

# Guide to the George Reber Wieland Papers

MS 750



compiled by Peter Bartucca

January 1976

Yale University Library  
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## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	3
Requesting Instructions .....	3
Administrative Information .....	3
Immediate Source of Acquisition .....	3
Conditions Governing Access .....	4
Preferred Citation .....	4
Existence and Location of Copies .....	4
Biographical / Historical .....	4
Scope and Contents .....	4
Arrangement .....	5
Collection Contents .....	6
Series I: Correspondence, 1889-1950s .....	6
Series II: Writings, 1896-1910, undated .....	8
Series III: Biographical and personal materials .....	9
Series IV: Printed materials .....	10
Series V: Photographs and prints .....	11
Selected Search Terms .....	12

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
(203) 432-1735  
(203) 432-7441  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 750

**CREATOR:** Wieland, G. R. (George Reber), 1865-1953

**TITLE:** George Reber Wieland papers

**DATES:** 1889-1953

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 2.75 linear feet

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The papers include professional and family correspondence, periodicals and pamphlets, books annotated by George Reber Wieland and scientific and personal photographs. The professional correspondence deals with his scientific expeditions and with negotiations on his proposed gift to the United States of a tract of land in South Dakota known as the "Fossil Cycad National Monument."

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0750>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0750>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Mary Wieland, 1975; and Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, 1985.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Preferred Citation

George Reber Wieland Papers (MS 750). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Existence and Location of Copies

The general correspondence in Series I is available in digital form through the Yale University Library Digital Collections. Links to the digital form are provided in the collection description.

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## Biographical / Historical

George Reber Wieland was born in Boalsburg, Pennsylvania, on January 24, 1865, the son of Washington Frederick Wieland and Margaret Reber. Having received his B.S. degree from Pennsylvania State college in 1893, he studied at the University of Gottingen, the University of Pennsylvania, and Yale University, from which he received his Ph.D. in 1900. He married Elda Kristina Anderson of Nykoping, Sweden, in 1891.

Wieland entered Yale intending to study vertebrate paleontology, but during the summer of 1897 while aiding O. C. Marsh in collecting in South Dakota, he met the paleobotanist Lester Ward. Ward had made a collection of cycadeoid trunks in the Black Hills of South Dakota in 1893, and it was through Ward's encouragement and Marsh's collecting that Wieland's scientific interest in these fossil trunks flourished. It is principally through Wieland's efforts that Yale accumulated a collection of 1,000 specimens which is considered to be the world's largest collection of cycadeoids.

Wieland was an internationally recognized paleobotanist noted for his research on the fossils of cycads. He held several academic appointments at Yale: lecturer in paleobotany, 1906-1920; research assistant in paleobotany, 1924-1935; and Sterling Fellow in botany, 1928-1929. He took part in several expeditions in North and South America and in Europe, and he made two important discoveries in the Black Hills of South Dakota: a petrified forest of cycads and a skeleton of *Archelon*, the largest marine turtle known to science. The skeleton is on permanent display in Yale's Peabody Museum of Natural History.

Wieland took title as a homesteader to a 360-acre tract in the Black Hills. He gave it to the United States in 1922 for the purpose of establishing the Fossil Cycad National Monument, but he became involved in a public quarrel over this project with Harold Ickes, Roosevelt's Secretary of the Interior. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, plans to develop the monument were postponed indefinitely.

As well as being one of the first scientists to be designated a research associate of the Carnegie Institute, Wieland was also the recipient of a gold medal from Archduke Rainer of Austria and a medal for his dedicatory address at the Capellini Museum at Bologna.

Until his retirement in the 1940s, Wieland remained at Yale as a research associate. During his academic stay, he wrote his important two volumes on *American Fossil Cycads* (1906, 1916). Wieland died in 1953.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers represented in this collection, which were donated by Wieland's daughter in 1975, represent only a fraction of a larger body of papers which have apparently perished.

## **Arrangement**

The collection is arranged into five series: Series I. Correspondence. Series II. Writings. Series III. Biographical and Personal Materials. Series IV. Printed Materials. Series V. Photographs and Prints.

## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, 1889-1950s

[YUL Digital Collections] Correspondence

Series I. Correspondence, consists of General correspondence, the majority of which is of a professional nature. The fields of paleobotany and paleontology are discussed at greatest length with additional references made to other fields of science. Among the more interesting correspondence is that which deals with expeditions in which Wieland took part. There are at least two references, in letters written to Wieland, to a revolution in Mexico (18 February 1914 and 11 May 1916). These comments were made apparently in reply to letters of Wieland's which are not in the collection. (It appears that he made few copies of his own letters). The professional correspondence discusses scientific discoveries made in diverse areas such as South Dakota, Kansas, Texas, Mexico and Argentina.

The Cycad National Monument correspondence consists of letters written in reply to Wieland's suggestion that there be a museum built at the Cycad National Monument. The correspondence is routine but does include the autographs of Harry Truman, senator from Missouri and Hugo L. Black, senator from Alabama as well as many other senators, congressmen and officials of the Department of the Interior.

