

Guide to the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences Records

MS 1373



compiled by Bella Z. Berson

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
Yale University Library
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CALL NUMBER: MS 1373

CREATOR: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences

TITLE: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences records

DATES: 1799-1987

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 8.5 linear feet (21 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The records consist of minutes of meetings, financial records, correspondence, exchange agreements, and publications arrangements which document the founding and continuous activities of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences. The records also contain data gathered by the academy, during the early nineteenth century, on weather, population, health, and geography.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1373>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.1373>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html. The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1992.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences Records (MS 1373). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

The Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences was founded in 1799 in New Haven. The goal of the academy is to represent the arts, the humanities, and the sciences in the state through its meetings and publications. It publishes *Memoirs* and *Transactions*. The academy continues to hold several meetings a year at various academic institutions around the state.

The constitution of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences declares that "The object of this Academy is to cultivate every art and science which may tend to advance the interest and happiness of a free and virtuous people." Over the years it has been the goal of the Academy to represent the arts, the humanities and the sciences in Connecticut through its meetings and publications.

In 1779, the year after Ezra Stiles became president of Yale College, he proposed the founding of a learned society in Connecticut that would embrace the purposes of the American Philosophical Society which had been established by Benjamin Franklin in 1769. Stiles discussed the project with Benjamin Guild of Harvard who, with his associates, founded the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1780, but a Connecticut society was politically untimely and would not come to fruition until 1799, four years after Timothy Dwight had succeeded Stiles as president of Yale College.

One of the first activities of the Academy was to issue a statewide circular in January 1800 requesting comprehensive information for a proposed "Statistical Account of Towns and Parishes in the State of Connecticut." This was Timothy Dwight's idea, and he produced a masterful pamphlet on the statistics of New Haven which was published by the Academy in 1811. Materials on other towns continued to be received until 1827, but the project was never completed and nothing more was ever published. Meteorology also commanded the attention of the Academy from its earliest days. In 1800, the Academy began recording meteorological observations for New Haven, a practice that it would support for more than fifty years.

From 1810 to 1816 the Academy published 25 papers in the first volume of its new journal, *Memoirs*. In 1818, the Academy abandoned publication of *Memoirs* when Benjamin Silliman the elder inaugurated the new *American Journal of Science*, which provided a frequent and regular medium of publication. However, the Academy later found that it had available a considerable amount of material which was not deemed suitable for publication in the *American Journal of Science*. Thus *Transactions*, a new series of publications, was inaugurated in 1866. The early issues of the *Transactions* also listed officers and

members of committees as well as additions to the Academy library by gift and exchange at the beginning of each volume.

Silliman served as president of the Academy from 1836 to 1847. During this time the Academy became intellectually and emotionally involved with the dramatic affair of the Spanish slave ship *Amistad* and its mutinous captives. While the captives were awaiting trial in the New Haven jail in 1839, one of the Academy members, Josiah Willard Gibbs the elder, used his knowledge of philology and his resourcefulness to develop a means of conversing with the Africans so that their side of the story could be told. The Africans were eventually freed by the U.S. Supreme Court and were repatriated in 1841 - the only such captives ever to escape permanent servitude and to return home.

After Silliman's presidency there followed a period of decline, and the Academy sold its library and voted to deposit unpublished manuscripts of the statistical accounts in the Connecticut Historical Society. Although attendance at meetings decreased, important scientific advances were presented at meetings and the best of the communications did appear in print to reach a wider audience. The third volume of the *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences* gave the world the study by Josiah Willard Gibbs the younger, "On the Equilibrium of Heterogeneous Substances" (October 1875-May 1876 and May 1877-July 1878) which provided the basis for physical chemistry. After an enthusiastic celebration of the Academy's centennial in 1899, the attendance again declined, but the *Transactions* continued to appear at the rate of a volume or two every two or three years.

In the nineteenth century, the meetings and publications had been primarily concerned with the natural and physical sciences. An agreement between the Academy and Yale in 1906 brought financial aid for increased publication and encouraged the Academy to widen its range of interests; papers were subsequently presented on history, economics, philosophy, linguistics, and belle-lettres in addition to continuing communications in biology, geology, chemistry, physics and engineering.

