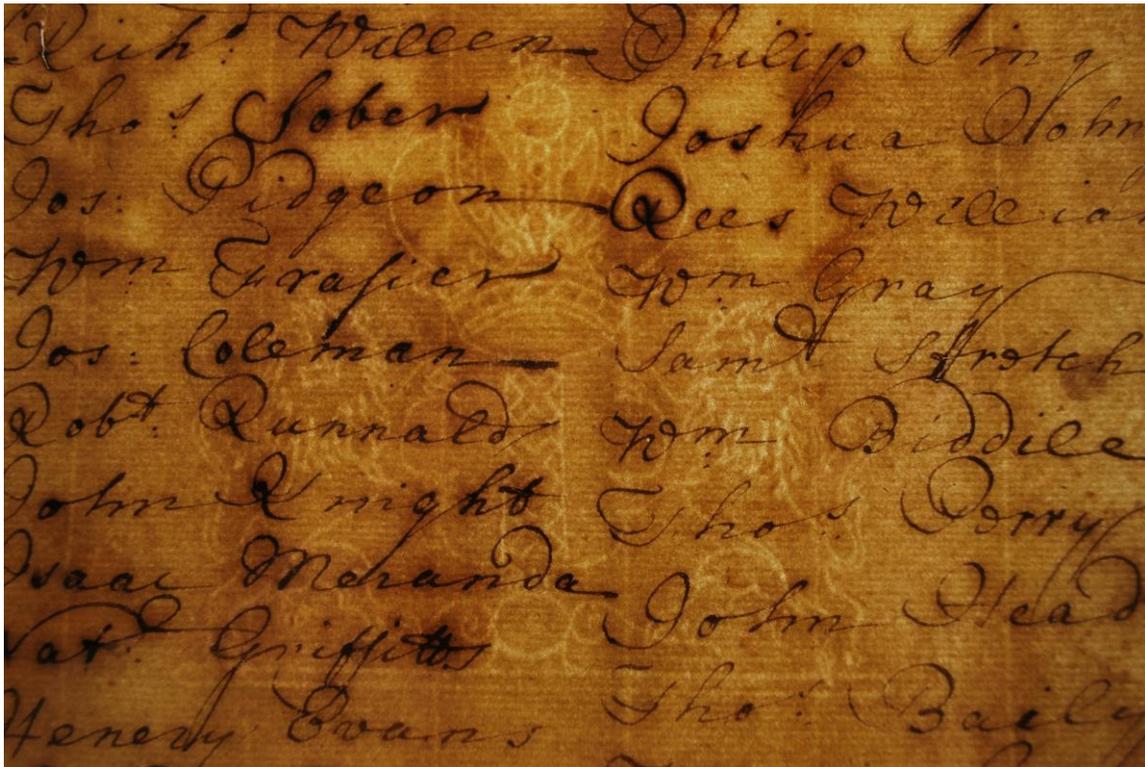


**Guide to
MS-195: Early American Document Collection**



**Tyler Black '17, Smith Intern
July 2016**

MS – 195: Early American Document Collection

(2 boxes, 2.87 cubic feet)

Inclusive Dates: 1685-1812

Bulk Dates: 1727-1728; 1775-1787

Processed by: Tyler Black '17

July 2016

Provenance

The Early American Document Collection is an artificial collection comprised of Colonial Era documents from a variety of donors and locations. Most are land and legal documents from Pennsylvania.

Many of the documents in this collection were donated to Gettysburg College before the existence of Special Collections, thus there is no known donation information or accession records.

