

David McNeeley Stauffer Papers, 1859-1889

Object ID: MG0369

5 folders .25 cubic ft.

Repository: LancasterHistory (Organization); PV7

Shelving Location: Archives South, Side 9

Scope and Content Note: This collection contains a sketch and copy book of Jacob Stauffer and his son, David McNeeley Stauffer. The sketch of a log house and watercolor of the Mathiot House are both attributed to David McNeeley Stauffer. Letters written to D. M. Stauffer refer to *The Intelligencer*, genealogy related to a portrait, and his collection of signatures.

Creators: Stauffer, David McNeeley, 1845-1913; Stauffer, Jacob

Conditions for Access: Patrons must make an appointment with the Director of Archival Services to view the sketchbook in Folder 1.

Conditions Governing Reproductions: Collection may not be photocopied. Please contact Research Staff or Archives Staff with questions.

Language: English

Biographical and Historical Note: David McNeely Stauffer (1845-1913)

Stauffer's extraordinary life began in 1845, in Mount Joy. His father was Jacob Stauffer and his mother was Mary Ann McNeely. He was raised by his stepmother since his mother passed when he was only a year old. His childhood home had somewhat of a local legend which claimed it was haunted by the unpleasant pirate who built it.

Around 1858, economic trouble forced the Stauffers to relocate to Lancaster City. His father took a job at the Lancaster Athenaeum library (on the 3rd floor of the old city hall) for small pay with the arrangement that he could establish his patent office there. David was inseparable from his father and spent more time at the library than he did at his home on North Duke Street.

From a young age David was enormously successful in school, no doubt due to his long hours at the library and absorbing the teachings of his father who was interested in natural sciences. He graduated from high school at an accelerated pace and earned his diploma at the age of 16. From there, he attended Franklin and Marshall college on a scholarship.

A crisis strikes Lancaster in 1862 with the invasion of the confederate army into Maryland. David, along with fellow classmates, were raised into a slapdash and disastrously ill prepared unit. They were eventually involved in the battle of Antietam if one uses the term "involved" loosely. Having virtually no experience or training they were kept out of the fight. After the short-lived adventure David returned to school for

another year but, possibly hoping to see more action, he rejoined the service as an artillery man. Later, he accepted a job on the railways before he was offered an appointment as Master's Mate in the navy and he once again joined the military.

After his service, he returned to railroad work where he was determined to become an engineer. By 1870 he had achieved this goal, being appointed head engineer for construction of a Philadelphia street bridge. David was 25 years old. He worked diligently as an engineer for many years and finally opening his own business in New York as a consulting engineer in 1882. Stauffer was in high demand as he was considered an expert in his trade and was widely known. He was the second American to ever become a member of the Institute of Civil Engineers in London. He also became part-owner and chief editor for "Engineering News" for 23 years.

He was very active socially, largely invested in civic improvement, and belonged to numerous societies and clubs. He was also well-traveled. Appreciative of many arts, he took a particular interest in engravings which he collected. He even published a book which is critical to many collectors today: "American Engravers upon Copper and Steel". Stauffer married rather late in life, at the age of 47, but his meeting with his wife is so extraordinary it sounds more like a sketch from a Melville novel. A shipwreck is the romantic occasion upon which these two lovers met, David and his future wife, Florence Scribner. David had been asked on an assignment for the *Engineering News* and Florence had been accompanying her father on a steamship when it wrecked in the Caribbean. They were married no more than a year later and set up residence in Yonkers, New York where he died in 1913.

Stauffer's passion for sketching was no doubt due to his father whose botanical sketches are still widely admired today. Of note is David's bookplate design used by Lancaster County Historical Society, which is one of many that he designed. He also left a legacy of no less than 70 drawings of early Lancaster City buildings, an unparalleled collection. Some buildings he documented still stand today; some weren't even standing when he drew them. He drew some earlier buildings that had been destroyed using only the descriptions from those who remembered them and historical documents.

Sources:

"David McNeely Stauffer". Elizabeth Clarke Kieffer. Papers of the Lancaster County Historical Society, vol. 56. 1952 no.7 David McNeely Stauffer could be called many things: scholar, soldier, traveler, engineer, artist, collector, author. Clearly a man of many talents and many pursuits, in his life he seemed determined to collect a wide variety of experiences.

"Biographical Sketch of David McNeely Knox Stauffer". John W. Jordan. The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, vol. 37. (Philadelphia : PA).

"David McNeely Stauffer: The Little-Known Legacy He Left to Lancaster." A Talk to the Lancaster County Historical Society by C. Eugene Moore. May 7th, 1996.

"David McNeely Stauffer Aids Today's Scholars" in Artists' Album/Lancaster County. Gerald S. Lestz. Science Press, 1983.

Works by Stauffer:

"Documentary History of the Borough of Lancaster"

"American Engravers upon Copper and Steel"

Source of Acquisition: Source unknown unless specified at the item level.

Accruals: Further accruals are expected.

Preferred Citation: David McNeely Stauffer Papers (MG0369), Folder #, LancasterHistory, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

People:

Duportail, [Louis Lebègue]
Gratz, Simon
Hensel, William Uhler
Montgomery, James
Montgomery, Robert
Montgomery, William A.
Rice, James M.
Stauffer, David McNeeley
Stauffer, Jacob

Subject Headings:

Stauffer, David McNeeley, 1845-1913.
Stauffer, Jacob.
Drawings.
Sketchbooks.
Watercolor painting.
Watercolors.
Letters.

Search Terms:

Stauffer, David McNeeley, 1845-1913.
Stauffer, Jacob.
Drawing.
Sketchbooks.
Watercolor painting.
Letters.

Related Materials: See also: David McNeely Stauffer drawings in the Curatorial Collection.

Processing History: Processed and finding aid prepared 2010; revised 2014, 2015. This collection has been documented, preserved and managed according to professional museum and archives standards. The collection was cataloged using DACS conventions.

Folder 1 Sketch and copy book of Jacob Stauffer and his son, David McNeeley Stauffer. Contains a watercolor of a local store and barn, scenes of Manheim, including Eby's Tannery and Market Street, and drawings of military and political figures. (in fragile condition) 1859, 1880. *Please make an appointment with the Director of Archival Services to view this item. Purchased at auction, October 2004.*

Folder 2 "Old Log House—N.W. cor. W. Orange & Charlotte." Sketch by [David McNeeley Stauffer]. No date. (photostatic copy)
Mathiot House, northwest corner of S. Queen Street and Vine Street, Lancaster.
Watercolor by [David McNeeley Stauffer]. No date.

Folder 3 Letter from W. U. Hensel stating that he is sending copies of *The Intelligencer* and sends thanks for [plan and title page]. Lancaster. 11 December 1886. *Transferred from the Document Collection, 29 May 2014.*

Folder 4 Letter from William A. Montgomery regarding a discrepancy about a Montgomery ancestor and a portrait. Chicago. 15 April 1889.
Typescript copy of a letter from James Montgomery to James M. Rice regarding Montgomery genealogy and enclosing an account by Robert Montgomery, 1844, and a record from the family Bible by William Montgomery, 1809. 14 February 1876.
Transferred from the Document Collection, 29 May 2014.

Folder 5 Letter from Simon Gratz regarding an exchange of autograph signatures of DeHaas and [Louis Lebègue] Duportail. Philadelphia. 3 October 1885. *Transferred from the Document Collection, 29 May 2014.*