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Bonsall family papers 4079363

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on January 13, 2025.

Description is written in: English.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Butler Library, 6th Floor
Columbia University, Mail Code 1127
535 W. 114th St.
New York, NY 10027

Business Number: (212) 854-5153

Fax Number: (212) 854-1365

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Bonsall Family
Title:	Bonsall family papers
ID:	4079363
ID:	MS#0132
Date [inclusive]:	1683-1916
Date [bulk]:	1825-1875
Physical Description:	2.5 linear feet 6 document boxes, 1 oversized folder
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	<p>The papers of the Bonsall Family of Pennsylvania primarily consist of correspondence, personal and professional documents, journals, genealogical tables, photographs, and a family Bible. The majority of the letters, documents, and journals were generated by or for Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879) and the members of his immediate family, particularly his eldest son, Spencer Bonsall (1816-1888). Also included are documents produced by or for other Bonsall family members, from Richard Bonsall who settled in Philadelphia with William Penn (ca. 1683) to Eleanor Crosby Martin Bonsall (1894-?), the daughter of William Martin Bonsall and granddaughter of Spencer Bonsall.</p>

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Bonsall Family Papers; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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Biographical / Historical

The Bonsall family traces its North American ancestry back to Richard Bonsall (d. 1699), who left England with William Penn around the year 1683 to settle in Pennsylvania. Over the course of their history, the Bonsalls remained devoted members of the Religious Society of Friends, also known as the Quakers. Well into the nineteenth century, much of their correspondence retained the use of "thee" and "thou" that were characteristic of Quaker plain speech, while months and days usually appeared in numeric rather than named form (for example "1st month, 4th day = January 4") to disassociate them from pagan deities. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, most of the Bonsalls continued to reside in the Delaware Valley, especially in the areas surrounding Philadelphia, Germantown, and Chester, but, as the country began to expand westward, others moved out to Ohio, Illinois, and Colorado. The Bonsall heirs were chiefly occupied by real estate, transportation, surveying, and the law, from which they seem to have derived a comfortable, if not extravagant, living. A great part of the material in the collection concerns Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879) and his oldest son, Spencer Bonsall (1816-1888). The family of Spencer's wife, Ellen Crosby Martin, is also well represented.

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Biographical / Historical

Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879): Edward H. Bonsall was born in 1794 to Isaac Bonsall (1765-1831) and Mercy Milhous (1768-1805) of Philadelphia. His career as a conveyancer engaged him in the founding of the Philadelphia, Germantown and Norristown Railroad, of which he eventually became president. In addition to being an avid writer of letters, speeches, and poems, Bonsall was an active member of several learned and charitable organizations, including the Philadelphia Literary Association and the Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons. As revealed in a number of his writings, he also nurtured a lifelong interest in travel. His detailed travel notes record the history, surroundings, and landscape of various cities in Europe, Egypt, and a burgeoning industrial America. These accounts frequently incorporate records of his day-to-day travel arrangements and expenses.

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Biographical / Historical

Spencer Bonsall (1816-1888): Spencer Bonsall, the first son of Edward H. Bonsall and Lydia McIlvain (1795-1854), inherited his father's love for travel and history. He was educated at the Quaker Westtown Boarding School in Chester, Pennsylvania, where, as his correspondence reveals, he lived an active social life. After an apprenticeship to the druggist Samuel C. Sheppard, Spencer took a trip around the world, passing through Madeira, Portugal, and landing in Calcutta, India. In 1840, he returned to India where he secured a position with the Assam Tea Company. Upon his return to the United States eight years later, he became the principal surveyor for the city of Philadelphia, and shortly thereafter, in 1854, married Ellen Crosby Martin. Upon the outbreak of the Civil War, Spencer enlisted in the 81st Pennsylvania infantry as a hospital steward, where he served from 1861 until 1863 when he was slightly wounded at the Battle of Gettysburg. From 1869 to 1883 he served as an assistant librarian and genealogist at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

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Summary

The Bonsall Family Papers primarily consist of correspondence, personal and professional documents, journals, genealogical tables, photographs, and a family Bible. The majority of the letters, documents, and journals were generated by or for Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879) and the members of his immediate family, particularly his eldest son, Spencer Bonsall (1816-1888).