Available provenance notes include:

- “Presented in memory of E.C. Goebel by his wife Janet C. Goebel”
 - Land Indenture for John Beard, from Samuel Miller and Wife, February 15, 1812
- Rosenberger Collection
 - Land Deed for Tench Francis, from William Gregory, August 20, 1787
 - Land Deed for Henry Drinker, from Tench Francis, May 23, 1794
 - Land Grant for Henry Drinker, from Tench Francis and William Gregory, October 10, 1796
- Donation of John George Butler (1826-1909), Class of 1850, College Trustee. Acquired from Philadelphia City Archives
 - Letter from Jos. Stamson to Rev. Benjamin Colman of Boston, containing a Catalog of Assorted Books, March 20, 1717
- Donation from Stanley L. Klos, 2005 (Accession 2005-0291)
 - Land Deed for Samuel Dilworth in Northumberland County, signed by Thomas Mifflin, 3 March 1794
- Purchase from William Reese (formerly VFM on “Thomas, Charles Secretary of the Continental Congress,” accession 2015-0097)
 - Resolution from the Continental Congress Requisitioning Flour for the Continental Army, December 11, 1779
- Purchase from Denning House Antiquarian Books and Manuscripts (formerly VFM on “Uniform for the Army of the United States (1799),” accession 2012-1120)
 - Broadside describing the Uniforms of the New American Army, January 9, 1799
- Pennsylvania Hall Vault
 - Broadside titled “An Indian’s Speech, in Answer to a Sermon presented by a Sweedish Missionary at Cannestoge / Anno Domini 1710,” 1781
- Purchase from Kurt Gippert Books
 - Land Indenture from William Penn to Joseph Baynes, 1683

Historical Note

The Early American Documents Collection has great variety in its subjects. Many of the court, petition, and survey documents concern the wards and organization of colonial Philadelphia. Philadelphia first organized into the ward system in 1705. The City Council organized portions of the city into ten wards; this collection has all of the ward survey documents from April 2, 1728, minus the Dock Ward return (if one was completed). It is not known how often this type of survey was conducted. This ward system would be retained for eighty years.¹ The collection also has manuscripts from early mayors in Philadelphia. The Mayor of Philadelphia, from 1701 to 1775, was appointed by the colonial Common Council every October to a one-year term. The two mayors found within the documents are William Fishbourn (in office 1719-1722) and Thomas Lawrence (in office 1727-1729; 1734-1735; 1749-1750; 1753-1754).²

The material with which the documents were produced can also be telling. More precious documents, meant to be preserved rather than disposed of, would be committed to parchment, made of stretched animal hides. The vast majority of the manuscripts and otherwise printed documents in this collection are of handmade, chain-laid paper, identifiable by the faint lines when the paper is exposed to light. Woven handmade papers, as well as machine-made papers, would not come into common production and use until the late 1700s and early 1800s. Many of the papers in the collection have a small hole in the top left corner, an indicator that they would have been bound with cord for grouping.³ A trademark of the handmade chain-laid papers was the watermark, a hidden symbol laid into the paper itself by the papermaker for recognition. Papermaking in general did not start in America until 1690, when Germantown settler and German immigrant William Rittenhouse started domestic production. His descendants, notably Klaus Rittenhouse, also produced paper. Other families and individual papermakers, like Frederick Bicking, also began papermaking. Each of these papermakers had their own watermarks for identification. As an example in the collection, the “KR” watermark is that of Klaus Rittenhouse. Sourcing the papermaker can speak to connections between its production and use, like an imported paper being used on an important document, rather than a domestic product. Watermarks may also be cut during the cutting of the paper itself, meaning that two sheets of paper can be identified as coming from the same larger sheet (there is an example of such in the collection, also a “KR”). A majority of the handmade chain-laid papers in this collection contain watermarks, as simple as an “H” or as elaborate as the crest of Amsterdam. An album of the watermark photographs in the collection is also available digitally through Special Collections.

