



The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

Adam W. Spies real estate and genealogy scrapbook

1828-1930 [bulk 1828-1887]

MssCol 22287

Compiled by Susan P. Waide, 2014

Summary

Creator: Spies, Adam W. (Adam William), 1800-1891

Title: Adam W. Spies real estate and genealogy scrapbook

Date: 1828-1930 [bulk 1828-1887]

Size: .25 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Purchased from Antipodean Books, 2013

Abstract: Adam W. Spies (1800-1891), the son of Mary Bergh and John Spies, was a hardware and military goods merchant in New York City. He was employed by the firm of C. & J. D. Wolfe, and was their agent in England in the 1820s. In 1834 he established A. W. Spies & Company, later Spies, Kissam & Company, retiring in 1866. He acquired extensive landholdings in New York City, upstate New York, and numerous other states, including Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, and Wisconsin, among others. In 1832 he married Sarah Ann Morrison (d. 1883), daughter of John C. Morrison of Monmouth County, New Jersey. Spies was a founding member of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. The Adam W. Spies real estate and genealogy scrapbook is primarily a record of his real estate transactions, containing numerous manuscript plat maps, many in watercolor with extensive annotations; a few printed maps; listings of properties, taxes and assessments; and legal notes. Holdings in Manhattan and Williamsburg, Brooklyn are especially well documented. Genealogical materials include charts and notes concerning the Spies, Morrison, and Bergh families, and autobiographical accounts, with advice to grandchildren, recalling his career, his service as a volunteer fireman, and life in Manhattan prior to the building of the Erie Canal and Croton Aqueduct. The volume also contains pasted clippings, certificates and receipts, cut silhouettes of Spies, and a few sketches, notably a watercolor street view by Spies of his father's place of business in Manhattan as depicted in 1808. There are some miscellaneous letters and notes relating to family and real estate matters, some loose, including a genealogical inquiry to his son-in-law John W. Cochrane dated 1907. A few of Spies's genealogical entries are updated to 1930. The scrapbook has multiple and duplicate paginations, with gaps: Index, p. 1-48, 50-58, [3 p.]; property maps with index, p. 0-100; and additional genealogical and autobiographical material, p. 133-143; 137-138, 139 (2 leaves), 142-155. Text and maps are separately indexed.

Access: Advance notice required.

Preferred citation: Adam W. Spies real estate and genealogy scrapbook, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

Processing note: Compiled by Susan P. Waide, 2014

Key Terms

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Cadastral maps
Clippings
Drawings (visual works)
Manuscript maps
Memoirs
Scrapbooks
Silhouettes
Watercolors

Occupations

Fire fighters
Landowners
Merchants
Philanthropists

Geographic Names

Manhattan (New York, N.Y.)
New York (N.Y.) -- Social life and customs -- 19th century
New York (State) -- Genealogy
Williamsburg (New York, N.Y.)

Subjects

Real estate management -- United States
Real property -- United States

Names

Spies, Adam W. (Adam William), 1800-1891
Berg family
Morrison family
Spies family
New York (N.Y.). Fire Department