After George Eaton became secretary of the Academy in 1907, publication of the *Transactions* was accelerated and in 1910 the *Memoirs of the Academy* reappeared, this time in quarto form for major illustrated works. Eaton added editorial work to his other duties and continued in office until 1946, a remarkable record of devoted service sustaining a steady tradition through two wars and many academic changes.

In addition to *Memoirs* and *Transactions*, the Academy undertook a special publication, "A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500" edited by John Edwin Wells (1916). The manual became a standard reference tool and continues to be supplemented.

The Academy was able to distribute its publications more widely through an agreement with the Yale University Library. The Library gave the Academy an annual subvention for publications which the Library used in its exchange program with other institutions. This support continues. By 1973 the Academy's library was given to Yale University.

In 1954 the Academy joined with the Connecticut Science Teachers' Association to sponsor an annual High School Sciences Talent Search in Connecticut. This project took place during the long and dedicated service of Dorothea Rudnick as secretary of the Academy. She took office at the 978th meeting in October, 1946 and served as secretary through September, 1986.

The Academy was always intimately associated with Yale and for the first 150 years its meetings were held at a variety of locations in New Haven. Thus its active members were only those living within a convenient distance of New Haven who could attend meetings and cast their vote. In the early 1950s, the council discussed the desirability of encouraging more participation from other institutions in Connecticut, and in 1952 the Academy convened a meeting at Storrs to welcome new members from the University of Connecticut. On the occasion of the 175th anniversary of the Academy in 1974 a meeting was held at Wesleyan University; Southern Connecticut State University was added in 1984 and Trinity College in 1991.

For additional details on the history of the Academy up to 1949, consult the Rollin G. Osterweis "Sesquicentennial History of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences" in its *Transactions*, volume 38, pages 103-149 upon which this summary is based.

Scope and Contents

The records of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences include its constitution, minutes of meetings, financial records, correspondence, exchange agreements and publications arrangements. The records also contain data gathered during the early nineteenth century on weather, population, health and geography.

Although the records of the Academy were formally donated to the University Library in 1992, a trunk of its early records was first deposited in the Rare Book Room of the Library in 1938. In 1992, the Academy added material up to the 1980s and indicated its intention to continue to do so in the future.

The records are arranged in four series: I. General Records, 1799-1986; II. Membership, 1870-1983; III. Publications, 1871-1984; and Subject Files, 1800-1949. Oversize materials for all series are arranged at the end of the records.

Series I, GENERAL RECORDS, contains correspondence, record books, and other papers beginning with the formation of the Academy. The series includes the Academy's charter, constitution and by-laws, financial accounts, and records of meetings.

The correspondence files date from 1799 to 1985. The nineteenth century correspondence contains discussions of the mission and the constitution of the Academy, the assignment of tasks for collecting data and descriptions of findings. There are acknowledgements of learned institutions receiving copies of a medal struck by the Academy to celebrate the New Haven bicentennial and of publications of the Academy, acceptances by individuals to membership when associated with other Academy business, and obituary notices. There is little correspondence for the last three decades.

The correspondence of the twentieth century is largely routine dealing with authors interested in publication, arrangements for meetings, and invitations to speakers. Correspondence with other learned societies about meetings and celebrations is included under "Academic Societies."

Record books (folders 121-128) contain minutes of the Academy and council meetings, membership lists and financial records. These books are varied rather than consistent in arrangement. Each book may contain one or more of these types of records. Although the record book covering 1881 to 1949 mentions a volume titled "Council 1872-1881" and the intention of continuing those minutes on page 375 of the same volume, no notes are found there. There is some mention of the Publication Committee in 1886. The available volume of the Publication Committee's minutes begins in 1907. From November 13, 1944, the meetings are designated as those of the council. The discussions include policy matters as well as publications. For 1970 there is an additional folder of minutes from Publication Committee meetings (folder 172). Council meetings are recorded in a volume dated 1872-1881 (folder 123) and in a volume dated 1907-1965 (folder 76) as well as in loose files (folders 77-79) from 1965 through 1986.

Financial records start with a cash book dated 1799-1899 with an additional folder from 1840 to 1985. A treasurer's book lists members' contributions made between 1799 and 1825. Records from the Yale University Treasurer's Office spanning 1908-1938 show income and expenditures for each fiscal year.

