



The Historical
Society of
Pennsylvania

Collection 1269

Fahnestock family
Papers

1849-1873

10 volumes, 1.25 linear feet

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Restrictions: None

Related Collections at Fahnestock family papers (Collection 1930)

HSP: J. Fletcher William's "Memoir of George W.
Fahnestock" (Am .0627)

Fahnestock family

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Abstract

The Fahnestock family of Philadelphia had its roots in Hagen, Westphalia, Germany. Among their earliest ancestors were John Diedrick and Anna M. Vahrenstück (Fahrenstück or Fahrenstock), who immigrated to America around 1728. The couple landed in New York, and eventually made their way to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. John and Anna had ten children, many of whom developed large families, and the family name spread throughout Lancaster, York, Franklin, and Adams counties. By about the second generation, the family had adopted the name “Fahnestock.” A brief genealogical report on the descendants of John D. Vahrenstück is available on page 5 of this guide.

John’s great-great-great grandson, George Wolff Fahnestock (1823-1868) was born in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, to Benjamin A. Fahnestock, a pharmaceutical manufacturer, and Anna Maria Wolff. The couple had four children, two of whom, George and daughter Mary Elizabeth, survived to adulthood. In 1829, the family moved from Chambersburg to the Pittsburgh area, where George spent his formative years. By at least 1846, George was living in Baltimore, Maryland, where, in that same year, he married Grace Sarah Ensey (d. 1867). The couple had one daughter, Grace Ensey Fahnestock (1848-1868). A year after Grace’s birth, the family moved to Philadelphia, where George W. Fahnestock became known for his literary and scientific pursuits. A member of the Academy of Natural Science and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, he published several works, including *Memoranda of the Effects of Carburetted Hydrogen Gas on a Collection of Exotic Plants* (1858). He held firm Christian beliefs and was an avid collector of rare books and pamphlets, amassing thousands before his untimely death. In December 1868, both he and his daughter were killed when their steamboat, the *United States*, struck another steamboat, the *America*, on the Ohio River. The resulting conflagration claimed dozens of lives. At the time, George’s mother was the only surviving immediate relative.

Comprising the papers of the Fahnestock family are George W. Fahnestock’s diaries dating from 1862 to 1867; Anna M. Fahnestock’s diaries dating from 1869 to 1873; a business and account book from the Estate of George W. Fahnestock, and a scrapbook of newspaper clippings documenting the steamboat crash that claimed George’s and his daughter’s lives.

George's diaries, in which he discussed everything from the weather to his overseas travels, are extremely detailed. In April 1862, he wrote of a reading by Charles Dickens he attended at St. James Hall in London, England. In his entry, he closely described Dickens' physical appearance and his stellar performance. Later that month, George visited the acclaimed cemetery outside of Paris, Père Lachaise, which, he observed, lacked the rural features of the American cemeteries. In other diary entries, George recorded personal business dealings, weather observations, and current events, including Civil War battles. He also wrote extensive entries around the times of his father's and wife's deaths. Each of his diaries is indexed.

Anna M. Fahnestock's diaries begin in January 1869 while she was still in mourning for her son and granddaughter. Among other preparations, she discussed arrangements for a family mausoleum. Other early entries include notes on her being visited by someone inquiring about her son's library collection, an offer of \$25,000 to build a library in memory of her husband and son (only one month after her son's death), and the day she received her son's umbrella, found in the steamboat wreckage. She also wrote extensively about her dealings with her late husband's business partner and her lack of understanding about her husband's work. Additionally, she wrote more generally about personal and family events, including deaths and births, and even the death of her favorite dog, Tips.

Restrictions

The collection is open for research.

Related collections

At HSP:

Fahnestock family papers (Collection 1930)

J. Fletcher William's "Memoir of George W. Fahnestock" (Am .0627)

Subject headings

Clippings

Collectors and collecting – Pennsylvania – Philadelphia

Diaries

Europe – Description and travel

Philadelphia (Pa.) – Social life and customs – 19th century

Ships – Fires and fire prevention

United States (Ship)

Fahnestock, Benjamin Augenbaugh, 1799-1862

Fahnestock, Anna Maria, 1803-1890

Fahnestock, George Wolff, 1823-1868

Fahnestock, George Wolff, 1823-1868 – Estate

Fahnestock, Grace Sarah (Ensey), d. 1867

Fahnestock, Grace Ensey, 1848-1868

Administrative information

Acquisition information

Gift of C.H. Wolff, Mrs. Francis K. Wolff, and Bernard Bunting Wolff, 1939, 1941.

