

**American Antiquarian Society
Manuscript Collections**

NAME OF COLLECTION:

Bangs Family, Papers, 1760-1866

LOCATION(S):

Mss. boxes "B"
Octavo vols. "B"
Folio vols. "B"

SIZE OF COLLECTION:

one manuscript box; one octavo volume (4 pp.); one folio volume (145 leaves, 122 blank)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:

For biography of Bangs family members, see Dean Dudley, *The Bangs Family in America* (Montrose, Mass., 1896), pp. 66-69. For biography of Nathaniel Howe, see Daniel Wait Howe, *Howe Genealogies* (Boston, 1929), vol. I, p. 236.

SOURCE OF COLLECTION:

Diary of Edward D. Bangs, the gift of Stephen Salisbury estate, 1906. Letters of Edward D. Bangs, the gift of Clark University, 1977.

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:

Edward Bangs (1756-1818) graduated from Harvard in 1777 and became an attorney in Worcester, Mass. He was later appointed to the state supreme court. His son, Edward Dillingham Bangs (1790-1838), received his M.A. from Harvard in 1827, after having studied law with his father. He had actually begun his practice in Worcester in 1813. Bangs served as state representative, county attorney, and Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1824-1836. Edward D. Bangs married, on 12 April 1824, Mary Grosvenor (1800-1864), who later married Stephen Salisbury (1798-1884).

This collection includes a diary of Edward Dillingham Bangs, 1823-1838; many documents and letters addressed to various family members; and a diary probably kept by Mary Grosvenor Bangs for the period 1840 to 1842. Edward D. Bangs' diary records daily activities, such as visits, political meetings, and his editorial work with the Worcester National Aegis; memoranda of European political events; his work as an attorney and as Secretary of the Commonwealth; and references to the deaths of notable Americans as well as to various changes in the appearance of Boston. Mary's diary contains descriptions of visits to Boston, the city's active social life, and descriptions of the inside of its Insane Asylum and House of Representatives. There is also a volume of notes for a will made by Mary G. Bangs, c. 1850.

The folder of documents and letters include, as principal correspondents, cousin Alice Bangs (-) of Watertown, Mass., Rev. John Healy Heywood (1818-) of Louisville, Ky., Austin Denny (1795-1830) who served as Bangs' attorney, and Stephen Salisbury II. There are wills, land deeds, commissions, warrants, and receipts, as well as business letters detailing the legal and political activities of the elder

and younger Bangs. Two folders of letters written to Mary G. Bangs from various cousins and friends, for the period 1839 to 1864, contain primarily information about family members and acquaintances including letters written by Helen James (-), the wife of the Rev. Horace James (1818-1875). Rev. Heywood frequently wrote of his ministry in Louisville and surrounding towns, while Salisbury courted Mary through his letters in 1856.

There are also letters of Edward D. Bangs to his friend Nathaniel Howe (1776-1829), who had studied law in Worcester with Levi Lincoln and set up as an attorney in Paris, Me., until 1811, when he moved to Bridgton, Me. He also was a member of the state senate. The letters span the period 1807 to 1820 and provide much information concern the sharp conflict which developed between the Federalist and Republican parties before the War of 1812. Bangs and Howe were ardent Republicans and wrote editorials for local anti-Federalist newspapers. (Bangs' column titled "Aequalitas," appeared in the Worcester National Aegis.) His letters are replete with his strong political feelings against the Federalists, political party dealings in Massachusetts, his analysis of election results in his own and Howe's countries, and the reporting of incidents indicating the degree of antipathy which existed in both political camps. Almost every letter also contains Bangs' response to Howe's "law queries" (i.e., legal cases with which Howe required assistance).

As the outbreak of war approached, Bangs discussed at greater length Republican campaign strategies, the political stands of specific members of the U.S. Congress, and the need to confront the English ("the European Algerines"). Later, there are references to the "conspiracy" of the "wicked" Northern governors, to U.S. Naval successes, and to the 1817 visit of President James Monroe to New England and the new wave of political unity.

Bangs' letters are also rich in family and local news and provide much information concerning the personal lives of eminent Worcester citizens, including Enoch Lincoln (1788-1829) and Daniel Waldo Lincoln (1784-1815). Several letters detail the extra-marital philanderings of Bangs' one-time law partner Williams Elijah Green (1777-1865).

See Contents List.

**American Antiquarian Society
MANUSCRIPTS DEPARTMENT**

BANGS FAMILY, PAPERS, 1760-1866
CONTENTS LIST

Manuscript Box

- Folder 1: Bangs Family, Correspondence and Documents, n.d.; 1760-1825
- Folder 2: Edward Dillingham Bangs, Correspondence, 1807-1820
- Folder 3: Edward Dillingham Bangs, Correspondence, 1807-1820 [transcripts]
- Folder 4: Edward Dillingham Bangs, Correspondence and Documents, 1826-1838
- Folder 5: Mary Grosvenor Bangs, Correspondence, 1839-1855; Diary, 1840-1842
- Folder 6: Mary Grosvenor Bangs, Correspondence, 1856-1864

Octavo Volume

Mary Grosvenor Bangs, Notes for a will, c. 1850

Folio Volume

Edward Dillingham Bangs, Diary, 1823-1838