

**New York Public Library
Humanities and Social Sciences Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

Robert Bonner, 1824 - 1899

Papers, 1860 - 1899

**(DRAFT)
Compiled by Valerie Wingfield
August 2000**

DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

- Main Entry:** Bonner, Robert, 1824 - 1899
- Title:** Robert Bonner Papers, 1860 - 1899
- Size:** 7 linear ft. (16 boxes)
- Source:** Purchased from American Autograph Shop and Richard S. Wormser (1937)
- Abstract:** Robert Bonner (1824 - 1899) was a newspaper publisher and trotting horse breeder. He owned and published the *New York Ledger*. The collection consists of correspondence, trotting horse papers, financial documents, writings, photographs, and artifacts. The correspondence includes letters to Bonner as proprietor of the *New York Ledger*, with a few drafts of his replies, mostly from contributors offering stories, suggesting plots, soliciting money, acknowledging remuneration, and relating to personal matters; letters from Presbyterian clergymen about church affairs; and letters from the owners of the *New York Sun*, *New York Herald*, and *New York Times*, revealing Bonner's willingness to lend financial aid to those newspapers. Notable correspondents include Henry Ward Beecher, Thomas M. Clark, Sylvanus Cobb, John Hall, Leon and Harriet Lewis, and William Henry Peck. The materials relating to the breeding, development, and shoeing of trotting horses contain letters from owners, breeders, veterinarians, editors of sporting journals, and others from all parts of the United States, but especially Kentucky; notes on horses; accounts; scrapbooks of newspaper clippings containing biographical data and other material on the horse and on the Scotch Irish Society of America.
- Special Formats:** Hay, metal links, photographs, sketches, and artifacts

RELATED MATERIALS NOTE

General Research Division: Classmark AN++ (Bonner, Robert. Scrapbook of newspaper clippings). Bonner, Robert. Scrapbook of newspaper clippings. 2 vols.
Subject: Horses

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Robert Bonner (1824 - 1899) was born near Londonderry (modern name Derry), Northern Ireland on April 28, 1824. He immigrated to the United States with his family as a child. At the age of fifteen, Bonner apprenticed at the *Hartford Courant* for five years. This Connecticut newspaper (started in 1764) is currently the country's oldest newspaper in continuous publication. Following this apprenticeship, Bonner moved to New York City as a correspondent, working for the *Evening Mirror*. Having accumulated enough money during this period, Bonner purchased the *Merchant Ledger* a financial weekly paper in 1851. Four years later, Bonner changed the name to the *New York Ledger*. At the helm of the newspaper, Bonner hired Fanny Fern, a well know author to write *One hundred dollar a column story*. Bonner also hired other popular writers including William Cullen Bryant and Henry Ward Beecher. Thus, Bonner changed the focus of the newspaper from a strictly financial newspaper to one of popular interest. He succeeded because the *New York Ledger* attained a circulation of 400,000 copies resulting in Bonner becoming a millionaire. When Bonner retired, he turned the paper over to his three sons, Allen, Robert Edwin and Frederick Bonner.

Managing and owning trotting horses was Bonner's other main business interest. This included breeding and care of trotting horses. With regard to family, Bonner married Jane McCanlis in 1850. There were six children from this marriage. Bonner died in 1899 and his survivors included his wife, sons and two brothers: William Bonner a farmer in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, and David Bonner, a merchant in Stamford, CT.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

The collection reflects the business side of Robert Bonner, (1824 - 1899), owner of the New York City newspaper the *New York Ledger* and his interest in trotting horses. The collection also documents his influence as a successful nineteenth century businessman. This collection is equally divided between Bonner's two businesses with correspondence being the bulk of the material. Prominent correspondents in the General Correspondence include Henry Ward Beecher, Sylvanus Cobb, among others. The Trotting Horse Papers correspondence includes materials from breeders, veterinarians and others involved in horse sports and trade support. Financial and legal records, writings, printed matter, illustrations, photographs and artifacts support this correspondence.

