

AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

Manuscript Collections

<p>Name of collection:</p> <p>Bowers-Flagg Family Papers, 1756-1930</p>	<p>Location:</p> <p>Mss. boxes "B"</p>
<p>Size of collection:</p> <p>3 mss. boxes</p>	<p>N.U.C.M.C. number:</p> <p>N.A.</p>
<p>Finding aids:</p> <p>For a biography of the Rev. Andrew Eliot Thayer, see Edward E. Parker (ed.), <u>History of Nashua, N.H.</u> (Nashua, N.H.: Telegraph Publishing Co., 1897), p. 142.</p> <p>For records of the Flagg family, see <u>Records of Weston, Mass. Births, Marriages, Deaths</u>, p. 357</p>	
<p>Source of collection:</p> <p>Purchased from Leonard W. Hill, 1979</p>	
<p>Collection Description:</p> <p>This collection contains correspondence, legal documents, and miscellaneous papers, 1756-1930, of the Flagg family of Weston, Mass., and Nashua, N.H., and the Bowers family of Nashua, N.H. John Flagg (1762-1816) and Lucy Curtis Flagg (1761-1831) were married in 1786 and had the following children: Harry (1786-1865), who married Jane Clark (-) in 1811; Lucy (1788-), who married the Rev. Andrew Eliot Thayer (1783-1846), a minister and later, a bookseller and newspaper publisher in Nashua; Patience (1791-1838), who married Daniel Sanderson Lamson (1793-1824) of Weston; Elmira (1793-1871); Charlotte (1795-1861), who married William Cheever (1792-1825) of Boston, Mass.; Charles (1799-1832), who graduated from Harvard in 1820 and became a teacher; his twin brother John (1799-1886), a merchant who traveled south frequently; and George (1801-1849), who was a merchant in Dunstable, N.H.</p> <p>The Flaggs are related to the Bowers family of Nashua, N.H. (a granddaughter of Lucy Flagg Thayer married a Bowers). This collection contains material pertaining to John Henry Bowers (1842?-) who traveled west during the 1860s; Charles Bowers (-) and Jerome Bowers (-), who, with their brother John Henry, worked briefly in the oil fields of Pennsylvania; and their sister, Jennie Bowers (-). The collection also contains letters from relatives and friends of the Bowers and Flagg families, such as the Melledges (Catharine Curtis Melledge was a sister of Lucy Curtis Flagg), the Childs, and the Smiths.</p>	

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Collection description (cont'd.) Bowers-Flagg Family Papers

All of the Flagg children are represented in the correspondence of this collection. Writing among themselves and to their mother, Lucy Curtis Flagg, they commented on family matters and daily activities in Boston and Weston, Mass., and Nashua and Dunstable, N.H. The letters of Charles Flagg pertain to his studies at Harvard College, his travels to Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Battletown, Virginia, in search of a tutorial position. His letters include a list of his requirements in a wife, and his political stand on various Congressional debates, e.g., piracy (1825) and internal improvements. John Flagg wrote frequently from New Orleans, La., concerning his efforts to establish himself in trade, and included comments on boarding with Creole families, descriptions of the city, and his business reversals and the fluctuating price of cotton. George Flagg traveled to Philadelphia, Pa., and Baltimore, Md., on business before settling as a merchant in Dunstable and Boston.

The letters of the four sisters, Charlotte, Elmira, Lucy, and Patience, relate to travels to nearby towns, e.g., Boston and the Mt. Wachusett area in central Mass.; the sudden and early death of Patience's husband, Daniel Sanderson Lamson in 1824; and the activities of their families. Their friends wrote during the early 1800s concerning the Flagg sisters' various suitors.

Members of the Bowers family wrote frequently to their parents in Nashua, N.H., during the middle part of the 19th century. Their letters constitute a fascinating account of the oil well industry in Pennsylvania, the life of a soldier during the Civil War, and the westward trek of the 1860s. Letters of brothers John Henry, Jerome, and Charles Bowers were written from Shaw's Landing, Pa., and Bernehoff Run, Petroleum Centre, Pa. They provide details of their trip from New Hampshire, the construction of oil wells, oil prices by the barrel, and oil fires and explosions. John Henry Bowers worked as an engineer while Charles was an oil company accountant. The former also gave advice to his father about holding on to his land in New Hampshire until the return of the gold standard.

John Henry Bowers also served for one month (April 1865) with the 1st New Hampshire Cavalry during the Civil War. His letters detail guarding the Upper Potomac River, camp life, casualties from guerrilla attacks by Moseby's Raiders, and searches of the area for John Wilkes Booth (1838-1865) and his accomplices (25 April). There are also letters written to his sister Jennie Bowers by soldier-friends. One letter written by C.C. Perry () from a Philadelphia hospital contains vivid descriptions of the Battle of Gettysburg, including Longstreet's charge and the moment when Perry was wounded in action. There is also a letter written to her by a member of the Freedmen's Bureau in Charleston, S.C., concerning her interest in joining the Bureau.

The most notable letters in this collection are those written by John Henry Bowers during his westward travels in 1863 and 1864. Written along the route to his parents and siblings, the letters contain descriptions of wagon-train travel along the River Platte, including landmarks; Indian attacks; life in Northfield, Minnesota, including the cheap cost of living, healthful climate, and his attempts to persuade his parents to join his search for gold in California (including costs of outfitting for such a venture); living conditions in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, including comments on the "promise" of the West, land-buying, good school system, road conditions, livestock, houses, peculiar construction of the wagons used there, soil conditions, the state of the Indian situation...in short, "this is a very healthy country a Dream hardly live...it is the place to make money." (Nov. 1863). Bowers also traveled from Nebraska to Nevada in 1864, and to Idaho in a four-wagon enterprise on which he was appointed cook, and then to Salt Lake City, Utah, and the Rocky Mountains. During all these travels, he described each city and its people

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Collection description (cont'd.) Bowers-Flagg Family Papers

(e.g., "that monster of bigotry and Poligamie Brigham Young"), travel across the Nevada desert without water, camel-crossings, Indian attacks and mass burials, quartz-mining, and the financially unattractive areas of California (e.g., due to wild-cat speculation).

The collection also contains a folder of miscellaneous letters written to members of the Flagg and Bowers families, such as a letter, 1756, written in Latin by Ebenezer Thayer (1734-1792), and a letter, 8 August 1871, written by Fred Hobbs () in San Francisco, California, to John Flagg concerning Thayer property in San Francisco. The letter, which includes hand-drawn street maps, gives information relative to decreased property values in that city due to a poor harvest year.

There is a folder of twenty-two sermons, 1787, of Ebenezer Thayer, minister in Hampton, N.H., a folder of genealogical material concerning the families of Thayer, Curtis, Cheever, Flagg, and Blanchard, and two folders of legal documents, 1777-1930. They contain family land deeds and leases, letters of recommendation for Charles Flagg, deeds to cemetery lots, pew deeds, court appointments, a Confederate \$1000 certificate, a bill of sale, 1846, of Andrew Eliot Thayer's bookstore, and printed records, 1860, of the Masonic Rising Sun Lodge in Nashua.

See Contents List.

2 July 1979

BOWERS-FLAGG FAMILY PAPERS

Contents List

Manuscript Boxes:

Box 1

- Folder #1 Genealogical material concerning period 1630 to 1970
- Folder #2 Letters of (sisters) Charlotte Flagg Cheever, Elmira Flagg, Lucy Flagg Thayer, Patience Flagg Lamson, 1812-1827, written to their mother, Lucy Curtis Flagg, and their brother, Charles Flagg
- Folder #3 Letters of Charles Flagg, 1817-1825, to his mother, sisters and brothers
- Folder #4 Letters of George Flagg, 1820-1837, to his mother, sisters and brothers
- Folder #5 Letters of John Flagg, 1816-1820, to his mother, sisters and brothers
- Folder #6 (cont'd.) Letters of John Flagg, 1821-1825, to his mother, sisters and brothers

Box 2

- Folder #1 Letters of the Child Family, 1832-1837: H. Child, Mary A. Child, Frances A. Child to Patience Flagg Lamson
- Folder #2 Letters of the Melledge Family, 1816-1837: Aunt Catharine Curtis Melledge, cousin Mary Melledge, Uncle James Melledge to the Flagg sisters
- Folder #3 Letters of Eliza Newell, 1812-1815, to Patience Flagg Lamson and Elmira Flagg
- Folder #4 Letters of the Smith Family, 1811-1836: Eliza Augusta Smith, Ellen Maria Smith, C. Smith to Patience Flagg Lamson
- Folder #5 Letters of Abigail Thayer, 1817-1821, to Patience Flagg Lamson
- Folder #6 Letters of Mary Ann H. Townsend, 1811, to Elmira Flagg
- Folder #7 Miscellaneous letters to Charles Flagg, 1819-1824
- Folder #8 Miscellaneous letters to Elmira Flagg, 1812-1828
- Folder #9 Miscellaneous letters to Lucy Curtis Flagg, 1814 and 1819
- Folder #10 Miscellaneous letters to Lucy Flagg Thayer and Andrew Eliot Thayer, 1810-1819
- Folder #11 Miscellaneous letters to Patience Flagg Lamson, 1805-1839
- Folder #12 Sermons of Ebenezer Thayer, 1787

Box 3

- Folder #1 Letters of the Bowers Family from Shaw's Landing, Pa., and from Bennehoff Run, Petroleum Centre, Pa., 1866-1870

- Folder #2 Letters of John Henry Bowers, mainly during westward travels and army service, 1863-1865; 1873, 1894
- Folder #3 Letters (4) to Jennie Bowers, 1860-1865, concerning the Civil War and Reconstruction
- Folder #4 Miscellaneous letters, undated; 1756-1893
- Folder #5 Poetry, addresses, miscellaneous items, c.1780-c.1865
- Folder #6 Legal documents, 1777-1835
- Folder #7 Legal documents, 1836-1930