of interest are the four letters written in 1909 urging the purchase of the Simon Newcomb Library for the Astronomy Department at Northwestern. The standard equinox correspondence records Fox's interest in 1915 in establishing such a standard internationally.

In 1923 there occurred a traditional "class fight" between the freshman and sophomore classes at Northwestern. Members of each class attempted to carry off students from the rival class. In the course of one such episode, a high speed automobile chase through Evanston and Wilmette ended tragically with the death of Louis Aubere, who had been riding on the running board of one of the cars. Fox was a member of the committee of which investigated the incident. His detailed notes, three reports, and a chart of the events are included in the papers.

Also included are miscellaneous astronomical notes and calculations, unrelated to specific publications, followed by notes and drafts of several papers on flocculi (cloudlike shapes of calcium, hydrogen, or other elements, revealed in the solar atmosphere by the spectroheliograph).

Fox's publications (1911 to 1928) are listed in reports he sent to the president of Northwestern from 1922 to 1928. A few articles and offprints of publications by Fox are included in the papers, followed by the minutes of the 19th meeting of the American Astronomical Society in 1916, when Fox served as secretary.

The major publication of Fox, aside from volumes one through three of the *Annals of the Dearborn Observatory*, is the *Rotation of the Sun* (1921) which is found both as a rough draft and as a galley. Also included is his *Paper on the Rotation of the Sun*. The *Catalogue of Stellar Parallaxes* was compiled in the spring of 1939. The biographies of scientists were written by Fox in 1940, perhaps as a result of his investigations in connection with compiling a list of great scientists.

The remainder of the files consist of lists of astronomers, physicists, and other scientists. The correspondence which accompanies the lists of great astronomers was compiled for the Planetarium, and the list of physicists, astronomers, chemists, and mathematicians, was compiled for the Museum of Science and Industry.

The addition is comprised of thirty-six postcards, to and from Fox or the Dearborn Observatory. Each postcard carries a picture of an astronomical observatory. The addition has

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been incorporated into the Philip Fox Papers as Folder 22 of Box 1.

Provenance: The Philip Fox papers were donated to the University Archives by Dr. Robert Fox on April 14, 1981 as accession #81-81. Additional materials were separated from the records of the Dearborn Observatory (29/2) on October 8, 1982 as accession #82-126. The addition was transferred to the University Archives by the Dearborn Observatory on April 10, 1987, as Accession #87-66.

Restrictions: None.

Separations: One phonograph record was added to the NUA audio collection. One 1914 Syllabus was filed with NUA duplicate holdings. A number of photographs went to the Philip Fox folder in the Archives photographic collection.

Processor: Marion McMahan, fall 1982; Patricia Cloud, April 10, 1987 (addition).

Scanned and Reformatted by: Zoe Streicker-Howard, June 2005.

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Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	Biographical Materials	1930 - 1944
	2	Correspondence	1904 - 1941
	3	Correspondence: Standard Equinox	1915 - 1916
	4	Report of Freshman-Sophomore Hazing Incident	1923
	5	Astronomical Notes & Calculations	n.d.
	6	Notes & Papers on Flocculi	n.d.
	7	Lists of Publications by Philip Fox	1908 - 1928
	8	Articles by Philip Fox	1907 - 1938
	9	“Nineteenth Meeting of the American Astronomical Society” by Philip Fox	1916
	10	“Rotation of the Sun” by Philip Fox (rough draft)	1920
	11	“Rotation of the Sun” by Philip Fox (galley)	1920
	12	Draft of <i>Paper on Rotation of Sun</i>	n.d.
	13	<i>Catalogue of Stellar Parallaxes</i>	Spring 1939
	14	American Astronomical Society: Programs of Meetings	1930 - 1931
	15	Biographies of Scientists	1940
	16	Lists of Observatories, Telescopes, Astronomical Societies: Officers of the Astronomical Society	1899 - 1939
	17	Great Astronomers: Planetarium Lists and Correspondence	1929
	18	Lists of Astronomers from the Biographical Directory of American Men of Science	1932, 1936
	19	Names: Geology, Mining, Metallurgy: Lists and Correspondence	1938
	20	Names: Physicians, Astronomers, Chemists & Mathematicians: Lists & Correspondence	1938
	21	Names for Frieze at Museum of Science & Industry	1938 - 1939
		ADDITION	
	22	Postcards	1907 - 1935