ARRANGEMENT NOTE

The collection is arranged into five series:

- I. General Correspondence
- II. Trotting Horse Papers
- III. Financial and Legal Records
- IV. Writings
- V. Printed Matter, Photographs, Sketches, Artifacts and Miscellany

SERIES DESCRIPTION NOTE

SERIES I. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

BOXES 1 - 6

The General Correspondence is arranged alphabetically by correspondent. Letters to Bonner are written to him in the capacity of owner of the *Ledger*. There are a few drafts of his replies. Correspondence includes letters from contributors offering stories for publication, solicitation for money, acknowledgment of remuneration and personal matters. There are also letters from the owners of the *New York Sun*, the *New York Herald*, and the *New York Times*. Notable correspondents include Henry Ward Beecher, Thomas M. Clark, Sylvanus Cobb, John Hall, Leon and Harriet Lewis, and William Henry Peck. The subseries of the General Correspondence, 1860 - 1899, is a small group of letters chronologically arranged (box 6). **See:** Index to General Correspondence.

SERIES II. TROTTING HORSE PAPERS

BOXES 7 - 12

The Trotting Horse Correspondence, 1845 - 1890, is arranged chronologically. These letters are related to breeding, development and shoeing of horses. Letters are from horse owners, breeders, veterinarians, and editors of sporting journals and other interested individuals from around the country. Excellent example of nineteenth century typeface and beautifully illustrated letterheads are part of this series.

SERIES III. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL RECORDS

BOX 13

This minor series contains an assortment of financial records, 1860 - 1899, mainly relating to Bonner's horses. There are three agreements, 1890; 1894, between Bonner and the New York Horse Manure Co.

SERIES IV. WRITINGS

BOXES 14 - 15

This series contains Bonner's notes on horses, notes on shoeing 1874 - 1897, notes on speed of horse, and horseshoes. The remainder of this series is prescriptions appropriate

for horses.

Series V. Printed Material, Drawings, Photographs, Artifacts and Miscellany
Box 16

This minor series contains a mixture of materials. There are some assorted newspaper articles, calling cards, drawings relating to horses, photographs of individuals and horses, artifacts relating to horses, and miscellany. The ink sketches may have been drawn by Bonner and include an illustration for a racetrack and a wheel for the trotting horse carriage. The hay and metal link artifacts may have been connected to horse carriages.

CONTAINER LIST

| Box | | Series I. General Correspondence (see index) |
|-----|----|--|
| 1 | 1 | Abbot, John C. |
| | 2 | Addey – Atwood |
| | 3 | B – Barnum |
| | 4 | Bartlett, William O. and Bartlett, Willard |
| | 5 | Beecher, Henry Ward 1860 - 1866 |
| | 6 | 1867 - 1872 |
| | 7 | 1873 - 1887 |
| | 8 | n.d. |
| | 9 | Bell – Bridgman |
| | 10 | Brown – Burleigh |
| | 11 | Calhoun |
| | 12 | Carlton – Chester |
| | 13 | Childs, George W. |
| | 14 | Church – Clarke, G. |
| | 15 | Clarke, Thomas M. |
| | 16 | Cleveland – Cooke |
| | 17 | Coxe, A. |
| | 18 | Cozzens – Crowell |
| 2 | | Cobb, Sylvanus |
| | 1 | 1860 |
| | 2 | 1861 |
| | 3 | 1862 |
| | 4 | 1863 |
| | 5 | 1864 |
| | 6 | 1866 - 1869 |
| | 7 | 1871 - 1872 |
| | 8 | 1873 |
| | 9 | 1874 - 1875 |
| | 10 | 1876 - 1879 |
| | 11 | 1882 - 1883 |
| | 12 | 1884 - 1887; n.d. |
| | 13 | Correspondence by other family members |
| | 14 | Dallas – Dalzell |
| | 15 | Dana |
| | 16 | DeMille – Durant |
| 17 | E | |
| 3 | 1 | Field – Field |
| | 2 | Floyd, A.C. |
| | 3 | Francis, M. – Fuller |
| | 4 | Gallaher – Gayler |

| | | |
|---|----|---------------------------|
| | 5 | Gifford, Martha C. |
| | 6 | Greeley, R.F. |
| | | Hall, John |
| | 7 | 1870 - 1872 |
| | 8 | 1873 - 1878 |
| | 9 | 1880 - 1889 |
| | 10 | 1890 - 1898 |
| | 11 | n.d. |
| | 12 | n.d. |
| | 13 | n.d. |
| | 14 | Empty envelopes |
| | 15 | Empty envelopes |
| | 16 | Halpine – Hopper |
| | 17 | Jennings, J.L. |
| | 18 | Jewitt, Solomon L. |
| | 19 | Jones, George 1873 - 1883 |
| 4 | 1 | K |
| | 2 | L – Levert |
| | | Lewis, Leon and Harriet |
| | 3 | 1862 - 1870 |
| | 4 | 1872 - 1873 |
| | 5 | 1874 |
| | 6 | 1875 |
| | 7 | 1876 |
| | 8 | 1877 |
| | 9 | 1878 |
| | 10 | 1883 - 1898 |
| | 11 | Leyburn – Lynn |
| | 12 | M – Manning |
| | 13 | Marble – Miller |
| | 14 | Moffat – Myers |
| | 15 | N – O |
| | 16 | P – Palmer |
| | 17 | Parry, Sallie |
| | 18 | Empty envelopes |
| | 19 | Parton, James |
| | 20 | Paton – Paul |
| 5 | 1 | Payne – Peck |
| | | Peck, William H. |
| | 2 | 1875 - 1877 |
| | 3 | 1878 - 1879 |
| | 4 | 1880 - 1885 |
| | 5 | Peterson – R |

