



The Historical
Society of
Pennsylvania

Collection 1878

**Sword family
Papers**

**1751-ca. 1940 (bulk 1836-1845)
9 boxes, 3.6 lin. feet**

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Inventory Completed: April 2008
Restrictions: None

**** Preliminary inventory ****

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Abstract

The Sword family was a merchant family of Philadelphia and New Castle, Delaware, who was prominent in the China trade. This collection contains mostly family letters, but there are a few personal journals and business papers. They richly document family life and the upper class devotion to the written word. Transcriptions accompany most of the original letters and journals.

John Dorsey Sword was a supercargo to the West Indies, South America, and China. His wife Mary Parry Sword accompanied him to South America from 1837 to 1838, and to China from 1841 to 1845, where she lived at Macao while he did business at Canton. John and Mary's papers, which date from 1836 to 1850, make up the majority of this collection. In many of their family letters and journals they touch on different aspects of the China trade, including descriptions of the voyage to Canton, the "Opium War" of 1838, and the social life of westerners at Macao. John D. Sword's papers also include family letters and business correspondence from his business partner John B. Trott. Mary P. Sword's letters contain numerous references to Americans in Macao, China. There are also extracts of her letters in which she references the grandparents of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Additionally, the collection includes Mary's outgoing letters from Brazil, Chile, and China; letters to her husband in Canton; incoming social letters; her travel diaries from South America and China; and letters from her brother Thomas Parry on life in Philadelphia.

The first two generations of Swords in America are also represented by a small number of family letters dating from 1751 to 1790. Represented in these letters are William Sword, a sea captain, his wife, Penelope Haley Sword, and their son, John Ewer Sword, also a sea captain.

Rounding out the collection are the papers of other family members, including William Sword Ash, who spent time in China with his uncle, James Dorsey Sword. Dating from about 1841 to 1848, William's papers also relate to the China trade and include family and business correspondence and his diary of the journey from New York to Canton. There are also letters of James Dorsey Sword's sister, Sarah Dunn Sword; his brother, James B. Sword, and his son, John Sword. Additionally, there are a few folders of papers from members of the related Brade and Ash families.

Subjects

Canton – Travel and description
China – History – Opium War, 1840-1842
Commerce – China
Commerce – South America
Commerce – West Indies
Correspondence
Delano family
Diaries
Macau – Travel and description
Rio de Janeiro – Travel and description
Shipping
Valparaiso – Travel and description

Ash, William Sword, d. 1848
Parry, Thomas.
Sword, James Brade, b. 1802
Sword, John Dorsey, 1805-1850
Sword, John Ewer, 1764/5-1810
Sword, Mary Parry, 1812-1845
Sword, Penelope Haley, b. 1736
Sword, Sarah Dunn, 1800-1875
Sword, William, b.1733
Trott, John B

Restrictions

The collection is open for research.

Acquisition information

Gift of the estate of Mary Parry Farr, 1962.

Preferred citation

Cite as: [Indicate cited item or series here], *Sword family papers* (Collection 1878), The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Box and folder listing

Box number	Folder or volume title	Approximate date range	Extent
Box 1	Letters of John Dorsey Sword	1819-1842	6 folders
Box 2	Letters of John Dorsey Sword	1843-1850	8 folders
Box 2	Business letters of John Dorsey Sword	1825-1838	2 folders
Box 3	Letters of Capt. John Ewer Sword	1782-1790	1 folder
Box 3	Miscellaneous printed material	ca. 1805-ca. 1891	1 folder
Box 3	Miscellaneous poems, scraps, will of S. D. Sword, notes, and genealogy	ca. 1842-ca. 1940	2 folders
Box 3	Letters of John B. Trott to John Dorsey Sword	1837-1942	2 folders
Box 3	Letters of Walter Ewer Jr., William Sword, Penelope [Haley] Sword, and John Haley	1751-1790	1 folder
Box 3	Miscellaneous papers of Mary Parry Sword and Eleanor Walsh Sword	ca. 1810-1816, n.d.	1 folder
Box 4	Letter of William James Barclay to Sarah Dunn Sword	1822	1 folder
Box 4	Letters of James B. Sword	1818-1839	2 folders
Box 4	Letters to James B. Sword	1824-1839	1 folder
Box 4	Letters of Sarah Dunn Sword	1824-1849	2 folders
Box 4	Daybook of Sarah Dunn Sword	1868-1873	1 folder
Box 5	Journal of Thomas Parry, books 1-7	1841-1844	4 folders
Box 5	Extract from journals of Thomas Parry	n.d.	1 folder
Box 5	Journal of John Sword [son of John Dorsey Sword] and letter	1863, 1875	1 folder
Box 6	Letters of Mary Parry Sword	1837-1845	7 folders
Box 7	Letters of Mary Parry Sword	1842-1845	3 folders
Box 7	Extracts from Mary Parry Sword's letters making reference to Delano family	1843-1845, 1935	1 folder
Box 7	Journals of Mary Parry Sword	1837-1842	2 folders
Box 8	Letters of William Sword Ash	1841-1848	2 folders
Box 8	Journal of William Sword Ash [Barque "Candace", NYC to Canton]	1846	1 folder
Box 8	Letters to William Sword Ash	1847-1848	2 folders
Box 8	Letters of Catherine [Sword] Ash	1824, 1831, 1838, 1847	1 folder
Box 8	Letters of Rachel Ash	1846-1849	1 folder
Box 8	Letters of Eleanor Ash	1845-1846, n.d.	1 folder
Box 8	Story by William Sword Ash	n.d.	1 folder
Box 9	Social letters to Mary Parry Sword	1837-1845	2 folders
Box 9	Letters of Sarah, Agnes, and Mary Brade	1819-1829	2 folders