

Catherine Drinker Bowen drafts of John Adams and the American Revolution

Ms. Coll. 1229

Finding aid prepared by Sam Allingham.

Last updated on January 31, 2018.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2016 August 22

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Drinker, Catherine, 1897-1973
Title	Catherine Drinker Bowen drafts of <i>John Adams and the American Revolution</i>
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1229
Date [inclusive]	1946-1950
Extent	5.6 linear feet (7 boxes)
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Catherine Drinker Bowen (1897-1973) was an American writer best known for her popular (and occasionally controversial) biographies of prominent American and English historical figures. Her books were great successes in the popular market, but sometimes received criticism from academics for their occasional re-imagining of historical occurrences. This collection includes 5 boxes of material related to her 1950 biography of John Adams, <i>John Adams and the American Revolution</i>. It includes two full drafts of the book, organized by chapter, with each chapter containing various revisions. It also includes various versions of the book's prologue, source notes, and bibliography, as well as notes and corrections, along with a statement by Drinker Bowen explaining her biographical methods.</p>

Cite as:

Catherine Drinker Bowen drafts of *John Adams and the American Revolution*, 1946-1949, Ms. Coll. 1229, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

Catherine Drinker Bowen (1897-1973) was an American writer best known for her popular (and occasionally controversial) biographies of prominent American and English historical figures. Born to a prominent Quaker family in the suburbs of Philadelphia, she studied music at the Peabody Institute and the Juilliard School and earned her teacher's certificate from the Institute of Musical Art in New York before deciding to become a writer. Despite her lack of formal academic training in writing, Drinker Bowen was a formidable researcher, and although her books were intended for a popular audience their utilization of primary source material and wide bibliographic range distinguished them from other popular biographies of her time. Her narrative re-imaginings of historical occurrences, which some academics felt undermined her accuracy, made Drinker Bowen's work controversial at times. However, these controversies did nothing to limit the popularity of her books, which were frequent Book of the Month Club selections, and in 1958 she received the National Book Award for Nonfiction. Her books included *Yankee from Olympus* (1944), *John Adams and the American Revolution* (1950), *The Lion and the Throne; the Life and Times of Sir Edward Coke* (1957), *Francis Bacon; the Temper of a Man* (1963), and *Miracle at Philadelphia* (1966). She died in 1973 in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains material related to Drinker Bowen's 1950 book *John Adams and the American Revolution*, originally titled *Yankee John*, which concerns the early life of John Adams, up to the declaration of American independence from Great Britain. The collection contains both an early draft of the book, completed between 1946 and 1947, and a later, more extensive draft completed between 1947 and 1949. Each draft represents a separate series within the collection, but as Drinker Bowen occasionally placed full pages from earlier drafts into the later one during her working process there are some cases where the delineation is not entirely firm. Each larger draft is organized by chapter, and each chapter is present in various versions; some are complete, while others represent only scattered pages with revisions. Some chapter numbers were changed during the revision process, and in such instances -- except where Drinker Bowen explicitly suggested otherwise with her own folder organization, in which case her note is included in the folder -- efforts have been made to place similar material together, regardless of the change in chapter headings. In general, the chronology of revision is unclear, and it would take careful comparison, both within the manuscript and with the completed book, to map the precise order. The collection also contains drafts of the book's prologue, source list, bibliography, notes and corrections, and

a statement concerning Drinker Bowen's biographical methods.

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2016 August 22

Finding aid prepared by Sam Allingham.

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use.

Use Restrictions

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Source of Acquisition

Gift of Catherine Drinker Bowen, 1949.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

At the Library of Congress:

Catherine Drinker Bowen papers, 1793-1980 (bulk: 1934-1972), MSS13383

Controlled Access Headings

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Drafts (documents)
- Writings (documents)

GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)

- United States--History--Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775
- United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Adams, John, 1735-1826

SUBJECT(S)

- American literature--20th century
- Authors
- Authors, American--20th century
- Biography
- Women authors