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged in four series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

xml document instance created by Carrie Hintz EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2011-02-10 2019-05-20

Restrictions on Access

This collection is located on-site.

Restrictions on Access

This collection has no restrictions.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Source of acquisition--Robinson, Cedric L. Method of acquisition--Purchase; Date of acquisition--1952. Accession number--M-52.

Processing Information

Cataloged Christina Hilton Fenn 04/06/89.

Processing Information

Papers Processed Meghan Constantinou, Pratt SILS, 2012 10/--/2010.

Processing Information

Finding aid Written Meghan Constantinou, Pratt SILS, 2012 11/--/2010.

Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared.
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Controlled Access Headings

- Families -- Pennsylvania -- Philadelphia
- Hospitals -- United States -- Employees -- Diaries
- Quakers -- Correspondence
- Quakers -- Family relationships
- Quakers -- Pennsylvania -- Diaries
- Quakers -- Pennsylvania -- Philadelphia -- Social life and customs
- Railroads -- United States -- History -- 19th century
- Soldiers -- Health and hygiene -- United States -- History -- 19th century
- Tea -- India
- Travel literature -- India
- Egypt -- Description and travel
- India -- Description and travel
- Germantown (Philadelphia, Pa.) -- Social life and customs
- Madeira (Madeira Islands) -- Description and travel
- Pennsylvania -- Social life and customs
- Pennsylvania -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Personal narratives
- Pennsylvania -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Regimental histories
- United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- Hospitals
- United States -- Description and travel -- Diaries
- Photographic prints
- Tintypes (photographs)
- Poetry
- Genealogies (histories)
- Silhouettes
- Visiting cards
- Deeds

- Indentures
- Playbills
- Marriage licenses
- Bonsall, Edward H., 1794-1879
- Bonsall, Richard
- Bonsall, Spencer, 1816-1888
- Bonsall, Spencer, 1816-1888
- Penn, William, 1644-1718
- Assam Company
- Westtown Boarding School
- United States. Army. Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment, 81st (1861-1865)

Collection Inventory

Series I: Correspondence, 1818-1901, (1824-1878)

Scope and Contents

This series, which comprises approximately half of the collection, contains correspondence by and to various members of the Bonsall and Martin families. Most of the letters were generated by or to Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879) and are personal in nature, although a small number concern Bonsall's career as a conveyancer and railroad industrialist. Substantial correspondence exists between Edward H. Bonsall and his son, Joseph Bonsall (1833-1876); and between Edward H. Bonsall and John Ousley Bonsall, a distant relative living in Ireland. The collection also contains several letters written by or to Spencer Bonsall when he was a student at the Westtown School in Chester, Pennsylvania. The Martin family is represented by several letters between William Martin, Esq. (1797-1862); his wife, Sarah Ann Martin (née Smith); and their daughter, Ellen Crosby Martin, wife of Spencer Bonsall.

Title/Description	Instances	
Biddle, [Craig?] to Spencer Bonsall, 1884	box 1	folder 1
Bonsall, Anna to Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879), 1855	box 1	folder 2
Scope and Contents		
(includes correspondence by Jane M. Plummer)		
Bonsall, Charles, 1832-1871	box 1	folder 3
Scope and Contents		
(includes letter from "Laura" to Mary Bonsall)		
Bonsall, Edward H. (1794-1879), 1824-1876	box 1	folder 4 to 6
<u>Physical Description:</u> (3 Folders)		
Bonsall, Edward H. (1821-1841), 1831-1836	box 1	folder 7

Scope and Contents

(includes correspondence by Edward H. Bonsall
(1794-1879) and Henry Bonsall)

Bonsall, Eleanor Crosby Martin to Santa Claus, 1901	box 1	folder 8
Bonsall, Henry to Spencer Bonsall, 1831-1832	box 1	folder 9
Bonsall, Jeremiah, 1833-1847	box 1	folder 10

Scope and Contents

(includes correspondence by Lydia M. Bonsall)

