

**New York Public Library
Humanities and Social Sciences Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

Robert Bonner, 1824 - 1899

Papers, 1845 - 1899

**(DRAFT)
Compiled by Valerie Wingfield
August 2000**

DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

- Main Entry:** Bonner, Robert, 1824 - 1899
- Title:** Robert Bonner Papers, 1845 - 1899
- Size:** 7 linear ft. (16 boxes)
- Source:** Purchased from American Autograph Shop and Richard S. Wormser (1937)
- Abstract:** Robert Bonner (1824 - 1899) was a newspaper publisher and trotting horse breeder. He owned and published the *New York Ledger*. The collection consists of correspondence, trotting horse papers, financial documents, writings, photographs, and artifacts. The correspondence includes letters to Bonner as proprietor of the *New York Ledger*, with a few drafts of his replies, mostly from contributors offering stories, suggesting plots, soliciting money, acknowledging remuneration, and relating to personal matters; letters from Presbyterian clergymen about church affairs; and letters from the owners of the *New York Sun*, *New York Herald*, and *New York Times*, revealing Bonner's willingness to lend financial aid to those newspapers. Notable correspondents include Henry Ward Beecher, Thomas M. Clark, Sylvanus Cobb, John Hall, Leon and Harriet Lewis, and William Henry Peck. The materials relating to the breeding, development, and shoeing of trotting horses contain letters from owners, breeders, veterinarians, editors of sporting journals, and others from all parts of the United States, but especially Kentucky; notes on horses; accounts; scrapbooks of newspaper clippings containing biographical data and other material on the horse and on the Scotch Irish Society of America.
- Special Formats:** Hay, metal links, photographs, sketches, and artifacts

RELATED MATERIALS NOTE

General Research Division: Classmark AN++ (Bonner, Robert. Scrapbook of newspaper clippings). Bonner, Robert. Scrapbook of newspaper clippings. 2 vols.
Subject: Horses

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Robert Bonner (1824 - 1899) was born near Londonderry (modern name Derry), Northern Ireland on April 28, 1824. He immigrated to the United States with his family as a child. At the age of fifteen, Bonner apprenticed at the *Hartford Courant* for five years. This Connecticut newspaper (started in 1764) is currently the country's oldest newspaper in continuous publication. Following this apprenticeship, Bonner moved to New York City as a correspondent, working for the *Evening Mirror*. Having accumulated enough money during this period, Bonner purchased the *Merchant Ledger* a financial weekly paper in 1851. Four years later, Bonner changed the name to the *New York Ledger*. At the helm of the newspaper, Bonner hired Fanny Fern, a well know author to write *One hundred dollar a column story*. Bonner also hired other popular writers including William Cullen Bryant and Henry Ward Beecher. Thus, Bonner changed the focus of the newspaper from a strictly financial newspaper to one of popular interest. He succeeded because the *New York Ledger* attained a circulation of 400,000 copies resulting in Bonner becoming a millionaire. When Bonner retired, he turned the paper over to his three sons, Allen, Robert Edwin and Frederick Bonner.

Managing and owning trotting horses was Bonner's other main business interest. This included breeding and care of trotting horses. With regard to family, Bonner married Jane McCanlis in 1850. There were six children from this marriage. Bonner died in 1899 and his survivors included his wife, sons and two brothers: William Bonner a farmer in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, and David Bonner, a merchant in Stamford, CT.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection reflects the business side of Robert Bonner, (1824 - 1899), owner of the New York City newspaper the *New York Ledger* and his interest in trotting horses. The collection also documents his influence as a successful nineteenth century businessman. This collection is equally divided between Bonner's two businesses with correspondence being the bulk of the material. Prominent correspondents in the General Correspondence include Henry Ward Beecher, Sylvanus Cobb, among others. The Trotting Horse Papers correspondence includes materials from breeders, veterinarians and others involved in horse sports and trade support. Financial and legal records, writings, printed matter, illustrations, photographs and artifacts support this correspondence.

