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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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Founded by Benjamin Franklin and his circle, the University of Pennsylvania Library was established in 1750. Today, the library consists of fourteen centrally administered libraries and the Biddle Law Library. The nature of these libraries ranges from the research institute model in the sciences and engineering, to the business orientation of Wharton's Lippincott Library, to the humanistic research library atmosphere of the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Library of Rare Books and Manuscripts. Ranked 20th among the major academic research libraries of America, the Penn Library holds 4.8 million volumes, over 34,000 current serials, more than 3 million pieces of microform, and important collections of rare books and manuscripts. The Digital Library at Penn is also quickly gaining prominence as one of the nation's most advanced. Penn's Digital Library is equivalent in size to a print library of more than two million volumes. It offers a graphical interface to the Library's catalog, more than one hundred journal article databases, and an increasing amount of information in full text, including encyclopedias, individual journal articles, and 2,000 electronic serials. The Digital Library also provides extensive listings of academically useful sites on the World Wide Web, in an easy to use subject arrangement. The Lippincott Library of the Wharton School provides a customized view of e-resources in business related topics from its homepage. For more information about the Penn libraries, visit their website.

In the Van Pelt Rare Books Collection, various colonial and early federal Pennsylvania manuscripts collections may be found. Among them are the commonplace book of Francis Daniel Pastorius (1651-1719), founder of Germantown (now a part of Philadelphia); commercial records, such as the Vanuxem family (Philadelphia and Bristol, Pennsylvania merchants); and lecture notes taken by students of Dr. Benjamin Rush (1746-1813) and of other medical lecturers at Penn. Also:

Benjamin Franklin Papers: correspondence and documents, 1758-1783, relating to Franklin's stay in France during the American Revolution and the negotiations between France and the Continental Congress.

Joseph George Rosengarten Collection: contemporary letters and diaries, research correspondence and notes, and other manuscripts compiled by Rosengarten on the German soldier in the American Revolution.

Thomas Forster Correspondence: letters, documents, accounts, 1793-1837, of Colonel Forster (1762-1836), who led a volunteer regiment during the Whiskey Insurrection and was the first surveyor of the City of Erie, where he served as Collector of the Port from 1799 to 1836.

Samuel D. Ingham Papers: letters and documents, 1750-1865, regarding Ingham (1779-1860), who served as a Member of the House of Representatives and as Andrew Jackson's first Secretary of the Treasury.

Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisoners: agents' case reports and other documents, 1828-1883 (bulk 1860-1883).

Samuel J. Randall Papers: correspondence, documents, and family papers, 1808-1890 (bulk 1870-1890). Randall (1828-1890) was a congressman from Pennsylvania and Speaker of the House during the Forty-fifth and Forty-sixth congresses.

Samuel Wetherill Companies Records: business records, 1762-1899, of the store and White Lead Works founded by Samuel Wetherill in the late eighteenth century.

In The Annenberg Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Penn,

The Annenberg has many finding aids to help researchers. The library itself comprises over 10,000 linear feet of modern manuscript collections. Many of these collections have been fully arranged and described in finding aids that offer background information on the collection's subject (a biography or institutional history), a scope and content note, a series description, and a container list of the collection's contents. Currently over 30 finding aids (or registers) to fully processed collections are available.

See for example:

1. The Register of the John Rowe Parker Correspondence, 1802-1840 – has 9 boxes and 339 folders. John Rowe Parker was born October 24, 1777, in Boston. He was the eldest of thirteen children born to Rev. Samuel Parker (1744-1804) and his wife Anne (d. 1844). The Parkers were a prominent family in Boston. John Rowe Parker's grandfather, William, was a Superior Court judge, and his father was the rector of Boston's Trinity Church. Matthew S. Parker (1780-1865), brother of John Rowe Parker, was the first secretary of Boston's Handel and Haydn

Society and the president of Oriental Bank in the 1830s. Another brother, Richard Green Parker (1798-1869), was a noted educator and author. Parker was named after another distinguished Bostonian, John Rowe (1715-1779). Rowe, a close friend of Samuel Parker and his wife, was a respected merchant, civic leader, and officer of Trinity Church. Rowe and his wife were childless and left their property at 103 Pond Lane to John Rowe Parker in their will.

