



ArchivesSpace

a community served by †Lyrasis

Lewis Morris Rutherford photographs4362131

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on January 13, 2025.

Description is written in: English.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Butler Library, 6th Floor
Columbia University, Mail Code 1127
535 W. 114th St.
New York, NY 10027

Business Number: (212) 854-5153

Fax Number: (212) 854-1365

rbml@libraries.cul.columbia.edu

URL: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/rbml/index.html>

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical / Historical	3
Summary	5
Administrative Information	5
Related Materials	6
Controlled Access Headings	6
Collection Inventory	6
Series I: Glass Plate Negatives	6
Series II: Photographic Prints	7

Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Rutherford, Lewis Morris, 1816-1892
Title:	Lewis Morris Rutherford photographs
ID:	4362131
ID:	UA#0113
Date [inclusive]:	1850s-1870s
Physical Description:	808 glass plate negatives 40 original wooden boxes
Physical Description:	10 photographs One half-manuscript box, one mapcase drawer adhered to mat 24 x 30 cm. (5) photos are OS prints attached to cardboard housed in mapcase.
Language of the Material:	English .

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; date (if known); Lewis Morris Rutherford Photographs, University Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Lewis Morris Rutherford (1816-1892) was born in Morrisania, New York. His great grandfather, Lewis Morris, was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Rutherford enrolled at Williams College at the age of fifteen, where he studied chemistry and physics. After graduation, Rutherford studied law under William H. Seward and was admitted to the bar in 1837. He practiced law for several years before giving it up in 1849, due to his wife's poor health. For the next seven years, Rutherford and his family lived in Europe. In 1856, Rutherford returned to New York and built an observatory where he began working with astronomical photography and spectroscopy. He worked for years on converting the telescope into a photographic instrument and succeeded in 1868.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Rutherford was a trustee of Columbia University for twenty-six years (1858-1884). He was instrumental in the establishment of the School of Mines, and later, in the departments of Geodesy and Practical Astronomy in 1881. In 1883, Rutherford made a gift of his observatory instruments to the University, and seven years later, he gave Columbia his collection of glass-plate negatives and twenty folio volumes of plate measurements.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Rutherford was one of the original members named in the act of Congress that created the National Academy of Sciences in 1863. He was elected to the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1857, and was made a fellow in 1875. He was the member of several associations, including the Royal Astronomical Society. Lewis Morris Rutherford died on May 30, 1892.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

The observatory located on top of Pupin Hall is named after Rutherford. There is also a professorship in Rutherford's name. John K. Rees, Harold Jacoby, Jan Schilt, Charles Lane Poor and Samuel Alfred Mitchell are some of those instructors who have held the Rutherford Professorship.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Summary

808 glass-plate negatives and ten black-and-white telescopic photographic prints of astronomical subjects.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Butler Library, 6th Floor
Columbia University, Mail Code 1127
535 W. 114th St.
New York, NY 10027

Business Number: (212) 854-5153

Fax Number: (212) 854-1365

rbml@libraries.cul.columbia.edu

URL: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/rbml/index.html>

Restrictions on Access

Series I, Glass Plate Negatives, is CLOSED pending conservation and digitization. Series II has no restrictions. kws 02-28-2023

Restrictions on Access

This collection is located on-site.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

Reproductions may be made for research purposes. The RBML maintains ownership of the physical material only. Copyright remains with the creator and his/her heirs. The responsibility to secure copyright permission rests with the patron.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

According to the 1891 Columbia University Annual Report, Lewis Morris Rutherford gave his entire collection of photographic plates, dating from 1858 to 1878, to the University in November, 1890. These plates numbered approximately 1,500 and included with them

were measurements of many of the star plates. The reduction of these measurements was carried out in the preceding years by professors John K. Rees and Harold Jacoby with financial support from Rutherford himself, and after his death, by his son, Rutherford Stuyvesant. According to an 1892 article found in the Rees biographical file in the University Archives, a number of the moon photographs were sent to Prof. L. Weinek of the Imperial Observatory in Prague, who was in the process of making a large map of the moon. A complete set of similar photographs was sent to the Lick Observatory as well. The photographic plates are now located in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, along with several large prints. The plates were found in a storage closet when the Astronomy Department was renovated.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Related Materials

Related Materials

The Department of Astronomy records (https://findingaids.library.columbia.edu/ead/nnc-ua/ldpd_5804362/dsc/5), in particular Series V, contain material related Rutherford and his calculations.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Moon
- Moon -- Pictorial works
- Astrophotographs
- Photographic prints
- Glass plate negatives

Collection Inventory

Series I: Glass Plate Negatives, 1850s-1870s

Scope and Contents

This series consists of 808 glass-plate negative slides, stored in 40 wooden boxes. The photographs are of astronomical subjects, taken by Rutherford from the 1850s through the 1870s.

Conditions Governing Access:**Conditions Governing Access**

CLOSED. This series is closed until a project to stabilize and then digitize the slides is completed.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series II: Photographic Prints, 1864-1865, 1871**Scope and Contents**

This series consists of ten mounted black-and-white telescopic photographic prints depicting the moon in various phases. According to Rees, Rutherford printed from albumenized plates that were made using the wet-plate process.

Title/Description	Instances	
Full moon, November 13, 1864	box 1	folder 1
Scope and Contents		
9¼ x 7½" (print), 12 x 9 ½" (mat)		
Moon, January 18, 1865	box 1	folder 2
Scope and Contents		
9½ x 7½" (print), 12 x 9 ½" (mat)		
Moon, February 4, 1865	box 1	folder 3
Scope and Contents		
9½ x 7½" (print), 12 x 9" (mat)		
Moon, March 6, 1865	box 1	folder 4
Scope and Contents		
9¼ x 7½" (print), 12 x 9 ½" (mat)		
Lunar Photograph - Last Quarter, undated	mapcase 15- L-4	item 1
Scope and Contents		
13 x 9.5"		
Half moon, March 6, 1865	mapcase 15- L-4	item 2

Scope and Contents

25.75 x 21"

Half moon, January 18, 1865

Scope and Contents

22 x 28"

mapcase 15-
L-4

item 3

Full moon, June 2, 1871

Scope and Contents

22 x 28"

mapcase 15-
L-4

item 4

Half moon, March 4, 1865

Scope and Contents

22 x 28"

mapcase 15-
L-4

item 5

Half moon, March 6, 1865

Scope and Contents

22 x 28"

mapcase 15-
L-4

item 6

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)