

ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

A Guide to the Annesley and Co. Records

Summary Information

Repository

Albany Institute of History & Art Library

Creator

unidentified

Title

Annesley and Co. Records

Identifier

HP 81-05

Date

1898-1911

Physical Description

7 boxes

Physical Location

The materials are located onsite in the Museum.

Language of the Material

English

Abstract

Lawson Annesley founded Annesley and Co. in Albany, New York in 1802. After a few years taking on different partners, Annesley's sons took over the business, which remained headed by the family until 1909. The company was known for selling fine furniture, looking glasses, and artist's supplies, and was often referred to as the "Albany Art Gallery." Annesley and Co. closed in the 1940s.

This collection contains business records of Annesley and Co., and includes invoices for items received by the company from 1898 to 1900 and business correspondence from customers, suppliers and artists from 1905 to 1911.

Preferred Citation

Preferred citation for this material is as follows:

Annesley and Co. Records, 1898-1911, HP 81-05. Albany Institute of History & Art Library, Albany, New York.

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Restrictions on Access

None

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Accession: # 81-05

Accession Source/Date: Purchased from dealer Dennis Holzman, March 1981.

Processing Information

Processed by R. Dworkin, October 2004; finding aid updated by H. Cox, June 2021.

Biographical/Historical

Lawson Annesley, a native of Bordentown, New Jersey, founded Annesley and Co. in Albany, New York in 1802. Lawson, along with his younger brother William, was a

gilder specializing in looking glasses and picture frames. In 1813, the shop was located at 16 Steuben Street, and later relocated to 294 North Market Street. In 1823, they moved again to a larger location at 325-327 North Market Street, and relocated again in the 1830s to 309-311 N. Market Street, where they began to advertise first as a looking glass store and then as a looking glass warehouse. During the 1840's, Annesley and Co. moved twice, first to 46 Broadway in 1841 and second, in 1846, to 504 Broadway.

The company's first major change came in 1856 when Lawson Annesley took on Marshall K. Williamson as a partner. The company name was changed to Annesley and Williamson. It was also the first year that the Annesleys advertised in the Albany Directories. Annesley and Williamson were billed as manufacturers and dealers of looking glasses as well as sellers of portraits, picture frames, engravings and artists' materials, and were also listed as a Picture Gallery. In the following year, Lawson entered into a partnership with B.H. Veeder and Company. Veeder owned a goldbeating company, which he had founded two years earlier, located at 45 Hudson Street. Also in 1857, Issac and Richard, Lawson's sons, were brought into the family business as clerks. The company's advertisement in the Albany Directory of that year showed that the business had expanded to include not only frames, looking glasses and artists' materials but also paintings and engravings from America and abroad. Around this time, the Annesley's store was described as a place where artists and people interested in art could meet informally.

In 1858, Issac Annesley became a partner in the business and, although Marshall Williamson continued to be a partner, the name reverted back to the original Annesley and Co. The following year, Richard Annesley left the company to work as a sign painter for O.S. Rice & Co. In 1860, the Annesley family's partnerships with B.H. Veeder and Marshall Williamson came to an end and the company name was changed to Annesley and Son. Lawson, in his mid to late 70's, retired in 1861. His son, Issac, took on Thomas R. Ferris as a partner to replace him, and the company's name changed once again, this time to Annesley and Ferris.

In 1865, Issac Annesley died suddenly in his early 40's and his younger brother Richard took over the business. Following his career as a sign painter for O.S. Rice and Co., Richard opened his own shop in 1862, located at 501 Broadway. That venture was short-lived, however, as Richard accepted a commission as a lieutenant in the 43rd Regiment in 1863. When he returned to Albany at the close of the Civil War to take over his late brother's business, he was a Captain. Lawson came out of retirement part-time to help with the business, and James Vint, a man first employed by the company as a porter in 1863, and then as a salesman starting in 1864, became a partner. The partnership between Vint and Annesley lasted for the next twenty years. Lawson Annesley returned

to the company on a full time basis in 1867, then retired again in 1875. During this time, Annesley & Vint advertised itself simply as sellers of looking glasses, pictures, and frames.

