

John Bartram Association records relating to its foundation and early organization

Ms. Coll. 1003

Finding aid prepared by Samuel Sfirri.

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University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2014.06.30

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	John Bartram Association.
Title	John Bartram Association records relating to its foundation and early organization
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1003
Date [bulk]	1893-1911
Date [inclusive]	1779-1937
Extent	0.4 linear feet (1 box)
Language	English
Abstract	The John Bartram Association was founded in 1893 for the purpose of protecting and enhancing the the home and garden of John Bartram, known today as "Bartram's Garden." This collection, dating from 1779 to 1937 (bulk 1893 to 1911), document the association's foundation and early administrative activities predominately through correspondence, accented by newspaper clippings, advertising fliers, and invitation cards.

Cite as:

John Bartram Association records relating to its foundation and early organization, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

The John Bartram Association (JBA) was founded in 1893 for the purpose of protecting and enhancing the home and garden of John Bartram, known as "Bartram's Garden." To this day, the JBA continues to speak to audiences of all ages on the discovery of the natural world, just as John Bartram did in his lifetime.

The site of Bartram's Garden was maintained by Bartram's descendants and other enthusiasts of the natural world, beginning with his daughter, Ann Bartram Carr and her husband Colonel Robert Carr in 1777 to the formation of the John Bartram Association in 1893. By the time the John Bartram Association was formed, it was evident that the grounds were in need of care that reached beyond the ability and resources of those in charge. The John Bartram Association and the allied park system of Philadelphia negotiated the terms to transfer the care and maintenance of Bartram's former home and garden to the city of Philadelphia. Thanks to those negotiations, the home and garden are now under the care of the Fairmount Garden System.

In addition to the resuscitation of "Bartram's Garden," the JBA's early efforts secured a safe home and custodian in the University of Pennsylvania for what is known as "The Bartram Memorial Library," the authority collection of volumes representative of early American botanical literature.

John Bartram (1699-1777) was born a third-generation Quaker in Darby, Pennsylvania, who followed his father's footsteps by becoming a farmer. However, his inquiry into the natural world went well beyond farming, into botany, horticulture, and exploration. These curiosities earned him an important place in the scientific world for his discoveries and generosity in sharing knowledge of the fledgling scientific discipline of botany. Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778), the Swedish botanist and originator of the system of taxonomic classification, regarded Bartram as the "greatest natural botanist in this world," an achievement yet unheard of in his time considering that he was an American-born colonist. In 1928, Bartram purchased a 102-acre plot of land, formerly inhabited by Native Americans as early as 3000 BCE, from Swedish settlers in order to examine its ecology. This plot of land, now known as "Bartram's Garden," was the source of much inspiration for Bartram, in addition to his discoveries from New England to Florida, until the end of his life in 1777.

Scope and Contents

The John Bartram Association records, dating from 1779 to 1937 (bulk 1893 to 1911), document the association's foundation and early administrative activities predominately through correspondence, accented by newspaper clippings, advertising fliers, and invitation cards. Significant portions of the correspondence records relate to accumulation of the "Bartram Memorial Library," an effort brought about by Mrs. Caroline Bartram Newbold of the John Bartram Association and John M. Macfarlane of the University of Pennsylvania. Accompanying these records is a copy of an inventory of the "Bartram Memorial Library" that appears to date from 1900.

Additionally, the collection contains correspondence, newspaper clippings, and other media dealing with matters regarding the foundation and day-to-day administrative workings of the John Bartram Association (1893), the foundation of Botanical Society of Philadelphia (1897), the 200th anniversary of John Bartram's birth (1899), lectures presented by John Bartram Association/Bartram Memorial Library Committee, hosted by University of Pennsylvania (circa 1902-1909), the death of John Bartram Association President, Mordecai Bartram (1904), the appointment of Franklin S. Edmonds as President of John Bartram Association and subsequent administrative personnel change (1905), the integration of Bartram Gardens into Philadelphia's allied park system, the appointment of Henry R. Edmonds as President of John Bartram Association (1908), and Bartram family genealogy.

When the John Bartram Association records were donated, the contents of the collection were filed chronologically. Since this organization best suits the recorded documentation regarding genesis and early administrative dealings of the John Bartram Association, the collection has been left in this original order. General terms (e.g., correspondence, invitation cards, donations, etc.) regard the John Bartram Association administration unless otherwise noted. The term "events" refers to lectures and reunions unless otherwise noted.

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

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Finding aid prepared by Samuel Sfirri.

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

Use Restrictions

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Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- Historic Bartram's Garden (Organization).

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Advertising cards
- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Correspondence
- Invitations

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Bartram, John, 1699-1777
- MacFarlane, John Muirhead, 1855-1943

SUBJECT(S)

- Genealogy & local history
- Social groups

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Ann & John Bartram Marriage Certificate (copy); Inventory of John Bartram's possessions drafted by James Bartram, 1779.	1	1
Invitation card to Bartram family reunion, 1893.	1	2
Correspondence regarding Bartram genealogy, 1895.	1	3
Invitation card to Bartram family reunion, 1896.	1	4
Correspondence regarding "Bartram's Garden"; Invitation card to Bartram family reunion, 1897.	1	5
John Bartram Association constitution; Correspondence regarding donations, 1898.	1	6

Advertising fliers and newspaper clippings regarding 200th anniversary of John Bartram's birth, 1899.	1	7
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Correspondence and newspaper clippings regarding transfer of Bartram Memorial Library to University of Pennsylvania, 1900.	1	8
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Inventory of Bartram Memorial Library (copy), 1900.		Box	Fold
		50	

Correspondence and newspaper clippings regarding transfer of Bartram Memorial Library to University of Pennsylvania, 1901.	Box	Folder
	1	9

Correspondence and newspaper clippings regarding transfer of Bartram Memorial Library to University of Pennsylvania; Advertising fliers and related materials regarding events, 1902.	1	10
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Correspondence regarding administration, "Bartram's Garden" grounds improvement plea; Advertising fliers regarding events, 1903.	1	11
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Correspondence regarding the integration of "Bartram's Garden" into Philadelphia allied park system, appointment of new president; Advertising fliers regarding events, 1904.	1	12
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Correspondence and newspaper clippings regarding personnel changes, 1905.	1	13
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Correspondence regarding "Bartram's Garden" joining allied park system, financial matters, 1906.	1	14
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Correspondence regarding administrative personnel changes, garden party; Newspaper clippings regarding Bartram family, 1907.	1	15
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Correspondence regarding membership; Advertising fliers for events, 1908.	1	16
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Miscellaneous John Bartram Association papers: Birth notification of Bartram Durfee Lewis; Bailey, Banks & Biddle Company card; Karl Wilbur note regarding Bartram Memorial Library Committee records (1937); "The Bartram Memorial Library" publication by John M. Macfarlane (1926), 1908, 1926, 1937.	1	21
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Correspondence, advertising fliers, and related materials regarding dramaturgical performance, 1909.	1	17
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Correspondece regarding membership and annual meeting, 1910.	1	18
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Correspondence regarding membership, 1911.	1	19
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Request for Fairmount Park to take charge of "Bartram's Garden", undated.	1	20
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Newspaper clippings regarding Bartram's Garden, John M. Macfarlane, Schuylkill River, Bartram Family, undated.	1	22
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