

## 20th-Century Collections Guide: Family Life and Genealogy

Many of HSP's collections document 20th-century family and social life, particularly those of the elite and burgeoning middle classes. Many of these family papers also include genealogical information.

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania is one of the most complete and professional genealogy centers in the nation, and the largest in the Mid-Atlantic region. The Society's 20th-century genealogy-related collections include contain family papers, funeral records, and institutional records. Many of these collections document the practice of this increasingly popular activity.

Please note that this is not a comprehensive guide to HSP's manuscript collections relating to 20th-century family life and genealogy. It is meant to serve as a starting point to help users locate collections that may be of interest to them.

See the [20th-Century Collections Guide main page](#). <sup>[1]</sup>

HSP staff is regularly adding finding aids to the website. Users should click on a collection's title to see whether a full online finding aid is available.

### Family Life

### Genealogy

## Family life

Allen, Alfred Reginald, 1876-1918; Allen, Alfred Reginald, 1905-1988

[Allen family papers, 1837-1971](#) <sup>[2]</sup> (Collection 3126) 57 boxes 13 volumes (23.2 linear ft.)

The Allen family of Philadelphia had its roots in Bristol, United Kingdom. Samuel Allen (sometimes spelled Allan or Allin) came to America in 1681 and settled in what is now known as Chester, Pennsylvania. The Allen family papers consist of correspondence, photographs, albums, newspaper clippings, volumes, manuscripts, ephemera, and artifacts collected first by Dr. Alfred Reginald Allen (1876-1918) and then by his son Alfred Reginald Allen Jr. (1905-1988). This collection of Allen family papers is rich in personal correspondence, particularly between Dr. Allen and his father in the late nineteenth century, between Dr. Allen and his wife while he was at the Army's Plattsburg training camp and overseas, and between Reggie and his mother from the 1920s until her death in 1949. There are also numerous photographs and albums in the collection which are mostly family portraits, pictures of their summer holidays on Lake George, New York, and the family's many travels abroad. There is also a significant amount of genealogical material in the form of historical biographies, family trees and letters. Dr. Allen began doing genealogical research and Reggie it. While Dr. Allen concentrated on the history of the Allens and the Pomeroy's, Reggie expanded the research to include the Howes, the DeWolfs, the Huntingtons, and other related lineages. This genealogical research

is particularly interesting as all lines of the family were people who settled in America in the 1600s. The Pomeroy's in particular were some of the original founders of the town of Dorset, Massachusetts.

Bok, Curtis, 1897-1962 and Nellie Lee Holt Bok

William Curtis Bok and Nellie Lee Holt Bok papers, 1836-1991 <sup>[3]</sup>(Collection 3096) (25 linear ft.)

The focus of this collection is the personal and professional papers of Curtis (1897-1962) and Nellie Lee Bok. In addition, there is some documentation of their children (Derek, Enid, and Benjamin) and their Bok and Holt ancestors. There are letters, travel journals, identified files, photographs, and printed materials relating to the illustrious careers of both Curtis and Nellie Lee.

Clapp family

Clapp family papers, 1942-1989 <sup>[4]</sup> (Collection 2172) 23 boxes 46 volumes (33 linear ft.)

Forty six volumes of diaries and scrapbooks, 1942-1989, which document both visually and textually the daily lives of a Philadelphia, Pa. suburban couple. The scrapbooks include photographs, Christmas and birthday cards, ephemera from social events, and material relating to their children's education and interests. These "memory books" go several steps beyond the typical scrapbook, however. They often include items that are more readily classified as artifacts -- apple stems, dixie cup spoons, and probably most memorably, a wishbone from a turkey. Mary Ann Clapp obviously spent a great deal of time compiling these albums and most items are captioned or refer the viewer to the diaries, take up the latter part of each volume.

Dwyer family

Dwyer family papers, 1854-1995 <sup>[5]</sup>(Collection 3029) 60 boxes 34 volumes (26 linear ft.)

The Dwyer Family Papers primarily consist of the papers of Edward James Dwyer, a graduate of St. John's College in Annapolis Maryland, who then attended Johns Hopkins University as a graduate student in engineering. He later became the president of Electric Storage Battery Company and served on the board of Quaker Chemical Company, Selas Corporation, and the National Association of Manufacturers. He was also a lawyer. The collection also includes many papers relating to Elizabeth MacLachlan Dwyer. The children of Edward and Elizabeth are also represented. This collection includes correspondence; class notes and thesis of Edward J. Dwyer; genealogical notes on the Dwyer, Root, Waters, MacLachlan, McDonald, and Hamblin families; scrapbooks; printed matter; and ephemera.

Gondos family

Gondos family papers, 1895-circa 1978 <sup>[6]</sup>(Collection 3082) 13 boxes 3 volumes (3.9 linear ft.)

