

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

**James Lenox Papers
1818-1941**

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February 2005**

This version produced March 2005

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Summary

- Main entry:** Lenox, James, 1800-1880.
- Title:** James Lenox Papers, 1818-1941
- Size:** 4 linear feet linear feet (9 boxes)
- Source:** Received from E. G. Allen, G. A. Baker, H. T. Friedman, University of Michigan, Presbyterian Church, I. & P. Robinson, W. T. Sabin, Jerome I. Smith, Henry Stevens Son & Stiles.
- Abstract:** Papers document the life of the New York bibliophile James Lenox, with an emphasis on his book collecting and philanthropic activities.
- Access:** Apply in the Special Collections Office for admission to the Manuscripts and Archives Division.
- Preferred citation:** James Lenox Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

Related materials note

Lenox Library Records. New York Public Library Archives.

Biographical note

James Lenox was born on August 19, 1800 at 59 Broadway in New York City. His father was Robert Lenox, who was born in 1759 in Kirkcubright, Scotland. Robert Lenox had migrated to New York City in the 1770s, and married Rachel Carmer in 1783. Robert Lenox was a merchant who was heavily invested in New York City real estate.

James Lenox received an A.B. from Columbia College in 1818, and later received Masters degrees from Columbia and the College of New Jersey (now known as Princeton University). He studied law and was admitted to the New York bar on January 18, 1822. After spending time in Europe, he returned to New York City and joined his father's business as an importing merchant. From 1829 until 1840, he worked at the firm known as Robert Lenox and Son, located at 59 Broadway.

Upon the 1839 death of his father, who was by then one of the wealthiest men in New York City, Lenox inherited property that included a large farm of 300 acres in the upper part of the city. Lenox carried on the family business until 1845, when he retired to concentrate on book collecting and supporting charitable organizations. Lenox gave land to the Presbyterian Hospital and Presbyterian Home for Aged Women. He was active in the Presbyterian Church on Fifth Avenue. Lenox was a trustee of the College of New Jersey from 1833-1857, and served the Princeton Seminary as trustee (1831-1879) and director (1835-1847). During the last twelve years of his life, he gave away three million dollars to charities.

In 1845, Lenox began to collaborate with Henry Stevens, an American book purchasing agent who lived in London. Stevens assisted Lenox in the development of a fine collection of rare books, especially Americana and early Bibles. Letters, notes, lists, and invoices passed between the two by almost every steamer for fifteen years. The first copy of a Gutenberg Bible to come to the United States was a James Lenox acquisition of 1847. Lenox also bought manuscripts, engravings, maps, and paintings.

Lenox eventually decided to make his collections accessible to scholars and the public by establishing an independent library to manage them. In 1870 the Lenox Library was incorporated with a nine-member board of trustees, and plans were made for a new library building to house the materials, then in Lenox's home. The architect selected was Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895) and the site (owned and donated to the new institution by Lenox) was Fifth Avenue between 70th and 71st streets in Manhattan.

James Lenox died at the age of 53 on February 17, 1880 at his residence at 53 Fifth Avenue. He is buried in New York City at the Marble Cemetery on Second Street. In 1895, the Lenox Library joined with the Astor Library and Tilden Trust to form The New York Public Library.

Scope and content note

Papers document the life of James Lenox with a focus on his book collecting and philanthropic activities. The papers consist of letters, invoices, notebooks, passports, drawings, photographs, and ephemera. The date span is 1818-1878. The bulk of the collection consists of general correspondence from the years 1844-1878, and concerns book collecting. The records of his personal life highlight his involvement with charitable organizations as well as his family affairs.

Arrangement note

The James Lenox Papers are organized in the following series:

- I. Correspondence, 1837-1878
- II. Book Dealer's and Publisher's Invoices, 1847-1878
- III. Subject Files, 1841-1886
- IV. Personal Papers, 1818-1941

Series descriptions and container list

I. Correspondence, 1837-1878

A. General

General Correspondence is arranged alphabetically in four boxes. The majority of the correspondence is incoming. Frequent correspondents included Ferdinand de Brackeleer (Belgian artist), Thomas Chalmers (Scottish author), Charles Robert Leslie (English painter and author), George Livermore (American authority on Bibles) and J. Valence (English museum proprietor). The most frequent correspondent is Henry Stevens, Lenox's book purchasing agent whose letters date from 1846-1879 and provide detailed information on some of Lenox's most significant acquisitions.

