

**Philipp Franz von Siebold Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2011**

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78039974>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms013009>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2013

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Philipp Franz von Siebold Papers

**Span Dates:** 1609-1927

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1820-1860)

**ID No.:** MSS39974

**Creator:** Siebold, Philipp Franz von, 1796-1866

**Extent:** 20 microfilm reels

**Language:** Collection material in German and Dutch

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78039974>

**Summary:** German physician, explorer, and scientist. Microfilm of correspondence, notes, memoranda, writings, reports, printed matter, and other papers consisting primarily of Siebold's notes and writings on the flora, fauna, geology, and meteorology of Japan, including observations and comments on its history, culture, customs, and languages. Also includes material relating to Korea and Taiwan.

## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

### People

Siebold, Philipp Franz von, 1796-1866.

### Subjects

Animals--Japan.

Botany--Japan.

Geology--Japan.

Germans--Japan.

Japanologists--Germany.

Meteorology--Japan.

Plants--Japan.

Zoology--Japan.

### Places

Japan--Civilization.

Japan--Description and travel.

Japan--History.

Japan--Languages.

Japan--Social life and customs.

Korea.

Taiwan.

### Occupations

Explorers.

Physicians.

Scientists.

## Provenance

The papers of Philipp Franz von Siebold, German physician, explorer, and scientist, were transferred from the State Department in 1948. They were filmed by the Library of Congress in 1983 and the originals sent to Ruhr-Universität Bochum in Germany, where they were united and filmed with other Siebold papers. Microfilm of the Siebold collection at Bochum was received as an exchange from the university in 1984.

## Processing History

The Siebold Papers in the Library of Congress were arranged and prepared for filming in 1983. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

## Other Repositories

In 1983, the Siebold Papers were filmed by the Library of Congress and transferred to Ruhr-Universität Bochum, where they were united with a larger collection of Siebold's papers in that institution.

## Copyright Status

It is the researcher's responsibility to determine requirements of domestic copyright laws and international treaties and conventions.

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of Phillip Franz von Siebold are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

## Microfilm

Microfilm of the Library of Congress collection of Philipp Franz von Siebold Papers is available on four reels. Also available is a microfilm edition on sixteen reels of the Bocuum Siebold Collection held by Ruhr-Universität Bochum in Germany. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Reel number, Phillip Franz von Siebold Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

Date	Event
1796, Feb.17	Born, Würzburg, Germany
1815	Began study of medicine, University of Würzburg, Würzburg, Germany
1820	Became doctor of medicine
1822	Entered Dutch military service as a army medical officer and developed interest in sea fauna
1823	As part of a Dutch legation, became resident physician on Deshima island, near Nagasaki, Japan; began collecting data on its environment, history, culture, and language
1829	Expelled from Japan
1830	Returned to Europe
1833-1841	Published <i>Bibliotheca Japonica</i> co-authored by Joseph Hoffmann and Kuo Cheng-Chang, a Javanese of Chinese extraction, who had journeyed with Siebold from Batavia to Japan
1859-1862	Returned to Japan, where he promoted the introduction of European science
1862	Returned to Europe
1866, Oct. 18	Died, Munich, Germany

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796-1866) span the years circa 1609-1927, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1820-1860. The collection consists entirely of microfilm organized into two sets.

Set I: Library of Congress Siebold Collection reproduces originals transferred to the Manuscript Division from the State Department in 1948 as a group of “wholly miscellaneous” captured German documents. Including notes, memoranda, correspondence, writings, lists, reports, charts, illustrations, and other scientific data collected by Siebold, the papers were gathered in binders entitled “Handschriften zu von Siebold’s Werken” (Manuscripts of von Siebold’s Works). Red stamps on the individually numbered reports within the binders indicate that the material was assembled by the Japan Institute of Berlin before being expropriated by American military forces during World War II. Set I was filmed by the Library in 1983 preliminary to the transfer of the papers to Ruhr-Universität Bochum in Germany, where the Library’s Siebold collection was united with a larger holding of Siebold papers in that institution.

Set II: Bochum Siebold Collection reproduces the Siebold papers at Ruhr-Universität Bochum after the transfer and incorporation of material formerly held by the Library of Congress. The film was received from the university in exchange for the transfer of the originals. A draft listing of its contents is available in the Manuscript Division Reading Room.

The focus of Set I: Library of Congress Siebold Collection is on Japan and the scientific data that he collected there. As a resident in Japan in the 1820s, the Bavarian-born doctor kept detailed records of its flora, fauna, geology, and meteorology. He also described its culture, history, customs, and language, and within the collection are depictions of a country not yet open to the Western world in the early-nineteenth century. Included are a meteorological report from Edo (Tokyo) and Nagasaki in 1825, a comment on the origin of the Japanese people, a Dutch-language manuscript of 1844 with Siebold’s handwritten annotations, and a list of Japanese herbs. Several items pertain to Korea and Formosa rather than Japan, and at the end of the collection is a small file of original and copied correspondence that includes letters to and from Siebold, his son Alexander, and the Japan Institute of Berlin, which purchased a Siebold letter in 1927.

## Arrangement of the Papers

The collection consists entirely of microfilm organized into two sets.

# Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1 REEL 1	Set I: Library of Congress Collection Container numbers reflect the housing of the Library of Congress collection of Siebold papers before they were transferred to Ruhr-Universität Bochum in 1984. Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 18,777
BOX 1 REEL 1	“Handschriften zu von Siebold’s Werken”
BOX 1 REEL 1	Table of contents
BOX 1 REEL 1	“Meteorologie, Geologie,” 142-144
BOX 1 REEL 1	“Reise nach Japan,” 145
BOX 1 REEL 1	Japan, Korea, Formosa: Beschreibung und Geschichite, 145-146 (1 folder)
BOX 2 REEL 1-2	(4 folders)
BOX 2 REEL 1-2	“Handleiding voor de vaart van Java naar Japan door P. W. Verkert Pistorius Herzien von Siebold, 1844,” 169 (3 folders)
BOX 3 REEL 2-3	“Botanices, Flora Japonica,” 178-179
BOX 3 REEL 2-3	“Flora Japonica Fragmente, 186-192 (2 folders)
BOX 3 REEL 2-3	“Flora Redaktion Horticultur,” 193-199 (2 folders)
BOX 3 REEL 2-3	“Flora Fragmente,” 200-212 (2 folders)
BOX 4 REEL 3	“Flora Japonica Fragmente,” 180-185 (2 folders)
BOX 4 REEL 3	“Bontanices, Flora Japonica,” 172-176 (4 folders)
BOX 5 REEL 3-4	“Botanische Fragmente, Flora,” 213-214 (2 folders)
BOX 5 REEL 3-4	“Fauna Fragmente,” 229-260 (3 folders)
BOX 5 REEL 3-4	Briefe, 1829-1927, 567, 571
BOX 6 REEL 4	Binders
BOX REEL 1-16	Set II: Bochum Siebold Collection Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 18,936
BOX REEL 1-16	Siebold papers at the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, including originals transferred from the Library of Congress in 1984 <i>Finding aid available in the Manuscript Division Reading Room</i>