

Library Company of Philadelphia

McA 5781.F

SANITARY FAIRS COLLECTION

1749-1867

(bulk 1864)

2.71 linear feet, 4 boxes

- Series I. Great Central Fair, Philadelphia, 1749-1867
- Series II. Other Sanitary Fairs, 1863-1865
- Series III. Oversize Material, 1864

April 2006

Descriptive Summary**Repository**

Library Company of Philadelphia
1314 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107-5698

Call Number

McA 5781.F

Creator

McAllister, John A. (John Allister), 1822-1896.

Title

Sanitary Fairs Collection

Inclusive Dates

1749-1867 (bulk 1864)

Quantity

2.71 linear feet (4 boxes)

Language of Materials

Materials are in English.

Abstract

The Sanitary Fairs Collection consists largely of ephemera and manuscripts documenting the efforts made by citizens to raise awareness and funds for the United States Sanitary Commission. Most of the material is from the Great Central Fair held in Philadelphia, such as circulars, forms, handbills, correspondence, and miscellaneous printed material generated by the various committees set up to collect objects and financial donations for the fair, and to arrange and staff the fair's sales booths and exhibits. The collection also holds some folders of autographs sold at the fair (dating from 1749 to 1851) and ephemera from fairs in Albany, Baltimore, Brooklyn, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Elmira, Indianapolis, New York, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Muscatine, Iowa.

Administrative Information**Restrictions to Access**

The collection is open to researchers.

Acquisition Information

Gift of John A. McAllister; forms part of the McAllister Collection.

Processing Information

The Sanitary Fairs Collection was formerly housed in two folio albums that had been created after the McAllister Collection arrived at the Library Company. The material was removed from the albums, and arranged and described in 2006, under grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the William Penn Foundation. The collection was processed by Sandra Markham. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this finding aid do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Preferred Citation

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Online Catalog Headings

Subject Names

Bannan, Benjamin, 1807-1875
 Furness, Horace Howard, 1833-1912
 Brunot, Felix R. (Felix Reville), 1820-1898
 Hopkinson, Francis, 1737-1791--Autographs
 Hopkinson, Thomas, 1709-1751--Autographs
 Pierpont, John, 1785-1866--Autographs
 Wood, William B. (William Burke), 1779-1861--Autographs
 Sully, Thomas, 1783-1872--Autographs
 Bond, L. Montgomery (Levi Montgomery), d. 1882
 Claghorn, John W., 1789-1869
 Great Central Fair for the U.S. Sanitary Commission (1864: Philadelphia, Pa.)
 Great Central Fair for the U.S. Sanitary Commission (1864: Philadelphia, Pa.).
 Committee on Labor, Incomes and Revenues
 Army Relief Bazaar (1864: Albany, N.Y.)
 Maryland State Fair, for the Benefit of the U.S. Sanitary and Christian Commissions
 (1864: Baltimore, Md.)
 New England Sanitary Commission Fair (1863: Boston, Mass.)
 Brooklyn and Long Island Fair in Aid of the United States Sanitary Commission (1864)
 Mississippi Valley Sanitary Fair (1864: Saint Louis, Mo.)
 Metropolitan Fair (1864: New York, N.Y.)
 Northwestern Sanitary Fair (1865: Chicago, Ill.)
 Great Western Sanitary Fair (1863: Cincinnati, Ohio)
 Sanitary Fair (1864: Pittsburgh, Pa.)
 United States Sanitary Commission. Philadelphia Branch

Subject Topics

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865--Women
 United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865--War work
 Sanitary fairs—United States

Document Types

Broadsides
 Ephemera
 Clippings

Letters

Related Collections

The McAllister Collection's Ribbons and Textiles Collection (McA 100090.F) holds a box of ribbons and badges from the Great Central Fair. The Library Company and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania each have a full run of the Great Sanitary Fair's newspaper, *Our Daily Fare*, which was published from Wednesday, June 8, through Tuesday, June 21.

The Library Company's Anne Hampton Brewster Papers has an Abraham Lincoln manuscript, with attendant donor correspondence and certificate, which Brewster acquired at the Great Central Fair's New Jersey Department, Arms and Trophies Table. There are various groups of papers, albums, and miscellaneous material relating to sections of the fair at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The John Shaw Pierson Civil War Collection at the Princeton University Library and the Kantor Collection of U.S. Sanitary Commission and Civil War at Wichita State University Library hold ephemera from Philadelphia, as well as material from other sanitary fairs.