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Processing note

These volumes are also catalogued under corresponding call numbers. Please see
volume listing on page 4 for more details.

The diaries of Anna M. and George W. Fahnestock were formerly catalogued under
collection number 1185.

Volume listing

Call number	Brief description	Approximate date range	Notes
Am .062701	George W. Fahnestock diary	1862	
Am .88996	George W. Fahnestock diaries	1863-1867	5 volumes, one for each year
Am .889961	Anna M. Fahnestock diaries	1869-1873	2 volumes, 1869-1871 and 1871-1873
Am .889962	Estate of George W. Fahnestock business and account book	1868-1871	
Am .889963	Clippings scrapbook – burning of the steamboat <i>United States</i>	1868	

Descendants of John Diedrick Vahrenstück

Generation No. 1

1. JOHN DIEDRICK¹ VAHRENSTÜCK was born 1696, and died 1775. He married ANNA M. WIRTH. She was born 1702, and died 1783.

Children of JOHN VAHRENSTÜCK and ANNA WIRTH are:

- i. CASPER DIEDRICK² FAHNESTOCK, b. 1724; d. 1808.
- ii. JOHAN HIENRICH ANDREW FAHNESTOCK, b. 1726; d. 1726.
- iii. ANDREAS FAHNESTOCK, b. 1728; d. 1737.
- iv. PETER FAHNESTOCK, b. Abt. 1729; d. 1805.
- v. DIEDRICK FAHNESTOCK, b. 1733.
- vi. JOHN FAHNESTOCK, b. 1735; d. 1812.
- vii. DANIEL FAHNESTOCK, b. 1739; d. 1801.
- viii. JOSEBA FAHNESTOCK, b. 1742; d. 1816.
2. ix. BENJAMIN FAHNESTOCK, b. 1747; d. 1820.
- x. BORIUS FAHNESTOCK, b. 1749; d. 1820.

Generation No. 2

2. BENJAMIN² FAHNESTOCK (*JOHN DIEDRICK¹ VAHRENSTUCK*) was born 1747, and died 1820. He married CATHERINE BARBARA GARBER. She was born Abt. 1749, and died 1793.

Children of BENJAMIN FAHNESTOCK and CATHERINE GARBER are:

3. i. GEORGE³ FAHNESTOCK, b. 1772; d. 1851.
- ii. JOHN FAHNESTOCK, b. 1774; d. 1842.
- iii. MARGARETTA FAHNESTOCK, b. 1776.
- iv. HENRY FAHNESTOCK, b. 1778; d. 1827.
- v. HESTER FAHNESTOCK, b. 1780.
- vi. CHRISTIANA FAHNESTOCK, b. 1782.
- vii. PETER FAHNESTOCK, b. 1784; d. 1864.
- viii. BENJAMIN FAHNESTOCK, b. 1787; d. 1842.
- ix. SAMUEL FAHNESTOCK, b. 1790; d. 1791.

Generation No. 3

3. GEORGE³ FAHNESTOCK (*BENJAMIN², JOHN DIEDRICK¹ VAHRENSTUCK*) was born 1772, and died 1851. He married MARY AUGHINBAUGH. She was born 1771, and died 1807.

Children of GEORGE FAHNESTOCK and MARY AUGHINBAUGH are:

4. i. ELIZABETH⁴ FAHNESTOCK, b. 1797; d. 1821; m. ANDREW DEWLING.
- ii. BENJAMIN AUGENBAUGH FAHNESTOCK, b. 1799; d. 1863.
- iii. JOHN FAHNESTOCK, b. 1801; d. 1831.
- iv. BARNET FAHNESTOCK, b. 1804; d. 1824.
- v. EPHRAIM A. FAHNESTOCK, b. 1805; d. 1840.

Generation No. 4

4. BENJAMIN AUGENBAUGH⁴ FAHNESTOCK (*GEORGE³, BENJAMIN², JOHN DIEDRICK¹ VAHRENSTUCK*) was born 1799, and died 1863. He married ANNA MARIA WOLFF. She was born 1803, and died 1890.

Children of BENJAMIN FAHNESTOCK and ANNA WOLFF are:

- i. GEORGE WOLFF⁵ FAHNESTOCK, b. 1823; d. 1868; m. GRACE SARAH ENSEY; d. 1867.
- ii. CHRISTIAN DEARING FAHNESTOCK, b. 1825; d. 1825.
- iii. HELEN MARY FAHNESTOCK, b. 1827; d. 1829.
- iv. MARY ELIZABETH FAHNESTOCK, b. 1830; d. 1855; m. GEORGE HEBERTON; b. 1822.