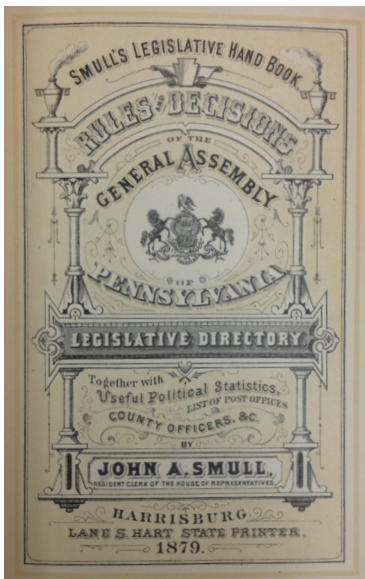




“Book of Reference for All Knowledge...of the life of the Commonwealth:” John Augustus Smull and the Origins of *The Pennsylvania Manual*

Since the early nineteenth century, the Pennsylvania General Assembly has printed a variety of publications to assist legislators and staff members in the daily business of government, and act as an informative resource for the public. Most of these have included the full text of the federal and state Constitutions, as well as parliamentary procedures and the Rules of the House and of the Senate. These volumes are the predecessors of *The Pennsylvania Manual* that sits on the desks of legislators and staff members today, a publication shaped most significantly by a man named John Augustus Smull. His name, forefront in the book’s title, *Smull’s Legislative Hand Book and Manual of the State of Pennsylvania*, graced the spines of manuals from 1866 until 1922, and



even for a few years thereafter, the newly minted *Pennsylvania State Manual* bore the parenthetical explanation ‘Formerly Smull’s.’

Born in Harrisburg in 1832 and raised in the city, Smull began taking steps toward his eventual career at a young age. His father

The title page of Smull’s Legislative Manual for 1879, in the House Archives’ library.



Portrait and signature of John A. Smull printed in a memorial book published by the State of Pennsylvania in his honor upon his death in 1881: Memorial of John Augustus Smull, Late Resident Clerk, House of Representatives of Pennsylvania (Harrisburg, PA: Lane S. Hart, State Printer), 1881.

died when he was barely 10 years old, compelling his mother, Harriet Pauli Smull, to procure work for her sons in support of the family. According to one biographer, “an acquaintance with a number of members of the Legislature emboldened her to secure a position” for John’s elder brother, Le Van (*Memorial of John Augustus Smull*, p. 9). Harriet’s case must have been convincing, as the role of page to the Speaker of the House appears to have been created for the 14-year-old Le Van to fulfill. In the meantime, John contributed to the household economy as a newspaper apprentice at the Harrisburg

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The Pennsylvania Manual *(Continued from Page 1)*

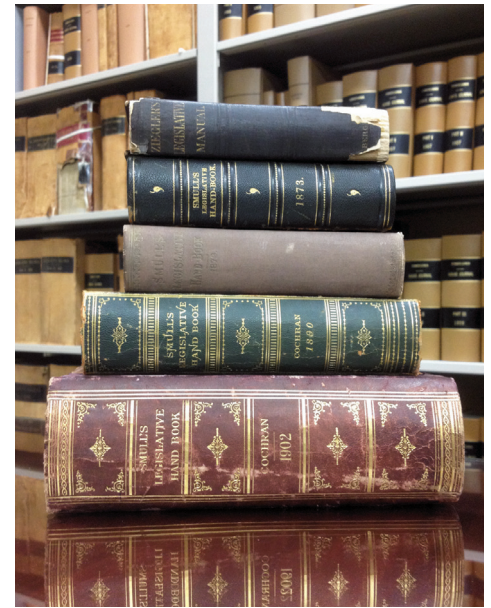
Daily Telegraph. When Le Van died just 8 years later, in 1849, Harriet Smull “secured the vacant position of page for her next son, John.” Smull gradually moved up the ranks in support of the Legislature, from page to bill clerk to reading clerk to resident clerk, in which capacity he closed his career. While Smull held these positions, according to his biographer, “there were few legislators who did not call him to their assistance,” and in cases where “his suggestions were unheeded,” some “local laws became inoperative through their imperfect wording” (*Memorial*, p. 12). He was reputed to have what is now known as an eidetic memory, with a keen facility for memorizing not only names and faces, but the histories of bills and laws.

