



The Historical
Society of
Pennsylvania

Collection 3062

Catharine Franklin Sharples (1768-1824)
Family Papers

1709-1866 (bulk 1790-1840)
3 boxes, 3 vols., 1.4 lin. feet

Contact: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania
1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: (215) 732-6200 FAX: (215) 732-2680
<http://www.hsp.org>

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Catharine Franklin Sharples (1768-1824)

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Abstract

Catharine Franklin Wistar was born in 1768 to Caspar and Mary (Franklin) Wistar. Caspar Wistar (1740-1811), was the youngest child of Caspar and Catherine (Jansen) Wistar. In 1804 Catharine married Abraham Sharples (1748-1835) of Aston (now Thornbury), Chester County. The Wistar and Sharples families were active in the founding and early years of Westtown School, near West Chester, Pennsylvania. Catharine and Abraham's son, Caspar Wistar Sharples (1805-1865), married Elizabeth Onderdonk in 1840 and continued the family tradition of practicing law.

While this collection contains papers from four generations of Wistars, the central figure is Catharine Franklin (Wistar) Sharples. Included in her own papers are many letters to and from her extended family and a wide circle of friends; a number of financial documents; and a significant collection of personal writings. A number of papers also pertain to her parents, husband, and son, and include correspondence, financial documents, and estate records. There is a small amount of material relating to the Onderdonk family, as well as miscellaneous documents belonging to Nicholas Newlin of Concord and some unattributed correspondence.

Background note

Caspar Wistar (1696-1752) emigrated to Philadelphia from the village of Hilsbach, near Heidelberg, Germany, in 1717. Born Wüster, he anglicized his name and spelled it differently from his brother, John, who emigrated in 1727 and began the Wister family line. Caspar was by trade a brass button maker, but in 1739 he founded America's first successful glassworks in Alloway Township, near Salem, New Jersey. In 1726, he married Catherine Jansen of Germantown. Their first child was Richard (1727-1781), later the father of the renowned Dr. Caspar Wistar (1761-1818), for whom the Wistar Institute is named. Their seventh and last child was Caspar (1740/1-1811) who in 1765 married Mary Franklin (1735-1804) of Flushing, New York.

The events of the younger Caspar's life are not well known, though traces of it exist in this collection. He practiced law and lived with his wife Mary in Pennsbury (now Pocopson), Chester County. Mary Franklin, his wife, came from a Quaker family in

Long Island, N.Y. Caspar may have provided assistance to other German immigrants, as his father had, by helping them locate land and settle.

Caspar Wistar also served on the Westtown Boarding School Committee from 1800 to 1804. Westtown School had been founded by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends in 1799 to provide a “guarded education” to Quaker children in a residential community away from the city that had grown so contentious and inimical to the pacifist Quakers since the war. Based on a plan published in 1790 by Owen Biddle who followed the planners of the Ackworth School in England, the school benefited from consultations with Benjamin Franklin and John Dickinson. It was situated on a 600-acre farm in Chester County where it would be built from the farm’s own clay for bricks and lumber. Food and fuel was to be produced at the farm as well.

Catharine Franklin Wistar (1768-1824) was the third child of Caspar and Mary (Franklin) Wistar. In 1802, Catharine became the second wife of Abraham Sharples (1748-1835) of Sarum Forge, in Aston (now Thornbury), Chester County. Abraham was 54 when they married. His first wife, Phebe Valentine, died in 1792 after having three children with Abraham. He was a successful miller in Aston. Later, some of his mill property would be known as Glen Mills.

Catharine and Abraham were also active with Westtown School; Catharine had been appointed to the school’s committee in 1795 and served until 1803. Abraham served on the committee from 1796 and also oversaw the school’s operations. He and his father-in-law Caspar were two of a group of local Quaker millers who helped build the school’s mills that later would belong to the school exclusively.

Catharine and Abraham’s son, Caspar Wistar Sharples (1805-1865), married Elizabeth Onderdonk (1817-1883) in 1840. Elizabeth was a daughter of Henry Ustick Onderdonk, Pennsylvania’s second Episcopal bishop. Caspar Wistar Sharples became a mill-owner, lawyer, house-builder, and (in 1845) Justice of the Peace in Concord Township.

