



Letter from Stephen Myers to
John Jay II

December 17, 1860

Paper, Ink

JJ.1959.145

SELECTED BY: Melissa Vail

AFFILIATION: Trustee of Friends of John Jay
Homestead, and Chair of the Scholars Lectures
Committee

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

BECAUSE: Stephen Myers was an abolitionist
born in slavery around 1800, based in Albany,
active on the Underground Railroad from the
1830s - 1850s. I chose this letter because it
shows a particularly close example of
relationships between John Jay II and members
of various factions of the antislavery
movement, relationships that were often
complicated even without racial lines. And
don't we wish we had a photo of that "smart
and spritely grandson"?

1010 Tark St
Antislavery office Albany Decem 17 1860

Mr Jay Sir I should like to trouble you
sir for six copys of your speech delivd at west
chester I suppose you have some in Pamphlet form
I have had one copy sent to me from New York I
promised The Hon John J Frost of Madison County
and senator Williams of Lyons to send them two
copies each providing I could get them if Mr
Jay has any I would be extremely obliged to
him if he would send me a few copies

During the last eight weeks there has more fugitives
escaped from the south than there have in any four
months before there has more come away in vessels
this season than in any former season and have landed
in eastern ports many have landed in nantucket
and Norwich week before last two from south carolina
and one from Georgia last Sunday we had eight
in one party men women and children there is three
here to night who came here on Saturday one Baltimore
county Md two from Charlestown Pts I send you
a memorandum of this family they have gone safe into
Canada

Mr Jay Sir
I have a smart and spritely Grand son about
four months old I have taken the liberty to name
him Mr John Jay Myers I desired to have one
colored child to bare that name Your humble serv
Stephen Myers



Toy Stove

19th Century

Iron

JJ.1962.354

SELECTED BY: Barry Abisch

AFFILIATION: Volunteer

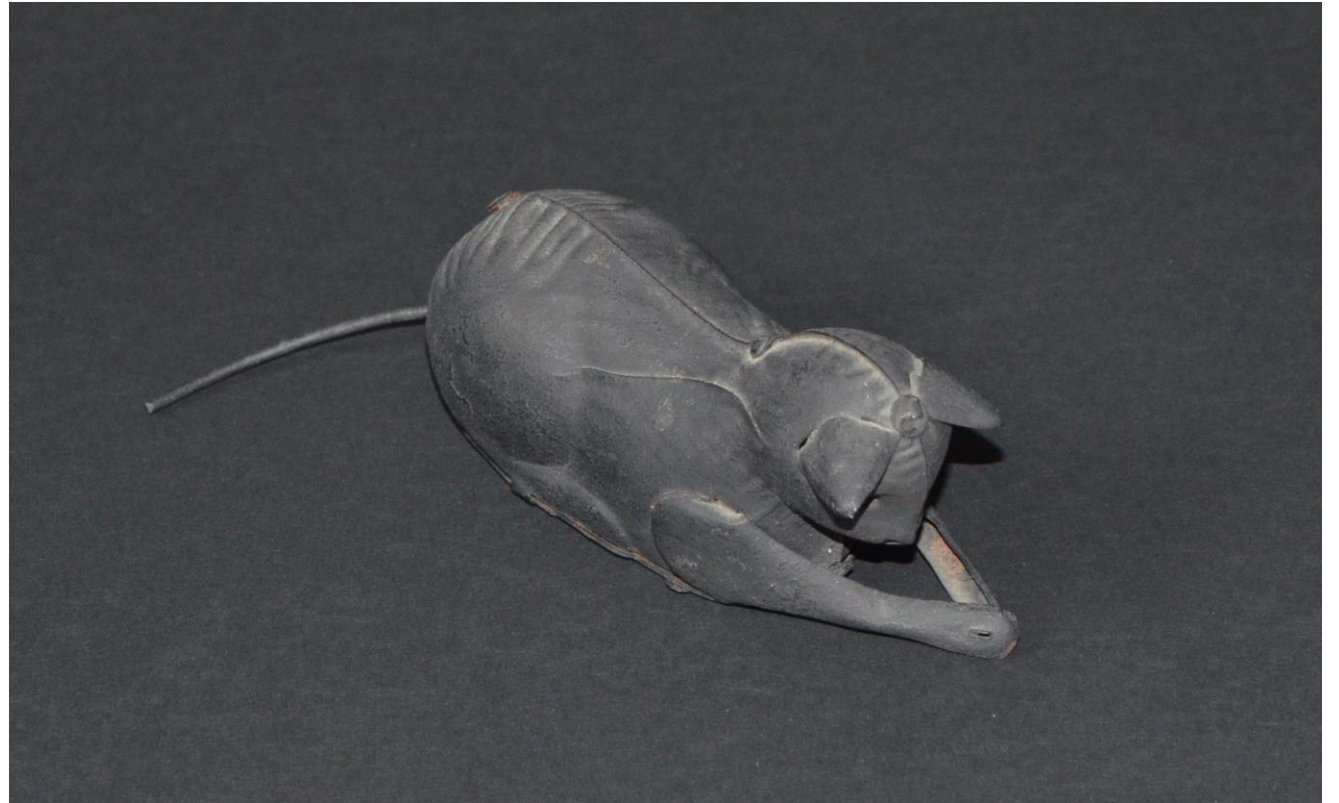
THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS BECAUSE: As a museum, the house is frozen in time, presented as much as possible as it was in 1820. But as a home to the Jay family for more than 150 years, the house underwent many changes. This toy stove connects us with the first big alteration: in 1818, an extension was added to the north side of the house. Included was a “modern” kitchen – complete with a cast iron stove, possibly not too different from this one in