Parker's professional life falls neatly into three parts. His first career was that of a dry goods merchant selling such wares as carpet, buttons, candlesticks, cutlery, and other sundries. By 1802 Parker was partners with Standford Smith in the firm of Smith and Parker. Parker was in London in January 1802 to purchase goods for the company. He returned to Boston in time to be married to Catherine Brigden on June 6, 1802, and then returned to London with his wife. Sometime after August 1803 the couple returned again to Boston, and Catherine died shortly thereafter.

Parker married Mary Hamilton of Portsmouth, New Hampshire on October 22, 1804. They had three children: Samuel Parker Parker (1805-1880), Jonathan Hamilton Parker (b. 1806), and Mary Hamilton Parker (1808-1821). Parker's partnership with Smith ended, and by the end of 1806 he was partners with Moses Poor in the firm of Parker and Poor. The partnership was short-lived, ending by October 1807.

Mary Hamilton Parker, John Rowe Parker's second wife, died during the winter of 1811-1812. By late 1812 Parker had relocated to New London, Connecticut, where he developed business contacts with the three Parkin brothers, Richard William (d. 1814), John Still Winthrop, and Thomas. He married their sister, Jane Parkin, on February 8, 1813. The Parkers stayed in New London through 1814 and then moved back to Boston, where Parker continued operating as a general merchant. They had one child together, Jane Winthrop Parker, born in 1818.

The next phase of Parker's professional life began in 1817 when he became the proprietor of the Franklin Music Warehouse in Boston. Parker was joined in this venture by Gottlieb Graupner, one of the most respected musicians and music publishers in Boston at that time. Graupner moved his inventory into Parker's premises in April 1817, but a dispute between the two men caused Graupner to leave by August.

Parker was able to take advantage of the rising demand for secular music in the former colonies to build his business into the largest music distributor in the United States during the years 1817 to 1821. In 1820 Parker published one of the first music dealer's catalogues issued in the United States. The fifty-five page catalogue contained lists of music titles, instruments, and other musical merchandise. The catalogue was also unique for bearing a distinctive, oval trademark stamp that Parker used to identify his publications. This practice was soon adopted by many other dealers. Copies of the catalogue survive in the Houghton Library at Harvard University and at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts. The final phase of Parker's professional life concerned his efforts to develop a nation-wide communication system for marine vessels. Parker attempted to revise a system of semaphore signals developed by James M. Elford (d. 1826) of Charleston, South Carolina. Although relatively small in number, personal letters provide some measure of insight into Parker's relationships with family members, including his mother, sister Rebecca Edsen, brothers James and William, and sons Samuel and Hamilton. A sequence of letters from 1824 to 1825 between Parker and his brother-in-law, Joshua Haven, in Philadelphia are particularly interesting. They provide a description of the work Parker's son Hamilton was performing in Haven's counting house and the resulting clamor when Hamilton fled to Norfolk, Virginia with \$700 from his uncle's business. The letters from the years during which Parker was a dry goods merchant, 1802-1817, reflect a period of unstable trade relations with Great Britain.

See related materials at: Parker, John R. (John Rowe), 1777-1844. John Rowe Parker Collection

(1801-1836). Ruth T. Watanabe Special Collections, Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York. Also, Parker, John R. (John Rowe), 1777-1844. Expense book, 1798-1809. Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera, Winterthur Library, Winterthur, Delaware. Also, Reynolds, Horace Mason. Papers, 1802-1838. (contains John Rowe Parker's daybooks from the Franklin Music Warehouse). John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island..

2. The Register of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agricultural, Records, 1785-1982

This collection of 103 boxes is one of the gems in the Annenberg Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Penn. Part I, the 18 th and 19 th Century records, will be of most use to scholars of the early American economy, though important correspondence appears in Parts II and III.