Throughout the nineteenth century, a collection of state laws and practical legislative guidance known as *Purdon’s Digest*, was published, fulfilling the role that the PA Manual would later serve. In 1825, *A Manual of Parliamentary Practice* was published Joel B. Sutherland, a legislator who had served as Speaker of the

Pennsylvania House in 1825 and later went on to represent Pennsylvania in the United States Congress. This volume also functioned as a legislative manual and included brief lists of the state’s Representatives and Senators and their committee assignments. In the 1850s, Ziegler’s Legislative Manual was the go-to guide for information specific to the Pennsylvania legislature, and including committee assignments and the addresses of Representatives. This manual was printed by Jacob Ziegler, who acted as Chief Clerk of the Pennsylvania House in 1857, 1858, and 1863.

Smull’s Legislative Handbook gained a reputation as the most comprehensive tool for legislators and the public in a single book, acting as a one-stop resource for information relevant to federal, state, and local government. But the focus was always on Pennsylvania, with lists of former Members and Senators, “state and county officers, post offices, election statistics,” and other useful data, and included the state and federal constitutions. The House formally authorized Smull’s handbook by Resolution of April

10, 1867, and it was printed annually by John Smull until his death in 1881. After that, his brother William assumed the duty, followed by a series of clerks, librarians, and editors. The Commonwealth officially purchased Smull’s copyright in 1923, when it became the Pennsylvania State Manual.



A selection of legislative manuals in the House Archives library.

Smull never married, but was popularly known to be especially fond of his dog. A terrier named Dolly, she was said to have accompanied him on the floor of the House each session day for 20 years, meeting Presidents Lincoln and Grant and countless dignitaries. Such was Dolly’s reputation that when she passed away in 1881, having been cared for by John Smull’s brother William after his death in 1879, an obituary was printed for her in the *New York Times* (left). Dolly is buried alongside Smull in the Harrisburg Cemetery. When Smull died in 1879 at only 47 years of age, his legacy was preserved each time a legislator consulted his handbook for the answer to a question of parliamentary procedure or to look up the name of a former Speaker from decades earlier.

The House Archives maintains a complete collection of Smull’s handbooks and the *Pennsylvania Manual*, from 1867 to the present.

‘Twenty years ago Dolly took her seat on the desk of the late Resident Clerk of the House, John A. Smull, where she sat every day the Legislature was in session until the death of Mr. Smull. She was a general favorite with members of the House, officers, and pages. When the Speaker’s gavel fell at adjournment Dolly always responded with a gentle bark, and she watched the proceedings at times as if she really comprehended their import. No dog that ever lived in Pennsylvania received as many caresses from statesmen, politicians, journalists, legislators, warriors, and ladies fair. She sat on the knee of every Governor from 1861. Supreme Judges did not hesitate to lay their hands gently on her beautiful head. Mr. Lincoln took her in his arms, charmed by her beauty. Gen. Grant had her paw in his hand frequently. All the great political leaders of Pennsylvania knew Dolly.

An excerpt from the obituary printed for John Smull’s beloved terrier, Dolly, in the New York Times, June 26, 1881.

Martha Glazer Speiser & Maurice J. Speiser: A Pioneer Legislator and a Philadelphia Attorney; Friends of Ernest Hemingway



Martha Glazer Speiser (front center) and her husband Maurice J. Speiser (front right) in Paris, France with Ernest Hemingway (rear center) circa 1932. Photograph courtesy of Speiser and Easterling-Hallman Foundation Collection of Ernest Hemingway, University of South Carolina Libraries.

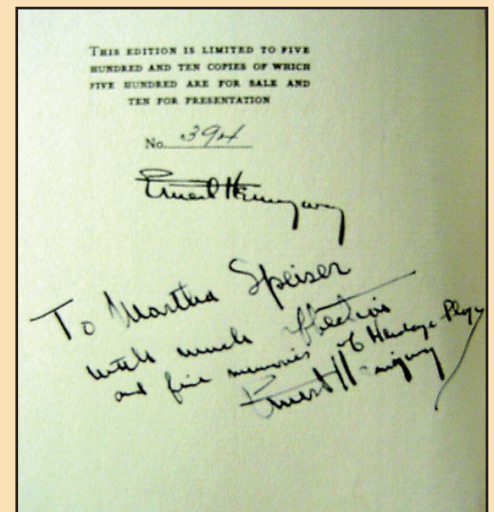
Martha Glazer Speiser was born in Belfast, the present capital of Northern Ireland, in 1884, and educated in Philadelphia. Her interest in art, literature, theatre, and politics brought her into contact with many prominent Philadelphians, and she was engaged in various community-building efforts in the city. During World War I, she acted as district chair for the Red Cross and Liberty Loan fundraising drives. In 1913, Glazer married Maurice J. Speiser, a prominent Philadelphia lawyer, expanding her already far-reaching connections and influence in Philadelphia cultural life. In 1922, in the first election in which women were legally allowed to become candidates for political office, Martha was elected to represent Philadelphia County in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. Her husband Maurice had represented Philadelphia in the House for one