Toy Wind-up Cat
Unknown Date
Metal
JJ.1962.613

SELECTED BY: Heidi Stryker

AFFILIATION: Office Manager,
Friends of John Jay Homestead

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE
THINGS BECAUSE: I love cats! I
have never seen anything
quite like this among the toys
of this particular era and
found it unique and charming.





Bird Whistle
Unknown Date
Earthenware
JJ.1965.359

SELECTED BY: Heather Iannucci

AFFILIATION: Director, John Jay Homestead

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS BECAUSE: My grandmother had a very similar bird whistle. When I would visit her as a child, she would let me play with it. My mother inherited it, and when they were younger, my children loved to play with that same bird whistle.

Hedgehog Bulb Pot
Josiah Wedgwood & Sons
c.1780
Earthenware
JJ.1968.215

SELECTED BY: Meaghan McClure

AFFILIATION: Meaghan has spent many years actively involved with the Homestead: first as a participant in its summer camps, then as archival intern, and finally as an estate Docent. She loves John Jay and looks forward to many more fun years here!

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS BECAUSE: The words cute and antique aren't usually paired together. But, at Jay, anything is possible! Where else can you find such an adorable, old, and colorful hedgehog?



Calais 12 Oct. 1783

I arrived here between eleven and twelve last night
being at all the worse for the Journey, tho' travelling at
my usual quantity of Sleep, or rather of lying
I have long been a stranger to what is called a
nap.

The Inns on this Road are bad, and yet I have not
dined with Bugs - I was told by two or three Landladies
there were no Bugs in this part of France, and my man
very well so, for that there are none in England,
at far off - This is a singular fact, and I wish to
know the reason.

The weather is fine, and I shall probably have an
opportunity to Dover, from whence I shall again write
if I should arrive in time to set out for London
tomorrow. - My Compl^{ts} to the Household of Passy -
the sweet little girls for me, and continue assured of
the affection of your faithful John Jay -

J. Jay -

Letter from John Jay to Sarah Jay

October 12, 1783

Paper, Ink

JJ.1986.23

SELECTED BY: Katherine Frawley

AFFILIATION: (Former) Visitor Service Coordinator

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS BECAUSE: It is a simple but sweet letter from John Jay to his wife, discussing typical topics for a married couple and wishing she kiss their "sweet little girls" for him. I also love that it is addressed to Mrs. Jay during her stay at Benjamin Franklin's home in Passy, France.

Godey's Lady's Book, Vol. 1858

1858

Paper, ink, cardstock

JJ.1975.3.2

SELECTED BY: Heather
Iannucci

AFFILIATION: Director, John
Jay Homestead

**THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE
THINGS BECAUSE:** I was
looking through this book one
day, trying to find an image
to use in a program. When I
came across these beautiful
sketches of women's fashions
of the day, I was struck by the
vibrant colors.





Colonel William Jay's Staff & Field Officer's Sword

c.1850

Steel, brass

JJ.2002.8

SELECTED BY: Meaghan McClure

AFFILIATION: Meaghan has spent many years actively involved with the Homestead: first as a participant in its summer camps, then as archival intern, and finally as an estate Docent. She loves John Jay and looks forward to many more fun years here!

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS BECAUSE: The Jays weren't only intimately involved in just the founding of our nation, they too experienced the unrest that came with the following decades. This sword is a potent reminder of that. Overall, it's a piece with serious gravity to it, and commands respect.

