

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 either been acquired within the past year or that have been more fully processed and therefore are more accessible to researchers. Full finding aids or catalog records for these collections, and many others, can be found online at <http://hsp.org/collections/catalogs-research-tools/finding-aids> and <http://discover.hsp.org/>.

The Life, Studies, and Works of Benjamin West, Esq., by John Galt, in Extra-Illustrated form, 1682–1844 (bulk 1792–1820)

3 boxes, 9 flat files

Collection 3239

In 1816 and 1820, Scottish author John Galt produced a two-volume biography entitled *The Life, Works, and Studies of Benjamin West, Esq.* Part one covers West's life in America, starting with his birth in 1738 up to the early 1760s, when West traveled to Italy to study art. The second volume begins with West's move to London in 1763 and ends with his death in 1820. Galt's work was the first biography of West, and West himself read over (or was read) the contents of the first volume to check for accuracy. Due to illness, he was unable to read over the second volume. This collection consists of pages from seven disbound extra-illustrated volumes of Galt's book, containing correspondence, original artwork, and other engravings, documents, and prints. While documents span from the 1680s to the 1830s, most date from the 1790s to 1820, when West served as the president of the Royal Academy of Art in London. The highlights of the collection are West's letters, his original sketches, and large-scale engravings that were made from several of his paintings. Among West's correspondents were American artist Thomas Sully; German painter Antonio Raphael Mengs; Lord Grantham (Thomas Robinson, the second

Baron Grantham); Joseph Reynolds, with whom West founded the Royal Academy; and Thomas Copley, a Jesuit missionary. There are also several letters West wrote to the Council of the Royal Academy, a letter from the managers of the Pennsylvania Hospital thanking West in advance for his painting *Our Saviour Healing the Sick in the Temple*; and an unsigned proposal for West to do a painting on the death of Lord Nelson. Among West's other documents are scattered notes and lists of his paintings, receipts for exhibition money, and occasional notes on the proceedings of the Royal Academy. This collection also contains sixteen original sketches and drawings by West. Nine oversized flat files that mostly contain large-scale engravings done after many of West's painting round out this collection. Additionally, there are several large portraits of Benjamin West.

Beatty J. Smith Collection of Smith Family Papers, 1769–1989, undated

15 boxes

Collection 3502

Beatty J. Smith (1933–2014) was the daughter of Cooper Smith (born 1900) and the granddaughter of James S. Smith III (1866–1956). The bulk of this collection consists of legal papers from her paternal line, beginning with her great-great-great grandfather Daniel Smith (1755–1836); her great-great grandfather James S. Smith (1782–1861) and his two sons, Richard Rundle Smith (1817–1903) and James S. Smith Jr. (1822–94); and her grandfather James S. Smith III (1866–1956). The vast majority of papers in this family collection date from the late 1700s to the late 1800s; however, there are a few items dating from the mid to late twentieth century. The collection consists of correspondence, mortgages, stock certificates, bonds and warrants, title papers, estate papers, genealogical notes, clippings, magazine articles, and other miscellaneous legal and financial papers. There are a few bound volumes, photographs, and glass negatives. Items of interest include Mary Nixon Smith's Application to the Colonial Dames; photographs of Spring Bank, a family estate; and genealogical notes and letters. Other legal items of interest include indenture papers titled "Moses, a Black Boy to James S. Smith," an insurance policy for the Ship *Charlotta* (1804–8), seven almanacs (1821–72), a ship's log (1801–2), and a notebook recording servants' wages (1820). The collection also houses some items of interests on the University of Pennsylvania

(1826–52), the Academy of Fine Arts (1843), Christ Church and St. Peter's Episcopal Church (1827–28), the Common Prayer Book Society (1813–52), and the recollections of Margaret Strawbridge (1989).

Super and Bicking Families Papers, circa 1776–1981 (bulk 1830–70)

1 box

Collection 4040

The Supers and Bickings were two Pennsylvania families, linked through marriage, with members from both sides residing throughout the Philadelphia suburbs, particularly in Delaware and Montgomery Counties. This is a collection of various family papers, the majority of which are from the Super family. Jacob Super (1773–1820) was a cabinet maker who owned a shop on Elfreth's Alley in Philadelphia called Super & Fritz. He had a grandson named John B. Super (1835–1903), who married Josephine Hoopes in 1863 and entered the Union Army in March 1865. The collection contains some letters between John and Josephine during the war as well as a number of letters to Josephine from her brother Isaac, who died in 1865. Isaac's letters date from 1862 and suggest he was in the army. There are also other scattered family letters dating from the 1830s up to the 1870s, with a few items dating from earlier. Other items include John Super's receipt book, 1827–37, a compilation of bound and printed English lessons that apparently belonged to Jacob Super, and genealogical and general family papers, including vital records, deeds, indentures, insurance papers, and at least one original photograph. Representing the Bicking family directly are a few notes, certificates, and clippings. There is also a copy of *Poor Will's Almanac* from 1798 bearing the name of Charles Bicking (1798–1854).

