

John W. Williams correspondence

Ms. Coll. 951

Finding aid prepared by Holly Mengel.

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

2013.11.26

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Williams, John W. (John Worthington), 1803-1837
Title	John W. Williams correspondence
Call number	Ms. Coll. 951
Date [inclusive]	1822-1853
Extent	0.4 linear feet (1 box)
Language	English
Abstract	John W. Williams (1803-1837) served as one of the editors of the magazine <i>American Quarterly Review</i> and of the <i>National Gazette</i> . The John W. Williams correspondence dates from 1822 to 1853 and largely documents Williams' personal and business life until the time of his death through letters from family, friends, authors, and editors.

Cite as:

John W. Williams correspondence, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

John W. Williams was born November 17, 1803, the son of John and Mary Bliss Williams, in Wethersfield, Connecticut. After graduating from Yale University in 1822, Williams moved to Philadelphia to practice law. In 1835, however, he decided to change careers from law to literature and took over from Robert Walsh as one of the editors of the magazine *American Quarterly Review* and of the *National Gazette*. Under his editorship, the *National Gazette* became a daily newspaper, after years of being published only three times a week.

In April 1836, Williams married Anne Keppele and they had one son, John. Unfortunately, shortly after their marriage, Williams became ill and he died in September 1837.

Following his death, his widow Anne remained in contact with Williams' correspondents and family.

Thomas S. Williams, an uncle of John W. Williams, was instrumental in helping Anne with inheritance and estate issues.

Scope and Contents

The John W. Williams correspondence dates from 1822 to 1853 and largely documents Williams' personal and business life until the time of his death. The collection is arranged in three series: Letters to John W. Williams, Letters to Mrs. John W. Williams (Anne Kappele), and Miscellaneous letters. These letters are mostly personal, being written by family or friends, but do include some business letters from authors and editors.

Letters to John Williams includes letters from family members, many of whom request favors and services from Williams, friends, and colleagues. Family correspondents include cousin John Howard and his wife Mary, father John Williams, O.E. Williams (relationship unknown), uncle Thomas S. Williams, and cousin S. Worthington. There are also letters from friends, including James Amory, Ed. E. Law, E.E. Lewis, and I.H. Townsend, whose letters discuss fellow classmates and friends and personal accounts of their lives. Williams received letters relating to his career, both as a lawyer and as an editor from George Bancroft, Park Benjamin, William B.O. Peabody, Amos Pilsbury, William Sullivan, and B.B. Thatcher. These letters address topics such as writings for *American Quarterly Review* and *National Gazette*, politics, and business in Philadelphia and elsewhere. Through these letters, researchers will also find information about other writers with whom Williams did not correspond, including Harriette Newell Woods Baker and Elizabeth Palmer Peabody.

Letters to Mrs. John Williams (Anne Keppele Williams, 1807-1853) are entirely personal in nature. Correspondents include Williams' friend James S. Amory who wrote to Mrs. Williams during Williams' illness and after his death; J. Parsons; Williams' sister Hannah H. Williams; and Williams' uncle Thomas S. Williams. These letters are largely distressing, informing Mrs. Williams of the deaths of family members and discussing her inheritance from her husband John W. Williams, his father John Williams, and his grandfather Colonel John Worthington.

The last series, Miscellaneous letters, are not addressed to either John W. Williams or his wife. These letters include letters from James S. Amory to Johnnie Williams; from Hungerford & Sons to James S. Amory; from Anne Keppele to John Hall, just before her marriage to John W. Williams; and from John W. Williams to his mother.

The bulk of these letters are family related, however, there are some letters that are strong in literary and political interest and provide the background of a well-educated young man who wished to leave his mark on the world of letters.

Administrative Information

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

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Finding aid prepared by Holly Mengel.

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Custodial History note

Sold by Charles Apfelbaum, Rare Books & Collections, New York, 1989.

Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- American quarterly review.
- National gazette and literary register (Philadelphia, Pa. : Semiweekly).

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Correspondence
- Manuscripts, American--19th century

SUBJECT(S)

