

HSTC Bulletin

Journal of the History of Canadian Science, Technology and Medicine
Revue d'histoire des sciences, des techniques et de la médecine au Canada

hstc
bulletin

Libraries

John Parkkari

Volume 1, Number 4 (4), August 1977

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1082410ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1082410ar>

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Publisher(s)

HSTC Publications

ISSN

0228-0086 (print)

1918-7742 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this document

Parkkari, J. (1977). Libraries. *HSTC Bulletin*, 1(4), 5–6.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1082410ar>

LIBRARIES

CISTI'S COLLECTION OF MATERIAL ON HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

During recent discussions concerning the role that the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (CISTI) might play, in the proposed studies by the National Research Council of Canada on the state of history of science in Canada, it has become apparent that very little is known about the collection of historical material in the CISTI Library (formerly the National Science Library).

The vast majority of the collection consists of published material, but there are three collections of archival material which could be of considerable value of historians of science during the period from the mid-Victorian era to the early 1920's. One collection, the Pluecker letters was bequeathed to the National Research Council by his nephew, Dr. Otto Maass, the distinguished professor of physical chemistry at McGill. These letters were written to Julius Pluecker from more than sixty physicists in the last century and the international scope is indicated in that they are in English, French, and German. This collection is complemented by an extensive collection of letters by Michael Faraday. Another collection consists of letters written to Fritz Reiche by Max Planck, Erwin Schroedinger, Max Born, and Albert Einstein. These cover the period 1911-1921.

Supplementary material which should be of value to historians of science is the primary literature. A notable resource is the collection of journals and other publications of the academies and learned societies throughout the world, examples of which are the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London (v. 1, 1665-) and the publications of l'Academie des Science, Paris (v. 1, 1666-). In addition to these, the CISTI library contains all the major journals in science, technology, and medicine, together with thousands of the minor journals. Indexes to this material have been collected intensively and secondary material on history of science is well represented.

However, until recently, the primary sources in monograph form have not been collected extensively. The situation has changed with the acquisition of a set called Landmarks of Science. This set, comprising 30,000 sides of microprint containing more than 2,500,000 pages of original text, was begun by the Readex Corporation in 1966 and is now complete. Landmarks of Science includes first editions from the beginning of printing to the present day, as well as successive editions of works when extensive changes were made in the texts. CISTI has also acquired The Catalogue of the History of Science Collections of the University of Oklahoma Libraries, which is probably the most comprehensive collection of material on history of science in North America. This catalogue is particularly useful since every title in Landmarks of Science appears in the

catalogue and is clearly identified as such, and can therefore be used as a key to microprint collection.

Several reprint or facsimile editions of collected works have been purchased as they appeared. Examples of these are: Tycho Brahe, Opera Omnia (13v.); Voyage de Humboldt et Bonpland (33v.); Leonardo da Vinci, Madrid Codices (4 v.); Isaac Newton, Correspondence (7 v.); and Leonhard Euler, Opera Omnia (73 v.). The Archives of the Royal Institution of Great Britain (1799-) is now being published and volumes are being acquired as they are issued.

The archival material can be consulted in the special collections room at CISTI as can Landmarks of Science, for which a reader is provided. Many of the monographs can be borrowed through Interlibrary Loan, but journal articles are available only in photocopy form. All requests for borrowing material should be directed to the Interlibrary Loan Department and should come, if possible, through the library serving the requestor.

John Parkkari
C.I.S.T.I.,
Ottawa.

ARCHIVES

Canadian Archives and Collections in Science and Technology
Institute for History and Philosophy of Science and Technology,
University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A1.

As reported in HSTC #1, Mr. David Lukens of the I.H.P.S.T. is heading a pilot project with a view to establishing a union catalogue of scientific and technical archives in Canada. He reports that the work is proceeding and several archival entries have been made. He and Dr. Ron B. Thomson have designed cards that researchers can make out when they find an archive; the card can then be placed in the Toronto file. Following is their description of a sample card entry. Further information about this project can be had from Mr. Lukens.

1. Last name in capitals, full first names. e.g.
SHORTT, Dr. Elizabeth (nee Smith)
Toronto. Mount Sinai Hospital.
2. Birth, death dates.
3. Field: - occupation, e.g. university professor, chemical engineer, physician
- and/or field: physics; plastics; gynecology
- and/or special notes: founder of, ..., commissioner of ...
4. Material in Archives: e.g. correspondence, manuscripts, published writings, diaries, memorabilia, speeches, lecture notes, research notes, clippings, etc.
Include inclusive dates of material (earliest and last items).
5. Type of material: e.g. original papers, transcripts, photocopies, microfilms, magnetic recording tapes, tape cassettes.