Three of the documents in the collection are published in German. These announcements would have been directed towards the German-speaking peoples in Pennsylvania, known as the Pennsylvania Dutch. Since 1683, Germans had been immigrating to William Penn’s religiously-tolerant colony. These persecuted Germans founded Germantown, just outside Philadelphia. The German-speaking population boomed over the next century, as more Anabaptist groups, such as the Amish and Mennonite, found homes in southern Pennsylvania. Other Germans,

¹ Philadelphia City Archives. “Chronology of the Political Subdivisions of the City of Philadelphia, 1705-1854.” Accessed June 25, 2016. <http://www.phila.gov/phils/docs/inventor/graphics/wards/wards2.htm>

² Philadelphia City Archives. “Mayors of the City of Philadelphia 1691-2000.” Accessed June 30, 2016. <http://www.phila.gov/phils/mayorlst.htm>.

³ Mary Wootten, conservator at Gettysburg College Special Collections.

inspired by the promises of indentured servitude and new life, also immigrated to the region in the early to mid-1700s. By the Revolution, when the German broadsides in the collection were published, about a third of Pennsylvanians were of German heritage. The number of Germans grew as thousands of Hessian mercenaries from the British forces defected during the Revolution to start a new life among the Pennsylvania Dutch. 360,000 German Americans lived in the now-United States by 1800.⁴

Languages

English
German

Scope and Content Notes

The Early American Document Collection contains broadsides, manuscripts, and other material from the colonial era and early republic. The material covers a broad range of subjects, mostly pertaining to administration in colonial Philadelphia, and the American Revolution. The series listing below further specifies the subject areas within the collection. Possible research topics include: colonial-era legal, land, or government documentation, the influence of broadside announcements, the use of German in colonial American documents, and for a general investigation into the happenings of the Continental Army. The military documents are more sparse in subject area, and do not include engagement information. The dates are largely bulked from 1727-1728, and also from 1775-1787. The collection does not contain mid-century documents pertaining to topics like the French and Indian War, or specific topics on daily colonial life.

The Early American Document Collection also contains a strong variety of colonial watermarks, from domestic and foreign paper. Possible research topics concerning watermarks include: sourcing of the papermaker, the inspiration behind the designs, the region of production, the trade connections between papermaker and user, and the connections between documents with the same watermarks. Further historical information on the use of watermarks in early American documents can be found in the historical notes above.

Subjects

Adams, John
Broadsides – Pennsylvania – Pennsylvania Dutch Country – History
Broadsides – United States
Courts
Economic Surveys – United States
Land Grants – Pennsylvania (also Land Titles – Pennsylvania)
Pennsylvania – History
Pennsylvania – History – Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775
Pennsylvania – History – Revolution, 1775-1783

⁴GaleGroup US History. "German Immigration." Accessed July 7, 2016.
<http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/uhic/ReferenceDetailsPage/ReferenceDetailsWindow?zid=a1bdd01f59dacbddab4e6bea68b2a54e&action=2&documentId=GALE%7CCX3436800018&userGroupName=gray02935&jsid=f6ef0c62ec142c368bfc2a12c90b49ea>.

Philadelphia (Pa.) – History
 Philadelphia (Pa.) – History – Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775
 Philadelphia (Pa.) – History – Revolution, 1775-1783
 Philadelphia (Pa.) – Politics and government
 Petitions
 United States – History
 United States – History – Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775
 United States – History – Religious aspects
 United States – History – Revolution, 1775-1783
 United States – History – Revolution, 1775-1783 – Propaganda
 United States – History – 1783-1815
 Washington, George, 1732-1799

Series Description

This collection is divided into eight Series. **Series 1:** German-language Declaration of Independence, **Series 2:** Military Documents, **Series 3:** Court Documents, **Series 4:** Land Indenture and Ownership Documents, **Series 5:** Return Survey Manuscripts for the City of Philadelphia Wards, **Series 6:** Manuscripts from the Mayors of Philadelphia, **Series 7:** Documents concerning Religious Affairs, **Series 8:** Catalog Manuscript

Series 1 consists of a German-language Declaration of Independence for the United States, published in Philadelphia by the Continental Congress, 1776. The original is a vaulted item, and the photocopy of the document is within the collection box.

Series 2 consists of early American military documents, ranging in date from 1775-1799. The various forms of documents include broadside announcements (in German and English), a congressional resolution, and a parchment certificate.

