

and 800 tortoise shell combs. From Buchanan & Bickham, on the Isle of France (now Mauritius), came 470 chests of tea in August 1807. In the fall of that year, Watson & Paul shipped on consignment four bales of "India goods" to Hollingsworth & Boyd in Guadeloupe, with the instructions that they should "please dispose of them to the best advantage and remit us the Proceeds in Coffee if it comports for our Interest." This transaction is recorded in a set of notarized papers, still tied through with their green silk ribbon, that includes invoices, correspondence, a bill of lading and a landing certificate, as well as the mailing wrapper in which they were transmitted. Another letter in the Hollingsworth & Boyd file, dated March 1, 1807, retains the sample of printed cotton fabric that the firm enclosed with their letter to Watson & Paul. In a few cases, particularly with the international vendors, the paperwork shows merchandise being shipped to Watson & Paul along with two other firms in Philadelphia, Levi Hollingsworth & Son, and Coates & Randolph, but Watson & Paul's relationship with those two firms is otherwise unexplored.

Less typical in the collection is a letter from Anthony Filippi of Philadelphia, who enclosed a prices current sheet and a letter of recommendation on behalf of the Italian firm I. B. Filippi & Co., of Genoa.

Not surprisingly, some of the correspondents mention their concern over the yellow fever epidemics sweeping the mid-Atlantic cities for five years during this period. Thomas Tenant wrote an account of the deaths in Baltimore in 1797, ending with the statement, "So much for the Yellow fever. We are willing to never se [*sic*] or hear of it again." The following year, Abraham Falconar wrote that Baltimore "never was more healthy at this season of the year, & hope the contagious Fever will escape us, with anxious desire that you & yours may escape the dreadful malady" which was then devastating Philadelphia. A July 29, 1799, letter from the Grims in New York, announced the arrival of yellow fever in that city: "'tis suppose it was brought to this place by the Ship *General Wayne* from the Havana, it is traced from that ship."

Other woes concerned other writers, particularly those in Europe. Charles Vogel of Hamburg enclosed circulars, his prices current sheets, and reports of sales of merchandise including fabrics and tea sent to him by Watson & Paul, but he also included many comments about trade being hindered by the Napoleonic Wars, blockades of the Elbe, news of possible truces, and gratitude for his American contacts. In February 1807, he wrote that because of "...the interdicted trade with G. Britain and the dreadful conflagrations in the Danish West India Islands, indeed our whole dependence is confined to the Supplies we may receive from the United States."

Correspondence reveals that Watson & Paul shipped coffee, cotton, and other goods from Philadelphia to the Antwerp firm of J. Ridgway Mertens & Co. Its founder was Philadelphia merchant Jacob Ridgway, father of the Library Company of Philadelphia's great benefactor Phoebe Ridgway Rush, and a partner in the Philadelphia firm of Smith & Ridgway. Jacob Ridgway (1768-1843) had moved to Europe to protect Smith & Ridgway's shipping interests