Scope & content

The collection has been divided into six series, the largest of which is Series 3, the papers of Catharine Franklin (Wistar) Sharples. Series 1 and 2 include the papers of her parents, Caspar Wistar and his wife Mary (Franklin) Wistar, respectively. Much of the correspondence in these two small series is from the Franklin family of Long Island. Caspar Wistar’s papers also include some business letters, financial records, and records pertaining to the administration of his estate.

Series 3 contains the papers of Catharine Franklin Sharples. These papers include correspondence, assorted writings by her and others, a commonplace book showing the range of her interests, and financial records of her own and for Westtown School. The series covers nearly forty years of her life and contains correspondence with many friends and relatives. The correspondence, commonplace book and literary autographs show that Catharine and her circle were highly literate and thoughtful. Most of her correspondents were fellow Quakers.

Series 4 contains the papers of Catharine's husband, Abraham Sharples. Papers in Series 5 belong to the couple's son, Caspar Wistar Sharples. Both series are small and are primarily comprised of correspondence and scattered financial records. Caspar Wistar Sharples's papers include letters written to him as a ten-year-old student at a boarding school in Burlington, New Jersey, from 1815 to 1817.

Series 6 includes miscellaneous papers pertaining to the Onderdonk family, especially Elizabeth (Onderdonk) Sharples, the wife of Caspar Wistar Sharples, and her father Henry Ustick Onderdonk, the Episcopalian bishop. Other miscellaneous materials include the collection's oldest documents: deeds and surveys of Nicholas Newlin of Concord Township, which were kept in a cloth bag marked "Deeds for Corner Catch."

Overview of arrangement

Series I	Caspar Wistar (1740-1811), 1777-1830, n.d.	5 folders
Series II	Mary (Franklin) Wistar	3 folders
Series III	Catharine Franklin Sharples	
	a. Incoming correspondence	20 folders
	b. Outgoing correspondence	11 folders
	c. Miscellaneous	5 folders, 3 volumes
Series IV	Abraham Sharples	5 folders
Series V	Caspar Wistar Sharples	5 folders
Series VI	Miscellaneous	7 folders

Series description

Series 1. Caspar Wistar, 1777-1830, n.d. (Box 1)

Caspar Wistar (1740-1811) was the seventh and youngest child of Catherine (Jansen) and Caspar Wistar, the German immigrant progenitor of the Wistar line. In 1765 Caspar married Mary Franklin of Flushing on Long Island, New York. Six of the nine letters to Caspar are from family and in-laws and two are from Samuel Franklin, the brother of Caspar's wife, Mary. Three letters are from other in-laws, Sarah and William Robinson. The letters serve to maintain affectionate contact among family members living at a distance and occasionally visiting one another. All are apparently Quakers. Other letters to Caspar are from business contacts: John Mears of Mifflin Township, Allegheny County (formerly of London), and John Bellach of Brandywine Mills. These letters have been addressed either to Wistar's residences in Brandywine or Pennsylvania.

Though there is not much outgoing correspondence, Caspar Wistar's letters portray him as an affectionate and dutiful father, son, husband, and brother. There are ten letters to his daughter Catharine and five letters to his children as a group, all quite affectionate. Also included is a letter addressed to his mother, Catherine Wistar, during wartime in 1777, has a note indicating that it had been "inspected and

permitted to pass” by a John L.C. Roome. Wister wrote this and other letters from New York, though most of his letters were written in Pennsbury.

This series also consists of some legal and financial documents. There is a copy of Caspar Wistar’s will and codicils, and three other documents pertaining to the will. His daughter Catharine and trustee Isaac W. Morris figure prominently in them, both being named as heirs along with Caspar’s other children. In 1812, Catharine had her father’s property appraised; that itemized appraisal fills most of a large 20-page notebook, including half a page devoted to Caspar’s library that included works by Swift, Pope, Addison, Johnson, and John Woolman, among others.

There are five documents of real estate transactions: two of them with Thomas Gallaudet of Woodbridge, New Jersey, for land in New York; two for land in Montgomery County in the state of New York; and one for land in Northumberland County in Pennsylvania. Another document shows an account extracted from the ledger of the business partners Franklin and Robinson—presumably Wistar’s relations by marriage. Finally, there is a list of the children of Caspar and Mary along with their birth dates and times; also on this page is a similar list of the children of Mary’s parents, Thomas and Mary (Pearsall) Franklin.

