

**Recollections of my acquaintance with deceased  
members of the American Philosophical Society, 1862**

**1862**

**Mss.920.B74**

American Philosophical Society  
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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	American Philosophical Society
<b>Creator</b>	Breck, Samuel, 1771-1862
<b>Title</b>	Recollections of my acquaintance with deceased members of the American Philosophical Society, 1862
<b>Date</b>	1862
<b>Call number</b>	Mss.920.B74
<b>Extent</b>	1.0 Volume(s) 1 volume, 108 p.
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<b>Location</b>	LH-MV-E-16
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Container</b>	1
<b>Abstract</b>	This volume contains short sketches of prominent American and European scholars, diplomats, and statesmen. "These short memoirs were composed in the heat of the summer of 1862; and the concluding page written on the 15th of August of that year, when I was about one month advanced in my ninety second year; my birthday being July 17th, 1771." Signed Saml. Breck. Persons discussed include Talleyrand Perigord; M. Volney; Rochefoucauld Liancourt; Louis Philippe, King of the French; Joel Barlow; William Bingham; Robert Morris; Alexander Hamilton; General Henry Knox; Doctor Benjamin Rush; Doctor Rush and William Cobbett.

## **Background note**

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Samuel Breck was a Philadelphia merchant and member of the American Philosophical Society.

## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

American Philosophical Society

## Provenance

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### Acquisition Information

Received and accessioned, 1900 (1900 Z699); provenance unknown. UnknownNUnknown

## Indexing Terms

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### Corporate Name(s)

- American Philosophical Society.

### Family Name(s)

- Adams, John Quincy, -- 1767-1848 -- Inauguration.
- Talleyrand-Périgord, Charles Maurice de, -- prince de Bénévent, -- 1754-1838.

### Genre(s)

- Business Records and Accounts
- Manuscript Essays

### Geographic Name(s)

- United States -- Biography.

## Occupation(s)

- Diplomats.
- Physicians.
- Presidents.
- Scholars.
- Statesmen.

## Personal Name(s)

- Barlow, Joel, 1754-1812
- Bingham, William, 1752-1804
- Brissot de Warville, J.-P. (Jacques-Pierre), 1754-1793
- Chastellux, François Jean, marquis de, 1734-1788
- Cobbett, William, 1763-1835
- Hamilton, Alexander, 1757-1804
- Holyoke, Edward Augustus, 1728-1829
- Knox, Henry, 1750-1806
- La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, François-Alexandre-Frédéric, duc de, 1747-1827
- Lafayette, Marie Joseph Paul Yves, marquis de, 1757-1834
- Letombe, Philippe Joseph, d. 1833
- Louis Philippe, King of the French, 1773-1850
- Morris, Robert, 1734-1806
- Penn, John, 1729-1795
- Raguét, Condé, 1784-1842
- Rush, Benjamin, 1746-1813
- St. John de Crèvecoeur, J. Hector, 1735-1813
- Washington, George, 1732-1799

## Subject(s)

- American Revolution
- Business and Skilled Trades
- Philadelphia History

## Other Descriptive Information

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The Samuel Breck Collection consists of two separately-cataloged, bound volumes. The first, "[Historical Sketch of the Continental Bills of Credit, from 1775 to 1781, with Specimens thereof](#)" (332.5 B74h), is a

long manuscript essay on Continental Bills of credit from 1775 – 1781, which reflects Breck's interest in historical matters. The second volume is a handwritten account of Breck at 92 years old reminiscing on prominent APS members he had met.

Of particular significance, the volume on Continental bills includes 153 examples of various Continental bills beginning with the first emission in May 1775 until 1779. The collection also includes examples of colonial currency from Pennsylvania and New Jersey. There is a separate section that includes examples of counterfeit Continental bills. Breck also discusses the history of paper money in the colonies and debate about Continental currency in the early republic. The essay may be of interest to those interested in governance and finance in the early republic.

The second volume, "Recollections of My Acquaintance and Association with Deceased Members of the American Philosophical Society" (920 B74), contains a number of essays on important individuals who were members of the APS and with whom Breck was an acquaintance. The content is interesting and informative, although it reads more like well-known biographical and historical profiles than personal remembrances. There are, nonetheless, often short asides that Breck tells of his interactions with prominent figures, such as dining with Robert Morris and Alexander Hamilton, and having a close relationship with Henry Knox's family.

Breck was a prominent member of Philadelphia society and active in a number of cultural institutions, such as the Library Company of Philadelphia, the Athenaeum, and the APS.

Breck was born into a prominent Massachusetts family, educated in France, and then relocated with the rest of his family to Philadelphia. He served in the military troops that went to suppress the Whiskey Rebellion and eventually entered politics, serving ultimately as a U.S. Congressman.