

during the Napoleonic Wars and stayed to become the United States Consul at Antwerp; during that time he formed J. Ridgway Mertens & Co. The company's folder holds a number of annotated prices current sheets, and, like Charles Vogel, letters with commentary on the state of the economy during wartime, including an acknowledgement in May 1806 that "The war with Prussia & England must however operate in favor of produce & the American Trade – as it cuts off large supplies which used to be carried in Prussian vessels from England."

The Watson & Paul Business Records reveals little of the relationship between the firm's two partners themselves, outside of two sets of letters written by James Paul to John Watson during Paul's business trips to New York in 1797 and 1799. Correspondence to the firm from Thomas Paul (addressed to "Dear Brothers") is more substantive, with fifteen letters recording Paul's regular need for financial assistance, as well as details of the merchandise in which they were trading. In February 1799, he requested his brother's help in placing an advertisement to sell "lotts suitable for a Summers retreat from Philadelphia." Elizabeth Stadleman Paul (1764 -1828), the widow of Thomas Paul (1760-1802), kept her husband's businesses going with the assistance of John Kinney Jr. One letter indicating this is found at the end of the Thomas Paul folder: writing under Elizabeth Paul's name, Kinney said that "We [changed by Kinney from "I"] send you seven Casks of flaxseed and some pig Iron" and asked in return for two boxes of 8 by 10 window glass, some black lutestring [a silk fabric], and "one piece of Handsome Swansdown [wool and silk fabric] for Waistcoating & one Journal & Ledger the size Mr. James Paul can Determin." Kinney, of Knowlton Mills, in Warren County, New Jersey, was independently sending pork, flour, lard, and ham to Watson & Paul during the same time period.

While there are many manuscript listings of current prices contained in the letters, printed prices current forms were sent to Watson & Paul by the following merchants: Joseph Byrnes (Charleston, SC, 1801); Byrnes, Cachard & Co. (Marseilles, 1806); Cachard, Belknap & Hodge (Marseilles, 1807); Daniel Crommelin & Sons (Amsterdam, 1805); Earle & Attwood (Cape Francois, Saint-Domingue, 1801); Grant Webb & Co. (Leghorn, 1806-1807); I. B. Filippi & Co. (Genoa, 1806); J. Ridgway Mertens & Co. (Antwerp, 1806-1807); James McMurtrie (Amsterdam & Isle of France, 1807); and Charles T. Vogel (Hamburg, 1806-1807), and can be found in their folders.

Series II, Financial Documents (1792-1805) holds records of moneys owed and paid by and to the Watson & Paul firm. It is arranged in four subseries: Invoices; Contract; Bank Notes; and Bills of Exchange, all of which record various financial activities of the company between 1792 and 1803. The invoices in this series were presented from suppliers not represented in the correspondence files of Series I (invoices are filed with the correspondence in that series). The merchants in Series II are Philadelphia vendors and craftspeople, or have no address listed.

The Invoices subseries is divided into seven sections: Freight, Fees, and Fines; Merchandise; Personal; Postage; Rent and Storage; Services; and Subscriptions and Advertising. The first folder holds invoices for shipping freight, and document prices paid for the movement of goods