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FROTHINGHAM, JOHN
Papers, 1810-1870
1 box (12 diaries, 2 photographs)

Collection of twelve diaries, and two photographs of John H. Frothingham (1788-1870), dated from 1810 to 1870, and one diary of his younger brother, Joseph May (d. 1832) dated 1809 to 1823, who was in partnership with him from about 1812 until his death. The diaries contain notes about business activities, the weather, the garden, arrival and departure of ships, family news, and Joseph's has notes about business trips between Montreal and Boston, with family visits in Portland, Maine where he and John were born.

Born in Portland, Maine, John came to Montreal in 1809 to open an hardware store for Samuel May, who had a similar store in Boston where John had worked. The brothers were partners in the hardware store in Montreal from after 1812 until Joseph's death in 1832. The diaries contain notes about business activities, the weather, their business trips, and family news. Occasional mention is made of political events. John was also president of the City Bank of Montreal from 1834 to 1849. He was one of the founders of (1831) and a main shareholder in this bank which broke the monopoly of the Bank of Montreal in the city. Two bills of exchange from the bank dated May 1846 are in the collection.

In 1836 John formed a partnership with William Workman. Their firm became the largest hardware and iron wholesale firm in British North America.

Two of the diaries, his house diaries or diaries of expenses, 1816 to 1820 with sheets laid in for other memos, dated to 1822 and 1826 to 1837, give detailed accounts for household and family expenditures. The latter diary includes some of the building and landscaping expenses for "Piedmont", the mansion which he had built on Mount Royal. It was later the residence for the governor-general when the government met in Montreal. The two diaries, his store diaries, 1837 to 1846 and 1846 to 1849, contain entries about business, the weather, his wife's health and her death on June 6 1843. The second diary contains entries in the hand of one of his children. After the last entry for 1849 he writes,

Hitherto, I have kept a memorandum book both at the store and house, but shall now discontinue this at the store, and carry on that at the house.- Formerly that at the house was, more of a garden book - and my office at the store is so dark I cannot see to write in it with any comfort so for those and other reasons one is discontinued, and the other serves for both.

Frothingham's other business interests and activities included the Montreal Board of Trade, St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad, Montreal Stock Exchange, Canada Inland Steam Navigation Company. He was also associated with the British and Canadian School of Montreal and the Montreal Horticultural Society. He contributed generously to the Protestant schools and McGill University in Montreal and to Queen's College in Kingston.

After John Frothingham retired as president of the City Bank in 1849 William Workman succeeded him. Frothingham retired from his business in 1859 but he continued to keep a diary until May 18, 1870.

Box 1

- item 1 Family Expenses 1816, 14 June to 1820, 19 May. Gives detailed accounts of household and family expenditures, except for note on inside front cover. Some memos are laid in.
- item 2 Expenses, 1826, 1 May to 1837, April. Gives detailed accounts of household and family expenditures, along with itemized expenses for the building and landscaping of "Piedmont", the mansion which he had built on Mount Royal. He describes it in a later diary.
- item 3 "Diary begun 7 Dec. 1837 ended 31 July 1846" One of his store diaries, it has notes about the weather, arrival and departure of ships, his wife's health, occasional mention of or reference to political events
- item 4 Diary, begun August 1st 1846 [Store Diary]
- item 5 1843 to 1849. Memorandum of Garden Orchard etc Continued from old parchment-covered book. May "The last book began with the possession of this place call'd Piedmont and ended with the death of her for whose health and happiness I bought it."
- item 6 "Memorandum of Garden Orchard &c continued from old book - up to this time I have kept a sort of diary at the Store also, with reference more to business but as I am now rather more *here* than *there*, I may discontinue that. [1849 to 1853.]
- item 7 1854-1862. On the first two pages he lists marriages, births, and deaths of family, friends, and acquaintances.
- item 8 First two pages have outline of notes about family, friends and acquaintances for 1862, April, to 1870.
- item 9 1810 28 Mar. to 1811 January. Account of travels, on business from Boston. Notes the communities, number of churches, houses, families. Sometimes gives the business characteristics of some of the men.
- item 10 Montreal to New York & England. John Frothingham. Montreal 10 Dec. 1828. Leaving Montreal on 10 December 1828 for Albany, he sailed for Liverpool arriving on 7 January 1829.

Box 1

- item 11 1852 March 18 to July 20 Account of trip to Europe with Louisa and Frederick, sailing from Boston with Mr & Mrs Heath & Mary, Abby, May for Halifax and then England, arriving at Liverpool on 13 April. The diary ends with their arrival in Zurich.
- item 12 1852 August to 5 November. The first few lines describing the arrival in Brussels have been erased, along with the first lines on the following two pages for their arrival in Paris.
- item 13 Diary of Joseph Frothingham, 1809 May to 1818 October.
- folder 14 Exchange for City Bank, Montreal, P104.3.0 13 May 1846. Sixty Days after sight of this SECOND of Exchange ... Pay to the order of C.H. Castle Esqre Cashier ... value received with charge to the account of this Institution ... London. John Frothingham President.
- folder 15 Printed bill of exchange, with date, amount, name in manuscript. Signed, John Frothingham. Verso signed.
Attached to another bill of exchange, "the THIRD of Exchange" with similar print and manuscript except for SECOND and THIRD.
- folder 16 Photograph of John Frothingham, 10 x 6.2 cm. Notman, Montreal.
- folder 17 Photograph of John Frothingham, 10 x 6.2 cm. Whipple, Boston.