Details of meetings are described not only in the record books but also in the folders labeled "Notices, correspondence, etc." dated 1965-1986. Records of special meetings, such as the thousandth meeting in 1949 and the centennial anniversary in 1899, are in separate folders.

Series II, MEMBERSHIP, includes lists and registers of members. Additional membership information is available in the record books of GENERAL RECORDS. There are many routine letters of acceptance, resignation and declination. The files of "Correspondence, lists, notes" contain membership lists, membership totals, and address lists.

Series III, PUBLICATIONS, contains correspondence concerning individual publications as well as correspondence with dealers, printers and distributors. Records for individual publications (roughly ten per cent of the total publications) are filed under the name of the author, followed by the initial of the publication (T for *Transactions*, M for *Memoirs*) and the volume number in Roman numerals. Information

available about the exchange of Academy publications for those of other academic societies from 1916-1983 is arranged chronologically. Some publications inventory lists from 1851 to 1984 are included.

Series IV, SUBJECT FILES, contains data collected by academy members in the early to mid-nineteenth century. The data include meteorological registers of New Haven and Washington, D.C., census data, bills of mortality for various cities, statistical data on New Haven and New London, observations on meteors and on the variation of the magnetic needle. From 1800 to 1830, barometric readings plus notes were recorded for every day. The minutes intimate that recordings were also made between 1830 and 1840 but these are lacking. The project was resumed from 1840 to 1852.

The series also contains other observations, including a folder of papers, given by the Reverend D. A. Sherman in 1829, of work by various investigators on the exploration of old fortifications and burial grounds in Tennessee and near the Mississippi River, a nineteenth century paper by Robert Stevenson on centripetal force and a folder of various papers by Noah Webster Jr., circa 1780, discussing St. Vitus Dance, maize and other corn, a light phenomenon similar to the Aurora Borealis, and customs and language of the Sandwich Islands. The Miscellaneous file contains thoughts on the nature and origin of knowledge, chemical experiments regarding the coloring principle of Prussian blue, a discussion of inherited characteristics and an essay on evaporation.

Arrangement

Arranged in four series: I. General Records, 1799-1986. II. Membership, 1870-1983. III. Publications, 1871-1984. Subject Files, 1800-1949.

Collection Contents

Series I: GENERAL RECORDS, 1799-1986

3.75' (9 boxes)

The material in this series is arranged by record types and is listed in alphabetical order. Within the record type the arrangement is chronological.

b. 1, f. 1	Charter amendment	1949
b. 1, f. 2	Constitution	1799
b. 1, f. 3	Constitution and by-laws	1983
	Correspondence	
b. 1, f. 4-10	General	1799-1845
b. 1, f. 11	General See also: box 21, folder 293	1846-1849
b. 1, f. 12-22	General	1850-1899, 1905-1921
b. 2, f. 23-44	General	1922-1966
b. 3, f. 45-66	General	1967-1986, undated
b. 3, f. 67	Academic societies	undated
b. 3, f. 68	Academic societies: solicitations for assistance	undated
b. 3, f. 69	Celebration for Dorothea Rudnick's eightieth birthday	1987
b. 4, f. 70-72	Invitations to other academies' celebrations	1906-1965
b. 4, f. 73	One hundred and seventy-fifth anniversary exhibit	1975
b. 4, f. 74-75	Science talent search	1955-1966
b. 4, f. 76	Council/publication meeting	1907-1965
b. 4, f. 77-78	Council meetings	1965-1969
b. 4, f. 79	Council meetings See also: box 13, folder 172	1970-1975
b. 4, f. 80	Council meetings	1976-1980
b. 4, f. 81	Council meetings	1985-1986
	Financial records	
b. 5, f. 82	Cash book	1799-1899

