

UNIVERSITY *of* PENNSYLVANIA



The University Archives
and Records Center

A Guide to the
William Ruckman Philler Papers
1863-1940

4.0 Cubic feet

UPT 50 P556

Prepared by Timothy H. Horning

November 2012

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PROVENANCE

The William Ruckman Philler Papers were classified as part of the Class of 1875 material in the Class Collection (UPT 110) and probably donated to the University in Philler's lifetime prior to the establishment of the University Archives in 1945.

ARRANGEMENT

The William Ruckman Philler Papers are arranged in seven series: Alumni Organizations, Athletics, Class of 1875, University of Pennsylvania Events, University of Pennsylvania Publications, and Miscellaneous. The material within each series has been arranged alphabetically.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Ruckman Philler was born in Philadelphia on February 17, 1857 to George Philler and Rebecca Ruckman Philler. He entered the College of the University of Pennsylvania in 1872 as a sophomore and member of the Class of 1875.

Philler was a very active and enthusiastic member of the Penn community. As an undergraduate, he was a member of the Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity and the Philomathean Society, where he served as the Society's Censor. He was also a founding member of both the Athletic Association of the University of Pennsylvania, serving as its treasurer 1873-1875, and the College Boat Club, where he was a member of the four and eight-oared crews. Philler also played on the varsity baseball and varsity cricket teams. Philler's involvement with Penn athletics did not stop after graduation as he again served as treasurer of the Athletic Association 1882-1883, as secretary of the University Cricket Association in 1880, and remained a lifelong member and supporter of the College Boat Club.

Philler earned a B.A. from the College in 1875 and continued his education at the University of Pennsylvania earning an M.A. and LL.B. in 1878. At commencement in June 1878, Philler had the honor of delivering the law oration.

Soon after graduation, Philler started working as a manager for the Western Savings Fund Society. In 1886 he started as secretary of the Real Estate Trust Company, a position he held until he retired in 1921. He was also very active within the Merion Cricket Club, serving as its treasurer 1878-1913, vice-president 1913-1935, and president 1935-1936.

In June 1885, Philler married Emily Chapman Winsor (1863-1941). Together they had one daughter, Emily Winsor Philler (1886-1946, Mrs. Clement Biddle Wood) and one son, William Winsor Philler (1888-1957). William Winsor Philler also attended the University of Pennsylvania, graduating with a B.S. in 1910. It should be noted that William Ruckman Philler's brother, George Stanley Philler (1859-1914), also attended the University of Pennsylvania earning a B.A. in 1877 and an M.A. and LL.B. in 1878.

Philler was very active as an alumnus. He served as an officer of the Class of 1875, organizing reunions and keeping track of his fellow classmates well into the 1930s. At a time before the streamlining of alumni groups, Philler was active in the Society of Alumni of the University of Pennsylvania, the Central Committee of the Alumni of the University of Pennsylvania, the Society of the Alumni of the College of the University of Pennsylvania, the Society of Alumni of the Law Department of the University of Pennsylvania, and the General Alumni Society. At the 27th Founder's Day in January 1941, Philler received an Alumni Award of Merit for "service to

University alumni organizations, perhaps of longer duration than that of any other living graduate, and because of an unswerving and inspiring devotion to his Alma Mater."

Upon the death of Dr. John A. Fell (M-1874) on January 4, 1944, Philler assumed the title of oldest living alumnus of the University of Pennsylvania. He held this title until his own death on March 10, 1944 in Haverford, Pennsylvania, aged 87.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The William Ruckman Philler Papers encompass a variety of organizations and events, mostly relating to the University of Pennsylvania. The late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries were a time of great change for the University of Pennsylvania; the University moved to its current campus in West Philadelphia, several alumni groups organized and assumed varying degrees of prominence, and athletics gained recognition as an important and worthwhile part of University life. Because of Philler's direct and lengthy involvement with organizations such as the General Alumni Society (known as Penn Alumni since 2003), the Athletic Association, and the Boat Club during their respective formative years, Philler's papers may help any researcher looking into the history of these groups. In a more general sense, the Philler papers can be of value to researchers looking at the progression of the University of Pennsylvania as it grew and assumed a role of national prominence, both in academics and athletics.