Series 2. Mary (Franklin) Wistar, 1786-1804, n.d. (Box 1)

Mary (Franklin) Wistar was raised in a Quaker family on Long Island, and much of the correspondence in this series concerns friends and family in New York. Correspondents include her niece Sarah Robinson, her daughter Sarah, and other family members, most of them women. Outgoing correspondence consists of three letters: one to her daughter Catharine, one to all of her children as a group, and one most likely to her husband, who was away at the time. The correspondence in this series depicts Mary Wistar as a loving mother and wife, and a busy manager of a large household.

Also included in this series is a short journal of a visit to New York written in 1803 by John Williams, who apparently drove the carriage for Mary on one of her visits there.

Series 3. Catharine Franklin Sharples, 1786-1829, n.d. (Box 1)

a. Incoming correspondence, 1786-1824, n.d.

This subseries includes more than 100 letters sent to Catharine Franklin (Wistar) Sharples, who was sometimes known as Kitty. Letters, most of which are from family and friends, are arranged alphabetically by author.

Among the correspondents are Catherine W. Morris, Mary Corsa, and Sarah and William T. Robinson, all of whom were cousins of Catharine. Letters are filled with their concern for her health and well-being: “I had, but the day or two before heard of thy illness—which thou must know would cause anxious feelings, in one who has so much Cause to love thee, as I have” (Catherine W. Morris, January 16, 1814).

Two letters from H. Elliott, Catharine W. Morris's "constant companion since the late change" have been included in this folder along with Morris's letters to Catharine.

The four members of the Robinson family that wrote Catharine—Sarah, Abby, Molly, and William—were from New York. In one letter, Sarah Robinson wrote to satisfy Catharine's curiosity about a new marriage: "thou ask me how we like my new Sister... she is my dear cousin all that we can wish and all that is ingaging in a woman and every way qualified to make my Brother a very happy man..." (no date). That brother may be the William T. Robinson whose eleven letters to Catharine are also in this collection. His 1815 letter from Lisbon to his sister, possibly Sarah, is also included here.

Also included in this subseries is correspondence stemming from the Wistar family's visit to the German spiritual community at Ephrata in 1786, where they had gone to visit Thomas, Catharine's oldest brother, and Mary, her youngest sister, both of whom had been placed by Catharine's parents under the care of Dr. Gideon, a physician at Ephrata. There are six letters to Catharine from three different correspondents related to the German religious community: Mary Miller and Obed and Petronella Hicken of Ephrata, and Mary Penry of Lititz.

Six members of the Wistar/Wister family wrote Catharine including the eminent physician and anatomist, Dr. Caspar Wistar, who wrote her in 1816 thanking her for her present to him of an edition of Plato: "It is the handsomest & most valuable donation I have ever received..." Also, cousin Sally Wister (1761-1804) wrote Catharine in 1785, inviting her to correspond and to exchange her descriptions of rural life for "the city intelligence" Sally could provide.

In-laws Richard and Catharine Hartshorne wrote Catharine five letters and the Franklins—Matthew, Ann, and John—, six. A "T.E." strikingly describes Matthew Franklin's apparent stroke and death after speaking at length on charitable works at Pearl Street Meeting House in 1815.

Letters from friends Mary Morton, Elizabeth Roberts, Rebecca Archer, and Rachel Hunt are included, as are forty-five letters from miscellaneous correspondents, a few of which are fragments of letters or are unsigned. The letters vary widely in theme and purpose though many of them were written to maintain contact among Friends who had met at Quaker meeting, such as Rebecca Young and D. Darby, who met Catharine in 1795.

References to ill health are frequent in the incoming correspondence. Robert Gill wrote to Catharine at the "Pennsylvania Slitting-Mills" in July 1808, describing Catharine's brother's recuperation from an apparent thigh injury. Catharine's cousin Sarah Morris described the passing of her sister Hannah in 1824. In an 1811 letter, George Ashbridge described a journey from Philadelphia through New York to Newport, R.I. On board were "Indians of the first consequence of the Ottawas tribe." A letter written from Edinburgh in 1799 recalling "that cementing Virtue that

united our Spirits when together” called forth this notation, presumably from Catharine: “from dear, dear John Wigham a letter that oft affects my heart—Lord let the work be all thy own.” In short, the correspondence reveals much about Catharine’s social and familial contacts over the course of her life, before and after her marriage.

b. Outgoing Correspondence, 1787-1824, n.d.

