

UP FRONT



THOMAS & KATHERINE DETRE

LIBRARY & ARCHIVES TREASURES

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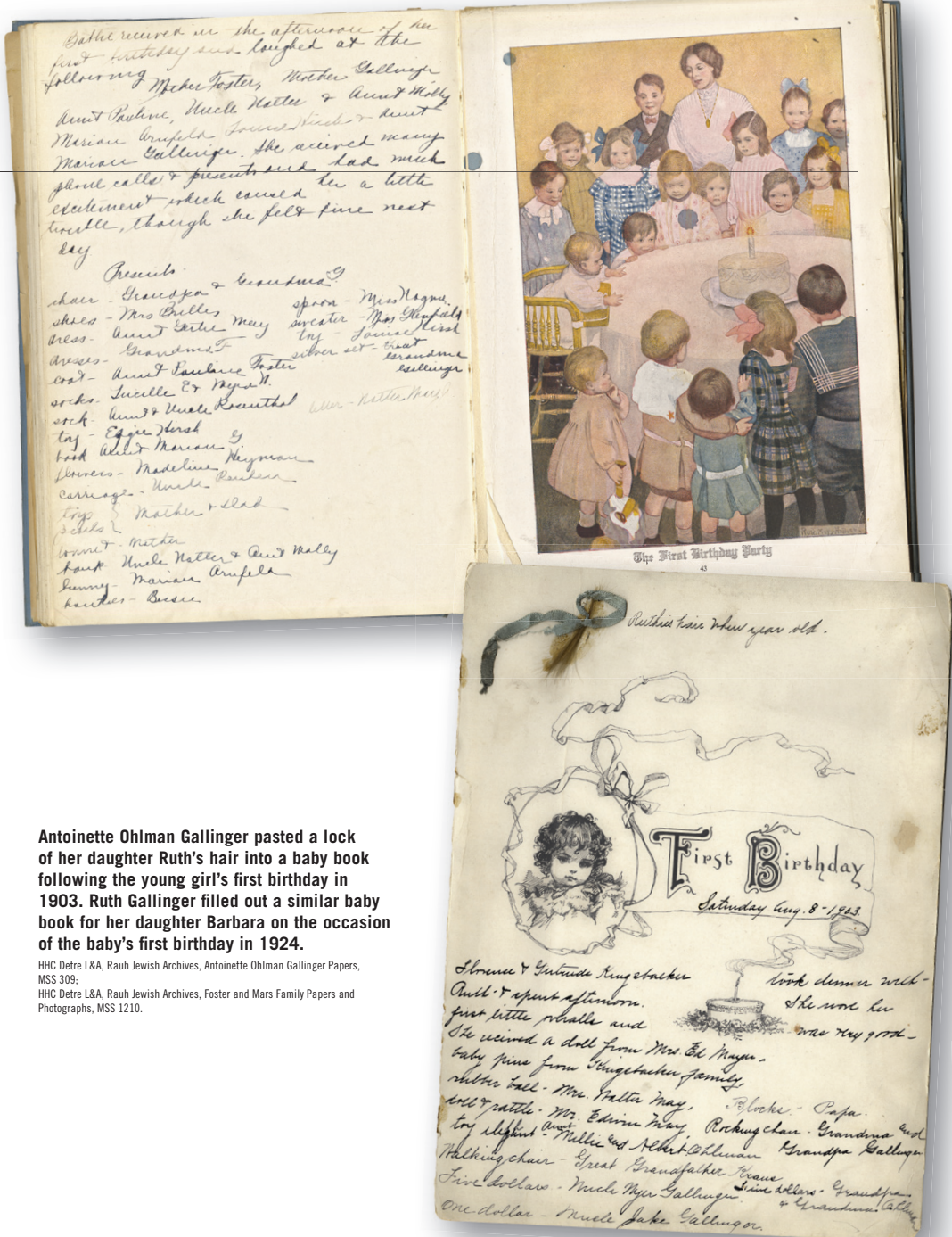
Echoes Across Generations

The documents of American life do not change all that much from era to era. Common milestones in education, family life, recreation, and public service have a way of replicating, producing the same types of materials from one generation to the next.

