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# ECONOMIC HISTORY IN THE PHILADELPHIA REGION

GUIDE TO MANUSCRIPTS AND PRINT RESOURCES FOR RESEARCH *Written by Cathy Matson & Wendy Woloson*

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## American Philosophical Society

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See *A New Guide to the Collections in the Library of the American Philosophical Society*, ed., J. Stephen Catlett (1987). This guide has been reproduced as an on-line guide at the APS web site, including corrections and new acquisitions since the early 1980s.

## Overview

The American Philosophical Society was founded in 1743 by Benjamin Franklin and his cohorts. Modeled on the Royal Society of London, the APS was the first organization in America to promote scientific endeavors and knowledge.

The APS's collection strengths include both printed and manuscript materials that, while concentrated in America, are international in scope. These collections are administered through separate reading rooms by different staff members. While the subject matter of these collections dovetails, each collection also stands alone; scholars visiting the institution do not necessarily use both parts of the collection. All materials, manuscripts and printed books, are closed-stack except for general reference works, which are publicly available. The collections document, primarily, scientific and medical study from America's founding, and include many botanical treatises, works of travel literature, medical dissertations, and scholarly works of nineteenth- and twentieth-century linguists. While APS's manuscript collections are vast, and include writings of prominent men such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, the institution also houses microfilm and photocopied versions of relevant papers from other institutions. Perhaps most important for the scholar of economy and society are the Girard papers on microfilm (see below, under "Misc. Reference Sources," for further description.)

While housing typical manuscript material such as household account books and diaries, the APS is also well suited for studies in "economic botany." Papers include shipping records for Philadelphia-area men interested in the cultivation of overseas plants and their efficacious use as

drugs. In addition to printed medical dissertations and early works dealing with weather and climatological aspects of America's history (which affected overseas trade and the relative success or failure of crops), the collection also houses the rare books from the Horticultural Society which include volumes on material medica and botany. Using these sources together illuminates the intersection of business and medicine, finance and science.

Two on-line catalogues provide access to APS's collections. VOLE contains printed materials including books and periodicals. MOLE contains abstracts of holdings in the manuscript collection. Arranged alphabetically by personal name, MOLE can be a bit awkward to navigate if one isn't tracing proper names. If relevant, the pre-searched subject areas (including "European Science, Technology, and Medicine" and "Scientific Exploration") are useful links, providing quick access to both printed and manuscript materials relating to the field. The full text of many finding aids is also online, and APS is actively working to add new finding aids to their site.

## Significant Collections and Manuscripts Related to the

### Study of the Early American Economy:

**Magellenic Premium:** The Magellenic Premium, still given, was awarded beginning in 1786 from a donation by Jean-Hyacinthe de Magellan (1723-1790) to promote the invention of labor-saving devices and inventions in navigation, astronomy, and natural philosophy. Before the founding of the Patent Office, the APS served as a storehouse for the proposals and models submitted for consideration for the prize. Due to stipulations of the awards committee, those proposals and models that did not receive the premium were to be destroyed. While most were, some models and proposals remain, and provide a good deal of information about early America's technological innovations. Consult the APS's *Catalogue of Instruments and Models* for more information on the Premium and the scope and contents of the existing collection.

**Peale family papers:** The APS holds the papers of Philadelphia artist and naturalist Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827) and those of the extended Peale family, which taken together provide a portrait of life in Philadelphia during the early Republic. Twenty-six volumes of Charles Willson Peale's diaries, from 1765 to 1826, contain information regarding his business activities relating to his portrait and museum work. Eighteen volumes of letter books (1767-1827) and an account book (1785-1795) record business correspondence primarily regarding Peale's museum. Such information reveals not only the day-to-day operations of such an institution, but also provides insight into popular entertainments and attractions of the time.

**"Economic Botany":** The papers of men who combined their interests in botany with entrepreneurial endeavors are well represented at the APS. Their travels and discoveries on behalf of both scientific exploration and financial interests are recorded in the minutes and correspondence (1812-1924), and miscellaneous letters (1744-1894) of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. According to APS's website, correspondents include: Louis Agassiz, Zaccheus Collins, Peter S. DuPonceau, Elie M. Durand, Asa Gray, William Hembel, Alexander von Humboldt, William H. Keating, James Mease, Samuel G. Morton, George Ord, Charles Pickering, Constantine S. Rafinesque, Benjamin Silliman, Sr., John Torrey, Charles Waterton, and Alexander Wilson.

