



Smithsonian

National Air and Space Museum

John A. O'Keefe Collection

2003

National Air and Space Museum Archives
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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	John A. O'Keefe Collection
Date:	undated
Identifier:	NASM.2002.0055
Creator:	O'Keefe, John Aloysius, 1916-
Extent:	31.61 Cubic feet ((29 record center boxes))
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Martha O'Keefe, Gift, 2002

Preferred Citation

John A. O'Keefe Collection, Accession 2002-0055, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

No restrictions on access.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

John A. O'Keefe (1916-2001) was a pioneer in space geodesy and planetary physics, but his passion was his longtime study of tektites. O'Keefe graduated from Harvard University in 1937 with a bachelor's degree in astronomy and received his Ph.D. in astronomy from the University of Chicago in 1941. During World War II, O'Keefe was with the US Army Corps of Engineers, where he spent 13 years heading the research and analysis branch. During his time with the Corps, O'Keefe made significant contributions to geodesy, including his development of the present NATO map coordinate system (UTM) and his initiative to use satellite tracking for geodesy. In 1958, O'Keefe left the Army Map Service to become the assistant chief of the theoretical division at NASA's newly formed Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, MD. At Goddard, O'Keefe spent the remainder of this career focusing on the study of tektites and the origin of the moon. O'Keefe authored the book, *Tektites and Their Origin* (1976), in which he presents his belief that tektites were ejected from volcanoes on the moon.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of twenty-nine cubic feet of the papers of John A. O'Keefe, mostly relating to his study of tektites. The following types of material are included: correspondence, publications by O'Keefe and various authors, photographs, slides, notes, and reports.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Geodesics (Mathematics)
- Physics
- Tektite

Types of Materials:

- Correspondence
- Papers
- Photographs
- Reports
- Slides (photographs)