



Newport Historical Society

Guide to the John Austin Stevens, Jr. family papers, circa 1777 – 1941

Newport Historical Society
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Descriptive Summary

<i>Collection Identifier</i>	MS.100
<i>Title</i>	John Austin Stevens, Jr. family papers
<i>Creator</i>	Stevens, John Austin, 1827-1910
<i>Date</i>	circa 1777 – 1941 (bulk 1863 – 1907)
<i>Extent</i>	4 boxes and a map
<i>Abstract</i>	The personal papers of the John Austin Stevens, Jr. Family of New York and Newport, including correspondence, historical research, published articles and poetry and other papers by various family members.

Historical Note

John Austin Stevens, Sr. (1795-1874) was a New York businessman and banker. His father was Ebenezer Stevens, a lieutenant-colonel in the 2d Continental Artillery during the American Revolution. He graduated from Yale College in 1813 and was secretary of the New York Chamber of commerce, first president of the Merchants' Exchange Company and first president of the Bank of Commerce, 1839-1866. In his role as President of the Bank of Commerce, he was in part responsible for loaning the United States government \$50,000,000.00 at the outbreak of the Civil War. He married Abigail Weld Perkins and is the father of John Austin Stevens, Jr.

John Austin Stevens, Jr. (1827-1910) was born in New York, but retired to Newport, Rhode Island later in life. He graduated from Harvard College in 1846 and was a businessman, banker, writer and historian. He is best remembered as the founder of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution in 1876, a patriotic organization which allowed any male descendant of men who either in military naval or civil service participated in the American Revolution. Throughout his life Stevens wrote and published articles on finance and history, largely in connection with the American Revolution. He was elected librarian of the New York Historical Society in 1876 and he founded the Magazine of American History in 1877. He married Mary Antoinette Morris in 1885 and had one son, John Austin Stevens, Jr. and two daughters, Mary Morris and Abby Weld Stevens.

Scope and Content

The bulk of this collection consists of the correspondence, research notes, published and unpublished writings of John Austin Stevens, Jr. and the correspondence of his father, John Austin Stevens, Sr. Papers from Mary Morris Stevens are also included, as well as the published and unpublished poetry of Mary Morris Stevens. Also included are unattributed and undated writings, letters and personal papers of other family members and unknown persons. The correspondence series consists of the correspondence of John Austin Stevens Sr., John Austin Stevens, Jr. and Mary Morris Stevens, in addition to the correspondence of other miscellaneous persons. The writings series is dominantly made up of the published and unpublished writings of John Austin Stevens, Jr. in the form of newspaper clippings, typescripts and manuscripts largely on topics related to the study of colonial American history. Also included in the writings series is the published and unpublished poetry and poetry fragments of Mary Morris Stevens and miscellaneous writings from unknown individuals. The research series consists of the historical research of John Austin Stevens on topics of colonial American history, the bulk is undated and unsigned. This series includes a map of the battlefield at Valley Forge, which is suspected to be drawn by Louis Lebègue Duportail. Also included in this series is genealogical research of the Stevens family. The professional papers series consists of the Harvard College diploma of John Austin Stevens, Jr. from 1846, and documents and newspaper clippings related to the Sons of the Revolution, Society

of the Cincinnati and other organizations John Austin Stevens Jr. was involved with during his life. Also included in this series is a box of ribbons and a program from various functions associated with these organizations. The textile instruction series consists of various written and printed instructions for crochet and other forms of needlework.

Organization

The John Austin Stevens, Jr. family papers are organized into five series:

Series 1. Correspondence

Series 2. Writings

Series 3. Research

Series 4. Professional papers

Series 5. Textile instruction

Subject Access

People

Stevens, Abby Weld
Stevens, John Austin, 1795-1874
Stevens, John Austin, 1827-1910
Stevens, Margaret Antoinette (Morris), b. 1830
Stevens, Mary Morris

Subjects

American drama
Economics--United States--History
History
United States--Social life and customs
United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783

Form/Genre

battlefield maps
clippings (information artifacts)
correspondence
patterns (guides)
decorations (personal artifacts)
research notes

scripts (documents)

Access and Use

Physical Access

This collection is housed on site at the Newport Historical Society. Researchers can be seen by appointment during operating hours.

