

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Archives and Special Collections

Amos Eaton (1776-1841) Papers, 1799-1841.

Accession #: MC 11
Quantity: 1 linear ft.
Access: Open

**Biographical
Note:**

Amos Eaton joined the New York Bar in 1802 and subsequently established himself as a lawyer and land agent in Catskill, New York. In 1810 Eaton taught what is considered to be the first popular course in botany in the United States. Shortly afterward, Eaton was imprisoned for forgery, and then pardoned in 1815. He relocated to New Haven, Connecticut and studied science under Benjamin Silliman at Yale. In 1817 Eaton began teaching natural sciences at Williams College, where he continued to give public courses as an itinerant lecturer. In the 1820s Stephen Van Rensselaer financed a series of geological surveys of New York State, furthering Eaton's reputation in both field work and scholarship. When Van Rensselaer established the Rensselaer School in 1824, he appointed Eaton senior professor. At Rensselaer, Eaton became a leader in scientific education by combining his unique teaching methods of laboratory experimentation and field observation. He was also an advocate of advanced education for women, although he was unsuccessful in his efforts to integrate women into the collegiate program. Eaton remained at Rensselaer until his death in 1842.

**Content
Note:**

Includes originals and typed transcripts of an 1821 deed to the Old Bank Building, which was the original home of the Rensselaer School; correspondence between Eaton and Lewis C. Beck, William Aiken, Silas Wright, Oliver Steele, William Marcy, and others, 1824-1838; and an undated sketch and comments on women's fashions. Also, Eaton's geological notebook, with notes and newspaper clippings, 1830-1836; and his herbarium, 1830. Correspondence with various members of the Eaton family, including Almira Eaton, Sarah C. Eaton, Daniel C. Eaton, Timothy D. Eaton, Typhena Cady, John Torrey, and Emma Willard (founder of the Troy Female Seminary) and two instruments used by him (steel mineralogist's forceps and a bone letter opener).

Box	Folder	Description	Date
		CORRESPONDENCE	
1	1	Amos Eaton to Nathan Haley	July. 23, 1807
		Amos Eaton to County Clerks (<i>Draft form letter, probably not written by AE, and a printed circular about the Rensselaer School</i>)	Jan 15, 1829, Oct 29, 1828
		Amos Eaton to William Aikin	Mar 14, 1829
		Amos Eaton to Silas Wright	Jun 10, 1830
		Amos Eaton to Silas Wright	Jul 10, 1830
		Amos Eaton to Oliver Steel	Jun 22, 1833
		William Marcy to Amos Eaton	Mar 28, 1836
		Amos Eaton to Col. Worth	Nov 17, 1837
		Amos Eaton to [?]	May 7, 1838
		Extract of a letter from Amos Eaton	
	2	Timothy Dwight Eaton to Tryphena Cady	Mar 19, 1825
	3	Sarah Eaton to Amos B. Eaton	May 22, 1832
		Sarah Eaton to Amos B. Eaton	Sept 10, 1832
		Sarah Eaton to Amos B. Eaton	Feb 6, 1834
		Sarah Eaton to Amos B. Eaton	Oct 27, 1834
		Sarah Eaton to Amos B. Eaton	Dec 13, 1834
		Sarah Eaton to Elizabeth Eaton	Jan 2, 1834
		Sarah Eaton to Daniel Cady Eaton	May 25, 1840
	4	William B. Eaton to Sarah Eaton	Aug 23, 1833
		William B. Eaton to Sarah Eaton	May 14, 1834
	5	H. Hulbert Eaton to John F. Bush	Mar 18 1827
		H. Hulbert Eaton to John F. Bush	Apr 29, 1827
		H. Hulbert Eaton to John F. Bush	Jun 13, 1827
		H. Hulbert Eaton to Tryphena Cady	Feb 17, 1827
		H. Hulbert Eaton to Tryphena Cady	Aug 14, 1827
		H. Hulbert Eaton to Tryphena Cady	Oct 5, 1827
		H. Hulbert Eaton to Tryphena Cady	Nov 19, 1827
		H. Hulbert Eaton to Tryphena Cady	Jan 4, 1829
		H. Hulbert Eaton to Sarah Eaton	Jan 11, 1828
2	1	Amos Eaton to Amos B. Eaton	Apr 1, 1824
		Amos Eaton to Sarah Eaton	Jul 19, 1830
		Amos Eaton to Sarah Eaton	Sept 27, 1836
		Amos Eaton to Sarah Eaton	Nov 29, 1836
		Amos Eaton to Sarah Eaton	May 3, 1837
		Amos Eaton to Sarah Eaton	Apr 20, 1838
		Amos Eaton to Sarah Eaton	Feb 18, 1840
		Amos Eaton to Sarah Eaton	Mar 21, 1840
		Amos Eaton to Sarah Eaton	Apr 22, 1840

2	2	Amos Eaton to John Torrey	Jul 11, 1828
	3	Amos Eaton to Emma Willard	Nov 20, 1819
		Amos Eaton to Emma Willard	Mar 24, 1820
		Amos Eaton to Emma Willard	Apr 8, 1822
		Amos Eaton to Emma Willard	Mar 3, 1823
		Amos Eaton to Emma Willard	Nov 29, 1823
		Amos Eaton to Emma Willard	Dec 24, 1824
		Amos Eaton to Emma Willard	May 1, 1827
		Amos Eaton to Emma Willard	May 16, 1827
		Amos Eaton to Emma Willard	Aug 14, 1827
		Amos Eaton to Emma Willard	Oct 30, 1827
		Amos Eaton to Emma Willard	Feb 9, 1828
		Amos Eaton to Emma Willard	Oct 16, 1828
		Amos Eaton to Emma Willard	Feb 21, 1837
		Amos Eaton to Emma Willard	Nov 15, 1837
	4	Almira Eaton to Emma Willard	Sept 16, 1825
		Almira Eaton to Emma Willard	Oct 16, 1825
	5	(Unidentified) Eaton to Emma Willard	Mar 16, 1828
	6	Timothy Dwight Eaton to Tryphena Cady	Jan 1, 1828
	7	Daniel Cady Eaton to Sarah Eaton	Mar 5, 1837
		MISCELLANEOUS	
3	1	Amos Eaton's William College Certificate	Jan 5, 1799
	2	Deed to Old Bank Place (original site of Rensselaer School)	Aug 24, 1821
	3	Eaton's commentary and sketch on women's fashion	n.d.
	4	Journal fly leaf, 1 page	1797
	5	Journal fragment (notes on dyes and water analysis)	n.d.
	6	Onondaga Academy resolution regarding Sarah Eaton	Apr 9, 1841
	7	Steel mineralogist's forceps owned by Amos Eaton	
		Bone letter opener/paper folder owned by Amos Eaton	
4	1	Amos Eaton's Geological Journal "G"	1830-1836
	2	Amos Eaton's Geological Journal "G" (photocopy)	1830-1836
5		Amos Eaton's Herbarium	1830