



Smithsonian

Institution Archives

Silvio A. Bedini Papers, 1952-1993

Finding aid prepared by Smithsonian Institution Archives

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Collection Overview

| | |
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| Repository: | Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu |
| Title: | Silvio A. Bedini Papers |
| Date: | 1952-1993 |
| Identifier: | Accession 02-221 |
| Creator:: | Bedini, Silvio A. |
| Extent: | 13 cu. ft. (13 record storage boxes) |
| Language: | English |

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Accession 02-221, Silvio A. Bedini Papers

Historical Note

Silvio A Bedini (b. 1917), an historian and author, attended Columbia University, 1935-1942, and received an L.L.D. from the University of Bridgeport in 1970. In 1961, he began his career at the Smithsonian Institution as Curator in the Museum of History and Technology (MHT), Department of Mechanical and Civil Engineering. By 1965, Bedini became Assistant Director of MHT, and in 1972 was appointed Deputy Director of the National Museum of History and Technology. Following his tenure as Deputy Director, he served as Keeper of the Rare Books at the Dibner Library from 1978 until his retirement in 1987. Bedini is currently Historian Emeritus at the Smithsonian, a title he has held since retiring. During his long association with the Institution he has authored more than twenty books and countless articles, particularly on the history of science, and is a leading authority on the life of Thomas Jefferson.

Descriptive Entry

This accession primarily consists of Bedini's correspondence and memoranda with Smithsonian colleagues, scholars, professional organizations, publishers, and the general public documenting his research activities for special projects and publications including research into scientific instruments. Also included are Bedini's publications; book reviews; research notes; photographs of scientific instruments, individuals, and exhibitions; copies of primary and secondary sources; and biographical information.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Research

Science -- History
Scientific apparatus and instruments

Types of Materials:

Black-and-white negatives
Black-and-white photographs
Clippings
Color negatives
Color photographs
Drawings
Manuscripts

Names:

Bedini, Silvio A.
Dibner Library Keeper of Rare Books

Container Listing

| Box 1 | |
|-------------|---|
| | Research Files: Correspondence/Other, B-C Summary: Research Files: Correspondence/Other, B-C |
| Box 1 of 13 | Bedini, Silvio A.: Book Reviews of Bedini's Publications |
| Box 1 of 13 | Bedini, Silvio A.: Book Reviews by Bedini, c. 1969 [two folders] |
| Box 1 of 13 | Bedini, Silvio A.: Select Bibliography, 1967-1978 |
| Box 1 of 13 | Bonnelli, Maria, 1963-1982 |
| Box 1 of 13 | Borghesi Astronomical Clock, 1962-1969 |
| Box 1 of 13 | Branca, Giovanni, 1978 |
| Box 1 of 13 | Bridges, Henry (photographs) |
| Box 1 of 13 | Brieux, Alain, 1962-1977 [two folders] |
| Box 1 of 13 | British Museum, 1969, 1978 |
| Box 1 of 13 | Brown University, 1966-1976 |
| Box 1 of 13 | Brusa, Giuseppe, 1975-1977 |
| Box 1 of 13 | Buchan Boxes, 1979 |
| Box 1 of 13 | C (general), c. 1968-1980 [three folders] |
| Box 1 of 13 | Cain, Walter O., 1975-1977 |
| Box 1 of 13 | Calipers, 1981 |
| Box 1 of 13 | Capriglia, 1979-1980 |
| Box 1 of 13 | Carlisle, Roxane, 1974-1977 |
| Box 1 of 13 | Cartography, c. 1977 [two folders] |
| Box 1 of 13 | Catholic University, 1979 |
| Box 1 of 13 | Cheney, Benjamin |

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|-------------|---|
| Box 1 of 13 | Chinese Clocks |
| Box 1 of 13 | Chinese Sundials, 1962-1966 |
| Box 1 of 13 | Chinese Water Clocks, 1968 |
| Box 1 of 13 | Ciphers and Codes, 1979 |
| Box 1 of 13 | Cipher Devices (MHT) |
| Box 1 of 13 | Circumferentor |
| Box 1 of 13 | Clap (Rector) |
| Box 1 of 13 | Clocks (general), c. 1977-1983 [two folders] |
| Box 2 | |
| | Research Files: Correspondence/Other, C-D Summary: Research Files: Correspondence/Other, C-D |
| Box 2 of 13 | Clock (Dial Plate) |
| Box 2 of 13 | Clock (Mechanical) |
| Box 2 of 13 | Clock of Wisdom |
| Box 2 of 13 | Clock (Timekeeping), 1963-1968 |
| Box 2 of 13 | Clockwork Universe, 1979 |
| Box 2 of 13 | Colles, Christopher |
| Box 2 of 13 | Columbia University, 1968-1976 |
| Box 2 of 13 | Columbus Exhibition, 1976 [four folders] |
| Box 2 of 13 | Compass (Land Travelers) |
| Box 2 of 13 | Compass Card, Thaxter & Son |
| Box 2 of 13 | Compass (Surveying, Wood), 1967 |
| Box 2 of 13 | Compass (Surveying, Metal), 1972-1973 |
| Box 2 of 13 | Cosmos Club, 1972-1986 [three folders] |
| Box 2 of 13 | Cryptography, c. 1980-1982 [three folders] |