Reproduction & Use

NHS allows monitored personal photography of manuscript and artifact collections for research use only, with some limitations and restrictions. Fees apply. See our Personal Photography Policy and Agreement for more details.

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Citation

John Austin Stevens, Jr. family papers, MS.100, Newport Historical Society, Newport, Rhode Island

Administrative Information

Processor

Processed by Stacie Parillo, February 21 2012; and Elsie Petraca, February 21 2012.

Descriptive Rules

Finding aid based on *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS)

Accession Info

The Steven family papers were a gift of Mary Morris Stevens, 1942-1944.

Inventory

Series 01: Correspondence, circa 1825 – 1941

The correspondence of John Austin Stevens Sr., John Austin Stevens, Jr. and Mary Morris Stevens, in addition to the correspondence of other miscellaneous persons.

Series is arranged by author, then chronologically with undated correspondence at the end of the folder.

File 01.001: Stevens, John Austin, Sr. correspondence, 1825 – 1863

Correspondence written and received by John Austin Stevens Sr. The correspondence is reflective of his business work, including information about the Merchants' Exchange Company, the Bank of Commerce and the Bank of the United States. Correspondents include fellow bankers, businessmen and statesmen, such as Albert Gallatin, Nicholas Biddle, George Curtis and Henry Clay.

File 01.002: Stevens, John Austin, Jr. correspondence, 1863 – 1898

Correspondence written and received by John Austin Stevens, Jr. This correspondence series primarily consists of letters regarding his business interests as well as his historical and genealogical research and his involvement with the New York Historical Society, the New York and Rhode Island chapters of the Sons of the Revolution and the Society of the Cincinnati. Also included are letters from his time spent abroad in France. The collection is dominantly in English with some French. Correspondents include Robert H. Kelby, Benjamin Harrison, Asa Bird Gardiner, Henry Turner and unidentified correspondents.

File 01.003: Stevens, John Austin, Jr. correspondence, circa 1900 – 1907

Correspondence written and received by John Austin Stevens, Jr.. The bulk of this series concerns his historical and genealogical research and was written and received while he was in residence in Newport. Correspondents include Robert H. Kelby, William Leslie Stevens and Edith B. D. Mason. Folder also contains two photographs of an unidentified man.

File 01.004: Stevens, Mary Morris correspondence, 1911 – 1941

Correspondence written and received by Mary Morris Stevens while she was in residence in Newport. The majority of the items in this series are related to her father's historical work or her own poetry. Correspondents include Emil E. Jemal of the Newport Daily News.

File 01.005: Miscellaneous Stevens family correspondence, circa 1854 – 1924

Correspondence written and received by various individuals. Individuals include Abby Geld Stevens, Charles C. Torrey and Theodore Roosevelt.

Series 02: Writings, circa 1846 – 1940

The writings series is dominantly made up of the published and unpublished writings of John Austin Stevens, Jr. in the form of newspaper clippings, typescripts and manuscripts largely on topics related to the study of colonial American history. Also included in the writings series is the published and unpublished poetry and poetry fragments of Mary Morris Stevens and miscellaneous writings from unknown individuals.

Arranged alphabetically by title of work when possible, with untitled material at the end of the folder. The works are largely undated.

File 02.001: Stevens, Abby Weld: Album, circa 1870

Bound book belonging to Abby Weld Stevens, which was a gift from her sister, Mary Stevens.

File 02.002: Stevens, John Austin, Jr.: B-E, circa 1890 – 1923

This folder includes works written by John Austin Stevens, Jr. published and unpublished, including "The Battle of Rhode Island," "Coaches in Colonial New York," "Colonel Beverly: A Drama if the Revolution in Five Acts" "Colonial Letters," "The Commerce of Rhode Island," and "Evolutions of American Finance."

