

Editor's Notes:

Dwight Demeritt, Jr. has been very involved in the ASAC affiliation with the Hagley Library. His contribution to ASAC as well as the Library speaks well of his dedication to

scholarly pursuits. A treatise on our involvement in our first decade of affiliation follows.

American Society of Arms Collectors and the Hagley Museum & Library

With the advent of the first decade of the affiliation between the ASAC and the Hagley Library, fast approaching, it seems useful for the membership of the Society to receive a report on the background of the affiliation and its status today.

In 1989, it was proposed that the Society consider expanding its efforts to implement its stated purposes for existence, as set forth in Article Third of the Society's Articles of Incorporation, namely . . . "to establish and promote standards and ethics in research and dissemination of information pertaining to the history of arms and armor; to promote and further the preparation, publication and distribution of scholarly literature pertaining to the development and history of arms and armor."

This implementation effort would consist of establishing a significant library of both published and manuscript material relating to the development and history of arms and armor. Since such an undertaking would have required a substantial physical plant, it was suggested that the Society seek an affiliation with an existing institution which already had a significant repository of both published and unpublished materials and was nationally recognized as a significant bibliographic repository.

A small committee, established by the Society's Board of Directors, explored the proposal and after some investigation, the committee recommended that the Society consider attempting to establish such a relationship with the Hagley Museum and Library located in Wilmington, Delaware. In reaching this conclusion three significant factors were considered, first, the quality of the existing institution, its willingness to enter into such a relationship and its central location with respect to the bulk of the Society's membership. The affiliation between the Society and the Hagley Library was established in 1991.

The Hagley was organized and endowed in 1952 by the duPont family, the creators of the most dominant American gun power manufacturing enterprise of the 19th and 20th centuries. The family had carefully preserved all of the Company's records starting in first quarter of the 19th

century and these materials, along with a vast accumulation of the records of many other American gun powder producing companies, formed the base for the creation of this library. Thereafter, the library expanded its holdings to include a major collection of materials dealing with the industrialization of America.

The Hagley operates its own photographic studio with darkroom, a book bindery and a modern paper conservation laboratory. Each of these facilities is managed by a professional with extensive experience. In addition the library is a member of the highly respected Independent Research Libraries Association. This is a group of approximately fourteen other privately funded significant American research libraries scattered from coast to coast.

One of the highlights of the Hagley's manuscript holdings are the papers of the famous Henry gun making family of Pennsylvania. These manuscript materials cover the period from 1758 through 1909. This collection alone contains 63 volumes and 1,757 boxed items. A more recent acquisition, is the Bannerman Collection which includes manuscript and printed materials dealing with the military goods dealer Francis Bannerman and his sons from the 1860s into the 1960s. ASAC members have donated a number of published volumes to the Library and several members are exploring the possibility of donating their entire libraries.

The Hagley Library can become the center for research on all types of weapons and their designers and makers through the concerted assistance of collectors, manufacturers and merchandisers. It has already become the center for research on gun powder manufacturing and merchandising in America.

Unfortunately, the records of many firearms, edged weapon and military goods manufacturing and merchandising entrepreneurs have been discarded or otherwise lost. Hopefully members of the Society and the public can seize upon the Hagley as a repository of a wide range of both manuscript and published material on weapons, armor and accessories of all ages. All donations are tax deductible to the extent of their appraised value.

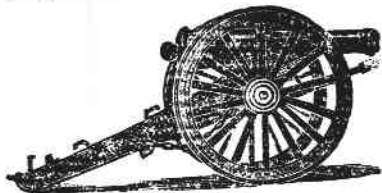
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