Newport Historical Society

Guide to the Turner, Prout, and Yates families papers, 1753 – 1838

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Descriptive Summary

Collection Identifier	MS.096
Title	Turner, Prout, and Yates families papers
Creator	Gardner, Sarah (Turner), ca. 1756-1843 Prout, Susanna (Turner), fl. 1793-1807 Prout, Tim, fl. 1793-1807 Yates, Hannah (Turner), 1761-1848 Yates, Seth, 1756-1856
Date	1753 – 1838 (bulk 1793 – 1807)
Extent	.25 linear feet (1 box)
Language	Materials are in English.
Abstract	This collection dates from 1753-1838 and contains Turner family correspondence, as well as family documents such as marriage certificates and a will.

Historical Note

This Turner family of Rhode Island can be traced back to John Turner, ironworker, an early settler of Lynn, Massachusetts in 1643. He and his sons worked as ironworkers and masons at Hammersmith Village (now Saugus Ironworks) and at Taunton, Massachusetts. Later generations removed to Newport (now Middletown), Rhode Island and had land interests in Jamestown and Westerly. Joseph Turner (born ca. 1717) was the youngest of the thirteen children of Mary and Lawrence Turner, yeoman, of Middletown. Joseph married twice, firstly to Abigail Smith in 1744 and secondly to Sarah Thurston in 1751, both of Newport. Joseph's household in Newport consisted of nine occupants according to the 1774 Census. Joseph belonged to a local mechanic's association and probably died in Newport, or elsewhere, between 1776 and 1779 during the British Army occupation. Sarah (Thurston) Turner was born on May 25, 1729 to Benjamin and Sarah (Casey) Thurston. She died on March 2, 1797.

Joseph and Sarah (Thurston) Turner had five daughters. Ruth Turner never married. Hannah Turner married Seth Yates, who was a painter. They lived in Newport and Providence and are buried at Swan Point. Sarah Turner married John Gardner. Susanna Turner married Tim Prout in Nova Scotia, and Mary Turner married John Jakways. John and Mary (Turner) Jakways had three children. Their daughter died at a young age, and their two sons were named Henry and John Jakways.

Sources:

- Beaman, Alden Gamaliel, comp. *Rhode Island Vital Records.* Princeton, MA: Alden G. Beaman, 1977.
- Radasch, Arthur and Katherine Radasch. "John Turner of Lynn, Mass. And Some of His Descendants." *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 123 (January 1969): 33-44.
- Stiles, Ezra. *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles,* ed. Franklin Bowditch Dexter, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 131.
- Ullman, Helen Schatvet. "Joseph and Sarah (Thurston) Turner of Newport, Rhode Island." *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 160 (2006): 215-223.

Scope and Content

This collection contains marriage certificates, receipts, a will, and letters written by members of the Turner family. The correspondence within the collection reveal family dynamics, discuss the inheritance of property, and provide insight into 18th century health and travel conditions. The bulk of this collection is made up of family letters between the Turner sisters. The letters date from 1792-1807. Letters written by Tim and Susanna (Turner) Prout discuss their marriage, the landscape of Nova Scotia, and the Turner siblings' relationships

with one another. Letters also discuss family inheritances, the Philadelphia Yellow Fever outbreak, and cases of influenza within the family.

This collection also contains a copy of Sarah (Turner) Gardner's will. Highlights from this document include the naming of Ruth Turner as her executrix and sole heir.

This collection also includes the marriage license of Jonathan Remington and Mary Thurston, and the marriage certificate on Seth Yates and Hannah Turner.

Organization

This collection is arranged into two series:

I. Correspondence, 1793-1861
II. Family documents, 1753-1838

Files within series are arranged chronologically by year, with undated materials placed at the end.

Subject Access

People	Gardner, John, fl. 1793-1807
	Gardner, Sarah (Turner), ca. 1756-1843
	Hopkins, Samuel, 1721-1803
	Jakways, Henry, fl. 1787-1795
	Jakways, Mary (Turner), ca. 1759-1838
	Prout, Susanna (Turner), fl. 1793-1807
	Prout, Tim, fl. 1793-1807
	Remington, Jonathan, fl. 1753
	Remington, Mary (Thurston), 1730-ca. 1784
	Turner, Ruth, ca. 1765-1860
	Turner, Sarah (Thurston), 1729-1797
	Yates, Hannah (Turner), 1761-1848
	Yates, Seth, 1756-1856
Subjects	Rhode Island--Genealogy

Rhode Island--History
Social life and customs
Influenza
Yellow fever
Nova Scotia--Genealogy

Form/Genre

correspondence
marriage certificates
wills

Access and Use

Physical Access

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Citation

Turner, Prout, and Yates families papers, MS.096, Newport Historical Society, Newport, Rhode Island

Administrative Information

Processor	Processed by Mollie Surprenant, November 22 2017.
Descriptive Rules	Finding aid based on *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS)
Accession Info	The Turner, Prout, and Yates families papers were a gift of Joyce E. Evans in 2017. Accession Number: 2017.014

Inventory

Series 01: Correspondence, 1793 – 1861

Letters within this series focus on family relationships. Letters discuss Sarah (Turner) Gardner traveling to stay with Susanna (Turner) Prout in Nova Scotia and Hannah (Turner) Yates planning a trip to visit her nephew, Henry Jakways, in New York. Letters written in 1789 focus on the appraisal of the family's property in Rhode Island, and its monetary value for the division of heirs.