Victor Gondos, a civil engineer, immigrated to the United States with his family in 1911, settling in Chicago. He married Irene Trautmann, and they had two sons, Zoltan (later Robert) and Victor Jr. In the 1920s they moved to Reading, Pennsylvania, where Victor set up The Gondos Company, a general contracting firm. In 1930, Gondos joined with his sons to form Gondos and Gondos, an architectural firm headquartered in Philadelphia that designed industrial buildings, schools, and hotels. Both sons garnered engineering degrees, but Victor Jr. was also an historian and archivist, and he served on the staff of the National Archives for twenty-three years. This diverse collection, which spans almost one hundred years, chronicles a Hungarian family's attempt to assimilate to the United States yet retain its heritage. It also documents the family's architectural and construction businesses from the mid 1920s through the Great Depression and World War II. The vast majority of this collection is correspondence between family members in the United States and in Hungary. There are also scrapbooks,

audio materials, clippings, programs, pamphlets, journals, technical drawings, and photographs.

#### Horstmann-Lippincott family

Horstmann-Lippincott family, 1724-1963 <sup>[7]</sup>(Collection 1899) 32 boxes 79 volumes (18.5 linear ft.)

Primarily the personal papers of several related Philadelphia families, including correspondence, financial records, estate records, diaries, photographs, and much miscellanea. The earliest papers, 1814-1858, are by members of the Shaw, Craige, and Lippincott families, and include: correspondence; miscellaneous receipts; Sarah Lippincott's receipt book, 1826-1858; and the diary, 1839-1840 of Josephine Craige who in 1845 married J.B. Lippincott, the founder of the publishing house.

The Sigmund H. Horstmann papers include a few personal letters, 1869-1870; and miscellaneous business records, 1851-1864, of Horstmann Brothers and Company, importers and manufacturers of military uniforms, insignias, and flags. His wife, Elizabeth West Horstmann, is represented by account books of household expenses, 1864; servant's wages, 1856-1896; travel expenses in Europe, 1869-1870; and two miscellaneous volumes. Also included are the European diaries, 1869-1870, 1873, of her daughters Sarah and Elizabeth Horstmann. The bulk of the collection is made up of the personal papers, 1860-1927, of Walter Lippincott, son of J.B. Lippincott and husband of Elizabeth Horstman. It contains: incoming correspondence; accounts; bills and receipts; contracts; real estate records; tax records; household accounts; inventories; instructions to servants; photo albums; Lippincott's diary, 1892-1919, with brief notations on routine activities; transcript of Lippincott's interview with Admiral George Dewey on the problems of the German fleet at the battle of Manila Bay; school records and reports; and other miscellanea. Elizabeth Horstmann is represented by incoming letters, account book, 1884-1919, scrapbooks, school papers, and miscellanea. The papers, 1906-1950, of Bertha Horstman Lippincott Coles, the only child of Walter and Elizabeth Lippincott, include a few letters, some regarding her published writings; financial records on the large estate inherited from her parents and other properties; a diary, 1906-1907; papers on her work with the U.S. Service Club; and the manuscript of her book, "Wound Stripes (1921)."

Lowrie and Derr families papers, 1844-1969 <sup>[8]</sup> (Collection D1259). 28 containers (25 linear feet).

This collection of family papers documents at least two generations, based largely in Wilkes Barre and Philadelphia. It includes a large amount of family correspondence and photographs; marriage records; diaries; financial records; art work and a manuscript by Elizabeth Derr Davison; research notes, manuscripts, and published volumes on Philadelphia history by Sarah Dickson Lowrie; and songs, poems, and plays by Thompson Derr. Documentation from 1910-1960 is more robust. Of special interest are materials relating to tourism in the Southwestern United States and Native American art, life in London during World War II, and Philadelphia history. This collection includes an extensive album of tintypes.

#### Wannemacher family

Wannemacher family papers, 1897-1957 <sup>[9]</sup> (Collection 3324) 1 box 10 volumes (1.7 linear ft.)

These 10 photo albums document the social and political lives of the Wannemacher family and other young Philadelphians in the 1910s and 1920s. At least some of the Wannemachers were Socialists involved with the Socialist Sunday School (24th and 27th wards) and the Young People's Socialist League. Their picnics and other excursions are documented. There

is a picture of Eugene V. Debs and another of the Socialist Book Store, 1326 Arch St., Philadelphia. The other major aspect of this collection is the documentation of various family trips to the Jersey Shore, New York City, Niagara, Wisconsin, and New England, where the family visited the homes and graves of Emerson, Thoreau, Alcott, and Hawthorne. They also traveled around Pennsylvania a great deal, to Harrisburg, Delaware Water Gap, Graterford, Wissahickon, Perkiomen, Media, Arden, and other places. Also of note are a handful of pictures of Philadelphia on Armistice Day. Some albums focused on the childhood of Margaret Wannemacher.

