



# Smithsonian Institution Secretary, Charles Doolittle Walcott

*Ellis Yochelson*

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Charles Doolittle Walcott (1850-1927) is a highly respected figure in history of geology and paleontology. Perhaps his most notable contribution to his field was his discovery of the Middle Cambrian Burgess Shale, one of the most important fossil discoveries ever made. In addition to his distinguished field work, Walcott's career included years of service as an administrative leader in the scientific community; as director of the U.S. Geological Survey, as secretary of the Smithsonian Institute, as organizer of the National Space and Aeronautics Administration, as a founding member of the National Research Council, and as president of the National Academy of Sciences. *Smithsonian Institution Secretary* continues the story Ellis L. Yochelson began in *Charles Doolittle Walcott, Paleontologist* (1998). Using Walcott's letters and journals and the recollections of friends and colleagues, Yochelson discusses Walcott's life and career as secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. As secretary, he worked tirelessly to revitalize the dispirited organization, fighting for funding, recognition and support from presidents, Congress, and the general public. During his tenure, the Institution flourished. He is credited with building the Freer Gallery of Art and with laying the foundations for the National Air and Space Museum, the National Portrait Gallery, and the National Museum of American Art. Accompanied by illustrations, photographs from private collections and the Smithsonian Archives, this straightforward biography of Charles Doolittle Walcott offers readers a look at the life and career of this important but little known American scientist.

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