- 6 S – Sheridan
- 7 Sherman – Sherwood
- 8 Sibourney, Lydia H.
- 9 Sinclair, Samuel
- 10 Smith, John F.

- 11 Smith – Suisshelm
- 12 T – Tupper
- 13 Tyng, S.H.
- 14 U
- 15 W – Watson
- 16 Wheeler – Whittaker
- 17 Wilkes, George 1863 - 1870
- 18 1873 - 1877
- 19 Williams – Wilson
- 20 Windship, George B.

- 6 1 Winter, Elizabeth C.
- 2 Wright, Julia M.
- 3 Wright – Wylie
- 4 Y
- General Correspondence
- 5 1860 - 862
- 6 1863 - 1869
- 7 1870 - 1875
- 8 1876 - 1879
- 9 1880 - 882
- 10 1883 - 1889
- 11 1890
- 12 1891
- 13 1892
- 14 1893
- 15 1894 - 1899
- 16 n.d.
- 17 Miscellaneous

Series II. Trotting Horse Papers

- 7 Trotting Horse Correspondence
- 1 1845 - 1865
- 2 1866 - 1870
- 3 1871
- 4 1872 - 1873
- 5 1874 Jan - Jun
- 6 1874 Jul - Dec
- 7 1875 Jan - Jun
- 8 1875 Jul - Dec

| | | |
|----|----|-----------------|
| | 9 | 1876 Jan - Feb |
| | 10 | 1876 Mar - Apr |
| | 11 | 1876 May - Jun |
| | 12 | 1876 Jul - Aug |
| | 13 | 1876 Sep - Dec |
| | 14 | 1877 Jul - Oct |
| | 15 | 1877 Nov - Dec |
| 8 | 1 | 1878 |
| | 2 | 1879 Jan - Jun |
| | 3 | 1879 Jul - Aug |
| | 4 | 1880 |
| | 5 | 1881 |
| | 6 | 1882 |
| | 7 | 1883 - 1884 |
| | 8 | 1885 Jan - Jun |
| | 9 | 1885 Jul - Dec |
| | 10 | 1886 - 1887 |
| | 11 | 1888 |
| 9 | 1 | 1889 Jan - Jun |
| | 2 | 1889 Jul - Dec |
| | 3 | 1889 Nov - Dec |
| | 4 | 1890 Jan - Feb |
| | 5 | 1890 Mar - Jun |
| | 6 | 1890 Jun - Aug |
| | 7 | 1890 Sep |
| | 8 | 1890 Oct - Dec |
| | 9 | 1891 Jan - Feb |
| | 10 | 1891 Mar. - Apr |
| | 11 | 1891 May - Jun |
| | 12 | 1891 Jul - Sep |
| | 13 | 1891 Oct |
| 10 | 1 | 1891 Nov |
| | 2 | 1891 Dec |
| | 3 | 1892 Jan - Feb |
| | 4 | 1892 Mar - Apr |
| | 5 | 1892 May |
| | 6 | 1892 Jun - Jul |
| | 7 | 1892 Aug - Sep |
| | 8 | 1892 Oct |
| | 9 | 1892 Nov - Dec |
| | 10 | 1893 Jan - Mar |
| | 11 | 1893 Apr - Jun |
| | 12 | 1893 Jul - Dec. |

- 11 1 1894 Jan - Mar
- 2 1894 Apr - Jun
- 3 1894 Jul - Sep
- 4 1894 Oct - Nov
- 5 1894 Dec
- 6 1895 Mar - Jun
- 7 1895 Jul - Dec
- 8 1896
- 9 1897
- 10 1898
- 11 1899
- 12 n.d.