Wright, Charles Adshead

Charles Adshead Wright collection, 1810-1982 <sup>[10]</sup> (Collection 3013) 33 boxes (14 linear ft.)

The Wright Family Papers recount the story of an American family coming of age in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The story is told through the recollections and writings of Charles Adshead Wright, who began compiling his memoirs in 1923, at the age of twenty-four. He titled his project, "The Story of a Life," and noted, "It will be my purpose to record daily the experiences which I have had, and my own personal reaction to those experiences." His project went through several revisions and periods of dormancy in the subsequent years, but continued with the support of his family, who inspired him to write additional chapters that gave a chronological account of all of the activities of the Wright family. He illustrated the text with family photographs, clippings, holiday cards, and other ephemera, so that by 1987 the "Wright Family History" occupied 108 binders and spanned nearly 172 years in the life of an American family.

## Genealogy

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Fluehr Funeral Home (Philadelphia, Pa.)

Fluehr Funeral Home records, 1919-1988 <sup>[11]</sup>(Collection GSP 051) 10 boxes (4.75 linear ft.)

John F. Fluehr & Sons were funeral directors in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They later

changed their name to Fluehr Funeral Home. They were located at 149 W. Susquehanna Avenue and 3260 and 3301-3305 Cottman Avenue. An associated funeral home was Fluehr's Funeral Home at 5401 Rising Sun Avenue in Philadelphia. The bulk of the collection consists of funeral records from 1929-1980, with several years missing. The funeral records include information on the deceased such as name (including maiden name for married women), birth date, death date, birthplace, names of family members, the cemetery and burial plot, residence prior to death, and cause of death. The records also include information on the funeral and burial arrangements, such as the type of casket, preparation of the body, clothing, flowers, and the associated costs for these items. Some records include the text of death notices. Each book, or section of a book, corresponds to a calendar year, and the records within are in alphabetical order by last name. There is also one box of miscellaneous materials, including financial records and receipts from the 1970s-1980s, documentation related to a property purchased in Ship Bottom, New Jersey, an honorable discharge from the army for Leslie A. Lynch and estate settlement papers for Harry J. Behr and Robert Licsauer.

#### Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania

Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania collection of genealogical records, 1808-1979 <sup>[12]</sup>  
(Collection 3270) (393 linear ft.)

This extensive collection originally was compiled and held by the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania. Most of the records represent the research notes, reports and correspondence of genealogists. Although most of the material is secondary and often uncited to source, there is a small amount of original documents within the volumes, including legal documents such as indentures and wills, correspondence, photographs, news clippings (mostly of obituaries), and receipts. There are also many Photostats and typed transcripts of such documents. While some volumes include documentation regarding multiple families, usually arranged alphabetically, many volumes are devoted to one family and occasionally follow a scrapbook-like format, filled with news clippings, photographs and printed ephemera. There are also several multi-volume subseries of special topics, such as the signers of the Declaration of Independence and their descendants, the "old families" of Philadelphia and by regional groupings, including some of the mid-Atlantic states, New England, and the counties of Pennsylvania.

Cope, Gilbert and Joseph Cope

Gilbert and Joseph Cope genealogical research materials and personal papers, 1798-1988 <sup>[13]</sup>  
(Collection GSP 041) 29 boxes (29 linear ft.)

The collection consists of genealogical research and personal papers compiled by Gilbert Cope (1840-1928) and his son Joseph. The largest portion of the collection is comprised of surname files from the Gilbert Cope Foundation of Genealogical and Historical Research (1818-1988). These files include genealogical worksheets, clippings, correspondence, family charts, printed materials, and some original photographs and documents (many of them relating to the Copes). Besides the Cope family itself, other families heavily represented include Baily, Brinton, Brown, Darlington, du Pont, Garrett, Gilbert, Hoopes, McGrew, Price, Sellers, Sharpless, and Smedley. The collection includes a number of volumes of correspondence to and from Gilbert and Joseph Cope, primarily on genealogical topics, with particular emphasis on Cope family history. Some printed materials from Pennsylvania and British institutions and groups are included. There are also some personal papers for ancestors of the Copes, including account books and diaries for Joseph Cope (1740-1820) and Eliza Cope (died 1862), and biographical information about Gilbert and Joseph, including transcripts of Gilbert's diaries. Some miscellaneous notes, drawings, and published family histories are also included.

Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania

Historical Society of Pennsylvania and Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania collection of genealogical records, 1766-1982 <sup>[14]</sup>(Collection 3255) 76 boxes (35 linear ft.)