The Alumni Organizations series consists of material generated through Philler's work with multiple alumni groups. Philler was a member of several different alumni organizations, and the material consists of correspondence, announcements, and documents generated through the planning of meetings and dinners. Most of this material comes from the General Alumni Society, and for this reason it is included within its own sub-series. The General Alumni Society came into existence in the last decade of the nineteenth century and became the most prominent of the University of Pennsylvania alumni organizations. The General Alumni Society published a number of periodicals; a few issues of these periodicals are included here as they contain articles specifically relating to alumni functions, or because they contain articles on subjects Philler felt strongly about, such as the Athletic Association or the College Boat Club.

Philler was a lifelong fan of athletics at the University of Pennsylvania. In the series called Athletics there are several official programs, posters, and tickets from various events that were collected over the years. Philler was a founding member of the Athletic Association of the University of

Pennsylvania, the College Boat Club of the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Pennsylvania Cricket Association. Each of these organizations have been listed in a sub-series and in addition to similar material found in the general Athletics series, they contain correspondence that discusses the formation of the respective groups.

Philler was an officer of the Class of 1875 until his death. As an officer he planned reunions and kept track of his fellow members of the class. He paid special attention to the gentlemen he called his closest friends from his university days: Edward B. Gleason, Effingham B. Morris, John C. Sherlock, and John W. Townsend. The material generated from Philler's work as a class officer is represented in the series called Class of 1875. There is also a small sub-series of materials that date to Philler's years in the College. This sub-series consists of papers, speeches, and "standing reports" or semester evaluations.

The series called University of Pennsylvania Events contains programs, tickets, and other ephemera from University events that Philler attended. This series also contains material that deals with the planning of the bicentennial celebration of the University in 1940 as Philler was a member of the Bicentennial Celebration committee and helped to plan the event. The official program of the celebration, called the Bicentennial Celebrator, is also included here.

The University of Pennsylvania Publications series contains items that were published by the University. This includes several years of the annual yearbook which is called The Record, a significant run of the University Catalogue, and a handful of issues of the University Magazine.

Finally there are two series of Miscellaneous materials which have been divided into those that are from the University of Pennsylvania or at least related to the University in some way, including information about the Glee Club, the University Orchestra, and the fraternity that Philler was a member of, Phi Kappa Sigma. All other materials were grouped into the Non-University of Pennsylvania sub-series and contain material from anything that Philler was involved in that did not relate to the University of Pennsylvania, such as the Merion Cricket Club, the Law Academy of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Fencing and Sparring Club, et cetera.

**William Ruckman Philler Papers
1863-1940**

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INVENTORY

| ALUMNI ORGANIZATIONS | Box | Folder |
|--|------------|---------------|
| General Alumni Society | | |
| Alumni Register, vol. 9, no. 9, June 1905 | 1 | 1 |
| Alumni Register, vol. 18, no. 1, October 1915 | 1 | 2 |
| Alumni Register, supplement, 1923 | 1 | 3 |
| Alumni Register, vol. 26, no. 6, March 1924 | 1 | 4 |
| Alumni Register, vol. 27, no. 8, May 1925 | 1 | 5 |
| Alumni Register, vol. 27, no. 9, June 1925 | 1 | 6 |
| Annual Meeting: photograph - Crenshaw, Philler, and Cardeza, 1926 | 1 | 7 |
| Correspondence, 1892-1897 | 1 | 8 |
| Correspondence, 1909, 1920-1929 | 1 | 9 |
| Correspondence, 1930-1939 | 1 | 10 |
| Directory of the Organized Alumni of the University of Pennsylvania, 1936-1937 | 1 | 12 |
| Directory of the Organized Alumni of the University of Pennsylvania, 1937-1938 | 1 | 13 |