María Josefa Espinosa de Cuesta Papers, 1822–42

2 boxes

Collection 1257

María Josefa Espinosa was born in Mexico and married Ángel León de la Cuesta y Álvarez, a Peruvian man who did business in Ecuador. From approximately 1826 until her death in the 1840s she lived in Philadelphia,

where her brothers-in-law Fernando and Leandro de la Cuesta operated a shipping business. She was a businesswoman who bought and sold real estate and made loans, and she served as legal guardian of her nephew Francisco de Paula Pastor, who was later diplomatic representative of Ecuador to Mexico. This collection mainly consists of incoming correspondence from de Cuesta's two sons, who studied in Paris, and her daughter and son-in-law in Panama. There are also deeds, contracts, and a few pages of calculations. The papers date from 1822 to 1842, with some undated miscellaneous material.

Mathew Carey Diaries, 1828–36

2 volumes

Collection 3672

Mathew Carey (1760–1836), born in Dublin, Ireland, arrived in America in 1784 with nine years of experience as a printer and publisher. With a four-hundred-dollar check from the Marquis de Lafayette, Carey established his own publishing and bookselling business in Philadelphia. Among his early publications were the *Pennsylvania Evening Herald*, the *Columbian Magazine*, and the *American Museum*. With the outbreak of yellow fever in Philadelphia in 1793, Carey took the opportunity to publish his own work entitled *A Short Account of the Malignant Fever, Lately Prevalent in Philadelphia*, which marked the beginning of his venture into medical publishing. During the course of his career, Carey published dozens of medical works. He also published works by Mason L. Weems, James Fenimore Cooper, Edgar Allan Poe, and Sir Walter Scott, among others. Additionally, his company printed broadsides, atlases, bibles, and political titles, including some of his own writings, such as *Vindiciae Hibernicae* (1819), *New Olive Branch* (1820), and *Essays of Political Economy* (1822). Carey devoted his life to political economics after he left the publishing business in the early 1820s. This collection consists of two of Carey's diaries that he kept between the end of 1828 and 1836, totaling 353 written pages and one detached two-page leaf. In these diaries, Carey recorded lengthy descriptions of his daily activities, including extensive reading, writing, editing, publishing, and meetings and conversations with well-known people of the time, such as politician and reformer Robert Dale Owen. In some of the entries Carey documented his relationships

with local newspaper editors, his complex and shifting views on economics, and his activities on behalf of poor and marginalized groups, religious activities, family life, and other matters.

Frederick C. Newhall Papers, 1856–91

1 box

Collection 4067

Frederick Cushman Newhall (1840–98) was born in Philadelphia to Thomas Albert Newhall and Sarah Jane Cushman Newhall. During the Civil War he served as lieutenant colonel in the United States Army, Sixth Pennsylvania Cavalry, with Major General Philip H. Sheridan. This donation consists of several items on and from Frederick C. Newhall and other members of his family. There are two pocket diaries, one of which dates 1890–91, the other of which he used as a “Journal of a Tour of Europe” from October 1856 to about February 1857. Additionally, the collection contains two scrapbooks; the first holds newspaper clippings about Newhall and a series of letters from him to his father in 1865. The volume also contains a disbound pamphlet, authored by Newhall, titled *With General Sheridan in Lee’s Last Campaign. By A Staff Officer* (1866), and signed by one R. Whitechurch of Maryland.

