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Online Catalog Headings

Subject Names

Hughes, John, 1797-1864
Doran, Joseph Michael, 1800-1859
Desmond, Daniel J., d. 1849
Nancrede, Joseph G. (Joseph Guerard), 1793-1857
Neagle, John, 1796-1865
St. John's Orphan Asylum (Philadelphia, Pa.)
Association of the "Friends of Ireland" and Irishmen in the City and County of Philadelphia

Subject Topics

Orphanages--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia
Irish Americans--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia--Societies, etc.
Ireland--Politics and government--1800-1837
Irish Americans--Correspondence
Merchants--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia--19th century--Archives
Irish question

Document Types

Letters

Biographical/Historical Notes

A respected Philadelphia merchant, William Whelan (d. 1863) was born in Ireland and came to America as a boy. He was employed in the United States Marshal's Office during his first few years in the city, after which he left to embark in the trade. According to his obituary in the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* (published December 15, 1863), "Mr. Edward Thompson, the well known shipping merchant of that day, made him a tempting offer to join him in an adventure in China, which on consideration he declined, and established himself without capital and purely on character and credit, as a grocer, at the corner of Fourth and Chestnut Sts. By industry and integrity he soon found himself at the head of a prosperous business." Whelan appeared in the Philadelphia directories from 1809 through 1842, listed as a grocer at the northwest corner of that intersection; his store is the most prominent building portrayed in John Lewis Krimmel's painting (and resulting prints) *Procession of the Victuallers in May 1821*. The compendium *Memoirs and Auto-biography of some of the Wealthy Citizens of Philadelphia* (1846) described Whelan as "A retired grocer, in which business he made his money" with a net worth of \$50,000. He was also one of the original stockholders in the Farmers and Mechanics Bank, which was one of the most prominent in the city at mid-century.