Alexis I. du Pont autograph album 2653.I

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Table of Contents

Summary Information .................................................................................................................................... 3
Biographical Note .......................................................................................................................................... 3
Scope and Contents ........................................................................................................................................ 4
Administrative Information ............................................................................................................................ 4
Controlled Access Headings .......................................................................................................................... 5
Summary Information

Repository: Manuscripts and Archives
Creator: Du Pont, Alexis I. (Alexis Irénée), 1816-1857
Title: Alexis I. du Pont autograph album
ID: 2653.I
Date [inclusive]: 1828-1909
Physical Description: 1 volume(s)
Language of the Material: English.
Abstract: Alexis I. du Pont (1816-1857) was proprietor of his family's business, E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, which began in the manufacture of gunpowder in 1802. Between 1829 and 1931, he attended the boarding school New Haven Gymnasium to prepare for his higher education at the University of Pennsylvania. The volume is an autograph book of mostly blank pages. Internal evidence suggests that it was begun by his older siblings as a memento for him when he first left home for school as he entered his teens. Later, Alexis du Pont used the same volume to collect samples of poetry verses on the theme of "friendship" as mementos of his schoolmates when he left preparatory school and entered college.

Biographical Note

Alexis I. du Pont (1816-1857) was proprietor of his family's business, E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Company, which began in the manufacture of gunpowder in 1802. He was the youngest child of Eleuthère Irénée du Pont (1771-1834), the founder of the DuPont Company. He was educated at Mt. Airy College in Germantown, Pennsylvania, and at the New Haven Gymnasium from 1829 to 1831, where his nephew, James Eleuthère Bidermann (1790-1865), was a classmate. In 1831, he entered the University of Pennsylvania, where he completed his scientific studies in 1835, but did not earn a degree.

In 1836, he married Joanna Maria Smith (1815-1876), the daughter of Francis Gurney Smith (1784–1873) of Philadelphia and a sister of Dr. Thomas Mackie Smith (1809-1852), who had married Alexis I. du Pont's sister Eleuthera du Pont Smith (1806-1876). Alexis I. du Pont and Joanna Maria Smith du Pont had eight children.
Alexis I. du Pont became a partner in E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Company in 1837 and continued as such until his death on August 23rd of that year, having been fatally injured in an explosion of the powder mills on the preceding day.

Scope and Contents

The volume is an autograph book of mostly blank pages. Internal evidence suggests that it was begun by his older siblings as a memento for him when he first left home for school as he entered his teens. The first pages are extracts of Romantic verses selected by his sisters Eleuthera, Sophie, and Victorine, and brother Henry dwelling on the sentimental aspects of "home" and of a boy first going out into the world. His sisters were skilled in drawing and included sketches of familiar scenes and family pets. Later, Alexis du Pont used the same volume to collect samples of similar verses on the theme of "friendship" as similar mementos of his schoolmates when he left preparatory school and entered college.

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

Laurie Sather 2021

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research.
Controlled Access Headings

- Poetry
- Drawings
- Du Pont family