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Institution Archives

János Xántus Papers, 1857-1864

Finding aid prepared by Smithsonian Institution Archives

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	János Xántus Papers
Date:	1857-1864
Identifier:	Record Unit 7212
Creator::	Xántus, János, 1825-1894
Extent:	0.5 cu. ft. (1 document box)
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 7212, János Xántus Papers

Historical Note

A native of Hungary, John Xantus (1825-1894) came to the United States in 1850. In 1855, he entered the United States Army and served as a hospital steward at Fort Riley, Kansas Territory, 1855-1857, and Fort Tejon, California, 1857-1859. In January 1859, Xantus was appointed tidal observer for the United States Coast Survey stationed at Cape San Lucas, Lower California, where he remained until August 1861. After a short visit to Hungary, Xantus was appointed United States Consul at Manzanillo, Mexico, on November 25, 1862. In 1864, he returned to Hungary, where he spent the remainder of his life.

In 1857, Xantus began corresponding with Spencer F. Baird, and in subsequent years he made extensive collections for the Smithsonian Institution, especially in the field of ornithology.

Introduction

This finding aid was digitized with funds generously provided by the Smithsonian Institution Women's Committee.

Descriptive Entry

These papers consist of correspondence from John Xantus to Spencer F. Baird, mostly concerning Xantus' collecting activities, 1857-1864. Also included are several letters (and copies of letters) from various individuals concerning Xantus, especially letters of recommendation for the position of U. S. Consul at Manzanillo, Mexico.

After entering the U. S. Army in 1855, Xantus began using the name Louis de Vesey. The letters in this collection for the years 1857-1858 are signed three different ways: DE VESEY, L. X. DE VESEY, and L. XANTUS DE VESEY. By 1859, he had readopted his given name and letters are signed J. XANTUS.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Ornithologists
Ornithology

Types of Materials:

Black-and-white photographs
Manuscripts

Names:

Baird, Spencer Fullerton, 1823-1887
United States Coast Survey
United States. Army
United States. Consulate (Manzanillo, Colima, Mexico)
Xántus, János, 1825-1894

Places:

Fort Riley (Kan.)
Fort Tejon (Calif.)

Container Listing

Box 1	
Box 1 of 1	Folder 1 Numbered Correspondence, 1-24, April 4, 1857-April 15, 1858
Box 1 of 1	Folder 2 Numbered Correspondence, 25-49, May 14, 1858-February 4, 1859 and undated (with drawings)
Box 1 of 1	Folder 3 Numbered Correspondence, 50-74, February 11, 1859-February 14, 1860
Box 1 of 1	Folder 4 Numbered Correspondence, 75-99, February 20, 1860-December 15, 1860
Box 1 of 1	Folder 5 Correspondence, December 28, 1860-December 26, 1862
Box 1 of 1	Folder 6 Numbered Correspondence, 1-24, January 10, 1863-December 16, 1863
Box 1 of 1	Folder 7 Correspondence, December 1863-1864 and assorted dates in order of binding
Box 1 of 1	Folder 8 Correspondence and Drawings from end of bound volume, unarranged
Box 1 of 1	Folder 9 Correspondence, 1864
Box 1 of 1	Folder 10 Selected Photographic Prints of Xántus Correspondence and Drawings
Box 1 of 1	Folder 11 Photograph of Xántus, undated (Accession 06-173)