Unlike the other records compiled by the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, most of the material in this collection is original. Folders are arranged by family or individual and contain a variety of material. Included are deeds wills and other legal documents, correspondence, account books, bills and receipts, school transcripts, photographs and printed material. Some contain volumes of published family histories. Perhaps more valuable than the genealogical data that can be extracted from these documents is the coverage of contemporary events also highlighted through words and pictures, including the Civil War and the Korean conflict. Some individuals are represented through more extensive documentation, comprising a mini-collection of its own. One such instance is the collection of Edwin S. Dunkerley, a former HSP volunteer. In addition to material documenting his life, there are letters from an apparent relative who served as a missionary in China during World War I. There is also one box of mid-19th century sheet music, identified as "Miss Leach" that includes titles such as "Lieutenant General Grant's Grand March," and F.B. Helmsmuller's "Ruck-Ruck-Gallop," or "Hitch-Hitch." Some records are by institution such as the Moyamensing Lodge No. 330.

Jacobs, Sophia Yarnall

Sophia Yarnall Jacobs papers, 1861-1990 <sup>[15]</sup> (Collection 3007) 2 boxes 5 volumes (1.33 linear ft.)

Sophia Yarnall Jacobs was a civic worker and author. She attended Bryn Mawr College from 1919-1921, marrying Reginald Robert Jacobs in 1921. They divorced in 1937, and she served as secretary of the United Nations Council (later the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia) and was president of the National Council of Women from 1960-1963. The Sophia Yarnall Jacobs papers contain photocopies of correspondence, photocopies of newspaper clippings, research notes, manuscript drafts, printed materials, letter books, and photographs. All the files relate either to the Coxe family or to the various Coxe mining enterprises. The papers are divided into two series, Coxe family research materials and bound volumes, and date from 1861-1990.

Ohio. Court of Common Pleas (Mahoning County)

Mahoning County Court of Common Pleas naturalization records, 1900-1933

[16](Collection MSS091) 8 boxes ( 8 linear ft.)

The collection contains Preliminary Naturalization petition forms ("second papers") for Mahoning County, Ohio. These forms were submitted to the district naturalization office along with immigrants' initial applications for naturalization ("first papers"), for verification of information such as arrival dates and residence before naturalization could proceed. These forms were to be destroyed when the final naturalization certificate was completed. This group of records was preserved by a clerk who passed them on to the donor. Two different versions of the forms are represented in the collection. In English.

Oliver H. Bair (Firm)

Oliver H. Bair funeral records, 1920-1980 [17] (Collection 3338) 991 boxes (396.4 linear ft.)

The Oliver H. Bair Company was founded in 1878 with the intent to offer the best service possible for families that had to make funeral arrangements for their deceased loved ones. Originating at 41 North Eighteenth Street in Philadelphia, the funeral home's most well-known location was at 1820 Chestnut Street, and it now operates from 8500 West Chester Pike in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, as a member of Oliver H. Bair Company & Monaghan Funeral Home. The collection contains records dated from 1920-1980 and includes records not only from Oliver H. Bair Company, but also from five other funeral homes that operated in Philadelphia and were purchased by the Oliver H. Bair Company. The burial records include information on the deceased, bills pertaining to funeral expenses, newspaper clippings, and correspondence between Oliver H. Bair and the person responsible for the payment for the deceased's funeral.

Rubincam, Milton, 1909-

Milton Rubincam papers, 1934-1980 [18](Collection GSP 102) 19 boxes 113 volumes (36.58 linear ft.)

The collection contains documentation of Rubincam's genealogical research. Materials include: an extensive, 113 volume Rubincam family genealogy, which contains correspondence, photocopies of records, photocopies of clippings, and other research; printed family histories and bibliographies (there are often photocopies of correspondence related to the research as well as the final product of the research); genealogical research on various royal families and non-royal families; manuscripts for articles and papers; articles and reprints by others; printed materials from genealogical societies, including a good deal of research related to the Sutherland family and newsletters from the Clan Sutherland Society in Scotland; and miscellaneous reels of microfilm for various individuals and families, as well as the Sussex County Court Records. Many of the genealogical projects draw on German primary sources. There is also extensive correspondence with fellow genealogists and historians - sometimes on genealogical topics, sometimes related to personal and organizational matters for organizations in which Rubincam was involved, such as the American Society for Genealogy. Some files include obituaries written by Rubincam. Correspondents include Walter Goodwin Davis, Donald Lines Jacobus, John Insley Coddington, and Calvin Kephart.

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## Links

[1] <http://hsp.org/collections/catalogs-research-tools/subject-guides/20th-century-collections-guide-1>

[2] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.ead.at01-3126>

[3] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.ead.at01-3096>

[4] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.ead.at01-2172>

[5] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.ead.at01-3029>

[6] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.ead.at01-3082>

[7] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.ead.at01-1899>

- [8] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.ead.at01-D1259>
- [9] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.ead.at01-3324>
- [10] <http://discover.hsp.org/Record/hsp.ead.at01-3013>
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