Material is arranged chronologically, with undated material placed at the end.

File 01.001: Prout family correspondence with Sarah (Thurston) Turner, 1793 – 1794

This folder includes a letter written in 1793 by Tim Prout to his mother in-law Sarah (Thurston) Turner informing her that he has married her daughter Susanna (Turner) Prout. they were married "after a short acquaintance of about ten days," on August 8, 1793. Tim Prout explained that he did not have the time to get her permission, but writes that he hopes, "the match is agreeable to you, and all relatives." This folder also contains another letter written by Tim and Susanna (Turner) Prout in Nova Scotia to Sarah (Thurston) Turner in Newport. Together they expressed their joy that their mother's health is is well even in her advanced age and hope by the blessing "of divine Providence it will continue." The letters also highlight sibling relationships and discuss the possibility of "Sally" (short for Sarah (Turner) Gardner) staying with the Prouts in Nova Scotia for the winter if John Gardner spends his winter in the West Indies.

File 01.002: Henry Jakways correspondence with Hannah (Turner) Yates, 1795

This folder contains a letter written from Henry Jakways in New York to his aunt Hannah (Turner) Yates in Newport, Rhode Island. On August 26, 1795, he writes that he has written three times and has yet to hear a response. He mentions that his aunt need not worry about the outbreak of fevers in New York. He explains that men have died, but the doctors to do think that it is the "philada fever,"possibly referring to the Philadelphia Yellow Fever outbreak of 1793.

File 01.003: Seth and Hannah (Turner) Yates and Prout family correspondence, 1784 – 1807

This folder contains six letters. The majority are written between 1749 and 1797. Letters discuss the time delay when receiving letters. Highlights include a letter written by Tim Prout in March 1798, to Seth and Hannah (Turner) Yates. Tim Prout writes to his sister in-law discussing the details of the property in "R. Island." He writes "Susey wishes to have the property appraised," as she would like her portion. Tim Prout writes that if they reach a settlement to please write so they can visit that spring. Another highlight includes a letter written by Tim Prout to Seth Yates on October 22,1807, explaining that the family has been very ill with influenza.

File 01.004: Sarah (Turner) Gardner correspondence to Hannah (Turner) Yates, 1816

In this letter Sarah (Turner) Gardner writes to her sister Hannah (Turner) Yates on June 28, 1816, asking her to have her children write their "old aunt." Sarah (Turner) Gardner also discussed the process of milking cows and making butter.

File 01.005: P.A Cooke correspondence with Laura M. Cooke, 1800

Within this folder is a letter written on January 28, 1800, by P.A. Cooke to his sister Laura M. Cook in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. He discussed the terrible weather conditions that impeded his travel to Providence, Rhode Island.

Series 02: Family documents, 1753 – 1838

This series includes the marriage certificate of Jonathan Remington and Mary Thurston, the certification of marriage of for Seth Yates and Hannah Turner, a copy of Sarah (Turner) Gardner's will, and 1792 receipt for Indian corn.

Material is arranged chronologically, with undated material placed at the end.

File 02.001: Marriage certificate of Jonathan Remington and Mary Thurston, 1753

This folder contains the Quaker marriage certificate for Jonathan Remington and Mary Thurston (sister of Sarah (Thurston) Turner), who were married on October 18, 1753, at "the Publick Meeting House of Newport." Signed witnesses to the marriage include members of the Townsend, Easton, and Wanton families.

File 02.002: Certification of marriage for Seth Yates and Hannah Turner, 1798

This folder contains Samuel Hopkins' signed certification of marriage for Seth Yates and Hannah Turner, who were married on December 16, 1798. Also included is a note that indicates the date of death for Joseph Yates and Seth Yates. Joseph Yates died on February 2, 1856, and was the son Seth and Hannah (Turner) Yates.

File 02.003: Copy of Sarah (Turner) Gardner's will, 1838

Within this folder is Sarah (Turner) Gardner's will, written on February 7, 1838, revoking all other wills. She names Ruth Turner as her executrix and sole heir.

File 02.004: Receipt, 1792

The receipt within this folder is dated May 29, 1792 and promises that payment will be made to Jeremiah Thornton for a bushel of "good and merchantable Indian corn."