

News, Notes, and Queries

The Bakken Library and Museum Artifacts Now Accessible Online

The Bakken Library and Museum announces the availability of a new online database of its outstanding collection of artifacts relating to the history of electricity and magnetism and their uses in medicine and the life sciences. Records for approximately 90 per cent of The Bakken's unique collection of roughly 2,000 artifacts have been entered into the database along with images of almost every item. The information provided typically includes description, remarks, and an image, as well as materials, date, size and weight, and a list of accessories.

The database is located at <http://thebakken.org/artifacts/database/> and is organized by The Bakken's accessioning categories. A person interested in plate electrostatic generators, for instance, would first click on "Electrostatics". Under "frictional generators", click "plate". The result will be a list of the plate electrostatic generators in the collection. Clicking the hyperlinks will then lead you to an image and

description of the generator in question. We hope to implement more sophisticated search functions in the near future.

The instrument collection focuses on the history of electricity and magnetism in the life sciences. It includes electrostatic generators, magneto-electric generators, induction coils, physiological instruments, recording devices, and accessories. There are hundreds of pacemakers and defibrillators, and dozens of magnetic devices.

A partial online catalogue of The Bakken's extensive book collection has been available for a number of years at <http://www.thebakken.org/library/library.htm#BooksAndManuscripts>. Plans are being made for an online public access catalogue of the entire collection.

The artifact database is a work in progress and The Bakken welcomes feedback from researchers. Please direct comments and questions to Ellen Kuhfeld, Curator of Instruments, at Kuhfeld@thebakken.org.