

Wistar and Horner Museum records

Ms. Coll. 1117

Finding aid prepared by Jessica Hoffman.

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

2015 August 11

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Wistar and Horner Museum.
Title	Wistar and Horner Museum records
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1117
Date [bulk]	1845-1855
Date [inclusive]	1822-1865
Extent	0.4 linear feet (1 box)
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The Wistar and Horner Museum was originally founded as the Wistar Museum in the early 19th century by Caspar Wistar, chair of the Department of Anatomy at the University of Pennsylvania School Of Medicine. In 1818, shortly before his death, Wistar appointed William Edmonds Horner, Dean of the Medical Faculty and professor of Anatomy at the University of Pennsylvania, as curator of the Wistar Museum. At that time, the combined collections of Wistar and Horner became known as the Wistar and Horner Museum. Dr. Joseph Leidy succeeded Horner as curator of the museum in 1847, and contributed hundreds of anatomical, botanical, and animal specimens to the museum collections. The Wistar and Horner Museum records date from 1822 to 1865, and consist of materials relating to museum collections, finances, funding, and curatorial activities; as well as Horner's dissecting class at the University of Pennsylvania. The collection documents the evolution, management,</p>

finances, and curatorial and collecting activities of a university museum.

Cite as:

Wistar and Horner Museum records, 1822-1865 (bulk: 1845-1855), Ms. Coll. 1117, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

The Wistar and Horner Museum was originally founded as the Wistar Museum in the early 19th century by Caspar Wistar, chair of the Department of Anatomy at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. The collections mainly consisted of preserved (dried and wax-injected) human samples and anatomical models created by William Rush, which were used by Wistar in his lectures on comparative anatomy. In 1818, shortly before his death, Wistar appointed William Edmonds Horner, Dean of the Medical Faculty and professor of Anatomy at the University of Pennsylvania, as curator of the Wistar Museum. At that time, the combined collections of Wistar and Horner became known as the Wistar and Horner Museum. The museum collections were further enhanced when Dr. Joseph Leidy was appointed curator of the museum in 1847. Leidy contributed hundreds of items to the Wistar and Horner Museum, expanding its collections to include botanical and animal specimens, as well as fossils. (Leidy had been acting as Horner's personal assistant, and also replaced him as professor of Anatomy in 1853 upon his retirement.) By 1880, the museum collections were beginning to show significant wear, and portions were damaged by a fire in the building at the University of Pennsylvania where the museum was located. As a result, University Provost William Pepper began raising funds to have the museum collections preserved and relocated to a permanent, more suitable home. Isaac Wistar, great nephew to Caspar Wistar and prominent Philadelphia lawyer, had a vision of a center for new, original biological research which would continue his great uncle's legacy. He funded an endowment and research building, which would become the Wistar Institute of Anatomy and Biology. The museum collections were moved from the University of Pennsylvania to the new building at 36th and Spruce (which remains a part of the Wistar Institute's facilities) in 1892. Today, the Wistar Institute remains a renowned center for biomedical research and training, and was the nation's first independent institution dedicated to such endeavors.

Works cited: "Our History." The Wistar Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.wistar.org/the-institute/our-history>

Scope and Contents

The Wistar and Horner Museum records contain volumes and papers related to the Wistar and Horner Museum, and date from 1822 to 1865, with the majority of materials dating from 1845 to 1855. The collection is arranged alphabetically by subject or genre, then chronologically within each subdivision, and documents the evolution, management, finances, and curatorial and collecting activities of a university museum. Materials include: a student roster book for Horner's dissecting class at the University of Pennsylvania, listing student names and home states; miscellaneous receipts and reports for various museum expenses (including exhibition and preservation supplies and wages paid to museum staff); reports on the "condition of the museum" by Leidy during his time as curator and reports on his additions to the collections; printed catalogs of the museum collections, one with manuscript annotations by Horner; Horner's lists of rules for Demonstrators in the Department of Anatomy; and correspondence from Caldwell L. Biddle of the University of Pennsylvania Board of Trustees regarding museum finances.

Administrative Information

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

2015 August 11

Finding aid prepared by Jessica Hoffman.

Access Restrictions

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Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- University of Pennsylvania. Department of Anatomy.

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Correspondence
- Financial records
- Notebooks
- Reports

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Horner, William E. (William Edmonds), 1793-1853
- Leidy, Joseph, 1823-1891

SUBJECT(S)

- Education
- Human anatomy--Study and teaching
- Medical education--United States--19th century
- Medical museums
- Medicine
- Museums

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Administrative records, W. E. Horner's memorandum book for the Museum, 1822-1855.	1	1
Administrative records, including agreements of Horner's personal assistants, portion of unidentified will, and letter from Dr. Agnew, 1845-1847, 1865, undated.	1	2
Administrative records, Museum reports by Joseph Leidy, including additions to the collections, 1848-1858.	1	3
Administrative records, logbook of additions to the Museum, 1855-1858.	1	4
Administrative records, Museum report by Joseph Leidy for 1861-1865, 1865 May 10.	1	5
"Catalogue of the Anatomical Museum of the University of Pennsylvania..."	1	6

by W. E. Horner, including a letter to the Wistar Museum Committee, 1832, 1836.

"Catalogue of the Wistar, or Anatomical Museum of the University of Pennsylvania..." by W. E. Horner, 1850.	1	7
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Dissecting class, contract and memorandum signed by George McClellan, founder of Jefferson Medical College, regarding classes and distribution of subjects, 1827.	1	8
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Dissecting class, agreements for demonstrators in the Department of Anatomy of University of Pennsylvania, 1845, 1852.	1	9
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Dissecting class, student roster book, 1849-1864.	1	10
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Financial records, account book for Z. Locke & Co., 1842-1855.	1	11
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Financial records, Museum expenses, 1847, 1848, 1856, 1861.	1	12
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Financial records, miscellaneous receipts, 1849.	1	13
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Financial records, miscellaneous receipts, 1850.	1	14
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Financial records, miscellaneous receipts, 1851.	1	15
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Financial records, miscellaneous receipts, 1852.	1	16
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Financial records, miscellaneous receipts, 1854.	1	17
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Financial records, letters from University of Pennsylvania Board of Trustees regarding funds appropriated for the Museum, 1854-1855.	1	18
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Financial records, miscellaneous receipts, 1855.	1	19
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