

“Correspondence,” “Court Cases,” “Estates,” “Land Tracts and Deeds,” and the more general “Subject File.” The bills and receipts provide good documentation of the Read family expenses, as well as John Read I’s legal practice in Philadelphia. His business papers include correspondence with legal clients and associates, various promissory notes, court case notes, legal documents, and notes and documents relating to the Asylum Company, which was a land share company based in Bradford County, Pennsylvania. The correspondence includes both personal and business matters, such as land tracts and land title disputes, and financial and legal assistance to family members. The materials for court cases consist of papers related to legal representation in cases of land disputes, the Bank of Philadelphia, and railroad cases. The estates papers document John Read I’s involvement with the settling and executing of many of his family members estates and wills, including those of George Clymer, Samuel Meredith, George Read, Benjamin Gibbs, Elizabeth Meredith, as well as his own estate with his wife Martha Meredith. The papers relating to land tracts and deeds include materials mostly related to land in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania along with a few other properties owned by Read family members or associates of John Read I. The general subject file materials contain personal papers, such as poems and songbooks, materials compiled during his education at Princeton University, literary research notes, as well as materials relating to John Read I’s involvement with the United Church of Christ and the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania Freemasons. This series provides good documentation of upper class Philadelphia society, family life, law, and politics.

The series “Judge John M. Read II” consists mostly of correspondence and business papers of Judge John M. Read II (1797-1874) relating to his legal practice and his relationship with various family members. The papers date from 1769 to 1882 and are arranged chronologically. Judge Read maintained an extensive correspondence with several business colleagues and family members (especially his son, General Meredith Read) throughout his life; these relationships are well-documented in this series. Besides numerous loose correspondence, there also are two bound volumes of family letters compiled by Judge Read late in his life. They contain papers on the history of the Read family, the Marshall family, the Eckard family, and the Irish and Scotch ancestors of the Reads. Many of the letters are of John Read I, pasted in no particular order into the albums. There are a large number of Marshall family papers, including letters of John Meredith Read to Priscilla Marshall, before their marriage in March of 1828; some of the papers are of Edward H. Hyde, whom Judge Read's daughter, Emma, married. Pasted in the albums also are the frequent notices of Judge Read that appeared in the newspapers during his life, which provide a very helpful overview of his career. Of particular interest in this series is Judge Read’s correspondence with his legal clerk, Charles H. T. Collis, and Collis’ wife, Septima Sevy Collis. Collis considered Judge Read a mentor, and wrote exhaustively of local and national politics, legal matters, philosophy, personal struggles, his military career, and his experiences fighting in the Civil War. Collis wrote about the Civil War concerning the battles he fought in or heard about, the problems of officers’ and soldiers’ pay, promotions, political appointments and influence in the Army, his opinions about the incompetency of generals, the apparent indifference of civilians to the political struggles during the War, as well as the national political campaign. There are over two hundred letters written by Collis to Judge Read in this series. Septima Sevy Collis wrote to Judge Read and his second wife about her marriage to Charles Collis and her experiences being close to battles in the Civil War. Judge Read also communicated heavily with his son, General Meredith Read, who frequently asked for money to fund his lifestyle as a gentleman scholar, as well as other family members, including William H. Hyde, Emma H. Hyde, Edward M. Clymer, Amelia Thomson, Samuel R. Meredith, and John Cadwallader. Judge Read also maintained correspondence with key political figures such as Charles Sumner, Michael Meyfert, Joseph Pugh, Henry A. Muhlenberg, George Plitt, and James Buchanan. His business papers include