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| Directory of the Organized Alumni of the University of Pennsylvania, 1940 | 1 | 14 |
| General Magazine and Historical Chronicle, vol. 28, no. 1, October 1925 | 1 | 15 |
| General Magazine and Historical Chronicle, vol. 28, no. 3, April 1926 [partial] | 1 | 16 |
| General Magazine and Historical Chronicle, vol. 31, no. 1, October 1928 | 1 | 17 |
| General Magazine and Historical Chronicle, vol. 31 no. 3, April 1929 | 1 | 18 |
| General Magazine and Historical Chronicle, vol. 36 no. 3, April 1934 | 1 | 19 |
| Pennsylvania Gazette, vol. 20, no. 3, 28 Oct 1921 | 1 | 20 |
| Pennsylvania Gazette, vol. 20, no. 5, 11 Nov 1921 | 1 | 21 |
| Pennsylvania Gazette, vol. 23, no. 6, 7 November 1924 | 1 | 22 |
| Pennsylvania Gazette, vol. 23, no. 38, 3 July 1925 | 1 | 23 |
| Pennsylvania Gazette, vol. 29, no. 3, 16 December 1930 (partial) | 1 | 24 |
| Pennsylvania Gazette, vol. 33, no. 8, 15 January 1935 | 1 | 25 |
| Pennsylvania Gazette, vol. 34, no. 17, 1 June 1936 | 1 | 26 |
| Pennsylvania Gazette, vol. 36, no. 10, July 1938 | 1 | 27 |
| Pennsylvania Gazette, vol. 37, no. 10, July 1939 | 1 | 28 |
| Pennsylvania Gazette, vol. 38, no. 7, April 1940 | 1 | 29 |
| Pennsylvania Gazette, vol. 38, no. 8, May 1940 | 1 | 30 |
| Pennsylvania Gazette, vol. 38, no. 9, June 1940 | 1 | 31 |
| Pennsylvania Gazette, vol. 38, no. 10, September 1940 | 1 | 32 |
| Pennsylvania Gazette, vol. 39, no. 1, October 1940 | 1 | 33 |
| Pennsylvania Gazette, Supplement for Class Officers, n.d. | 1 | 34 |

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| Pennsylvania Songs songbook, 1916 | 1 | 35 |
| Other | | |
| Associated Pennsylvania Clubs, Alumni of the University of Pennsylvania, 1940 | 1 | 36 |
| Central Committee of the Alumni of the University of Pennsylvania, 1880-1888 | 1 | 37 |
| Central Committee of the Alumni of the University of Pennsylvania, 1892-1894 | 1 | 38 |
| New York Society of Alumni of the University of Pennsylvania, 1895-1896 | 1 | 39 |
| Organized Classes of the University of Pennsylvania, 1940 | 1 | 40 |
| Society of the Alumni, 1875-1878 | 1 | 41 |
| Society of the Alumni, 1881-1888 | 1 | 42 |
| Society of the Alumni, 1891-1897 | 1 | 43 |
| Society of the Alumni, 1909 | 1 | 44 |
| Society of the Alumni, 1939-1940 | 1 | 45 |
| Society of the Alumni of the College of the University of Pennsylvania, 1924-1929 | 1 | 46 |
| Society of the Alumni of the Law Department of the University of Pennsylvania, 1882-1897, 1929-1940 | 1 | 47 |

| ATHLETICS | Box | Folder |
|--|------------|---------------|
| Athletic Association of the University of Pennsylvania | | |
| Anouncements, by-laws, constitution, 1876-1894 | 1 | 48 |
| Clippings, 1873 | 1 | 49 |
| First Annual Winter Meeting, 1888 | 1 | 50 |
| Fortieth Anniversary, 1913 | 1 | 51 |