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>		
1	1	Allen, Edward G., 1859	
	2	Allen, Edward G., 1859-1861 (From Francis Fry)	
	3	Allen, Edward G., 1859-1869 (Invoices, statements and receipts)	
	4	Allen, Edward G., 1859-1879 (Letters from James Lenox)	
	5-9	Allen, Edward G., 1860-1872	
	10	Allibone, S. Austin, 1879-1881 (Regarding catalog)	
	11	Allibone, S. Austin, 1880-1887	
	12	Arber, Edward, 1877-1878	
	13	Aspinwall, H., 1850-1870	
	2	1	Barlow, S. L. M., 1869-1877
		2	Bartlett, John, 1855-1877
		3	Blades, William, 1859-1860
		4	Brackeleer, Ferdinand de, 1850-1859
5		Breckenridge, Robert J., 1842	
6-7		Brotherly, Barrington, 1855-1857	
8		Buffa, Francois, 1856-1860	
9-10		Chalmers, Dr. Thomas, 1845-1847	
11		Chapman, John G., 1851-1853	
12		Cotton, Henry, 1861-1864	
13		Cotton, William, 1859	
14		Cox, Samuel S., 1870	
15		Crawford, Thomas, 1852	
16		Deane, Charles, 1854-1872	
17		Eich, Dr., 1862	
18		Fish, Hamilton, 1870-1879	
19		Force, Peter, 1849-1861	
20-21		Fry, Francis, 1861-1870	
22		Gagginipote, Bernardo, 1841	
23		Gallatin, Albert, 1847	
24		Gardiner, Wm. W., 1868-1869	
25		Girod, Ducommun, 1850	
26		Goyangos, P. de, 1860-1863	
27		Greene & Co., 1855-1857	
28		[Gutenberg Bible], 1847-1850	
29		Halliwell, J. O., 1861-1868	
30	Hermann, J. M., 1850-1851		
31	Hodges Smith & Co., 1862-1863		
32	Humplmays, August, 1855-1860		
33	Jones, Charles C., 1873-1874		
34	Kilian, A. J., 1820-1898		
35	Leeds, Henry H., 1864 (Regarding artwork)		

	36	Lenox, James, 1855-1857
	37-38	Leslie, C. R., 1844-1852
	39	Livermoore, George, 1854-1858
3	1	Mills, Glyn, 1837-1856
	2	Miscellaneous A-D
	3	Miscellaneous E-M
	4	Miscellaneous Ma-R
	5	Miscellaneous S-W
	6	Moore, George H., 1858-1867
	7	Moreau, John B., 1860-1865
	8	Muller, Frederik, 1850-1857
	9	Murphy, Henry C., 1859-1875
	10	Nijhoff, Martinus, 1857-1862
	11	O'Callaghan, Edmund B., 1860-1875
	12	Pagee, Leon, 1855-1862
	13	Parkman, Frances, 1857
	14	Pickering, William, 1851
	15	Portier, L., 1856-1861
	16	Powers, Hiram, 1851-1856
	17	Quaritch, Bernard, 1879
	18	Rafn, Charc C., 1849-1852
	19	Saporti, Marquis Rocca, 1857-1858
	20	Shea, John Gilmary, 1857-1866
	21	Sobolewski, S., 1850-1868
	22	St. Hilaire, 1857-1863
	23	Staelin, 1856-1864
	24	Stevens, B. F., 1862
	25-30	Stevens, Henry, 1846-1851
	31-36	Stevens, Henry, 1846 1851 (Transcriptions)
4	1-3	Stevens, Henry, 1852-1854
	4-6	Stevens, Henry, 1852-1854 (Transcriptions)
	7-24	Stevens, Henry, 1855-1879, n.d.
	25	Stewart, Robert, 1861-1873
	26	Suarez, L.S., 1859-1861
	27	Thierry-Mieg, 1862-1864
	28	Thuttel, Francois, 1855-1856
	29	Trowbridge, Tillman, 1865-1874
	30	Valance, John, 1850-1852
	31	Verbackhaven, Eugene, 1850-1851 (Concerning artwork)
	32	Wagner, Archalt, 1856-1857
	33	Weigel, J.O., 1858-1863
	34	Willing, Richard, 1843-1852

B. Acknowledgements of Gifts Received from James Lenox

Acknowledgements of Gifts Received from James Lenox consist of eighteen folders dating from 1850-1869, arranged chronologically. Acknowledgements were sent by universities, historical societies, and public libraries as well as other institutions from across the country.

5	1-14	1850-1861
6	1-4	1862-1869, n.d.

II. Book Dealer's and Publisher's Invoices, 1847-1878

Sixteen folders, arranged alphabetically. The majority of the book dealer's and publisher's invoices are from Henry Stevens, F.W. Christern, and John Wiley.

