

Patrick Coad Family Papers, 1798-1888

MC37

Summary Information

Repository	Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center
Creator(s)	Coad, Patrick, 1783-1872 Coad, Joseph R., 1829-1868
Title	Patrick Coad Family Papers, 1798-1888
Collection number	MC37
Dates	1798-1888
Extent	2 boxes, 1.5 linear ft.
Language	English

Abstract

Patrick Coad (1783-1872), an Irish immigrant who settled in Philadelphia, was the first patentee of a graduated galvanic battery with insulated poles. Touting his battery among other uses as an instrument that helped cure various diseases, Coad's invention attracted a good deal of attention within the scientific and medical communities. A teacher whose interests focused on medicine and the sciences, Coad also travelled throughout Pennsylvania and the surrounding area as a lecturer on the natural sciences.

The collection includes Coad's correspondence, his lecture and medical notes, and ephemera, such as newspaper clippings, pamphlets and broadsides, publicizing his galvanic battery and lectures. Several of Coad's family members are also documented through correspondence, ephemera, and estate items, including his son Joseph R. Coad (1829-1868), a prominent Philadelphia physician. A family scrapbook with miscellaneous materials is also included.

Background note

On April 29, 1820, Patrick Coad (1783-1872) married Anna Maria O'Conway (1799-1882), the youngest daughter of Matthias O'Conway (1766-1842), a prominent Philadelphia linguist and lexicographer who was especially well-known within the Catholic community. Patrick and Anna Coad had several children, including Cecilia Coad (b. 1826), Joseph R. Coad (1829-1868), Anna

Coad (b. 1831), Elizabeth Coad (b. 1832), Eleanor Coad (b. 1834), John B. Coad, and Theophilus Mathias Coad (1843-1847)

The family was active within the medical, scientific, and Catholic communities of the city. Other than the Southwark section of Philadelphia, the Coad family, long time parishioners of Old St. Joseph and Old St. Mary, also lived for a time in western Pennsylvania (Myerstown). Patrick owned land in several states, including Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Kentucky.

Patrick Coad was a noted teacher and lecturer of medicine and the natural sciences, but gained wider notoriety after he patented his graduated galvanic battery in March 1842. The patent Coad received was for the “improvement in the mode of constructing the galvanic battery so as to vary the intensity of its effect, and in the construction of insulated conductors applied to the same for adapting it to medical purposes.” The instrument garnered a good deal of attention within the medical community, which at the time was very interested in the use of electricity and magnetism for medical treatment.

Patrick’s son Joseph R. Coad became a well-known doctor within the city, serving as president of the Board of Health in 1858. Joseph was also involved with various civic and Catholic institutions in the city, including the Catholic Philopatrian Institute, the Native American Institute, and the Franklin Fire Company. Joseph married Elizabeth (Lydia) B. Hall, a non-Catholic who later converted. They had four children before Joseph’s early death at the age of thirty-nine: Joseph Aloysius Coad (b. 1861), Mary Isabel Coad (1863-1955), Wilfred Coad (b. 1865), and Theophilus John B. Coad (b. 1867).

Bibliography

Flick, Lawrence F. “Mathias James O’Conway: Philologist, Lexicographer and Interpreter of Languages, 1766-1842.” *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society* 10-11. (September 1899- June 1900).

Griffin, Martin I.J., ed. *The American Catholic Historical Researches* 10 (1904): 19.

Griffin, Martin I.J., ed. *The American Catholic Historical Researches* 21 (1904): 182.

Historic United States Patents. March 1842. <http://www.historicpatents.net/patents-1842-march/>
Accessed November 20, 2010.

Smith, Sarah Trainer. “Philadelphia’s First Nun.” *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society* 5, no. 4 (December 1894): 417-522.

Scope and Content

The majority of materials relating to Patrick Coad, including incoming letters, his lecture notes, legal papers, and ephemera, concern his galvanic battery with patent insulated poles and also document his career as a lecturer of the sciences. Many of the items are testimonials, authored by numerous prominent medical professors, physicians, and government officials, such as Thomas D. Mutter, J. K. Mitchell, and Governor John Fairfield of Maine. Most of these, which Coad publicized through pamphlets, exist as copies in Coad's hand.

Ephemeral materials include newspaper clippings, pamphlets and broadsides publicizing his invention, lectures, as well as the school that Coad opened for boys and girls. Other items include medical notes and remedies and school-related papers. One item among these materials is a small notebook entitled, "Minutes of Cholera Cases", which documents some of Coad's work with patients during the 1849 cholera epidemic.