Bonsall, John Ousley to Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879), 1837-1870	box 1	folder 11
Bonsall, Joseph H., 1859-1875	box 1	folder 12
Bonsall, Spencer, 1833-1854	box 1	folder 13
Boustead, James to Spencer Bonsall, 1833	box 1	folder 14
Brewster, A.W. to Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879), 1876	box 1	folder 15
Castle, J. H. to Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879), 1859	box 2	folder 1
Chandler, Joseph R. to Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879), 1878	box 2	folder 2
Clark, S. J. to Ellen C. Martin, undated	box 2	folder 3
Cope, Marmaduke C. to Mary Ann C. Morris, 1870	box 2	folder 4

Scope and Contents

(extract in the hand of Edward H. Bonsall
(1794-1879))

[Duttan?] Samuel to Spencer Bonsall, 1832	box 2	folder 5
Egner, Emma C. to Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879), 1876	box 2	folder 6
Hollinshead, Ray M. to Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879), 1824	box 2	folder 7
Hoopes, Edward C. to Spencer Bonsall, 1833	box 2	folder 8
Horner, Joseph P. to Joseph Hartshorne, 1836	box 2	folder 9
Johnson, Rowland to Spencer Bonsall, 1833	box 2	folder 10
Kite, Thomas to Spencer Bonsall, 1833	box 2	folder 11
Lightfoot, H. M. to Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879), 1839	box 2	folder 12
Martin, Georgiana, [1852?]	box 2	folder 13
Martin, John Hill to Ellen C. Martin, 1852		

	box 2	folder 14
Martin, Sarah A., 1852-1853	box 2	folder 15
Scope and Contents		
(includes correspondence by William M. Martin, 1853)		
Martin, William, M. (1797-1862),1844-1853	box 2	folder 16
Scope and Contents		
(includes correspondence by Sarah A. Martin, 1853)		
Moynan, Harriette E. to Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879), 1873	box 2	folder 17
Moynan, Richard to Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879), 1876	box 2	folder 18
Newman, Henry to Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879), 1858	box 2	folder 19
Pease, Jonathan, 1836-1860	box 2	folder 20
Plummer, Jane M., 1818-1872	box 2	folder 21
Price, Isaac C. to Spencer Bonsall, 1833	box 2	folder 22
Rhodes, C. D. to Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879), 1876-1877	box 2	folder 23
Smith, Ellen C. to William M. Smith, 1852	box 2	folder 24
Snider, Annie L. to Ellen C. Martin, 1854	box 2	folder 25
Stokes, Hannah M. to Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879), 1872	box 2	folder 26
Tatum, Josiah to Spencer Bonsall, 1833	box 2	folder 27
Thompson, Joseph B. to Spencer Bonsall, 1833	box 2	folder 28
Warrington, Priscilla to Jane M. Plummer, 1831	box 2	folder 29
Wilson, Susan to Spencer Bonsall, 1831	box 2	folder 30
Wood, M. A. to Mary B. Hutchin, 1838	box 2	folder 31
Woodnutt, Preston to Spencer Bonsall, 1833	box 2	folder 32

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Series II: Documents and Photographs, 1683-1916

Scope and Contents

This series, which comprises most of the remainder of the collection, contains a broad range of documents relating to several generations of the Bonsall family. The largest portion consists of ancestral wills, land deeds, and other property records, dating from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Also well represented are genealogical tables and coats of arms. Personal documents, such as poems, calling cards, tickets, and invitations, are interspersed with professional membership certificates, speeches, writings, and general memoranda. Dozens of photographs, tintypes, and silhouettes depict members of the Bonsall and Martin families, some of which have been annotated by William Martin Bonsall, the son of Spencer Bonsall and Ellen Crosby Martin. A small number of documents pertain to individuals with an uncertain relationship to the Bonsall family, while a few others are anonymous. A map of the Denver, Colorado area by Joseph H. Bonsall, dated August 22, 1871, has been moved to the Historical Map Collection.