- Newspaper editors
- Periodical editors

Collection Inventory

I. LETTERS TO JOHN W. WILLIAMS.

	Box	Folder
Ames, Seth, letter requesting that Williams speak to a bookseller on behalf of a friend to build a library, Boston, Massachusetts, 1828 July 11.	1	1
Ames, Seth, letter thanking Williams for help with bookseller, Boston, Massachusetts, 1828, August 18.	1	2
Ames, Seth, letter requesting that Williams help find Ezekiel Byam, an individual who absconded from Chelmsford and owes money to a printer and a merchant, Lowell, Massachusetts, 1830 December 25.	1	3
Amory, James S., letter informing Williams' of his pending visit and requesting that he inform the Misses Drinker of his arrival, Boston, Massachusetts, 1833 May 22.	1	4
Amory, James S., letter about conversations with fellow passengers on the steamboat and train and a party he attended, Boston, Massachusetts, 1835 May 1.	1	5
Amory, James S., letter regarding the trials of traveling and news of Mrs. Baker being burned as a result of a cold remedy, Boston, Massachusetts, 1836 January 24.	1	6
Amory, James S., letter concerning friends, Boston, Massachusetts, 1837 January 10.	1	7
Bancroft, George, letter including a translation of Goethe's poem at the beginning of the third book of Wilhelm Meister's <i>Leprjahre</i> ,	1	8

Northampton, 1830 November 1.

Benjamin, Park, letter regarding the editorship of the *American Quarterly Review* and suggestions for increasing its subscription, Boston, Massachusetts, 1836 March 14. 1 9

Benjamin, Park, letter regarding a review of Miss Sedgewick's book and informing Williams that he wishes to review a book by Miss Peabody of Salem, 1836 November 7. 1 10

Cabot, George, letter including \$100, half for Williams and half to pay his bill at the Mansion House, Boston, Massachusetts, 1836 August 12. 1 11

Howard, John, letter regarding the estate of Williams' father, John Williams, Senior, and suggesting that Williams, Senior had been dishonest about his assets, Springfield, Massachusetts, 1833 December 28. 1 12

Howard, Mary (wife of John Howard), letter requesting Williams to purchase a pair of silver soup tureens, Springfield, Massachusetts, 1824 September 8. 1 13

Howard, Mary (wife of John Howard), letter about health of her brother, Charles Chauncey who is near death and requesting that Williams purchase silver pitchers rather than sauce tureens, Springfield, Massachusetts, 1824 October 6. 1 14

Howard, Mary (wife of John Howard), letter thanking Williams for the wedding invitation and sending her regrets that she cannot attend, Springfield, Massachusetts, 1836 April 19. 1 15

Kirkland, C.C., letter informing Williams of the death of Miss [Elizabeth] Cabot (Kirkland's niece) who died after nursing her mother, Boston, Massachusetts, 1833 June 25. 1 16

Kirkland, C.C., letter informing Williams that Mrs. Cabot is recovering from her illness and that Mr. Cabot is devastated by death of his 1 17

daughter, Elizabeth, Boston, Massachusetts, 1833 July 2.		
Law, Ed. E., friendly letter from former classmate regarding friends, New London, and fishing, New London, Connecticut, 1833 August 22.	1	18
Law, Ed. E., letter describing his holidays with his family, New London, Connecticut, 1836 August 19.	1	19
Lewis, E.E., invitation to visit New Hampshire, New Haven, Connecticut, 1822 October 24.	1	20
Palfrey, John G., letter to Williams and G.M. Wharton regarding a proposal to merge <i>American Quarterly Review</i> with the <i>North American Review</i> , Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1836 December 24.	1	21
Parsons, F., letter inquiring about the reputation of three Philadelphia companies: Lenox & Boggs, Wingate & Gaskill, and Chapman & Millet, Hartford, Connecticut, 1835 January 30.	1	22
Peabody, Wm. B.O., letter regarding the <i>American Quarterly Review</i> , Springfield, Massachusetts, 1836 January 13.	1	23
Pilsbury, Amos, warden of Connecticut State Prison, letter inquiring about the standing of Washington Jackson, an iron and nail merchant who owes the prison merchandise, Wethersfield, Connecticut, 1830 September 15.	1	24
Sullivan, William, letter regarding John Quincy Adams' corrupt political career, Boston, Massachusetts, 1836 January 30.	1	25
Sullivan, William, letter regarding the qualities making a good newspaper and complimenting Williams on his editorial paragraphs, Newport, Rhode Island, 1836 August 17.	1	26
Sullivan, William, letter describing submissions for publishing (not included in letter), Boston, Massachusetts, 1836 August 19.	1	27