This subseries includes Catharine’s outgoing letters, most of which were sent to family, but there are also letters sent to friends. There are more than 100 letters addressed to members of her family, including her parents, her husband, her son Caspar, her sister Sarah, and Sarah’s husband, George Pennock. There are also a number of letters to her cousins, including Sarah Robinson and Catharine Haines, to both of whom Catharine wrote affectionately and informatively about her visits and journeys. Most of the letters to her son Caspar were written when he was away at school in Burlington, New Jersey, from 1815 to 1817.

Letters to friends are addressed to a number of individuals. Many of these letters are fragments and a number are undated; some do not show to whom they are addressed, and at least one was never sent. Nevertheless, they communicate much about Catharine’s personality, often revealing much about her apprehensions about her own spiritual state; for example, in her 1796 letter to Peter Lossing, she exclaims, “Alas it appears to my frail mind at times as if there never was in any other being—so much nature to contend with.”

Catharine’s epistolary style is frequently quite sophisticated and her manner of address quite appealing. Occasionally, her letters will adopt the journal format or, as she phrased it, the “journalizing way of writing.”

c. Miscellaneous, 1773-1829, n.d.

This subseries is comprised of three journals, poetry, a few financial records, and some miscellaneous writings of Catharine Franklin Sharples. Her 1786 journal is a twenty-four-page record of her family’s three-month visit to the German spiritual community at Ephrata. As of July 16, the date of the first entry, both Thomas, Catharine’s oldest brother, and Mary, her youngest sister, had already spent five weeks under the care of Ephrata’s physician, Dr. Gideon, “for the recovery of an unusual disorder.” The journal describes in some detail the religious communities in Ephrata and Lititz. Catharine attended meetings that she described in detail, including accounts of two rituals favored by the community, the love-feast and washings of the feet. They returned home on September 20, 1786.

Her 1790 journal seems to have been modeled on the Quaker physician John Rutt’s “Spiritual Diary” (actually *A Spiritual Diary and Soliloquies*, published in Dublin, Ireland, in 1776). This journal was for self-examination: she would make “some memorandum each night how the day has been passed,” so that she “might be a witness of my own folly and strive to mend.” She seemed to be most concerned about her tendency to prefer the “gayety and lightness” of society to “retirement.” There are, for example, expressions of misgivings about reading novels, descriptions

of Quaker meetings she attended and of some troubling conflict with her mother (see the entries for February 15, 24, and May 5, 1791). For ten months, from September 21, 1790, to July 22, 1791, interrupted only during two visits to “P” (Pennsbury?), each visit lasting approximately three weeks, she wrote daily entries of greatly varying length—from a few words to two pages.

In 1802, at the age thirty-five, Catharine wrote a third travel journal. It is short—only nine pages long—and in it Catharine copied almost verbatim the introduction she had written in the 1790 journal. The ensuing entries are temporally vague (“1st month 1802,” “Some Months after”) but nevertheless informative about the Pennsylvania Quaker meetings she attended and about her own spiritual state.

A folder of miscellaneous writings contains nineteen documents of varying length and theme. One is a 1789 description—with a lock of hair attached—of fourteen-year-old John Skinner Webster, “the most amiable Youth I ever saw.” Five documents—one of them ten pages long—chronicle a traumatic event in Catharine’s life, the final sickness and death of her mother in 1804. One page, labeled “feelings,” describes Catharine’s distress at some dissension with her sister: “O how was my soul torn with the situation of things between my sister and my self. . . .” One four-page document describes her religious qualms raised by a reading of Thomas Paine’s *Age of Reason*. All of these documents reveal parts of Catharine’s private self and show that she must have derived consolation from committing private thoughts—sometimes painful ones—to paper.

Catharine’s commonplace book contains over 100 pages filled with notes and extracts from a variety of writers, among them Quaker theologian Robert Barclay, the seventeenth-century English devotional author William Law, the English Quaker minister Samuel Fothergill, and the American Quaker minister Job Scott. Much of the handwriting is Catharine’s, though there is a lengthy extract from “Bennett’s Letters” and a fair number of other extracts in what may well be in another’s hand. Some entries have titles such as “Christian advice and consolation,” “The Ways of Providence Justified: An Eastern Allegory,” “Advantages of Solitude,” and “Female Delicacy.”