Financial records (continued)

b. 5, f. 83-95	General See also: box 21, folder 293	1840-1950
b. 6, f. 96-104	General	1951-1985
b. 6, f. 105	Treasurer's book	1799-1825
b. 7, f. 106	University treasurer's office	1908-1938
b. 7, f. 107	Lists of officers and of members	1919-1984
	Meetings	
b. 7, f. 108	Centennial anniversary	1899
b. 7, f. 109	Centennial anniversary See also: box 21, folder 294	1899
b. 7, f. 110-116	Notices, correspondence, etc.	1965-1986, undated
b. 7, f. 117	Thousandth meeting: delegates	1949
b. 7, f. 118	Thousandth meeting: greetings	1949
b. 8, f. 119	Thousandth meeting: invitations	1949
b. 8, f. 120	Thousandth meeting: program	1949
b. 8, f. 121-122	Record book	1799-1858, 1858 January-1881 January
b. 8, f. 123	Record book: council minutes only	1872-1881
b. 9, f. 124	Record book	1881 January-1949 April
b. 9, f. 125	Record book: minutes and register of members	1949 May-1986
b. 9, f. 126-128	Record books: associated loose documents	1833, undated, 1881 January- 1949 March, 1949 May-1986

Series II: MEMBERSHIP, 1870-1987*1.25' (3 boxes)*

The material in this series is arranged by record type and is listed in alphabetical order. Within the record type the arrangement is chronological.

b. 10, f. 129-145	Acceptances	1905-1965
b. 10, f. 146-148	Correspondence, lists, notes, etc.	1955-1973
b. 11, f. 149-158	Correspondence, lists, notes, etc.	1974-1987
b. 11, f. 159	List of members	Circa 1870s-1880
b. 12, f. 160	List of members: with taxes paid, compiled annually	1884-1911
b. 12, f. 161	List of members	1911-1940s
b. 12, f. 162	Necrology	1903-1965
b. 12, f. 163	Register of members	1949-1957
b. 12, f. 164-167	Resignations and declinations	1904-1930
b. 12, f. 168-171	Resignations	1931-1968

Series III: PUBLICATIONS, 1871-1984

2.25' (5 boxes)

The material in this series is arranged by record type. The files of correspondence concerning individual publications are arranged by the last name of the author. The files of correspondence with publishers/dealers are arranged by the name of the firm and chronologically within those sets. The files of exchanges are arranged chronologically.

b. 13, f. 172 Committee meetings 1970
See also: [box 4, folder 79](#)

Correspondence concerning individual publications

b. 13, f. 173	Bidwell TXX	1916
b. 13, f. 174	Christopherson TXVII	1922-1937
b. 13, f. 175	Clark TXXIV	1910-1914
b. 13, f. 176	Clark	1915-1921
b. 13, f. 177	Cowgill MXVII	1966
b. 13, f. 178	Deevey TXXXIX	1956
b. 13, f. 179	Donaldson TXXXIX	1955
b. 13, f. 180	Dunham TXXXIX	1955
b. 13, f. 181	Dzulynski TXLII	1965
b. 13, f. 182	Eaton/Bingham	1915-1922
b. 13, f. 183	Evans TXXXVIII	1952
b. 13, f. 184	Ferris TXXV	1919-1921
b. 13, f. 185	Gause TXXXVII	1947
b. 13, f. 186	Gill TXXXII	1934-1935
b. 13, f. 187	Hessler MXVI	1965
b. 13, f. 188	Ingholt MXII	1954
b. 13, f. 189	Kubler MXI	1951
b. 13, f. 190	Latourette TXXII	1916-1917
b. 13, f. 191	MacCurdy MIII	1921-1950
b. 13, f. 192	Mathewson TXXXVIII #7	1951
b. 13, f. 193	Means TXXI	1917-1921
b. 13, f. 194	Miller TXXXI	1931-1932
b. 13, f. 195	Nemoy TXL	1956

Correspondence concerning individual publications (continued)

