



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the John Goffe  
Rand Papers, circa 1832-1960, bulk  
1832-1873, in the Archives of American Art

Jayna Hanson

Funding for the processing and digitization of this collection  
was provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art

December 2008

Archives of American Art  
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<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	John Goffe Rand papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.randjohn
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1832-1960 (bulk 1832-1873)
<b>Extent:</b>	0.2 Linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Rand, John Goffe, 1801-1873
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The scattered papers of inventor and portrait painter John Goffe Rand measure 0.2 linear feet and date from circa 1832-1960, bulk 1832-1873. Included are biographical sketches, a will, lists of portraits by Rand, a small amount of correspondence, files regarding Rand's invention of the collapsible artists' paint tube, clippings, a photo, and an example of one of the first paint tubes made in a factory.

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## Administrative Information

### Provenance

The John Goffe Rand papers were donated by Rand's great-grandnieces Mary and Katherine Anglemeyer in 1981 and 1985.

### Alternative Forms Available

The papers of **John Goffe Rand** in the Archives of American Art were digitized in 2010 and total 112 images.

### Processing Information

The John Goffe Rand papers were processed by Jayna Hanson in 2008, and digitized in 2010 with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

### Preferred Citation

John Goffe Rand papers, circa 1832-1960, bulk 1832-1873. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

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## Biographical Note

John Goffe Rand (1801-1873) lived and worked in Boston, London, and New York as a portrait painter and inventor. Rand invented and patented the first collapsible artist's paint tube.

Rand was born in 1801 in Bedford, New Hampshire. As a young man, he worked as an apprentice to a cabinet maker. Although he showed talent, Rand chose to paint houses and signs and found that he excelled at portraiture. Discovered and encouraged by Samuel F. B. Morse, he moved to Boston and by 1828 established his own studio. While temporarily in Charleston, South Carolina, Rand met Miss Lavinia Brainerd whom he later married.

Shortly after their wedding, Lavinia and John Rand travelled to London where John continued to paint portraits. Among those whom he painted were members of the royal family and other figures in the English nobility including Lord Bexley, the Duke and Duchess of Inverness, and the Duke of Sussex.

While in London, Rand invented a collapsible paint tube made of tin for storing artists' mixed oil paints. Prior to this advancement, painters generally mixed pigments with oil in small amounts and stored the extra paint in animal bladders. The tin tube allowed unused paint to be stored and used later without drying out. In 1841, Rand patented the invention with the United States Patent Office. He went on to patent several later improvements. Other later inventions, however, were not as widely received, and most of his ideas were not financially successful.

Upon returning to the United States, John Rand and his wife settled on Long Island where he continued his career in painting portraits. The artist died in 1873.

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## Scope and Content Note

The scattered papers of inventor and portrait painter John Goffe Rand measure 0.2 linear feet and date from circa 1832-1960, bulk 1832-1873. Included are biographical sketches, a will, lists of portraits by Rand, a small amount of correspondence, United States patents for the collapsible paint tube invented by Rand and later improvements, printed materials, a photo, and an example of one of the first paint tubes made in a factory.

Biographical Information includes an unpublished biography about Rand, typescripts of an obituary, short biographical sketches, lists of portraits painted by Rand, and a copy of his will. A small amount of correspondence consists of one letter written by Rand in 1864 addressed to his niece and typescripts of letters written by members of Rand's extended family concerning the artist and his works.

Subject files document Rand's invention of the collapsible tin artists' paint tube and include two patents from the United States Patent Office dated 1841 and 1844. The 1844 patent was for improvements to

the tube. The patent applications contain diagrams and written descriptions of the tube. There are also clippings about the anniversaries of the invention.

Additional clippings are about members of the Rand family and a painting by Rand. One photograph depicts Rand's gravesite circa 1930. Artifacts include an example of one of the first collapsible paint tubes made in a factory.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 6 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Information, 1873-1941, circa 1960 (Box 1; 5 folders)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1864, 1906-1960 (Box 1; 2 folders)
- Series 3: Subject Files, 1841-1844, 1941-1956(Box 1; 2 folders)
- Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1900 (Box 1; 1 folder)
- Series 5: Photographs, circa 1930 (Box 1; 1 folder)
- Series 6: Artifact, circa 1832 (Box 1; 1 folder)

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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:

Inventors -- England  
Painting -- Equipment and supplies  
Portrait painters -- England -- London

Types of Materials:

Photographs

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Information, 1873-1941, circa 1960

*(Box 1; 5 folders)*

This series consists of biographical sketches of John Goffe Rand, an unpublished biography, a list of Rand's portraits, typescripts of Rand's obituary and his will.

Box 1, Folder 1	Biographical Sketches, 1931-1941 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 2	"John Goffe Rand" by Mary Elizabeth Franklin, circa 1930 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 3	Lists of Portraits, circa 1960 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 4	Obituary, 1873 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 5	Will, 1873 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>

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## Series 2: Correspondence, 1864, 1906-1960

*(Box 1; 2 folders)*

This series contains one letter written by John Rand to his niece and scattered typescripts of letters to and from the Rand family concerning the artist.

Box 1, Folder 6            From John Goffe Rand, 1864  
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 7            Concerning John Rand, 1906-1960  
[Image\(s\)](#)

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## Series 3: Subject Files, 1841-1844, 1941-1956

*(Box 1; 2 folders)*

Found here are materials relating to the John Goffe Rand's invention and patent of the collapsible tin paint tube, including drawings and written descriptions. There are also patents from 1841 and 1844 for improvements to the tube and clippings celebrating anniversaries of the invention.

Box 1, Folder 8            Patents, 1841-1844

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 9            Clippings, 1941, 1956

[Image\(s\)](#)

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## Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1900

*(Box 1; 1 folder)*

Newspaper clippings concern members of the Rand family and articles about John Goffe Rand's works of art.

Box 1, Folder 10

Clippings, circa 1900

[Image\(s\)](#)

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## Series 5: Photographs, circa 1930

*(Box 1; 1 folder)*

There is one photograph of John Goffe Rand's gravestone.

Box 1, Folder 11

Photograph, circa 1930

[Image\(s\)](#)

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## Series 6: Artifact, circa 1832

*(Box 1; 1 folder)*

Found here is a surviving example of one of the first collapsible paint tubes made in a factory, circa 1832.

Box 1, Folder 12

Paint Tube, circa 1832

[Image\(s\)](#)

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