The Family correspondence deals primarily with difficulties encountered by Wieland in his efforts to straighten out the title to the Wieland family farm.

b. 1, f. 1	General correspondence <a href="#">[YUL Digital Collections] General Correspondence, 1889-1906</a>	1889-1906
b. 1, f. 2	General correspondence <a href="#">[YUL Digital Collections] General correspondence, 1907-1910</a>	1907-1910
b. 1, f. 3	General correspondence <a href="#">[YUL Digital Collections] General correspondence, 1911-1914</a>	1911-1914
b. 1, f. 4	General correspondence <a href="#">[YUL Digital Collections] General correspondence, 1916-1925</a>	1916-1925
b. 1, f. 5	General correspondence <a href="#">[YUL Digital Collections] General correspondence, 1926-1931</a>	1926-1931
b. 1, f. 6	General correspondence <a href="#">[YUL Digital Collections] General correspondence, 1932-1935</a>	1932-1935
b. 1, f. 7	General correspondence <a href="#">[YUL Digital Collections] General correspondence, 1936-1939</a>	1936-1939
b. 1, f. 8	General correspondence <a href="#">[YUL Digital Collections] General correspondence, 1940-1942</a>	1940-1942
b. 1, f. 9	General correspondence <a href="#">[YUL Digital Collections] General correspondence, 1943-1953</a>	1943-1953
b. 2, f. 10	Cycad National Monument correspondence <a href="#">[YUL Digital Collections] Cycad National Monument correspondence, 1936-1937</a>	1936-1937
b. 2, f. 11	Postcards	circa 1889-1950s
b. 2, f. 12	Posthumous letters	post 1953

b. 2, f. 13	General correspondence <a href="#">[YUL Digital Collections] General correspondence, undated</a>	undated
b. 2, f. 14	Family and related correspondence	1923-1925
b. 2, f. 15	Family and related correspondence	1926-1930
b. 2, f. 16	Family and related correspondence	1931-1933
b. 2, f. 17	Family and related correspondence	1934-1940
b. 2, f. 18	Family and related correspondence	1941-1949
b. 2, f. 19	Family and related correspondence; newspaper clippings	undated
b. 2, f. 20	Wieland family genealogical correspondence	circa 1889-1950s
b. 2, f. 21	Wieland family genealogical materials	circa 1889-1950s
b. 3, f. 22	Financial records	1903-1946
b. 3, f. 23	Stock transaction records	1918-1943

**Series II: Writings, 1896-1910, undated**

Series II. Writings, consists of original manuscripts of several articles and the book *Araucarian Forests*. There are also reprints of several articles and a book, *American Fossil Cycads*. This series includes three expedition notebooks which may be of value to a researcher but do not appear to be very complete or extensive. Notes made on envelopes and pieces of paper are also found in this series.

b. 3, f. 24	<i>Codaitean Wood from the Indiana Black</i> , by Marian G. Elkins and G. R. Wieland English	
b. 3, f. 25	Manuscripts of scientific papers, by G. R. Wieland	
b. 3, f. 26-27	<i>Araucarian Forests</i> , by G. R. Wieland English	
b. 4, f. 28	<i>American Fossil Cycads</i> English	
b. 5, f. 29	Review of Wieland's <i>The Cerro Cuadrado Petrified Forest</i> , by W. C. Darrah	
b. 5, f. 30	Reprints of scientific monographs by Wieland - I	
b. 5, f. 31	Reprints of scientific monographs by Wieland - II	
b. 5, f. 32	"Harriet Martineau's American visit", by G. R. Wieland	
b. 5, f. 33	Notebook of the 20th Geological Excursion	1898
b. 5, f. 34	Scientific notebook	1898-1909
b. 5, f. 35	Scientific notebook	1909-1910
b. 5, f. 36	Notes and fragments	
b. 5, f. 36a	Notes on lectures on fossil vertebrates given by Edward Drinker Cope at the University of Pennsylvania	1896-1897



### **Series III: Biographical and personal materials**

Series III, Biographical and Personal Materials, consists of newspaper clippings, obituaries, an article in the *Alumni Weekly* as well as some invitations, etc.

b. 6, f. 37          Biographical and personal materials

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b. 6, f. 38          Memorabilia

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**Series IV: Printed materials**

Series IV, Printed Materials, consists of periodicals, pamphlets, and books in which Wieland made notes.

b. 6, f. 39	<i>The Yale Collections</i> (notes by Wieland)
b. 6, f. 40	<i>Sigma IX Quarterly</i> (notes by Wieland)
b. 6, f. 41-42	Miscellaneous printed matter [notes by Wieland]
b. 6, f. 43	<i>Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors</i> (notes by Wieland) English

## Series V: Photographs and prints

Series V, Photographs and Prints, consists of photographs of family members, an eclipse of the sun, fossils, dinosaurs' bones, etc. Some of these may be of scientific value.

There are some prints of historical figures in whom Wieland was interested and reproductions of illustrations for scientific writings which were probably published.

b. 7, f. 44      [Assorted personal and scientific photographs, prints and reproductions](#)

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b. 8      Oversize photographs

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## **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.

### **Subjects**

Botany  
Cycads, Fossil  
Ferns, fossil  
Paleobotany  
Paleontology  
Science

### **Geographic Names**

Black Hills (S.D. and Wyo.)

### **Occupations**

Botanists  
Paleobotanists  
Paleontologists

### **Names**

Wieland, G. R. (George Reber), 1865-1953

### **Corporate Body**

Yale University -- Faculty