On September 1, 1875, Annesley & Vint moved from 504-506 Broadway to 57 North Pearl Street where the company remained until 1915. In 1881, the company's founder, Lawson Annesley, died in his late 90's. A year later James Vint's son, James H. Vint, the company bookkeeper, became a partner. In the Albany Directory of that year, Annesley & Vint ceased to advertise themselves as sellers of looking glasses, but rather as purveyors of picture frames, fine furniture, upholstering, and hangings, while also referring to themselves as the Albany Art Gallery. In 1885, the senior James Vint left the business to set up his own shop on 34 North Pearl Street specializing in artists' supplies. His son remained with Annesley although the name reverted back to Annesley and Co. With the departure of the elder Vint, the company began to turn from manufacturing to a gallery for both art and fine furniture.

In 1890, the partnership with the younger Vint dissolved, and Richard Annesley never took on another partner. By 1893, the phrase "Albany Art Gallery" came to dominate the Albany Directory advertisements of Annesley and Co. Over the next few years, the advertisements of the company changed little, consistently offering etchings, paintings and frames, but also at various times fine furniture, antiques, cut glass, oriental rugs, and artists supplies. The company was incorporated in 1905. On October 24, 1909, the last Annesley to run the company, Richard Annesley, died. Ambrose Boylan, who had begun at Annesley and Co. as a clerk in 1885, succeeded Richard Annesley as president. Within two years of taking over the company, Boylan shifted focus and, while continuing to offer art, frames and antiques, Annesley and Co. began to make and modify fine furniture at their new factory located at 40 James Street. In 1915, the company moved back to its 1874 location at 504-506 Broadway. Annesley and Co. ceased to advertise in the Albany Directory after 1930. Sixteen years later it moved again to 121 State Street. By 1941, Annesley and Co. was listed as selling antiques at 20a Steuben Street. All mention of the company disappeared after 1944. In its final years, Annesley and Co. became primarily an antique dealer and furniture maker.

Scope and Contents

The collection is divided into two series: Invoices and Correspondence.

Invoices consists of shipping invoices from the wholesalers, manufactures and importers which provided Annesley and Co. with their wares. This series spans from 1898 to 1900, during which time Richard Annesley was the sole proprietor of his family's business.

These are arranged in alphabetical order by the names of the sending companies. The companies with which Annesley and Co. did business included importers, publishers, glass and metal craftsmen, and manufactures of furniture and upholstery located primarily along the eastern seaboard, but also in large mid-western trade ports and major cities in Europe, especially London. The items purchased by the company range from fine wood and metal picture frames, to furniture, upholstery, oriental imports and mass produced art such as photographs and etchings. In addition, the documents also include the cost of each item for Annesley and Co., thus granting some insight into the basic economy of the company.

Correspondence consists of letters received by Annesley and Co. These are arranged first by year and then by alphabetical order of the name of the sender. All correspondence sent on a company letterhead is filed under the name of the company rather than that of the signer. The series begins in 1905 after the incorporation of the company, runs through Ambrose Boylan's succession following Richard Annesley in 1909, and ends in 1911. The volume of letters within the collection varies from year to year, and 1905, 1906 and 1908 are rather poorly represented. The correspondence includes requests from customers, notices of art shows at regional galleries, solicitations from charitable groups including the Salvation Army and Albany Academy Alumnae Association, shipping updates from suppliers, product samples from would-be suppliers and letters from artists featured by the Gallery. There is an entire folder dedicated to the letters of William Verplanck Birney, a landscape and genre artist whose work was featured at the Albany Art Gallery in 1907.

Contents List

The following section contains a listing of the materials in the collection.

Description	Box	Folder
Invoices, 1898-1900		
A, 1898-1900	1	1
B, 1898-1900		2
C, 1898-1900		3
D, 1898-1900		4
E, 1898-1900		5
Favor to Fitter, 1898-1900		6
Fort to Freiberg, 1898-1900		7
G, 1898-1900		8
H, 1898-1900		9
J, 1898-1900		10
K, 1898-1900		11

L, 1898-1900		12
M, 1898-1900		13
N, 1898-1900		14
O, 1898-1900		15
P, 1898-1900		16
Q, 1898-1900		17
R, 1898-1900		18
S, 1898-1900		19
T, 1898-1900		20
U-V, 1898-1900		21
W, X, Y, Z, 1898-1900		22
Correspondence, 1905-1911		
A-Z, 1905-1906		23
A, January to August 1907	2	1
B, January to August 1907		2
From William Verplanck Birney		3
C, January to August 1907		4
D, January to August 1907		5
E, January to August 1907		6
F, January to August 1907		7
G, January to August 1907		8
H-I, January to August 1907		9
J, January to August 1907		10
K, January to August 1907		11
L, January to August 1907		12
M, January to August 1907		13
N, January to August 1907		14
O, January to August 1907		15
P-Q, January to August 1907		16
R, January to August 1907		17
S, January to August 1907		18
T, January to August 1907		19
U-V, January to August 1907		20
W, January to August 1907		21
X, Y, Z, January to August 1907		22
A-Z, 1908		23
A, January to August 1909	3	1
B, January to August 1909		2
C, January to August 1909		3
D, January to August 1909		4
E, January to August 1909		5
F, January to August 1909		6
G, January to August 1909		7
H, January to August 1909		8
I-J, January to August 1909		9
K, January to August 1909		10

L, January to August 1909		11
M, January to August 1909		12
N-O, January to August 1909		13
P-Q, January to August 1909		14
R, January to August 1909		15
S, January to August 1909		16
T, January to August 1909		17
U-V, January to August 1909		18
W, January to August 1909		19
X, Y, Z, January to August 1909		20
A, April to July 1910	4	1
B, April to July 1910		2
C, April to July 1910		3
D, April to July 1910		4
E, April to July 1910		5
F, April to July 1910		6
G, April to July 1910		7
H, April to July 1910		8
I-J, April to July 1910		9
K, April to July 1910		10
L, January to July 1910		11
M, March to July 1910		12
N-O, April to July 1910		13
P-Q, April to July 1910		14
R, April to July 1910		15
S, April to July 1910		16
T, U, V, April to July 1910		17
W, X, Y, Z, April to July 1910		18
A, August to October 1910	5	1
B, August to October 1910		2
C, August to October 1910		3
D-E, August to October 1910		4
F, August to October 1910		5
G-H, August to October 1910		6
I, J, K, August to October 1910		7
L-M, August to October 1910		8
N-O, August to October 1910		9-11
S, August to October 1910		12
T, U, V, August to October 1910		13
W, August to October 1910		14
Y-Z, August to October 1910		15
A-Z, August to October 1910		16
A-B, January to April 1911	6	1
C, January to April 1911		2
D, January to April 1911		3
E-F, January to April 1911		4

G-H, January to April 1911		5
I-J, January to April 1911		6
K-L January to April 1911		7
M, January to April 1911		8
N-O, January to April 1911		9
P-Q, January to April 1911		10
S, January to April 1911		11
T, U, V, January to April 1911		12
W, January to April 1911		13
X, Y, Z, January to April 1911		14
A-B, May to August 1911	7	1
C, May to August 1911		2
D, May to August 1911		3
E-F, May to August 1911		4
G-H, May to August 1911		5
I-J, May to August 1911		6
K-L, May to August 1911		7
M, May to August 1911		8
N-O, May to August 1911		9
P-Q, May to August 1911		10
R, May to August 1911		11
S, May to August 1911		12
T, U, V, May to August 1911		13
W, May to August 1911		14
X, Y, Z, May to August 1911		15