ARRANGEMENT NOTE

The collection is arranged into five series:

- I. General Correspondence
- II. Trotting Horse Papers
- III. Financial and Legal Records
- IV. Writings
- V. Printed Matter, Photographs, Sketches, Artifacts and Miscellany

SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

SERIES I. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

BOXES 1 - 6

The General Correspondence is arranged alphabetically by correspondent. Letters to Bonner are written to him in the capacity of owner of the *Ledger*. There are a few drafts of his replies. Correspondence includes letters from contributors offering stories for publication, solicitation for money, acknowledgment of remuneration and personal matters. There are also letters from the owners of the *New York Sun*, the *New York Herald*, and the *New York Times*. Notable correspondents include Henry Ward Beecher, Thomas M. Clark, Sylvanus Cobb, John Hall, Leon and Harriet Lewis, and William Henry Peck. The subseries of the General Correspondence, 1860 - 1899, is a small group of letters chronologically arranged (box 6). **See:** Index to General Correspondence.

SERIES II. TROTTING HORSE PAPERS

BOXES 7 - 12

The Trotting Horse Correspondence, 1845 - 1890, is arranged chronologically. These letters are related to breeding, development and shoeing of horses. Letters are from horse owners, breeders, veterinarians, and editors of sporting journals and other interested individuals from around the country. Excellent example of nineteenth century typeface and beautifully illustrated letterheads are part of this series.

SERIES III. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL RECORDS

BOX 13

This minor series contains an assortment of financial records, 1860 - 1899, mainly relating to Bonner's horses. There are three agreements, 1890; 1894, between Bonner and the New York Horse Manure Co.

SERIES IV. WRITINGS

BOXES 14 - 15

This series contains Bonner's notes on horses, notes on shoeing 1874 - 1897, notes on speed of horse, and horseshoes. The remainder of this series is prescriptions appropriate

for horses.

Series V. Printed Material, Drawings, Photographs, Artifacts and Miscellany
Box 16

This minor series contains a mixture of materials. There are some assorted newspaper articles, calling cards, drawings relating to horses, photographs of individuals and horses, artifacts relating to horses, and miscellany. The ink sketches may have been drawn by Bonner and include an illustration for a racetrack and a wheel for the trotting horse carriage. The hay and metal link artifacts may have been connected to horse carriages.

CONTAINER LIST

Box		Series I. General Correspondence (see index)
1	1	Abbot, John C.
	2	Addey – Atwood
	3	B – Barnum
	4	Bartlett, William O. and Bartlett, Willard
	5	Beecher, Henry Ward 1860 - 1866
	6	1867 - 1872
	7	1873 - 1887
	8	n.d.
	9	Bell – Bridgman
	10	Brown – Burleigh
	11	Calhoun
	12	Carlton – Chester
	13	Childs, George W.
	14	Church – Clarke, G.
	15	Clarke, Thomas M.
	16	Cleveland – Cooke
	17	Coxe, A.
	18	Cozzens – Crowell
2		Cobb, Sylvanus
	1	1860
	2	1861
	3	1862
	4	1863
	5	1864
	6	1866 - 1869
	7	1871 - 1872
	8	1873
	9	1874 - 1875
	10	1876 - 1879
	11	1882 - 1883
	12	1884 - 1887; n.d.
	13	Correspondence by other family members
	14	Dallas – Dalzell
	15	Dana
	16	DeMille – Durant
17	E	
3	1	Field – Field
	2	Floyd, A.C.
	3	Francis, M. – Fuller
	4	Gallaher – Gayler

