

Canton Commercial Advertiser Collection

MSS #140

14 linear feet

Historical Note

The *Commercial Advertiser* was first published in Potsdam Junction (Norwood), New York in 1873. Proprietors were J.C. Tracey and Giles Hall. The paper established itself as a weekly publication in 1874 as a "Democratic" paper. In 1877, publication was moved to Canton where it competed with the already established *Plaindealer*. 13 years later, following Tracey's death, John Finnegan, a war correspondent for the *Watertown Standard* during the Spanish-American War, became editor and sole owner of the *Advertiser* and shifted its editorial stance from Democratic to Republican. The *Commercial Advertiser* continued to be published until Finnegan's death in 1958. Over his 62-year career at the *Commercial Advertiser*, John Finnegan became well-known and respected both in newspaper circles and in the Canton community. His weekly column *Looking Through a Main Street Window* was popular for decades among his readers as a commentary on the goings-on in Canton.

Scope and Content

The collection is divided into three series. Series 1 contains extracted news articles from the *Commercial Advertiser* covering the years 1874 to 1914. Advertisements are not included in the extracts and missing issues are noted on the finding aid. Series 2 consists of account books for 1886-1894 and 1896-1898, as well as a subscriber list for 1886. Also included in the box containing the account book is a series of letters from 1896 from the Associated Press General Office in New York to *Plaindealer* publisher Williston Manley concerning a controversy involving John Finnegan, when he was a reporter covering events in Cuba as an Associated Press representative when he was not authorized to do so. Series 3 contains complete bound copies of the *Commercial Advertiser* covering April, 1935 to March, 1952 (volumes 63-79). Volume 76 (1948-49) is missing.

Provenance

The *Commercial Advertiser* abstracts were donated by Mary Smallman. Provenance of the account books and subscriber list are not known for sure, but may have been acquired from Atwood Manley around 1949

Series 1—*Commercial Advertiser* extracts

<i>Box</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1	1874	Complete
2	1875	Complete
3	1876	Complete
4	1877	Complete
5	1878	Complete
6	1879	Complete
7	1880	Complete
8	1881	complete
9	1882	complete
10	1883	Missing April 19, 1883
11	1884	complete
12	1885	missing March 12, 1885
13	1886	complete (missing April 10, 1886)
14	1887	complete
15	1888	complete
16	1889	missing March 6-April 3, 1889
17	1890	complete
18	1891	complete

19	1892	complete
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<i>Box</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Comments</i>
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20	1893	complete
21	1894	complete
22	1895	complete
23	1896	complete
24	1897	complete
25	1898	complete
26	1899	complete
27	1900	complete
28	1901	complete
29	1902	complete
30	1903	missing January 21; May 6 or May 13, 1903
31	1904	missing May 3, 1904
32	1905	complete
33	1906	missing all of January-February 20, 1906
34	1907	missing March 12- April 5, 1907
35	1908	complete
36	1909	complete
37	1910	January 4 –September 20, 1910
38	1910	September 20 (cont.)- December 1910
39	1911	January 3-July 25, 1911
40	1911	July 25 (cont.)- December 1911
41	1912	January 2-August 27, 1912
42	1912	September 3-December 1912
43	1913	January 7-August 5, 1913
44	1913	August 5 (cont.)- December 1913 (missing November 25)
45	1914	complete to March 17, 1914

Series 2—Account books and subscriber lists

46	1886-1894	Account book
47	1896-98	Account book
48	1886	Subscriber list (includes series of letters concerning John Finnegan)

Series 3—Commercial Advertiser bound volumes—kept in Oversize area

(Each volume runs April-March)

Vol. 63	1935-1936	Vol. 71	1943-1944
Vol. 64	1936-1937	Vol. 72	1944-1945
Vol. 65	1937-1938	Vol. 73	1945-1946
Vol. 66	1938-1939	Vol. 74	1946-1947
Vol. 67	1939-1940	Vol. 75	1947-1948
Vol. 68	1940-1941	Vol. 77	1949-1950
Vol. 69	1941-1942	Vol. 78	1950-1951
Vol. 70	1942-1943	Vol. 79	1951-1952