6	5	Christern, F. W., 1855-1879
	6	Crosby, O. H., 1858-1861
	7	Elliot, D. G., 1864-1868
	8	Gowans, 1858-1862
	9	Munsell, Joel, 1857-1867
	10	Norton, Charles B., 1855-1859
	11	O' Callaghan, Edmund B., 1858
	12	Putnam, G. P., 1858-1859
	13	Randolph, Anson D. F., 1858-1878
	14	Richardson, Chas B., 1859-1865
	15	Shea, John, 1866-1868
	16	Stevens, Henry, 1847
	17	Westermann, B., 1860-1867
	18	Wiggin, J. K., 1866-1867
	19	Wiley, John, 1854-1864
	20	Miscellaneous, 1854-1878

III. Subject Files, 1841-1886

Subject files, arranged alphabetically, reflect Lenox's involvement with charitable organizations. Eleven of the folders deal with the Presbyterian church, hospital, or historical society. Four folders contain notebooks of the Presbyterian Church's acknowledgements of special donations from 1853 through 1860. Other organizations represented include the American Bible Society, Inebriate Asylum, the Redwood Library and the Princeton Theological Seminary. Three folders document the Stuart Collection and contain miscellaneous lists, dealers' statements and memorandums related to books formerly owned by Robert Stuart, and acquired by Lenox. There is one folder which contains an incomplete draft and part of the galley proofs of "Recollections of James Lenox" by Henry Stevens.

7	1	American Bible Society, 1871 (Letters regarding James Lenox's resignation as president)
	2	Central Park, 1853-1854 (Correspondence relating to Fourth Avenue)
	3	Central Park, 1867 (Acknowledgement of donation of plants)
	4	Historical Societies, 1854-1860 (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York City)
	5	Inebriate Asylum, 1863-1866 (Letters of thanks for financial contributions and donated books)
	6	Miscellaneous printed material, 1855-1880, n.d.
	7	
	8	Presbyterian Church, 1841-1862 (Minutes of Executive Committee of Board of Publication)
	9	Presbyterian Church, 1844-1864, n.d.
	10-13	Presbyterian Church, 1853-1860 (Acknowledgements of special donations)
8	1	Presbyterian Hospital, 1868 (Letters regarding Lenox becoming a trustee)
	2	Presbyterian Hospital, 1868-1874
	3	Presbyterian Hospital, 1870-1876 (Correspondence regarding paving of street)
	4	Presbyterian Historical Society, 1841-1843 (Transcripts of letters to officials)
	5	Presbyterian Historical Society, 1841-1860 (List of letters to officials)
	6	Protestant church & school, n.d. (Drawings of sites in Genoa, Italy)
	7	Redwood Library, 1864 (Regarding donated books)
	8	Stevens, Henry, 1886 ("Recollections of James Lenox")

- 9-11 Stuart Collection, 1856-1884
 12 Theological Seminary, 1842 (Specifications and contracts for building of library)
 13 Theological Seminary, 1861-1879 (Correspondence regarding the installation of heating system)

IV. Personal Papers, 1818-1941

Personal items such as Lenox's passport, photographs, canceled checks, and letters and invoices for clothing. Two folders contain information about the ancestral home of the Lenox family in Scotland.

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| 8 | 14 | Cancelled checks, 1870-1873 |
| <u>Map case</u> | <u>Drawer</u> | |
| 200-A | 2 | Diplomas and certificates awarded to James Lenox, v.d. |
| <u>Box</u> | | |
| X-5 | | Diplomas and certificates awarded to James Lenox, v.d. |
| 8 | 15 | Hulsius, DeBryietc, n.d. |
| | 16 | Lenox, James, and The Lenox Library, 1853-1941 |
| | 17 | Lenox Farm, 1835-1836 |
| | 18 | Lenox genealogy, n.d. |
| | 19 | Lenox, Rachel - Book of Common Prayer, n.d. |
| | 20 | Letters and Invoices for clothing, 1858-1870 |
| | 21 | McMillan, Dr., 1858-1864 (Memorandum regarding land at Millhouse, Scotland) |
| | 22 | Memoranda, Bills on books sponsored and privately printed by James Lenox, n.d. |
| 9 | 1 | Miscellaneous printed material, 1818-1871, n.d. |
| | 2 | Miscellaneous written papers, 1843-1880, n.d. |
| | 3 | Notebooks, n.d. |
| | 4 | Passports, 1824-1856 |
| | 5 | Photographs, n.d. |
| | 6 | Remembrance of Lenox and Stevens, 1880-1886 |
| | 7 | Residence of James Lenox, n.d. |
| | 8 | Scotland papers, n.d. |
| | 9 | Writings "on the influence of self love", 1821 |