Biographical/Historical Notes

With the outbreak of the Civil War came the realization that there were not significant systems in place to serve the needs of those who had gone off to fight. From lack of bandages to a lack of doctors and nurses to apply them, the military branches were unprepared to help the thousands of wounded Union servicemen, as well as those brought down by disease, that were living in unsanitary conditions. Inspired by the efforts of British nurse Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) to establish sanitary and medical standards during the Crimean War a decade before, Rev. Henry Bellows (1814-1882), Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell (1821-1910), and Dorothea Dix (1802-1887) met in New York to discuss how American citizens could assist the government in supplying food, clothing, supplies, and medical personnel to the armed forces. They founded the Woman's Central Association of Relief for the Army in April 1861, and two months later, following their lead and Nightingale's work with the Royal Commission on the Health of the Army, President Abraham Lincoln established the United States Sanitary Commission.

Among the commission's greatest fundraising schemes were the more than twenty charity bazaars, known as "sanitary fairs," that were organized by citizens in the Northeast and Midwest between 1863 and 1865. The first, held in Lowell, Massachusetts, in February 1863, was the smallest. It raised nearly \$5,000 and was followed that fall by fairs in five other cities. The spring of 1864 saw eight more fairs held from Brooklyn to St. Louis, including New York's Metropolitan Fair. The Great Central Fair in Philadelphia was held in June 1864, and was the second-highest grossing after New York, collecting just over \$1,000,000. The last of these remarkable fundraising events was held in Milwaukee in June 1865. In total, they contributed more than \$5,000,000 toward the work of the Sanitary Commission.

The Great Central Fair's Executive Committee was headed by John Welsh (1805-1886), a prominent Philadelphia merchant. Committees were set up "in each department of industry and art" to solicit contributions of goods to be sold at the fair and volunteers to staff the various booths. The Executive Committee issued a circular on March 1, 1864, appealing to clergymen and the press to carry the fair's message to their public: "We call on every workshop, factory and mill for a specimen of the best thing it can turn out; on every artist, great and small, for one of his creations; on loyal women, for the exercise of their taste and industry; on farmers, for the products of their fields and dairies. The miner, the naturalist, the man of science, the traveler, can each send something that can at the very least be converted into a blanket that will warm, and may save from death, some one soldier whom government supplies have failed to reach. Every workingman mechanic or farmer, who can make a pair of shoes or raise a barrel of apples, is called on to contribute something that can be turned into money, and again from money into the means of economizing the health and the life of our national soldiers."

The Philadelphia fair was held in temporary buildings constructed in Logan Circle. It began on June 7th, and the grounds were open every day from 9 am until 10 pm. When the fair closed on June 25, the remaining goods were sold at public auction.

After the war ended, the United States Sanitary Commission turned to assisting Union veterans in obtaining various benefits, including back pay and pensions. The commission was disbanded in the spring of 1866.

Collection Overview

The Sanitary Fairs Collection consists largely of printed ephemera related to the efforts of citizens to raise awareness and funds for the United States Sanitary Commission. It is arranged in three series: Great Central Fair, Philadelphia; Other Sanitary Fairs; and Oversize Material.

Series I, Great Central Fair, Philadelphia (1749-1867) contains circulars, forms, handbills, correspondence, and miscellaneous printed material generated by the various committees set up to collect objects and financial donations for the fair, and to arrange and staff the fair's sales booths and exhibits. The papers are divided in two subseries: Administrative Material; and Committees and Departments.

The Administrative Material subseries contains both Executive Committee ephemera and items that pertain to the fair overall, such as plans of the fairgrounds, admission tickets, and programs from the opening exercises. There is one folder with a few unrelated letters sent to fair officials and committee members, and one containing advertisements for product and merchandise sold at the fair, including coffee, paper collars, and clothes wringers. A folder of music holds three examples of two songs that were composed expressly for the fair and were printed on coated card, silk ribbon, and paper. The tickets folders hold general admission passes to the fair as well as to the off-

grounds fundraising events held both before the fair and during its run. There is a manuscript tally sheet of money collected for tickets sold at venues around the city; on its verso is inscribed the name of the former secretary of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), with his then-current address at the Mariposa Claim in California. The Miscellaneous file has a variety of ephemera including two anti-raffling display cards, and a handbill advertising tours of the Cathedral of St. Peter & St. Paul for fairgoers; a larger advertisement for the cathedral is filed in Series III.

The first subseries ends with a folder of programs from events held in Philadelphia in 1863 and 1864 to benefit the United States Sanitary Commission; it is not known if they had any direct connection to the Great Central Fair.