### Printed Materials (all supported by bibliographic resources):

**Franklin Institute printed materials:** When the Franklin Institute dispersed its collection of printed materials, much of it went to the APS. The institution has an extensive number of titles related to late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century technology, machinery, and electrical devices, and is particularly strong in canals and railroads, especially their development in Mexico as businessmen sought to increase their markets.

**“science is business”:** Printed works related to “economic botany” include materia medica and agricultural treatises on subjects such as silk culture and apiculture. A major such collection is that on beet and cane sugar cultivation, processing, technology, history, manufacture and trade. While most of the works were published after 1865, there are many earlier works and those useful to the historian as well.

**Miscellaneous collections:** include various works on coinage, metals, numismatics; maps supporting the works on travel and exploration; minutes and records of mechanics' institutes and other technical schools. Trade catalogues relate mainly to APS's scientific collections and are strongest in art supplies, chemists/druggists, and makers of and dealers in various scientific instruments. Materials on international fairs and expositions begin at London's Crystal Palace in 1855 and end in the early twentieth century. This collection, comprised wholly of printed materials, is international in scope. The APS boasts one of the largest collections of broadsides in the United States relating to science and technology. The APS's exhibit, “Amusement here with Science is Combined: Broad­sides Relating to Science and Technology,” was mounted in 1986, and a 16-page guide was printed in conjunction with the exhibit.

## **Representative papers of interest in studying early American economic history:**

### **Baldwin, Loammi (1780-1838)**

Civil engineer.

Diary, Sept.9-Nov. 29, 1823. 1 vol. (109 pp.).

Baldwin constructed Fort Strong in Boston Harbor (1814), as well as the Union Canal in Pennsylvania (1821). This diary records his travels in the Low Countries of Europe, with detailed observations and fascinating sketches of canals and canal machinery.

### **Bancker, Charles Nicoll (1778?-1869)**

Merchant, financier. APS 1825.

Family Papers, ca. 1733-1894. ca. 1,200 items.

This collection was assembled in three major accessions, one (2 boxes) being a group, 1791-1864, containing letters to and from Bancker and other members of his family on education, business, and personal topics, with such correspondents as: Samuel Hazard, H.M. McIlvaine, James C. Montgomery, and John T. Montgomery.

The bulk of the collection was received after 1966 and is more diverse, with more correspondence both earlier and later, among family members; and also with many extraneous letters from prominent Americans. Many of these letters are addressed to Frederick Beasley of the University of Pennsylvania.

The collection contains, as well, other types of documents, such as a furniture inventory volume (30pp.); a Daybook, 1795-1800 (120pp.); and a very interesting journal (unidentified, but by one of the Banckers, and filed under "Description of a trip..."), from New York to Albany and back, between July 20-Aug. 15, 1793 (1 vol., 31 pp.). It contains detailed observations of the Hudson River and the towns along the way.

C.N. Bancker was in business and trade prior to 1826, and in the insurance business after that date, so there is material relating to those topics in this collection. He owned a substantial library of the period, which was used by Charles Wilkes's Expedition after 1837 (see Reynell Coates to Bancker). This library, along with Bancker's notable scientific instrument collection, was sold after his death and there are published auction catalogues in the collection.

There is much family correspondence from: Anne E. Bancker, Charles Gerard Bancker, Evert Bancker, Sarah U. Bancker, Violetta Bancker Talbot, Elizabeth Bancker Teackle, and John Teackle.

### **Maclure, William (1763-1840)**

Merchant, geologist. APS 1799.  
Letters and papers, 1796-1848. Film. 10 reels.

From Workingmen's Institute, New Harmony, Ind. Letters to Maclure; journals of travel in Europe and America; notes and essays; also manuscripts, transcripts, and notes relating to Maclure.

### **Sellers, John (1762-1847)**

Surveyor, farmer, miller of Upper Darby, Pennsylvania  
Records, 1783-1852. 13 vols.

These consist of a ledger, 1783-1819 (#33, 1 vol., 374 pp.), listing sales and purchases, with names; a day book, 1785-1817 (#31 & 34, 2 vols., 548 pp.), which records by date purchases of leather and skins, and the sale of shoes, boots, soles, leggings, etc.; diaries, 1808-1846 (#32, 7 vols.), beginning with Sellers's removal from his house in Philadelphia to his farm, with entries noting work done there, at the mill, as well as family and business events; receipt book, 1821-1852 (#35, 3 vols.), containing signed receipts for payments for wheat, rye, flax seed, oats, corn, casks, cattle, etc.

### **Sellers, Nathan (1751-1830)**

Surveyor, scrivener, manufacturer  
Records, 1771-1844. 14 vols.

