Robert P. Multhauf Papers, circa 1957-1987

Finding aid prepared by Smithsonian Institution Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository: Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title: Robert P. Multhauf Papers
Identifier: Record Unit 7467
Date: circa 1957-1987
Extent: 7 cu. ft. (7 record storage boxes)
Creator:: Multhauf, Robert P.
Language: English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation
Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7467, Robert P. Multhauf Papers

Historical Note

Robert P. Multhauf (1919-2004), historian of science, was born in Sioux City, South Dakota. He graduated from Iowa State University, B.S., 1941, and received his M.A., 1950, and Ph.D., 1953, from the University of California at Berkeley. Multhauf was employed by the Smithsonian Institution as Associate Curator for the Division of Engineering, United States National Museum (USNM), in 1954. The following year he became Curator of the Division and in 1957 was appointed Head Curator of the Department of Engineering and Industries at USNM. When USNM was reorganized and the Museum of History and Technology (MHT) was established in 1957, Multhauf became Head Curator for the Department of Science and Technology under MHT. He also served as Acting Curator of the Division of Physical Sciences within the Department.

In 1966, Multhauf was appointed Director of MHT and served in this capacity until 1969, the year MHT was renamed the National Museum of History and Technology (NMHT). Afterwards he became Senior Scientific Scholar of the Department of Science and Technology, 1970-1977, and for the Department of the History of Science, 1978-1979, at NMHT. Multhauf joined the staff of the Office of Senior Historians in 1980, when NMHT was renamed the National Museum of American History, and retired from the Smithsonian Institution in 1987.

Descriptive Entry

These papers consist largely of correspondence documenting Multhauf's participation in various national and international organizations, most notably the American Council of Learned Societies, History of Science Society, International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science, National Air and Space Administration Historical Committee, Society for the History of Technology, and American Federation of
Information Processing Societies. In addition there are manuscripts of published and unpublished articles; copies of major publications including *The Origins of Chemistry* and *A History of Common Salt*; research notes; photographs of Multhauf at symposiums; and records pertaining to *Isis*, for which Multhauf was Editor.

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**Names and Subject Terms**

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

**Subjects:**
- Chemistry
- Science -- History

**Types of Materials:**
- Black-and-white photographs
- Manuscripts

**Names:**
- American Council of Learned Societies
- American Federation of Information Processing Societies
- History of Science Society
- International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science
- Iowa State University
- Multhauf, Robert P.
- National Air and Space Administration Historical Committee
- National Museum of History and Technology (U.S.). Department of Science and Technology
- National Museum of History and Technology (U.S.). Department of the History of Science
- National Museum of History and Technology (U.S.). Division of Physical Sciences
- National Museum of History and Technology (U.S.). Office of the Director
- Society for the History of Technology
- United States National Museum. Dept. of Engineering and Industries
- United States National Museum. Division of Engineering
- University of California, Berkeley

**Preferred Titles:**

*Isis (Serial)*
## Container Listing

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Box 6 of 7  "Geology, Chemistry and the Production of Salt"
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Box 6 of 7  "Saltpeter: Its Constitution, According to Becher and Stahl"
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Box 6 of 7  "Sal Ammoniac: A Case History in Industrialization"
Box 6 of 7  "Essays on Alchemy," Essay Review, Isis
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"Technology and Society: The Factor of Scale, As Illustrated by the Alkali Industry"

"The History of Science, 1924-1974: As Reported in Isis"

"Jacob Mathias Schleiden"

"How the United States Became a Technological Culture...and How it is Reflected in Museums"

"Docufacts: Or What is the Use of Museum Specimens? 0517f," Berkeley, August 1985


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General Correspondence

Geomagnetism, 1983

"The State of the World in 400, 1300, and 1700"

"Docufacts: Or What is the Use of Museum Specimens? 0517f"

"The Ancient Origin of the New Physics"

"Robert Hare's Electrochemical Theory"

"Apianus"

"Popular and Recondite Science in Tudor and Stuart England"

"Daniel Sennert, 1572-1637"

"Salt and Environmental Pollution: An Historical View," (Research Notes) New York Academy of Sciences, May 24, 1984

"Lana Terza" (Including black and white photographs)

"Science in American History," Read at George Washington University, 1964

"Earth Boring: Diffusion of Independent Discovery?"

"Balances" and "...Oxygen and Hydrogen, and the Ratio of their Atomic Weights," Smithsonian Institution, 1895
Box 7 of 7  "Some Observations on the Historiography of the Industrial Revolution;"
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Box 7 of 7  "The Origins of Chemistry," Manuscript by Robert P. Multhauf (2 folders)

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