In the inside front cover of the commonplace book is a folded note containing a three-page copy of a prose piece entitled “On Self-Examination.” Attached to the inside back cover is a note containing Samuel Fothergill’s account from 1770 of statements of appreciation made by an Admiral Terril on the silent worship of Friends.

In addition to Catharine’s poetry, there is also poetry and prose that was written by friends and relatives. These papers appear to have been retained by Catharine. This poetry includes nineteen documents, all of which are transcriptions of poetry written by friends and relatives of Catharine. Together they form what might be considered Catharine’s personal poetry album or miscellany. One is a booklet containing an unsigned six-page rhyming elegy entitled “On the death of a beloved Mother” that could perhaps have been copied if not written by Catharine.

Some of the other poetry includes a stitched-together 8-page booklet containing a Job Scott poem copied by Thomas Temple for Catharine in 1798; a copy of verse written by Samuel Emlen “on the happy day of his marriage”; unattributed “Reflections Occasioned by the birth of a Son 4th of 5th month 1799”; “A Farewell to Weston after spending six months there as a scholar very agreeably,” likewise unattributed; “Richard to Frances” perhaps written by “Richard Nesbitt when confined in the Hospital for insanity”; “The Tears of Basket Swamp, An Elegy addressed to Eliza Huntington the morning after her marriage 1st, 3rd mo. 1788” from the copyist Emma and the rest of “the sad sisterhood”; and a copy of “The Hermit” by Dr. Beattie, copied by Hannah Wister.

Miscellaneous prose pieces include an “An account of the last illness of Robert Mott written by his brother Richard Mott who gave this to Catherine F. Sharples”; it fills six pages of an eight-page booklet. Another is an undated letter from Job Scott to “JS on the death of his wife.” Another is a copy of a 1775 letter written by “Miss R. to Mr. Morris” who had taken “vilanous advantage” of her and left her pregnant and ruined. In addition to the writings, this subseries also includes a few financial records. Among them are a 1773 account of her father Casper Wistar’s estate; an 1816 contract binding “Sarah Johnson aged Seven Years” as apprentice to Abraham and Catharine Sharples; ledger sheets and letters detailing Isaac W. Morris’ dealings with his cousin Catharine during the 1820s; an “Exemplification” of the 1814 will of Catharine’s brother, Thomas Wistar; two “Queries” pertaining to wills written by Catharine; and other assorted statements, receipts, and notes.

In addition to loose financial records, there is also a ledger entitled “Board School Infirmary Book,” dated 1801. According to records at the archives of the Westtown School in Pennsylvania, Catharine and her husband and father were all members of the Westtown Boarding School committee, between (approximately) 1795 and 1804. This account book—apparently not written in her hand—has two separate accounts, each running for several pages at the book’s beginning and end, the rest of the book being blank. One account’s debit and credit entries run from February 1801 to June 1803, while the other account shows the expenditures in building a “Mill and dwelling house on the Westtown Boarding School Farm” in 1802.

Series 4. Abraham Sharples, 1748-1835 (Box 2)

There are two folders of incoming correspondence. One folder contains 7 letters to Abraham Sharples from various writers. One from George Churchman in 1809 was written to convey the writer’s concern about the “stiff disposition, undue expressions, & an untoward conduct in the precious blooming boy [son Caspar Wistar Sharples].” Other correspondents include his son-in-law George Ashbridge, Benjamin Tilghman, Joseph Douglas, and others. There is also a copy of an unsigned letter that interestingly describes a visit by the Quaker prison reformer Elizabeth Fry to Bridewell prison in London.

Also included are thirteen letters to Abraham from his cousin and financial partner, Isaac W. Morris, written between 1803 and 1830. The first discusses shares in the Germantown and Perkiomen Turnpike that Isaac had bought for Abraham. Another encourages Abraham to maintain contact after Catharine's death in 1824. Most have to do with accounts Isaac maintained on Abraham's behalf.