- | | | |
|---|----|---------------------------|
| | 5 | Gifford, Martha C. |
| | 6 | Greeley, R.F. |
| | | Hall, John |
| | 7 | 1870 - 1872 |
| | 8 | 1873 - 1878 |
| | 9 | 1880 - 1889 |
| | 10 | 1890 - 1898 |
| | 11 | n.d. |
| | 12 | n.d. |
| | 13 | n.d. |
| | 14 | Empty envelopes |
| | 15 | Empty envelopes |
| | 16 | Halpine – Hopper |
| | 17 | Jennings, J.L. |
| | 18 | Jewitt, Solomon L. |
| | 19 | Jones, George 1873 - 1883 |
| 4 | 1 | K |
| | 2 | L – Levert |
| | | Lewis, Leon and Harriet |
| | 3 | 1862 - 1870 |
| | 4 | 1872 - 1873 |
| | 5 | 1874 |
| | 6 | 1875 |
| | 7 | 1876 |
| | 8 | 1877 |
| | 9 | 1878 |
| | 10 | 1883 - 1898 |
| | 11 | Leyburn – Lynn |
| | 12 | M – Manning |
| | 13 | Marble – Miller |
| | 14 | Moffat – Myers |
| | 15 | N – O |
| | 16 | P – Palmer |
| | 17 | Parry, Sallie |
| | 18 | Empty envelopes |
| | 19 | Parton, James |
| | 20 | Paton – Paul |
| 5 | 1 | Payne – Peck |
| | | Peck, William H. |
| | 2 | 1875 - 1877 |
| | 3 | 1878 - 1879 |
| | 4 | 1880 - 1885 |
| | 5 | Peterson – R |

- 6 S – Sheridan
- 7 Sherman – Sherwood
- 8 Sibourney, Lydia H.
- 9 Sinclair, Samuel
- 10 Smith, John F.

- 11 Smith – Suisshelm
- 12 T – Tupper
- 13 Tyng, S.H.
- 14 U
- 15 W – Watson
- 16 Wheeler – Whittaker
- 17 Wilkes, George 1863 - 1870
- 18 1873 - 1877
- 19 Williams – Wilson
- 20 Windship, George B.

- 6 1 Winter, Elizabeth C.
- 2 Wright, Julia M.
- 3 Wright – Wylie
- 4 Y

- 5 1860 - 1862
- 6 1863 - 1869
- 7 1870 - 1875
- 8 1876 - 1879
- 9 1880 - 882
- 10 1883 - 1889
- 11 1890
- 12 1891
- 13 1892
- 14 1893
- 15 1894 - 1899
- 16 n.d.
- 17 Miscellaneous

Series II. Trotting Horse Papers

- 7 Trotting Horse Correspondence
- 1 1845 - 1865
- 2 1866 - 1870
- 3 1871
- 4 1872 - 1873
- 5 1874 Jan - Jun
- 6 1874 Jul - Dec
- 7 1875 Jan - Jun
- 8 1875 Jul - Dec

	9	1876 Jan - Feb
	10	1876 Mar - Apr
	11	1876 May - Jun
	12	1876 Jul - Aug
	13	1876 Sep - Dec
	14	1877 Jul - Oct
	15	1877 Nov - Dec
8	1	1878
	2	1879 Jan - Jun
	3	1879 Jul - Aug
	4	1880
	5	1881
	6	1882
	7	1883 - 1884
	8	1885 Jan - Jun
	9	1885 Jul - Dec
	10	1886 - 1887
	11	1888
9	1	1889 Jan - Jun
	2	1889 Jul - Dec
	3	1889 Nov - Dec
	4	1890 Jan - Feb
	5	1890 Mar - Jun
	6	1890 Jun - Aug
	7	1890 Sep
	8	1890 Oct - Dec
	9	1891 Jan - Feb
	10	1891 Mar. - Apr
	11	1891 May - Jun
	12	1891 Jul - Sep
	13	1891 Oct
10	1	1891 Nov
	2	1891 Dec
	3	1892 Jan - Feb
	4	1892 Mar - Apr
	5	1892 May
	6	1892 Jun - Jul
	7	1892 Aug - Sep
	8	1892 Oct
	9	1892 Nov - Dec
	10	1893 Jan - Mar
	11	1893 Apr - Jun
	12	1893 Jul - Dec.

