

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

Newly Available and Processed Collections at The Historical Society of Pennsylvania

WHAT FOLLOWS ARE DESCRIPTIONS of some of the collections at The Historical Society of Pennsylvania that have been fully processed within the past year and a half and are now more available and accessible to researchers. Full finding aids for these collections, and many others, can be found online at <http://www.hsp.org/default.aspx?id=35>.

Joseph E. Beck Papers, 1902–1988 (bulk ca. 1950–1980)

3 boxes (21 folders), 2 flat files

HSP Collection 3083

Joseph E. Beck (1904–1981) was born to Romanian Jewish immigrants in Racine, Wisconsin. Beck spent his formative years in Cleveland, Ohio, and attended the Ohio State University for one year. He transferred to Harvard in 1922 and majored in government and minored in economics. He earned a fellowship from the Associated Charities of Cleveland (ACC), which enabled him to pursue graduate studies in social work at Western Reserve University. Beck worked for various social agencies in Cleveland and Scranton, Pennsylvania, before becoming executive director of the Jewish Welfare Society of Philadelphia in 1934. In 1942, he became executive director of the National Refugee Service in New York City and assisted Jewish refugees during the war. He moved to California in 1950 and continued with social work until his retirement. The materials in this collection consist of family records, correspondence, photographs, clippings, and sixteen millimeter films. The majority of the holdings is comprised of Beck's candid and personal writings on a variety of social, political, and cultural topics, many of which he used in his autobiography.

**First Association of Spiritualists of Philadelphia, ca. 1867–1955
(bulk ca. 1910–1950)**

3 boxes, 4 flat files

HSP Collection 3089

In 1848, Kate and Margaret Fox inaugurated the Spiritualist movement (based on the notion that spirits could be contacted through mediums) in Hydesville, New York. The First Association of Spiritualists of Philadelphia held its initial meeting in January 1852 and signed its constitution on July 24, 1864. In 1865, the Spiritualists hosted their national convention in Philadelphia. The association met in numerous halls around the city, and in 1901, it purchased a building at Twelfth and Thompson streets and dedicated it as the Temple of the First Association of Spiritualists. In 1931, the association sold the Temple and moved its worshipping place to Master and Carlisle streets. The First Association of Spiritualists of Philadelphia appears to have disbanded sometime during the latter half of the twentieth century, although Spiritualists maintain various worship places within the city of Philadelphia. This small collection contains a detailed scrapbook, which consists of newspaper clippings, church bulletins, postcards, photographs, private writings from church members, and correspondences with the Executive Mansion of Pennsylvania and the White House. The collection also includes the organization's constitution, newspapers, magazines documenting other Spiritualist groups in the Delaware Valley, and numerous photographs of society members, places of worship, and events.

Gondos Family Papers, 1895–ca. 1978 (bulk 1900–1975)

13 boxes, 3 vols., 7 flat files

HSP Collection 3082

In 1911, Victor Gondos (1879–1963) and his family immigrated to the United States from Hungary and settled in New York City. Victor, a civil engineer, and his wife, Irene Trautmann (1883–1964), had two sons, Zoltan (later Robert) and Victor Jr. Victor Sr. and his brother served jail terms in 1915 and 1916 for extortion charges, and the government labeled their families “enemy aliens” during the First World War. Upon moving to Reading, Pennsylvania, in the 1920s, Victor set up the Gondos

Company, a general contracting firm. In 1930, Gondos joined with his sons to form Gondos and Gondos, an architectural firm headquartered in Philadelphia that designed industrial buildings, schools, and hotels. Though both sons earned engineering degrees, Victor Jr. was also an architect, historian, and archivist. He worked for the National Archives for twenty-three years and served as editor of *Military Affairs*, a military history journal published by the American Military Institute. Robert worked as a design engineer for Campbell Soup Company for twenty-one years. Victor Sr. dissolved Gondos and Gondos in the late 1940s, but managed the Gondos Company until his retirement in 1953. This collection, which spans almost one hundred years, chronicles a Hungarian family's efforts to assimilate to the United States while attempting to retain its heritage. Many materials relate to the family's architectural and construction businesses from the mid-1920s through World War II. The vast majority of this collection is correspondence between family members in the United States and in Hungary. It also includes scrapbooks, audio materials, clippings, programs, pamphlets, journals, technical drawings, and photographs.

Harcum Junior College, 1953–2006 (bulk 1980–2001)

23 boxes, 20 vols.