Materials in the collection relating to Joseph R. Coad, a prominent Philadelphia physician who for a time served as president of the city's Board of Health, include incoming and outgoing correspondence, cards of admission to medical lectures, and his obituary clippings from the *Catholic Standard and Times*. A few items relating to Joseph R. Coad are also contained in the family scrapbook discussed below. Correspondence, estate items, and ephemera relating to Anna Maria O'Conway Coad, John B. Coad, and Elizabeth Coad are also included.

One folder contains ephemera relating to the Coad family as well as miscellaneous correspondence. Included in this folder are letters and notes from Philadelphia clergymen Hugh Lane (1821-1902), the founding pastor of St. Teresa of Avila (1853), and Father Charles A. McFadden (1836-1910). Other papers and correspondence appear to be related to Anna Maria O'Conway Coad's sister, Isabel Editha O'Conway McFadden (b. 1796), who was the wife of Patrick McFadden (d. 1826).

Also included is a folder with items relating to Matthias O'Conway. These appear to be receipts of payments for pew rentals at Old St. Mary Church as well as receipts relating to contributions made to the parish and its societies.

The collection also contains various miscellaneous items. One is a document listing the number of those in the city who died during the Yellow Fever epidemic in possibly August and September 1798. Another document includes a list of food items that were requested for those military personnel and civilians stationed at St. Paul's Church during the first phase of the Nativist riots in May 1844.

Lastly, there is a scrapbook relating to the Coad family. The scrapbook itself is a ledger circa 1810 presumably used by a liquor dealer in Ireland whose clientele consisted mostly of doctors. Items contained therein are mostly miscellaneous engravings, including a lithograph of the ruins of St. Augustine after it was destroyed during the 1844 Nativist riots, paintings, drawings, and sketches, some of which appear to have been removed from published works. A few of these items are marked "O'Madden". Also included is a photograph of Joseph R. Coad as well as a broadside from the Franklin Fire Company, of which he was a member, marking his death. There are also First Communion and Confirmation certificates from Old St. Mary and Old St. Joseph relating to Joseph R. Coad and his family.

Controlled Access Headings

Form/Genre(s)

Broadsides
Clippings
Correspondence
Ephemera
Lecture notes
Lithographs
Paintings
Pamphlets
Photographs
Research notes
Scrapbook
Sketches

Geographic Name(s)

Philadelphia (Pa.)

Personal Name(s)

Coad, Anna Maria O'Conway, 1799-1882
Coad, Elizabeth, b. 1832
Coad, John B.
Coad, Joseph R., 1829-1868
Coad, Elizabeth B. Hall
Coad, Patrick, 1783-1872
Lane, Hugh, 1821-1902
McFadden, Charles A., 1836-1910
O'Conway, Matthias, 1766-1842

O'Madden, Isabella Editha O'Conway, b. 1796

Subject(s)

Catholics--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia.
Clergy--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia
Electric batteries--Patents
Inventors and inventions
Medicine --Pennsylvania--Philadelphia--19th century
Natural sciences
Physicians

Related Materials

At the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center:
Matthias O'Conway Papers (1999.030) Available on microfilm.

Finding aids

An older finding aid is also available in hard copy at PAHRC.

Administrative Information

Restrictions

The collection is open for research.

Acquisition information

Accession number 1990.038

Preferred citation

Cite as: [Indicate cited item or folder title here], Coad, Patrick. Family Papers, 1798-1888 (MC 37), Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center.

Processing note

Finding aid updated by Faith Charlton, Assistant Archivist, January 2011.

Scrapbook is in poor condition.

Collection Inventory

	Date	Box	Folder
Patrick Coad- incoming correspondence	1836-1858, undated	1	1
Patrick Coad- lecture and research notes, medical remedies, and school-related materials	1849, undated	1	2
Patrick Coad- lecture and research notes, medical remedies, and school-related materials	undated	1	3
Patrick Coad- Testimonials regarding galvanic battery and scientific lectures	1833-1859, undated	1	4
Patrick Coad- Legal papers, newspaper clippings, and publicity ephemera	1842-1851, undated	1	5
Joseph R. Coad- Correspondence, ephemera, and obituary clippings	1853-1855, undated	1	6
Anna Maria O'Conway Coad- correspondence, estate item, and ephemera	1854-1880	1	7
John B. Coad and Elizabeth Coad- Correspondence	1841-1888	1	8
Coad family- Miscellaneous correspondence and ephemera	1814-1874, undated	1	9
Matthias O'Conway- Receipts	1800-1813	1	10
Miscellaneous (yellow fever deaths and item list for militia)	1798, 1844, undated	1	11
Coad family scrapbook	circa 1850-1890	2	