

Card Catalogs

HSP's card catalog contains over one million individual, hand-written and typed cards with information about unpublished materials currently not searchable in *Discover*, HSP's online catalog.

Online Card Catalog

Digital scans of HSP's card catalog ^[1] are available through FamilySearch, one of the world's largest online genealogy databases. The card catalog's organization on FamilySearch's database mirrors its physical organization.

Card files in the Reference Room

Card files are broken down into separate sections for manuscripts, broadsides, graphics, maps, sheet music, Afro-Americana, genealogical resources, and newspapers. Included below are descriptions of these categories to aid users in their research.

PC 1 - Manuscript catalog

Manuscripts, which librarians and archivists generally consider a handwritten or otherwise unpublished document, are principally text or musical notation on paper. Typewritten documents are typically classified as manuscripts but are more accurately described as typescripts.

HSP's collection of manuscripts includes letters, diaries, accounts, and more. The Manuscripts catalog contains information about nearly 1 million manuscript resources processed by archivists between the late 19th century and the 1970s.

PC 2 - LCP in HSP catalog

This catalog is a name index to the Library Company of Philadelphia (LCP) manuscript collections. HSP administers these collections according to a cooperative agreement with LCP. LCP is adjacent to HSP on the 1300 block of Locust Street, making for a history-filled block of Center City, Philadelphia.

PC 3 - Broadsides

A broadside is a large sheet of paper printed on a single side only, with many historical broadsides including posters and advertisements. Many broadsides were created for a specific purpose, such as promoting a public event, with the intention of then throwing away. Luckily, many of these ephemeral items have been collected and preserved by libraries such as HSP, offering a glimpse into the media consumed by Americans throughout history.

The Broadsides catalog contains information on HSP's graphics holdings of broadsides, from

printed accounts of 18th century births and burials, to 20th century anti-tobacco advertisements.

PC 4 - Graphics catalog

When librarians and archivists discuss “graphics,” they are referring to a broad class of materials primarily consisting of image-based (rather than text-based) records. These often include architectural, engineering, or artistic works, and may be drawings, designs, prints, paintings, photographs, sketches, or other media.

The Graphics catalog is best thought of as a series of smaller catalogs, ranging from A through D. Each of the four sections contains different types of images:

- 4A includes images, portraits, and trade cards in the formats of prints, drawings, watercolors, and photographs.
- 4B includes coats of arms from families both famous and forgotten alike.
- 4C includes insurance surveys held in the Mutual Assurance Company and the Philadelphia Contributionship
- 4D includes maps, atlases, and all other cartographic material

PC 5 - Music catalog

HSP’s collections of sheet music and other musical works capture the operas, librettos, psalms and hymns, popular and patriotic songs, jazz, and other music from the soundscapes of American history.

The Music catalog contains information about these items, from African American spirituals to Scandinavian folk tunes.

PC 6 - Afro-Americana in HSP and LCP

The Afro-Americana catalog contains information on the Afro-Americana collections of the Library Company of Philadelphia (LCP) and HSP for the period of 1553-1906. The catalog is divided into three categories: broadsides, manuscripts and prints.

Thematically, the Afro-Americana collection documents the West's discovery and exploitation of Africa; the rise of slavery in the New World along with the growth and success of abolitionist movements; the development of racial thought, including political protest and resistance to racism; descriptions of African American life—slave and free—throughout the Americas; and slavery and race in fiction and drama. Also featured are printed works of African American individuals and organizations.

PC 7 - Family History/Genealogy Catalog

HSP is one of the most comprehensive and professional genealogy centers in the nation—and the largest in the Mid-Atlantic region. HSP collects genealogical materials from Pennsylvania and every other state east of the Mississippi River. However, its collections also cover pre-migration from Europe, the genealogical “stepping stones” across the Caribbean, and out-migration to Canada.

The Family History catalog contains a variety of unpublished family history and genealogical records including bible, church, cemetery, probate, tax, land, immigration, and vital records.

Newspapers (PC8)

As the “first draft of history,” American newspapers have preserved essential records and detailed accounts of the people, issues and events that shaped the nation for several centuries.

The Newspapers catalog contains information on HSP’s collections of newspapers, which include some of the nation’s oldest titles as well as numerous ethnic titles from the Balch Institute of Ethnic Studies.

Links

[1] <http://familysearch.org/search/collection/2524622?collectionNameFilter=false>