- 12 1 1873 - 1878
- 2 1879
- 3 1890

Series III. Financial and Legal Records

- 13 Accounts
- 1 1860 - 1896
- 2 1873
- 3 1874 - 1875
- 4 1876 - 1877
- 5 1878 - 1889
- 6 1890 - 1893
- 7 1894 - 1899
- 8 Agreements 1890; 1894

Series IV. Writings

- 14 Notes on shoeing horses
- 1 1874 - 1878
- 2 1880 - 1885
- 3 1886 - 1887
- 4 1888
- 5 1889 - 1897
- 6 n.d.
- 7 Notes on speed of horses
- 8 Miscellaneous notes on horses
- 9 Miscellaneous notes on horses
- 10 Notes on horse shoes
- 11 Notes on pedigree
- 12 Prescriptions for horses

- 15 1 Notes on horses

Series V. Photographs, Sketches, Artifacts and Miscellany

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 15 | 2 | Ink sketch of a wheel |
| | | Ink sketch of three quarter track |
| | 3 | Miscellaneous illustrations; postcards |
| 16 | 1 | Calling cards |
| | 2 | Address on trotting horse before New York farmers |
| | 3 | Horse shoeing (printed) |
| | 4 | Miscellaneous printed material |
| | 5 | Miscellaneous printed material |
| | 6 | News Clippings |

INDEX TO GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE
(Boxes 1-6)

| |
|---|
| Box 1 |
| Abbott, John S.C. 1861 - 1865 |
| Addey, H.M. 1865 |
| Alcorn, James T. 1864 |
| Ames, Mary C. 1861 - 1873 |
| Arculaims, Henry 1865 |
| Armitage, Thomas 1868 |
| Arnold, George 1862 |
| Atkins, Katy C. 1868 |
| Atwood, (Mrs.) Montgomery see: Payne, Mrs. J. Horne |
| |
| Baden, Frances H. n.d. |
| Bancroft, George 1860 - 1885 |
| Barnum, P.T. 1862 |
| Bartlett, William O. and Willard 1839 - 1887 |
| Beecher, Henry Ward 1860 - 1862 |
| Bell, C.S. 1865 - 1876 |
| Bennett, Emerson 1880 |
| Blanchard, George 1861 |
| Booth, Robert 1879 |
| Bridgman, Charles 1891 |
| Brown, David Paul 1860 |
| Browne, Emma Alice 1874 - 1876 |
| Browne, William M. 1860 |
| Bryant, William Cullen 1860 - 1872 |
| Bundy, J.M. 1871 |
| Burdleihg, William H. 1869 |
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| Calhoun, A.B. 1879 - 1887 |
| Carlston, Gerald 1882 |
| Cary, Alice 1865 |
| Ches?, Caroline 1862 - 1866 |
| Chester, Anson G. 1879 |
| Childs, George W. ? - 1892 |
| Church, Ella R. 1876 |
| Clapp, Henry JR. 1870 |
| Clarke, George W. 1865 - 1871 |
| Clark, Thomas N. 1875 - 1885;n.d. |
| Cleveland, Cecilia n.d. |
| Cobb, Sylvanus 1860 - 1887 see: Box 2 |
| Conant, H.C. 1862 |

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| Conwell, John A. 1863 |
| Cooke, Pearsons 1880 |
| Coxe, A. Cleveland 1876 - 1877 |
| Cozzens, Frederick S. 1862 |
| Croffut, W.A. 1877 |
| Crofton, F. Blake 1874 - 1875 |
| Crowell, Mary B. 1883 |
| |
| Box 2 |
| Dallas, Mary Kyle 1866 - 1868 |
| Dallzell, Private 1873 |
| Dana, Charles Anderson and Paul 1873 - 1896 |
| DeMille, James 1861 |
| Dixon, H.W. n.d. |
| Doree, Nadage 1899 |
| Downing, Fanny 1868 |
| Durant, Jul G. 1869 |
| Echols, John W. 1890 - 1897 |
| Elliott, John 1878 - 1880 |
| Ellis, Edward S. 1881 |
| Everett, William 1877 - 1881 |
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| Box 3 |
| Field, Henry M. 1887 - 1892 |
| Field, Kate 1892 |
| Floyd, A.C. 1889 - 1894 |
| Francis, Mary 1874 - 1881 |
| Fuller, William P. 1873 - 1885 |
| Gallaher, John 1873 - 1880 |
| Gardette, Charles D. 1875 - 1878 |
| Gayler, Charles 1875 |
| Gifford, Martha C. 1873 - 1882 |
| Greely, R.F. 1874 |
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| Hall, John 1870 - 1898; n.d. |
| Halpine, Mary Grace 1867 |
| Hill, Mona 1867 |
| Hopper, Sarah L. n.d. |
| Jennings, J.L. 1874 - 1876 |
| Jewitt, Solomon W. 1864 |
| Jones, George 1873 - 1883 |
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| Box 4 |
| Kellogg, Peter C. 1871 - 1878 |
| Keyes, Lillian 1886 |