Series 3 consists of early American court documents, from about 1727-1728. The records from Philadelphia are general court reports and “Quarter Session” petitions.

Series 4 consists of land and ownership documents, ranging in date from 1685-1812. The series contains Pennsylvania land deeds or grants, and land indenture certificates. Box 2 (Oversized) is a continuation of Series 4.

Series 5 consists of return survey manuscripts for the wards of Philadelphia, likely all from 1728.

Series 6 consists of manuscripts from early mayors of Philadelphia, ranging in date from 1721/2 – 1728. The manuscripts include mayor orders, as well as attached jury lists.

Series 7 consists of early American documents concerning religious affairs, ranging in date from 1781-1799. The documents are broadsides, in English.

Series 8 consists of a manuscript letter, dated 1717, containing a catalog of books.

Box List

Box 1

1-0 Finding Aid and former Broadside Listing

Series 1 – German-language Declaration of Independence

1-1 Declaration of Independence, written in German, published in Philadelphia, 1776

Series 2 – Military Documents

- 1-2 Revolutionary War Period Documents, 1774 – 1783
- German-language broadside warning Philadelphia residents that British soldiers are closing Boston Port due to the Trade Act, May 1774
 - German-language broadside notifying Pennsylvanians of General Charles Lee and the forthcoming military aid, and instructing locals to continue resistance against the British Army, December 10, 1776
 - Broadside announcement warning Pennsylvanians that the British Army is targeting Philadelphia, and that militia must be ready, April 9, 1777
 - Broadside resolution from the Continental Congress requisitioning flour for the Continental Army, December 11, 1779
- 1-3 Post-Revolution Documents, 1784 – 1799
- Parchment certificate of membership for the Society of the Cincinnati, awarded to Thomas Dungan, signed by Henry Knox and George Washington, October 31, 1785
 - Broadside describing the uniforms of the new American Army, January 9, 1799

Series 3 – Court Documents

- 1-4 Philadelphia Court Records
- Court record describing Lock, John and the mistreatment of servant Mary Harrell, March 8
 - Court record describing Brooks, Charles and a theft of goods, March 28
 - Court record describing Carr, James and a liquor infraction, March 28
 - Court record describing Lock, John and the mistreatment of servant Mary Harrell, March 28
- 1-5 Philadelphia Quarter Session Petitions, 1728
- Petition from Carr, James to the Mayor Recorder and Aldermen
 - Petition from Chester, Samuel to the Mayor Recorder and Alderman Justices, April 3, 1728
 - Petition from Durell, Moses to the Mayor Recorder and Aldermen
 - Petition from Flower, Sarah, and her sister Mary, to the Court Justices
 - Petition from Roberts, John to the Mayor Recorder and Aldermen, April 1728
 - Petition from Symmons, Samuel to the Mayor Recorder and Aldermen

Series 4 – Land Indenture and Ownership Documents

- 1-6 Land Deeds and Grants, 1787-1796
- Land deed for Tench Francis, from William Gregory, August 20, 1787
 - Land deed for Samuel Dilworth in Northumberland County, signed by Thomas Mifflin, March 3, 1794
 - Land deed for Henry Drinker, from Tench Francis, May 23, 1794
 - Land grant for Henry Drinker, from Tench Francis and William Gregory, October 10, 1796
- 1-7 Land Indenture, 1812
- Land indenture for John Beard, from Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Miller, February 15, 1812

NOTE: Series continued in Box 2

Series 5 – Philadelphia Return Survey Manuscripts

- 1-8 Return Survey Manuscripts from Philadelphia, 1728
- Return Survey for the “Chosnot” [Chestnut] Ward, undated

- Return Survey for the High Street Ward, undated
- Return Survey for the Lower Delaware Ward, April 2, 1728
- Return Survey for the Middle Ward, April 2, 1728
- Return Survey for the Mulberry Ward, April 2, 1728
- Return Survey for the North Ward, undated
- Return Survey for the South Ward, undated
- Return Survey for the “Uper” Delaware Ward, undated
- Return Survey for the Walnut Ward, April 2, 1728