File 02.003: Stevens, John Austin, Jr.: F-L, circa 1901

This folder includes works written by John Austin Stevens, Jr. published and unpublished, including. The Finances of the United States in a Century, 1800-1900," "Le Francais en Rhode-Island," "Heine's Intermezzo," and "The Legend of

Petersfield."

File 02.004: Stevens, John Austin, Jr.: The Mayor's Quest

This folder contains one work by Stevens Jr., "The Mayor's Quest."

File 02.005: Stevens, John Austin, Jr.: The Margins, or Men of the Period

This folder contains one work by Stevens Jr., a play entitled, "The Margins, or Men of the Period."

File 02.006: Stevens, John Austin, Jr.: Mo-T, 1875 – 1907

This folder includes works written by John Austin Stevens, Jr. published and unpublished, including, "Money and Investment," "The Presidential Election of 1868," "Une Respose Heureau," and "The Two Dominoes"

File 02.007: Stevens, Margaret: Composition book, October 1 1844 – February 19 1846

A bound composition book of Ms. Stevens' writings. Includes remarks from her instructors.

File 02.008: Stevens, Mary Morris: Writings, circa 1932 – 1940

Majority are works of poetry, both unpublished and published which often contain political themes.

File 02.009: Stevens family or unknown author: A-L

Published and unpublished manuscripts from various individuals both connected and unconnected to the Stevens family or works here no author could be accurately determined. These include works, "Apothesis of the Dutchman," "The Ballad of Sir Olaf," "An Hour with Alphonse Daudet," "Juanito's Five Franc Piece," and "The Lassies."

File 02.010: Stevens family or unknown author: N-Y, untitled, circa 1878 – 1895

Published and unpublished manuscripts from various individuals both connected and unconnected to the Stevens family or works here no author could be accurately

determined. These include works, "Naval War College," "The Physician's Obligation," and "Rules and Maxims for Young Musicians."

Series 03: Research, circa 1777 – 1910

The research series consists of the historical research of John Austin Stevens, Jr. on topics of colonial American history, the bulk is undated and unsigned. This series includes a map of the battlefield at Valley Forge, which is suspected to be drawn by Louis Lebègue Duportail.

Arranged by subject and then chronologically.

File 03.002: Research notes, circa 1893 – 1894

This folder contains the research notes of John Austin Stevens, Jr. written largely in connection to his work in the field of American history. It includes sections copied from books used in the course of his research as well as original research. Some of the topics covered include coaches in colonial America and the Duke of Lauzun and Marie Antoinette.

File 03.003: Genealogy research, circa 1818 – 1910

This folder contains biographical and genealogical information on John Austin Stevens, Jr. and the extended Stevens family. It includes a genealogy of the Stevens family (male line).

Series 04: Professional papers, circa 1846 – 1926

The professional papers series consists of the Harvard College diploma of John Austin Stevens, Jr. from 1846, and documents and newspaper clippings related to the Sons of the Revolution, Society of the Cincinnati and other organizations John Austin Stevens Jr. was involved with during his life. Also included in this series is a box of ribbons and a program from various functions associated with these organizations.

Arranged chronologically by date with undated materials at the end of the folder.

File 04.001: Academic record, 1846

This folder contains the Harvard College diploma of John Austin Stevens, Jr.

File 04.002: Stevens, John Austin, Jr. business records, circa 1889 – 1926

This folder contains letters, pamphlets and other ephemera relating to fraternal organizations such as the Sons of the Revolution and the Society of the Cincinnati. Also included in this series is a separate box of ribbons made for functions held in connection with these fraternal organizations.

File 04.003: Ribbon and badges

This folder contains a small box of identifying badges and other insignia from many organizations including the New York Chamber of Commerce and the New York Historical Society, as well as events such as the Celebration of Evacuation of New York by the British.

Series 05: Textile instruction

Various written and printed instructions for crochet and other forms of needlework.

File 05.001: Patterns

Written and typed instructions/diagrams for textile work, dominantly crochet.