*White Peacock Confronting a Magpie in a
Palace Garden*

Eleanor Jay Iselin

c. 1930

Oil on Canvas

JJ.1958.557

SELECTED BY: Koran Terry

AFFILIATION: Maintenance

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

BECAUSE: Living on site has provided me daily views of the beautiful landscape here at John Jay Homestead. I love having the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends who come to explore and learn about the history. I chose this painting by Eleanor Jay Iselin because it is a reminder of the local wildlife I see here every day; and also the fact that my closest neighbor is a coop of chickens.





Wine Bottle

c.1820s

Glass

JJ.2013.7.9

SELECTED BY: Ariana Sceccitano

AFFILIATION: Education Coordinator

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS BECAUSE: It impresses me that such a family heirloom was passed on for so many generations and although the wine itself has not been preserved, the bottle is singularly unique, hand blown, and bears an uncommon finish which is not found in factory-made bottles.

Augustus Jay's Book of Common Prayer

c.1724

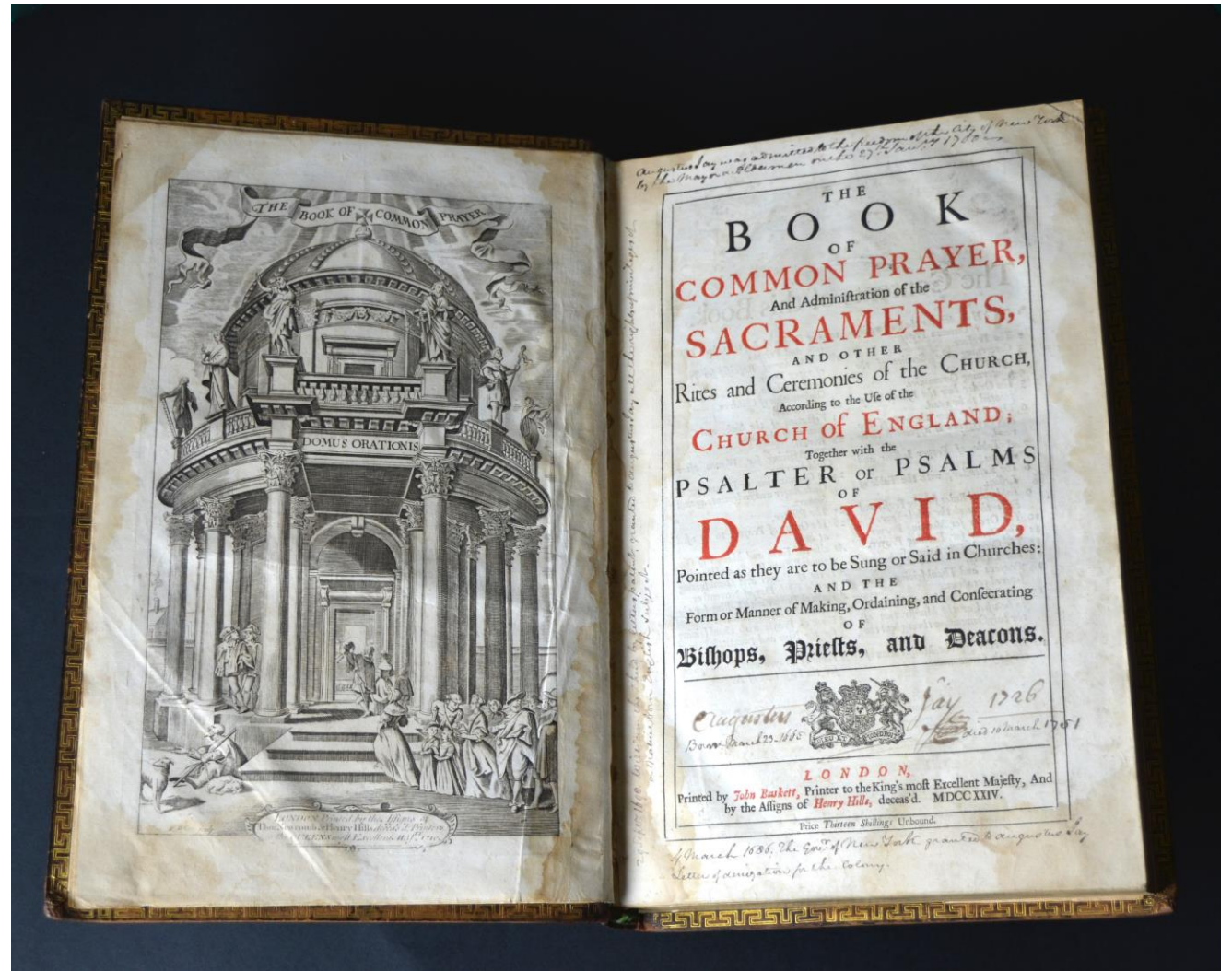
Paper, ink, cardstock

JJ.2008.4

SELECTED BY: Heather Langham

AFFILIATION: Trustee, Friends of John Jay
Homestead

**THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS
BECAUSE:** This *Book of Common Prayer* dated 1724 belonged to John Jay's grandfather, Augustus, and is a tangible symbol of the religious freedom the new world offered. A family of French Huguenots, the Augustus Jay family immigrated to this country seeking religious freedom and freedom from persecution. This *Book of Common Prayer* represents the Augustus Jay family's right to be practicing Protestants in the Church of England in their new homeland. I also found the book compelling because it is a beautiful and charming family treasure dated and signed by Augustus.



Bedford - 20 March (1837)

Rev. Sir

