

Library Company of Philadelphia

McA MSS 003

ALBERT NEWSAM PAPERS

1833-1864

1.63 linear feet, 2 boxes

Series I. Correspondence (1833-1864)
Series II. Documents (1835-1862)

March 2005

Descriptive Summary**Repository**

Library Company of Philadelphia
1314 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107-5698

Call Number

McA MSS 003

Creator

McAllister, John A. (John Allister), 1822-1896.

Title

Albert Newsam Papers

Inclusive Dates

1833-1864

Quantity

1.63 linear feet (2 boxes)

Language of Materials

Materials are in English.

Abstract

The Albert Newsam Papers holds correspondence and documents sent to, written by, and about the artist. Some of the material relates to the Gallaudet Monument Association, which was organized to collect funds from the deaf community nationwide to raise a monument to Thomas H. Gallaudet (1787-1851) on the grounds of the American Asylum for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb (now the American School for the Deaf) in Hartford, Connecticut. The collection also holds a circa 1835 folio album, titled "Principles of Perspective," which is thought to be in Newsam's hand and functioned as his workbook on the subject.

Administrative Information**Restrictions to Access**

The collection is open to researchers. It is on deposit at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and should be accessed through the Society's reading room at 1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA. Visit their website, <http://www.hsp.org/>, for reading room hours.

Acquisition Information

Gift of John A. McAllister; forms part of the McAllister Collection.

Processing Information

The Albert Newsam Papers were formerly interfiled within the large and chronologically arranged McAllister Manuscript Collection. The papers were reunited, arranged, and described as a single collection in 2005, under grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the William Penn Foundation. The collection was processed by Sandra Markham. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this finding aid do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Preferred Citation

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Online Catalog Headings

Subject Names

Newsam, Albert, 1809-1864
 Carlin, John, 1813-1891
 Gallaudet, T. H. (Thomas Hopkins), 1787-1851--Monuments
 Gallaudet, Thomas, 1822-1902
 Clerc, Laurent, 1785-1869
 Brown, John A., b. 1810
 Pyatt, Joseph O.
 Duval, Peter S., 1804 or 5-1886
 Hutton, Abraham B., 1798-1870
 American Asylum, at Hartford, for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb
 Gallaudet Monument Association
 Pennsylvania--General Assembly--House of Representatives

Subject Topics

Deaf artists

Document Types

Receipts (financial records)
 Certificates
 Letters
 Drawings
 Albums
 Perspective projections

Related Collections

Letters from Albert Newsam to John A. McAllister are in the Library Company's John A. McAllister Papers (McA 001); in those letters, Newsam writes accounts of his life at the Living Home and the work he is pursuing while there. The Library Company's Print Department holds a number of works by Newsam, both prints and drawings. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania holds three letters from Newsam to McAllister in the Society and Dreer autograph collections; also in the Dreer Collection is a January 1863 affidavit from Thomas Gallaudet about Newsam's 1862 baptism. More than a hundred portrait prints by Newsam were donated to the

Historical Society of Pennsylvania by McAllister in 1881; they were the artist's personal set which he had given to John A. McAllister.

Biographical/Historical Notes

Albert Newsam (1809-1864), was a deaf artist who was born in Steubenville, Ohio, and orphaned at an early age. Through devious means he was taken to Philadelphia where, by good fortune, he was admitted in 1820 to the recently established Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb. Newsam had exhibited great talent as an artist while young man, and became an apprentice with Philadelphia lithographer Col. Cephas G. Childs (1793-1871) in 1827, after which he became the principal artist with the noted printer Peter S. Duval (1804 or 05-1886). A master copyist, portraitist, and chromiste, Newsam is generally credited with helping to elevate the art of lithography in the United States. His career ended suddenly in 1859 when he suffered a stroke that affected his vision and coordination; he spent his final years at Dr. John A. Brown's Living Home for the Sick and Well, near Wilmington, Delaware, a situation arranged for him and funded by a committee of friends that included John A. McAllister.

Newsam's portfolio of his prints was in McAllister's hands prior to the artist's death. McAllister had the portraits photographed, and sent a set of images to historian and author Benson Lossing in 1863; a letter from Lossing to McAllister in the John A. McAllister Papers (McA 001) records the gift.

The most comprehensive biographical study of the artist was written by Joseph O. Pyatt, an instructor at the Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, *Memoir of Albert Newsam (Deaf Mute Artist)* (Philadelphia, 1868). The Library Company's copy carries the bookplate of John McAllister Jr., and was inscribed to him by his son John A. McAllister. Wendy Wick Reaves' illustrated profile of Newsam and his portrait work appears in *American Portrait Prints: Proceedings of the Tenth Annual American Print Conference* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia and the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1984).