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| King, Thomas 1878 |
| Lester, C. Edwards 1880 |
| Levert,, Octavia n.d. |
| Lewis, Leon and Harriet 1862 - 1878;n.d. |
| Lewis, Leon 1883 - 1898 |
| Leyburn, John 1882 |
| Libbey, Laura Jean 1887 |
| Lynn, Ethel 1895 |
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| Mackenzie, Adelheid 1879 |
| Macloskie, George 1892 - 1898 |
| MacNamus, Ella Burr 1880 |
| Manning, Etta n.d. |
| Marble, Earl 1880 |
| Mathews, J.A. 1894 |
| McDermott, Hugh F. 1878 |
| McDonnell, Katherine 1873 |
| Milburn, William H. 1883 |
| Miles, A.M. n.d. |
| Miller, Joaquin n.d. |
| Moffat, Mary E. 1875 |
| Moran, John 1876 |
| Morton, (Mrs.) J.A. 1876 |
| Murray, Reverend 1875 |
| Myers, P. Hamilton 1876 - 1877 |
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| Nitsch, Helen Alice 1883 |
| Ott?, ? 1873 - 1879 |
| Ouida, pseud. see: Payne, Mrs. J. Horne |
| Page, H.C. 1877 |
| Palmer, Allen B. 1876 - 1882 |
| Parry, Sallie 1868 - 1889 |
| Parton, James 1883 - 1884 |
| Paton, W.A. 1878 - 1879 |
| Paul, L.A. 1874 - 1880 |
| |
| Box 5 |
| Payne, (Mrs.) J. Horne 1868 |
| Peck, William Henry 1874 - 1885 |
| Paterson, T.B. 1876 |
| Reed, William B. 1874 |
| Reid, Whitelaw 1876 |
| Ritchie, William F. 1861 |
| Robinson, Phil n.d. |
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| Sargent, Epes 1862 - 1873 |
| Scawlaw, Lucy A. 1864 |
| Scovel, James M. 1879 |
| Shepherd, D. 1862 - 1865 |
| Shepherd, N.G. 1863 |
| Sheridan, Mattie n.d. |
| Sherman, Cecilia 1868 |
| Sherwood, M.N. n.d. |
| Sibourney, Lydia Huntley 1861 - 1864 |
| Sinclair, Samuel 1861 - 1873 |
| Smith, John Frederick 1870 - 1885 |
| Smith. Mary Burrows 1887 |
| Smith, Mathews Hale 1871 |
| Smith, Roswell 1877 |
| Smythies, H.M. Gordon n.d. |
| Sprague, Amasa 1864 |
| Stouffer, Frank H. 1876 |
| Suisshelm, G. 1878 |
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| Thomson, Mortimer 1874 |
| Tilton, Theodore 1861 - 1869 |
| Tupper, Ellin Isabelle n.d. |
| Tupper, Martin F. 1877 |
| Tyng, Stephen H. 1868 - 1878 |
| Urner, Nathan D. 1879 - 1881 |
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| Wakeman, George n.d. |
| Wallace, William Rose 1869 |
| Wallis, George B. 1860 |
| Ward, Sam 1863 |
| Ware, W. Powell 1871 |
| Watson, I.W. 1862 - 1881 |
| Wheeler, William T. 1862 |
| White, H. 1885 - 1888? |
| Whittaker, Frederick 1885 - 1886 |
| Whiteley, L.A. 1860 |
| Wilkes, George 1863 - ? |
| Williams, J. 1868 |
| Willis, J.S. 1871 |
| Willis, N. P. 1861 |
| Wilson, James Grant 1866 - 1889 |
| Windship, George B. 1861 - 1862 |
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| Box 6 |
| Winter, Elizabeth Campbell 1862 - 1891 |

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| Wright, Julia Menair 1879 - 1882 |
| Wylie, A. McElrey 1871 - 1876 |
| Wright, Thomas T. 1890 - 1892 |
| Young, W.C. 1889 - 1910 |