b. 13, f. 196	Obermann TXXXVIII	1949
b. 13, f. 197	Osterweis (photos) TXXXVIII	1949
b. 14, f. 198	Pentrunkevitch TXXXVI	1945
b. 14, f. 199	Pentrunkevitch TXXXVII	1949
b. 14, f. 200	Pentrunkevitch TXLI	1958
b. 14, f. 201	Raymond MVII	1916-1921
b. 14, f. 202	Sanders MX5	1963
b. 14, f. 203	Shufeldt TXIX	1914
b. 14, f. 204	Szöverffy TXLII	1965
b. 14, f. 205	Thieme TXLI	1957
b. 14, f. 206	Vernadsky TXXXI	1933
b. 14, f. 207	Verrill TXXVI	1922-1923
b. 14, f. 208-212	Wells Manual	1915-1953
b. 15, f. 213-214	Wells Manual	1954-1975
b. 15, f. 215	Wells Manual, reviews	undated
b. 15, f. 216	Winslow TXXXII	1932-1934
b. 15, f. 217	Yale North India Expedition	1934-1957
Correspondence with publishers and dealers		
b. 15, f. 218	Biancos Lunos Bogtrykkeri	1955-1966
b. 15, f. 219	Kraus Reprint Corporation	1966-1983
b. 15, f. 220	Munksgaard	1958-1964
b. 15, f. 221-230	Shoestring Press	1968-1978, 1986
b. 15, f. 231	University Microfilms	1964-1990
b. 15, f. 232-238	Yale University Press	1910-1942
b. 16, f. 239	Yale University Press	1954-1986
b. 16, f. 240-249	Exchanges	1916-1975
b. 16, f. 250-253	Exchanges: reports of the librarian	1920-1983
b. 16, f. 254	Exchanges: Yale Library subvention	1973
b. 16, f. 255	Gifts to war devastated and other libraries	1946
b. 16, f. 256-259	Inventories	1951-1984, undated

b. 17, f. 260	Lists	undated
b. 17, f. 261	Permissions	undated
b. 17, f. 262	Standing orders	1968
b. 17, f. 263	Subscriptions for the continuance of the publication of Transactions of the Connecticut Academy	1871, 1872, 1883, 1903
	Unidentified illustrations See: box 21, folder 295	

Series IV: SUBJECT FILES, 1800-1949

1.25' (3 boxes)

The material in this series is arranged alphabetically by subject.

b. 18, f. 264-265	Bills of mortality: communities	undated
b. 18, f. 266	Barometric measurements: Hartford	1816
	Census of New Haven See: box 21, folder 296	
b. 18, f. 267	Connecticut: proposals for a statistical history	1800
b. 18, f. 268	Histories of the Connecticut Academy	1839, 1949
	Meteorological data: Wallingford See: box 21, folders 298-299	
b. 18, f. 269-271	Meteorological register: New Haven	1800 March-1820 December
b. 19, f. 272-277	Meteorological register: New Haven	1821 January– 1830 Nov, 1840 December–1852 April
b. 19, f. 278	Meteorological register: Washington, D.C.	1802
b. 20, f. 279	New Haven data: occupations; geography; botany; zoology; manufactures	undated
b. 20, f. 280-281	New Haven data See also: box 21, folder 297	undated
b. 20, f. 282	Observations of meteors: New Haven	1861 September 9
b. 20, f. 283-287	On the variation of the magnetic needle See also: box 21, folder 300	undated
b. 20, f. 288	Sherman, Rev. D. A.: papers given by See also: box 21, folder 301	1829
b. 20, f. 289	Statistical Account of New London: paper	undated
b. 20, f. 290	Stevenson: paper	undated
b. 20, f. 291	Webster, Noah Jr.: papers	1780
b. 20, f. 292	Miscellaneous papers See also: box 21, folder 302	1803-1842

OVERSIZE

b. 21, f. 293	Correspondence and financial records	1840-1849
b. 21, f. 294	Centennial anniversary	1899
b. 21, f. 295	Publications: unidentified illustrations	undated
b. 21, f. 296	Census of New Haven	1800
b. 21, f. 297	New Haven data	Circa 1810
b. 21, f. 298	Meteorological data: wind charts, Wallingford	1851-1862
b. 21, f. 299	Meteorological data: photographs of Wallingford tornado	undated
b. 21, f. 300	On the variations of the magnetic needle	undated
b. 21, f. 301	Sherman, Rev. D. A.: papers given by	1829
b. 21, f. 302	Miscellaneous papers	1842

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Demographic surveys -- Connecticut
Meteorology
Science -- History
Science -- Societies, etc. -- Connecticut

Geographic Names

Connecticut -- Learned institutions and societies

Genres / Formats

Demographic records
Meteorological records

Names

Dorthea Rudnick
George Eaton

Corporate Body

Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences