

Winterthur Library

An Introduction to Resources



The du Pont Family

The Winterthur Archives

The Archives hold the personal and business papers of Henry Francis du Pont and his immediate family. The focus of the papers is the development of the Winterthur estate and the creation and development of Winterthur Museum. The approximate date range of material in the Archives is 1860 to 1980.

Personal Papers

The personal papers of H. F. du Pont; his wife, Ruth Wales du Pont; his father, Colonel Henry A. du Pont; and other members of the immediate family detail their lives on the Winterthur estate. Included are social and business correspondence and financial material concerning the management of the estate. One group of letters between du Pont and Jacqueline Kennedy relates to his chairmanship of the White House Fine Arts Commission in the 1960s and the changes made in the White House decor during that era.

Development of the Museum

The Archives include architectural drawings and plans for the expansions and renovations of the

Winterthur house and museum. Bills, correspondence, and other documents from architects Thomas Waterman, Albert Ely Ives, and the firm of Perot and Bissell show the evolution from a family home to a museum.

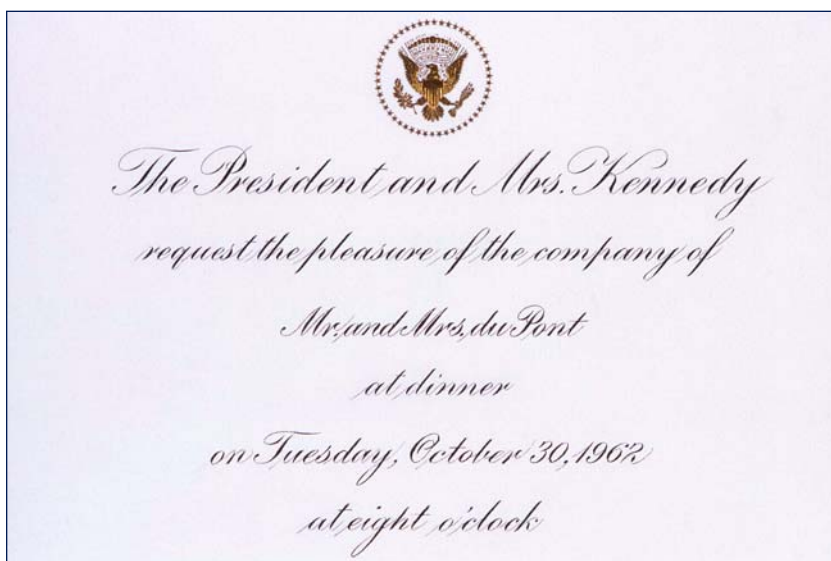
Between 1928 and the late 1950s, H. F. du Pont purchased entire rooms of woodwork from early American houses and had spaces at Winterthur redesigned to incorporate them. He then filled the rooms with furnishings of a similar place and time, changing the furniture and arrangement as more appropriate objects became available. A series of room designs and plans as well as the documents concerning the purchase and installation of the interior architecture, are available in the Archives. A group of stereographic views from the 1930s display the rooms with changing seasonal decoration.

The development of the Winterthur collection of furniture, metals, textiles, pottery, and other objects is documented in the correspondence between H. F. du Pont and antiques dealers throughout the world. The letters often discuss connoisseurship and refer

to objects related to those in the collection. The material reflects du Pont's collecting practices from about 1923 until the mid-1960s.

The Gardens

H. F. du Pont began planting daffodils in the gardens in 1912 and considered himself to be the "Head Gardener" of the estate until his death in 1969. From the 1930s until 1957, du Pont worked with noted landscape architect Marian Cruger Coffin to develop the grounds. Documentation for the gardens includes landscape design and horticultural records, correspondence with nurserymen, seed and bulb



Invitation to the White House, 1962. Winterthur Archives, Winterthur Library.



Marian Coffin, ca. 1956. Winterthur Archives, Winterthur Library.



March Bank, Winterthur, before 1929. Winterthur Archives, Winterthur Library.

orders, and propagation records. Hundreds of photographs reflect the changes in the garden. Of special interest is the collection of four hundred autochromes produced between 1910 and 1916 that record the Winterthur landscape.

The Winterthur Corporation

The name of the Winterthur Corporation became the Winterthur Museum after 1951. The papers of the corporation include the historical records of selected museum departments. Of particular interest are the papers of Charles F. Montgomery, the museum's first director, and Joseph Downs, the first curator. Oral histories in the collection feature recollections of the many employees who worked on the estate during the first half of the twentieth century.



H. F. du Pont and bull, Winterthur, ca. 1920. Winterthur Archives, Winterthur Library.

Winterthur Farms

For more than a century, Winterthur was a self-sustaining farming estate. In 1914 H. F. du Pont took over the management of the farms from his father and developed a world-renowned Holstein herd using newly established techniques of herd development. The breeding and milking records of that era are in the Archives, as is material relating to land and property management.

Related Resources in Delaware

Extensive records of other members of the du Pont family and businesses are available at Hagley Museum and Library and at the Corporate Record Management Center of the Dupont Company. The Hagley collection focuses on the personal papers of members of the du Pont family from their arrival in Delaware at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The papers of the various du Pont businesses are the focus of the corporate collection.



Winterthur Library is located in the Crowninshield Research Building, accessible from the main entrance to Winterthur Museum & Country Estate.

Hours: Monday–Friday, 8:30 am–4:30 pm

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