



Smithsonian Institution Archives

Joseph Saxton Papers, 1821-1856

Finding aid prepared by Smithsonian Institution Archives

Smithsonian Institution Archives
Washington, D.C.
Contact us at osiaref@si.edu

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Historical Note.....	1
Descriptive Entry.....	1
Names and Subjects	1
Container Listing	3

Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Joseph Saxton Papers
Identifier:	Record Unit 7056
Date:	1821-1856
Extent:	0.5 cu. ft. (1 document box)
Creator::	Saxton, Joseph, 1799-1873
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7056, Joseph Saxton Papers

Historical Note

Joseph Saxton (1799-1873), a self-educated inventor and machinist, developed his skills in mechanics, etching, and watchmaking while working as a watchmaker in Philadelphia for eleven years. In 1828, Saxton left for Great Britain in order to further his education. While in Great Britain, Saxton was employed by the Adelaide Gallery of Practical Science in London. There, Saxton became well known for building and exhibiting scientific novelties and machines. In 1837 he returned to the United States to work for the United States Mint in Philadelphia as Constructor and Curator of the standard weighing apparatus of the Mint. From 1843 until his death, Saxton was Superintendent of Weights and Measures at the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey in Washington, D. C.

Descriptive Entry

These papers consist of notebooks and diaries in which Saxton wrote detailed information on his experiments and social life in London; an appointment book for 1838; a scientific sketchbook with notes, which include drawings and descriptions of some of Saxton's inventions; and a textbook. Other Joseph Saxton material may be found in the Joseph Henry Papers, Record Unit 7001.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Clock and watch makers
Inventions
Inventors
Machinists
Science -- History
Technology -- History

Types of Materials:

Books
Diaries
Field notes
Illustrations
Manuscripts

Names:

Adelaide Gallery (London, England)
Henry, Joseph, 1797-1878
Saxton, Joseph, 1799-1873
U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey
United States Mint

Container Listing

Box 1

- Box 1 of 1 Folders 1-2 Notebooks, 1832-1835
Image(s): [Joseph Saxton's Notebook from May to September 1832 \[Image nos. SIA2017-045427 to SIA2017-045542\]](#)
Image(s): [Joseph Saxton's Notebook from September 1832 to January 1833 \[Image nos. SIA2017-045599 to SIA2017-045764\]](#)
Image(s): [Joseph Saxton's Notebook from January to September 1833 \[Image nos. SIA2017-045765 to SIA2017-045809\]](#)
Image(s): [Joseph Saxton's Notebook from 1834 \[Image nos. SIA2017-048072 to SIA2017-048112\]](#)
Image(s): [Joseph Saxton's Notebook from 1834 to 1835 \[Image nos. SIA2017-048113 to SIA2017-048158\]](#)
- Box 1 of 1 Folder 3 Appointment book, 1838
- Box 1 of 1 Folder 4 Sketchbooks with Notes, 1821-1856
Image(s): [Joseph Saxton's Sketchbook with Notes, 1821-1856 \[Image nos. SIA2017-070595 to SIA2017-070716\]](#)
- Box 1 of 1 Folder 5 *Treatise on the Teeth of Wheels*, by M. Camus, 1837