The Committees and Departments subseries primarily contains ephemera issued by the dozens of committees organized to support and operate the fair. The first folder holds a list of the committees and their chairs, following which there is a file for each of the committees and departments. They are arranged alphabetically and hold ephemera distributed by the committees, which is mostly printed circular letters and forms. There are two committees for which are exceptions. The Relics, Curiosities, and Autographs committee has two additional files with examples of the autographs (dating 1749-1851) that were sold at their booth and remain in their special printed enclosures from the fair. These include: a court document signed by Thomas Hopkinson (1709-1751) and donated by Miss Pennington; three folders with bills of exchange signed by Francis Hopkinson (1737-1791) donated by Samuel Bradford; a note from actor William B. Wood (1779-1861) donated by Charles H. Hart; an 1851 letter from Unitarian poet John Pierpont (1785-1866), donated by the New York Metropolitan Fair; and an 1839 letter from the painter Thomas Sully (1783-1872) to Franklin Peale (1795-1870), donated by Peale, who was the director of the U.S. Mint and chairman of the fair's autograph committee.

More extensive records exist to document the work of the second exception, the Committee on Labor, Incomes and Revenues: the files hold both correspondence and ephemera related to the department's fundraising efforts. The CLI&R was threefold in agenda and tri-state in its reach. First, its members sought to obtain from every employed individual a contribution of "one day's labor" equal to that person's single day's earnings, with targeted donors ranging from presidents of companies and captains of industry to government clerks, factory workers, and milliners. Their second effort was to obtain from each employer – companies, railroads, industrial works, and retail establishments of all sizes – a contribution equal to "one day's revenue" of their corporation. Third was to obtain a contribution of "one day's income" from those not covered above, including retired people, clergy, medical professionals, authors, artists, and "persons of fortune." Through the efforts of the committee's chairman, Philadelphia tea merchant Levi Montgomery Bond (1820-1882), its treasurer John W. Claghorn (1789-1869), and a legion of members drawn from the fair's standing committees, more than a quarter-million dollars was collected to support the work of the U.S. Sanitary Commission.

The Committee on Labor, Incomes and Revenues records are divided into two groups: Manuscripts; and Ephemera. The first holds letters sent to Bond and Claghorn from the Sanitary Commission and the Central Fair's administrative staff, from outside donors, and from CLI&R subcommittee members. Administrative correspondence includes letters and meeting notices from fair director John Welsh and secretary Horace Howard Furness (1833-1912, and secretary of the Sanitary Commission's Philadelphia agency), in addition to lesser officials. Correspondence from donors of material goods includes two letters, written on illustrated pricelist letter paper, from William Knabe & Co. piano manufacturers of Baltimore; the company sent a piano to the fair to be sold for the benefit of the committee. The folder also holds two letters from Christopher C. Callan (died 1886), a Confederate Army deserter who offered to give a lecture to raise funds for the committee (and himself), one letter from New York resident Elias Dexter, who donated for sale two copies of his work on the portrait artist Charles Balthazar Julien Fevret de Saint-Mémin, and a letter from Philadelphia & Reading Railroad president G.A. Nicolls who sent a volume of the New Testament, printed in Rotterdam in 1550, to be sold. A letter to Pittsburgh philanthropist Felix R. Brunot (1820-1898) was answered with a request of Brunot's own on behalf of his city's sanitary fair.

Committee general correspondence is four folders of letters received from members of the CLI&R subcommittees; they are filed chronologically. Topics ranged from accepting (or declining) Bond's appointment invitation to suggesting fundraising schemes. Among the latter was a proposal from Pottsville newspaper publisher Benjamin Bannan (1807-1875) to have photographs made of Pottsville resident Nick Biddle, the first African American to shed blood in the Civil War, which could be sold during Biddle's appearance at the fair. Rounding out the manuscripts is Bond's farewell address to his committee, dated September 6, 1864.

The Committee on Labor, Incomes and Revenues' Ephemera section consists mostly of circular letters and forms sent by the committee and by the subcommittees formed to reach out to various professions: there were, for instance, subcommittees on Car Builders, Plain and Decorative Plasterers, Hair Dressers, Hatters and Hatters' Materials, Manufacturers of Boots and Shoes in the Eastern States, etc. The Ephemera is arranged in five sections: Committee Circular; Subcommittees Circulars; Appointment and Meeting Notices; Subscription Lists and Blank Forms, and a special folder of Printers' Copies, consisting of printed pieces that were edited or marked up for purposes of reprinting. George W. Childs did printing for the CLI&R and its subcommittees at no charge. For fundraising purposes, the subcommittees' vocation-specific request letters were attached to a contribution form (there is one example in the Subcommittees Circulars folder) or to a generic circular letter issued by the main committee. The Committee Circular folder holds English and German versions of the first letter issued by the committee; it is the only foreign-language material in the collection. The Series IV, Oversize Material folder of Broadsides and Display Cards, Events and Meetings holds advertising material related to the Committee on Labor, Incomes and Revenues.