There are also two folders of Abraham Sharples's outgoing correspondence. The first contains four letters written between 1803 and 1808 by Abraham to his wife Catharine or—as he calls her—Kitty. Other outgoing correspondence includes fifteen letters Abraham wrote to son Casper (Abraham, unlike Catharine, writes his son's first name with an "e") while he was away at school in Burlington between 1815 and 1817. Letters from Abraham and Catharine to Caspar (see also Series 3) indicate their concern for their son. On December 13, 1815, Abraham warned Caspar not to "expose thysself unessussarily [*sic*] to the cold nor go on the ice on the Delaware."

Lastly, this series includes one folder of legal documents, among them an 1818 lease agreement between Abraham and Sarah Pennock for land to be farmed; an 1830 will leaving what was originally Thomas Wistar's estate to his two sons, Casper and Abraham; seventeen financial papers drawn up for Abraham by Isaac Morris between 1825 and 1828; two undated papers showing expenditures for the Westtown Mill Company; three receipts relating to the Westtown Boarding School Infirmary; and two miscellaneous receipts.

Series 5. Caspar Wistar Sharples, 1815-1866, n.d. (Box 2)

Four folders contain Caspar Wistar Sharples's incoming correspondence. Included are ten letters cousin Sarah Pennock wrote to Caspar at school in Burlington from 1815 to 1817. Also included are eight letters to Caspar at school written by his half-sister Rachel Ashbridge and her husband George. The letter for April 9, 1817, reports that George bought a Swiss servant with wife and child: "they speak no English—perhaps they will learn thee to talk Dutch if thee comes."

Other letters written to Caspar while he was away at school are from Hannah Chandler and Francis Wisely, a partner of Caspar's father in the iron manufactory at Sarum Forge. Another folder contains verses written by Caspar's fellow student, John H. Piece. Verses written by "C.W.P." recount the ongoing Pennsylvania gubernatorial election results of 1823, when John Andrew Schulze defeated Andrew Gregg; Caspar was apparently a "warm supporter of Schulze" despite what the writer calls Schulze's "acknowledged imbecility of mind."

Four notes addressed to Caspar are from several members of the Onderdonk family. In 1840 Caspar married Elizabeth Onderdonk, daughter of Henry U. Onderdonk, Episcopal bishop. In one of the notes, E. (presumably Elizabeth) Onderdonk invited Caspar to a concert. In another, Mrs. Onderdonk requested Caspar's company. Another contains two verses very likely written by Henry U. Onderdonk. Another from Benjamin T. Onderdonk states that he will "comply with your request to

perform the marriage service.” Also in this folder are four clipped newspaper notices of that wedding, of the wedding of Elizabeth’s sister, Susan, and of the deaths of two Sharples children.

Another folder contains forty documents relating to Caspar’s professional and financial affairs. There is an 1845 commission, signed by Governor Francis Shunk, appointing Caspar Justice of the Peace of Concord Township. Caspar and his brother Abraham were executors of the will of their father’s business partner, Francis Wisely: there are 2 papers from this transaction. Caspar apparently was a builder and had John Northrop, Jr. as his contractor. There are a dozen documents signed by Northrop and two releases of liens made out by the “mechanicks and material men” who had worked on a building project for Caspar. There is a lease of land to Jeremiah Brown et al for the construction of a building in Philadelphia; two quit claims from Sarah Pennock for lots in New York; seven documents bearing the name of Sarah D. Sharples; several account sheets bearing the name of the firm Pleasants & Kelly; and other miscellaneous papers.

Series 6. Miscellaneous, 1709-1866

This series includes miscellaneous papers pertaining to various members of the extended Wistar and Sharples families. Among them are ten letters written to Elizabeth Onderdonk Sharples between 1839 and 1886. Elizabeth married Caspar W. Sharples (see Series 5), who died in 1865. There is a letter to Elizabeth from Horace Binney, Jr. in that year asking for her cooperation as he carried out Caspar’s will. There is an 1848 letter to her from her father who has included two short poems in the letter, “Sunday Works” and “The New Ship Tuscarora.” The other letters are from her uncle Benjamin and from several of her sisters.

There are also letters addressed to Henry Ustick Onderdonk (1789-1858), the brother of Elizabeth (Onderdonk) Sharples, and Pennsylvania’s second Episcopal bishop. Onderdonk was known in his day as an outstanding theological scholar and controversialist. In 1844 he confessed his alcoholism to the church and resigned his ministry and bishopric. In 1856 he was restored by the church to the ministry. There are three letters in this folder. One sister wrote to him regarding Caspar Wistar Sharples: “if he is as good as Libby deserves he must be a most estimable man.”