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|-------------|---|
| Box 2 of 13 | Current Meters |
| Box 2 of 13 | D (general), 1970-1977 |
| Box 2 of 13 | Dearborn, Benjamin, 1981-1984 |
| Box 2 of 13 | Diber, Bern, 1972-1975 |
| Box 2 of 13 | Dividing Illustrations |
| Box 2 of 13 | Dividing Engines (MHT) |
| Box 2 of 13 | De Dondi, Giovanni, 1963-1974 [two folders] |

Box 3

| | |
|-------------|---|
| | Research Files: Correspondence/Other, D-E Summary: Research Files: Correspondence/Other, D-E |
| Box 3 of 13 | De Dondi, Giovanni, 1963-1974 [two folders] |
| Box 3 of 13 | Drafting Instruments |
| Box 3 of 13 | E (general), 1968-1982 |
| Box 3 of 13 | Early American Scientific Instruments, c. 1964-1982 [twenty-six folders] |
| Box 3 of 13 | Electrostatic Machines |
| Box 3 of 13 | Elephant (Hanno), c. 1979-1981 [five folders] |

Box 4

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|-------------|---|
| | Research Files: Correspondence/Other, E-F Summary: Research Files: Correspondence/Other, E-F |
| Box 4 of 13 | Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation, 1965-1980 [five folders] |
| Box 4 of 13 | Emery, Matthew, 1976-1980 [two folders] |
| Box 4 of 13 | Emett, Rowland, 1978-1983 [two folders] |
| Box 4 of 13 | F (general), 1963-1984 [three folders] |
| Box 4 of 13 | Ferguson, Eugene, 1964-1976 [two folders] |
| Box 4 of 13 | Filby, William P., 1978 |

Box 4 of 13 First American Astronomical Observatory, c. 1980 [two folders]

Box 4 of 13 Folger Library, 1974-1978

Box 4 of 13 Folger Symposium, 1978 [two folders]

Box 4 of 13 Franklin Institute, 1965-1977 [two folders]

Box 5

Research Files: Correspondence/Other, F-H
Summary: Research Files: Correspondence/Other, F-H

Box 5 of 13 Franklin, Benjamin, 1969 [two folders]

Box 5 of 13 Fraser, T.J., 1965-1978

Box 5 of 13 G (general), 1970-1977 [two folders]

Box 5 of 13 Galileo's Instruments, 1964-1982 [two folders]

Box 5 of 13 Galvez, Bernardo de, 1975

Box 5 of 13 Gauge/Gunnery (MHT), 1971

Box 5 of 13 Gauge

Box 5 of 13 Gazebo/Bandstand, 1978-1979

Box 5 of 13 Gear Train, 1973

Box 5 of 13 Gems and Jewelry, c. 1964

Box 5 of 13 George Washington University, 1965-1978

Box 5 of 13 Giles, Orrery, 1963-1984 [two folders]

Box 5 of 13 Globes, 1982-1984

Box 5 of 13 Graphometer

Box 5 of 13 Greene, Carroll, 1967-1978

Box 5 of 13 Greenough, Hamilton P., 1965-1980 [two folders]

Box 5 of 13 Grolier Club, 1978-1979

Box 5 of 13 H (general), 1962-1978 [three folders]

Box 5 of 13 Hardware of History, c. 1964-1965 [three folders]

Box 5 of 13 Hill, Peter, 1979 [two folders]

Box 6

Research Files: Correspondence/Other, H
Summary: Research Files: Correspondence/Other, H

Box 6 of 13 Hiller, Joseph

Box 6 of 13 Hindle, Brooke, 1964-1976

Box 6 of 13 Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1966-1976

Box 6 of 13 Hume, Ivor Noel, 1966-1969

General Correspondence, c. 1962-1978
Summary: General Correspondence, c. 1962-1978