HSP Collection 3080

Edith Hatcher and her husband, Octavius Marvin Harcum, founded Harcum Junior College (originally Harcum Post Graduate School) on October 1, 1915. Edith decided to establish a women's college based on her belief that "general education and education for a career are compatible. Specialized vocational courses and liberal arts courses complement each other." Though the first class had only three students, fifteen students had enrolled at the college and the faculty had expanded to over twenty members by the second term. Octavius served as president until his death in a car accident in 1920, and Edith occupied the presidency for the following thirty years. In 1952, financial troubles forced the school to declare bankruptcy. The Junto Adult School purchased Harcum, and Philip Klein became the new president. In 1956, Harcum became the first junior college to confer associate of arts and associate of science degrees. The college had several presidents during the next few decades, and in

2002, Dr. Charles H. Trout assumed the presidency. He increased course offerings and made the college a coeducational institution, and enrollment increased from five hundred to eight hundred students during his tenure. Trout passed away in 2006, leaving the leadership of the school to the board of trustees. The topics addressed in this collection range from curriculum decisions to recording enrollment and alumni statistics of Harcum students to the school's financial, real estate, and legal concerns. The materials are divided into four series: board, administration, financial, and miscellaneous. The board series (1953–2001, n.d.) consists primarily of committee minutes, the papers of Arthur Klein, and various board correspondence and memoranda. The administration section includes information on the operations of the college's different departments and its facilities. The miscellaneous materials (1962–2001, n.d.) include issues of the alumni magazine, *Patches*, college yearbooks, handbooks, course catalogs, newspaper clippings, invitations, and press releases.

Rev. Dr. Yam Tong Hoh Papers (ca. 1910–1987)

64 boxes, 22 vols., 8 flat files

MSS 126

Yam Tong Hoh (1898–1987) was born in Fushan, China, and earned a degree with honors in education from Lingnan University (Canton Christian College) in 1923. He received his masters in education from Stanford University in 1929, attended San Anselmo Theological Seminary, and earned his doctorate from Columbia University Teachers College in 1933. He returned to China and headed the True Light Middle School in Canton, a Christian mission school for orphan girls founded in 1872. The school relocated several times during World War II in an effort to evade the Japanese invasion and occupation. Hoh fled China in 1944 and returned to the United States after World War II to direct the Chinese Community Center in Oakland, California; he also served the Chinese Congregational Church in Berkeley. In 1954, he moved east to lead the Chinese Christian Church and Center of Philadelphia. He retired from the ministry in 1967 and became the first director of On Lok House Older Adult Living Center, an organization that provided subsidized housing for elderly Asians. The collection contains materials concerning Philadelphia's Chinese American community

and Chinatown. Most of the collection is written or printed in Chinese and consists of correspondence, cards, writings, notes, board papers, applications, church bulletins, blueprints, posters, newspapers and clippings, financial reports, receipts, programs, appointment books, magazines, children's primers, and photographs, the bulk of which relate to Hoh's work in the Chinese American community of Philadelphia. Other materials include Hoh's sermons and related notes, comprehensive documentation of the On Lok House Older Adult Living Center, and background information on the elderly in Philadelphia's Chinatown. There is relatively little documentation of Hoh's personal life.

Lantern and Lens Guild of Women Photographers Records, 1904–2004

15 boxes, 15 vols.

HSP Collection 3085

In 1905, Margaret Bodine and her classmates in Mathilde Weil's photography course at the Drexel Institute established the Drexel Camera Club. The women met on a weekly basis for lectures, classes, and exhibitions. In 1912, the club changed its name to the Lantern and Lens Guild of Women Photographers. Guild members photographed people, animals, buildings, and landscapes in Philadelphia and the surrounding area. The group also hosted visiting artists and subscribed to various photography publications. The women exhibited their work in numerous venues, including the Bryn Mawr Art Center and the Franklin Institute; they also hosted annual competitions. The Lantern and Lens Guild moved into the New Century Guild Building at 1307 Locust Street in 1946 in order to expand its facilities. It remained there for almost twenty years, but by 1965 a decrease in membership led the women to discontinue payment of dues, elections of officers, and their regular schedule of activities. Instead, they intended to meet occasionally at the homes of members. The collection is divided into three series: Guild papers, printed materials and ephemera, and images and artifacts. The majority of the collection consists of photography publications and images, with a lesser portion devoted to manuscript material. Among the materials included are images of the group's outings, its works, and meeting minutes.

Pennsylvania Prison Society Records, 1787–1966, n.d.

1 box, 29 vols.