Series 6 – Manuscripts from the Mayors of Philadelphia

1-9 Orders and Jury Listings from the Mayors of Philadelphia, 1721/2-1727/8

- Order from Mayor William Fishbourn to his Sheriff and constables, March 10, 1721/2
- Grand and Petty Jury listing, April 3, 1722
- Order from Mayor Thomas Lawrence to his Sheriff and constables, accompanied by a Grand and Traverse Jury listing, April 2, 1728
- Sheet of paper with inscriptions “Presented by Dr. Patterson” and “April”
- Sheet of paper with inscriptions “Presented by Dr. Patterson” and “1728”

Series 7 – Documents concerning Religious Affairs

1-10 Broadside Documents concerning Religious Affairs, 1781-1799

- Broadside titled “An Indian’s Speech, in Answer to a Sermon presented by a Sweedish Missionary at Cannestoge / Anno Domini 1710,” 1781
- Broadside proclamation from John Adams recommending April 25 to be a religious day of Thanksgiving, March 6, 1799

Series 8 – Catalog Manuscript

1-11 Letter from Jos. Stanson to Rev. Colman of Boston, containing a book catalog, March 20, 1717

Box 2 (Oversized)

Series 4 – Land Indenture and Ownership Documents (cont.)

2-1 Land Indenture from William Penn to Joseph Baynes, 1683

Removed from Collection

“Woodtax made for school district number two,” November 10, 1828

Location: Thrall Library in Middletown, New York

Jesuit Letter, sent to London, on the happenings in Rome, 1777

Location: Vertical File Manuscript Collection

Related Collections

American Revolution Book Collection

VFM-42: Vertical File on “Duquesne, Fort,” containing a photocopy of a 1758 report claiming British victory and capture of Fort Duquesne (“now Pittsburg”)

VFM-110: Vertical File on “Paper Money – United States,” containing a two-dollar note from 1776

VFM-161: Vertical File on “Washington, George 1732-1799,” containing two possible original letters and one lithograph from George Washington

VFM-165: Vertical File on “Whitney, Eli,” containing photocopies of manuscripts, concerning the patent of the cotton gin and letters from Whitney about the invention, some of which involve Founding Fathers (1793-1803)

VFM-467: Vertical File on “Montgomery, Robert, American Consul in Spain, 1803-1808,” containing correspondence between Montgomery and Thomas Lear, the American Consul in Algiers, detailing Anglo-French tension among other affairs

Un-cataloged periodical: August 1776 issue of “Gentleman’s Magazine,” printed in Britain, with the full text of the American Declaration of Independence

Un-cataloged periodical: November and December 1787 issues of “Gentleman’s Magazine,” printed in Britain, with the full text of the new American Constitution

For more information about the Early American Document Collection

Online translations of the German-language documents:

- Declaration of Independence:
http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html
- December 10, 1776 Broadside:
<http://www.bradford-delong.com/2014/12/liveblogging-the-american-revolution-december-10-1776-particularly-to-the-people-of-pennsylvania.html>

Watermark Database:

- <http://www.gravell.org/search.php?&&offset=&rectotal=&query>

Available in Musselman Library:

- “American Odysseys: A History of Colonial North America” by Timothy J. Shannon and David N. Gellman
- “American Watermarks, 1690-1835” edited by Thomas L. Gravell and George Miller
- “British North America in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries” edited by Stephen Foster
- “Flying Leaves and One-Sheets: Pennsylvania German Broadsides, Fraktu, and their Printers” by Russell Earnest and Corinne Earnest
- “The Pennsylvania German Broadside: a History and Guide” by Don Yoder
- “Philadelphia: A 300-Year History” by the Barra Foundation
- “Whirlwind: The American Revolution and the War that Won It” by John Ferling