



The Historical
Society of
Pennsylvania

Collection 1858

Joshua Francis Fisher (1807-1873)
Papers

1681-1865 (bulk 1760-1830)
3 boxes, 1.25 linear ft.

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Restrictions: None.

Related Collections at Brinton Coxe collection (Collection 1983)

HSP: Cadwalader family papers (Collection 1454)

Fisher family papers (Collection 2094)

Tench Francis ledger, Amb. 3401.

Logan-Fisher-Fox papers (Collection 1960)

William Tilghman family papers (Collection 659)

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Abstract

Miscellaneous papers of a Philadelphia family contain: Tench Francis to his wife, 1767-1768, reporting on business activities in England; Fisher family letters, 1775-1777, concerning revolutionary activities in America; George Harrison papers, 1792-1842, including some business papers and accounts, correspondence with William Tilghman concerning the Tench and Ann Francis estate and with Horace Binney relating to William Waln property; and Joshua Francis Fisher papers, 1819-1865, concerning family matters and a dispute with William Logan Fisher over the estate.

Background note

Joshua Francis Fisher (1807-1873) was a prominent Philadelphia citizen in the nineteenth century. Joshua, an active member in the formative years of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania later became vice president of the organization. His daughter, Maria Middleton Fisher, with wife Eliza Middleton Fisher, married Brinton Coxe who was another prominent Philadelphia resident.

In addition to the Coxe family, Joshua was connected with several other Philadelphia families including the Harrison, Francis, Logan and Willing families. Joshua's paternal great grand parents were Joshua and Sarah Fisher and William and Hannah Logan. Their children, Thomas Fisher and Sarah Logan married in 1771 having seven children; Sarah Fisher (b. 1774), Joshua Fisher (1775-1806), Hannah Logan Fisher (b.1777), William Logan Fisher (1779-1780), William Logan Fisher (b. 1781), James Fisher (b. 178?) and Esther Fisher (b. 1788).

Joshua Francis Fisher's father, Joshua, married Elizabeth P. Francis who was the daughter of Tench and Anne Willing Francis. Elizabeth's siblings included Thomas Willing Francis and Sophia Francis. Sophia later married George Harrison a Philadelphia merchant and naval agent from 1830-1831. It seems George was influential in managing Joshua's finances after the early death of his father.

Scope & content

The Joshua Francis Fisher Papers comprises miscellaneous papers representing three related families from 1681 to 1865. The materials are not very extensive as the collection is predominantly correspondence between family members and business partners with significant gaps. A small amount of genealogical notes, estate and business papers as well as obituaries and land deeds are included in the collection however.

Included are detailed descriptions of specific aspects of the Francis, Fisher, and Harrison families such as: Trench Francis's estate difficulties and his legal battles in London during 1767; and the situation of the Quakers in England and Philadelphia during the American Revolution and the Quaker exile in Virginia. There is also correspondence mentioning that women in Philadelphia were responsible for mounting opposition to the Stamp act as well as letters that give an account of Joshua Francis Fisher's stay in France in 1832 and the difficulties of conducting business during this time. Other parts of the collection such as the account statements and business correspondence of George Harrison are of more limited use and interest to researchers. The strength of this collection is in the rich detail regarding social and political issues and situations discussed in the correspondence.

The papers were originally arranged according to family surname Francis, Fisher, or Harrison. This arrangement has been maintained and the surnames are used as series names. As these families are related to each other by marriage there is overlap in the arrangement. Letters regarding Sophia Francis Harrison, wife of George Harrison, can be found in the George Harrison series as well as in the Francis family series. The documents are arranged in alphabetical and chronological order within the series according to subject or creator/receiver of the correspondence.

Overview of arrangement

Series I	Fisher family papers, 1681-1865	Extent
Series II	Francis family papers, 1738-1854	Extent
Series III	George Harrison papers, 1783-1842	Extent

Series description

Series 1. Fisher family papers, 1681-1865 (Box 1)

This series maintains its original order with correspondence arranged alphabetically by folder title. Within folders items have been assembled in chronological order. A limited amount of genealogical notes and land deeds can be found in the series.