Miscellaneous personal and business records as follows: Commonplace books, 1771-1773 (#36a,b, 2 vols., 136 pp.), containing household records, records of carpentry for the Library Company of Philadelphia and other accounts, notes on surveys, molds for papermaking, drawing and weaving wire, reports on Quaker meetings, reflections on work, morality, etc.; account book, 1774-1815 (#38a,b, 2 vols., 340 pp.), including accounts of the firm of Nathan and David Sellers, with records of sales to the Continental Congress, Pennsylvania Committee of Safety, Thomas Fitzsimons, Thomas Leiper, John Penn, Stephen Sayre, Edward Shippen, Anthony Wayne, and others; also sketches of watermarks designed for special customers. Surveying notebooks, 1775-1784 (#39, 4 vols.), consisting of notes on surveys, 1777-1779; survey of the West Chester road; survey of the State House Yard after 1785, with drafts of letters to Zeba Pyle, 1820-1821; and diaries of a survey from Tulpehocken Springs to Quitapahilla Spring with David Rittenhouse and Thomas Hutchins, 1784, with notes of a trip to Baltimore, 1784, and receipts, 1806-1817 (#37, 4 vols.). There are notes, kept as a member of the Philadelphia Common Council, 1805-1812 (#40, 1 vol., ca. 70 pp.), including a record of expenditures for cleaning, paving, and repaving streets, for the town watch, for the care of wells and pumps for water, etc. Receipt book, 1813, 1819-1829 (#41, 1 vol., 40 pp.). Notes of financial transactions, 1814-1844 (#42, 1 vol., ca. 75 pp.), including investments in mortgage, stocks, loans, etc. with records of payments.

### **Sellers, Nathan and Coleman**

Manufacturers  
Order book, 1834-1836. 1 vol. (ca. 296 pp.).

Orders for paper molds, with descriptions, and for machine work of different kinds. Customers include William Duane, Thomas Gilpin, Adam Ramage, and John Shryock.

### **Sellers, Nathan and David**

Manufacturers  
Letterbook, 1821-1831. 1 vol. (230 pp.).

Business correspondence of the firm, relating to the sale and shipment of wire and wire products.

Correspondents include John Haviland and George Shryock.

### **Sellers, Samuel**

Receipt book, 1828-1839. 1 vol. (ca. 172 pp.).

There are personal accounts with various members of the Sellers family and with others.

### **Vaughan, John (1755-1841)**

Merchant; librarian and secretary, APS. APS 1784

Papers, 1768-1841. ca. 450 items (8 boxes).

This is mainly correspondence relating to: French and English politics, business, and trade (ca. 1778-82); his immigration to America; Joseph Priestley; vaccines and inoculation (with Jefferson's comments on same); Vaughan's business in Philadelphia; and the APS. There is correspondence with Pierre, E. I., and Victor Marie du Pont, 1801-1816 (photostats from Eleutherian Mills Historical Library); with George W. Featherstonhaugh (photostats from Mrs. duane Featherstonhaugh); Vaughan's commonplace book, 1783 (ca. 66 pp.; B V 462.c), with its comments on Rush, Rittenhouse and his orrery, Priestley, Franklin, Washington, and Jefferson; another commonplace book entitled, "J. Vaughan's book," May 17, 1779 (47 pp. in Latin; 870/L34); inventory and other documents relating to his estate, 1841. The collection includes verses written for Vaughan by William H. Furness, 1826, and verses and a song prepared for the Vaughan Club by Benjamin M. Hollinshead and William Norris, 1839, 1841. There are also 2 boxes of papers relating to Vaughan's administration of the estate of Samuel Merrick, Philadelphia importer, 1796-1822. There are also boxes containing the Madeira-Vaughan Collection (1768-1922): miscellaneous letters of members of the Madeira family to or from, among others: Edward Everett Hale, Washington Irving, Harriet Martineau, Richard Peters, Jr., Agnes Repplier, Roger B. Taney, and Daniel Webster; the journal of a voyage on the ship Sampson, 1819, a letter of Jan Ingenhousz to Jonathan Williams, many letters to Jacob Snider, etc.

### **Haines & Twells**

Philadelphia brewers

Account book, 1767-1770. 1 vol. (410 pp.).

### **Hare-Willing Family**

Papers, ca. 1744-1905. ca. 1300 letters. 53 volumes.

