

## NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

### *Newly Available and Processed Collections at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania*

**W**HAT FOLLOWS ARE DESCRIPTIONS of some of the collections at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania that have either been acquired within the past year or more fully processed and therefore are more available and accessible to researchers. Full finding aids for these processed collections, and many others, can be found online at <http://www.hsp.org/node/2044>.

#### *Recently Processed Collections*

##### **Abraham H. Cassel Collection, 1680–1893**

47 volumes

Collection 1610

Abraham Harley Cassel, a book collector and historian, acquired over fifty thousand books, pamphlets, and documents about early Pennsylvania history. He was born in 1820 to a family of German-speaking members of the Dunkard Brethren. His parents, desiring their children to remain “piously ignorant,” did not send him to school, but Abraham nonetheless became obsessed with books and reading. He fed his love of learning in secret by surreptitiously purchasing books, reading by candlelight after the rest of his family was asleep, and teaching himself English from a pocket dictionary. As an adult, he spent a great deal of his time and money collecting volumes and letters from all over the world, eventually amassing a collection large enough to require a separate library building. In 1852 Cassel began to write about the history of the Church of the Brethren and soon became known as an expert not only on Dunkard history but on the religious, political, and social history of Pennsylvania Germans. Historians wrote to him frequently for advice and information,

and many—including Oswald Seidensticker, Samuel W. Pennypacker, and Martin S. Brumbaugh—traveled to Lower Salford, Pennsylvania, in order to visit his library in person. Cassel died in 1908, but not before ensuring that his collection would be cared for after his death. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania purchased forty-seven volumes of printed material from his library (the remainder of his collection is divided between the Beeghly Library at Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, and the Bethany Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois); this assemblage includes hymn books, religious tracts and catechisms, diaries, letters, genealogical records, and examples of Pennsylvania German folk art and *fraktur*. Two German religious groups are especially well represented: the Seventh Day Baptist group at the Ephrata Cloister and the followers of Kaspar Schwenkfeld, who established what would become the Schwenkfelder Church in southeastern Pennsylvania. The collection also contains some materials relating to the wilderness hermitage community founded by Johannes Kelpius.

**Francis Daniel Pastorius Papers, 1683–1719**

10 volumes, 1 folder

Collection 457

Francis Daniel Pastorius founded the settlement of Germantown, which would eventually be incorporated into Philadelphia. Born 1651 in Sommerhausen, Germany, Pastorius was trained as a lawyer. In 1683 he purchased land in Pennsylvania on behalf of the Frankfort Company, which sent him across the Atlantic in order to oversee the fledgling settlement. Even after his tenure as the landowners' agent ended in 1700, Pastorius remained a central figure in Germantown political, social, and judicial affairs. He taught at the Friends School of Philadelphia from 1698 to 1700 and at the newly opened Germantown School from 1702 to 1716 and was elected to public office multiple times, serving as bailiff, clerk, court recorder, and rent collector. Germantown residents also sought after him in his capacities as scrivener and legal counselor, roles which exemplify his importance to the legitimizing of the early Germantown community. Pastorius is well known for his antislavery stance; he joined the Pennsylvania Quakers in signing a protest against slavery in 1688 (the first antislavery document written in the United

States). He died in Germantown sometime between December 26, 1719, and January 13, 1720. The Pastorius Papers date from 1683 through 1719 and consist of ten bound volumes and one folder of loose manuscripts containing Pastorius's personal papers. In the collection may be found Pastorius's autobiography, written in German; his writings on farming and beekeeping; legal documents pertaining to his role as the representative of the Frankfort Company; letter collections; poems; the beginnings of a German dictionary; a commonplace book begun by his father, Melchior Adam Pastorius; a book of medical ailments and remedies; and a volume of legal papers.

### **Belfield Papers, 1697–1977**

235 boxes, 99 volumes

Collection 3158

In 1826, industrialist and entrepreneur William Logan Fisher (1781–1862) purchased “Belfield,” a large house in Germantown, Pennsylvania, from painter Charles Wilson Peale. He gave the house to his oldest daughter, Sarah Logan Fisher (1806–1806), and her husband, William Wister (1803–1891). Belfield remained home to their descendants until 1984, when it was sold to La Salle University. Collectively, the Belfield papers tell the story of several generations of a prominent family and provide glimpses into life in and around Philadelphia from the 1820s to the 1970s. As a result of the various family members' diverse professional and personal engagements, the collection contains materials on a wide range of topics. Particularly well documented are the activities of Sarah Logan Wister Starr (1873–1956), who served as president of the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania from 1921 to 1941. Among numerous positions of leadership in civic groups, she additionally served as state vice chairman of the National League for Women's Services during World War I, chairman of the Women's Committee of the Liberty Loan program for the Federal Reserve District, and president of the Colonial Dames of America. Also notable are materials pertaining to Sarah Logan Wister Starr's son-in-law, Dr. Daniel Blain, a practicing psychiatrist from the 1930s to the 1970s. These records offer general information about the practice of psychiatry during the mid-twentieth century. As a whole, this extensive collection offers researchers insight