Peter Mars donated a collection of family materials to the Rauh Jewish History Program & Archives in 2018. The Foster and Mars Family Papers and Photographs (MSS 1210) documents the lives of his parents, grandparents, and other relatives as well as his own youth and family life. It also offers a new perspective on a collection that was donated more than 20 years ago: the Antoinette Ohlman Gallinger Papers and Photographs (MSS 309/MSP 309). Antoinette was Mars' great-grandmother. The collection was donated in five accessions between 1995 and 1997 by Antoinette's daughter Marion Gallinger Reel and granddaughter Barbara Foster Mars—Peter Mars' great aunt and mother.

The materials document the social life of an upper class Jewish teenager coming of age in Western Pennsylvania at the turn of the 20th century. Antoinette's diary, correspondence, photos, and scrapbooks vividly display the rites of courtship, matrimony, and parenthood.

The Foster and Mars Family Papers and Photographs provide a similar glimpse into the lives of Antoinette Gallinger's descendants. The connections are not merely thematic. In



Antoinette Ohlman Gallinger pasted a lock of her daughter Ruth's hair into a baby book following the young girl's first birthday in 1903. Ruth Gallinger filled out a similar baby book for her daughter Barbara on the occasion of the baby's first birthday in 1924.

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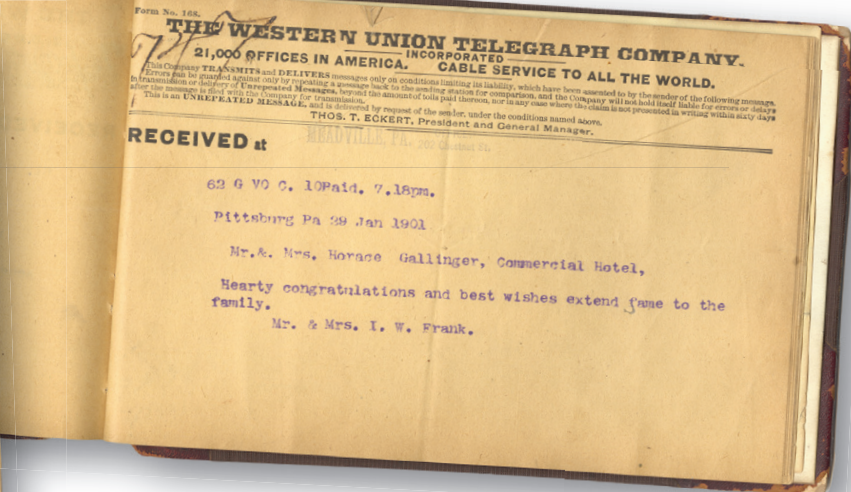
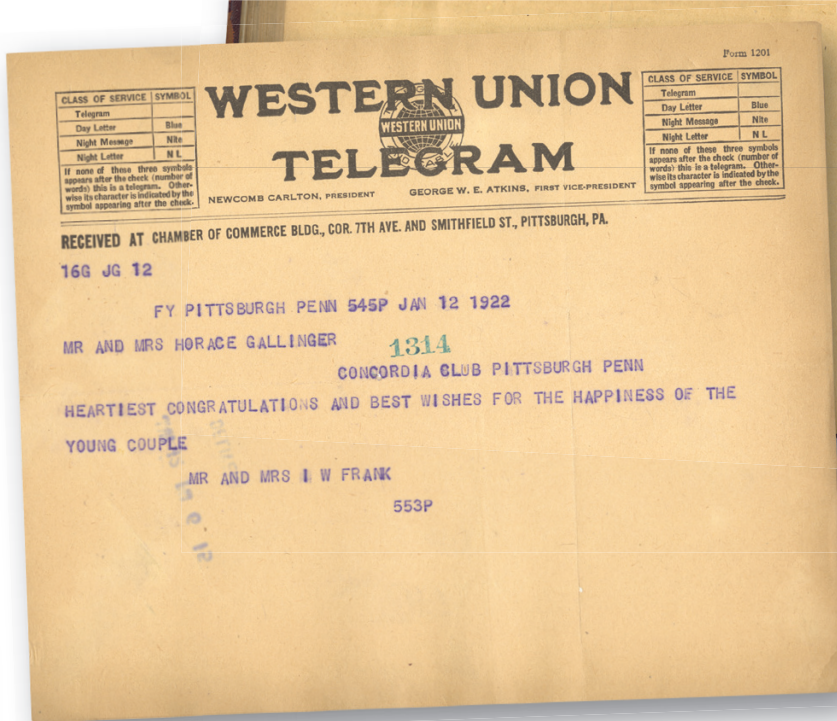
many instances, the exact types of documents created in one generation were created anew in subsequent generations, providing wonderfully tangible points of comparison.

