

Sea terms in different languages, [n.d.]

n.d.

Mss.359.03.D92

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Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Creator	Du Ponceau , Peter Stephen, 1760-1844
Title	Sea terms in different languages, [n.d.]
Date	n.d.
Call number	Mss.359.03.D92
Extent	1.0 Volume(s) 1 volume, 56 p.
Extent	1 volume, 56 p.
Location	LH-MV-E-15
Language	Multiple languages
Container	1

Background note

Peter Stephen Du Ponceau worked as a lawyer, author, and philologist.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Gift from the Du Ponceau estate and accessioned, 11/1901 (5335).

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- Language Material
- Legal Records
- Sketches.

Subject(s)

- International Trade.
- Language and languages
- Law
- Philology.

Other Descriptive Information

The Peter Stephen Du Ponceau Collection has a wide array of material. This entry refers to a dictionary of terms relating to the sea and seafaring (359.03 D92). This portion likely reflected both Du Ponceau's personal interest in linguistics and his career as a lawyer who specialized in international law and trade.

What follows is a general summary of the Du Ponceau Collection as a whole. The collection has a wide array of material, although it is particularly strong in of Native American material from the nineteenth century.

As a leading linguist of the era, the Du Ponceau's collection has three portions that relate to language. The first is a large volume of 73 Indian languages for both South and North American Indians (497 In2). The second is a nine volume set of notes on philology that focuses on Native American languages but includes notes on range of other language groups, such as the language of Polynesians and Greeks (410 D92). The notes also make numerous observations about Native American customs, practices, and beliefs. The third portion of linguistic material is a dictionary of terms relating to the sea and seafaring (359.03 D92).

Although Du Ponceau is most well-known today for his work in Native American linguistics, the Du Ponceau Collection includes a significant amount of correspondence from Du Ponceau's legal career in the nineteenth century (B D92p). As a practicing lawyer often working on trade issues, his correspondence also includes large collection of business news and legal affairs happening in Philadelphia. Most of these documents are from cases Du Ponceau worked on, and many of these cases involve international trade and merchant concerns. One of the more interesting case files includes a brief on whether or not the family of a mariner lost at sea can recover lost wages.

Du Ponceau was well-connected and some of his correspondence involves research on American Indians, language, and other intellectual endeavors (410.D92.1). He corresponded with many individuals throughout the U.S. and fellow members of the American Philosophical Society, sometimes as official APS business.

The APS collection also has a commonplace book of Du Ponceau, which includes interesting notes on colonial Pennsylvania history and especially William Penn's legacy (B D92c). Written in 1820, the notes can lend insight into the public and historical memory in early nineteenth century Philadelphia.

Some of his correspondence also involves his attempt to acquire documents from prominent Philadelphians so that the APS could publish a complete history of Pennsylvania. In addition to Du Ponceau's own efforts, Deborah Norris Logan corresponded with Du Ponceau about her own attempt to write a history of Pennsylvania. The Deborah Logan correspondence also touches upon women's roles in the early republic, with Logan writing that she felt uneasy publishing something in her name "before the publick" because of her "sex and station."