into a wealth of topics, including nineteenth-century industry and legal practice, the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania, the Colonial Dames of America, World War I Liberty Loan drives, Philadelphia's Sesquicentennial Exposition of 1926, stamp collecting, 1930s-era world travel, twentieth-century psychiatry, and the genealogy of the Logan, Fisher, and Wister families.

**Charles A. Tracy Collection of Hardie Family Papers, 1777–1902**

1 box

Collection 3155

This collection contains personal papers pertaining to several members of the Hardie family of Philadelphia; the bulk of the records, however, relate to David Hardie (1838–1889), who lived and worked in Philadelphia and served in the United States Navy during the Civil War. His papers, spanning the 1850s through the 1880s, include personal correspondence, petitions, letters from the United States Treasury and Navy departments, and printed circulars, bills, and orders. The letters from the US Navy Department, in particular, highlight David's appointments to various ships between 1862 and 1865. The collection also contains a folder of personal papers and photographs pertaining to David's father, Robert Hardie (1798–1881), who served on a privateer during the War of 1812 and who later became active in the Ancient York Masons. Additionally, one folder holds a few papers relating to David's great-grandfather Robert Hardie (1727–1795), who emigrated from Scotland to Bristol, Pennsylvania, in the 1740s, later moving to Philadelphia's Southwark district and serving as a captain in the Pennsylvania navy during the Revolutionary War. A few other family members are highlighted through photographs and clippings. There are also booklets and report cards from Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital dating from 1896 to 1902.

**Abraham Barker Collection on the Free Military School for Applicants  
for the Command of Colored Regiments, ca. 1863–1895 (bulk  
1863–1864)**

1 box, 1 volume, 2 flat files  
Collection 1968

Abraham Barker, an ardent abolitionist and member of the Union League of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Stock Exchange, served as chairman of the finance committee for the Supervisory Committee for Recruiting Colored Regiments. Barker compiled this collection mostly from the papers of Thomas Webster, chairman of the Free Military School for Applicants for the Command of Colored Regiments, which opened in December 1863 at 1210 Chestnut Street. The school was formed and supported by the Philadelphia Supervisory Committee for Recruiting Colored Regiments, which issued solicitations to the local community of free African Americans to prove their equality as citizens by fighting for their nation. Students attended a variety of classes, from math and history to command tactics and army regulations; some attained additional experience at nearby Camp William Penn, the area's first training grounds for African American soldiers. Upon completing their training, students were sent before a Board of Examiners, and those who passed were granted commissions (for ranks ranging from captain to colonel) and sent into the field with African American regiments. The school remained open until late 1864; during its year of service, it helped raise eleven free African American regiments. This collection, consisting of a register of admission to the school, a disbound register, and a scrapbook, generally spans the period from 1863 to 1864. It contains correspondence, pamphlets, printed circulars, form letters, songs, registers, prints depicting and relating to African American soldiers, and a few clippings. Correspondents include chairman of the Free Military School Thomas Webster, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, Governor Andrew G. Curtin, and Congressman Henry Winter Davis of Maryland.

**Wannemacher Family Papers, 1879–1957 (bulk 1880–1934)**

1 box, 10 volumes

Collection 3324

The history and social and political lives of the Wannemacher family of Philadelphia and other young Philadelphians of the late 1800s and early 1900s are documented in this collection. In 1893, Edward H. Wannemacher married Mary A. Fairbairn at St. Mary's Church in Philadelphia. The couple had at least one son, Edward H. Wannemacher ("Ed Jr."). The Wannemacher Family Papers briefly describe the history of the family. In the photo albums are records of their activities, from casual visits to local landmarks and travels throughout the mid-Atlantic states and New England to their involvement with the Socialist Sunday School and the Young People's Socialist League. Notable among the albums' contents are pictures of Eugene V. Debs, the Socialist Book Store at 1326 Arch Street, and scenes of Philadelphia on Armistice Day. Among the papers pasted into the albums is a letter from George W. Wanamaker of New York regarding a Christmas Day family reunion at the home of Charles Wannemacher Jr. There is also a letter of recommendation from John Wanamaker of Philadelphia, who is described as a "family friend." A box of loose papers contains poems and writings, 1879–1880; vital records; and a 1904 letter from John Wanamaker to the Metropolitan Soap Company.

**Charles A. Quinn Family Albums, 1898–1919**

2 volumes

Collection 3476

Charles Quinn was an unusually talented and meticulous amateur photographer as well as a competent painter. The photos contained in these family albums document his courtship of and marriage to Ann Weber and the growth from infancy into young adulthood of their daughters Viola and Hilda. There are numerous candid shots of leisure activities in Fairmount Park; Wildwood, New Jersey; and other Philadelphia-area locales. Quinn also decorated the albums' pages with hand-painted thematic images. These pictures provide an exceptionally rich look at the life of a Philadelphia family over the first decades of the twentieth century.

**League of Women Voters of Philadelphia Records, 1920–1984**

89 boxes

Collection 1940

The League of Women Voters of Philadelphia, still active as of 2012, was established as a local chapter of the national League of Women Voters (LWV) shortly after the organization's founding in 1919. In light of the impending ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, which granted American women the right to vote, the LWV's mission was to educate women on the civic responsibilities of voting and to encourage women to take an active role in politics. Over the following fifty years, the LWV expanded its agenda to address issues affecting American society, taking positions on national concerns such as the right of women to run for public office or participate in legal contracts without the consent of their husbands, the institution of the United Nations and the Marshall Plan, the civil rights movement, the "War on Poverty," environmental initiatives, and the Equal Rights Amendment. The LWV of Philadelphia Records consist of administrative documents and organizational papers from the national, state, and local branches of the LWV from 1920 to 1984. In particular, there are financial records, membership lists, publications, program materials, meeting minutes, correspondence and memoranda, newspaper clipping scrapbooks, and audiovisual materials. The Philadelphia chapter communicated with national and state LWV branches, politicians and civic leaders, and other organizations, and the contents of the collection reflect these relationships. These records will be of interest to researchers of the history of women voters in the United States and to anyone more specifically interested the history of the League of Women Voters, especially the ways in which it functioned in an inner-city environment.

**Morris Milgram Papers, 1923–1994**

480 boxes, 1 flat file

Collection 2176

This collection documents the career of Morris Milgram, builder and developer of integrated housing. The bulk of the collection consists of Milgram's office files related to the funding and administration of his housing projects. Also included are records of his involvement with sev-

eral political and activist groups, correspondence between him, his wives, and several family members, and papers reflective of his relationship with poet, author, and civil rights advocate Pauli Murray. The part of the collection covering business records includes material on Milgram's early career as a developer of open housing, multiple office records generated by the different companies he founded with the purpose of establishing housing projects, detailed transaction records between Milgram and his investors and donors, and correspondence between Milgram and several political figures. The portion of the collection featuring personal papers includes material on Milgram's college years, letters to and from his spouses, documents about his activities in different political organizations, and correspondence from friends and relatives. Both personal and office records span from the early 1920s until the mid-1990s.

**Viri Viginti Club of Philadelphia Records, 1962–1999 (bulk  
1980–1985)**

1 box, 1 flat file

Collection 3529

Viri Viginti, still active today, is believed to be Philadelphia's oldest African American social club. In 1914, a group of twenty African American men began meeting on a regular basis to discuss current events. Though these early meetings were very informal and purely social, the group eventually decided to call themselves the Viri Viginti Club ("viri viginti" being Latin for "twenty men"). By the 1960s, Viri Viginti met at least five times a year and held annual garden parties. Presidents of Viri Viginti have included Oliver Ramsey, Leon F. Martin, Benjamin Waters, and R. Allen Durrant. The bulk of the papers, which primarily document the club's activities during the 1980s, consist of minutes and reports, correspondence, and other administrative records from the 1970s to the 1980s. Minutes from four meetings in 1998 and 1999 are also included, which provide insight the club's workings and contain information on its annual garden party. This collection additionally boasts essays on the club's history, member photographs, and photocopies of a scrapbook created to commemorate the club's seventy-fifth anniversary in 1989, as well as corresponding commemorative certificates from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia.

**South Asian Immigrants in the Philadelphia Area Oral History Project,  
1996**

6 boxes

Collection 3211

In the summer of 1996, staff members of the Balch Institute's South Asian Immigrants in the Philadelphia Area Oral History Project interviewed sixteen individuals from various countries and regions of South Asia. The goal of this project was to collect information about the immigrant experience, focusing on individuals who arrived in the United States in the 1960s and early 1970s from countries in South Asia, especially India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. The records of this collection consist of the audiocassette recordings of these sixteen interviews and eight text transcripts. The interviews provide a detailed and personal glimpse into the lives of first-generation South Asian immigrants, who discuss their families and lives in South Asia, their careers, adjustment to American culture, the process of becoming American citizens, and their impressions of the next generation's ethnic and cultural identity.

*Historical Society of Pennsylvania*

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