**Adelaide Ermentrout Scrapbooks on Daniel Ermentrout, 1859–1932
(bulk 1877–83 and 1899)**

1 box, 3 volumes

Collection 3629

These three scrapbooks were compiled by Adelaide Louise (Metzger) Ermentrout, wife of Daniel Ermentrout (1837–99), a six-time congressman from Reading, Pennsylvania. In 1873, Ermentrout ran a successful campaign for a seat in the Pennsylvania Senate and was re-elected in 1876. Ermentrout was elected to the US House of Representatives, Pennsylvania’s Eighth District, representing Berks County, in 1880. He held his seat in three successive congresses until meeting defeat in 1888. He was again elected to Congress in 1896, this time as a representative of his home state’s Ninth District, which covered both Berks and Lehigh Counties. He

remained in this position until his accidental choking death in 1899. He also served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention during the 1868 and 1880 presidential elections. In the early 1870s, Ermentrout married journalist Adelaide Louise Metzger of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The first two volumes contain Adelaide's notes alongside newspaper clippings, letters and telegrams, cards, programs, travel tickets, invitations, and other ephemera. Most of the clippings are in English with a few from German papers scattered among them; Ermentrout was interested in the history of the early Germans of Pennsylvania, who formed a large part of his constituency. The third volume documents Ermentrout's untimely death. In it are clippings of obituaries, some of which were gathered by a clipping service, and bereavement letters sent to Adelaide.

First National Bank of Strasburg Records, 1868–1919

37 volumes
Collection 4017

The First National Bank of Strasburg was chartered in 1863 in Strasburg, Pennsylvania, and served the residents of southern Lancaster County. It changed its name to the First National Bank of Lancaster County in or before 1980 and became part of a holding company, Sterling Financial Corporation, when that company was organized in 1987. In 2008, Sterling was acquired by PNC Financial Services Group. The collection includes financial records, including general cash books, general ledgers, individual ledgers, and discount ledgers from the First National Bank of Strasburg, spanning 1868–1919.

Norman M. Rolston Photographs, circa 1907–circa 1934

2 boxes, 2 volumes
Collection 3608

Norman M. Rolston (1886–1970) was born in Philadelphia and raised mostly in the Pittsburgh region. He worked most of his life as a photographer, having photographed Indian tribes in the southwest United States in the early 1900s, Civil War veterans for the fiftieth anniversary of Gettysburg in 1913, and surviving colonial-era structures in and around

Philadelphia during the 1930s. This latter work he did in Philadelphia for the Department of City Transit. The two boxes in this collection contain Rolston's glass slides, which depict a variety of subjects and showcase the images he took for the city. The collection also contains a folder of five black and white photos, some of which are composite photographs from around 1908 of what appears to be a presidential visit to Philadelphia. The other images depict the photo office of the Department of City Transit and the department's photographers, including Rolston. Additionally, the collection contains two books that feature Rolston's images: *The World War through the Stereoscope* (1923) and *Pennsylvania: Gettysburg Reunion, 1863–1913* (1913).

Brant Shoemaker Papers, circa 1928–89, undated

1 box

Collection 4030

George Brant Shoemaker Jr. (1924–90), who went by “Brant,” was a Philadelphia poet, painter, and professor. He attended Frankford High School and obtained degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Connecticut. He served with the Marine Corps during World War II and taught poetry and modern literature for twenty-five years at the University of Pennsylvania's Ogontz Campus in Abington. This collection of Shoemaker's papers spans the bulk of his life and consists of a few early family records; correspondence, clippings, photographs, diaries, yearbooks, ephemera, and artifacts from and pertaining to Shoemaker's time with the Marines; correspondence with family; published poetry; unpublished poetry, prose, and plays; Shoemaker's University of Pennsylvania application materials; clippings on Shoemaker's poetry and life in general; and two framed images.

**Frederick M. Yost Collection on John Wanamaker's Department Store
Publicity, 1863–1984 (bulk 1949–80)**

45 boxes, 11 volumes, 91 flat files

Collection 3440

This collection consists of several decades of papers and scrapbooks documenting various store displays and designs, promotions, and special events at John Wanamaker's department store, compiled by Frederick M.

Yost. Yost, a vice president and sales promotion manager, was responsible for newspaper, radio, and television advertising, as well as public relations, exhibitions, shows, and visual merchandising for the Wanamaker's stores. Yost began working at Wanamaker's Philadelphia store in 1948 as director of visual display. From 1952 to 1965 he was in charge of sales promotions, and in 1965 he became the corporate vice president. Yost came up with the institutional advertising slogan "John Wanamaker has everything" and conceived the Wanamaker Christmas Light Show, which was first seen in the store's expansive central court in 1955. The majority of the collection includes scrapbooks of photographs of store displays and their construction as well as conceptual and architectural drawings, most notably the elaborate Christmas displays and light shows that became a tradition at Wanamaker's. Other materials include office memos, stationery, personal "idea" notebooks, blueprints, floor plans, news clippings, and scrapbooks about John Wanamaker. Items of interest may include the large advertising posters for Wanamaker's stores and Christmas display conceptual designs.