I have had the honor of receiving your favor of the 9th inst^t transmitting the recent circular of "The American Society for the promotion of education in Africa," & expressing a desire that I would give you my "views" on the subject as you presume they are favorable to the cause. When the hostile attitude I have assumed towards the Colonization Society is considered this application in behalf of an effort avowedly originating with the friends of that institution manifests a confidence in my candor that claims my acknowledgments.

The extension of education to Africa & every other barbarous country is an object that must command the good wishes of all benevolent men, however much they may differ in opinion as to the means of accomplishing it.

When gentlemen so distinguished for talents, influence & Christian philanthropy as those named in the circular, propose a benevolent enterprise & I am invited, although indirectly to unite with them, howe it to myself, to them, & permit me to say, to the respect I feel for you personally, to state frankly the reasons which induce me to decline the invitation. You will excuse me should I find it necessary in detailing these reasons to trespass a little on your patience.

It is admitted that your African education Society, is the "Young Men's Colonization Society of New York" with a new name. That I may be the more clearly understood, I will state the liberty to mention briefly the grounds of my opposition to the institution for which the Young Men's Society was till lately an auxiliary.

There is nothing in the constitution of the American Colonization Society to which in my opinion any Christian can reasonably object.

Letter from William Jay to Reuben Turner

William Jay

March 20, 1837

Paper, Ink

JJ.2017.225

SELECTED BY: Katherine Frawley

AFFILIATION: Visitor Service Coordinator

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS BECAUSE: It provides a glimpse into William Jay's character and beliefs while showing how respected and involved he was in the abolition movement. In the letter, he rejects helping or writing anything for the Recolonization Society because he doesn't believe in their mission- but he does so in a stern yet sassy way, going as far as to tell them they are wrong and explain why.

