

**RUFUS ALEXANDER GRIDER
ALBUMS, 1886-1900
VC22932**

QUANTITY:	9 volumes (boxes) ; 3 cubic feet
ACCESS:	Restricted: stores in the vault; viewing the original documents requires making special arrangements through Manuscripts and Special Collections
ACQUISITION:	Purchased by the New York State Library, October 4, 1941 from William P. White of Clinton, N.Y. with money from the Gotshall Fund. See provenance note for further information.
PROCESSED BY:	Elizabeth Shaver, Volunteer, May 1991; revised by Vicki Weiss, August 2006.

Biographical Note:

Rufus Alexander Grider was born April 13, 1817, in Lititz, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, a town founded by members of the Moravian Congregation in 1756. Grider's ancestors came from Switzerland and Grider was confirmed in the Moravian Church. He graduated from John Beck's School for Boys in Lititz.

Grider married Elizabeth Skirving of Germantown, Pennsylvania, October 20, 1863 (or October 13, 1864); they had two daughters: Amy (born ca. 1865), who married James H. Sammons of Canajoharie, and Margaret (Margaretta S., born ca. 1868). Elizabeth Grider died March 12, 1875.

Census records show the Griders lived in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania from 1870 to 1883, when he moved to Canajoharie, Montgomery County, New York. He taught art at the Canajoharie Academy (replaced on the site in 1892 by the West Hill School) until his retirement in 1898.

Rufus Grider died February 7, 1900. He was survived by a brother, Lawrence, of Cadiz, Ohio, and a sister, Mrs. Adeline Fett, of Lititz.

Provenance note:

The Rufus Alexander Grider albums of his pen-and-ink sketches and watercolors were acquired by the New York State Library in October 1941 by special funds made available through the bequest of the late William Charles Gotshall. Before coming to this repository most written accounts indicate that upon Grider's death in 1900, his albums "fell into the hands" of an Albany (N.Y.) dealer in rare books who sold them to W. Pierrepont White of Utica, New York. On the latter's death, his wife and sons offered them to the State Library.

Scope and Content Note:

Rufus A. Grider's artistic endeavors of places and objects related to New York State history began in August 1886, while sketching the buildings erected by Sir William Johnson at Johnstown, Fulton County, New York; this is when he said that he first came up with the idea of making a "collection of pictures of old and new & curious objects possessed by inhabitants" of

the Mohawk Valley. He decided he could also draw objects that “formerly existed” if he could find individuals who could “describe the objects & recognise [sic] them when drawn or restored to view”.

Initially he drew views of buildings and landscapes, then Indian relics and finally “any object suited for illustration,” including documents, which he “copied by tracing, making a coplete [sic] duplicate of the original”.

From 1886 to about 1900, whenever his “school duties allowed,” Grider traveled up and down the Mohawk Valley, with occasional excursions to the Cherry and Schoharie valleys and Lake George and Lake Champlain, in search of historic buildings, battlefields, the sites of ancient forts, the relics of Indians and early settlers, all of which he drew or copied and then arranged – with explanatory notes – on pages of albums.

In the October 1, 1888 preface to Volume I, Grider states the object of his work was twofold: “to preserve the memory of very many interesting objects of this locality – which might otherwise be lost – and 2d, for the pleasure such researches gave me, the greater the difficulty of solving a mystery, the greater the interest”.

By the time of Grider’s death in 1900, he had compiled nine volumes containing 1,041 pieces, including 623 water color sketches, 42 water color portraits, 169 tracings of manuscripts, 81 original engravings, seven original manuscripts, 71 tracings of maps and plans, 23 photographs and 25 water color drawings of powder horns. The first five volumes are devoted primarily to the history of the Mohawk Valley region of New Yew York State. The first three include a potpourri of images that include historic buildings and structures, natural features, early family records and historical documents, and Indian artifacts; the fourth devoted to the first commercial highways of the state, including the rivers, canals and turnpikes, and the fifth, with text as well as pictures, telling the story of the invasion of the Mohawk and the Schoharie valleys by Sir John Johnson and his Indians and Tories in 1780. Volume six contains material on Fort Ticonderoga, Lake Champlain, Lake George and other parts of the state, while volume seven is devoted entirely to the Cherry Valley, and volume eight, to the Schoharie Valley. The ninth volume contains text and illustrations devoted to the Continental Road built by General Sullivan’s army between the Mohawk River and Otsego Lake in 1779 during the expedition that destroyed the settlements and crops Iroquois Indians in central and western New York.