Collection Overview

The Albert Newsam Papers is arranged in two series: Correspondence; and Documents. The collection holds material sent to, written by, and about the deaf artist.

Series I, Correspondence (1851-1864) is divided into three subseries: Letters to Albert Newsam; Letters from Albert Newsam; and Letters about Albert Newsam. The first holds material relating to the raising of a monument to Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet (1787-1851) at the American Asylum for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb (now the American School for the Deaf) in Hartford, Connecticut. Newsam was involved as both a fundraiser and the designer for the statue, which incorporated bas-relief panels by the deaf artist John Carlin (1813-1891). The monument was entirely underwritten by the deaf community, with funds

raised partly through the sale of a lithograph of the monument made by Newsam. A copy of the print can be seen in the Library Company's Print Department.

The earliest letter in the collection is an acknowledgement from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the "fine specimens of Lithographic drawing" presented to it by Newsam in gratitude for the subvention he received while attending the Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb. The papers hold letters from the deaf French educator Laurent Clerc (1785-1869), Gallaudet's son Thomas (1822-1902), and Carlin. The second subseries holds letters written by Newsam to book and paper dealers, and to friends. The third subseries holds letters about Newsam: one from John Carlin to Joseph Pyatt and four from various people to Francis H. Duffee, a Philadelphia stockbroker and a member of the Newsam support committee. The latter includes a letter by Dr. Joseph Mundy with a full account of Newsam's stroke, and a copy of a telegram from Dr. John Brown, proprietor of the Living Home, announcing Newsam's death there.

Series II, Documents (circa 1835-1862) includes circular letters printed to raise funds for the Gallaudet Monument in Hartford, as well as Newsam's certificate of baptism, a ceremony which was performed by Thomas Gallaudet in 1862. Miscellaneous documents include receipts for portraits by Newsam and for his room and board. A separate box holds a folio album, titled "Principles of Perspective," in which were copied academic texts and illustrations on the subject. It is unsigned, but is believed to be in Newsam's hand. The album has twenty-six pages of text and with labeled plates, followed by a number of blank pages. One holds newspaper columns cut from the *Philadelphia Saturday Courier*, containing the texts of two letters on the topic of European painting, written in 1837 by John Carlin while he was living and studying in Paris.

No records exist to document how Newsam's papers and related material came to John A. McAllister, but as he was a great supporter of the artist he would have been a likely recipient. In a letter to Abraham B. Hutton, director of the Philadelphia Deaf and Dumb Asylum, Newsam described McAllister as "one of the best of men, a sincere friend to me." Undoubtedly, McAllister acquired the various documents from committee members, friends, and the artist's estate upon Newsam's death, and then added them to his collection.

Box Folder

SERIES I. CORRESPONDENCE

1833-1864

Arranged in three subseries: Letters to Newsam; Letters from Newsam; and Letters about Newsam.

Letters to Albert Newsam

1	1	Batterson, James G.	1854
	2	Carlin, John	1851-1855
	3	Clerc, Laurent	1854-1855
	4	Duval, Peter S.	1864
	5	Gallaudet, Thomas	1854-1863
	6	Kraft, Adam	1852 Nov 11
	7	Latimer, Thomas	1852 Sep 7
	8	McAllister, John A.	1862
	9	Macatee, Henry	1854 Nov
	10	McClurg, Thomas James	1854 Oct 13
	11	Mundy, Joseph D.	1859 Aug 23
	12	Nichols, F. H.	undated
	13	Pennsylvania. General Assembly. House of Representatives	1833 Feb 13
		Shunk, Francis Rawn See: Pennsylvania. General Assembly. House of Representatives	
	14	Stoops, Minna	undated
		Letters from Albert Newsam	
	15	Hutton, Abraham Bloodgood	1864 May
	16	Miscellaneous	1863-1864, undated

Box Folder

SERIES I. CORRESPONDENCE, cont.

Letters about Albert Newsam

[1]	17	Brown, John A., to Francis H. Duffee	1864 Nov 20
	18	Carlin, John, to Joseph O. Pyatt	1851 Nov. 11
	19	Gallaudet, Thomas, to Francis H. Duffee	1862-1863
	20	Henszey, Marshall, to Francis H. Duffee	1862
		Lewis, John T. See: Marshall Henszey	
	21	Mundy, Joseph D., to Francis H. Duffee	1860 May 18

Box Folder

		SERIES II. DOCUMENTS	1835-1862
[1]	22	Certificate of baptism	1862 Jul 19
	23	Gallaudet Monument Association circular letters	circa 1852
	24	Invoices and receipts for portrait paintings	1860, undated
	25	Receipts for board and rent	1848, 1853
2		Folio album, "Principles of Perspective"	circa 1835