

Archives and Special Collections

Dickinson College

Carlisle, PA

COLLECTION REGISTER

Name: **Read, John Meredith (1797-1874)** **MC 2001.19**

Material: Papers (1818-1870)

Volume: 0.25 linear feet (1 Document Box)

Donation: Gift of the Friends of the Library, 1975

Usage: These materials have been donated without restrictions on usage.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Meredith Read was born on July 21, 1797 in Philadelphia to John and Martha Meredith Read. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1812, and was admitted to the Philadelphia Bar on September 7, 1818. He entered the legal profession in private practice.

From 1823 to 1825, Read served in the Pennsylvania State Legislature. He was a member of the select-council of Philadelphia from 1827 to 1828, and was city-solicitor from 1830 to 1831. Read married Priscilla Marshall on March 20, 1828. The couple had five children before Priscilla's death in 1841.

Read was serving as United States district attorney for Eastern Pennsylvania from 1837 to 1841, when President Tyler nominated him as an associate justice of the Supreme Court. After his opinions on slavery prevented his confirmation to that post, Read instead served a brief term as attorney general of Pennsylvania, from June to December 1846. He then returned to private practice, where his beliefs on slavery prompted him to become an early supporter of the Republican Party.

Read remarried on July 26, 1855 to Amelia Thompson of Philadelphia. In 1858, during the first Republican victory in Pennsylvania, Read was elected to a fifteen-year term in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Due to failing health, he retired on December 2, 1872 as chief justice of that court. Read died nearly two years later on November 29, 1874.

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The John Meredith Read Collection was donated by the Friends of the Library, and is housed in one document box. This small collection is divided into two categories:

Correspondence and Legal and Financial Papers.

The Correspondence section contains letters that were either sent or received by John Meredith Read, and are grouped accordingly. A set of letters from John M. Read, Jr. to his father have been grouped and listed separately. Under each grouping, letters are arranged in chronological order. The majority of John, Sr.'s letters deal with business interests, both for clients and for family members. The letters from an unnamed sister, his granddaughter, Emma Hyde, and from his son, John, Jr. are more personal in nature.

The Legal and Financial Papers section contains a declaration of trust and several checks drawn on the Bank of Philadelphia.

COLLECTION INVENTORY

BOX 1 - MC 2001.19

CORRESPONDENCE

John Meredith Read - Letters Sent

- Folder 01) To S. Dickinson - August 10, 1826
To S. H. Smith - July 24, 1835
To John Read - May 25, 1844
To Mary Fisher - Feb. 23, 1846
- Folder 02) To C. J. Ingersoll - Jan. 11, 1851
To James Lynd and W. S. Stackley - Aug. 7, 1866
To James Thompson - Oct. 7, 1868
To General Collins - Nov. 26, 1870

John Meredith Read - Letters Received

- Folder 03) From "Sister" - undated
From unknown - Jan. 9
From Edward Armstrong - Oct. 13, 1818
From George Read - Aug. 30, 1830
From F. Mitchell - Jan. 24, 1833
From John Read - May 24, 1844
- Folder 04) From "Sister" - Apr. 17, 1850
From William H. Hyde - Nov. 20, 1851
From R. Blatchford - 1852
From John Read - Jan. 14, 1852
From William H. Hyde - Nov. 6, 1861
- Folder 05) From Alex Henry - Aug. 3, 1864
From William H. Hyde - July 13, 1866
From William H. Hyde - Feb. 9, 1867
From Fred Graff - Apr. 12, 1869
From Emma H. Hyde - Sep. 23, 1869

BOX 1 - MC 2001.19 (cont.)

CORRESPONDENCE (cont.)

John Meredith Read, Jr. - Letters Sent

- Folder 06) To John Meredith Read - Dec. 13, 1841
- To John Meredith Read - July 19, 1845
- To John Meredith Read - Feb. 24, 1867
- To John Meredith Read - Feb. 27, 1867
- To John Meredith Read - May 4, 1868
- Folder 07) To John Meredith Read - Sep. 14, 1868
- To John Meredith Read - Sep. 20, 1868
- To John Meredith Read - Sep. 26, 1868
- To John Meredith Read - Nov. 4, 1868
- To John Meredith Read - May 22, 1869

LEGAL AND FINANCIAL

- Folder 08) Declaration of Trust - Aug. 12, 1826
- Folder 09) Philadelphia Bank checks - 1853-1856

This collection register was prepared by LeAnn J. Fawver, December 2001.