A Collection to Irish Folk Song for Piano

c.1850

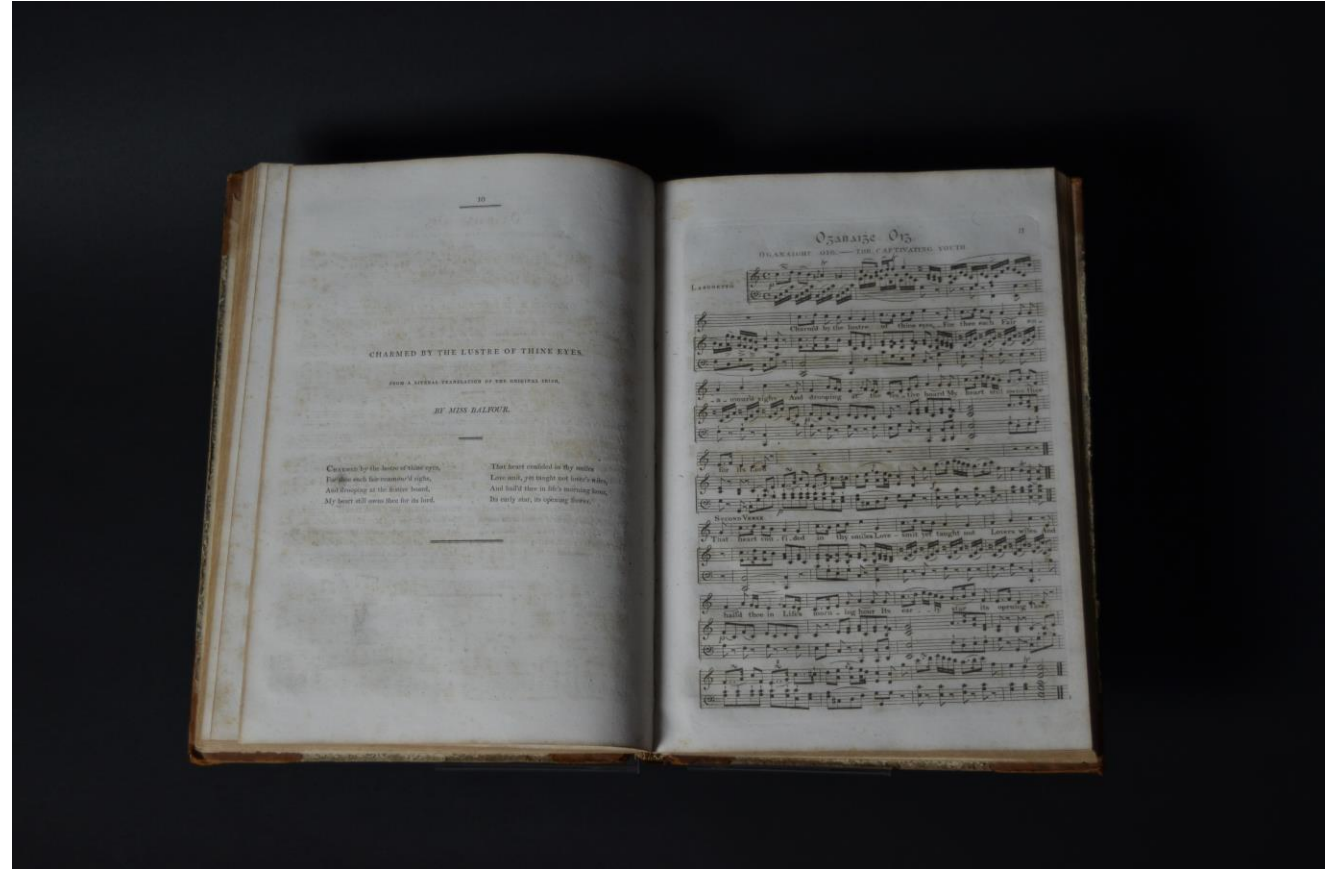
Paper, ink, cardstock

JJ.2017.460

SELECTED BY: Meaghan McClure

AFFILIATION: Meaghan has spent many years actively involved with the Homestead: first as a participant in its summer camps, then as archival intern, and finally as an estate Docent. She loves John Jay and looks forward to many more fun years here!

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS BECAUSE: This book gives us the ability to really imagine how one's leisure hours would be spent in the mid- 19th century. You can almost see the Jays, seated in the Front Parlour, enjoying this music together as a family. Quite a lovely thought!



West Africa.
8th August 1853

My dear Mr Jay.

I left England, with my family according to expectation on the 24 June; and we reached Monrovia on the 15th July. Our passage included the usual incidents, viz: detours and trials of a sea voyage: we stopped at Madeira, Teneriffe, Goree, Bathurst, Sierra Leone; and perhaps a notice of the events that occurred and those several places will be interesting to you. But I judge that you will be more interested in some notice and reference to Liberia; and therefore passing the former, and writing a sermon relating to myself; I will note a few lines about this young Republic.

I have been here ^{over} three weeks and have taken pains to see with my own eyes as much as possible; and I assure you that that reports you have seen and read of the progress and improvement of the people are not exaggerated: all things considered
John Jay Esq.

Letter from Alexander Crummel to William Jay

August 8, 1853

Paper, Ink

JJ.2017.570

SELECTED BY: Melissa Vail

AFFILIATION: Trustee of Friends of John Jay Homestead, and Chair of the Scholars Lectures Committee

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS BECAUSE: Alexander Crummell was a leading abolitionist, pan-African activist, scholar, and minister in the Episcopal Church. Educated at the African Free School (co-founded by John Jay), he was denied admission to General Theological Seminary in New York, ordained in Massachusetts, and then became the first black student ever to graduate from Queens College, Cambridge. He was not successful in his several attempts to gain equal standing for black congregations in the Episcopal Church. He was deeply admired by WEB DuBois. I chose this letter because of all the elements of the antislavery movement it illustrates, and the mutually respectful and egalitarian relationship it shows between Crummell and John Jay II.

William Jay's Chemistry Textbook

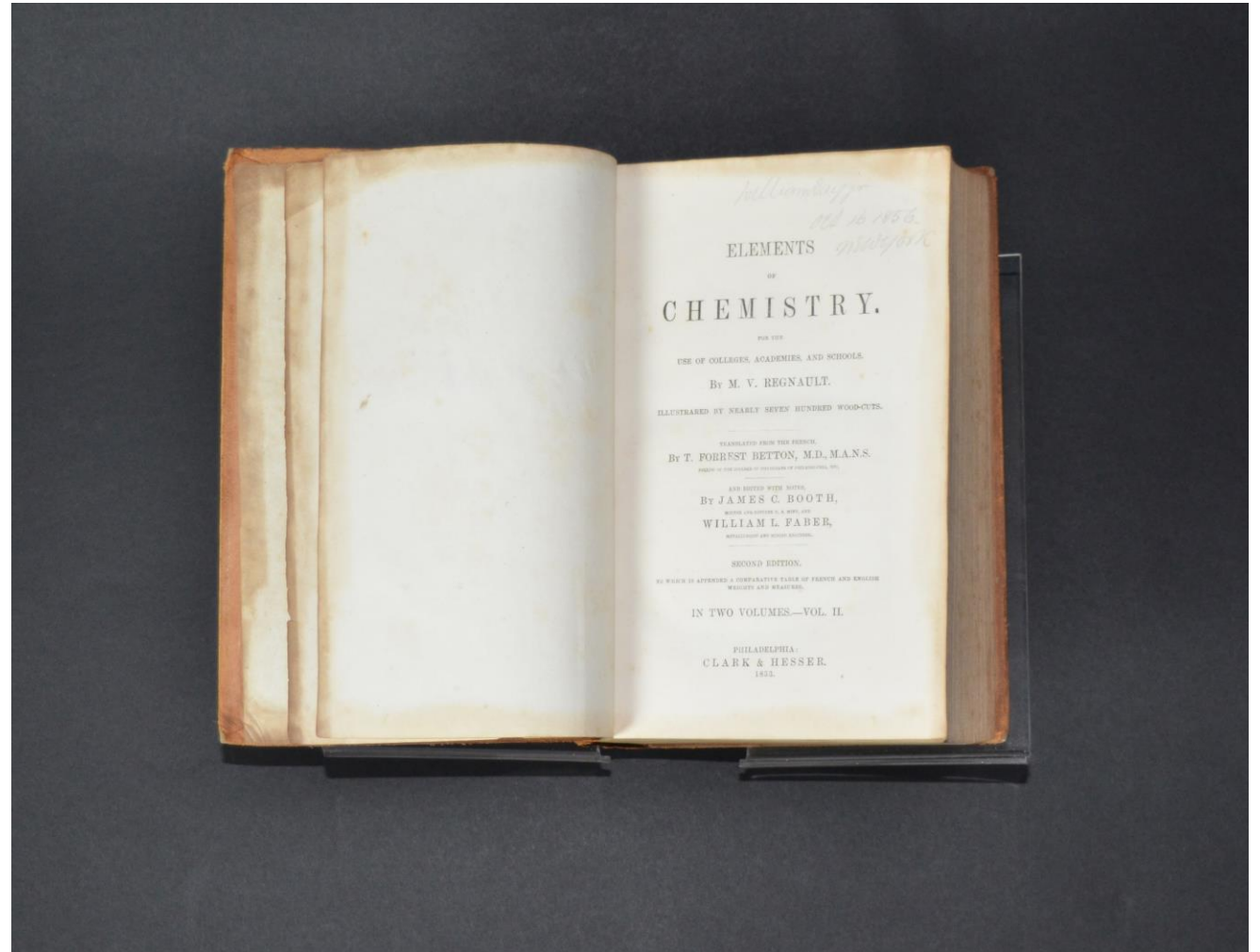
Paper, ink, cardstock
JJ.2020.10

SELECTED BY: Domenick Gasparro

AFFILIATION: Former Museum Associate /
Volunteer

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

BECAUSE: I discovered this chemistry book owned by Col. William Jay while doing a survey of the historic book collection in the summer of 2018. So often we find ourselves removed from figures of the past because we feel that they are very different than we are. In many cases, they were. However, occasionally, we see that perhaps they weren't so different after all. For instance, in the front of this book, we see a doodled 'W' Jay" on the first few pages. Many of us have doodled our initials in the front pages of textbooks or notebooks, and I found this commonality to be quite interesting, and a bit humorous.