Series II, Other Sanitary Fairs (1863-1865) holds miscellaneous small ephemera, including handbills, circulars, tickets, and tags, collected from fairs held in Albany, Baltimore, Brooklyn, Chicago, Cincinnati, New York, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis. A folder of Miscellaneous material holds one item each from the Cleveland, Elmira, Indianapolis, and Muscatine, Iowa, fairs.

Series III, Oversize Material (1864) is arranged in three subseries: Broadsides and Display Cards; Newspaper Clippings; and Miscellaneous. Except for one piece from New York fair in the last folder, the material is all from the Great Central Fair in Philadelphia. The first subseries contains printed advertising signs made for promoting events and departments, labeling booths, and giving directions. The Prize folder has advertising signs for items being voted upon, including the prize fire horn.

The Newspaper Clippings folder contains twenty-six folio-size sheets of paper holding columns cut from several Philadelphia papers. The clipper/compiler is unknown. The material was fixed to the pages sometime in the late 1890s. It is in random order without apparent chronology or subject arrangement, and represents what is left of the collection's former scrapbook-style housing. Much of the content is devoted to reporting income generated by the committees and departments, with contributors' names and amounts raised. Another popular topic regularly covered was the vote tallies for a camp chest of silverware, a silver fire horn, and the silver "Union vase" donated as prizes and awarded to winners based on public votes: each prospective winner was nominated by a twenty-dollar contribution, and each voter paid one dollar to cast a vote. There is good reporting on the fair's opening day, including a full front page from *The Press* of Wednesday, June 8, as well as coverage of its closing events and farewell speeches. The folder also holds two loose wood engravings from *Harper's Weekly*: "Head-Quarters of the United States Sanitary Commission at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania" (published in vol. 8, no. 372, February 13, 1864), and a full-page image of the "Grand Musical Festival in Philadelphia in Aid of the Sanitary Commission" (vol. 8, no. 386, May 21, 1864).

The Miscellaneous folder holds notices advertising the sale of *Our Daily Fare* (the fair's own paper) and the opening of the cathedral for tours, a facsimile of a letter from George Washington to Matthew Irwin (dated February 22, 1777, and reproduced from the original then in the possession of John William Wallace) for sale at the fair, and a single-page manuscript register signed by a group of citizens (including John A. McAllister) who had agreed to underwrite the contribution of the Farmers and Mechanics Bank to the fair's Labor, Incomes and Revenues committee campaign.

Box Folder

SERIES I. GREAT CENTRAL FAIR, PHILADELPHIA

1749-1867

Arranged in two subseries: Administrative Material; and Committees and Departments.

Administrative material

1	1	Correspondence	1864
	2	Committee chairs lists	1864
	3	Contributors' shipping labels and tags	1864
	4	Events and entertainments	1864
	5	Executive Committee circulars and notices	1864
	6	Grounds plans	1864
	7	Letterhead and blank forms	1864
	8	Music	1864
	9	Opening exercises	1864
	10	Product and merchandise advertisements	1864
	11	Rules for management	1864
		Tickets	
	12	Admission	1864
	13	Events	1864
	14	Income tally sheet	1864
	15	Miscellaneous	1864
	16	United States Sanitary Commission benefits programs	1863-1864
		Committees and Departments	
	17	Accommodations for Strangers	1864

Box Folder

SERIES I. GREAT CENTRAL FAIR, PHILADELPHIA, cont.

Committees and Departments, cont.

[1]	18	Agriculture	1864
	19	Agricultural Implements	1864
	20	Architectural Designs for Exhibition and Sale	1864
	21	Arms and Trophies	1864
	22	Auditing and Finance	1864
	23	Benefits, Entertainments, and Exhibitions	1864
	24	Booksellers	1864
	25	Boots, Shoes and Leather	1864
	26	Brewers and Malterers	1864
	27	Builders	1864
	28	Cabinet Ware	1864
	29	Canned Fruits	1864
	30	Carpets, Oil Cloths, and Matting	1864
	31	Carriages	1864
	32	Charities (Public) and Benevolent Institutions	1864
	33	Chemicals	1864
	34	Children	1864
	35	Clothing	1864
	36	Coal Operators and Dealers	1864
	37	Colleges, Libraries and Literary Institutions	1864
	38	Confectionery and Foreign Fruit	1864

Box Folder

SERIES I. GREAT CENTRAL FAIR, PHILADELPHIA, cont.

