

THE PAPERS OF SIR ISAAC HOLDEN (1807-1897) AND FAMILY, WEST RIDING WOOL COMBERS : collection description

Special Collections, J.B. Priestley Library

Reference code

GB 0532 HOL

Title

The Holden Papers

Dates

[1840?]-1897

Level of description

Fonds

Extent

19 boxes

Name of creator

Sir Isaac Holden, 1807-1897, industrialist and technical innovator

Administrative/biographical history

Sir Isaac Holden was born in Paisley in 1807. He worked in a cotton mill, as a shawl-weaver, and as a teacher before taking the post of book-keeper in Townend Brothers worsted mill in 1830. He stayed with the firm until 1846, becoming works manager and introducing mechanical woolcombing methods. In 1847 he took out a joint patent with Samuel Cunliffe Lister for "Improvements in carding preparing combing and spinning wool ... , and also in making heald and genappe yarns". In 1848 Holden and Lister opened a wool-combing factory at St. Denis, near Paris ; this was soon replaced by factories at Croix and Rheims.

About this time the two were involved in work on the square-motion comb, which Lister later patented. In 1858, after a number of disagreements, Lister sold his share of the business to Holden. Leaving the running of the French factories largely to his nephews Jonathan Holden (1828-1906) and Isaac Holden Crothers (1830-1908), in 1864 Holden opened a large new wool-combing plant in Bradford, the Alston Works. Holden was elected M.P. for Knaresborough 1865-68, for the Northern Division of the West Riding 1882-85, and for Keighley 1885-95.

He was created a baronet in 1893, and died in 1897.

Immediate source of acquisition

Donated to the University by Sir Edward Holden, Sir Isaac Holden's great-grandson, in 1971.

Scope and content

Correspondence and papers (c.1845-1896) of Sir Isaac Holden and his second wife, Sarah (1804?-1890), relating to the Holden family and some aspects of the family business. Includes some technical memoranda on wool-combing machinery and processes.

System of arrangement

The papers had been sorted into numbered bundles by a member of the Holden family. This arrangement has been retained. Where the same number was repeated, upper-case letters have been added to the number in order to distinguish the bundles.

Access conditions

Available to researchers, by appointment. Access to archive material is subject to preservation requirements and must also conform to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act and any other appropriate legislation.

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Language of material

English.

Finding aids

Handlist, published in "The West Riding wool industry" by Patricia Hudson (Edington : Pasold Research Fund, 1975).

Related units of description

A collection of Holden papers, particularly business archives, is held by the Brotherton Library of the University of Leeds.

Publication note

Used by J. Malcolm Trickett for M.Sc. thesis, "A technological appraisal of the Isaac Holden papers" (Bradford, 1977), and by Elizabeth Jennings for her Ph.D. thesis, "Sir Isaac Holden (1807-1897) 'the first comber in Europe' " (Bradford, 1982)

Archivist's note

Described by John Brooker

Rules or conventions

ISAD(G) 2nd ed.

Date(s) of description

9 April 2001

Indexing

Persons and Families

Crothers, Isaac Holden
Holden, Sir Isaac
Holden, Jonathan
Holden, Sarah
Lister, Samuel Cunliffe, Lord Masham
Holden Family

Subjects

Wool trade and industry - England - West Yorkshire - History
Woollen and worsted manufacture - England - West Yorkshire - History

Locations

Bradford - West Yorkshire - England

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