

Haverford College Library
Special Collections

Finding Aid for the JOHN JAY SMITH PAPERS, 1683-1859

Collection No. 900
1 document box (0.5 linear feet)
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Presented by Logan Pearsall Smith (n.d.)

RESTRICTIONS

No restrictions

ABSTRACT

Primarily papers are those received by his forebears and collected by John Jay Smith, an entrepreneur who was a founder of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Among them are some manuscripts of Robert Proud, a treatise by Dr. F. Daniel Lobstein and a document in the hand of James Dickinson.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Jay Smith (1798 - 1881) was an editor and librarian, a grand-nephew of Richard Smith and a grandson of John Smith, one of the founders of the Philadelphia Contributionship (1752), the first fire-insurance company instituted in America, and of Hannah (Logan) Smith, daughter of James Logan, 1674-1751. The son of John and Gulielma Maria (Morris) Smith, he was born on a farm at Green Hill, Burlington County, N. J. John Jay Smith attended the Friends' boarding school at Westtown, Pa., and was given some courses in languages at an early age. He was then apprenticed to a druggist in Philadelphia. After a brief partnership with Solomon Temple in the wholesale drug business, he entered business on his own account, and in 1821, married Rachel Collins Pearsall. He was active in the establishment of a line of Conestoga wagons, operating as regular carriers between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, but the enterprise was short-lived.

In 1827, in partnership with George Taylor, he inaugurated the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Two years later he became librarian of the Library Company of Philadelphia; he was a hereditary trustee of the Loganian Library,

one of its component parts. Through his taste and industry, he gathered for the institution a large collection of autographs and manuscripts relating to the history of New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

In the early thirties, Smith suggested the republication of important foreign books in the form of a cheap weekly, to Adam Waldie, a Philadelphia printer. *Waldie's Select Circulating Library*, under Smith's editorship, could be circulated through the mails. This was the first effort in America on an extensive scale to take advantage of the absence of international copyright. Within three months the work had a circulation of 6,000 copies a week, and for some years it enjoyed great success. During 1835, Smith also edited the *Museum of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art*. He was treasurer of the Philadelphia Museum and a founder of the Girard Life Insurance, Annuity, and Trust Company and of Laurel Hill Cemetery. During the laying out of the cemetery, his interest in landscape gardening was deepened, and he afterwards edited (1850-51) *The North American Sylva* by François André Michaux and the eleventh edition (1857) of *The American Gardener's Calendar* by Bernard McMahon. He also published *Designs for Monuments and Mural Tablets . . . With a Preliminary Essay on the Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries* (1846) and *Guide to Laurel Hill Cemetery* (1844), which went through seven editions in his lifetime.

Smith contributed articles on Benjamin Franklin, David Rittenhouse, William Augustine Washington, and Simon Kenton to *The National Portrait Gallery of Distinguished Americans* (1834-39). Meanwhile, in 1845, his son, Lloyd Pearsall Smith had begun the publication of *Smith's Weekly Volume*, a successor to *Waldie's*, and this publication was edited by the elder Smith from January 1845 to Mar. 25, 1846. He made four trips to Europe, describing one in *A Summer's Jaunt across the Water* (2 vols., 1846). In 1851 he retired from his librarianship so that his son Lloyd might be appointed in his place. His later literary work included the editing of *Letters of Dr. Richard Hill* (1854) and the authorship of a volume of entertaining gossip, written for his children, which was edited by his daughter and privately printed in 1892 under the title, *Recollections of John Jay Smith Written by Himself*. Smith died at his estate, "Ivy Lodge," Germantown, at the age of eighty-three. He had four sons and three daughters; Hannah Whitall Smith was his daughter-in-law.

From: "John Jay Smith." *Dictionary of American Biography* Base Set. American Council of Learned Societies, 1928-1936. *Biography Resource Center*. Farmington Hills, Mich.: Thomson Gale. 2007. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/BioRC>

SUBJECT HEADINGS

Dickinson, James, †d 1658-1741.

Lobstein, J. F. Daniel †q (Johann Friedrich Daniel), †d 1777-1840.

Proud, Robert, †d 1728-1813.

Smith, J. Jay †q (John Jay), †d 1798-1881.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

The collection includes miscellaneous papers comprised of:

- James Dickinson's ADS testimony concerning Thomas Lloyd, 1694 (fragments conserved to paper base);
- ADS by Henry Mallows, 1699;
- ALS from Mary Lucas to Benjamin Franklin, 1746;
- ALS from Richard Smith Jr. to John Smith, 1747;
- ADS re appointment of William Simpson Chief Justice of SC, 1761;
- Epistle from Meeting for Sufferings, London, to Gov. of New Jersey, Josiah Hardy, ca. 1761-62, requesting fair treatment of Quakers in NJ;
- ALS from Nicholas Collin to William Attmore, 1773;
- 2 ALS by C.S. Tarples to John Jay Smith, 1837-1838; 2 ALS from Frank M. Etting to John Jay Smith, 1859 & n.d.;
- lines of prose by a patriot, ending "Long live the United States," 1779;
- Robert Proud's manuscript signed, "Notes & observations of Man's knowledge of God and the limited Capacity, of Mankind," 1792 (4 p.), and essays and extracts written by him, 1796, 1797, 1799, 38 pp. sewn together and 1797 ALS (request to borrow portrait of Wm. Penn from the Loganian Library) and multiple prints depicting Robert Proud;
- ALS by William Penn (1776-1845), ca. 1820;
- Dr. F. Daniel Lobstein's treatise, and announcement of his publication, "Semeiology of the Eye for the use of Physicians...for criminal Jurisprudence", 1828;
- ALS by John Jay Smith to W. Brooke Rawe?, 1880
- and other miscellaneous documents, including an invitation to a reception for Lord Coleridge, Chief Justice of England, 1883; also unsigned documents and fragments.

MATERIALS REMOVED

Map of Philadelphia by Thomas Holme, 1683, removed to 995R