Committees and Departments, cont.

[1]	39	Delaware	1864
	40	Dentistry, Artificial Teeth, Gold Foil, Surgical Instruments	1864
	41	Dressmaking and Millinery	1864
	42	Drugs	1864
	43	Dry Goods – Retail	1864
	44	Dry Goods – Wholesale	1864
	45	Fancy Articles (Homemade)	1864
	46	Fancy Goods, Watches, Jewelry, Silver and Plated Ware	1864
	47	Finance and Donations	1864
	48	Fine Arts	1864
	49	Fire Arms	1864
	50	Fire Department	1864
	51	Florists and Horticulture	1864
	52	Furs, Hats, and Caps	1864
	53	Gentlemen's Furnishing Goods	1864
	54	Glass and Glassware	1864
	55	Grocery - Retail	1864
	56	Grocery - Wholesale	1864
2	57	Hardware	1864
	58	Harness and Saddlery	1864
	59	Hollow-ware and Stoves	1864

Box Folder

SERIES I. GREAT CENTRAL FAIR, PHILADELPHIA, cont.

Committees and Departments, cont.

[2]	60	Homeopathic Physicians	1864
	61	Hospitals	1864
	62	House Furnishing Goods	1864
	63	Importations	1864
	64	India Rubber Goods	1864
	65	Iron - Wrought and Cast	1864
		Labor, Incomes and Revenues	1864

Manuscripts

	66	Administrative correspondence	1864-1867
	67-70	Committee general correspondence	1864
	71	Donor correspondence	1864
	72	Farewell speech	1864 Sep 6

Ephemera

	73	Committee Circular	1864 Mar 28
	74	Subcommittee Circulars	1864
	75	Appointment and Meeting Notices	1864
	76	Subscription Lists and Blank Forms	1864
	77	Printers' Copies	1864
	78	Looking Glasses, Picture Frames, and Gilt Ornaments	1864
	79	Lumber and Lumber Merchants	1864
	80	Mechanic Arts and Machinery	1864

Box Folder

SERIES I. GREAT CENTRAL FAIR, PHILADELPHIA, cont.

Committees and Departments, cont.

[2]	81	Military Goods	1864
	82	Miscellaneous	1864
	83	Musical Entertainments and Musical Instruments	1864
	84	Newspaper and Publications	1864
	85	Oil	1864
	86	Orations and Lectures	1864
	87	Paper Hangings	1864
	88	Paper Manufacture and Stationery	1864
	89	Perfumery and Toilet Articles	1864
	90	Photographs	1864
	91	Plumbing	1864
	92	Post Office	1864
	93	Produce	1864
	94	Receiving Committee	1864
		Relics, Curiosities, and Autographs	
	95	Committee circulars and broadside poem	1864
	96-97	Autographs sold at the fair	1749-1851
	98	Restaurant	1864
	99	Schools - Public and Private	1864
	100	Sewing Machines	1864
	101	Sewing Women	1864

Box Folder

SERIES I. GREAT CENTRAL FAIR, PHILADELPHIA, cont.

Committees and Departments, cont.

[2]	102	Ships and Ship Building	1864
3	103	Tobacco and Segar Interest	1864
	104	Trimmings and Lingeries	1864
	105	Umbrellas, Parasols, and Canes	1864
	106	Upholstering	1864
	107	Wagons and Heavy Vehicles	1864
	108	Wax, Paper, and Artificial Flowers, and Hanging Baskets	1864
	109	West Jersey Auxiliary	1864
	110	West Philadelphia Table	1864
	111	Wines and Liquors	1864
	112	Woolen and Cotton Manufacturers and Dealers	1864

Box Folder

Series II. OTHER SANITARY FAIRS 1863-1865

Arranged alphabetically by city.

[3]	113	Albany, Army Relief Bazaar	1864 Feb
	114	Baltimore, Maryland State Fair	1864 Apr
	115	Brooklyn, Brooklyn and Long Island Fair	1864 Feb
	116	Chicago, Northwest Soldiers' Home Fair	1865 May
	117	Cincinnati, Great Western Fair	1863 Dec
	118	New York, Metropolitan Fair	1864 Apr
	119	Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Sanitary Fair	1864 Jun
	120	St. Louis, Mississippi Valley Fair	1864 May
	121	Miscellaneous	1864

Box Folder

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
	Series IV. OVERSIZE MATERIAL	1864
4	Broadsides and display cards	
122	Directional signage	1864
123	Events and meetings	1864
124	Prizes	1864
125	Restaurant Department	1864
126	Smoking and No Smoking	1864
127	Newspaper clippings	1864
128	Miscellaneous	1864