

Constantine Samuel Rafinesque papers, 1818-1977

ANSP.Coll.418

Finding aid prepared by Garrett Boos

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia

2010.12.07

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Summary Information

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Repository | Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia |
| Creator | Rafinesque, C. S., (Constantine Samuel), 1783-1840 |
| Title | Constantine Samuel Rafinesque papers |
| Date [inclusive] | 1818-1977 |
| Extent | 5.0 Linear Inches |
| Language | English |
| Abstract | Constantine Samuel Rafinesque (1783-1840) was a naturalist who is best known for his contributions to scientific classification and nomenclature and giving Latin names to approximately 6,700 plants. While in the United States, he toured west of the Alleghenies and made important botanical discoveries in Kentucky and Illinois. This collection dates from 1818 to 1977 and consists of copies of Rafinesque's professional letters, family material, and research by F. W. Pennell regarding Rafinesque. The majority of the collection is composed of biographical letters and rough drafts made by Pennell. |

Preferred Citation note

[Description and date of item], [Box/folder number], Coll.418, Constantine Samuel Rafinesque papers, 1818-1977, Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia.

Biographical/Historical note

Constantine Samuel Rafinesque (1783-1840) was a naturalist who is best known for his contributions to scientific classification and nomenclature and giving Latin names to approximately 6,700 plants.

Rafinesque was born in Galata, near Constantinople on October 22, 1783, the son of Francois G. A. and Madeleine Rafinesque. Much troubled by the turmoil in France in the late 1700s and early 1800s, his father moved frequently, from France, to Italy and to Philadelphia, where he died of yellow fever in 1793. Rafinesque was educated in Italy, but was largely self-taught.

In 1802, Rafinesque arrived in Philadelphia for an apprenticeship with the mercantile house of the Clifford Brothers. However, he was fascinated by the plants and wildlife he saw on the North American continent and in 1804, he left his work with Clifford Brothers and "made extended botanical tours into Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia," (p. 368).

He returned to Italy, circa 1805, where he served as secretary to the United States Consul, and at the same time, collected specimens, studied botany, and wrote extensively. He lived there for ten years before returning to the United States in 1815. During his 1815 voyage, he was shipwrecked near Long Island and his collection of specimens, sketches, and unpublished manuscripts were lost. Upon his arrival in North America, he traveled throughout the United States, particularly along the Ohio River and in Kentucky. In 1819, Rafinesque took the position as professor of botany at Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky. While at Transylvania University, he was "often troubled by quarrels with colleagues, [but his years there] were among his most productive," (University of Evansville).

In 1826, he returned to Philadelphia, where "he traded in specimens and books; he gave public lectures; he organized a workingmen's bank; he invented and marketed a nostrum for tuberculosis," (University of Evansville), in addition to writing and publishing more than 200 works. At the time of his death, in Philadelphia in 1840, he had named approximately 6,700 plants.

Bibliography:

University of Evansville. "Constantine Samuel Rafinesque (1783-1840) naturalist," <http://faculty.evansville.edu/ck6/bstud/rafin.htm> (accessed November 28, 2011).

Scope and Contents note

The collection of Rafinesque's papers dates from 1818 to 1977. It contains xeroxed copies of letters and some of Rafinesque's notes, notes by Francis Whittier Pennell for his study of Rafinesque, and family letters, manuscripts, an engraving, and a bicentennial celebration for Transylvania University. The

majority of the collection is composed of biographical letters and rough drafts made by Francis Whittier Pennell, a botanist who was extremely interested in the history and lives of early American botanists.

Some of the correspondents included in this collection are John Hendley Barnhart, L. A. Brown, Georgette Louise Lanthios, Jessie Ledridge, M. B. McDaniel, Frank T. McFarland, (Mrs.) Charles F. Norton, William J. Robbins, John W. Sandstedt, Henry Schuman, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Jonathan M. Steere, James J. Walsh, and Emilia Rafinesque Winston.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia 2010.12.07

Conditions Governing Access note

This collection is open for research use.

Conditions Governing Use note

Copyright restrictions may apply. Please contact the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia with requests for copying and for authorization to publish, quote or reproduce the material.

Custodial History note

Gift of Rafinesque, Guy K. Haldeman, and F. W. Pennell; archived in 1952.

Processing Information note

The creation of the electronic guide for this collection was made possible through generous funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, administered through the Council on Library and Information Resources' "Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives" Project.

Finding aid entered into the Archivists' Toolkit by Garrett Boos.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.
- Transylvania College.

Genre(s)

- Biographies
- Correspondence
- Family papers
- Field notes
- Manuscripts

Geographic Name(s)

- Estate records

Occupation(s)

- Botany

Personal Name(s)

- Rafinesque, C. S., (Constantine Samuel), 1783-1840

Collection Inventory

Copies: Letters and notes (copies) transcribed by F. W. Pennell undated

| | Box | Folder |
|------|------------|---------------|
| Text | 1 | 1 |

Copies: Daybook (1832-1834) and Xeroxed field notebook (circa 1817) 1817, 1832-1834

| | Box | Folder |
|------|------------|---------------|
| Text | 1 | 2 |

Pennell's Life and Work of Rafinesque typescript and printed copy, "Eccentric Naturalist" 1940

| | Box | Folder |
|------|------------|---------------|
| Text | 1 | 3 |

Letters, Barnhart-Walsh circa 1940

| | Box | Folder |
|------|------------|---------------|
| Text | 1 | 4 |

Bibliography by Pennell; Identifying index by Pennell; Collins Herbarium undated

| | Box | Folder |
|------|------------|---------------|
| Text | 1 | 5 |

Inventory of estate and obituary (1940) and letter press certificate of membership to the Carolinae Academy (1820) 1820, 1940

| | Box | Folder |
|------|------------|---------------|
| Text | 1 | 6 |

Manuscript of Constantine Samuel Rafinesque at the Academy of Natural Science Philadelphia
Genealogical Chart 1943

| | Box | Folder |
|------|------------|---------------|
| Text | 1 | 7 |

Family Letters: Emily; Georgette 1830-1834

| | Box | Folder |
|------|------------|---------------|
| Text | 1 | 8 |

Engravings signed "C.S.R." 1825

| | Box | Folder |
|------|------------|---------------|
| Text | 1 | 9 |

His notes and articles 1819

| | Box | Folder |
|------|------------|---------------|
| Text | 1 | 10 |

Bicentennial Symposium: Transylvania University Lexington, Kentucky 1983

| | Box | Folder |
|------|------------|---------------|
| Text | 1 | 11 |