HSP Collection 1946

On May 8, 1787, a group of men from various Christian sects created the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons in an attempt to improve conditions in Philadelphia's jails. They also wanted to end the illegal suffering of inmates, whose punishment often included public labor. Early society members provided prisoners with clothing, money, and bibles. By the 1820s, the society advocated the implementation of the "Pennsylvania system" of solitary confinement; isolated prisoners, the members believed, would use their sentences to reflect on their crimes. As a result, Eastern State Penitentiary opened in 1829. Upon celebrating its centennial in 1887, the organization changed its name to the Pennsylvania Prison Society. During the twentieth century, it became involved in numerous studies in an effort to gain a better understanding of the causes of criminality and the most effective and just paths to punishment and reformation. The Prison Society's collection includes twenty-nine minute books from its meetings, as well as a variety of correspondence. These materials focus on the society's activities and goals and offer insight into the establishment, operations, and activities of the society since its creation. The majority of the correspondence was written by society members and prisoners incarcerated in the Walnut Street Jail at the end of the eighteenth century. The topics discussed in this collection include: prison conditions at the Walnut Street Prison, Eastern State Penitentiary, and other county prisons; the plight of prisoners; relief given by the society; the roots and implementation of the Pennsylvania System of Solitary Confinement; the society's involvement in national conferences for penal reform; and acts brought to the state legislature for penal reform.

***People's Voice* Research and Editorial Files, 1865–1963**

(bulk 1940–1947)

1 box (10 folders), 1 flat file

HSP Collection 3086

Adam Clayton Powell Jr. (1908–1972), a minister and politician, founded *People's Voice*, a New York City-based leftist African American newspa-

per in 1942. The paper targeted a progressive African American audience and focused on everything from local gatherings and events to U.S. civil rights issues to the political and economic struggles of the peoples of Africa. Powell participated in the civil rights movement in New York City in the 1930s by organizing mass gatherings to protest restaurants, stores, and transportation and utility companies that refused to hire or promote African American employees. Powell left *People's Voice* for Congress in 1944. Shortly before the paper's demise, *People's Voice* gained the support of Benjamin J. Davis Jr., a Communist Party leader. The government accused the paper of being subversive, and financial and personnel problems led to the cessation of publication in 1948. This collection is composed more of raw materials gathered for writing the paper than of the finished products of *People's Voice* or its employees. It includes correspondence, press releases, booklets, clippings, flyers, programs, printed materials, and photographs. The collection covers a variety of topics, including African American music and theater performances, cultural, political, and labor developments in Africa during and after World War II, civil rights in the United States, the Fair Employment Practices Committee, portrayals of African Americans in popular literature, and staff issues within *People's Voice*.

St. David's Church Records (ca. 1760–2006)

22 boxes, 34 vols.

HSP Collection 1478

At the end of the seventeenth century, the Welsh settled the land that now comprises Radnor, Pennsylvania. These settlers were followers of the Church of England, but they lacked a minister to lead their services in America. After petitioning the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the community received the Reverend John Clubb and laid the cornerstone for St. David's Church in 1715. In 1776, the Reverend William Currie felt compelled to follow the doctrine of the Church of England and resigned his position when the colonies rebelled; thus, the church was left without a minister during the Revolutionary War. The parish grew during the early 1800s, and by the 1830s railroads enabled more urban dwellers to attend the church. The church expanded with several construction projects in the twentieth century. St. David's parish-

ioners currently number over one thousand families. The records of St. David's Church span from 1706 to 2006 (though the bulk of the collection dates to the late twentieth century). The records have been divided into four series: administration, parish history, sermons of Thomas G. Clemson, and printed materials and images. These materials offer insight into the activities of the parishioners and history of the church. The collection consists of meeting minutes, correspondence, clergy profiles, sermons, histories of the parish, publications, and a variety of images of the church and church events. The majority of the records relate to the various church committees, especially the vestry committee, and the sermons of the Reverend Thomas G. Clemson.

Whiteman Family Papers (1849–1856)

9 boxes, 47 vols.

Am .1881 (Collection 0712)

This collection focuses on the works of the Whiteman brothers of Philadelphia (John G., William A., James G., and Horace). During the early 1850s, the boys, ranging in age from the early teens to early twenties, composed several small, handwritten booklets, including the serial "The Ladder," that reflected mid-nineteenth-century popular culture. These miniature volumes (approximately three inches by four inches) combined elements of newspapers and comic books and contained articles on natural history, descriptions of different museum exhibitions, news items, poetry, satire, stories, puzzles, riddles, descriptions of Fourth of July and Christmas holiday festivities, and line drawings and color illustrations. The collection also includes works attributed to John G. Whiteman, an amateur musician and leader of an orchestra who, between 1851 and 1856, produced several operas and light operas.

Historical Society of Pennsylvania

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