Most of the items are correspondence and legal documents regarding a dispute between Joshua Francis Fisher and his uncle William Logan Fisher. The dispute resulted from Joshua feeling wronged by his uncle regarding an inheritance that Joshua was to receive once he became an adult. It is presumed that the uncle was custodian of the inheritance until Joshua came of age.

Court papers in the collection also document the case of Joshua Francis Fisher vs. George Harrison in 1826. It is unclear whether this case relates to the dispute with William Logan Fisher. In Fisher vs. Harrison Joshua is seeking interest on a certificate issued to his family by the United States government during the American Revolution. The judge believed the United States owed Joshua the interest but there were issues surrounding the statute of limitations and whether or not the interest could be collected in 1826. It seems Harrison was named in the cases as he was the executor of the will which left the certificate to Fisher.

Joshua Francis Fisher spent 1832 in Europe as related in letters home to his family. These letters tell of his experiences in France including having to flee to England during a Cholera epidemic. Many of the letters are addressed to George Harrison and detail Fisher's expenses abroad. It appears Harrison was managing Fisher's finances at this time.

Series 2. Francis family papers, 1738-1854 (Box 1)

The Francis family series, like the Fisher series, is predominantly comprised of correspondence arranged alphabetically by creator or receiver of the letters. Individual items are arranged chronologically. Much of the correspondence is between Tench Francis and his wife, Anne while there is correspondence from other Francis family members including Sophia Harrison.

Tench Francis spent 1767-1768 in England sorting out legal problems resulting from bad business arrangements. He wrote frequently to Anne discussing these matters, his brother's health and her relatives whom he was staying with in England. She also wrote about the state of their family in Pennsylvania as she was staying with relatives. In addition to the business and cultural aspect of their daily lives these letters provide a snapshot into the life and love shared between Tench and Anne.

Series 3. George Harrison papers, 1783-1842 (Boxes 2-3)

The George Harrison series contains a mixture of correspondence and business documents. Balance sheets for 1805-1832 are documented as well as the Tench Francis Estate papers. Nearly all of the correspondence relates to Harrison's business dealings.

The Tench Francis estate papers reveal Sophia Harrison, Thomas Willing Francis and Elizabeth Powell Fisher were among the heirs to the estate. Judge William Tilghman was the executor of the estate which was an on going and time consuming process to settle beginning in 1783 and ending 1826. Individuals with whom Tench and Anne Francis had accounts are documented including an account with George Harrison. Of possible interest to researchers is a Bond of Indemnity between Elizabeth Powell Fisher and Thomas Willing Francis relating to the estate.

Within the context of the Francis estate a second estate belonging to James Baine is mentioned. Documents appoint Walter Sterling of London Power of Attorney to

receive and distribute shares of the estate of the late James Baine. No further information regarding this individual is present in the collection.

Separation report

None

Related materials

At The Historical Society of Pennsylvania:
Brinton Coxe collection (Collection 1983)
Cadwalader family papers (Collection 1454)
Fisher family papers (Collection 2094)
Tench Francis ledger, Amb. 3401.
Logan-Fisher-Fox papers (Collection 1960)
William Tilghman family papers (Collection 659)

At other institutions:

Fisher Family Papers, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pa.
William Logan Fisher Papers, Clements Library, University of Michigan

Bibliography

Fisher, William Logan. *An Account of the Ancestry of William Logan Fisher*. Wakefield: 1839.

Subjects

Cholera – England – 19th century.
Europe – Description and travel – 19th century.
Family life – Pennsylvania – 19th century.
Quakers – Pennsylvania – 18th century.
Quakers -- Virginia.
Spouses – Correspondence – 18th century.
United States – History – Revolution, 1775-1783.

Binney, Horace, 1780-1875
Fisher, Elizabeth P.
Fisher, Jabez Maud, 1801-1876
Fisher, Joshua Francis, 1807-1873
Fisher, William Logan, 1781-1862
Francis, Tench, 1730-1800
Francis, Anne.
Francis, Thomas W.
Harrison, George, 1762-1845
Harrison, Sophia
Ingersol, Joseph R.
Tilghman, William, 1756-1827
Waln, William, 1775-1826

Administrative Information

Restrictions

The collection is open for research.

