

Joseph Carson papers, 1810-1877
1810-1877
Mss.B.C239

American Philosophical Society
105 South Fifth Street
Philadelphia, PA, 19106
215-440-3400
manuscripts@amphilsoc.org

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Background note	4
Indexing Terms	5
Other Descriptive Information	5

Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Creator	Carson, Joseph, 1808-1876
Title	Joseph Carson papers, 1810-1877
Date [inclusive]	1810-1877
Call number	Mss.B.C239
Extent	0.25 Linear feet 35 items
Extent	35 items.
Location	LH-MV-C-3
Language	English
Container	1
Abstract	<p>This collection contains material relating to his legal affairs, medical publications, receipts for books purchased, and information on botany. Important correspondents include Edward H. Clarke, George Mifflin Dallas, Samuel David Gross, and Joseph Henry. There is also family history in these papers.</p>

Background note

Physician Joseph Carson taught medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- Business Records and Accounts
- Educational Material
- General Correspondence
- Notebooks
- Receipts.

Subject(s)

- Americans Abroad
- Botany.
- Education
- Medical publishing
- Medicine
- Medicine -- Pennsylvania -- Philadelphia.
- Trade

Other Descriptive Information

The APS collection of Joseph Carson's letters is relatively small, especially for the purposes of this guide. Joseph Carson was a Philadelphia born and educated physician who spent time serving as a ship's physician. The collection has six documents from before 1850. They range from letters to receipts to notes from a lecture. Of particular significance is a very long letter Carson wrote from Calcutta in 1830 to Samuel Grant, an associate in the U.S.. Carson had been asked to carry a bill of exchange for Grant, which he had some difficulty disposing of because Grant's credit was not well-known, and to purchase goods on Grant's behalf for sale in the U.S.. Carson details the process and availability of goods in India,

and the reasons for his decision to purchase silk and indigo for Grant. Carson then goes on to describe his experience on the trip, stating that he “played the part of merchant and doctor.”

Joseph Carson was a Philadelphia born and educated physician who spent time serving as a ship’s physician. He attended the University of Pennsylvania, studying under Thomas Hewson and graduating in 1830. He served briefly as the physician to the Philadelphia almshouse before embarking as a ship’s surgeon aboard an India bound merchant vessel Georgiana. Upon his return in 1832, he began his own practice and became a well-regarded obstetrician. Carson was also interested in materia medica, a precursor to modern pharmacology and a field that reflected Carson’s interest in natural history and botany. Carson published two well-received books in the field, *Illustrations of Medical Botany: Consisting of Coloured Figures of the Plants Affording the Important Articles of the Materia Medica* and *The Elements of the Materia Medica*. He eventually became a professor of materia medica at the University of Pennsylvania.