The text of the title pages of the nine volumes are as follows:

Volume I: A Collection of Illustrations of Historic Matter Consisting of Tracings of Documents, and Pictures of Curios, & &. Collected Principally in the Mohawk Valley, A.D. 1886 & 1887 by Rufus Alex’r Grider, of Canajoharie, N.Y.

[Volume II]: A Collection of Historic Matter Relating Principally to the Mohawk Valley, Being the Second of a Series Made by Rufus A. Grider of Canajoharie, Montgomery Co., N.Y., 1889.

[Volume III]: A Collection of Illustrations of Historic Matter Consisting of Tracings of Documents, of Pictures, of Restorations, Curios, Portraits, & &. Relating to the Mohawk Valley,

Gathered Mostly During the Years 1889 to 1897. It Is Not a History, But Consists of Material Suitable for Illustration and Which, It Was Thought, Should Be Preserved. This Volume Is the Third of the Mohawk Series, Soon to Be Followed by a Fourth – Illustrating the Great Invasion in the Years 1780 by Sir John Johnson. Collected & Drawn by Rufus A. Grider of Canajoharie, N.Y. [Dated]: March 10th, 1897.

[Volume IV]: First Commercial Highways of the State of New York by Rufus A. Grider..

[Volume V]: The Invasion of the Schoharie and Mohawk Valleys by Sir John Johnson in 1780 by Rufus A. Grider

[Volume VI – no title page]

[Volume VII]: A Collection of Historic Matter Relating Mostly to Cherry Valley, Otsego County, N.Y. Made in the Year 1888 Being the Fourth of a Series Made by Rufus A. Grider of Canajoharie, Montgomery Co., New York.

There is a discrepancy as to whether this is Volume IV or Volume VII. The date and the reference “fourth in a series” seems to indicate this volume should be Volume IV. However, provenance suggests the volume became Volume VII.

[Volume VIII]: Illustrated Collections, New and Old, Made in 1887 & 1888 by Rufus A. Grider of Canajoharie, N.Y., Embracing Principally Matter Relating to Schoharie County, State of New York. (Began July 29, 1887. Completed Sept. 18, 1888)

An article by R.W.G. Vail on the items in Volume VIII appeared in the Quarterly Bulletin published by the Schoharie County Historical Society in January 1944 (pages 6-16). The article was basically the same as the one that originally had been published in the 125th Annual Report of the New York State Library. The article prefaced descriptions of the images in Volume VIII that are more detailed than the item-number descriptions provided in this finding aid. A copy of the article is appended to the paper copy of the finding aid available in the reading room of the Manuscripts and Special Collections unit of the New York State Library.

[Volume IX – no title page]

Prefatory information in volumes II and IV refer to “a collection of over 100 colored pictures of powder horns ... with notes relating where & by whom used in war time & views of the places where made or used. This latter collection seems to be the only one known to exist & has excited the attention of many antiquarians as an entirely new idea. Should these books be separated, the foregoing explains how they follow & that each vol. is complete in itself.” A penciled note signed R.W.B. Vail on the preface for Volume II states: “The powder horn collection is now in New York Historical Society and a partial duplicate (?) collection in Worcester (Mass.) Historical Society”.

Several of the nine volumes have hand-lettered indexes. The item list compiled by the New York State Library for the collection was an embellishment of the original indexes.

Box and Folder List

Vol.	Description	Item Number(s)
I	Autographs or signatures	54, 57, 67, 68, 100
I	Battle markers, Stone Arabia	82, 85
I	Bellinger, Col. Peter	55
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I	Brant, Joseph, portrait	87
I	Brewster, Dr. Oliver, portrait	88
I	British Corners, old house	51
I	British officer's red coat	89 ¼
I	Brown, Col., Monument	86
I	Butler homestead, during Revolution	20
I	Butler homestead, 1886	20
I	Butler Rangers cockade	20
I	Canajoharie, roads & ferry	99
I	Castle Church, Danube	50 ½
I	Caughnawaga Stone Church	23, 83
I	Caughnawaga church bell	24
I	Caughnawaga old store/tavern	25
I	Caughnawaga old dwelling	26
I	Certification of Oriskany wounded	55
I	Comforture (used to light pipes) at Caughnawaga	26
I	Christie's Rift, from south	70
I	Christie's Rift, from north	71
I	Coat, British officer	89 ¼
I	Cook, Casper, portrait	88
I	Court House, Herkimer County	50 ½
I	Dievendorf, Jacob, portrait	87
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I	Ehle (Oel), John Jacob, ordination	32
I	Ehle (Oel), John Jacob, translation	33
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I	Fort Ehle, fireplace	29
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I	Fort Failing	82
I	Fort Herkimer, church, 1767	49
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I	Fort Herkimer, church history	50, 90
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I	Fort Herkimer, petition for money	50 ¾

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I	Fort Johnson or Aiken, 1886	16, 17, 18
I	Fort Kayser, as remembered	74
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I	Fort Kayser, north & east views	80
I	Fort Klock (St. Johnsville), 1886	8
I	Fort Paris, site of	72, 73
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I	Fort Paris, from distance	77
I	Fort Plain, plan	38
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I	Fort Plain, site from railroad	41
I	Fort Plain, church & parsonage	39
I	Fort Plain, monuments, 1886	39
I	Fort Plain, from railroad	41
I	Fort Plain, site from valley	42
I	Fort Plain, appearance and construction	42 ¼
I	Fort Plain, from Lipe farm	43
I	Fort Stanwix, plan of	59 (oversize)
I	Fort Van Rensselaer, print and history	3
I	Fort Van Rensselaer, & Episcopal Church	4
I	Fort Van Rensselaer, photo, 1888	5
I	Fort Van Rensselaer, as a ruin	6, 7
I	Forts on Mohawk & north, names and dates	42 ½
I	Fox, Peter C., document, 1832	101
I	Frey Fort, view & history	45, 46
I	Frey Fort, from Canajoharie	44 1/22
I	Frey Fort, port hole block	44
I	Frey Mansion mantel	44 ¼
I	Fuller, Truman	81
I	Gansevoort, Gen. Peter, portrait & signature	89
I	Garoga Lake	66 ½
I	Genealogy, Klock	35
I	Genealogy, Silvernail	79
I	Genealogy, Van Alstine	7
I	German names & translations	50 7/8
I	German Reformed Church at German Flats, 1886	48
I	Ginseng	98 ¼
I	Herkimer, General, residence	50 ½, 52
I	Herkimer, homestead	50 5/8
I	Herkimer, portrait and biography	53
I	Herkimer County History, title page	50 ½
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I	Johnson, John, forming area	85 ¹ / ₂
I	Johnson, Sir William, portrait	8 ¹ / ₄ , 87
I	Johnson, Sir William, finger ring	9
I	Johnson, Sir William, prayer book	9
I	Johnson, Sir William, neglected grave	15
I	Johnson, Sir William, proclamation to Indians, 1757	9 ¹ / ₂ (oversize)
I	Johnson Hall, from Lossing	8 ¹ / ₂ , 9
I	Johnson Hall, from north (drawn by Guy Johnson)	8 ¹ / ₄
I	Johnson Hall, stairway	10
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I	Stone Arabia, German Reformed church history	61
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I	Stone Arabia churches, history	63 ½
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II	Boating on the Mohawk, Little Falls	48
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