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| History of Athletics at the University of Pennsylvania 1896-1908, 1909 | 1 | 52 |
| History of Athletics at the University of Pennsylvania 1896-1908: correspondence, 1909 | 1 | 53 |
| History of Athletics at the University of Pennsylvania 1896-1908: correspondence, 1926-1927 | 1 | 54 |
| History of Athletics at the University of Pennsylvania 1896-1908: notes, c. 1909 | 1 | 55 |
| Ledger page, 1874 | 1 | 56 |
| Relay Races, 1896 | 1 | 57 |
| Rowing Committee, 1916 | 1 | 58 |
| Spring Contests, 1875-1877 | 1 | 59 |
| Tickets, 1886-1923 | OS 1 | 1 |
| College Boat Club | | |
| Announcements, By-laws, Charter, Constitution, 1873-1893 | 1 | 60 |
| Centennial College Regatta, 1876 | 1 | 61 |
| Correspondence, 1873-1875 | 1 | 62 |
| Opening of New Boat House, 1921 | 1 | 63 |
| University Cricket Association | | |
| Clippings and Tickets, 1880-1881 | 1 | 64 |
| Correspondence, 1879-1881 | 1 | 65 |
| Report of Committee on Organization of University Cricket Assn., 1879-1880 | 1 | 66 |
| Penn v. Haverford poster, 1881 | OS 2 | 1 |
| Other | | |
| Baseball, 1893-1915 | 2 | 1 |
| Clippings, 1923-1936 | 2 | 2 |

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| Council on Athletics, 1923-1929 | 2 | 3 |
| Council on Athletics: Class of 1875 flagpole, 1923 | 2 | 4 |
| Football: clippings, 1893-1894, 1938 | 2 | 5 |
| Football: official program, 1894 | 2 | 6 |
| Football: Penn vs. Princeton game, 1893 | 2 | 7 |
| Football: Penn vs. Princeton game, 1936 | 2 | 8 |
| Football: schedules, 1913-1916 | 2 | 9 |
| Football: ticket books, 1925-1926 | 2 | 10 |
| Football: ticket information, 1940 | 2 | 11 |
| Football: Varsity vs. Graduates game, 1901 | 2 | 12 |
| Gymnasium entrance card, n.d. | 2 | 13 |
| Inter-Collegiate Association of Amateur Athletes of America: championships, c. 1927 | 2 | 14 |
| Inter-Collegiate Association of Amateur Athletes of America: constitution and members, 1877 | 2 | 15 |
| Inter-Collegiate Association of Amateur Athletes of America: correspondence, 1910 | 2 | 16 |
| Miscellaneous Schedules, 1923-1930 | 2 | 17 |
| Report on athletics by H. Jamison, c. 1939 | 2 | 18 |
| Saratoga Collegiate Athletic Games, 1876 | 2 | 19 |
| Track: 45th Annual Relay Carnival, 1939 | 2 | 20 |
| Track: British Track Team luncheon, 1927 | 2 | 21 |
| Typed excerpts about athletics for The Record, 1874 | 2 | 22 |
| Varsity "P" Dinner, 1925 | 2 | 23 |
| Varsity "P" Dinner, 1931 | 2 | 24 |
| Varsity Club: by-laws and constitution, c. 1913 | 2 | 25 |

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| Varsity Club: honorary dinner for coaches, 1913 | 2 | 26 |
| Varsity Club: invitations to meetings, 1923-1939 | 2 | 27 |
| CLASS OF 1875 | | |
| 20th Reunion Anniversary Record, 1895 | 2 | 28 |
| 30th Reunion, 1905 | 2 | 29 |
| 40th Reunion, 1915 | 2 | 30 |
| 45th Reunion, 1920 | 2 | 31 |
| 50th Reunion, 1925 (1) | 2 | 32 |
| 50th Reunion, 1925 (2) | 2 | 33 |
| 60th Reunion, 1935 | 2 | 34 |
| Class Supper, 1876 | 2 | 35 |
| Correspondence, 1873-1875 | 2 | 36 |
| Executive Committee minutes, 1874-1876 | 2 | 37 |
| Gleason, Edward B. (1854-1934), 1880, 1915 | 2 | 38 |
| Junior year roster and exam schedule, 1873 | 2 | 39 |
| Lists of class members, 1928-1935 | 2 | 40 |
| Morris, Effingham B. (1856-1937), 1927-1937 | 2 | 41 |
| Necrology, 1878-1940 | 2 | 42 |
| Schedule of courses, 1874-1875 | 2 | 43 |
| Sherlock, John C. (1853-1929), 1894, 1929, 1943 | 2 | 44 |
| Townsend, John W. (1855-1939), 1931 | 2 | 45 |
| Philler Student Material | | |
| Book fragment, "Satires of Horace", n.d. | 2 | 46 |
| Exams, c. 1871-1875 | 2 | 47 |

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| Paper: "Fools Rush in Where Angels Fear to Tread", 1874 | 5 | 1 |
| Paper: "He That is Giddy Thinks the World Turns Round", 1874 | 5 | 2 |
| Paper: "Progress by Differentiation", 1875 | 5 | 4 |
| Paper: "The Lawfulness of Defensive Warfare", 1875 | 5 | 3 |
| Paper: "Washington Irving", 1874 | 5 | 5 |
| Paper: untitled geology paper, n.d. | 5 | 6 |
| Speech: "Egotism", 1874 | 5 | 7 |
| Speech: "Liberty Irrepressible", 1874 | 5 | 8 |
| Speech: untitled, 1875 | 2 | 48 |
| Standing Reports, 1872-1875 | 2 | 49 |

| UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA EVENTS | Box | Folder |
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| Alumni Day poster, 1916 | OS 1 | 1 |
| Alumni Day, 1923-1929 | 2 | 51 |
| Alumni Day, 1930, 1935-1939 | 2 | 52 |
| Alumni University Day, 1916-1933 | 2 | 53 |
| Annual Celebration of George Washington's Birthday, 1925-1931 | 2 | 54 |
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| Commencement, 1875, 1877-78, 1881, 1883, 1888, 1894 | 2 | 56 |
| Commencement, 1909-10, 1913-14, 1916 | 2 | 57 |
| Commencement, 1929, 1933, 1938-40 | 2 | 58 |
| Commencement: Medical, Dental, and Veterinary Schools, 1875, 1878, 1882, 1895 | 2 | 59 |
| Conference on the Medical Development of the University, 1927 | 2 | 60 |
| First Annual Conference of the College of the University of Pennsylvania, 1926 | 2 | 61 |

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| Founders Day, 1938-1939 | 2 | 62 |
| Henry Charles Lea Library Opening, 1926 | 2 | 63 |
| Ivy Day, 1874-1877 | 2 | 64 |
| Junior Day, 1873-1878 | 2 | 65 |
| Penniman, Josiah H. retirement, 1939 | 2 | 66 |
| Pepper, George Wharton 70th Birthday Dinner, 1937 | 2 | 67 |
| Pepper, William Jr. inauguration, 1881 | 2 | 68 |
| President and Trustees dinner, 1925 | 3 | 1 |
| Junior Day poster, 1874 | OS 1 | 2 |
| University Bicentennial: Bicentennial Celebrator, 1940 | 3 | 2 |
| University Bicentennial: brochures, programs, tickets, 1940 | 3 | 3 |
| University Bicentennial: correspondence, 1937-1941 | 3 | 4 |
| University Bicentennial: invitees in Lower Merion, 1940 | 3 | 5 |
| Alumni Day, 1916 | 2 | 50 |
| UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PUBLICATIONS | | |
| Illustrated History of the College of the University of Pennsylvania, 1901 | 3 | 6 |
| Library Chronicle, vol. 8, no. 2-3, Sept 1940 | 3 | 7 |
| Sperry '89, n.d. | 3 | 8 |
| Record, 1874 | 3 | 9 |
| Record, 1875 | 3 | 10 |
| Record, 1876 | 3 | 11 |
| Record, 1877 | 3 | 12 |
| Record, 1879 | 3 | 13 |