Sullivan, William, letter describing his views on the presidency and Andrew Jackson, Boston, Massachusetts, 1836 October 19.	1	28
Sullivan, William, letter discussing Matthew L. Davis's book on Aaron Burr, Boston, Massachusetts, 1836 December 20.	1	29
Thatcher, B.B., letter informing Williams that he cannot accept his terms for reprinting "The Tea Party," Boston, Massachusetts, 1836 May 20.	1	30
Townsend, I.H., invitation to attend a reunion of the Theological Chamber at commencement, New Haven, Connecticut, 1830 August 24.	1	31
Tyler, D., letter regarding his interest of reform in the areas of industry and government, particularly the War Department, Hartford, Connecticut, 1830 August 18.	1	32
Wheeler, Fitch, letter regarding business with a deposition from a captain, Bridgeport, Connecticut, 1832 May 26.	1	33
Williams, John (Senior), letter regarding the estate of Lucius Dyer and his wife's wish to use the bequest to refurnish their home, and the news of cholera in Philadelphia and New York and his worry over Williams' health, Wethersfield, Connecticut, 1832 September 5.	1	34
Williams, O.E., letters requesting that Williams represent his case before the president of the United States Bank, from which he hopes to borrow money, Hartford, Connecticut, 1832 September 7.	1	35-36
Williams, O.E., letter inquiring how Pennsylvania was regarded in relation to General Andrew Jackson's candidacy in the 1832 presidential election, Hartford, Connecticut, 1832 October 27.	1	37
Williams, Thomas S., letter responding to Williams' plan to leave his career in law and return to a career of writing and editing the <i>American Quarterly Review</i> , and offering to loan him money for the endeavor, Hartford, Connecticut, 1836 March 4.	1	38

Williams, Thomas S., letter regarding the <i>American Quarterly Review</i> and his regrets for not being able to attend Williams' wedding, Hartford, Connecticut, 1836 April 2.	1	39
Williams, Thomas S., letter congratulating Williams on his approaching wedding and requesting that he contact his father who asked about his finances, Hartford, Connecticut, 1836 April 18.	1	40
Williams, Thomas S., letter thanking Williams for news of the wedding, Hartford, Connecticut, 1836 June 1.	1	41
Williams, Thomas S., letter regarding the <i>National Gazette</i> and Burr's biography, Hartford, Connecticut, 1836 December 27.	1	42
Williams, Thomas S., letter concerning Williams' debt to his father, 1837 May 9.	1	43
Woodward, Henry, letter requesting information on the worth of stock in the Bank of North America and why its value appears to have increased, Middletown, Connecticut, 1831 October 8.	1	44
Worthington, S., letter requesting that Williams find him a position in Philadelphia, as a bank clerk or in a printing firm, Hartford, Connecticut, 1830 June 1.	1	45
Yale Class Reunion, circular listing information about graduates, New Haven, Connecticut, 1835 September 25.	1	46

II. LETTERS TO MRS. JOHN W. WILLIAMS (ANNE KEPPELE).

	Box	Folder
Amory, James S., letter informing Mrs. Williams that he is vacationing	1	47

with Mrs. Baker and the Misses Peabody and he hopes Williams' health has improved, Nahant, Massachusetts, 1837 July 28.		
Amory, James S., letter apologizing for not visiting John W. Williams, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1837 August 24.	1	48
Amory, James S., letter informing Mrs. Williams that he is five-weeks married and wishes to remain her friend, Boston, Massachusetts, 1838 January 3.	1	49
Amory, James S., letter relating Boston gossip, Boston, Massachusetts, 1838 February 13.	1	50
Amory, James S., letter expressing his hopes that Mrs. Williams' son, John, is recovering from his illness, Nahant, Massachusetts, 1838 July 29.	1	51
Amory, James S., letter expressing sympathy to Mrs. Williams' sister whose husband died, Nahant, Massachusetts, 1838 September 2.	1	52
Parsons, J., letter informing her of the death of her brother-in-law, Thomas, who drowned in the Connecticut River, Hartford, Connecticut, 1842 September 18.	1	53
Williams, Hannah H., letter relating news of the Williams family and mourning the loss of her brother John W. Williams, Wethersfield, Connecticut, circa 1938.	1	54
Williams, Thomas S., letter announcing the death of John Williams, Senior, Wethersfield, Connecticut, 1840 December 18.	1	55
Williams, Thomas S., letter responding to her request for help educating her son and her concerns about her inheritance, Hartford, Connecticut, 1851 January 22.	1	56
Williams, Thomas S., letter regarding her inheritance and the estate of Colonel John Worthington, Hartford, Connecticut, 1851 February 13.	1	57

III. MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS.

	Box	Folder
Amory, James S., letter to Johnnie Williams about the Williams' vacation and his mother's improvement in health, Boston, Massachusetts, 1853 July 27.	1	58
Hungerford & Son, letter to James S. Amory regarding the will of John Worthington, Hartford, Connecticut, 1844 August 6.	1	59
Keppele, Anna, letter to John Hall regarding a trip to Montreal and Boston, describing Williams as "dreadfully proper," Boston, Massachusetts, 1834 August 31.	1	60
Williams, Anna K (Mrs. J.W. Williams), letter to an unknown recipient, undated.	1	61
Williams, John W., letter to his mother informing her that he has visited Dr. Pepper and obtained salve for his feet and advice regarding his swollen arms, undated.	1	62