Letters, letterbooks, account books, diaries, scrapbooks, etc., concerning the families of Robert Hare and Thomas Willing (1731-1821, DAB). Robert Hare's son, also named Robert (1781-1858, DAB) was the noted chemist, whose mother was Margaret Willing. The letters and other documents include early family material, as well as documents written by numerous family relations, and some obviously only collected by them.

The Willing family letters (1744-1863, ca. 460) are diverse, concerning family matters, business, society, comments on the Civil War, etc. There are numerous letters from Thomas Willing, many concerning his banking career, as President of the Bank of North America and later at the first Bank of the U.S.

The Hare family letters (1781-1890, ca. 800) are more extensive and diverse, including much on travel in the U.S. and elsewhere. There is a letter from Robert Hare Jr. concerning steam engines, and letters from Horace Binney Hare concerning his education at Harvard, 1860, his trip to San Francisco and the west, 1862, and numerous letters written while a soldier in the Civil War. There are many letters from Horace Binney (1780-1875, DAB) to his daughter Esther, who was married to John Innes Clark Hare (1816-1905, DAB), concerning family travel and court cases. There are also letters from outside the family, such as those from Dorothea L. Dix.

The bound volumes include, among others: Robert Hare letterbooks (1824-1825, 1841-1857), estate records, and laboratory expense accounts (1818-1860); G. H. Hare's journal or log of cruises aboard the U.S. United States (1841) and U.S. Flint (1845); Horace Binney Hare's 1862 journal of his trip to San Francisco. There are account books and accounts (1754-1795) kept by Thomas Willing; accounts of the controversy over the estate of John Innes Clark; and records of the First Colored Wesley Methodist Church of Philadelphia (receipt book, 1820-1848; minute book, 1827-1844). There are also Philadelphia court records, and minutes

of the Common Council of the city, 1832.

### **Girard, Stephen (1750-1831)**

Merchant, banker, philanthropist.

Papers, 1769-1831. Film. ca. 600 reels.

From the Board of Trustees of the Estate of Stephen Girard, these films are the complete archive of one of the largest mercantile and financial operations in the United States of his day. The collection includes correspondence, with translations of letters in French (139 reels); bank records, account books, ledgers, cash books, journals, etc.; papers, documents, and records of trading voyages, arranged by vessel and date; records of Girard's country house, "The Place"; records of real estate, rents, etc.; prices current in ports of the world. There is a card index of correspondents and ships (14 reels).

Of particular note, unrelated to the business records, are the records accumulated by Alexander Dallas Bache on European schools in the late 1830s, as he made a planning survey for the Trustees of the yet to be created Girard College for Orphans (for Bache's published report see: *Report on Education in Europe, to the Trustees of the Girard College for Orphans*. Philadelphia, 1839). He visited numerous schools in England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Italy, Switzerland, Prussia, and the Austrian Empire, collecting published material and producing data such as: educational goals of the schools, administrative structure, text books, expenses, etc. It is arranged alphabetically by country, and then city, and included are such non-traditional schools as Emanuel Fellenberg's Pestalozzian school at Hofwyl, Switzerland. (Series II, Reels 474 476).

For an overall description of this collection see Murphy D. Smith, "The Stephen Girard Papers," *Manuscripts* (Winter 1977): 14-22. Table of contents (32 pp.). Accessioned, 1964

### **Kane Collection**

Logbooks, 1844-1857. 11 items.

Peter Kaspar. Log of the ship Edward O'Brien, 1853-1856. 1 vol.

W. B. Boon. Log of the schooner Leesburg, 1850-1853. 1 vol.

A. Caster. Log of the brig New World, 1852. 2 vols.

H. H. Lovell. Log of the ship Wings of the Morning, 1854-1855. 1 vol.

R. R. Ducan. Log of the ship Savannah, 1852-1853. 1 vol.

J. D. Rice. Log of the ship Sandusky, 1853-1854. 1 vol.

F. A. Parker. Log of the U.S. Frigate Brandywine, 1843-1845. 1 vol.

Samuel L. Breese. Journal of the U. S. Sloop of War Albany, 1846-1847. 1 vol.

Samuel L. Breese. Log of the U. S. Frigate Cumberland, 1844-1845. 1 vol.

Robert Smith. Log of the bark Roderic, 1853. 1 vol.

H. G. Roath. Log of the schooner Telegraph, 1856-1857. 1 vol.

### **Kane, Miscellaneous Collection. 15 items.**

This is a miscellaneous assortment of volumes that were received with the Kane papers.