- 11 1 1894 Jan - Mar
- 2 1894 Apr - Jun
- 3 1894 Jul - Sep
- 4 1894 Oct - Nov
- 5 1894 Dec
- 6 1895 Mar - Jun
- 7 1895 Jul - Dec
- 8 1896
- 9 1897
- 10 1898
- 11 1899
- 12 n.d.

- 12 1 1873 - 1878
- 2 1879
- 3 1890

Series III. Financial and Legal Records

- 13 Accounts
- 1 1860 - 1896
- 2 1873
- 3 1874 - 1875
- 4 1876 - 1877
- 5 1878 - 1889
- 6 1890 - 1893
- 7 1894 - 1899
- 8 Agreements 1890; 1894

Series IV. Writings

- 14 Notes on shoeing horses
- 1 1874 - 1878
- 2 1880 - 1885
- 3 1886 - 1887
- 4 1888
- 5 1889 - 1897
- 6 n.d.
- 7 Notes on speed of horses
- 8 Miscellaneous notes on horses
- 9 Miscellaneous notes on horses
- 10 Notes on horse shoes
- 11 Notes on pedigree
- 12 Prescriptions for horses

- 15 1 Notes on horses

Series V. Photographs, Sketches, Artifacts and Miscellany

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 15 | 2 | Ink sketch of a wheel |
| | | Ink sketch of three quarter track |
| | 3 | Miscellaneous illustrations; postcards |
| 16 | 1 | Calling cards |
| | 2 | Address on trotting horse before New York farmers |
| | 3 | Horse shoeing (printed) |
| | 4 | Miscellaneous printed material |
| | 5 | Miscellaneous printed material |
| | 6 | News Clippings |

INDEX TO GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE
(Boxes 1-6)

Box 1
Abbott, John S.C. 1861 - 1865
Addey, H.M. 1865
Alcorn, James T. 1864
Ames, Mary C. 1861 - 1873
Arculaims, Henry 1865
Armitage, Thomas 1868
Arnold, George 1862
Atkins, Katy C. 1868
Atwood, (Mrs.) Montgomery see: Payne, Mrs. J. Horne
Baden, Frances H. n.d.
Bancroft, George 1860 - 1885
Barnum, P.T. 1862
Bartlett, William O. and Willard 1839 - 1887
Beecher, Henry Ward 1860 - 1862
Bell, C.S. 1865 - 1876
Bennett, Emerson 1880
Blanchard, George 1861
Booth, Robert 1879
Bridgman, Charles 1891
Brown, David Paul 1860
Browne, Emma Alice 1874 - 1876
Browne, William M. 1860
Bryant, William Cullen 1860 - 1872
Bundy, J.M. 1871
Burdleihg, William H. 1869
Calhoun, A.B. 1879 - 1887
Carlston, Gerald 1882
Cary, Alice 1865
Ches?, Caroline 1862 - 1866
Chester, Anson G. 1879
Childs, George W. ? - 1892
Church, Ella R. 1876
Clapp, Henry JR. 1870
Clarke, George W. 1865 - 1871
Clark, Thomas N. 1875 - 1885;n.d.
Cleveland, Cecilia n.d.
Cobb, Sylvanus 1860 - 1887 see: Box 2
Conant, H.C. 1862

Conwell, John A. 1863
Cooke, Pearsons 1880
Coxe, A. Cleveland 1876 - 1877
Cozzens, Frederick S. 1862
Croffut, W.A. 1877
Crofton, F. Blake 1874 - 1875
Crowell, Mary B. 1883
Box 2
Dallas, Mary Kyle 1866 - 1868
Dallzell, Private 1873
Dana, Charles Anderson and Paul 1873 - 1896
DeMille, James 1861
Dixon, H.W. n.d.
Doree, Nadage 1899
Downing, Fanny 1868
Durant, Jul G. 1869
Echols, John W. 1890 - 1897
Elliott, John 1878 - 1880
Ellis, Edward S. 1881
Everett, William 1877 - 1881
Box 3
Field, Henry M. 1887 - 1892
Field, Kate 1892
Floyd, A.C. 1889 - 1894
Francis, Mary 1874 - 1881
Fuller, William P. 1873 - 1885
Gallaher, John 1873 - 1880
Gardette, Charles D. 1875 - 1878
Gayler, Charles 1875
Gifford, Martha C. 1873 - 1882
Greely, R.F. 1874
Hall, John 1870 - 1898; n.d.
Halpine, Mary Grace 1867
Hill, Mona 1867
Hopper, Sarah L. n.d.
Jennings, J.L. 1874 - 1876
Jewitt, Solomon W. 1864
Jones, George 1873 - 1883
Box 4
Kellogg, Peter C. 1871 - 1878
Keyes, Lillian 1886

