



**Girard College Historical Collections  
Founder's Hall, Girard College  
2101 S. College Ave, Philadelphia PA 1921**

Kathy Haas

Director of Historical Resources

[khaas@girardcollege.edu](mailto:khaas@girardcollege.edu); 215-787-4434

The Girard College Historical Collections preserve and interpret historical materials associated with Stephen Girard and Girard College. Stephen Girard (1750 –1831) was a French-born, naturalized American, who made a fortune as a mariner, merchant, banker and landowner. He ran the fever hospital at Bush Hill during the Yellow Fever epidemic of 1793, saved the U.S. government from financial collapse during the War of 1812, and died as one of the wealthiest men in American history. In his will he bequeathed nearly his entire fortune to charity, including an endowment for establishing a boarding school for "poor, white, male" orphans in Philadelphia. Today Girard College is multi-racial and co-educational; it continues to serve academically capable students from families with limited financial resources.

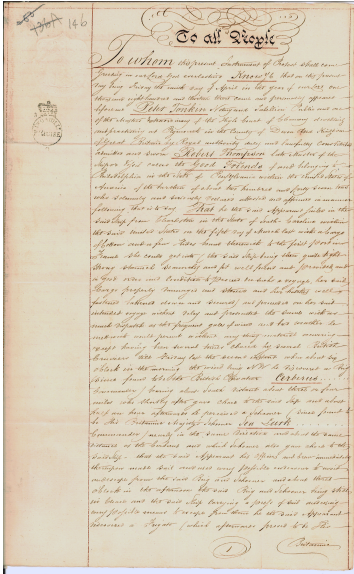


Stephen Girard willed his papers and possessions to the school he created; today this uniquely well-preserved collection of 500 objects and 100,000 pages of letters, ledgers, craftsman bills, maritime records, hospital records etc. gives insight not only into Girard but also into the world of early national Philadelphia. The papers segment of this collection is also available to researchers on microfilm at the American Philosophical Society.

The Girard College Historical Collections also chronicle the history of the unprecedented school Girard endowed for disadvantaged youth and provide resources for the study of educational, architectural and Philadelphia history through tens of thousands of thousands of photographs, archival records, and objects.

# Debate and Diplomacy in History

## Examples of topics represented in the Girard College Historical Collections:



### Fever 1793

The debate over the causes of the deadly fever epidemic in Philadelphia and the best way to treat patients and protect public health.

### Post-Revolutionary Diplomacy

The debate over U.S. relations with other nations in the post-Revolution period, its effect on merchants, and their attempts to deal with the shifting international landscape and make their concerns heard during the Napoleonic wars and the War of 1812.

### Central Banking

The debate over the creation and management of the First and Second Banks of the United States.

### Architecture

The debate over the Greek Revival architecture of Girard College, which reflected ideological divisions in Philadelphia between Jacksonian populists and Whigs.

### Civil Rights Movement

The different strategies and tactics used in the struggle to desegregate Girard College, a key Northern civil rights case led by Nathan Mossell, Raymond Pace Alexander, and Cecil B. Moore.

### Education:

The debate over the goals and methods of American education and especially education for under-served students. The Girard collections document two centuries of debates and changing ideas about the goals and means of education, academic vs. vocational training, the role of religion in education, etc.

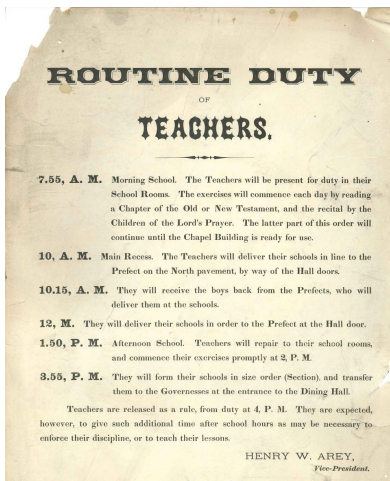


Photo Courtesy  
Robert F. Houston