Part I letters date primarily from the early nineteenth century, and include correspondence with foreign and American agricultural societies, as well as letters among significant social and political figures. Major correspondents who wrote representing the Society include Nicholas Biddle, John Beale Bordley, Richard Peters, James Gowen, James Mease, Algernon S. Roberts, Roberts Vaux, and Richard Wistar. American agricultural societies include the Agricultural Society of Bucks County, the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, the Berkshire (Mass.) Agricultural Society, the North Carolina Agricultural Society, and the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture. Foreign organizations include *Accademia economico-agraria dei georgofili* of Italy, the *Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle* of France, the English Board of Agriculture, and the Royal Agricultural Society of Jamaica. Political correspondents include U.S. Presidents George Washington, John Quincy Adams, and James Madison. Many of these correspondents are Quakers. The one woman correspondent was Hannah Barnard, a notable Pennsylvania farmer.

Communication with the Society consists of queries by farmers, recommendations for farming practice, and data collected during practical farming experiments. Topics of concern to nineteenth century farmers include the Hessian fly, crop rotation, fertilizer, and the benefits of planting clover. In 1787 Elias Boudinot wrote to communicate "some Experiments I have made on the Culture of the very useful Grain, Indian Corn." George Logan wrote to recommend that hard spirits be banned from the farm. Instead he praises Small Malt Beer, for which he includes a recipe (George Logan, 1787). In 1793, John Beale Bordley copied correspondence with the Society into a bound folio entitled "Communications." These letters date from 1785 to 1789 and include letters not on record elsewhere. In 1805, after Bordley's death, George Clymer reported that he had received from John Bordley's executor "the book to record the correspondence of the Society & mldr; which [was] found among Mr. Bordley's papers" (Society's Minutes, I, 155).

Bound volumes of minutes date from 1785 to 1846. Additional loose papers date from as late as 1864. During the second half of the nineteenth century these minutes relate to such topics as sorghum cane, the distribution of seeds by the National Government, the establishment of the new Veterinary School, plans for cattle shows and exhibitions, et cetera. Minutes of various committees date primarily from the early nineteenth century and include such committees as Cattle, Crops, and Agricultural Implements. Minutes often contain transcriptions of communications presented before the Society.

The Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture was established in 1785, when John Beale Bordley proposed to members of the American Philosophical Society that they form an American agricultural society in the British pattern. On the first of March the Society held its charter meeting with twenty-three members present. Charter members include prominent judges and lawyers (John

Beale Bordley, Richard Peters, James Wilson, and Edward Shippen), military leaders (General John Cadwalader, Colonel George Morgan, Colonel John Nixon), doctors (Benjamin Rush, John Jones, George Logan, Adam Kuhn), and politicians (Samuel Powel, George Clymer, Henry Hill, Philemon Dickinson, Samuel Vaughn, Lambert Cadwalader, Tench Francis, Charles Thompson). Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine became members later in that year.

In its early years the Agricultural Society met on the first Monday of each month, when six or eight prominent men would come together to discuss agriculture and rural affairs. These men hoped to encourage new developments in agricultural practice through experimentation and scientific research. In the patriotic spirit of the time, early members were concerned that America not fall behind England's rapid agricultural advances. Central to their concerns were crop rotation, soil fertility, and animal husbandry. Prizes or premiums were offered for agricultural accomplishments in order to stimulate experimentation. Papers published by the Society (among them the ground breaking "Address to American Farmers," and George Morgan's "Plan for a Farm Yard") had broad circulation and were widely influential in American farming practice.

One of the most concrete accomplishments of the early Society was the construction of a permanent bridge over the Schuylkill river, the first of its kind in America, and the longest covered bridge in the world. The Society drew up the plans for the bridge and raised the \$300,000 necessary to fund the project. Completed in 1804, the Schuylkill bridge facilitated the transport of farm produce from Chester and Lancaster Counties into the Philadelphia Market.

Though a few truly gifted scientific minds (such as Morgan and Bordley) did make considerable advances in theories of agriculture, the group never realized its goal of offering leadership to the common farmer. Throughout its early years the Society was riven by political conflict between Federalists and Anti-Federalist, and several times members left the Society to start rival groups. In the period between 1793 and 1805 meetings were held only periodically, and the activities of the Society were for the most part abandoned.