Also included is poetry written by Henry Ustick Onderdonk in 1848. There are four poems, three of them inscribed by Onderdonk himself for “Kate’s Album.” Note that the series above contains a letter—from Onderdonk to his daughter—that contains two other poems.

Materials pertaining to Nicholas Newlin, dated 1709-1771, are the oldest documents in the collection. This folder contains papers which were probably kept in the cloth bag marked “Deeds for Corner Catch.” These miscellaneous papers consist of the following:

two surveys of land in Concord Township by Thomas Pierson of 1709 and 1710; a part of an apparently even more ancient deed made out to Nicholas Nulin;

a 1717 inventory of the goods of Nicholas Pyle of Concord;
a 1734 division of the lands of Nicholas Newlin's father, Nathaniel;
a 1746 Quaker marriage certificate from Concord Meeting for Ann Spikeman (Speakman) and Nicholas Newlin;
a 1753 letter to Nicholas Newlin from Elizabeth Baker;
a 1757 letter from Nicholas Newlin to his countryman Arthur Adkins in Ireland in which Newlin complains about the "many cruel scenes of Barbarity having been committed on the poor Inhabitants by the Natives an Unwearied and Merciless Enemy";
and a 1771 survey by Engelbart Lott of the land of John Anderson.

In another folder are three 1821 judgment bonds obligating Benjamin Newlin of Concord Township to pay specified amounts to Margaretta Kerlin and Thomas S. Brinton.

Other miscellaneous papers include five miscellaneous letters. One is a 1790 letter from the Rhode Island Quaker minister Job Scott to Margaret Haines and her daughter Catherine (see above Series 3, Folder 32 for Catharine Franklin Sharples's letters to the Haines). There is a 1785 letter from Mary Waln (1765-1844) to her future husband Thomas Wistar (1764-1851)—they married in 1786. There is an 1800 letter from Margaret R. Morton to her mother, Elizabeth Robinson of Long Island (see also her letters to Catharine Sharples in Series 3, Folder 9). And there are two letters whose writers are difficult to ascertain. Finally, there are two unattributed documents, one a description of a house to be built, the other an account sheet.

Separation report

None.

Related materials

Wistar Family Papers, Collection 727

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Subjects

Boarding school students – Correspondence
Family life – Pennsylvania – Philadelphia
Female friendship – 18th century
Quaker women – Social life and customs
Quakers – Pennsylvania – 18th century
Quakers – Pennsylvania – 19th century
Quakers – Social life and customs
Spirituality
Spouses – Correspondence

Onderdonk, Henry, 1789-1858
Sharples, Abraham, 1748-1835
Sharples, Caspar Wistar, 1805-1865
Sharples, Catharine Franklin, 1768-1824
Sharples, Elizabeth
Wistar, Mary, 1735-1804
Wistar, Caspar, 1740-1811
Wistar, Caspar, 1761-1818
Wistar family

Ephrata Cloister
Westtown Boarding School

Administrative Information

Restrictions

The collection is open for research.

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Alternative format

None.

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Processing note

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Box and folder listing

Series 1. Caspar Wistar

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
Incoming correspondence	1789-1804, n.d.	1	1
Outgoing correspondence – to family	1777-1788	1	2
Outgoing correspondence – to daughter Catharine	1786-1792, n.d.	1	3
Outgoing correspondence – to children	1789, 1799- 1800	1	4
Financial and legal	1791-1812	1	5

Series 2. Mary (Franklin) Wistar

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
Incoming Correspondence	1803-1804, n.d.	1	6
Incoming Correspondence – from Sarah Robinson	1790-1804, n.d.	1	7
Outgoing Correspondence – to children	n.d.	1	8

Series 3. Catharine Franklin (Wistar) Sharples. a. Incoming correspondence

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
Incoming correspondence – from Rebecca Archer	1799-1801, n.d.	1	9
Incoming correspondence – from Mary Corsa	1786-1796, n.d.	1	10
Incoming correspondence – from the Franklins	1789-1818, n.d.	1	11
Incoming correspondence – from the Hartshornes	1798-1807, n.d.	1	12
Incoming correspondence – from Rachel Hunt	1802-1812	1	13
Incoming correspondence – from Catherine W. Morris (and H. Elliott)	1804-1824, n.d.	1	14