King, Thomas 1878
Lester, C. Edwards 1880
Levert,, Octavia n.d.
Lewis, Leon and Harriet 1862 - 1878;n.d.
Lewis, Leon 1883 - 1898
Leyburn, John 1882
Libbey, Laura Jean 1887
Lynn, Ethel 1895
Mackenzie, Adelheid 1879
Macloskie, George 1892 - 1898
MacNamus, Ella Burr 1880
Manning, Etta n.d.
Marble, Earl 1880
Mathews, J.A. 1894
McDermott, Hugh F. 1878
McDonnell, Katherine 1873
Milburn, William H. 1883
Miles, A.M. n.d.
Miller, Joaquin n.d.
Moffat, Mary E. 1875
Moran, John 1876
Morton, (Mrs.) J.A. 1876
Murray, Reverend 1875
Myers, P. Hamilton 1876 - 1877
Nitsch, Helen Alice 1883
Ott?, ? 1873 - 1879
Ouida, pseud. see: Payne, Mrs. J. Horne
Page, H.C. 1877
Palmer, Allen B. 1876 - 1882
Parry, Sallie 1868 - 1889
Parton, James 1883 - 1884
Paton, W.A. 1878 - 1879
Paul, L.A. 1874 - 1880
Box 5
Payne, (Mrs.) J. Horne 1868
Peck, William Henry 1874 - 1885
Paterson, T.B. 1876
Reed, William B. 1874
Reid, Whitelaw 1876
Ritchie, William F. 1861
Robinson, Phil n.d.

Sargent, Epes 1862 - 1873
Scawlaw, Lucy A. 1864
Scovel, James M. 1879
Shepherd, D. 1862 - 1865
Shepherd, N.G. 1863
Sheridan, Mattie n.d.
Sherman, Cecilia 1868
Sherwood, M.N. n.d.
Sibourney, Lydia Huntley 1861 - 1864
Sinclair, Samuel 1861 - 1873
Smith, John Frederick 1870 - 1885
Smith. Mary Burrows 1887
Smith, Mathews Hale 1871
Smith, Roswell 1877
Smythies, H.M. Gordon n.d.
Sprague, Amasa 1864
Stouffer, Frank H. 1876
Suisshelm, G. 1878
Thomson, Mortimer 1874
Tilton, Theodore 1861 - 1869
Tupper, Ellin Isabelle n.d.
Tupper, Martin F. 1877
Tyng, Stephen H. 1868 - 1878
Urner, Nathan D. 1879 - 1881
Wakeman, George n.d.
Wallace, William Rose 1869
Wallis, George B. 1860
Ward, Sam 1863
Ware, W. Powell 1871
Watson, I.W. 1862 - 1881
Wheeler, William T. 1862
White, H. 1885 - 1888?
Whittaker, Frederick 1885 - 1886
Whiteley, L.A. 1860
Wilkes, George 1863 - ?
Williams, J. 1868
Willis, J.S. 1871
Willis, N. P. 1861
Wilson, James Grant 1866 - 1889
Windship, George B. 1861 - 1862
Box 6
Winter, Elizabeth Campbell 1862 - 1891

Wright, Julia Menair 1879 - 1882
Wylie, A. McElrey 1871 - 1876
Wright, Thomas T. 1890 - 1892
Young, W.C. 1889 - 1910