In 1805, after the death of President Samuel Powel and of Vice President and founder John Beale Bordley, the Society was reorganized under the leadership of Richard Peters. Once again, a handful of wealthy patrons of agriculture gathered monthly to discuss agricultural methods. The practice of offering awards and premiums was revived. The first Agricultural exhibition was held in 1822, featuring cattle, farm products, and machinery. In this, the most fruitful period of its history, the Philadelphia Society tested, identified, and analyzed seeds and plant specimens. They also served as a distribution center to make foreign seeds available to American farmers for experimentation. The Society researched methods of animal husbandry and soil fertilization, investigated outbreaks of plant and animal disease, and encouraged the development of labor-saving machinery. During this period five volumes of Memoirs were published (in 1808, 1811, 1814, 1818, and 1826), each containing significant agricultural articles of the time. From 1816 to 1829 the Society published an almanac to propagate scientific developments in agriculture among working American farmers.

After the death of Richard Peters in 1828, John Hare Powel was elected president, followed by Nicholas Biddle from 1831 to 1844 and James Mease from 1844 to 1846. Throughout this period the Society continued to offer premiums for plant breeding and farm management. From 1838 to 1856 they sponsored annual exhibitions. These exhibitions featured livestock, displays of agricultural implements, and a plowing match. In 1847 members established the Farmer's Club as an auxiliary to the Society. This group initially met at the farms of different members to inspect the farm and then to discuss agricultural issues of current interest. Later the Club functioned primarily as a social gathering.

This early period was the most intensely active and the most fruitful of the Society's history. The

Society's members from this time were among the most influential thinkers in experimental agriculture. The scope of their vision of agricultural progress as well as their insistence on rigorous experimentation and scientific method laid the groundwork for the rapid advance of American farming practice in the nineteenth century.

From the beginning the Agricultural Society believed one of its primary tasks to be the establishment of a network of agricultural organizations in the region and across the country. As S.W. Fletcher writes in his history of P.S.P.A.:

It was a comprehensive and far-seeing program for the advancement of Pennsylvania agriculture in several other ways, including the organization of county agricultural societies, the establishment of pattern farms, the endowment by the state of professorships in agriculture and its supporting sciences at colleges, elementary teaching of agriculture in the public schools, and specialized instruction in agriculture at institutions of college grade. (Fletcher, 73)

In 1855 this ambition was partially realized with the founding of the "Farmer's High School," now Penn State University. The University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine also owes its existence in part to the influence and support of the Philadelphia Society. James Mease, an officer of the Society, delivered the first series of lectures in Veterinary medicine as early as 1814, though it was not until 1883 that the Society's ambition to start a Veterinary school was formally fulfilled through the founding of the Veterinary School. Throughout this time the Society toyed with the idea of a model farm or "Pattern Farm," which would serve as a working laboratory for agricultural experimentation. This project never came to fruition, but the principles behind it were realized with the establishment of agricultural experiment stations across the region in the late nineteenth century.

The Society also played a role in the organization of state and federal departments to oversee agriculture. In 1851, the establishment of the Pennsylvania State Agricultural Society represented the achievement of a long-term goal for the Society. At the same time, the role P.S.P.A. had played in collecting and distributing agricultural knowledge was made obsolete by the growth of this network of governmental and academic research institutions. County and regional organizations drew membership away from the Philadelphia Society, and more authoritative regional and federal associations sapped their influence on the national agricultural scene. The State Society encroached on the local functions of P.S.P.A. when it took over the task of sponsoring the annual agricultural exhibition (later the State Fair).

The onset of the Civil War also disrupted the Society's activities. One member recalls: "The bitter discussions over the incidents of the Civil War 1860-1866 caused the attendance at the meetings to fall off to nothing. Consequently there were no more meetings held during that period. — It is a curious fact that these horny fisted Farmers of the Agricultural Society were to such a large proportion, Southern sympathizers" (Letter from Burnet Landreth to George Curwen, May 12, 1926). Toward the end of the century meetings became irregular and eventually ceased altogether in 1885.

The Society began to build up a collection of agricultural books in the early nineteenth century. Under the direction of Dr. James Mease, foreign and American agricultural books and pamphlets were collected. Other works were contributed by correspondents. In 1825 a catalog of the library was assembled and published. In 1888, around the time that the Society began to dissolve, P.S.P.A.'s library of more than 500 volumes was deposited with the University of Pennsylvania and housed in the Furness library (now known as the Fisher Fine Arts Library). At the same time a fund was established for the purchase of additional books to expand the collection over the years.

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