Title/Description	Instances	
General, 1805-1909	box 3	folder 1
Scope and Contents		
(includes envelopes, poems, tickets, newspaper clippings, a political cartoon, and other miscellaneous documents)		
Aston, Peter and Hannah--Land Deed to Thomas Guest, 1751	box 3	folder 2
Scope and Contents		
(includes release of claims on Thomas Guest for above indenture by Isaac Greenleaf and Mordecai Yarnall)		
Bonsall, Benjamin--Copies of Will and Land Deed to Josiah Fearn, 1729-1768	box 3	folder 3
Bonsall, Benjamin Say--Printed Jury List, 1833	box 3	folder 4
Bonsall, Edward H. (1739-1826)--Land Deed, Will, and Estate Settlement, 1798-1830	box 3	folder 5
Bonsall, Edward H. (1794-1879), 1826-1879	box 3	folder 6
Scope and Contents		
((includes business reports, travel accounts, orations, passport, an account of the death of Edward H. Bonsall Jr.(1821-1841), and other personal and professional documents)		
Bonsall, Eleanor Crosby Martin, 1894-1898	box 3	folder 7
Scope and Contents		
(includes drawings, hair, and religious cards)		
Bonsall, Ellen C. (Martin)--Receipt, 1877	box 3	folder 8
Bonsall, Enoch--Copy of Marriage Certificate, 1717	box 3	folder 9

Bonsall, Isaac--Marriage Certificate and Estate Documents, 1786-circa, 1830	box 3	folder 10
Bonsall, Jacob, Benjamin and Enoch--Copy of Land Grant from William Penn., 1703	box 3	folder 11
Scope and Contents		
(includes envelope addressed to Spencer Bonsall, Historical Society of Pennsylvania)		
Bonsall, James--Will, 1754	box 3	folder 12
Bonsall, John Ousley--Poem on the Death of his Wife, 1869	box 3	folder 13
Bonsall, Mary (Mrs. John Ousely)--Poem to her Husband, 1860	box 3	folder 14
Bonsall, Mary H.--Land Title Brief, 1864	box 3	folder 15
Bonsall, Mercy--Poems, 1788-1789	box 3	folder 16
Bonsall, Richard--Copy of Will, 1699	box 3	folder 17
Bonsall, Spencer, 1827-1889	box 3	folder 18
Scope and Contents		
(includes receipts, copper plates for calling cards, marriage certificate, professional membership certificates, poem transcriptions, and four undated, unsigned letters)		
Bonsall, Vincent--Property Documents and Will, 1751-1796	box 3	folder 19
Bonsall, William Martin, 1867-1911	box 3	folder 20
Scope and Contents		
(includes will, tickets, class rosters, invitations, a court summons, and professional membership certificates)		
Butler, John--Land Deed to Abraham Scott, 1768	box 3	folder 21
Bonsall Family--Photographs, Silhouettes, Tintypes, 1776-1916, undated, 1776-1916, undated	box 4	folder 1
Bonsall Family--Genealogical Research and Coats of Arms, 1761-circa, 1870s undated	box 4	folder 2
Scope and Contents		
(includes photocopies gifted by Joseph Colton Bonsall, October 2005)		
Clarke, John Jr.--Copy of Will, 1731	box 4	folder 3
Flower, Samuel--Land Deed to John Butler, 1765	box 4	folder 4
Fraelich, Leonard--Mortgage to Christopher Witt, 1759	box 4	folder 5

Froth, Henry--Copy of Will, 1836	box 4	folder 6
Grand Central Variety Theatre--Playbills, 1874-1875	box 4	folder 7
Guest, Thomas--Indenture to Samuel Flower, Land Deed, 1755	box 4	folder 8
Hunt, Joseph--Marriage Certificate, 1724	box 4	folder 9
Jones, Robert--Land Deed to John Butler, 1763	box 4	folder 10
Martin, E--Invitation from Union League Club, 1886	box 4	folder 11
Martin, Ellen C.--Certificates of Approbation, 1843	box 4	folder 12
Martin Family--Coats of Arms, Genealogical Table, circa, 1860s undated	box 4	folder 13
Martin, John Hill--Engagement Cards, Newspaper Subscription, 1859-1876	box 4	folder 14
Martin, William (1765-1798)--Receipts, Appraisal of Goods, 1788-1798	box 4	folder 15
Martin, William M. (1797-1862)--Justice's Commission, Testimonials on Death of,, 1836-1862	box 4	folder 16
Mercantile Library Company, Philadelphia--Library Rules, circa, [1855?]	box 4	folder 17
Milhous, Jane--Poem, 1823	box 4	folder 18
Pearson, Isaac--Land Deed to Samuel Flower, 1752	box 4	folder 19
Penn, William--Coat of Arms, undated	box 4	folder 20
Scope and Contents		
(includes four miscellaneous coats of arms, undated)		
Pennsylvania Laws and Statues--Extracts from laws passed between 1698 and 1774, undated, 1698, 1774, undated	box 4	folder 21
Scope and Contents		
(includes envelope addressed to Spencer Bonsall)		
Penrose, Thomas--Deed to Jane Hales, 1777	box 4	folder 22
Philadelphia--Wax Seals, 1683-1701	box 4	folder 23
Scope and Contents		
(includes two seals of William Penn and one of the city of Philadelphia)		
Sandilands, James--Copy of Petition to William Penn, 1700	box 4	folder 24
Scott, Abraham--Land Deed to Robert McMin, 1769	box 4	folder 25
Wroth, William--Receipt, 1807	box 4	folder 26