Box 6 of 13 Civil Service Commission

Box 6 of 13 Dutch Street Organs

Box 6 of 13 L (a-i)

Box 6 of 13 L (j-z)

Box 6 of 13 M (a-b) [two folders]

Box 6 of 13 M (c-i) [two folders]

Box 6 of 13 M (j-z) [two folders]

Box 6 of 13 N [three folders]

Box 6 of 13 NSF (National Science Foundation) Travel Grant

Box 6 of 13 O [two folders]

Box 6 of 13 P [three folders]

Box 6 of 13 Q

Box 7

Box 7 of 13 R [two folders]

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Box 7 of 13 | S (a-l) [two folders] |
| Box 7 of 13 | S (m-z) [two folders] |
| Box 7 of 13 | T |
| Box 7 of 13 | U |
| Box 7 of 13 | V |
| Box 7 of 13 | W [three folders] |
| Box 7 of 13 | X, Y, Z [two folders] |
| Box 7 of 13 | General Correspondence, 1978-1979 [two folders] |
| | Scientific Instruments Research Summary: Scientific Instruments Research |
| Box 7 of 13 | Historical Societies, 1971 |
| Box 7 of 13 | Sextants, 1967 |
| Box 7 of 13 | Octants, 1967-1974 |
| Box 7 of 13 | University of Pennsylvania, 1962-1973 |
| Box 7 of 13 | Washington Academy of Science, 1965-1966 |
| Box 7 of 13 | Washington History of Science Club, 1964-1972 |
| Box 7 of 13 | Waters, David W., 1963-1971 |
| | Box 8 |
| Box 8 of 13 | Webster, Roderick, 1964-1978 |
| Box 8 of 13 | Winterthur Museum, 1972-1973 |
| Box 8 of 13 | Zorn, George, 1964 |
| Box 8 of 13 | Cooperative Program for Advise, 1972-1977 [two folders] |
| | National Inventory of Scientific Instruments (NISI) Summary: National Inventory of Scientific Instruments (NISI) |
| Box 8 of 13 | NISI Project Description |

Box 8 of 13 Correspondence (general), c. 1965-1977 [six folders]

Box 8 of 13 Correspondence: A-Z, c. 1964-1969 [ten folders]

Box 9

Box 9 of 13 Navigational Instruments, c. 1967-1973 [eight folders]

Box 9 of 13 Demonstrational Inventory Forms, c. 1966 [two folders]

Box 9 of 13 Surgical Instruments, c. 1966-1967

Box 9 of 13 Observational Instruments, c. 1964-1967 [three folders]

Box 9 of 13 Machines, c. 1968

Box 9 of 13 International Inventory, 1959-1966 [two folders]

Box 9 of 13 Non-Inventory Instruments

Box 9 of 13 Drafting Instruments, c. 1968

Box 9 of 13 Gnomonic Instruments, c. 1967

Box 9 of 13 Weights and Measures, 1967-1968

Box 9 of 13 Gunnery, 1967

Scientific Instruments Research
Summary: Scientific Instruments Research

Box 9 of 13 Horology, c. 1953-1965 [three folders]

Box 10

Box 10 of 13 Horology, 1953-1965 [three folders]

Box 10 of 13 Mariner Astrolabes, 1969

Box 10 of 13 Oriental Astrolabes

Box 10 of 13 Western Astrolabes

Box 10 of 13 New York University

Box 10 of 13 Wellesley College

Box 10 of 13 Perpetual Calendars, 1952

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| Box 10 of 13 | Smithsonian Collections |
| Box 10 of 13 | Compasses and Tools |
| Box 10 of 13 | Astronomical Rings, 1965 |
| Box 10 of 13 | Astronomical Compendiae |
| Box 10 of 13 | Sanskrit Instruments, 1963-1964 |
| Box 10 of 13 | Public Inquiries re: Scientific Instruments, 1961-1965 [two folders] |
| Box 10 of 13 | Instruments Purchased, 1962-1963 |
| Box 10 of 13 | Instruments (general) |
| Box 10 of 13 | Regiomontanus |
| Box 10 of 13 | Felix, David |
| Box 10 of 13 | Drafting Instruments |
| Box 10 of 13 | Globes and Spheres, 1962, 1972 |
| Box 10 of 13 | Globes: Celestial and Terrestrial, 1965 |
| Box 10 of 13 | Armillary Spheres |
| Box 10 of 13 | Gunnery Instruments |
| Box 10 of 13 | 18th Century Instrument Makers, 1962-1963 |
| Box 10 of 13 | English Instrument Makers, 1965 |
| Box 10 of 13 | Trade Cards |
| Box 10 of 13 | Lodestones and Terellae |
| Box 10 of 13 | Nautical Instruments, c. 1965 |
| Box 10 of 13 | Measuring Instruments |
| Box 10 of 13 | Nocturnals |
| Box 10 of 13 | Microscopes, 1973 |
| Box 10 of 13 | Egyptian Medical Museums, 1976 [two folders] |