term a decade earlier. Martha had a singular motivation during her time in the House, repeatedly introducing bills “providing for the welfare of prisoners” (HBs 16 and 18, 1923) addressing concerns about the physical conditions in which prisoners were confined in the state (HB 19, 1923), as well as “abolishing solitary confinement of prisoners” (HB 17, 1923).

The couple were well-known art collectors and patrons of painters and playwrights, especially the work of modernists. According to one of Ernest Hemingway’s biographers, the famed author of *The Old Man and the Sea*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, he had been in the market for a competitive lawyer to negotiate a film adaptation of one of his novels when he happened to meet Maurice Speiser in a barber shop in Hendaye, France, sometime in the late 1920s. The legislator-couple and the Nobel Prize-winning writer became fast friends, and even artistic consultants. Martha wrote to Hemingway in 1940: “Dear Ernie, I wonder if you still remember that it was I who asked you to write a play? Well, you did and a good one it is.... You...have shown in plain and no uncertain terms the meaning of war and fight—a fair presentation which is most moving for its honesty.” This work, Hemingway’s only major play, *The Fifth Column*, may not have received much acclaim from theatre reviewers or the literary community, but the Speisers played a central role in preserving Hemingway’s reputation through Maurice’s legal guidance and Martha’s critical eye.

Hemingway’s success was in some ways a Glazer Speiser family affair: Martha Speiser’s brother, Benjamin Glazer, was a Hollywood writer who aided in producing the screenplay for Paramount Pictures’ film of *A Farewell to Arms*. Martha passed away at the age of 83 on September 22, 1968, in Philadelphia.

Scholars and archivists affiliated with the University of South Carolina, where a collection of materials from the Speisers association with Hemingway is held, detail the relationship between the legislators and the famous author, including Jill M. Jividen’s monograph Power of Attorney: Business and Friendship Between Ernest Hemingway and Maurice J. Speiser (2008).



A personal inscription in a first edition copy of A Farewell to Arms from 1929, signed by the author, Ernest Hemingway, and addressed “To Martha Speiser with much affection and fine memories of Hendaye Plage.” Original book held by the University of South Carolina Libraries.

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Recent Acquisitions at the House Archives available for consultation

- Pin – J. Lee Plummer for State Treasurer, 1905 (R-Blair, 1903-1906); Pin – John O. Sheatz for State Treasurer, 1907 (R-Philadelphia, 1903-1908)
- Fred Noye Campaign Memorabilia Collection (approx. 620 pieces)
- “A Manual for the Government of the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania” by J. Ziegler, 1863
- “Why Are You Here?” by Franklin Kury, 2014 (D-Montour, Northumberland, 1967-1972)
- “Exploits and Adventures of a Soldier Ashore and Afloat” by William Llewellyn Adams, 1911 (R-Luzerne, 1913-1916)
- “The Memoirs of Lieutenant Governor, Lieutenant General Daniel Bursk Strickler” by Strickler, 1972 (R-Lancaster, 1931-1932)
- “Verhandlungen Und Debatten Der Konvention Der Republik Pennsylvania, um Verbesserungen zuder Constitution, vol. V,” 1838 (Debates of the 1837 Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention in German)
- Personal Papers of Lita I. Cohen (R-Montgomery, 1993-2002)

In March, the House Archives had the privilege of a visit from former Representative Fred Noye, when he generously donated his large collection of campaign memorabilia. He and the House Archives would like to encourage other Members and staff to consider donating any materials to our research collections. What a great way to spring clean your offices and homes!

DID YOU
KNOW?

On May 29, 1774, the Colonial Pennsylvania Assembly was visited by Paul Revere, who brought news of the closure of Boston Harbor and requested Pennsylvania’s support against the British.