Mamie Whisk Broom

19th Century

JJ.2020.12

SELECTED BY: Bethany White

AFFILIATION: Interpretive Programs Director

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS BECAUSE:

Material culture and how it relates to the political and social climate of a time period has always fascinated me. The mammie archetype ties back to the period of southern slavery where African American women worked in the homes of white families caring for their children. This is a period of time that we do not often cover in our interpretation here, but there is a rich story to tell. This mammie whisk broom is a great example of the views on race, its exploitation and representation in early 20th century America

News article by Eleanor Jay Iselin,
offering Jay Homestead to U.N. to
use as their headquarters
Eleanor Jay Iselin
February 7, 1946
Paper, Ink
JJ.2020.11

SELECTED BY: Bethany White

AFFILIATION: Interpretive Programs Director

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

BECAUSE: The history of this house has so many fun stories that we are rarely able to share. In 1946, Eleanor Iselin wrote an opinion piece in the New York Herald Tribune offering up Bedford House as the home of the newly formed United Nations. She wrote: "This is not a time when personal sentiments or convenience should interfere with what would appear to be the one hope of the world in solving the international problems with which it is confronted." As we know, the U.N. ultimately settled on a home in New York City and the home of John Jay became a museum. But it is interesting to image what might have happened in the United Nations Organization took Eleanor Iselin up on her offer.

Mrs. Iselin Approves

To the New York Herald Tribune:

In view of the strong feelings which have been aroused and expressed about the choice of the site committee of the U. N. O. for its eventual headquarters, I should like to go on record as heartily endorsing and applauding the opinions of the citizens of Westchester County and the Greenwich and Stamford areas who have approved and shown their willingness to welcome the U. N. O. to this part of the country.

We can only assume that the choice has been made after careful study of the needs of the organization and the adaptability of the various areas which have been under consideration. It is certainly a great honor to New York City and these outlying districts that they have been chosen to become the capital of the world.

I own a tract of land in the Township of Bedford, four miles north of Bedford Village and within the possible expansion area. The land has been in my family since it was purchased from the Indian Sachem Katonah by my ancestor, Jacobus Van Courtlandt, in 1702. The house in which I was born, and now live, was built in 1890 by my great-great-grandfather, John Jay, who inherited the land from his mother. I am the fifth generation who has lived in the house, and on the land, without interruption.

Besides being deeply rooted in the hearts and the lives of myself and my family it has become a historic landmark of some importance. If it should be necessary for me to turn Bedford House over to the U. N. O. I can think of no more dignified or fitting termination to its connection with my family.

This is not a time when personal sentiments or convenience should interfere with what would appear to be the one hope of the world in solving the international problems with which it is confronted. Throughout the world large areas of country, great cities and thousands of homes have been destroyed, but in this respect we have remained untouched. Our sacrifices in the loss of our young men have been great. In comparison, the changing of the nature of our community or the loss of our homes would seem small. Should we not all give our whole-hearted co-operation and submerge our own interests in a concerted effort to further the plans for a lasting peace? I feel that we should.

ELEANOR JAY ISELIN.
Katonah, N. Y., Feb. 7, 1946.



Statue of John Jay
Edward A. Kuntze (1826-1870)
c.1850
Plaster

SELECTED BY: Arthur Benware

AFFILIATION: Collections Manager

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS BECAUSE: This sculpture of Jay is based on his image in the Benjamin West painting *The American Peace Commissioners*, I find it interesting that the artist chose this depiction of Jay for a posthumous sculpture.