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| Record, 1880 | 3 | 14 |
| Record, 1881 | 3 | 15 |
| Record, 1882 | 3 | 16 |
| Record, 1883 | 3 | 17 |
| University Bulletin, 1914 | 3 | 18 |
| University Catalogue, 1870-1871 | 3 | 19 |
| University Catalogue, 1871-1872 | 3 | 20 |
| University Catalogue, 1873-1874 | 3 | 21 |
| University Catalogue, 1874-1875 | 3 | 22 |
| University Catalogue, 1894-1895 | 3 | 23 |
| University Catalogue, 1930-1931 | 3 | 24 |
| University Magazine, December 1875 | 3 | 25 |
| University Magazine, May 1876 | 3 | 26 |
| University Magazine, June 1876 | 3 | 27 |
| University Magazine, May 1879 | 3 | 28 |
| University of Pennsylvania: Its History, Traditions, Buildings and Memorials, 1914 | 3 | 29 |
| MISCELLANEOUS - UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA AND PENN-RELATED | Box | Folder |
| Class of 1878 - Law School, 1878-1928 | 3 | 30 |
| Class of 1887 songbook, 1912 | 3 | 31 |
| Class of 1892 20th Reunion, 1912 | 3 | 32 |
| Correspondence, 1923-1926 | 3 | 33 |
| Glee Club, 1876-1882 | 3 | 34 |
| Houston Club: Class Records Project, 1909-1910 | 3 | 35 |

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| Library Card, c. 1878 | 3 | 36 |
| Memorabilia: pins and ribbons, n.d. | 3 | 37 |
| Musical Association of the University of Pennsylvania, 1873 | 3 | 38 |
| Penn Club, 1881 | 3 | 39 |
| Phi Kappa Sigma, 1875-1899 | 3 | 40 |
| Phi Kappa Sigma, 1900-1924 | 3 | 41 |
| Phi Kappa Sigma: 75th Anniversary, 1925 | 3 | 42 |
| Phi Kappa Sigma, 1926-1934 | 3 | 43 |
| Philomathean Society, 1872-1888 | 3 | 44 |
| Satirical Student Pamphlets, 1873-1875 | 4 | 1 |
| University Club, 1881-1893 | 4 | 2 |
| University Museum, 1940 | 4 | 3 |
| University Orchestra, 1878 | 4 | 4 |
| University of Pennsylvania Fund, 1925-1939 | 4 | 5 |
| MISCELLANEOUS - NON UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA | | |
| Bills, 1926-1940 | 4 | 6 |
| Christmas Cards, 1915-1930 | 4 | 7 |
| Correspondence, 1874-1878, 1913-1937 | 4 | 8 |
| Haverford College Commencement, 1874-1876, 1878 | 4 | 9 |
| Horace Club of Philadelphia, 1878 | 4 | 10 |
| How Free People Conduct a Long War, Charles Stille, 1863 | 4 | 11 |
| Jefferson Medical College, 1879 | 4 | 12 |
| Labels, n.d. | 4 | 13 |
| Law Academy, c. 1881 | 4 | 14 |

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| Menus, n.d. | 4 | 15 |
| Merion Cricket Club, 1937 | 4 | 16 |
| Philadelphia Fencing and Sparring Club, 1882-1883 | 4 | 17 |
| Photographic plate, 1895 | 4 | 18 |
| Sesquicentennial postcard, 1926 | 4 | 19 |
| Social Art Club, 1879 | 4 | 20 |
| State of Pennsylvania Bicentennial, 1882 | 4 | 21 |
| World War I pins, c. 1917-1918 | 4 | 22 |