Box 10 of 13 Planispheres

Box 10 of 13 Planetaria, 1976

Box 10 of 13 Opticals, c. 1967-1968 [four folders]

Box 10 of 13 Watches

Box 11

Box 11 of 13 Astronomical Korean Clock, 1963-1967 [two folders]

Box 11 of 13 Egypt Trip, 1976

Box 11 of 13 Quadrants

Box 11 of 13 Tiffler Clock, 1974-1976

Box 11 of 13 Sundials, 1968-1971

Box 11 of 13 Graphometers and Circumferentors

Box 11 of 13 Gelb, J.W.

Box 11 of 13 Dentzel, M., 1962

Box 11 of 13 American Astronomy

Box 11 of 13 Surveying Instruments

Box 11 of 13 Telescopes, 1976

Box 11 of 13 Sand Glasses

Box 11 of 13 Bogardus, 1963

Box 11 of 13 Philip Immser/Timekeeping, 1974

Box 11 of 13 Timekeeping/Spanish Missions, 1975

Box 11 of 13 Clockwork Chronology, 1965

Box 11 of 13 Water Clocks

Box 11 of 13 Water Clocks/Ctesibian, 1961-1962

Box 11 of 13 Weights and Measures, 1962

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| Box 11 of 13 | USNM (United States National Museum) Instruments, 1964-1965 |
| Box 11 of 13 | Reference Works |
| Box 11 of 13 | Istanbul Conference, 1977 |
| Box 11 of 13 | Heralds of Science |
| Box 11 of 13 | Relics of the Revolution, 1986-1987 |
| | Professional Surveyor: Correspondence/Other Summary: Professional Surveyor: Correspondence/Other |
| Box 11 of 13 | Surveying Equipment, 1982-1993 [six folders] |
| Box 11 of 13 | Correspondence re: "Collectors Corner," 1983-1986 |
| Box 12 | |
| Box 12 of 13 | Correspondence re: "Collectors Corner," 1983 |
| Box 12 of 13 | Bedini, Silvio A.: "Collectors Corner" Articles, 1983-1992 [three folders] |
| | NMHT/NMAH (National Museum of American History)- Smithsonian Research Summary: NMHT/NMAH (National Museum of American History)- Smithsonian Research |
| Box 12 of 13 | Tools in Art |
| Box 12 of 13 | Archival Collections, 1965 |
| Box 12 of 13 | Historic Site Archeology, 1962-1965 |
| Box 12 of 13 | Industrial Archeology, 1965-1966 |
| Box 12 of 13 | Underwater Exploration, 1965 |
| Box 12 of 13 | Projects Proposed, 1965 |
| Box 12 of 13 | Public Relations Committee, 1964 [two folders] |
| Box 12 of 13 | Index of American Culture, 1965 |
| Box 12 of 13 | National Endowment for the Humanities, 1978 |
| Box 12 of 13 | Settala Museum (photographs) |

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|--------------|---|
| Box 12 of 13 | National Science Foundation, 1972-1975 [two folders] |
| Box 12 of 13 | Maloy, Robert M., 1979-1981 |
| Box 12 of 13 | Smithsonian Institution Libraries, 1979-1983 |
| Box 12 of 13 | Humanistic Themes & Interpretive Goals |
| Box 12 of 13 | Jefferson and Science Exhibition, 1981 [three folders] |
| Box 13 | |
| Box 13 of 13 | Dibner Library, 1977-1978 [two folders] |
| Box 13 of 13 | Museum Exhibitions, 1971-1977 [four folders] |
| | Bedini's Publications Research/Travel Reports Summary: Bedini's Publications Research/Travel Reports |
| Box 13 of 13 | Correspondence, 1966 |
| Box 13 of 13 | Correspondence, 1963-1979 |
| Box 13 of 13 | Publications Research, c. 1964-1993 [ten folders] |
| Box 13 of 13 | Reviews, c. 1975-1976 |
| Box 13 of 13 | Travel Reports, 1958-1977 |