Incoming correspondence – from Mary Morton	1814-1817	1	15
Incoming correspondence – from Elizabeth Roberts	1802, n.d.	1	16
Incoming correspondence – from Sarah Robinson	1788-1804, n.d.	1	17
Incoming correspondence – from William T. Robinson	1796-1815, n.d.	1	18
Incoming correspondence – from the Robinsons	1783, 1792	1	19
Incoming correspondence – from Caspar Wistar, M.D.	1816, n.d.	1	20
Incoming correspondence – from Mary Wistar	1803-1824, n.d.	1	21
Incoming correspondence – from the Wistars	1800-1805, n.d.	1	22
Incoming correspondence – from Sally Jones Wister	1785-1786	1	23
Incoming correspondence – from Ephrata and Lititz	1786-1802	1	24
Incoming correspondence – miscellaneous	1790-1799	1	25
Incoming correspondence – miscellaneous	1800-1808	1	26
Incoming correspondence – miscellaneous	1811-1824	1	27
Incoming correspondence – miscellaneous	n.d.	1	28

Series 3. Catharine Franklin (Wistar) Sharples. b. Outgoing Correspondence

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
Outgoing Correspondence – to Catharine Haines	1785-1796, n.d.	1	29
Outgoing Correspondence – to brother-in-law George Pennock	1791-1795, n.d.	1	30
Outgoing Correspondence – to sister Sarah Pennock	1802-1823, n.d.	1	31
Outgoing Correspondence – to Sarah Robinson	n.d.	1	32
Outgoing Correspondence – to husband Abraham Sharples	1804, n.d.	2	1
Outgoing Correspondence – to son Caspar Wistar Sharples	1815	2	2
Outgoing Correspondence – to son Caspar Wistar Sharples	1816-1817	2	3

Outgoing Correspondence – to son Caspar Wistar Sharples	n.d.	2	4
Outgoing Correspondence – to Elizabeth Townsend	n.d.	2	5
Outgoing Correspondence – to parents	1785-1801	2	6
Outgoing Correspondence – to parents	n.d.	2	7
Outgoing Correspondence – to misc. family	1790-1796, n.d.	2	8
Outgoing Correspondence – to misc. friends	1789, 1796, n.d.	2	9
Outgoing Correspondence – to misc. friends	n.d.	2	10

Series 3. Catharine Franklin (Wistar) Sharples. c. Miscellaneous

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
Journals	1786, 1802	2	11
Journal	1790	vol. 1	
Miscellaneous writings	1789-1805, n.d.	2	12
Commonplace book	n.d.	vol. 2	
Item removed from vol. 2		2	13
Financial	1773-1825, n.d.	2	14
“Board School Infirmary Book”	1801	vol. 3	
Poetry [most in others’ hands]	1788-1819, n.d.	2	15
Prose extracts [most in others’ hands]	1775-1829, n.d.	2	16-17

Series 4. Abraham Sharples

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
Incoming Correspondence - from Isaac Morris	1803, 1824- 1830	2	18
Incoming Correspondence – from misc.	1809-1824, n.d.	2	19
Outgoing Correspondence – to wife Catherine	1803-1808	2	20
Outgoing Correspondence – to son Caspar	1815-1817	2	21
Financial, legal	1801-1826	2	22

Estate administration	1825-1830	2	23
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Series 5. Caspar Wistar Sharples

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
Incoming correspondence – from the Ashbridges	1815-1817	3	1
Incoming correspondence – from the Onderdonks	1840, n.d.	3	2
Incoming correspondence – from Sarah Pennock	1815-1816, n.d.	3	3
Incoming correspondence – from friends	1815-1823	3	4
Financial, legal	1830-1866, n.d.	3	5

Series 6. Miscellaneous

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
Elizabeth Onderdonk Sharples Incoming Correspondence	1839-1866, n.d.	3	6
Henry Ustick Onderdonk Incoming Correspondence	1840, 1848, n.d.	3	7
Henry Ustick Onderdonk Poetry	1848	3	8
Nicholas Newlin	1709-1771, n.d.	3	9
Benjamin Newlin	1821	3	10
Misc. correspondence	1785-1808, n.d.	3	11
Miscellaneous	n.d.	3	12