

John H. Elfman family and business papers

07

**Finding aid prepared by Celia Caust-Ellenbogen and Faith
Charlton through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden
Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories.**

Last updated on November 19, 2013.

Doylestown Historical Society

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Summary Information

Repository	Doylestown Historical Society
Creator	Elfman, John H., 1912-1983
Title	John H. Elfman family and business papers
Call number	07
Date [inclusive]	1930-2012
Extent	4 linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	<p>After attending Pennsylvania State University, John H. Elfman (1912-1983) married Jean M. Kerr (1913-1955). He joined his father's business, A.C. Elfman & Sons, a building contractor firm established in Doylestown, Pa. in 1909. The largest portion of the John H. Elfman family and business papers, 1930-2012, is letters from Jean M. Kerr to her future husband, John H. Elfman, while he was away at college (1930-1934). The collection also includes records from A.C. Elfman & Sons (1935-1986), and some genealogical research and biographical notes on Elfman family members.</p>

Biography/History

The business A.C. Elfman & Sons, building contractors, was started in Doylestown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, in 1909.

John H. Elfman (1912-1983) was the son of Augusts C. Elfman (1888-1973) and Alice (Black) Elfman (1889-1969). John graduated from Doylestown High School and Pennsylvania State University. A star athlete, his nickname was "Brickey." With a degree in architectural engineering, he joined the family business, A.C. Elfman & Sons. He also owned A.C.E.S.'s Woodwork Shop, and was a charter member and president of the Bucks County Homebuilders Association. A business and civic leader in Bucks County, Elfman was a charter member of the Doylestown Borough School Authority, a 45-year member of Doylestown Rotary Club, and a president of the Bucks County Historical Society. He purchased a house at 56 South Main Street in Doylestown (currently the home of the Doylestown Historical Society) in 1935.

In 1936 John married Jean Kerr (1913-1995), daughter of George and Louisa Kerr. John and Jean had attended Doylestown High School together, after which she earned a music degree from Temple University in 1935. The couple's only son, John H. Elfman, Jr., was born in 1940. Jean, like her husband, was involved in the community. She was president of the Village Improvement Association and Doylestown Nature Club, as well as a member of the Bucks County Choral Society.

Bibliography:

Spence, Kurt. "History of Your Property: 56 South Main Street, Doylestown, Pa." 2013. Accessed July 22, 2013. <http://www.doylestownhistorical.org/56SMain.pdf>.

Scope and Contents

The largest portion of this collection is letters from Jean M. Kerr to her future husband, John H. Elfman, while he was away at college, 1930-1934. It also includes records from A.C. Elfman & Sons (1935-1986), and some genealogical research and biographical notes on Elfman family members.

The letters from Jean M. Kerr to John H. Elfman are arranged in chronological order. They are mostly of a personal nature, discussing daily events and documenting the couple's budding romance while he attended Penn State and she attended Temple University.

The records from A.C. Elfman & Sons include: articles of incorporation, transfer of subscription, and by-laws, 1976-1977; stock certificates, 1976-1986; a blank share ledger and transfer book; payroll account ledger (cancelled checks and check stubs), 1985-1986; an account ledger, 1982-1983; a payroll account book and correspondence, 1963-1969; and estate papers, contracts, incorporation documents, insurance policies, agreements, indentures, and other business-related papers, 1935-1984.

The collection also includes genealogy research and biographical notes on Elfman family members (Augustus, John, Herman, and others), copies of family photographs, sheet music and musical programs that belonged to Jean Elfman, and other family and personal documents.

Administrative Information

Doylestown Historical Society

Finding aid prepared by Celia Caust-Ellenbogen and Faith Charlton through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories.

Sponsor

This preliminary finding aid was created as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories. The HCI-PSAR project was made possible by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Access Restrictions

Contact Doylestown Historical Society for information about accessing this collection.

Immediate Source of Acquisition Note

Gift of Syd Martin, 2011.

Processing Information Note

Summary descriptive information on this collection was compiled in 2012-2014 as part of a project conducted by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to make better known and more accessible the largely hidden collections of small, primarily volunteer run repositories in the Philadelphia area. The Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR) was funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This is a preliminary finding aid. No physical processing, rehousing, reorganizing, or folder listing was accomplished during the HCI-PSAR project.

In some cases, more detailed inventories or finding aids may be available on-site at the repository where this collection is held; please contact Doylestown Historical Society directly for more information.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- A.C. Elfman & Sons
- Pennsylvania State University
- Temple University

Geographic Name(s)

- Bucks County (Pa.)
- Doylestown (Pa.)
- Philadelphia (Pa.)
- State College (Pa.)

Personal Name(s)

- Elfman, Jean Kerr, 1913-1995
- Elfman, John H., 1912-1983

Subject(s)

- Building
- Construction industry
- Contractors' operations
- Genealogy