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### Collection Overview

**Repository:** Archives Center, National Museum of American History  
**Title:** Lewis M. Rutherfurd Collection  
**Identifier:** NMAH.AC.0364  
**Date:** 1846-1884  
**Extent:** 0.3 Cubic feet (1 box, 1 oversized folder)  
**Creator:** Schmidling, David, Dr.  
Rutherfurd, Lewis Morris, 1816-1892  
Physical Sciences, Division of (NMAH, Smithsonian Institution).  
**Language:** English  
**Summary:** The collection documents Lewis M. Rutherfurd’s work related to astronomy.

### Administrative Information

#### Acquisition Information

Collection donated by Dr. David Schmidling, November 13, 1989.

#### Provenance

The collection was transferred from the Division of Physical Sciences to the Archives Center in December 1989.

#### Processing Information

Processed by Don Darroch, volunteer, 1989.

#### Preferred Citation


#### Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

#### Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.
Biographical / Historical

Lewis Morris Rutherfurd (1816-1892), a native of New York, was a member of a prominent family and financially independent enough to permit his pursuit of scientific interests. After graduation from Williams College he practiced law for 10 years before devoting himself to amateur astronomy. Rutherfurd designed and made his own instruments for photography and spectroscopy in astronomical observations, often only demonstrating their capabilities before making them available to other scientists. A member of the National Academy of Sciences and numerous professional societies, Rutherfurd was awarded the Rumford Medal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1874 for his "improvements in the processes and methods of Astronomical Photography."

Scope and Contents

The collection includes two papers by Rutherfurd published in the American Journal of Science, lecture notes apparently used by Rutherfurd in teaching, and two letters from Benjamin A. Gould, an astronomer and close friend of Rutherfurd's, as well as a draft letter of Rutherfurd to the editors of the American Journal of Science and Art. Most of the collection is comprised of notebooks and loose notes in which Rutherfurd recorded his observations, calculations and designs relating to his professional activities. Two bound notebooks record observations of stars, planets and comets by telescope in 1846-1849 and 1859-1861. Other papers loose and less formally recorded on astronomical observations and the design and calibration of cameras and spectroscopes used by Rutherfurd, cover the period 1858-1874. A number of photographs of the moon and other subjects related to his work are also included.

Bibliography


Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:
Astronomers
Astronomy
Photographers
Photographs -- Moon -- 19th century
Telescopes -- 19th century

Types of Materials:
Lecture notes
Notebooks -- 1850-1900
Photographs -- 19th century

Names:
Physical Sciences, Division of (NMAH, Smithsonian Institution).
### Container Listing

| Box 1, Folder 1 | Rutherfurd published papers, circa 1865-1884 |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Correspondence, 1869 - 1870 |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Letter from Dr. Gould to Rutherfurd, 12 January 1869 |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Letter from Dr. B. A. Gould to Rutherfurd, 1870-05-02 - 1870-05-02 |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Letter in pencil (by Rutherfurd?) addressed to the editors of the American Journal of Science and Art, undated |
| Box 1, Folder 3 | Class lecture notes, 13 folded sheets, circa 1858-1859 |
| Box 1, Folder 4 | Notebooks (2) of astronomical observations--stars, planets, comets, 1846 - 1849, 1859 - 1861 |
| Box 1, Folder 5 | Notes on astronomical observations, etc., circa 1858-1873 |
| Box 1, Folder 6 | Notes on instrument design, calibration, etc., circa 1858-1874 |
| Box 1, Folder 7 | Photographs; astronomical and experimental (27 images, includes 5 stereo images of the moon). |
| Box 1, Folder 7 | Portrait of standing man (carte-de-visite) by Rockwood, New York. |
| Oversize 1, Folder 1 | Sonnenspectrum, undated |