Acquisition information

Gift of Mrs. James B. Drinker, 1961.

Alternative format

None.

Preferred citation

Cite as: [Indicate cited item or series here], Joshua Francis Fisher Papers (Collection 1858), The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Processing note

Processed by Meghan Vacca, September 2005.

Box and folder listing

Series 1. Fisher family papers

Folder title	Date	Extent	Box	Folder
Correspondence	1774-1838	16 items	1	1
Correspondence	1845-1855	12 items	1	2
Correspondence, Europe	1832	9 items	1	3
Correspondence, E. Francis	1864-1865	7 items	1	4
Correspondence, Sophia Harrison	1793-1847	10 items	1	5
Correspondence, legal dispute	1819-1828	11 items	1	6
Correspondence, legal dispute	1828-1837	11 items	1	7
Correspondence, legal dispute	1843	10 items	1	8
Correspondence, Middleton	1865-1879	19 items	1	9
Correspondence, Thomas Willing	1758-1791	5 items	1	10
History & genealogical notes	1681-1810	15 items	1	11
Land papers				

Series 2. Francis family papers.

Folder title	Date	Extent	Box	Folder
Correspondence, Anne Willing Francis	1777-1799	8 items	1	12
Correspondence, Anne Willing Francis	1805-1810	9 items	1	13
Correspondence, Charles Francis	1738-1817	3 items	1	14
Correspondence, John Francis	1780	1 item	1	15
Correspondence, Sophia Francis	1790-1794	3 items	1	16
Correspondence, Tench Francis	1767-1798	3 items	1	17
Correspondence, Tench and Anne Francis	1767	11 items	1	18
Correspondence, Tench and Anne Francis	1767-1768	10 items	1	19
Correspondence, Tench and Anne Francis	1768	7 items	1	20
Correspondence, Thomas W. Francis	1793	2 items	1	21
Obituaries	c. 1854	8 items	1	22

Series 3. George Harrison papers

Folder title	Date	Extent	Box	Folder
Balance sheets	1805-1808	6 items	2	1
Balance sheets	1809-1814	5 items	2	2
Balance sheets	1816-1819	5 items	2	3
Balance sheets	1820-1824	4 items	2	4
Balance sheets	1825-1829	5 items	2	5
Balance sheets	1830-1832	5 items	2	6
Correspondence, business	1781-1797	12 items	2	7
Correspondence, business	1797	11 items	2	8
Correspondence, business	1797-1987	11 items	2	9
Correspondence, business	1798-1818	13 items	2	10
Correspondence, business	1819-1821	14 items	2	11
Correspondence, business	1821-1822	11 items	2	12
Correspondence, business	1823-1825	15 items	2	13
Correspondence, business	1825-1826	11 items	2	14
Correspondence, business	1826	12 items	2	15
Correspondence, business	1826-1835	10 items	2	16
Correspondence, business	1835-1842	15 items	3	1
Correspondence, John Francis	1791-1794	14 items	3	2
Correspondence, Thomas W. Francis	1792	2 items	3	3
Correspondence, Sophia Harrison	1793-1812	5 items	3	4
Tench Francis Estate	1783-1812	11 items	3	5
Tench Francis Estate	1812-1814	15 items	3	6
Tench Francis Estate	1815-1816	12 items	3	7
Tench Francis Estate	1816-1820	11 items	3	8
Tench Francis Estate	1820-1822	19 items	3	9
Tench Francis Estate	1822-1824	10 items	3	10
Tench Francis Estate	1824-1826	20 items	3	11
Tench Francis Estate	1826	14 items	3	12
Tench Francis Estate	1826	13 items	3	13
Tench Francis Estate	1826	15 items	3	14
Tench Francis Estate	1827	7 items	3	15
Misc. land and estate papers	1704-1816	9 items	FF	1