

AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

Manuscript Collections

<p>Name of collection:</p> <p>Otis, Bass, Account Book, 1815-1854</p>	<p>Location:</p> <p>Octavo vols. "O" Misc. mss. boxes "O"</p>
<p>Size of collection:</p> <p>1 octavo volume, 98 pp.; 1 folder, 5 items</p>	<p>N.U.C.M.C. number:</p> <p>N.A.</p>
<p>Finding aids:</p> <p>For biographical notes, see <u>DAB</u>, vol. 14, pp.91-92; for genealogical and biographical notes, see William A. Otis, <u>The Otis Family in America</u> (Chicago: n.p., 1924) pp. 209-11. Bass Otis' self-portrait is in the office of the Society's director. See accompanying sheet(s) for additional information.</p>	
<p>Source of collection:</p> <p>Gift of Charles H. Taylor, 1931</p>	
<p>Collection description:</p> <p>Bass Otis (1784-1861), a Philadelphia artist, lithographer, and portrait-painter, was born in Bridgewater, Mass. He was apprenticed first to a scythemaker, then to a coach painter in New York about 1808. He later opened a studio in Philadelphia, copied portraits for <u>Delaplaine's Repository</u>, and sent his work to exhibitions. Otis is credited with making the first lithograph in America in 1818.</p> <p>This octavo volume lists Bass Otis' accounts for the period 1815 to 1854, and consists of a list of names and prices of his portraits with the framers' names, notes on painting techniques and procedures in making lead and zinc molds, "Rules by which the Painter is to be governed in the future," and an account of the number of tickets signed and held by the Adam and Eve Company. Several pages are devoted to rough and fine sketches of children in chairs, surgical instruments, Caleb Cresson's children, George Washington, and human hands. Also included is a list of Joseph Delaplaine's (1777-1824) accounts for 1816, entries referring to painting in Philadelphia and traveling in Baltimore, Md., expense accounts, notes from Craig's Lectures on colors, and various newsclippings about stock prices, bank exchanges, and a poem to the Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834), and receipts for Otis' subscription to the <u>Journal of the Franklin Institute</u> in Philadelphia.</p> <p>Among other items in the folder is a letter written by Otis in 1841 to a Boston attorney concerning the financial transactions of his daughter Susan P. Otis (1816 -1883).</p>	

American Antiquarian Society

Bass Otis Account Book, 1815-1854

Publications of material in this collection:

The entire notebook has been published. See Thomas Knoles, "The Notebook of Bass Otis, Philadelphia Portrait Painter," PAAS, 103(1) 1993, 179-253.