Yarnall, [Mordecai?]-Transcription from the Third Book of Chronicles, undated	box 4	folder 27
Bonsall, Spencer--Life Membership to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania,, 1870	box 14-P-2	
Bonsall, William M.--Membership to the Veteran Corps of the 1st Infantry National Guard of Pennsylvania,, 1894	box 14-P-2	
Crosby, John--Appointment as Judge to the Court of Common Pleas, Delaware County, Pennsylvania,, 1799	box 14-P-2	
Martin, William--Commission as Captain of the Pennsylvania Artillerists of Delaware County,, 1828	box 14-P-2	

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Series III: Journals and Account Books, 1785-1865

Scope and Contents

The sixteen journals in this series cover a range of topics. Prominent are the travel journals of Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879) and Spencer Bonsall, which describe voyages to Washington DC, the Ohio Valley, and Calcutta, India. The collection also contains a Civil War journal by Spencer Bonsall, written between March 1 and April 17, 1863 during his service as a hospital steward in the 81st Pennsylvania Regiment. Further additions include a book of genealogical tables, the legal journal of John Crosby (written between 1803 and 1816), and a handful of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century account books containing the costs for such mundane expenses as rent, hair dressing, and laundry. The collection also contains the composition books of Spencer Bonsall, his mother, Lydia McIlvain, and a Rebecca B. Thomson, whose connection to the family is unclear.

Title/Description	Instances	
Bonsall, Edward H. (1794-1879)--Travel Journals and Letter Books, 1824-1875 <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)	box 5	folder 1 to 2
Bonsall Family--Genealogy Book, 1903-1908 Scope and Contents (covers 1682 to 1866)	box 5	folder 3
Bonsall, Mercy--Copy of Writings, 1785-1805	box 5	folder 4
Bonsall, Spencer, 1832-1863 <u>Physical Description:</u> (3 Folders) Scope and Contents (includes composition books, travel journals, Civil War diary; and a poem by Edward H. Bonsall, 1828)	box 5	folder 5 to 7
Crosby, John--Legal Notebook, 1803-1816	box 5	folder 8
Martin, William (1765-1799)--Account Book, 1787-1796	box 5	folder 9

McIlvain, Lydia--Composition Book, 1812	box 5	folder 10
Thomson, Rebecca B.--Composition Book, 1824-1826	box 5	folder 11
Wroth, William and Elizabeth--Account Book, 1794-1824	box 5	folder 12

Scope and Contents

(includes records of James and Mrs. McKeever, and Sarah Thompson)

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Series IV: Family Bible, 1814, 1815-1876**Scope and Contents**

This family Bible (Collins's "Quarto" Bible, 3rd ed., NY: printed and sold by Collins and Co., 1814) was owned by Edward H. Bonsall (1794-1879) and lists the marriages, births, diseases, and deaths of his two wives, Lydia Bonsall (née McIlvain) and Mary Bonsall (née Hutchin), as well as his eleven children: Spencer, William Milhous, William, Edward H. Jr., Henry, Jeremiah, Charles, Elizabeth, Jane, Joseph, and Jesse. The Bible is signed and dated at the front: "Edward H. Bonsall 1815," with notes dating 1815-1876.

Title/Description	Instances	
Bible--Collins's Quarto, 3rd edition, New York, 1814	box 6	folder 1

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