For example, Antoinette saved a bound volume of telegrams sent by friends and family after she married Horace Gallinger in January 1901. The Foster and Mars Family Papers contains a folder of loose telegrams sent to Antoinette and Horace's eldest daughter, Ruth Gallinger, after she married Byron Foster in January 1922. One finds many of the same well-wishers appearing in both sets, separated

by 21 years. In some cases, the earlier and later messages are nearly identical.

Both collections contain "baby books," illustrated volumes with prompts to encourage new mothers to document early child development. In the older collection, Antoinette Gallinger wrote about Ruth's first birthday party in 1903, mentioning the guests and gifts and including a lock of her daughter's hair. In the newer collection, an adult Ruth Gallinger Foster documents the first birthdays of her daughter Barbara and son Byron Jr.

Teenage life is intimately depicted in both



Mr. and Mrs. I.W. Frank sent nearly identical telegrams to Antoinette and Horace Gallinger in 1901 and 1921. The first congratulated the couple on their marriage. The second congratulated the couple on the wedding of their daughter Ruth Gallinger.

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collections. A candid photo in the Antoinette Ohlman Gallinger collection shows 18 effervescent friends clustered in an affectionate scrum at a costume party in 1899. A photograph from the Foster and Mars Family Papers and Photographs shows Antoinette's granddaughter Barbara Foster hanging out

with six girlfriends in the early 1940s. The young ladies flaunt cigarettes, mimicking Hollywood glamour of the day. Another set of images shows Barbara's son Peter Mars and several of his high school friends as they bum around Israel in August 1971, decked out in shorts, tank tops, and sandals. Together, these

three sets of images show Pittsburgh teens documenting their own social lives across a 70-year span.

Scrapbooks of notable European cruises can be found in both collections. Antoinette and Horace Gallinger attended the "May Party," an elaborate trip to France sponsored



Ruth Gallinger (seated center, with the big bow) attended Linden School in the East End of Pittsburgh in 1911. Her grandson Peter Mars (second row, third from right) attended the school in the mid-1960s.

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by Walter and Mollie May in honor of their silver anniversary in 1928. The 63 guests enjoyed “one of the most unique and costly entertainments ever held in the history of Pittsburgh,” as one newspaper report claimed at the time. The Gallinger’s scrapbook documents luxurious travel accommodations, lavish banquets, and elegant wardrobes.

Ruth and Byron Foster created a similar scrapbook in 1946, as they crossed the Atlantic on the RMS *Queen Elizabeth*, en route to England, Belgium, and France. In letters and photographs, Ruth Foster combines her affection for Europe with her muted

astonishment at the destruction wrecked during the recently completed World War II. A related set of images in the collection shows scenes from a business trip through Europe after the war by executives of the L.B. Foster Company, founded by Byron’s brother Lee Foster.

Other connections include military discharge papers issued after the Spanish American War and after World War II, and class pictures from Linden School in 1911 and 1965.

The intergenerational shouts and echoes between these two collections are striking, but they are not unusual within the Rauh Jewish Archives. A similar phenomenon occurs in the three collections from the Chamovitz-Eger-Jackson families, the three collections from six generations of the DeRoy family in this region, and dozens of smaller collections.

An archive should reflect the real world. The multigenerational Jewish families of Western Pennsylvania left multigenerational collections to the regional Jewish archive. 🌟

The habits of youth never really change. Antoinette Ohlman saved a photograph of a party with her friends in 1899. Her granddaughter Barbara Foster did the same thing in the early 1940s. Her son Peter Mars documented his friends on a trip to Israel in 1971.

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Antoinette and Horace Gallinger were among the 63 guests of the "May Party," a lavish cruise to Europe sponsored by Walter and Mollie May in 1928, in honor of their silver anniversary. Their daughter and son-in-law Ruth and Byron Foster covered similar ground during a cruise in 1946 and found the continent wrecked by depression and war.

HHC Detre L&A, Rauh Jewish Archives, Antoinette Ohlman Gallinger Papers, MSS 309;
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Us saying goodbye on the boat