1. American Philosophical Society. Subscription lists for the erection of an astronomical observatory with

- the city of Philadelphia, 1835. 5 vols.
2. Pennsylvania Literary Association of Philadelphia. Minutes, Jan. 1, 1842-Dec. 5, 1845. 1 vol. (90 pp.).
  3. Commonplace book, 1834-1835. Concerning the support for Dr. William Harris for assistant lecturer at the Univ. of Pa.
  4. Philadelphia. Subscription book for a civic ball in honor of Lafayette, 1824. 1 vol. (14 pp.).
  5. Mary B. Leiper. Receipt book, May 31, 1854-June 14, 1855. 1 vol.
  6. Henry Aykroyd. Ledger. 1 vol. Record of a butcher's sales.
  7. George W. Bolivar. Receipt book, 1845-1850. 1 vol.
  8. Receipt book. 1 vol.
  9. Society for the promotion of legal knowledge and forensic eloquence. Minutes, Jan. 17, 1820-March 13, 1822. 1 vol. (18 pp.).
  10. Amos Davis. Estate account, 1849-1853. 1 vol.
  11. List of ships which were insured, 1835. 1 vol.
  12. John Donaldson. Insurance of vessels, 1793-1809. 1 vol.
  13. Philadelphia. Managers of the Consolidation Ball, 1854. 3 vols.
  14. Benjamin H. Bunker. Receipt book, 1854-57. 1 vol.
  15. Philadelphia Museum Company. Receipt book, Oct 12, 1827-Sept 30, 1836. 1 vol.

### **Coates, Samuel (1748-1830)**

Philadelphia merchant and philanthropist.

Account and memoranda books, 1785-1830. 5 vols. and 1 reel of film.

Memorandum book, 1785-1825 (1 reel, film from the Pennsylvania Hospital); account book of the estate of Deborah Morris, 1793-1817 (1 vol., ca 68 pp.), contains a copy of her will, inventory, records of income and disbursements by the executors; day book, 1796-1816 (1 vol., 32 pp.), containing notes of payments and sales, of wills written, mortgages arranged, rentals agreed to, notes signed, etc.; receipt book, 1803-1830 (1 vol., ca. 308 pp.), containing signed receipts for purchase of hickory wood, ham, stores, oil, varnish, liquors, gravestones, "cyder," and for payment of taxes, wages, painting the house, etc.; vendors include Zaccheus Collins, John Syng Dorsey, Peter S. Du Ponceau, Christian Febiger, Rebecca Jones, and Ann Moore. In this volume, as well, are signatures and engravings (some by Samuel Sartain) of John Barry, Tench Coxe, Charles Chauncey, Isaac T. Hopper, and Zachariah Poulson (presented by Arthur Bloch, 1953); and bank books, 1788-1798 (2 vols., ca. 110 pp.), being a record of checks, bills of exchange, notes, gold, silver, and currency sent to Bank (of North America).

### **Coates, Thomas (1659-1719)**

Philadelphia merchant

Memorandum book, 1678-1698. 1 vol. (ca 75 pp.). Principally a record of payments for paper, hay, stockings, butter, silks, coats, nails, flax, etc., with a few journal entries; bound with the British Merlin (almanac) for 1683.

**Samuel Coates Papers, 1748-1830** -- (5 vols., plus 1 microf. Reel) Bank books dating for period 1788 to 1798, with checks, bills of exchange, notes, receipts for Bank of North America deposits of specie.

**John Head, Account Book, 1718-1753** -- Joiner and cabinetmaker -- see Jay Stiefel article, "Philadelphia Cabinetmaking and Commerce, 1718-1753: The Account Book of John Head, Joiner," on the APS website.

### **Misc. Reference Sources:**

In addition to manuscript and printed holdings, the APS has on site various useful electronic

resources. Because the APS is a member of J-STOR, researchers have access to a variety of bibliographic resources citing primary and secondary works. The complete collection of Girard Papers is on microfilm (accessed via an extensive card catalogue); *Niles Weekly* and the Franklin Papers are available on CD-Rom.

Footnotes:

1. Robert P. Multhauf, com. *A Catalogue of Instruments and Models, in the Possession of the American Philosophical Society* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1961).
2. For the comprehensive collection of Peale family papers housed at the APS, see Lillian B. Miller, ed., *The Collected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family* (Kraus Microfilms, 1980).
3. Contents of this collection can be found in Venia T. and Maurice E. Phillips, *Guide to the microfilm publication of the minutes and correspondence of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, 1812-1924* (Philadelphia, 1967).
4. See especially Cornelia S. King's compiled bibliographies representing area collections including APS: *American Education 1622-1860* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984) and *American Philanthropy 1731-1860* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984).

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