The Grapes of New York

U.P. Hedrick

1908

Paper, ink, cardstock

JJ.2020.13

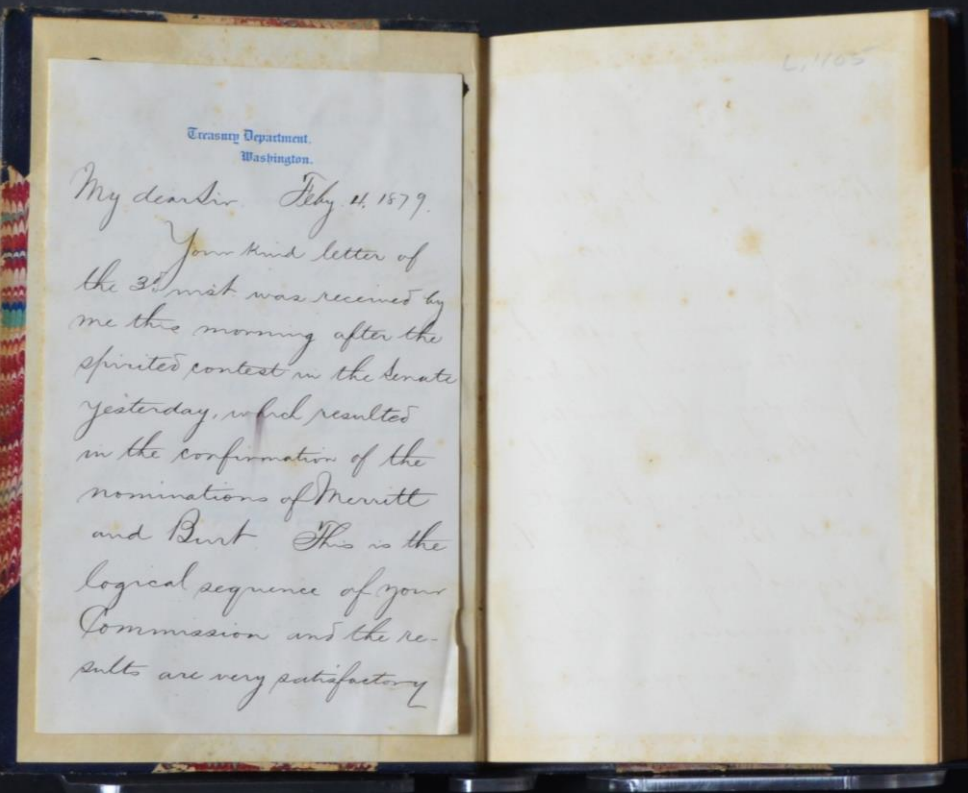
SELECTED BY: Linda Wang

AFFILIATION: Volunteer

**THIS IS ONE OF MY
FAVORITE THINGS**

BECAUSE: Although grapes were never grown on the Homestead, this book provides a detailed look at New York's history with grapes, as well as a glimpse into the Jay family's continued interest in agriculture.





Letter of the Secretary of the Treasury Relative to the Nominations of Collector and Naval Officer in the New York Custom House

John Sherman

1879

Paper, ink, cardstock

JJ.2020.14

SELECTED BY: Linda Wang

AFFILIATION: Volunteer

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS BECAUSE: John Jay II, best known for being an ardent abolitionist, also helped fight corruption within the government. This book was gifted by John Sherman, the Secretary of the Treasury during the Hayes Administration, for leading the investigation into the New York Custom-House.

Lady Washington's Reception

Daniel Huntington

c.1860

Paper, Ink

JJ.1958.632

SELECTED BY: Michael Deller

AFFILIATION: Tour Guide

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS BECAUSE: while the focus of this piece clearly revolves around the esteemed Martha Washington, there is a remarkable amount of prominence given to John and Sarah Jay among the crowd of party attendees. John Jay can be seen standing in his flowing chief justice robes on the far-left side of the portrait, with his back and right shoulder turned toward the viewer. His gaze across the room can be traced to another equally prominent figure, a dark-haired lady with pearls in her hair and a fan in her left hand. This lady is John's beloved wife Sarah Livingston Jay. What I find so remarkable about the composition of this piece is that, among the crowd of notable dignitaries, the Jay couple quietly share a fond glance across the room. Yet, in a way, they almost steal the scene.

This colored engraving was made by Alexander Hay Ritchie after Daniel Huntington's original painting, *The Republican Court (Lady Washington's Reception Day)* in 1861. Huntington was commissioned to paint it for the expressed purpose of mass producing it as a marketable print. It was created on the eve of the American Civil War as a nostalgic (if not romanticized) memory of a more honorable time in the nation's young history.





Portrait of Eleanor Kingsland Field Jay

Giovanni Battista Canevari

c.1833

Oil on Canvas

JJ.1958.295

SELECTED BY: Heather Langham

AFFILIATION: Trustee, Friends of John Jay Homestead

THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS BECAUSE: Mrs. John Jay II was what we might call today an *influencer*...In keeping with the architectural style of her times she added a Victorian façade to Bedford House, and while abroad when John Jay II was serving as ambassador to Austria - Hungary, she acquired decorative and fine arts that are part of our collection today. Eleanor was a Victorian swan and her contributions are noteworthy part of JJH cultural history. Because this lovely portrait is outside of our interpretive time period it is a not on permanent display; *These Are a Few of My Favorite Things* is the ideal opportunity to showcase this charming portrait and Eleanor Field in all of her loveliness.