Collection Inventory

I. EARLY DRAFT OF *YANKEE JOHN*, 1946-1949.

	Box	Folder
Prologue, Chapter 1, 1946.	1	1
Chapter 2, 1946.	1	2
Chapter 3, 1946.	1	3
Chapter 4, 1946.	1	4
Chapter 5, 6, 1946.	1	5
Chapter 7, 1946.	1	6
Chapter 8, 9, 10, 1946.	1	7
Chapter 11, 1946.	1	8
Chapter 12, 1946.	1	9
Chapter 13, 14, 1946.	1	10
Chapter 13, 14, 15, 1946.	1	11
Chapter 15, 1946.	1	12
Chapter 16, 17, 1946.	1	13
Chapter 18, 1946.	1	14

Chapter 19, 1946.	1	15
Chapter 20, 1946.	1	16
Chapter 21, 1946.	1	17
Chapter 22, 23, 1946.	1	18
Chapter 24, 1946.	1	19
Chapter 25, 1946.	1	20
Chapter 26, 1946.	1	21
Chapter 27, 1946.	1	22
Chapter 28, 1946.	1	23
Chapter 29, 1946.	1	24
Chapter 30, 1946.	1	25
Chapter 31, 1946.	1	26
Chapter 32, 1946.	1	27

II. LATER DRAFT OF *YANKEE JOHN* (*JOHN ADAMS AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*), 1947-1949.

	Box	Folder
Preface, 1949.	1	28
Preface, part 2, 1949.	1	29

Chapter 2, 1947-1949.	1	30
Chapter 2, 1949.	2	1
Chapter 3, 1947-1949.	2	2
Chapter 3, 1949.	2	3
Chapter 4, 1947-1949.	2	4
Chapter 5, 1947-1949.	2	5
Chapter 6, 1947-1949.	2	6-7
Chapter 7, 1947-1949.	2	8-9
Chapter 4, 7, 8, revised pages, 1948.	2	10
Chapter 8, 1947-1949.	2	11-13
Chapter 8 (later Chapter 9), 1949.	2	14
Chapter 8, 9, 10, 1947-1949.	2	15
Chapter 9, 10, 1947-1949.	2	16-20
Chapter 10, 11, 1947-1949.	2	21
Chapter 11, 12, 1947-1949.	3	1
Chapter 12, 1949.	3	2
Chapter 12, 13, 1947-1949.	3	3
Chapter 12, 1947-1949.	3	4
Chapter 13, 1947-1949.	3	5

Chapter 13, 1947-1949.	3	6
Chapter 14, 1947-1949.	3	7-8
Chapter 14, 15, 1947-1949.	3	9
Chapter 15, 1949.	3	10-12
Chapter 15, 16, 1949.	3	13
Chapter 16, 1949.	3	14-15
Chapter 17, 1949.	3	16
Chapter 18, 1949.	3	17
Chapter 16-19, various pages, 1949.	3	18
Chapter 19, 1949.	4	1
Chapter 20, 1949.	4	2-4
Chapter 21, 1949.	4	5-7
Chapter 22, 1949.	4	8
Chapter 23, 1949.	4	9-10
Chapter 24, 1949.	4	11-15
Chapter 25, 1949.	4	16-17
Chapter 26, 1949.	4	18-19
Chapter 27, 1949.	4	20-21
Chapter 28, 1949.	5	1-2

Chapter 29, 1949.	5	3-4
Chapter 30, 1949.	5	5-8
Chapter 31, 1949.	5	9-10
Chapter 32, 1949.	5	11-15
Notes and Corrections, 1949.	5	16-17
Source Notes and Bibliography, 1949.	5	18-19
End Material, 1949.	5	20

III. FINAL TYPESCRIPT OF *JOHN ADAMS AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*.

	Box	Folder
Front material, Chapters 1-5, 1950.	6	1
Chapters 6-8, 1950.	6	2
Chapters 9-10, 1950.	6	3
Chapters 11-13, 1950.	6	4
Chapters 14-16, 1950.	6	5
Chapters 17-19, 1950.	6	6
Chapters 20-21, 1950.	6	7
Chapters 22-23, 1950.	6	8

Chapters 24-25, 1950.	6	9
Chapters 26-29, 1950.	7	1
Chapters 30-31, 1950.	7	2
Chapter 32, Notes (part I), 1950.	7	3
Notes (part II), 1950.	7	4