

Cambridge Ridley Lynch  
ARC Research Report  
September 4, 2013

Thanks to the largesse of the ARC committee, this summer I was given the opportunity to work in the Yale Meteorological Manuscripts Collection. Each week I went to New Haven and read through reams of meteorological materials in the Manuscripts and Archives division of Sterling Library, which was a veritable treasure trove of information for my larger project researching the ways in which contemporary weather science impacted ordinary Americans' understanding of the natural world during the Age of Jackson.

There is no doubt that this summer's work in the Yale collections will greatly impact my future research. Specifically, I was able to construct a more complete intellectual genealogy among members of the American meteorological community in the mid-1830s and 1840s. Prior to my work at Yale, the number of actors that I had listed in that community was generally limited to scientists that were published in the the *Transactions* of the American Philosophical Society, the *Journal* of the Franklin Institute, the *Memoirs* of the American Academy of the Arts and Sciences, and the *Annals* of the Lyceum of Natural History. Yale's collection of the weather journals of businessman and amateur meteorologist William C. Redfield, however, gave me the names and contact information for members of a far more extensive network. Through them, I had access to full lists of meteorologists with whom he was in contact. As a result, I was able to see the contours of a vast data-sharing network, which represented a real breakthrough in my attempts to understand how widespread the meteorological project was in Jacksonian America. Even better, I was able to use this information to identify a few new outside resources available in the public domain that directly cited these same weather journals as invaluable references for those meteorologists who would come to visit him in New York, which deepened my understanding of how these types of relationships were built on face-to-face interactions that depended on old modes of deference and reciprocity.

Until this breakthrough, I frequently had to resort to hearsay in my research. I *knew* that meteorology took a vast amount of resources and involved many different actors, but I was uncertain that I'd be able to effectively capture its extent. I also was somewhat corrected on its *character* - rather than being competitive, the persons found in the Redfield journals were enormously free with their hard-won data. I was particularly taken by the extent to which Redfield was clearly willing to share his weather journals - the culmination of a lifetime of work. One of his guests, Andr s Poey of Havana, lifted Redfield's work wholesale when compiling his own "Chronological Table of Cyclonic Hurricanes," which was published in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* in 1855, but this was clearly done with Redfield's blessing.

Going forward, I plan on following up on the many leads afforded me by this research, including creating a map to visualize these networks and researching individual actors in order to better flesh out the common characteristics of the persons who choose to be part of this larger scientific community. Many thanks again for the funding that made this first step possible.