



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## Selected Peale family papers

Archives of American Art  
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<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Selected Peale family papers
<b>Date:</b>	1803-1854
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.pealpeal
<b>Creator:</b>	Peale family
<b>Extent:</b>	3 Microfilm reels (3 partial microfilm reels)
<b>Language:</b>	English .

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Microfilmed by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania for the Archives of American Art, 1955.

### Location of Originals

REEL P21: Originals in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Peale family papers.

### Location of Originals

REEL P23, P29: Originals in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Society Collection.

### Related Materials

The Archives of American Art holds the Rembrandt and Harriet Peale collection, circa 1820-1932 and the Rubens Peale diaries, 1855-1865. Also found at the Archives of American Art are the microfilmed Charles Willson Peale diaries and exhibition announcement, 1765-1826; microfilmed printed material relating to Rembrandt Peale, 1830-1862; microfilmed Titian Ramsay Peale Collection, 1771-1876; microfilmed selected papers from the Peale-Sellers collection, [circa 1767-1904]; and microfilmed Augusta Barker papers, 1875-1887.

The American Philosophical Society holds the Rembrandt Peale papers, 1808-1833 and the Peale family papers, 1705-1898. New York Public Library Archives and Manuscripts Division holds the Rembrandt Peale letters, 1835-1857.

### Available Formats

35mm microfilm reel P21 (fr. 164-182, 261-675); P23 (fr. 158-159, 217); and P29 (fr. 5-31) available for use at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

### Restrictions

The Archives of American art does not own the original papers. Use is limited to the microfilm copy.

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## Biographical / Historical

The Peale family was a family of painters, primarily in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827) was a portrait painter and engraver and studied in London with Benjamin West. He is known for his portraits of the founding fathers including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams. In 1786 he founded the Peale Museum, and was one of the founding members of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1805.

Rembrandt Peale (1778-1860) was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and was the second son of Charles Willson Peale. He was known primarily for his historical paintings and portraits, particularly those of George Washington. Peale painted his first Washington portrait in 1795 at the age of 17, in a sitting arranged by his father. With his father, he was also a founding member of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. He also established Peale's Baltimore Museum and Gallery of Fine Arts in 1814.

Titian Ramsay Peale (1799-1885) was a naturalist, photographer, and scientific illustrator. Named for an older brother who died in 1798, he was the only naturalist in the family and documented animals and scenery in watercolors on scientific expeditions including the 1819 Long expedition to the Rocky Mountains.

Benjamin Franklin Peale (1795-1870), called Franklin, was his father's assistant at the museum and managed it after Charles Peale's death. Franklin Peale was also an employee of the Philadelphia Mint from 1833 to 1854.

Rubens Peale (1784-1865) opened the New York Museum of Natural History and Science in 1825. Following the economic Panic of 1837, Rubens became a gentleman farmer in the Pennsylvania countryside. He returned to Philadelphia in 1864 and began painting still lifes.

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## Scope and Contents

The microfilmed selected Peale family papers contain papers of Charles Willson Peale, Rembrandt Peale, and Titian Ramsay Peale, mainly related to Peale's Museum. Also included are one item pertaining to Franklin Peale, and one to Rubens Peale.

Microfilmed on Reel P21 are manuscript of memoranda of the Philadelphia Museum, giving records and accessions for 1803-1842; financial statements (1808-1819) listing current expenditures; a manuscript of *A Walk Through the Philadelphia Museum* by Charles Willson Peale (after 1802); minutes of the Museum (1841-1845); manager's reports to the Board of Trustees (1833-1835), signed by Titian R. Peale (10 reports); Titian Peale's correspondence with George Ord (1827-1854), and his drawing book (circa 1820); extracts of letters written by Charles Willson Peale from Belfield and Philadelphia (1821-1823); extracts of letters written by Rembrandt Peale to Reuben Haines and Coleman Sellers (1828 September 24 and 1829 November 30), and to his wife (1830). Also included (frames 164-182) is a "Catalog of the National Portrait and Historical Gallery, illustrative of American history, comprising 269 original portraits and historical paintings, formerly belonging to Peale's Museum, to be sold without reserve, on Friday 6th October 1854... M. Thomas & Sons, Auctioneers."

Microfilmed on Reels P23 and P29 are miscellaneous Peale related documents from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Society Collection. Included are a report of the Committee of Councils on the use of Charles Willson Peale's windmill (1815 January 5); C. W. Peale's appeal to aid for a soldier; Rubens Peale memorial of the Trustees of the Philadelphia Museum (1831 October 25); and a register made by Franklin Peale of the medal dies of the U. S. Mint, with notes (1841) (reel P29, frames 5-31).

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Art, American -- Pennsylvania -- Philadelphia

Names:

Haines, Reuben, 1786-1831  
Ord, George, 1781-1866  
Peale's Museum (Philadelphia, Pa.)  
Peale, Charles Willson, 1741-1827  
Peale, Franklin, 1795-1870  
Peale, Rembrandt, 1778-1860  
Peale, Rubens, 1784-1865  
Peale, Titian Ramsay, 1799-1885  
Sellers, Charles Coleman, 1903-

Occupations:

Painters -- Pennsylvania -- Philadelphia