



BHC-MSS 0009
Guide to the John Skutel Collection
By Meghan Rinn
2018

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Skutel, John

Title: John Skutel Collection

Dates: 1831-1957 [bulk 1850s-1900s]

Quantity: 1 manuscript box, 1 oversized box

Abstract: Collected by John Skutel, a private collector who placed his materials up for auction in 1989. The collection contains material related to P.T. Barnum and associates, which is heavily represented by the Bridgeport History Center's P.T. Barnum Research Collection (BHC-MSS 00001). Of note in the Skutel Collection is the original contract that signed M. Lavinia Warren to P.T. Barnum's management, and the original typescript of Warren's autobiography.

Language: English

Repository: Bridgeport History Center

Biographical History

John Skutel was a private collector of material related to P. T. Barnum.

Scope and Content Note:

John Skutel collected material related to P.T. Barnum and his performers. While there are some items of Jenny Lind and Charles S. Stratton (General Tom Thumb) materials, M. Lavinia Warren is most heavily represented. There is no overarching scope beyond all of the connections to Barnum.

Included in the collection are a number of mass market books, including multiple copies of Struggles and Triumphs, P.T. Barnum's autobiography.

Arrangement note:

Arranged by subject, then chronologically

Administrative information:

Provenance: Purchase

Preferred Citation:

John Skutel Collection (BHC-MSS 0009), Bridgeport History Center.

Names and Subject Tracings

Personal Names

Barnum, P. T. (Phineas Taylor), 1810-1891.

Bailey, James Anthony, 1847-1906.

Lind, Jenny, 1820-1887.

Magri, M. Lavinia (Mercy Lavinia), 1841-1919.
Thumb, Tom, 1838-1883.

Corporate Names

Barnum & London Circus
Barnum and Bailey
Barnum and Bailey--History.
Barnum's American Museum

Subject headings

Circus animals--1870-1880.
Circus animals--Pictorial works.
Circus animals--United States--History--19th century
Circus owners.
Dwarfism
Entertainers--1840-1890

Box 1.

1. Letterhead, PT Barnum's marvelous drawing room aggregation 1870(?)
2. Program, Banquet to welcome Mr. PT Barnum to England 11/8/1889
3. Map, Denver showing Barnum's property
4. Program, Barnum's Wonders, Hindoo Hairy Family, 1888(?)
5. Manuscript, Philo Barnum, Sheriff and US Deputy Marshall (2 pieces) 1875
6. Booklet, "Legends of the blue hills" with strange Barnum reference on p. 10
7. Article, PT Barnum, Showman and humorist, by Joel Benton from Century Magazine
8. Letter, John Niles to Zalman Wildman 9/27/1831
9. Letter, Gideon Welles to Zalman Wildman 4/19/1833
10. Letters, I.W. Barnum, c. 1890s
11. Manuscript, PT Barnum biography with photos by George Gordy 1934-1936(?) cover
12. Manuscript, PT Barnum biography with photos by George Gordy 1934-1936(?)
13. Handbill, Masonic festival with GL Stratton on the program June 24, 1858
14. Book, General Tom Thumb's 3 Years Tour around the World by Sylvester Bleeker and The Tale of Tom Thumb, 1910
15. Contract signing M. Lavinia Warren to P.T. Barnum's employ, December 11, 1862
16. Letter, Countess Magri to Mrs. Conroy, October 10, 1916
17. Original typescript for Autobiography of Mrs. Tom Thumb by M. Lavinia Warren, 1920
18. Typescript for "My last chapter" by M. Lavinia Warren
19. Postcards and tickets, 2 postcards from Mrs. Tom Thumb at Midget City c. 1910s, 2 tickets to General Tom Thumb's Entertainment, undated; colored engraving of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Thumb.
20. "The story that never grows old", by Benjamin Bump, 1953
21. Sheet music, the Tom Thumb Polka, c. 1950s
22. Small items, Invitation to Mrs. Tom Thumb's 74th birthday; small 1-page print of the history of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Thumb; a Tom Thumb children's book
23. Jenny Lind Album (autograph book) 1837
24. Program, the Barnum Festival, 1857

Box 2, oversize

1. Sheet music, Tom Thumb Polka, 1848

2. Jenny Lind songbook, c. 1850s
3. Newspaper, Utica Morning Herald and Daily Gazette; Tom Thumb's Wedding on front page, February 12, 1863
4. Newspaper, Harper's Weekly Journal of Civilization featuring the Fairy Wedding, February 21, 1863
5. P.T. Barnum's Advanced Courier, April 21-25, 1873
6. American Agriculturalist, 1873
7. PT Barnum's menagerie, text and illustrations arranged for little people by PT Barnum and Sarah J. Burke 1888
8. Missing: General Tom Thumb and his lady by Romaine 1976