

LMHS.08: Roberts Family Collection

08

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

Last updated on November 09, 2012.

Lower Merion Historical Society

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Summary Information

Repository	Lower Merion Historical Society
Creator	Roberts family
Title	LMHS.08: Roberts Family Collection
Call number	08
Date [inclusive]	1677-1998
Extent	6 linear feet
General Physical Description Note	About 250 items
Language	English
Abstract	<p>John Roberts was among the first settlers of Merion, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania in 1683. His descendants included civic leaders, a physician, a president of the Pennsylvania Railroad and a state senator; the businesses his family started included a model dairy farm and the Pencoyd Iron Works. The Roberts Family Collection, 1677-1998, includes indentures and deeds, maps, tax receipts, wills, correspondence, photograph albums and a daguerreotype, genealogical research, and diaries. The highlight of this collection is a series of private letter books of George Brooke Roberts (president of the Pennsylvania Railroad), 1833-1897.</p>

Biography/History

"John Roberts came to the area of Pennsylvania called Merion [from his homeland in Wales] in November of 1683. In January 1684, John married Gaynor Roberts who was a fellow passenger on the sailing ship Morning Star. Their marriage was the first such ceremony performed at Merion Friends Meeting. Of the three men named John Roberts who came on the same voyage of the Morning Star, this John Roberts is called "The Maltster" for the crop he raised, barley for malt.

"John was pleased to discover well timbered land, a clear spring, plenty of stone for building and soil which was "good and fat." He called his farm "Pencoid", later spelled Pencoyd, which in Welsh means "head of the woods," an apt name because his large stone farmhouse was nestled at the top of the rise of land overlooking the Schuylkill River. His property extended from the Schuylkill River to Conshohocken State Road along City Avenue.

"The dynasty which he founded produced many civic leaders; a physician, a president of the Pennsylvania Railroad and a state senator. The industries that John Roberts' descendants started include a model dairy farm and an iron works." ("The Roberts Family Collection")

*Founder of Pencoyd: John Roberts, 1648 (Wales)-1724.

*Second Proprietor of Pencoyd: Robert Roberts, 1685-1768.

*Third Proprietor of Pencoyd: John Roberts, 1710-1776.

*Fourth Proprietor of Pencoyd: Algernon Roberts, 1751-1815.

*Fifth Proprietor of Pencoyd: Isaac Warner Roberts, 1789-1859.

*Sixth Proprietor of Pencoyd: George Brooke Roberts, 1833-1897.

*Seventh Proprietor of Pencoyd: T. Williams Roberts, 1877-1962.

George Brooke Roberts, 1833-1897, began working in the railroad industry in 1851. In 1880 he became president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, in which role he was influential in the development of the Main Line.

Bibliography:

Lower Merion Historical Society. "The Roberts Family Collection." March 2003. Accessed November 16, 2011. <http://www.lowermerionhistory.org/roberts>.

Lower Merion Historical Society. "The Pioneers." *The First 300: The Amazing and Rich History of Lower Merion*, ed. by Dick Jones. Ardmore, PA: Lower Merion Historical Society, 2000. Accessed November 16, 2011. <http://lowermerionhistory.org/texts/first300/part03.html>.

Scope and Contents

This collection includes indentures and deeds, maps, tax receipts, wills, correspondence, photograph albums and a daguerreotype, genealogical research, and diaries. There are also several published texts and the Roberts family bible (no genealogical data included).

The highlight of this collection is a series of the private letter books of George Brooke Roberts, 1833-1897. The letters are on subjects such as: using what is now Roosevelt Boulevard as an entrance to Fairmount Park, the Garfield Monument, selling land to the Pennsylvania Railroad for the Wynnewood Station, and the Centennial Exposition of 1876.

Administrative Information

Lower Merion Historical Society

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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 Lower Merion Historical Society for information about accessing this collection.

Immediate Source of Acquisition Note

Most materials gift of Roberts family, 1999; personal letterbooks of George Brooke Roberts gift of Bayard H. Roberts, 2002.

Related Materials

Separated Materials Note

Materials from the Roberts Family Collection were removed to form the "Lower Merion Realty Company minute book, photographs, and brochures" collection (also at Lower Merion Historical Society).

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Pencoyd Iron Works.
- Pennsylvania Railroad.

Geographic Name(s)

- Bala-Cynwyd (Pa.)
- Lower Merion (Pa. : Township)
- Main Line (Pa.)
- Montgomery County (Pa.)

Personal Name(s)

- Roberts, George Brooke, 1833-1897